

Late, cool, and wet would aptly describe the season, with winter-like weather lasting well into spring. At Erie, Pennsylvania, for example, Presque Isle Bay remained essentially ice-covered until the third week of March. Yet some 15,000 ducks (mostly scaup, Canvasbacks, and Common Goldeneyes) still managed to squeeze into a small area of ice-free water at the head of the bay during that early period. Much the same was true elsewhere along the Lake Erie shore and on many of the larger rivers and inland reservoirs of the Region.

There was, as usual, a scattering of very early arrival dates for a few species of Neotropical migrants, but arrival and peak migration dates for passerines in general (as observed by the banders at Powdermill Nature Reserve, in southwestern Pennsylvania) were about five days later than the average of the last 40 years. Weather-related fallouts, particularly of flycatchers and warblers, combined with a later-than-usual leaf-out of deciduous trees, certainly gave the impression of a good landbird flight—an impression also confirmed at Powdermill, where among the 105 species banded, 69 were in numbers within one standard deviation of their long-term average, 32 were less than one standard deviation above average, and just four were banded in numbers one standard deviation below average (details at: <www.westol.com/~banding>).

Abbreviations: B.S.B.O. (Black Swamp Bird Observatory, *Ottawa*, OH), O.N.W.R. (Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, *Ottawa/Lucas*, OH); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle State Park, *Erie*, PA); P.N.R. (Powdermill Nature Reserve, *Westmoreland*, PA).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

Always a good find away from the Region's larger lakes and reservoirs, a late Red-throated Loon was on L. Somerset, *Somerset*, PA 12 May (LP), and one or 2 lingered at Peace Valley L. and at Nockamixon S.P., *Bucks*, PA through 28 May (AM, m. ob.). A count of 611 Common Loons passing by Lakeshore Reservation, *Lake*, OH 5 Apr far exceeded any previous spring report for the state (JPo). The 122 Horned Grebes listed at Pymatuning L., PA on 26 Mar represented a good count for that area (RFL), and, during a heavy fallout, 500 were found along the Susquehanna R. between W. Fairview and Marysville, PA 30 Mar (DH). Apparently in response to a substantial freeze-over of the Great Lakes, Red-necked Grebes were found in unprecedented numbers nearly throughout the Region. In Ohio, about 200 birds were reported from some 40 counties (*vide RH*), including a high count of 61 at Eastlake Point Park e. of Cleveland 13 Mar (LR). A compilation of Pennsylvania sightings put

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together by Deuane Hoffman (mostly from the PABIRDS Internet site) totaled 911 Red-necked Grebes for the state, with records from 56 counties. Among six reports of Eared Grebe in Ohio were those of late individuals seen off Kelley's I., *Erie* 15 May (LR), and at Funk Bottoms W.A., *Wayne* 14-16 May (E. Schlabach).

Reported from at least a dozen sites scattered about the state, American White Pelicans invaded Ohio in record numbers (*vide RH*). The first bird appeared at Buck Creek S.P., *Warren*, OH 15 Mar; the maximum count at any one site was 7 on L. Erie, off *Erie* 28 Apr (S. Wright); and the last report was of 2 at O.N.W.R. 26 May. Double-crested Cormorants peaked at 2411 off Lakeshore Res., OH 20 Apr (JPo); inland, 251 put down on L. Author, *Butler*, PA 8 Apr (SK). On the lower Delaware R., PA, Great Cormorants peaked at a now-normal 25-30 on 11 Mar (DF). An *Anhinga* was well studied near Turbotville, *Northumberland*, PA 27 Apr (DH, AMc), another passed over the N. Lookout at Hawk Mt. Sanctuary, *Berks*, PA the same day (K. McCarty), and one was at Reading 28 Apr (P. Saenger).

