

## REGIONAL REPORTS

The Spring Migration

April 1, 1971 to May 31, 1971

### NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION / Davis W. Finch

This was by all accounts a late season, and as such quite unlike last spring. There were a few early eye-openers in the first week or so of April, then almost nothing until a fairly good wave



reached s. New England on May 12, as evidenced by the best warblers of the season at Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, R.I. (CW), and 264 birds banded in Massachusetts at M.B.O., the highest one day total of the spring (RAN). The final big push, however, was delayed until the period May 22-27. On May 22, following the passage of a cold front, very large numbers of passerine migrants were reported landing in fog on fishing boats off the coast of e. Maine between Stonington and Cutler (WCT). On the same date a strong wave was apparent in the Bangor region (EVT) and to a lesser extent farther south in York Co. (DJA & DWF). Tuesday, May 25 brought the season's best birding to New London Co., Conn. (GB, fide RCD), a good warbler wave to Providence (CW), and "the best day ever" [or worst?—Ed.] (HC, BRK & HTW) to the 52-story Prudential Center in Boston, where a long list included, dead or alive, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Philadelphia Vireo, Orange-crowned (2), Kentucky, Cerulean and Worm-eating Warblers, and 9 Lincoln's Sparrows. Banding totals at M.B.O. for May 25-26-27 were 181, 183, 185, the season's highest after May 12; May 26 was considered the best day in Essex County, Mass. at Marblehead (PSM) and Plum I. (CAG & WRP), and on May 27 a party of three found 101 species

on Brier I., N.S. (RRA, DWF, ELM). Finally, the fact that birds are still migrating even as late as mid-June was demonstrated this year by M.B.O. banding figures. The usual Maine records were unavailable for this report.

**GREBES, TUBENOSSES**—In the Merrimack R. Valley of New Hampshire, a well-defined movement of grebes was apparent Apr. 25, when 29 Red-necked Grebes and 119 Horned Grebes were counted in the Concord area (TR, et al., fide EWP), and 7 Red-necked and 63 Horned were found somewhat farther north in Franklin (KCE, et al., fide EWP). These counts are higher than normal. A subadult Yellow-nosed Albatross was identified under very favorable circumstances at Bird I. in Buzzards Bay, Mass. May 7 (ICTN, et al.). It was separated from possible Black-browed Albatross by the black-bordered white underwing and the dark bill with pink dorsal ridge and pink tip. This species has been collected or photographed four times in the Northeast, and there are several sight reports from the Gulf of Maine and the Bay of Fundy, but there is no previous record for Massachusetts. "Bluenose" Ferry crossings during April yielded Fulmar counts of 3 on the 4th (RWS, et al.) and 6 on the 23rd (WCT), the latter birds being somewhat late. Single Manx Shearwaters were seen along the Rhode Island coast at Pt. Judith May 8 (KKB, DLK, FP & CW) and off the Beavertail, Jamestown I., May 16 & 30 (MD et al., fide SSD). A Wilson's Petrel at Sable I., N.S. May 2 (JB fide IAMcL) was well in advance of the usual late May appearance of these birds off the New England coast.

**HERONS, IBISES**—As spring migrants, Green Herons seem increasingly frequent in Nova Scotia, where this year 10 individuals were found at 5 localities (v.o., fide PRD). Little Blue Herons were more numerous than usual this season: in the two-month period, 10 birds, all adults, were found at 4 localities in coastal New Hampshire (v.o., fide EWP) and 18 birds at 9 localities in Massachusetts (v.o., fide RPE). Louisiana Herons, formerly very rare anywhere in the Region, have become, momentarily at least, almost commonplace, with April and May totals for the last 3 years being 7, 12 and 13+. This year's birds were 4+ in e. Connecticut, 1 in Rhode Island, 6+ in Massachusetts, and 2 single birds found on the New Hampshire coast at Hampton, Apr. 30 (ACB et al., fide EWP) and Rye, May 5 (EWP & LGP). The most impressive spring flight, however, was that of Glossy Ibises which reached Nova Scotia (5 birds at 4 localities), Prince Edward I. (2 birds

at 1 locality), and New Brunswick (at least 25 birds at 10 localities). Comparably large numbers are said to have occurred in Maine, though the details are not at hand. Six birds were seen at 4 localities in New Hampshire, at least 217 birds at 16 localities in Massachusetts, and 37 at 9 localities in Rhode Island. It is still unclear what becomes of these northern wanderers after late spring, when most seem to vanish.

