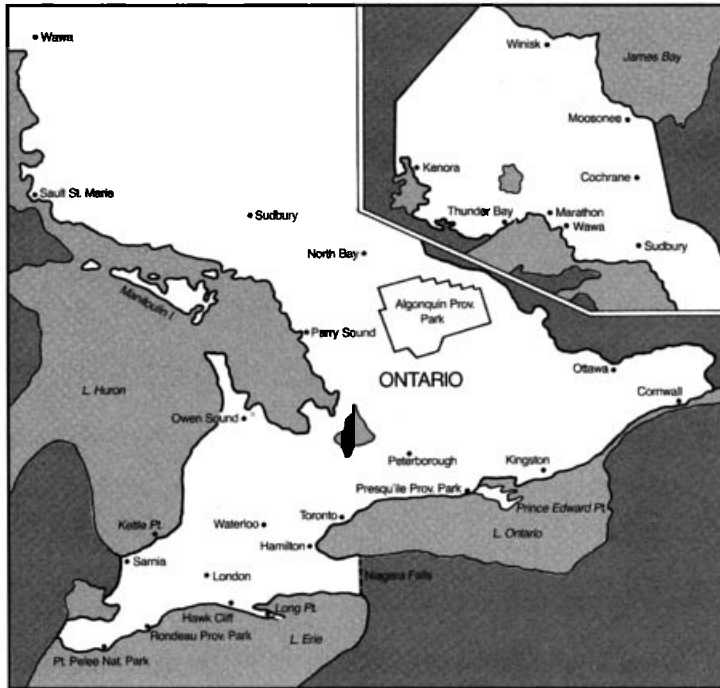


# Ontario



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Spring moved across the province in a series of stops and starts but with no real weather events that affected bird migration. Thus the spring migration could be described as relatively normal, with the majority of species arriving as expected. On 17 May, weather conditions overnight and a heavy nocturnal migrant movement combined for the ever hoped-for fallout at Point Pelee National Park. Birds were *everywhere* in the Park and above it in the fog. Many species were found in record high numbers—such as 110 Philadelphia Vireos. Veteran Pelee birders fortunate enough to be there recalled similar days in the distant past when such occurrences were apparently much more common.

The massive winter owl movement and a continued high small rodent population in the northwestern part of the province resulted in both Northern Hawk Owls and Great Gray Owls staying to breed. At least 6 Northern Hawk Owl nests were found north of Thunder Bay. Much searching however, failed to turn up a Great Gray Owl nest, even though many were present in suitable breeding locations. A nice mix of unexpected rarities were found and included Glossy Ibis, Black Vulture, Mississippi Kite, Snowy Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, and Eurasian

Collared-Dove.

**Abbreviations:** C.A. (Conservation Authority); K.F.N. (Kingston Field Naturalists); L.P.B.O (Long Point Bird Observatory); S.T.P. (Sewage Treatment Ponds); T.C.B.O (Thunder Cape Bird Observatory). Place names in *italics* refer to districts and regional municipalities as well as to counties.

## LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Red-throated Loon was off the Tip of Point Pelee N. P. 10 May (AW et al.), locally rare for the area in spring. On 1 May, a record high count of 19 was made at Presqu'ile P.P. (CEG, JEG), with singles noted at Amherst I. 2 May (K.F.N.) and Darlington P.P. 20–25 May (BH). A Pacific Loon was found 20 May at Prince Edward Point (MHE, RBS), and 2 in breeding plumage were at Pinery P.P. 24 Apr (m. ob.). An impressive record high count of 1381 Horned Grebes was made 31 Mar (AW) at Point Pelee N.P. Equally noteworthy were 300 Red-necked Grebes at Bluffer's Park 9 Apr (JI, KK). Eared Grebes were attracted to S.T.P.s across the province, with one at Townsend 22 Apr (JL et al.), 2 at Emo 27 May (RS), 2 at Rainy R. 31 May (DHE), and one at Parkhill 4 May (JL). The pair at Emo built a nest in shoreline cattails, but a subsequent lower water level meant that the attempt ended in failure.

