

REGION 6—ST. LAWRENCE

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March weather was mild and uneventful, with a mean temperature in Watertown of 31.0° F, just 0.4° below normal. Most of April was mild as well, but an extended warm spell mid-month during which the mercury reached as high as 80° on 16 and 17 April was largely responsible for a monthly mean that was 1.9° above normal. Cooler than average temperatures predominated in May, with the temperature dropping to 33° on four nights in late May, the last on the 25th, and the month's mean temperature was 3.4° below normal, although a late warm spell ended the month with a 79° day. Spring started wet, as the 3.8" of precipitation that fell in March was 1.1" above normal. April and May were drier, with 3.0" and 2.9" of rain respectively, deficits from normal of 0.6" and 0.8". Most of May was even drier than these statistics indicate given that 1.8" of rain, or 62% of the month's total, fell on 1 May.

Arrival dates were obtained for 90 of the 93 species that *Kingbird* Regional Editors use to calculate overall average migration dates each spring, the three missing species all shorebirds that are not reliably observed in Region 6 in spring. Of these 90 species, 52 arrived more than two days earlier than long-term arrival dates, 27 within two days of average, and just 11 more than two days late. Four species, Northern Pintail, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Gray Catbird, set record early arrival dates, and Black-throated Green Warbler tied the record early date set in 2022. As this latter record suggests, many species arrived early compared to long-term averages, but at similar or only slightly earlier dates relative to most recent years. The overall average arrival this spring was 22 April, one day later than 2022 and identical to 2021, but one day earlier than the most recent ten-year mean.

The Black River floodplains near Lowville is often among the best places in Region 6 to witness the waterfowl migration, but this area generally does not receive extensive coverage. An increase in effort here this spring, especially by Jeremy Collison and Gregg Dashnau, turned up some nice birds, including a Tundra Swan present most of April, a rarity in Lewis County. On 4 April the season's only Greater White-fronted Goose was here, as was a male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal**. Surprisingly a second Eurasian Green-winged Teal turned up in the town of Waddington on 28 April. Cackling Geese were noted in the Black River floodplains through most of the first half of April, with singles in three additional locations. The only Barrow's Goldeneye of the season was photographed at Tibbits Point on 12 March.

Of the eleven species mention above that arrived later than normal, four were shorebirds, including Killdeer and American Woodcock, somewhat of a surprise as both species often arrive very early during years when February warm fronts result in exceptionally early flights, as happened this year. Greater Yellowlegs and Lesser Yellowlegs, perhaps the most regularly observed of all of the Region's migrant shorebirds, were also among the season's late arrivals. By contrast, the season's only Semipalmated Sandpiper report was in the Black River floodplains at the record early date of 4 May. Shorebirds generally were scarce, especially along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River where water was high, but there were some big surprises, including a rare spring American Golden-Plover Jeremy Collison found in the Black River Valley on 17 April and that continued to at least 23 April, and a group of **24** Willets Raymond Spahn saw on the beach at Lakeview WMA on 26 May. Willet sightings are scarce and fleeting in Region 6, rarely involving more than a single individual. Less of a surprise but exciting nonetheless was a pair of nesting Piping Plover at Lakeview WMA, where nesting seems to be becoming annual.

Northern raptors, present in low numbers this winter, departed the Region relatively early. The last Rough-legged Hawk of the season was seen on 5 March and the last Snowy Owl on 7 March. The last Short-eared Owl of the season, presumably an overwintering bird but possibly a migrant, was in Clayton on 15 March. The immature Golden Eagle that overwintered between Canton and Potsdam was last seen 17 March. An immature Golden Eagle, presumably a migrant, was at Red Lake from 12 to 22 May. Northern Shrikes lingered longer, with the last observed in Potsdam on 8 April.