Perhaps reversing the downward trend of recent decades, migrating American and Least Bitterns were a bit more common and widely reported than we have come to

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expect. The first Great Egret of the season had returned to Wade I. in the Susquehanna R. near Harrisburg 15 Mar (S. Lockerman), where there were 193 nests later in the season (*vide DH*), up from 166 nests in 2002. A Tricolored Heron was a rare find at Newell's Run, *Washington*, OH 24 Mar (L. Beardmore, JE). In the Pennsylvania mountains, single Cattle Egrets were unexpected finds at Penn Run, *Indiana* 13 May (MH), and Coudersport, *Potter* 15 May (D. Hauber); a high count of 23 was made at Sandusky, *Erie*, OH 12 May (K. Mock), near Ohio's only known breeding colony. A rather early Glossy Ibis that had returned to the lower Susquehanna R. Valley by 31 Mar (D. Snell, R. Reeder) was the first of many spring sightings there (DH), and 7 *Plegadis* ibis (presumably Glossy) were seen flying near

the Penn-Warner Tract, Bucks, PA 6 Apr (M. Sharp). A White-faced Ibis was confirmed at Pickerel Creek W.A., Sandusky, OH 18-19 May (GL), for one of the few state records.

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

A total of 10 Greater White-fronted Geese was reported from Ohio, including 5 at Camp Dennison, Hamilton 1 Mar (S. Corbo); the only Pennsylvania sighting was of 2 at Nockamixon S.P. 12-15 Mar (BE). The Snow Goose flight was heavy in se. Pennsylvania, where 75,000 were estimated at Middle Creek W.M.A., Lancaster 14 Mar and 80,000 passed through the L. Ontelaunee, Berks area 22-23 Mar (RK). A Ross's Goose on the New R. at Hinton, Summers, WV 8-10 Mar was exceptional for that area (JPh); several were seen in se. Pennsylvania, and one was at Mercer, PA in the nw. part of the state 22-23 Mar (NT). In Ohio, a Ross's was at L. Rockwell, Portage 18-25 Mar (LR), and 2 visited Hueston Woods S.P., Preble/Butler 7-9 Mar (DR, J. Stenger). The provenance of a Whooper Swan documented at Hebron Fish Hatchery, Licking, OH 16 Apr (ph. C. Dusthimer) is uncertain as of press time (*vide* RH). Better counts of Tundra Swans, in a rather lackluster flight, included 350 at Pymatuning L., PA 12 Apr (RFL) and 483 in Lake, OH 12 Mar (JPo).

A productive waterfowl census at O.N.W.R. on 6 Apr included 335 Gadwall, 202 Northern Shovelers, and 493 Green-winged Teal (EP). Ohio and Pennsylvania birders each reported 3 Eurasian Wigeons at widely separated sites. High counts of American Wigeons included 800 in Ottawa, OH 28 Mar and 800 in adjacent Lucas 1 Apr (VF). A female Harlequin Duck obligingly lingered at Eastlake Point Park, OH 2-15 Mar (CH, m. ob.). Surf Scoters, although in small numbers, were well distributed; the maximum count was 7 on the Susquehanna R. at Marysville 29 Mar (DH), and 4 late birds were at P.I.S.P. 7 May (BC). White-winged Scoters were in better-than-average numbers in Pennsylvania and Ohio, with a high of 6 seen at L. Ontelaunee, PA 17 Mar (KK); one was unusual at Neale I., Wood, WV 2 Mar (JE). There were few significant fallouts of Long-tailed ducks in Ohio; in Pennsylvania, however, 168 put down on Keystone Res., Armstrong 26 Mar (MH), and

150 were on the Susquehanna R. near Harrisburg 29 Mar (DH). Other good Harrisburg waterfowl counts were of 1200 Buffleheads and 1500 Red-breasted Mergansers 29 Mar (DH). One thousand Common Mergansers graced Nockamixon S.P., PA 21 Mar (BE).