A record early Double-crested Cormorant

was at Hillman Marsh 15 Mar (BM), and 2 flying over Tea L., Algonquin P.P. 15 Apr (RT) were five days early. A Great Cormorant was at Amherst I. 19 May (RDW), a rare spring record Great Egrets returned to nest for the 2nd year at Presqu'ile P.P. (m. ob.). Singles appeared at the Leslie Street Spit 19 (RL) & 20 May (*fide* RBHS) A Snowy Egret was at the same location 6 May (RBHS, GC). A Little Blue Heron flew s. along the length of Point Pelee N.P. 22 Apr (AW) Individual Tricolored Herons appeared 10 May at the Breakwater (L.P.B.O.) and 27 May at Port Weller (KR, AS). A Cattle Egret was found near Sault Ste. Marie 27 May (*fide* BK), and 2 were at Amherstburg 28–30 Apr (RJ et al.). A Black-crowned Night-Heron, rare for Algonquin P.P., was found 18 May (PS). **Glossy Ibis** made an impressive showing this spring, with one 28 May near Port Rowan (L.P.B.O.) and 3 in the same area 29 May (BC). Other singles were at Cranberry Marsh 31 May (HK), Bloomfield 19–23 Apr (DC), and St. Clair Beach 27 Apr–8 May (MB et al.). Up to 3 were at Southampton 21–25 May (CC), and 2 were found at Aylmer 11 May (DM, LW). One wandered n. to Spanish L near Sudbury 31 May (BK).

## VULTURES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

A single **Black Vulture** was present at St. Clair's Bush (*Kent*) 30 Apr–1 May (GDB et al.). Two were at Point Pelee N. P. 27–29 Apr (DCB, KB) and 8–9 May (m. ob.). The Pelee birds flew up and down the Point, giving excellent views to birders who happened to look up at the right time. Toronto had a Greater White-fronted Goose that frequented the Verobeach Road Pond 28 Apr–2 May (PL). Three were at Pinery P. P. 30 Mar (PC), and 2 were found near Echo Bay 6 Apr (BK). Cobourg had 35 Snow Geese 4 Apr (CEG), the 2nd highest count for the area. A peak of 1300 Brant was seen off Amherst I. 20 May (K. F. N.). On 19 Mar 21,000 Tundra Swans stopped near Pinery P.P. (*fide* AR), with most leaving overnight. A male Eurasian Wigeon stayed at Darlington P.P. 31 Mar–30 Apr (TH), and Canvasbacks again apparently bred on the Leslie Street Spit. At least 2 pairs were noted 21 Apr–20 May (GC). An imm. King Eider was at Bluffer's Park 31 Mar–4 Apr (m. ob.), and a female Common Eider was at Amherst I. 27 May (RKE, NM). A male Harlequin Duck was at Darlington P.P. 18 Mar–30 Apr (TH). Observers on Prince Edward Pt. counted an amazing 300,000 Long-tailed Ducks 20 Mar (JHE, BR), and a male Barrow's Goldeneye was at the Leslie Street Spit 18 Mar–1 Apr (m. ob.). A very late flock of 700 Red-breasted Mergansers flew past the Tip of Point Pelee N. P. 8 May (AW).

One of the nicest surprises of the spring was an ad. **Mississippi Kite** near Rowanwood 11–12

May (RL, AC, VD). A one-year-old bird was seen over Point Pelee N.P. 10 May (AG, AGr), and another appeared briefly there 18 May (MT). Red-shouldered Hawks appear to be increasing, at least in the Sault Ste. Marie area, where spring counts totaled 37 individuals (BK). A Swainson's Hawk was found n. of Rainy R. 29 Apr (RS), and 3 very late Rough-legged Hawks were noted in the same area 31 May (DHE). Gyrfalcons were found along the shores of L. Erie, with a juv. white morph at Point Pelee N.P. and area 11 Mar–6 Apr (DJW et al.) and a juv. graymorph 17–19 Mar (DJW et al.). The Long Point P.P. area also had 2 Gyrfalcons, with a white morph 14 Apr (Jla) and a gray morph 8 Apr (BH). The only reported King Rail of the period was one at the Strathroy S.T.P. 4 May (TB). Yellow Rails were completely absent from their usual haunts near Rainy R. due to record-high water levels (DHE). Where do they go when habitat is temporarily lost?

