



### Matthew L. Holder

As the lingering wintering birds extended their stay into the spring period, returning migrants began to arrive in Ontario on schedule, only to have winter-like conditions hit the province again in April. A shift to seasonal temperatures in late April accelerated the rate of migrant arrival, and a number of record-early species were noted in certain regions. Weather conditions on May 15 created fallouts in southern Ontario, leading to an exciting situation for many birders who were able to take the time mid-week to find the large numbers of landbirds seeking shelter. Interesting vagrants included Western Grebe, Snowy Plover, Black-necked Stilt, Sprague's Pipit, Townsend's Warbler, and Cassin's Sparrow.

Abbreviations: L.P.B.O. (Long Point B.O., *Norfolk*); N.P.H. (Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch, *Niagara*); P. E. Pt. (Prince Edward Pt., *Prince Edward*); P.P.B.A. (Point Pelee Birding Area; Point Pelee N.P. and environs, *Essex*); s.l. (sewage lagoons); T.C.B.O. (Thunder Cape B.O., *Thunder Bay*). Place names in italics refer to districts and regional municipalities as well as to counties.

### WATERFOWL THROUGH IBISES

It was another good spring for Greater White-fronted Geese, with 4 at Long Pt., *Norfolk* 16 Mar–Apr (DS), 2 near Bourget, *Prescott & Russell* 25 Mar (*vide* CL), and one in Ottawa 26–27 Apr (TB). However, truly remarkable were the 35 birds at St. Clair N.W.A., *Chatham-Kent* 23 Mar (*vide* JGH), surpassed by the 37 at St. Joseph I., *Algoma* 27–28 Mar (BK), with 19 of this flock found to the n. at Echo Bay 1–3 Apr (KZ). Single Ross's Geese were at Long Pt., *Norfolk* 2 Mar–Apr (RR), near St. Isadore, *Prescott & Russell* 21 Apr (BY), and near Echo Bay, *Algoma* 1–3 Apr (KZ), the latter bird prob-

ably from the flock of 3 at nearby St. Joseph I. 28 Mar (KM, KZ). Alfred, *Prescott & Russell* hosted 2 Ross's Geese 7–9 May (JB), then 4 on 12 May (JB). A strong flight of Brant during May peaked with 5500 at Kingston, *Frontenac* 22 May (KFN). Single Eurasian Wigeons were at Big Cr., *Norfolk* 20–21 Mar (S&DJ), Port Rowan, *Norfolk* 23 Mar (ME), Reesor Pond, York 21 Apr (SLo), Cranberry Marsh, *Durham* 21 Apr (GG), Amherst I., *Frontenac* 21 Apr–17 May (J&BM et al.), and Ripley s.l., *Bruce* 29–30 Apr (JT). A single male King Eider was at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 22–31 Mar (AW), and perhaps a different bird flew past the Tip 15 May (RC, KAM et al.). The usual smattering of Harlequin Ducks lingered from the winter at various s. Ontario locales, but 2 at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 7 May (JMT, RGT, MH) were noteworthy. Record early for Algonquin P.P., Nipissing were 4 Surf Scoters at L. of Two Rivers 1 May (KC, CDJ, JPe). Lingered Barrow's Goldeneyes were at Remic Rapids, Ottawa, and Presqu'île P.P., *Northumberland* through 11 Mar and at Strathcona Park, Ottawa 20 Mar, and a female was at P. E. Pt. 24 Mar (JHE, VPM, RDW et al.). A male Ruddy Duck at Emo s.l. 26 Apr (DHE) was rare for *Rainy River*.