Good spring Osprey counts at Pennsyl-



This Slate-colored Junco showed up at a feeder in Yardley, Bucks County, Pennsylvania 10 March 2003 (here). A small percentage of Slate-colored Juncos can show distinct white wingbars similar to those in the race *aikeni* (White-winged Junco). Such birds can be identified as Slate-colored by their smaller size, darker gray coloration, especially on the throat, and less white in the tail. Photograph by Rick Mellon.

vania hawkwatch stations included 137 birds at Rose Tree Park, Media, PA, 135 at Tussey Mt., Bedford, and 132 at Allegheny Front, Somerset/Bedford. An ad. Mississippi Kite wandered n. to Bern Twp., Berks, PA 28 Apr (J. Silagy), and an imm. was near L. Ontelaunee 17 May (KK). Bald Eagle numbers continue to increase across the Region, topped by 16 birds visible at one time at Metzger Marsh W.A., Lucas, OH 1 Apr (VF). In an exceptional flight, 97 Red-shouldered and 215 Red-tailed Hawks were listed at Maumee Bay S.P., OH 16 Mar (VF). Early Broad-winged Hawks were in Summers, WV 1 Apr (JPh) and at P.N.R. 3 Apr (ML). A Swainson's Hawk spotted at Tussey Mt. hawkwatch 20 Apr (ML) established what was apparently just the 3rd Pennsylvania spring record. The 199 Golden Eagles that passed Tussey Mt., PA (32 of them on 16 Mar alone) established a record spring total for an e. U.S. hawkwatch (*vide* GG); in yet another exceptional spring count, 124 Golden Eagles passed by Allegheny Front.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

Although mudflats were scarce at many traditional stopover sites for shorebirds, muddy or flooded farm fields offered a suitable alternative habitat for many Charadriiformes, e.g. the 115 Black-bellied

Plovers that found a Lucas, OH field 17 May (DR). High counts of American Golden-Plovers, along their w. Ohio migration corridor, included 560 in Wood 24 Apr (CA) and 360 in Lucas 9 May (DO). Two Piping Plovers at Magee Marsh W.A. 3 May (ph. C. Vest) provided the season's only sighting, as did 2 American Avocets at

Pawing Res., Pawing, OH 29 Apr (D. & M. Dunakin). A very early Greater Yellowlegs was along the Little Miami R., Hamilton, OH 3 Mar (S. Hedeon). A 10 May count of 51 Solitary Sandpipers was exceptional at Haldeman I., Dauphin, PA (S. Bills). Eleven Whimbrels were at Lakeshore Res., OH 26 May (JPo); the only Pennsylvania report was from the Conejohela Flats, Lancaster 25 May (JB). An early Ruddy Turnstone appeared at P.I.S.P. 27-28 Apr (BC), and a count of 4 was exceptional at Pymatuning L., Andover, OH 10 May (M. Buckwalter). The 2 Least Sandpipers at Buck Creek S.P., OH 1 Mar possibly had wintered (C. Buechele), and an early Least was in Ottawa 28 Mar (VF). Good counts of Pectoral Sandpipers included 133

in a flooded field near Shippensburg, Cumberland, PA 1 Apr (DS), and a remarkable 1100 along the Sandusky R. bottoms, Wyandot, OH 11 Apr (*vide* RH).

Dunlin peaked at O.N.W.R. at 2097 on 28 Apr (SZ). The only report of Stilt Sandpiper was of 2 at Funk Bottoms W.A. 17 May (SS, D. Kline). Rainy weather grounded at least 237 Short-billed Dowitchers at various ponds in Berks, PA 26 May (RK), and 21 were at the Penn-Warner Tract, Bucks the same day (DF). Another weather-related fallout was of 92 Wilson's Snipe at Berlin, Somerset, PA 26 Mar (JPa). Six Red-necked Phalaropes were listed from Ohio (*vide* RH), and in an unprecedented flight in Bucks, PA one was at Penn-Warner Tract 9 May (DF), 2 were at Churchville Res. 17 May (*vide* AM), and one was at Peace Valley P. 28 May (AM).

