

showing of redpolls this past winter, several Hoarys lingered into the spring season. These included three in Savoy, MA Mar. 10–12 (D. Shampang, ph.), one in Fairfield, VT Mar. 4 (J. Zurit), one in Orono, ME Mar. 1–13 (J. Markowsky), and one impeccably described in E. Rochester, NH Apr. 11 (DJA).

### Exotica

A Eur. Goldfinch visited a feeder in Concord, NH Apr. 17 (*vide* A.S.N.H.), and ≥ six Ruddy Shelducks were found at-large in Connecticut this May.

### Corrigendum

The report of 20 Carolina Wrens at Light-house Point S.P. in New Haven, CT, last fall referred to White-breasted Nuthatches, not wrens.

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# Hudson-Delaware Region

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Spring 1996 was characterized by cooler, wetter weather than normal, resulting in a one–two week delay in development of foliage in most areas. Bird migration seemed to be delayed as well, but a few fortuitous collisions of cold fronts with southerly flow in late May brought spectacular flights to some locations. Although some thought that the numbers of birds was not as high as the “good old days” of 30–40 years ago, most experienced birders agreed that the migration was the heaviest in many years at those places lucky enough to share in the experience.

In addition to the heavy flights of annual migrants, there was a modest number of rarities, a couple without precedent. These included Pacific Loon, Anhinga, vagrant and nesting Trumpeter Swan, Tufted Duck, (apparent) Eurasian Hobby, Wilson's Plover, White-winged Dove, Great Gray Owls, a possible Common Swift, continuing Varied Thrush, and Harris' Sparrow.

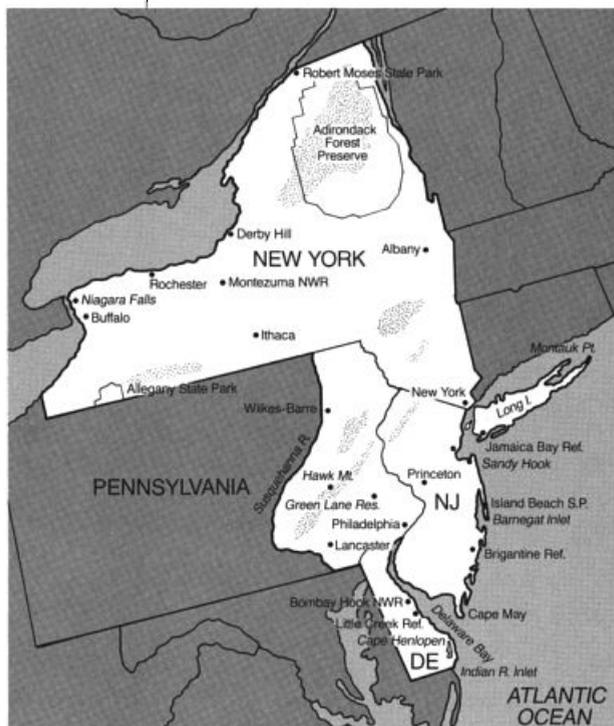
Abbreviations: Braddock Bay (*Braddock Bay S.P. and vicinity, Monroe, NY*); Bombay Hook (*Bombay Hook N.W.R., near Smyrna, DE*); Brig (*Brigantine Unit, Forsythe N.W.R., Atlantic, NJ*); Cape Henlopen (*Cape Henlopen S.P., Sussex, DE*); Conejohela Flats (*mud flats and adjacent parts of Susquehanna R., Washington Twp., Lancaster, PA*); Green Lane (*Green Lane Res., Montgomery, PA*); Hamlin Beach (*Hamlin Beach S.P. and adjacent lakeshore, Monroe Co., NY*); Jamaica Bay (*Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens, NYC*); LI (*Long Island, NY*); Port Mahon (*marshes and bayside along road e. of*

*Little Cr., Kent, DE*); Sandy Hook (*Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway National Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ*); N.Y.S.A.R.C. (*New York State Avian Rarities Committee*); P.O.R.C. (*Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee*).