Long Pt.'s first ever Pacific Loon was at Breakwater 19 & 21 May (EH, FIN), and an imm. was at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 30 May (BRH, LR). A good number of Eared Grebes was noted around the province, with as many as 13 observations and a total of four observations at the Tip of Pt. Pelee in Apr, including 2 there 14 Apr (PDP et al.). The first was at Humber Bay, Toronto 15 Mar (JS, JF) followed by one at Grimsby s.l., *Niagara* 30 Mar–30 Apr (CEE, DRD) for the area's earliest record. Other singles were at Ward's I., Toronto 9 Apr (NMu, MLV, EO), Long Pt. 17 Apr (LPBO), Colonel Samuel Smith Park, Toronto 20 Apr (NM), Townsend s.l., *Haldimand* 21 Apr (KGB, MBu et al.), Grand Bend s.l., *Lambton* 15 May (*vide* AR), and Emo s.l. and *Rainy River* s.l. in *Rainy River* 18 May (DHE). A Western Grebe was at Leslie Street Spit, Toronto 9 Mar–8 Apr (RL, GC), and likely a 2nd bird was off Bronte, *Halton* 5–9 Apr (MWJ). Single American White Pelicans were at Cook's Bay, York 9–11 May (AD), London, *Middlesex* 21–22 May (BMc), and Mitchell s.l., *Perth* 30 May (NK, GM). Two were at Rondeau P.P., *Chatham-Kent* 19–25 May (m.ob.), and 3 were at L. Nipissing, *Nipissing* 27–30 May (TF).

A record-early Least Bittern for Hamilton was at Hamilton Mt. 26 Apr (PS et al.), and one was n. to North Bay, *Nipissing* 22 May (NNC). An ad. Little Blue Heron was at Toronto 20 Apr (ph. GJ et al.), and another at St. Catherine's, *Niagara* 13–16 May (S. Tay-

lor). A Green Heron was photographed at Silver Harbour C.A., *Thunder Bay* 18 May (MRi), and a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was in Ottawa 9 Apr (MRo). An unidentified ibis was at Hillman Marsh, *Essex* 29 Apr (*vide* AW), and single Glossy Ibis were at Collingwood, *Simcoe* 12–15 May (ph. D&JM), Nepean, *Ottawa* 16 May (*vide* CL), and Casselman s.l., *Prescott & Russell* 20 May (BB, CL et al.), the latter moving to Winchester s.l., *Storont-Dundas-Glengarry* 23 May (DBt, JR).

### VULTURES THROUGH SANDPIPERS

A Black Vulture was at Long Pt. 29–30 Apr (FIN, SAM), and another was Pt. Pelee 3 May (KGB et al.). An Osprey at Cayuga, *Haldimand* 17 Mar was record early for the area (L&AT). An imm. Mississippi Kite was at Pt. Pelee N.P. 11–18 May (MDF, SF, EAS). Very rare in the e., 2 apparently different dark-morph Broad-winged Hawks were noted in Apr: a bird in second-basic plumage (in its 3rd calendar year) at Beamer C.A., *Niagara* 24 Apr (ph., RC, NPH), and a juv. (in its 2nd calendar year) at Burlington, *Halton* 26 Apr (TT). Away from the more traditional wintering areas in cen. Ontario, a migrant Golden Eagle was at Pt. Pelee 17 Mar (IMR).

A Yellow Rail was heard at Long Point P.P., *Norfolk* 24 May (MDB), and remarkably, a King Rail was reported from Pumpkin Marsh, *Algoma* 29–30 May (KZ). A Sora heard in a marsh along Hwy. 60 on 29 Apr (BMD) was record early for Algonquin P.P. Several observations of migrating released Whooping Cranes were made at Wheatley, *Chatham-Kent* 23 Mar (GTH), in the London and Long Pt. areas in Apr (TBo, P&SH; JP, SAM), and in Nepean, *Ottawa* 26 May (TB, G&HS). A high count of 3832 Black-bellied Plovers was noted near Merlin, *Chatham-Kent* 27 May (AW), while the maximum count for American Golden-Plover near Merlin was 320 on 8 May (AW). A Snowy Plover lingered at Pelee I., *Essex* 29 May–1 Jun (ph. ACP et al.), and a female Black-necked Stilt stayed for just one day at Hillman Marsh, *Essex* 22 May (ph. STP, MJSi). Three American Avocets were at SE and SW Hillman Marsh 5 May (MK, MAK), then at NW Hillman Marsh 16 May (*vide* AW). Single avocets were at Grand Bend s.l., *Lambton* 10 May (RT) and Leslie Street Spit, Toronto 22 May (DD). Single Willets were reported from *Durham*, *Niagara* and as far e. as Alfred, *Prescott & Russell* (JB) in May, but flocks were reported in Apr, the largest being 20 near Pt. Pelee 28 Apr (STP, IMR, GBM). Large numbers of Whimbrels were reported from w. L. Ontario during May, but especially noteworthy was a white-rumped bird (either the nominate subspecies or *variegatus*) on

Amherst I., *Frontenac* 22 May (BR). Away from sw. Ontario, single Marbled Godwits were at Amherst I. 1-5 May (JHE, VPM et al.), St Isadore, *Prescott & Russell* 20-25 May (JB, CB) and Alfred, *Prescott & Russell* 23 May (*fide* CL). Pt. Pelee hosted a late Purple Sandpiper 15 May (BRH, EWH) and a male Ruff 24 May (AW, GLS, SES).

## GULLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Single Laughing Gulls were near Leamington, *Essex* 22 Mar (AW), at Bronte harbor, *Halton* 7 May (MWJ), at Long Pt. 16-19 May (SAM, FIN, EH et al.), near Wheatley Harbour, *Chatham-Kent* 19 May (BRH, GTH), and at Pt. Pelee 23 May (BRH, LR). In *Northumberland*, Cobourg's bird of the spring was a long-staying Laughing Gull at the harbor, 4 Mar-21 May (KN). Two were at Pelee I. 25 & 27 May (ACP) and at Black Willow Beach, *Essex* 26 May (STP, CG). A Franklin's Gull was at Wheatley Harbour 2 May (DSH, IS). A rare melanistic imm. Bonaparte's Gull was at Pt. Pelee 9 May (KAM). An apparent Herring Gull × Great Black-backed Gull hybrid was at Wheatley Harbour 27 Apr (AW), and up to 2 Great Black-backed Gulls were at Thunder Bay 30 Apr-5 May (GGo, KW, AHa). A Caspian Tern at Hamilton 28 Mar (RZD) marked a record-early arrival for the area.

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was n. to Bala, *Muskoka* 26 May (D&NM). An exciting but saddening roadkill was a Barn Owl found near Wheatley, *Chatham-Kent* 16 Apr (*fide* PAW). A perched Chuck-will's-widow was found at Long Point P.P., *Norfolk* 12 May (JG), and another was at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 13-14 May (DWL, GML). The Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Hamilton Mt. 11 Apr (*fide* CC) was record early for Hamilton. Both very rare woodpeckers in *Thunder Bay*, a Red-headed Woodpecker visited a Pine Bay feeder 5-9 May (ph. S&RI), and single Red-bellied Woodpeckers were at Marathon 10 May (PC) and T.C.B.O. 18 May (AH, RG, MR). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was record early at Algonquin P.P. 30 Apr (ADo, RGT). Algonquin reported the largest irruption of American Three-toed Woodpeckers ever seen in the park this past winter, with the last observation on 12 May (WP).

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

It was a poor spring for rare flycatchers, with the usual Acadian Flycatchers seen on migration at s. Ontario locations and a Western Kingbird at Hurkett, *Thunder Bay* 22 May (BMo). A Black-billed Magpie associating with a flock of Blue Jays was at Cabot Head B.O., *Bruce* 14 May (TC, RS, DR et al.) but did not

linger for anyone else to spot this rare visitor to s. Ontario. At P. E. Pt., 22 Apr brought peaks of 110 Brown Creepers, 110 Golden-crowned Kinglets, and 400 Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*fide* RTS). The wintering Varied Thrush at Selkirk P.P., *Haldimand* remained through 3 Mar (JH), and another was at Port Britain, *Northumberland* 29 Apr (GL). Brown Thrashers at Thunder Bay 6 May (FJ) and Pine Bay (S&RI) were rare sights in *Thunder Bay*.