The 30,000 Laughing Gulls at the Penn-Warner Tract 10 May was described as "incredible" for a Pennsylvania site (AM); in Ohio, 3 individual birds were seen at L. Erie between 5 Apr and 18 May (*vide* RH). A Franklin's Gull was in Auglaize, OH 22 Apr (M. Misplon), while one at Yellow Creek S.P., Indiana, PA provided a 3rd county record (MH). The high count for Iceland Gull in Ohio's L. Erie waters was of 8 at Cleveland 1 Mar (JPo); up to 3 were at P.I.S.P. 14-22 Mar (JM), and a late bird was

there 11 May (JM). In Bucks, PA, where they are now widespread, the Lesser Black-backed Gull count peaked at 72 at Nockamixon S.P. 19 Apr (BE); several appeared at various sites along the Pennsylvania/Ohio L. Erie shoreline, and inland singles were at LaDue Res, *Geauga*, OH 30 Mar (LR) and L. Wilhelm, *Mercer*, PA 8 Apr (NT). An imm. Great Black-backed Gull at L. Somerset, *Somerset*, PA 30 Mar provided a 3rd county record (JPa, S. Bastion). An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake at Lakeshore Res., OH 19 Apr (JPo) provided the lone report of the season.

An early Caspian Tern was at Rocky River City Park, *Cuyahoga*, OH 27 Mar (P. Lozano), and the first appeared at P.I.S.P. on the 28th (JM). An Arctic Tern was an unexpected rarity at the Penn-Warner Tract, Bucks, PA where it was documented 26 May (*vide* AM). The first 2 Forster's Terns appeared at Funk Bottoms W.A., OH 5 Apr (SS), and an early bird was on the Monongahela R., Pittsburgh, PA 7 Apr (C. Tague); best count came in at 174 from Conneaut, OH 12 May (CH). A Least Tern was a rare find at Metzger Marsh W.A., OH 18 May (M. Anderson), and continuing the trend of recent years, one was at the Conejohela Flats, *Lancaster*, PA 26 May (JB). Perhaps the larid of the season, however, was the Black Skimmer found on the Conejohela Flats 31 May (JB, m. ob.), one of few state records.

OWLS THROUGH THRUSHES

Undoubtedly underreported from Pennsylvania, a Barn Owl was seen hunting over Buffalo Creek, *Somerset* 22 Apr (JPa); another was in Tincum Twp., Bucks 10 May (DF). Single Long-eared Owls were reported from eight Ohio sites and from at least as many Pennsylvania localities, topped by 2 at P.I.S.P. 20-22 Mar (JM); there were also eight sightings of Short-eared Owls at Presque Isle 16 Mar-21 Apr (LM, BC). Forty-five Common Nighthawks were listed in *Hamilton*, OH 18 May (J. Brown), but the species went unreported over most of the Region. The first Chuck-will's-widows had returned to their *Adams*, Ohio stronghold by 20 Apr (J. Lehman); 6 were there 13 May (*vide* RH).

Olive-sided Flycatchers, first reported 10 May from both Bluestone S.P., *Summers*, WV (JPh) and P.N.R. (M. Wolff, RM, RCL), were frequently reported from across the Region. In general, the *Empidonax* flycatcher migration was very strong. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were widely noted; at P.N.R., 28 were banded 11 May-6 Jun, and 20 were netted at B.S.B.O. 20 May (*vide* RH). Timing of the Willow Flycatcher migration in the Region is poorly understood, but one at Nockamixon S.P., PA 30

Apr (BE) seemed early. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher delighted birders at Williamsport Regional Airport, *Lycoming*, PA 8-9 May (D. Ferry, m. ob.). A nesting pair of Loggerhead Shrikes was in Oliver Twp., *Adams*, OH 13 May+ (P. Whan), and one was near a former nesting site at Plainfield, *Cumberland*, PA 5 May (J. Heller). An early Blue-headed Vireo was in *Summers*, WV 13 Mar (JPh). An exceptional flight of 881 Northern Rough-winged Swallows and 1092 Bank Swallows passed Lakeshore Res., OH 11 May (JPo).