Shorebirds put on a good show this spring both in numbers and the appearance of rare species. Cobourg had 107 Black-bellied Plovers 30 May (CL), a record high count for the area. A **Snowy Plover** delighted birders 24–31 May at Prequ'ile P.P. (DS, FH, m. ob.). Lesser Yellowlegs peaked at record high of 145 at Hillman Marsh 25 Apr (AW). Single Willets were at Thunder Bay 26 Apr–16 May and 19 May (BR, BMo). A flock of 92 Whimbrel was at Colonel Samuel Smith Park 20 May (CSAM). A Hudsonian Godwit dropped into the Rainy River S.T.P. 23 May (DHE, AH), and 2 were found at Sault Ste. Marie 30 Apr, with one remaining to 5 May (BK). Hillman Marsh hosted a total of 22 Marbled Godwits 24 Apr–4 May (m. ob.). An impressive flock of 1500 Pectoral Sandpipers was seen off the Tip of Point Pelee N.P. 13 Apr (AW, JK). Purple Sandpipers are always unusual in spring, so one at Presqu'ile P.P. 23 May (DS) is of interest. A **Curlew Sandpiper** was found 6 May at the Blenheim S.T.P. (RS, JH et al.). Individual female Ruffs were at Aylmer Police College 6 May (JH, BJ et al.), 12–15 May at Cranberry Marsh (DL), and 7 May at the Strathroy S.T.P. (AWH). Red-necked Phalaropes are rarely seen in spring at Point Pelee N.P., but one was present at the Tip 18 May (GTH et al.).

## GULLS THROUGH CROWS

A Parasitic Jaeger off the Tip of Point Pelee N.P. 9 May (TRS, LVM, KAM) was the 14th spring record for the Park. Four Laughing Gulls were noted in the Point Pelee N.P. area, the earliest on 14 Apr and the last 14 May (m. ob.). Another was at Frenchman's Bay 30 May (DSh). Franklin's Gulls were scarce across the province, with 3 at Wheatley 21 Apr (AW) and 2 at Rainy R. 21 May (DHE, AH), where they are usually present in

much larger numbers. Little Gulls were at Oshawa Second Marsh in excellent numbers, with 34 there 22 Apr (JH) and 63 in the marsh 27 Apr (TH). Others noted were 5 at Hillman Marsh 11 May (DJW), 2 at Turkey Pt. 24 Mar (SW) and one at Prince Edward Pt. 24 Apr (RKE). A single Black-headed Gull was reported 15 Apr (JL) near Long Point P.P. A late Iceland Gull was at Selkirk P.P. 11 May (JM). Also rather late was a lingering second-year Glaucous Gull at Kettle Pt. (AR). Great Black-backed Gulls do not usually wander far from the lower Great Lakes, but one ad. was found near Sault Ste. Marie 17–18 Mar (BK), and another reached Thunder Bay 14 Apr (AH). On 28 May, an Arctic Tern was observed at the tip of Long Pt. (MD). If the record is accepted, it will be a first for that area.

A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was found at Hillman Marsh 28–29 Apr (PDP), and likely the same bird found its way to the Tip of Point Pelee N.P. 5–10 May, where it gave a lot of birders fleeting and exasperating glimpses of it as it flew over the trees. It was a first record for the area and the 4th for the province. Barn Owls are very rare in Ontario, but one was found 17 May at Long Point P.P. (BJ) and again 19 May (BJ, JH). A Snowy Owl was still on Amherst I. 4 Apr (AS). The major winter incursion of Northern Hawk Owls and Great Gray Owls in the nw. part of the province continued through the period, and many birds moved right to s. areas. High small rodent populations in nw. Ontario continued well into spring and not only held many owls but encouraged breeding. North of Thunder Bay, 6 Northern Hawk Owl nests were found, primarily in large cutover areas (NGE), an unprecedented number. While numerous Great Gray Owls were reported, no nests were found. A Northern Hawk Owl lingered to 4 Apr near Joyceville (FE). A Great Gray Owl was at Amherst I. on 1 Apr. (AS), and 2 different birds were seen in Algonquin P.P. 7 Mar (TW) and 8–9 Mar (RT et al.). Short-eared Owls took advantage of high rodent populations in the Rainy R. area this spring: up to 8 could be found hunting over area fields in late May and early Jun (DHE). Food exchanges indicated probable nesting. North of Atikokan, 8 calling Boreal Owls were heard 12 Apr (DHE). Numerous other Boreal Owls were reported hunting near bird feeders during late Mar and early Apr and were likely migrants looking for mice attracted by spilled bird seed (DHE). A single Boreal Owl was found in Algonquin P.P.; it was being harassed by Gray Jays (DS).