It was a noteworthy spring for rare warblers, with many migrant overshoots and a few w. vagrants. Observers at Thunder Cape banded a Golden-winged Warbler 8 May (JW) and observed another 12 May (T.C.B.O.). Rare in Ontario, an Audubon's Warbler was at Presqu'île P.P., *Northumberland* 27 & 30 Apr (MB). The rarest warbler of the spring was an ad. male **Townsend's Warbler** at Rondeau P.P., *Chatham-Kent* 5 May (GS). The first Yellow-throated Warbler of the spring was identified as *dominica* at Stoney Creek, *Hamilton* 26-30 Apr (KDi). Others, of which at least some were identified as *albilora*, were at Long Pt., *Norfolk* (RR, SAM) and Rondeau P.P., *Chatham-Kent* (SL et al.), both 9 May, at Leslie Street Spit, Toronto 11 May (ph. DD), at Pt. Pelee N.P. 15 May (CH, RM, SM et al.), and n. to Thunder Cape, *Thunder Bay* 19 May (AH, RG, MR). A Pine Warbler at Hamilton 5 Apr was record early for the Region (BSC), and 2 Palm Warblers at Bronte, *Halton* 6 Apr (MC, JH) were also record early for the Hamilton area. An imm. female Kirtland's Warbler was at Pt. Pelee 14 May (RLW, KAM), followed by a male there 21-23 May (GBM); an imm. male Kirtland's was at Rondeau P.P., *Chatham-Kent* 18 May (BAM). A Bay-breasted Warbler at Cauliflower L. 6 May (DTo) was record early for Algonquin P.P. Outside of their usual occurrence in the spring, Prothonotary Warblers appeared at Tobermory, *Bruce* 15 May (M&GW) and Ottawa 28-30 May (BRo). A total of 7 Worm-eating Warblers was tallied in the P.P.B.A. in May (m.ob.), with the only other one reported occurring at Long Pt. 9 May (JG). North of its usual range in the province, a Louisiana Waterthrush was at Komoka, *Middlesex* 18 May (BM). Within Pt. Pelee N.P., *Essex*, 11 Kentucky Warblers were noted from 23 Apr-24 May (m.ob.). Elsewhere, single Kentucky Warblers were at Rondeau P.P., *Chatham-Kent* 30 Apr (DBr, MO) and 22 May (JL), at P. E. Pt. 9 (RTS et al.) & 19 May (RTS et al.), at Cootes Paradise, *Hamilton* 17 May (RZD, CEE), and at the Tip of Long Pt., *Norfolk* 27-28 May (ph. SAM). One of the more interesting observations of the spring was a possible hybrid warbler at Fanshawe Lake C.A.,

*Middlesex* 21 May (JMcG), exhibiting characteristics of both Mourning Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. It was vocalizing like a Common Yellowthroat but looked more like a Mourning Warbler, except for its whitish throat and upper breast. Three Hooded Warblers were at P. E. Pt. 11-23 May (m.ob.), and up to 5 Yellow-breasted Chats were there 9-19 May (DO).

Seven Summer Tanagers were at Rondeau P.P., *Chatham-Kent* during May (m.ob.), and 10 were at Pt. Pelee N.P. 4-19 May (m.ob.), including one at Tilden's Woods eating honeybees from a hive, a behavior regularly observed in the park (STP, DK, KK). Elsewhere, Summer Tanagers were at P. E. Pt. 13 & 23 May (*fide* RTS), Long Pt. P.P., *Norfolk* 16 & 26 May (RR), Oungah, *Chatham-Kent* 18 May (AVE), and High Park, Toronto 25 May (SMF).

The Eastern Towhee at Westover 14 Mar (BNC) represented *Hamilton's* earliest record. A highlight of the spring was a Cassin's Sparrow banded and photographed at the Tip of Long Pt., *Norfolk* 30 May (FIN, DRB), Long Pt.'s 2nd ever. Single Lark Sparrows were at Sturgeon Cr., *Essex* 28 Apr (JEB, DWB), at the Tip of Pt. Pelee 11 May (JBL), and at Colonel Samuel Smith Park, Toronto 21 May (WER). The Lark Sparrow near Walsingham, *Norfolk* 12 May grew to 2 singing birds into Jun (CEs, m.ob.). The Lark Bunting at Ruthven, *Essex* 9-10 May (HB, MBr) was photographed, as was the male Lark Bunting way to the n. in Minnetaki, *Kenora* 25 May (CE). The Savannah Sparrow at Beamsville, *Niagara* 13 Mar (BNC) provided an early record for the area. A total of 8 Henslow's Sparrows in Point Pelee N.P. was a great showing for this species, with the earliest ever seen 17 Mar (ACP). Away from Pt. Pelee, another was at Concession Road A, *Norfolk* 25 Apr (*fide* SAM). A Le Conte's Sparrow was record early at Erieau, *Chatham-Kent* 10 Mar (BAM). Three were at Pt. Pelee during the spring (m.ob.), another was at Toronto Island Airport 10 May (DB, JPs), and one was at Long Pt. 24 May (LPBO). Single Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were at Long Pt. 8 May (L.P.B.O.), at Sturgeon Cr., *Essex* 16 May (STP), and at Pt. Pelee N.P. 18 (HTO) & 22 May (BRH, LR). The Harris's Sparrow visiting a feeder near Bloomfield, *Prince Edward* remained until at least 25 Apr (NF); another was at Long Pt. P.P., *Norfolk* 28-29 Apr (K&RB).