### Loons to Storks

Although Pacific Loon is an uncommon, but now annual, visitor to the Region, virtually all records are of birds in basic plumage. For the 2nd consecutive year, however, a bird in full breeding plumage was discovered, this time at Green Lane Apr. 29, an exceptional rarity for the state (JHo, *et al.*). Red-necked Grebes made an excellent showing throughout, especially in w. New York. Symonds' regular monitoring of Hamlin Beach, *Monroe*, produced an early count of 364 birds Mar. 19, and a staggering 2754 Apr. 4 (WS). Green Lane held four Mar. 3 (KC), and several were part of a large flight of waterbirds in *Luzerne* and *Wyoming*, PA Apr. 14 (v.o.). This season's two Eared Grebes were at John Heinz National Environmental Center (Tinicum) near Philadelphia Mar. 26 (NP), and at Irondequoit Bay, Rochester, NY Apr. 26 (RGS).

Several Am. White Pelicans appeared at diverse corners of the Region, led by three at Braddock Bay Apr. 26 (m.ob.), a single at Cape Vincent, *Jefferson, NY* in May (no date given), and another a Brig., May 12 (LL, J. Bickal). With the increasing appearance of Anhinga just to our south, including the flock of 30 in Maryland, it is not surprising that several sightings were reported this spring, some with adequate



documentation. The first was a flyover at Absecon, *Atlantic*, NJ Apr. 17 (JDa), followed by one that entertained a group of observers at Garrett Mountain, *Passaic*, NJ Apr. 25 (GEM *et al.*). The next report came from nearby Lost Brook Preserve, *Bergen*, NJ May 5 (J. Sedecino), followed by a well-described bird in Salford Township, *Montgomery*, PA May 15 (AM).

An unprecedented early flight of egrets into *Luzerne* in n.e. Pennsylvania included the first local record of Cattle Egret at W. Pittston (RKO *et al.*) and five Great Egrets at Exeter, all Apr. 29. Elsewhere in the county were a single Snowy Egret and several other Great Egrets (*vide* WR). Tricolored Herons were nesting again in May at Rehoboth Bay, *Sussex*, DE, the state's only site for the species, while the now annual White-faced Ibis was first noted at Bombay Hook May 25 (S. Dyke *et al.*).

### Waterfowl

A family group of five Trumpeter Swans at the Conejohela Flats, Apr. 24–May 12 were of unknown origin (RMS, m.ob.). The most likely source of these birds, which were unbanded, is the recent introduction program taking place in Ontario and other mid-western states and provinces. Ontario is almost certainly the origin of a nesting pair of Trumpeters at Perch River W.M.A., *Jefferson*, NY, in April (B. Hughes, T. Elmery). The normal scattering of about 8 reports of Greater White-fronted Geese came mainly from upstate New York, but included a videotaped bird in Franklin Township, *Susquehanna*, PA Apr. 1, apparently the first record for n.e. Pennsylvania (H. Flavell).

Among the 100,000 or so Snow Geese at Middle Creek W.M.A., *Lancaster*, PA, in early March were two Ross' Geese, which would have been an extraordinary rarity 5 years ago, but now can be considered routine (TG *et al.*). Another individual was at Chestnut Level on the Susquehanna, also *Lancaster*, Mar. 16 (RMS). Finally,  $\leq$ four different Ross' Geese were at Bombay Hook in March and early April (m.ob.). Also among the Snow Geese at Middle Cr. in March was a Barnacle Goose, for which the usual caveats about origin must apply (B. Carl *et al.*).

Eurasian Green-winged Teal continue to be well reported, mostly in March, with three in Delaware, two in New Jersey, and a single on Long Island, while Eur. Wigeon, too numerous to catalog, included four from the Rochester area. A ♂ Tufted Duck at Braddock Bay during March was an outstanding record for w. New York (RGS, v.o.), while more expected was an individual at Watermill, LI, Apr. 14 (R.

Stanford). The Com. Eider flock at Montauk Point, LI, reached 250 in late March, but a female at Shinnecock Inlet, LI, May 19–June 1, was a presumed non-breeder.

Two Harlequin Ducks were at Sodus Pt., *Wayne*, NY, e. of Rochester, May 18 (DSh, M. Tetlow), and the usual concentrations lingered along the coast into April. The only Barrow's Goldeneye detected was a drake at Leonardo, *Monmouth*, NJ, Mar. 16–17 (RKA *et al.*).