Up to 6 Sedge Wrens were at the Voice of America grasslands, *Butler*, OH 30 Apr+ (M. Busam), and one was at Funk Bottoms W.A. 17-30 May (*vide* RH). An early Blue-gray Gnatcatcher had arrived at Yellow Creek S.P., PA 25 Mar (MH), and a remarkable 126 were listed at Shawnee S.E., OH 15 Apr (RR). In one of few significant daytime fall-outs, 51 Swainson's Thrushes were banded at B.S.B.O. 20 May (*vide* RH). A Townsend's Solitaire at Shaker Lakes 4-14 Mar (L. Deininger, J. West, m. ob.) represented the 6th accepted record for Ohio. A Wood Thrush at Raccoon Creek S.P., *Beaver* 18 Apr (E. Richards) was early for w. Pennsylvania.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

An early Blue-winged Warbler was spotted in *Summers*, WV 15 Apr (JPh). Twenty-three Golden-winged Warblers (*vide* RH) were listed for Ohio, including 3 at Magee Marsh W.A. 10 May. An early Tennessee Warbler was at Magee Marsh 21 Apr (VF), and 15 Orange-crowned Warblers were banded at B.S.B.O. 28 Apr+. The parulid of the season, however, was the Kirtland's Warbler found at Indiana, PA 18 May (MH, C. Guba et al.) on a Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology outing! A Prairie Warbler was early at Enlow Fork, *Greene*, PA 3 Apr (W. Shaffer). An early Cerulean Warbler was at McDough W.A., *Wood*, WV 18 Apr (JE), and good numbers were reported elsewhere over much of the Region, including 59 at Shawnee S.E., OH 15 Apr (RR). The 11 male Prothonotary Warblers heard singing at Killbuck W.A., *Wayne/Holmes*, OH 19 May represented an exceptional count (RR) for the Region. A Swainson's Warbler at Sewickley Heights 9-16 May was a first for *Allegheny*, PA (SK, ph. C. Knoll, m. ob.). Among the more unusual reports was that of an Audubon's Warbler from *Franklin*, OH 4 May (J. McCormac). Top spring banding totals for warblers at P.N.R. (RCL, RM) included 156 Magnolia Warblers (74 is long-term average), 52 American Redstarts, 35 Chestnut-sided Warbler, 7 Northern Parulas, and 2 Yellow Palm Warblers, the latter rare in Pennsylvania w. of the Allegheny Front.

In the Pennsylvania mountains, single Summer Tanagers were well out of range at P.N.R. 9 May (ML) and at Indiana 10 May (J. Dearing). A wintering Clay-colored Sparrow stayed at a Meadville, PA feeder through 6 Apr (RFL), and there was what R. Harlan described as a "mini-invasion" of 7 birds in Ohio, plus at least as many in Pennsylvania; in West Virginia, a Clay-colored returned to a known breeding site in Canaan Valley for the 3rd year in a row (*vide* GF). A Lark Sparrow was a rare and unexpected migrant in *Sandusky*, OH 27 Apr (GL), as was one at P.I.S.P. 25 May (JM, BC). Another rarity was the Harris's Sparrow that visited a feeder in Kennett Square, *Chester*, PA 4 May (S. Beach). In a massive flight, 3613 Lapland Longspurs (in 62 groups) were counted headed sw. along the Maumee R., *Lucas/Wood*, OH 18 Mar (CA); e. of this flyway, a count of 109 was exceptional at P.I.S.P. 25 May (BC).

An early (or wintering?) Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in *Stark*, OH 26 Mar (E. Snively), and one at Ligonier 19 Apr was early for the Pennsylvania mountains (R. Shaw). An apparent hybrid Rose-breasted x Black-headed Grosbeak was netted, photographed, and released unbanded at P.N.R. 2 May (RM, RCL). An Indigo Bunting that had spent part of the winter at a feeding station in Miami Hts., *Hamilton*, OH remained through 9 Mar (N. Keller). A wintering Painted Bunting at Lower Makefield Twp., Bucks, PA was last seen 22 Apr (*vide* AM). A Baltimore Oriole at Mt. Jackson, *Lawrence*, PA 15 Apr was early (B. Dean); best count was of 164 orioles passing Lakeshore Res. 10 May (JPo). The only n. finches listed by contributors were a few widely scattered Pine Siskins, plus a single Red Crossbill at Stony Cr. Valley, *Dauphin*, PA 27 Apr (DH, AMc).

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