A handful of migrants were reported in larger than usual numbers. During most years at most one or two Red-headed Woodpeckers are reported away from the Fort Drum stronghold for this species, but this spring migrants were seen at Robert Wehle State Park, Grindstone Island, and in the towns of Clayton and Norwood. Unusually, both Northern Mockingbird and Orchard Oriole were reported from all three counties in Region 6, something I don't recall happening for either species since I have been Regional Editor. Reports for these species are well documented, but the 28 Philadelphia Vireos reported to eBird is several times more than average for spring, with many of these reports including no documentation other than the dreaded "Identified by Merlin". Clearly many birders still do not understand that while Merlin's ability to identify singing birds is impressive, it is not fool-proof, and it has particular difficulty birds that sound very similar, especially Red-eyed Vireo and Philadelphia Vireo.

There were few true rarities this season, the highlight among passerines a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** that Christina O'Riley saw at her bird feeder in Watertown briefly on 27 April. Fortunately, Christina was able to get some photos before the blackbird disappeared for good a few minutes after she first spotted it. The Boreal Chickadee at Grass Point State Park successfully made it through the winter and was last seen on 4 April, and seemed even more cooperative during March than it had been over the winter.

For the season I received reports of 237 species, six higher than the most recent ten-year average spring tally, but two lower than last spring's record high. Yellow-headed Blackbird was certainly the most unusual species reported, but as so often occurs for rarities in Region 6 was a single-observer report. The continuing highly cooperative Boreal Chickadee at Grass Point State Park seems to have been the bird that thrilled local and visiting birders the most. The return of Piping Plovers to Lakeview WMA, where this species appears on the way to becoming an established breeder, was another high point of the season.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFWMA – Ashland Flats WMA; **BI** – Barnhart I, T Massena; **BRB** – Black River Bay; **BRV** – Black River Valley floodplains; **CCSP** – Coles Creek SP; **CV** – T Cape Vincent; **FD** – Fort Drum Military Reservation, JEFF & LEWI; **GPSP** – Grass P SP; **HH** – Henderson Harbor; **ICNC** – Indian Creek Nature Center, T Canton; **JCSP** – Jacques Cartier SP; **JEFF** – Jefferson Co; **Jrd** – Jericho Rd wetlands, T Hounsfield; **KC** – Kelsey Creek, T Watertown; **LEWI** – Lewis Co; **LPSP** – Long Pt SP; **LWMA** – Lakeview WMA; **MI** – Murphy Islands, T Waddington; **MM** – Massawepie Mire, T Colton & Piercefield, STLA; **PilPt** – Pillar Pt; **PRWMA** – Perch Ri WMA, JEFF; **PtPen** – Pt Peninsula, T Lyme, JEFF; **RLT** – Richard’s Landing Trail; **RRT** – Remington Recreation Trail, T Canton; **RS** – SUNY-ESF Ranger School; **RWSP** – Robert G. Wehle SP; **SBSP** – Southwick Beach SP; **SLR** – St. Lawrence Ri; **STLA** – St. Lawrence Co; **StPt** – Stony Pt, T Henderson, JEFF; **TP** – Tibbetts Pt; **ULLWMA** – Upper and Lower Lakes WMA, T Canton; **WHWMA** – Wilson Hill WMA; **WISP** – Wellesley I SP; **WP** – Whalen P, T Louisville.

Snow Goose: max 5000 T Watertown 20 Mar; scarce after 4 Apr incl ad with broken wing T Champion to 31 May.

Greater White-fronted Goose: BRV 4 Apr (J. Collison, G. Dashnau, photos!).

Brant: 70 over Payne L 6 May & 150 over T Lorraine 15 May only reports.

Cackling Goose: T Canton 4 Mar (R. Gould); 4 reports of 1-2 BRV 4-17 Apr (J. Collison, E. Moser, I. Worrall); FD 6 Apr (JSB); T Rutland 17 Apr (J. Collison).

Mute Swan: max 78 WISP 18 Mar.

Trumpeter Swan: max 14 Raquette R T Potsdam 12 Mar & ULLWMA 16 Apr; increasing.