### Raptors to Cranes

A combination of blocking cold fronts interspersed with strong SW winds brought an outstanding total of >144,000 birds to Braddock Bay. We, unfortunately, did not receive the final totals from either Braddock Bay or Derby Hill, but the former's impressive total included 13–14 Swainson's Hawks (normally one–two) and a couple Mississippi Kites. Black Vulture finally made it all the way to the St. Lawrence R. with the appearance of an individual at Ogdensburg, *St. Lawrence*, NY Apr. 16, a first for the county and the St. Lawrence region, though not unexpected as the species spreads N (KLC). Only Pennsylvania missed out on Swallow-tailed Kite; one was along the Delaware Bayshore, *Kent*, DE Apr. 23 (J. Multhrop), another at Cape May Apr. 26 (K. Lukens *et al.*), and a 3rd at Carmen's R., Brookhaven, LI, May 26 (J. Clinton). It was a good spring for Mississippi Kite as well, with numerous reports from a new hawk watch at Cape Henlopen and multiples in s. New Jersey, including a peak of four–six birds at Cape May May 13 (m.ob.). Nesting Bald Eagles continue to do well; although reports are incomplete, New Jersey's 13 nesting pairs produced  $\geq$ 15 young, and 5 of the 7 e. Pennsylvania nests were successful.

A dark-morph Broad-winged Hawk, a color form rarely seen in the east, was at Manitou, near Braddock Bay, May 19 (D. Skelly). In addition to the Swainson's Hawks at Braddock Bay, an unusually late, rare in spring, adult was at Jakes Landing, *Cape May*, NJ, May 15–18 (D. Ward, m.ob.). Also extraordinarily late was a Rough-legged Hawk present for a week through May 11 on the Mullica R., *Atlantic*, NJ (NB *et al.*). An imm. Golden Eagle being harassed by Com. Ravens at Barnes Corners, *Lewis*, NY May 13, could have been a late migrant or, hopefully, a prospector looking for a mate and nest site (GS). The bird-of-the-season, if accepted by N.Y.S.A.R.C., would be a reported Eurasian Hobby at Overlook Beach, *Suffolk*, LI, Apr. 7 (TL, Rku *et al.*). Photographs were taken and have been sent to European experts for confirmation of the identification. The identity has been dis-

puted by some from a copy of a single slide, but others who have seen complete sets of the originals support the identification; hopefully, the issue will be resolved shortly. A Gyrfalcon was at nearby Tobay Mar. 18 (M. Konsto), and what was probably the same bird was at Cedar Beach, also on the Jones I. strip, Apr. 18 (D. Fetuma).

Five Sandhill Cranes were seen n. of Bridgeton, *Cumberland*, NJ Mar. 16, in the company of a Com. Crane, presumably the escapee that has been roaming s. New Jersey for the past few years (E&M Perry). Another Sandhill was at Cape May Apr. 27 (v.o.). In New York, two Sandhill Cranes were at Ellisburg, *Jefferson*, Apr. 15 (GS), and another 30 mi farther north at Perch R., May 4. Braddock Bay had about a dozen for the season.

### Shorebirds

The season was highlighted by the first appearance in several years of Wilson's Plover—not one, but four. The first was discovered at Cape May May 5, by a pair of foreign birders scouting for the World Series of Birding (A. McGeehan, B. MacTavish); it was seen by many and photographed through the following day (ph. SF). The next Wilson's Plover was found at Brig during the World Series event May 11, but did not linger (DSi *et al.*). On Long Island, one was found at Westhampton, *Suffolk*, May 15 (Rku), and the last at Jones Beach, *Nassau*, May 19 (A. Bendinger).