An unexpected Acadian Flycatcher was found 27 May at Amherst I. (RKE, NM). A pair of Eastern Phoebe's nested at Point Pelee N.P. 30 May (AW) for the first time in decades. At the extreme w. end of the province, **Western**

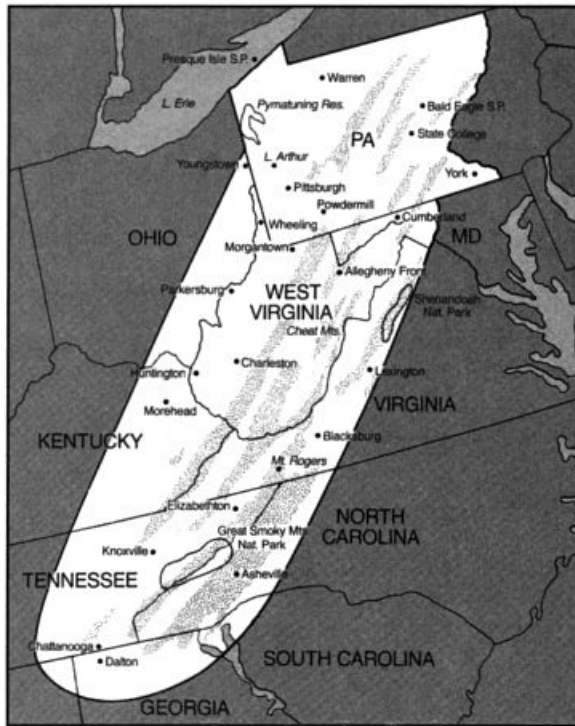
**Kingbirds** were found building a nest on a microwave tower n. of Rainy R. (GC); an ad was on the nest 4 Jul (DHE). A single Western Kingbird was at Thunder Bay 21 May (MM). Rare in nw. Ontario, Loggerhead Shrikes were at T.C.B.O. 21–23 May (BRo) and at Rainy R. 31 May (*fide* GC). A White-eyed Vireo, rarely seen in the area, was found at Jackson Park near Peterborough 1 May (CJ). Another was at Thicket's Woods 4–5 May (AB, m. ob.). On the big fallout day 17 May at Point Pelee N.P., a record high count of 110 Philadelphia Vireos was made (AW). Common Ravens nested at Cottesloe 14 May (AA), a continued example of the species's southward breeding expansion. A single bird was noted at Palgrave C.A. 10 Mar (GC). Rarely seen in Algonquin P.P., a Purple Martin was found 24 May (LP, RSt).

## TITMICE THROUGH FINCHES

A Tufted Titmouse at Prince Edward Pt. 2 May (RKE) was unusual. The 3rd Durham region Townsend's Solitaire was in Pickering 12 May (DL), and another was at the Ganaraska Forest Centre 5 May (EK, AE). A Varied Thrush that wintered near Sault Ste. Marie was last seen in early Mar (BK). Northern Mockingbirds continue to do well in the Toronto area. In Etobicoke, 6 were seen at Mockingbird Alley (appropriately named) 6 May (SH). Two were noted at Rainy R., the first on 1 May (AH, DHE) and the second 1 Jun (m. ob.).

An Orange-crowned Warbler made a record early arrival in Ontario when one showed up at Point Pelee N.P. 12 Apr (AW). Yellow-throated Warblers were limited to one at Long Point P.P. 12 Apr. (JO) and singles at Point Pelee N.P. 23–24 Apr (FJU, AW) and 12 May (JBS et al.). A Cerulean Warbler was at Thicket's Woods 4 May (m. ob.). Worm-eating Warblers were found a several locations in the s. part of the province. A total of 7 was at Point Pelee N.P., ranging from 9 Apr, a record early date for Ontario (AW), to 11 May (MEC). One was at Thicket's Woods 18 May (Mba, JI), another was found in High Park, Toronto 22 May (CSAM), and 2 were at the Old Cut, L.P.B.O. 30 Apr, with one remaining to 20 May (JA). Far to the e., one was at Prince Edward Pt. 20 May (MHE, RBS, RDW). A very cooperative Kentucky Warbler was at Rondeau P.P. 10 May (m. ob.) and delighted watchers as it fed on and under a large fallen tree. Point Pelee N.P. recorded a total of 11 Kentucky Warblers 1–19 May (m. ob.). A Connecticut Warbler in Toronto 25 May (TF) was a nice find. Hooded Warblers are rare along the n. shore of L. Ontario; thus, 2 at Toronto 10 (MM) & 19 May (PNP) and one at Prince Edward Pt. 20 May (MHE, RBS, RDW) were notable. A rare and early Yellow-breasted