Tundra Swan: max 22 LWMA 22 Mar; last BRV 4-25 Apr a scarce LEWI record.

Wood Duck: arr T Henderson 5 Mar.

Blue-winged Teal: arr LWMA 22 Mar.

Northern Shoveler: arr T Orleans 23 Mar; max 40 BRV 17 Apr.

Gadwall: max 14 T Dekalb flooded field 29 Mar.

American Wigeon: overwintering birds joined by migrants starting about 22 Mar; max 84 WHWMA 23 Apr.

Mallard: max 65 BRV 18 Apr.

American Black Duck: max 84 BRV 6 Apr.

Northern Pintail: arr Jrd 15 Feb; max 340 Tibbits Creek T Lisbon 28 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: arr LWMA 22 Mar; max 490 BRV 18 Apr.

EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL (R6): m BRV 4-18 Apr (G. Dashnau, J. Collison, JSB); m T Waddington 28 Apr (JSB).

Canvasback: LPSP 26 Mar; max 10 Chippewa Bay 9 Apr; only reports.

Redhead: max 80 CV 10 Mar.

Ring-necked Duck: max 457 PRWMA 27 Apr.

Greater Scaup: max 1200 LPSP 26 Mar.

Lesser Scaup: max 68 BRB 7 Mar.

Surf Scoter: 2 WHWMA 23 Apr only report.

White-winged Scoter: max 300 HH 22 Mar.

Long-tailed Duck: max 165 TP 14 Apr; last ED 19 May.

Bufflehead: max 198 JCSP 22 Apr; last Wellesley I 17 May.

Common Goldeneye: max 400 PtPen 12 Mar; last CCSP 28 Apr.

Barrow's Goldeneye: m TP 12 Mar (M. Seidman) photos!; only report.

Hooded Merganser: max 24 Stony Creek T Henderson 6 Mar.

Common Merganser: max 116 RLT 3 Apr.

Red-breasted Merganser: max 54 TP 21 Apr.

Ruddy Duck: GPSP 25 Mar; 4 scattered singles between 25 Mar and 27 May.

Spruce Grouse: Hitchins Bog 10 May (P. Baker) only report.

Pied-billed Grebe: arr LWMA 22 Mar.

Horned Grebe: arr PilPt 29 Mar; max 33 WHWMA 23 Apr; last 2 ULLWMA 6 May.

Red-necked Grebe: arr T Watertown 23 Mar; max 8 WHWMA 23 Apr; last 2 ULLWMA 2 May.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: arr Grand Lakes Reserve 13 May.

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr FD 11 May.

Common Nighthawk: arr T Carthage 18 May.
Eastern Whip-poor-will: arr T Hammond 23 Apr.

Chimney Swift: widespread arr 7 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: widespread arr 8 May.

Virginia Rail: arr ULLWMA 16 Apr.
Sora: arr LWMA 24 Apr.
Common Gallinule: arr CV 22 Apr.
American Coot: multiple reports up to 5 PRWMA 24 Mar to 27 May; 1-2/day ULLWMA 6-14 Apr; T Watertown 26 Apr only other report.

Sandhill Crane: arr Pinckney SF 24 Mar; presumed pairs PRWMA, ULLWMA, Lisbon Swamp T Chipman, Newton Falls Reservoir; presumed migrants 2 T Dekalb 2 May, 3 T Canton 4 May, T Croghan 4 & 10 May.

American Golden-Plover: BRV 17-23 Apr (J. Collison, JSB, photos!) rare spring.

Killdeer: arr T Canton 17 Mar.

Semipalmated Plover: max 3 Red Lake 20-22 May; LWMA 23 May only other report.

PIPING PLOVER (R6): pair nesting LWMA 8 May thru (A. Koczek, mob).

Upland Sandpiper: arr FD 27 Apr; max 9 FD 25 May.

Ruddy Turnstone: LWMA 26 May

Dunlin: 2 SBSP 21 Apr

Least Sandpiper: arr & max 25 BRV 11 May.