There were several reports of Black-necked Stilt in s. New Jersey, with a maximum of a eight at Cape May May 20 (SF, PL, J. Liguori); in Delaware, a pair at Gordon's Pond, Cape Henlopen, represented a possible new nesting site away from the traditional *Kent* locations. The spring flock of Am. Avocets peaked at about 70 at Kitts Hummock, *Kent*, DE Mar. 30 (APE), and a single late lingerer was at Bombay Hook May 27 (*vide* APE). A very early Solitary Sandpiper was at Princeton, NJ Mar. 26 (LL) and an even earlier Upland Sandpiper was in Holmdel, *Monmouth*, NJ Mar. 23 (A. Spears); as unusual as this was, it preceded by just 3 days the appearance of an Upland Sandpiper in Nova Scotia. An impressive flock of >500 Whimbrels were at Shell Bay Landing, *Cape May*, NJ May 6 (GW), but a Whimbrel at Plains, *Luzerne*, Apr. 13, was the first in n.e. Pennsylvania since the 1960's (RKO *et al.*). The latter bird was one of 15 species of shorebirds found at Plains this spring, an unprecedented total for that area.

Hudsonian Godwits are rare in spring, so 3 different reports was most unusual. In Delaware, one was at Kitts Hummock May 15 (DAC, NP) and another, or perhaps the

same, at the nearby Ted Harvey W.M.A., May 25 (G. Hess); there are only 2 previous spring records for the state, the last in 1974. In New Jersey, a flock of six Hudsonian Godwits was at South Amboy, *Middlesex*, May 11 (R. Johnson). A Marbled Godwit was in s. *Cape May* Apr. 28 to at least May 18 (D. Githens *et al.*), and another was at Jamaica Bay May 26 (*vide* TWB). The Plains hotspot also provided a Red Knot May 19, the first for n.e. Pennsylvania in 25 years (RKO). Only one Curlew Sandpiper, a species reported with decreasing frequency in recent years, was noted, a bird at Shinnecock, *Suffolk*, LI, May 25 (JA). Ruffs were few, as well, with only three in Delaware, one on Long Island at Sagg Pond Apr. 26 (JA), and three in New Jersey, the last at De Korte S.P. in the Hackensack Meadowlands, *Bergen*, May 10 (NB). A handful of phalaropes, a few each of Red-necked and Wilson's, were found in Delaware, s. New Jersey, and Long Island.

### Gulls to Alcids

Three Long-tailed Jaegers were at Fire I., NY Apr. 30 for a rare onshore encounter (AWI), and a single was seen on the Memorial Day pelagic trip out of Brielle May 26. The pelagic trip also recorded seven Pomarine and three Parasitic Jaegers, but failed to locate a South Polar Skua. A Laughing Gull appeared at Braddock Bay May 29, while a Franklin's Gull at Hamlin Beach Apr. 21 provided another reward for Symond's spring vigil (WS). Little Gulls were well represented except in New Jersey, which had a single at South Amboy May 10 (LL). Two were in Delaware at Port Mahon from May 4+, but more surprising were the several in Pennsylvania. A bird at L. Hibernia, *Chester*, Apr. 20 represented a first county record (J. Maloney *et al.*), while two adults and an immature on the Susquehanna R., *Lancaster*, Apr. 14 (EW), and another immature there May 24 (RMS), provided the highest local count. A maximum of 10 at Hamlin Beach in April was more normal for that location (WS). Common Black-headed Gulls were somewhat scarcer, with only two in Delaware, two in New Jersey, and a single at Hamlin Beach. A possible Thayer's Gull was studied at Bordentown Beach, *Mercer*, NJ Mar. 24 (LL, WDa, R. Brown, BMo; † to N.J.R.C.); there is still no accepted record for this species (?) in New Jersey, although there are many sight records, many no doubt correct. In Pennsylvania, a Thayer's Gull at Green Lane Res. was new for that locale Apr. 3 (JHo *et al.*). An early Royal Tern was off Robert Moses S.P., LI, Apr. 27 (*vide* TWB), and a rare and very early Sandwich Tern was at Cape May May 24 (A. Robinson). Three Arctic Terns were unusual at Braddock Bay

Apr. 16 (KLG, D. Tetlow *et al.*), and a possible Arctic was at Peace Valley Nature Center, *Montgomery*, PA May 10 (AM, † to P.O.R.C.). The only alcid of note was a Black Guillemot, not in the best of health, at Great Kills Park, Staten I., NY, for a couple of weeks in May (C. Aquila, m.ob.).