# Appalachia



Chat was at Lurgan Beach (*Bruce*) 30 Apr (AWM). Point Pelee N.P. had a total of 8 Summer Tanagers 27 Apr–22 May (m. ob.), and an imm. male sang in the Wilson Tract n. of Long Point P.P. 12–31 May (RL, AC, VD). A Lark Sparrow was at Point Pelee N. P. 17 May (MB, SA), and another was at a feeder just w. of Dryden 8–21 May (CE). The same feeder hosted 2 Lark Sparrows a year earlier. Single Henslow's Sparrows were found at Point Pelee N.P. 12 Apr (AW et al.), at Wilmot Creek (*Durham*) 18 May (O&DP), and at Two Creeks C.A. (*Kent*) 9 May (DF). Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows are usually expected more often in the fall, but 3 were found at Point Pelee N.P., with single birds 1–20 May (AW et al.), 19 May (GTH et al.), and 20 May (GE). A Harris's Sparrow was at the Breakwater Field Station, L.P.B.O. 3 May (JF, SM). A second-year male Blue Grosbeak was banded in the Wilson Tract 15 May (CF, m. ob.), and a bright ad. male was at Point Pelee N.P. 5–10 May (TO, GS et al.). A Dickcissel at an Atikokan feeder 12–13 May (MCE, SP) was new for the e. end of the Rainy R. District. Another was off the Tip of Point Pelee N.P. 17 May (AW et al.) flying about in the fog. White-winged Crossbills nested for the first time in the Toronto area, where a nest with eggs was found 4 Mar at Palgrave C.A. (GC).

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**S**pring migration presented the usual mixed picture in Appalachia. There were some heavy fallouts of waterfowl, especially across western Maryland and Pennsylvania. At Erie, for example, over 30,000 ducks, mostly Canvasbacks and scaup, put down on Presque Isle Bay in mid-March. In May, good numbers of shorebirds appeared in eastern Tennessee where water levels were low in the upper lakes of the T.V.A. system. Nearly every field observer, however, commented on the generally poor flight and lack of significant fallouts of Neotropical migrants. At Powdermill Nature Reserve, Carnegie Museum of Natural History's field station at Rector, Pennsylvania, this spring's banding total of about 1800 birds was the third lowest ever and 35% below the 40-year average, but numbers of only a few Neotropical migrants (e.g., Least Flycatcher, House Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Canada

Warbler, and American Redstart) were much below average. Others, like Acadian Flycatcher, Gray Catbird, Wood Thrush, and Chestnut-sided Warbler, were well above average.

**Abbreviations:** P.N.R. (Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector, *Westmoreland*, PA); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., *Erie*, PA).

## LOONS THROUGH STORKS

There were more than the usual number of Red-throated Loons across w. Pennsylvania, with reports 4 Mar–22 Apr of single birds from at least 10 scattered localities. Good counts of Common Loon included 28 at L. Julian, *Buncombe*, NC 13 Apr (WF) and 42 at Codorus S.P., *York*, PA 6 Apr (PR). Over 163 Horned Grebes were at Pymatuning L., PA 26 Mar (SKa), and 100 were on L. Somerset on 27 Mar (JP). Normally rare in Pennsylvania, 13 Red-necked Grebes were at Bald Eagle S.P. 16 Apr (DHo), 2 were at Shawnee L., *Bedford* 11 Apr (RG), and 2 were at Tamarack L., *Meadville* 19 Apr (RFL). Two of the Eared Grebes reported from last season at S. Holston L., TN were seen until 11 Mar (RK), and single migrants were at Brainerd Levee,