The ad. male Northern Cardinal singing at Beaver Pond Trail 15 May (DA) was both very rare for Algonquin P.P., *Nipissing* and record early. Blue Grosbeaks were at Emsdale, *Parry Sound* 2-4 May (KD), Hungry Hollow, *Middlesex* 9-10 May (JPC), Pelee I., *Essex* 11 May

(RTy, DP), and Longlac, *Thunder Bay* 23 May (FJ). Single Dickcissels were at Pt. Pelee N.P. 15 (MJS, WW) & 27 May (RP, CS, JR), and an imm. male was banded and observed at Long Pt., *Norfolk* 26-29 May (TTH, SAM). A strong flight of Rusty Blackbirds at P. E. Pt. mid-Mar–late Apr peaked at 185 on 29 Apr (KFN).

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## Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley



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March began with a quick thaw of the late-winter snows of February. This melting of an especially thick snow pack left widespread agricultural flooding throughout the western till plains into early April, providing a very hospitable environment for migrant waterfowl. Late March was marked, as it has been normally of late, with dramatic warmth from southern climes. This brought record arrival dates for a few species, but the effect was neither so pervasive nor so pronounced as in previous years. The warm

spell was replaced by a dramatic return to winter in early April. In the east, mid-April was marked by a severe coastal storm, and its attendant heavy precipitation had immediate impacts on birds and birding. In the west, the inclement weather held up migration for weeks, allowing for a tremendous release of migrants the 23-24 April that was marked by record concentrations and a few rarities. Wave migration, with strong and frequent fallouts, was the norm into May, even as the month grew drier than normal. This led to some remarkable tallies of Neotropical migrants for mist-netting operations. For all its ups and downs, this was a fairly typical spring migration, despite the pendulum swings of weather and migratory movements. A first state record for West Virginia came in the form of Red Knot. Apart from lingering rarities from the winter season, the outstanding find had to be the Yellow-billed Loon in Pennsylvania, a state first. And finally, acceptance of a Red-naped Sapsucker and White-throated Swift from spring 2006 added to the Ohio state list.

**Abbreviations:** B.E.S.P. (Bald Eagle S.P., Centre, PA); B.S.B.O. (Black Swamp B. O., OH); B.C.S.P. (Buck Creek S.P., Clark, OH); C.F. Conejohela Flats, Lancaster, PA); Conneaut (Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula, OH); C.C.S.P. (Caesar Creek S.P., Warren/Greene, OH); C.FR. (Clear Fork Res., Richland/Morrow, OH); G.L.R. (Green Lane Res., Montgomery, PA); Green Bottom (Green Bottom W.M.A., Cabell/Mason, WV); Headlands (Headlands Beach S.P. & N.P., Lake, OH); Hoover (Hoover Res., Delaware/Franklin, OH); H.W.S.P. (Houston Woods S.P., Preble/Butler, OH); I.B.A. (Important Bird Area); Killbuck (Killbuck Marsh W.M.A., Wayne/Holmes, OH); Longbrakes (Longbrake Wetlands, Hardin, OH); L.N. (L. Nockamixon, Bucks, PA); L.O. (L. Ontelaunee, Berks, PA); M.C.W.M.A. (Middle Creek W.M.A., Lancaster/Lebanon, PA); Magee (Magee Marsh W.M.A., Lucas/Ottawa, OH); Metzger (Metzger Marsh W.A., Lucas, OH); M.W.W. (Miami Whitewater Wetlands, Hamilton, OH); Ottawa (Ottawa N.W.R., Lucas/Ottawa, OH); P.M.C. (Pennsylvania Migration Count; 12 May); P.W.T. (Penn Warner