### Doves to Shrikes

Once again a White-winged Dove visited the Region in spring, this time at Cape May May 5 (F. Mears, B. Mitchell), with another or the same there May 19 (M. Danzenbaker). Great Gray Owls staged an apparent return flight this spring in upstate New York, but from where no one knows. An individual was at Robert Moses S.P., Massena, *St. Lawrence*, Mar. 13 (L. Harper) and another at Rush, *Monroe*, Mar. 28–Apr. 13 (L. Rausch, ph.). At least three–four, probably more, were along the Ontario Lakeshore w. of Rochester during April, with some continuing into May and one even into June. A Great Gray a few mi farther west at Yates, *Orleans*, may have been one of the previous group. Adding to the interesting owl reports was a Boreal Owl banded at Manitou, near Braddock Bay, in April (*vide* RGS).

One of the extreme rarities of the season was a bird identified as a swift of the genus *Apus*, probably Common Swift (*Apus apus*), by two highly experienced birders at Lafayette Hill, *Montgomery*, PA May 10 (R. Ridgeley, L. Bevier). Seen in direct comparison with Chimney Swifts, the identification was made based on the much larger size, shape, and deeply forked tail, as well as a familiarity with other New World swifts. A tantalizing report of two territorial ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at High Point S.P., *Sussex*, NJ May 8, was not, apparently, followed up; there is not even a suspected nesting record for the state. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher put in a brief appearance at Frederica, *Kent*, DE May 11 (J. MacConnell, B. Sherman *et al.*), but could not be relocated. Common Ravens nested again at High Point S.P., NJ, and a pair were seen repeatedly in the vicinity of the Bear Mountain Bridge, *Rockland*, NY, as the species continues to spread. Carolina Wren numbers have yet to recover from recent severe winters, but Sedge Wrens were more widely reported than normal. Singles were at Greenwich, *Cumberland*, and New Grenna, *Burlington*, NJ, May 11 (CS, WDa *et al.*), and another was at Rye, *Westchester*, NY, Apr. 29–May 3 (TWB *et al.*). Two were at Lisbon, *St. Lawrence*, NY, a known breeding area, in late May, but most unusual was an individual at the Conejohela Flats area in Pennsylvania May 29 (RMS).

The Varied Thrush that wintered at Edgemoor Hills, *New Castle*, DE, lingered to at

least Mar. 24 (*vide* APE). Brinkley reported a huge nocturnal flight of thousands of thrushes over Troy Meadows, *Morris*, NJ May 10–11 during the World Series of Birding event (NB); other teams that night also reported hearing many migrant thrushes and other passerines. Following a good winter showing, Bohemian Waxwings staged a big spring flight in the St. Lawrence region of upstate New York, with the biggest total being >1500 at Watertown, *Jefferson*, Apr. 13 (R. Brouse). Also holding over from their massive winter invasion, N. Shrikes were widely reported from as far south as Cape Henlopen during March and from New Jersey and New York well into April.

### Vireos to Warblers

**SA** The passerine migration was especially strong during the middle part of May. Early cold, wet conditions finally broke occasionally to allow a strong SW flow to spring hordes of thrushes, vireos, warblers, and tanagers. In s. New Jersey, May 10 was perceived as the best spring passerine flight in many years, while at Ft. Washington, *Montgomery*, PA, Murphy encountered good numbers and variety on most days from May 5–19. Similar positive assessments came from the Lehigh Valley to the Champlain Valley to the St. Lawrence Valley, where May 14 & 18 were spectacular days for passerine migration, the latter being described as "the best warbler migration in 10–15 years or more." Hundreds of thousands of birds swarmed along the edge of L. Ontario in Jefferson, staying so close to the shoreline that many species were absent only an eighth of a mile from the water (LBC). May 19 brought an excellent flight to the New Jersey coast from Cape May to Sandy Hook, and truly staggering numbers to New York City area and Long Island, where a morning fog brought the migrants down in wave after wave from Breezy Pt. to Orient Pt. Veterans of many decades, such as Tony Lauro and Manny Levine, experienced the best fallout in a lifetime of birding. Kurtz, birding at Jamaica Bay, found thousands of birds in the first few hours, including 150 Bay-breasted Warblers in one small area known as the North Gardens. Although the numbers of neotropical migrants have surely declined in the past several decades, it is encouraging to know that the right combination of conditions can still bring such a spectacular fallout.