Pectoral Sandpiper: singles BRV 4 & 18 Apr; only reports.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 4 BRV 4 May only report.

American Woodcock: arr ULLWMA 22 Mar.

Wilson's Snipe: arr T Dekalb 24 Mar.

Spotted Sandpiper: arr T Clayton & T Watertown 30 Apr.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr BRV 23 Apr; max 5 BRV 11 May.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr BRV 28 Apr; max 35 BRV 11 May; last CWF 19 May.

WILLET (R6): 24 LWMA 26 May (R. Spahn).

Greater Yellowlegs: 2 arr T Dekalb 6 Apr; max 12 BRV 18 Apr & 11 May.

Bonaparte's Gull: SLR T Ogdensburg 10 Mar early; main arr T Hounsfield 2 Apr; max 388 TP 14 Apr.

Little Gull: TP 14 Apr (S. Kelling) only report.

Ring-billed Gull: estimates of adults at MI colony increased from 19 on 11 Mar to 520 by 25 Mar, 950 by 13 Apr, and 1225 by 21 Apr.

Herring Gull: max 300 BI 12 Mar.

Caspian Tern: arr LWMA 9 Apr.

Black Tern: 2 arr ULLWMA 30 Apr (JSB) early.

Common Tern: arr ULLWMA 22 Apr.

Common Loon: arr T Croghan 5 Apr.

Double-crested Cormorant: arr Chaumont Bay & CCSP 25 Mar.

American Bittern: arr FD & PRWMA 12 Apr.

Least Bittern: arr ULLWMA 7 May.

Great Blue Heron: migrants becoming obvious by 22 Mar.

Great Egret: arr Alcoa Pds T Massena 3 Apr.

Green Heron: arr KC 16 Apr.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr MI 13 Apr.

Osprey: arr T Watertown 28 Mar.

Golden Eagle: overwintering imm Canton & Potsdam continued to 17 Mar; St. Lawrence University T Canton 11 Mar; imm Red L 12 to 22 May.

Northern Goshawk: LPSP 26 Mar (J. McKay); different loc FD 3 Apr & 2 May (JSB); T Piercefield 26 May (R. Buckert).

Red-shouldered Hawk: widespread arr 21 Mar.

Broad-winged Hawk: arr New Bremen 9 Apr (C. Lee) early; only report before widespread arr 15-16 Apr.

Rough-legged Hawk: last T Lisbon & T Osceola 5 Mar.

Eastern Screech-Owl: T Canton 15 Apr only report.

Snowy Owl: Favret Rd CV 7 Mar only report.

Short-eared Owl: max 4 CV 4-5 Mar; last Woodard Rd T Clayton 15 Mar.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: RS 12 Apr; MM 8 May; Dead Creek T Piercefield 26 May; good showing.

Belted Kingfisher: arr T Brasher 21 Mar.

Red-headed Woodpecker: at feeder Sam Adams Rd T Clayton 16-17 May (R. Booth); RWSP 18 May (R. Spahn); at T Norwood feeder 20 May (R. Gould); Grindstone I 30 May 9 (P MacLean); more reports than usual away from FD where arr 2 May.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr FD 28 Mar, early

Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 MM 12 Apr & 28 May; Hitchins Bog 10 May; Dead Creek Flow 26 May; only reports.

Northern Flicker: arr obscured by overwintering birds; increasing by 7 Apr.

American Kestrel: arr obscured by overwintering birds; increasing by 22 Mar.

Merlin: 85+ reports from 50+ loc; continuing to increase.

Peregrine Falcon: RWSP 21 Mar; T Canton 18 May; 2 T Hammond 30 May; BRV 4 & 11 Apr; L Bonaparte 20 Apr; several reports from known nesting sites.

Great Crested Flycatcher: arr StPt 28 Apr.

Eastern Kingbird: arr T Alexandria 29 Apr.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: arr MM 8 May.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: arr Red L 12 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr High Falls Trail T Fine 13 May.