The big flights of warblers also brought an unusually high number of Philadelphia Vireos, uncommon in spring, to the New Jersey-New York City area, including 7 reports from Long I., May 19 alone (*vide* TWB). Most of the warblers were well represented, with the notable exception of Cape May, but there were few surprises. A Yellow-throated Warbler at Snowshoe Pt., *Jefferson*, NY May 18 provided a first for the St. Lawrence region (NL), while another at Webster Park near Rochester May 5 was noteworthy (DDT). A Swainson's Warbler was stunned hitting a window on Roosevelt I., New York City, Apr. 20, but recovered and flew off (A&S Levine), while another Swainson's was seen and heard singing at Cape May May 1 (SE, RCr).

### Tanagers to Finches

The usual scattering of Summer Tanagers, about seven, were reported from the New York City area, but none seemed to have made it farther north. Scarlet Tanager and Rose-breasted Grosbeak, however, were well represented among the many passerine migrants in mid-May. The Painted Bunting present at an Ocean View (Bethany Beach), *Sussex*, DE, feeder throughout the winter lingered until Apr. 7 (APE), while another ♂ Painted Bunting at a feeder in Klecknersville, PA Apr. 26 had been present for some time before birders were informed (RW). This was the spring of the Dickcissel throughout the Region, as well as those Regions to the south and northeast, with many of the birds attempting to nest. The summer report will provide greater details, but a couple of dozen birds were involved. Speculation centered on the possibility that the midwestern drought may have driven the birds east.

Pennsylvania had a surprising three Clay-colored Sparrows. One was a holdover from the winter at Peace Valley to Apr. 28, while spring birds were discovered at Marcus Hook, *Delaware*, May 5 (NP) and Roosevelt Park, Philadelphia, May 14 (E. Fingerhood, M. Logan). A singing bird at Orleans Township, *Jefferson*, NY May 31 was probably looking for a mate in an area where the species has previously nested (NL, B Walker). The Lark Sparrow that wintered at a Cape May feeder continued into the spring, but new was a singing male at Bashakill, *Sullivan*, NY May 17 (H. McGuinness, AB). There were 2 reports of a possible Henslow's Sparrow at the Milleville Airport, *Cumberland*, NJ, in early May, but no confirmation. Nesting locales in the Region include several places in n.e. Pennsylvania, and scattered places in upstate New York, especially Ft. Drum, near Watertown, where the species is common on land

inaccessible to civilians (*vide* T. Miller, S. Barnes). A displaced LeConte's Sparrow photographed in Battery Park, Manhattan, Mar. 15 must have wintered nearby, perhaps across the river in New Jersey (P. Osenbaugh). One of the highlights of the season in w. New York was a **Harris' Sparrow** present in Pomfret Township, *Chautauqua*, NY May 11–13 (T. Mosher *et al.*).

The few reports of Yellow-headed Blackbird included two in Delaware, one standing next to the Varied Thrush at Edgemoor Hills Apr. 11 (AH). A single male was at the usual Ft. Elfsborg, *Salem*, NJ site Mar. 31 into April (WDa *et al.*). Three Brewer's Blackbirds were along Route 9, *Kent*, DE Mar. 28, near the traditional wintering site (RMS, Bird Treks). The only other reports came from the Rochester area, with one at Manitou Mar. 14 (RO) and another at Kendall Mar. 15 (D. Traver). Common Redpolls appeared at many places during March, with six continuing at a Greenville, DE, feeder through Mar. 24 (ES). The northbound flight moved through the St. Lawrence region in March and early April, with the last three at Canton May 13 (M. Greenwald). Among the Commons was a Hoary Redpoll that visited a Cape Vincent feeder Mar. 17 and Apr. 13 (MBW). Other Hoary Redpolls were at feeders in the Rochester area: one at Greece during March (KLG) and another at Webster late March–Apr. 10 (DDT). A big flight of Evening Grosbeaks joined the other passerines along the L. Ontario shore near Snowshoe Pt., May 14 (LBC).

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