Alder Flycatcher: arr Beartown SF & FD 13 May.

Willow Flycatcher: arr Saddlemire Tral T Canton 13 May.

Least Flycatcher: arr T Lisbon 28 April.

Eastern Phoebe: arr Munter Trail T Potsdam 25 Mar.

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr T Antwerp 5 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: arr RS 16 Apr (J. Fogden) early.

Philadelphia Vireo: arr FD 13 May; 28 reports in eBird far more than usual but many presumed misidentifications *intro*.

Warbling Vireo: arr T Hermon 1 May.

Red-eyed Vireo: arr T Croghan 3 May.

Northern Shrike: last T Potsdam 8 Apr.

Canada Jay: max 3 High Falls Loop T Fine 29 May; additional reports MM, RS.

Boreal Chickadee: continuing GPSP to 4 Apr (mob); rare JEFF; only report.

Horned Lark: max 150 T Clayton 10 Apr.

Bank Swallow: arr PRWMA 27 Apr.

Tree Swallow: widespread arr 29 Mar.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: arr BRV & T Watertown 17 Apr.

Purple Martin: arr PRWMA 27 Apr.

Barn Swallow: arr PRWMA 6 Apr (B. Miller) early; main arr 15-16 Apr.

Cliff Swallow: arr SLR T Massena 2 May.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: arr T Croghan 6 Apr.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: arr LWMA 1 Apr.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 70 RRT 9 Mar; last 5 RLT 10 Apr.

Cedar Waxwing: scarce before mid-Apr where primarily STLA; widespread in small groups 15 Apr thru; max 21 RWSP 24 May.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: arr BRV 11 Apr.

House Wren: arr T Watertown 14 Apr.

Winter Wren: arr RRT 22 Mar; RS & ICNC 29 Mar only other reports before main arr early Apr.

Sedge Wren: 2 Maple Ridge Rd T Dekalb 22-29 May (JSB, A. Belford, M. Bodine, B. Miner); Sykes Rd T Canton 29 May (JSB); only reports.

Marsh Wren: arr PRWMA 12 Apr (R. Brouse); only report before 24 Apr at same loc.

Carolina Wren: reports from 20 loc; most in any season since summer 2021.

Gray Catbird: early arr ULLWMA 21 Apr (B. Dixon), Emporium Easement T Colton 22 Apr (L. Desmond) & CV 25 Apr (R. Booth) only reports before main arr 1st week May.

Brown Thrasher: arr FD & T Brownville 12 Apr.

Northern Mockingbird: arr T Brownville 19 Apr; reports from 11 loc in all 3 counties more than usual.

Eastern Bluebird: overwintering birds obscure arr; increasing by 22 Mar.
Veery: arr FD & LWMA 8 May.
Gray-cheeked Thrush: FD 18 May (JSB) only report.
Swainson's Thrush: arr FD 13 May.
Hermit Thrush: arr T Brownville 5 Apr.
Wood Thrush: arr FD & T Potsdam 5 May.

American Pipit: arr T Canton 27 Mar; max 36 FD 4 May; last FD 12 May.

Evening Grosbeak: max 47 RS 13 Mar; widespread at feeders LEWI & STLA thru; scarcer JEFF.

Pine Grosbeak: max 18 Ames Rd T Potsdam; last 5 Munter Trail T Potsdam.

Purple Finch: scarce Mar; widespread small numbers 3 Apr thru; max 35 T Croghan 19 Apr.

Common Redpoll: max & last 70 FD 3 Apr.

Red Crossbill: 2 T Rodman 1 Mar; T Fine 19 Mar; T Theresa 27 Apr; 2 T Croghan 28 Apr; 2 Indian Pipe SF 2 May; only reports.

Pine Siskin: about 20 reports 1-3 each 14 Mar to 18 May.

Lapland Longspur: T Lowville 5 Mar.

Snow Bunting: max 200 T Lisbon 5 Mar; last 20 T Carthage 24 Mar.

Grasshopper Sparrow: early arr FD 24 Apr; only report until main arr PtPen 4 May.

Chipping Sparrow: 4 arr early PtPen 22 Mar (R. Brouse, R. Lewis); main arr RS & T Canton 6 Apr.

Clay-colored Sparrow: arr FD 4 May.

Field Sparrow: arr FD & T Croghan 6 Apr.

Fox Sparrow: arr T Martinsburg 22 Mar; last RRT 2 May.

American Tree Sparrow: last T Gouverneur 1 May.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 165 CCSP 13 Apr.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr T Lowville 2 May; last T Henderson 30 May.

White-throated Sparrow: max 49 FD 24 Apr.

Vesper Sparrow: arr FD 5 Apr.

Henslow's Sparrow: no reports.

Savannah Sparrow: CV 12 Mar (J. McGowan, L. Santana) early arr or winter survivor; next T Brownsville 5 Apr.

Song Sparrow: rapid increase 19-22 Mar.

Lincoln's Sparrow: arr MM 6 May.

Swamp Sparrow: arr FD & T Croghan 6 Apr.

Eastern Towhee: arr T Dekalb & T Hammond 8 Apr.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (R6): T Watertown feeder 27 Apr (C. O'Riley, photos!).

Bobolink: arr CV 6 May.

Eastern Meadowlark: arr CV 6 Mar.

Orchard Oriole: arr CV 9 May; 4 additional reports from W JEFF where well established; unusual loc: T Canton 14 May (S. Hooper); Iroquois Dam Horse Trails (20 May); T Martinsburg 21-29 May (I. Worrall).

Baltimore Oriole: arr PilPt 5 May.

Brown-headed Cowbird: arr KC 19 Mar.

Rusty Blackbird: arr RRT 24 Mar; possible High Falls Loop T Wanakena & Tug Hill WMA 18 May (breeding loc?).

Ovenbird: arr FD 4 May.

Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Morgan Gulf T Turin 15 Apr; reports from 12 additional loc more than usual.

Northern Waterthrush: arr FD 24 Apr.

Golden-winged Warbler: arr FD 7 May.

Blue-winged Warbler: arr FD & ULLWMA 7 May.

Black-and-white Warbler: arr FD & WHWMA 25 Apr.

Tennessee Warbler: arr FD 7 May.

Orange-crowned Warbler: AFWMA 13 May (R. McDonnell).

Nashville Warbler: arr FD 25 Apr.

Mourning Warbler: arr Whetstone Gulf SP 12 May.

Common Yellowthroat: arr FD 4 May.

Hooded Warbler: 4 on terr T Ellisburg 13 May; arr T Diana 26 May (A. Lewandowski) rare STLA.

American Redstart: arr RRT 30 Apr.

Cape May Warbler: arr ULLWMA 7 May.

Cerulean Warbler: arr T Dekalb 11 May.

Northern Parula: arr CV 7 May.

Magnolia Warbler: arr Janack's Landing trail T Fine 10 May.

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr T Dekalb 12 May.

Blackburnian Warbler: arr T New Bremen & RS 7 May.

Yellow Warbler: arr WP 23 Apr.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: arr FD 8 May.

Blackpoll Warbler: arr T Theresa 11 May.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: widespread arr 7 May.

Palm Warbler: “Yellow” at ADK breeding sites by 11 Apr; widespread in lowlands 22 Apr incl 1st “Western”.

Pine Warbler: arr T Croghan 6 Apr.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: early arr T Brasher 1 Apr; next T Watertown 8 Apr.

Prairie Warbler: arr FD 8 May; MM 28 May (JSB) unusual loc.

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr FD 25 Apr.

Canada Warbler: arr FD 11 May.

Wilson's Warbler: arr FD 17 May.

Scarlet Tanager: widespread arr 9 May.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: arr T Theresa 27 Apr.

Indigo Bunting: early arr T Potsdam 27 Apr; next T Ellisburg 7 May.