**WATERFOWL**—The season's only Whistling Swans were 1 at Trustum Pond in Kingstown, R.I., Apr. 2, and 4 on immediately adjacent Card's Pond, Apr. 12 (DW, fide SSD). Single adult Blue Geese were observed on the New Hampshire coast at Seabrook, Apr. 3 (DWF) and at Plum I, Mass., Apr. 28–May 6 (CAG, WRP et al.). Gadwalls north of Massachusetts are quite rare: this spring single birds were seen in New Brunswick at Southern Head Beach, Grand Manan Apr. 9 (Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Willcox, fide DSC) and in New Hampshire at Newington on Great Bay, Apr. 11 (RWS, et al. fide EWP). A ♂ Eur. Widgeon at Bloomfield, Kings Co., N.B. May 23 (CLJ, fide DSC) was unique in the Region. The Com. Teal at Plum I, Mass., noted in the previous report, remained there through Apr. 24 (GW, fide RPE), another of these birds in Nova Scotia at Glace Bay Sanctuary, Apr. 3, was a first record for Cape Breton (JJO'C, FMack & BR, fide WPN), and 2 other ♂♂ were found together in New Brunswick at Saints' Rest Marsh in Saint John West Apr. 10 (CLJ & JGW, fide DSC). Following last winter's occurrence of large numbers of King Eiders, small groups of these birds lingered at various localities along the coast. In Massachusetts there were 12 at Bird I. May 21 (ICTN) and at the end of the month there were 6 at Acoaxet, 2 at Chatham, 2 at Manomet, and 4 at Plum I. that remained into June (v.o., fide RPE). In New Hampshire the flock at Hampton numbered 11 as late as Apr. 17 (KCE, et al., fide EWP), and the wintering bird at Laconia remained through May 15 (HCA & RWS, fide EWP). In New Brunswick at least 9 individuals occurred at 5 localities in the period Mar. 21–May 16 (v.o., fide DSC). This is many more King Eiders than normally occur there.

**VULTURES, HAWKS, GALLINULE**—Thirteen Turkey Vultures were found in 8 localities in New Hampshire, Mar. 28–May 29 (v.o., fide EWP), and other single birds wandered farther to York, Me., Apr. 4 (DWF) and Brier I., N.S., May 29 (RRA, DWF, ELM). A Rough-legged Hawk at West Newbury, Mass. May 22 was very late (CAG & WRP). Peregrine Falcon reports numbered only 6 this spring, 1 in Rhode Island, 4 in Massachusetts, and 1 in New Hampshire. Spring figures for 1969 and 1970 were 21 and 9, respectively. As last spring, the Region's only Purple Gallinule occurred in Nova Scotia, at Sable I. in the period June 10–16 (WTS & John Shaw, fide IAMcL).

**SHOREBIRDS**—Am. Oystercatchers returned to their Massachusetts breeding sites, presumably

during April. One or 2 were found at Cape Poge on Chappaquiddick I., Martha's Vineyard, May 1 (CAG & WRP) and 2 were found May 7 at Monomoy, where a nest containing 2 cracked eggs was discovered May 28 (WB, fide RPE). Other single Am. Oystercatchers were seen at Beverly, Mass. May 2 (Roy E. Kimball, fide RPE) and S. Wellfleet, Cape Cod, May 31 (Robert Stymeist, fide RPE), but more significant was a pair found breeding for the first time on Tuckernuck I., Nantucket, where a nest with 3 eggs was discovered June 2 by Edith Andrews. A rather early Am. Golden Plover was seen on Cape Cod at Morris I. in Chatham, Apr. 4 (WB, fide RPE) and another appeared near McGowan's Corner, Sunbury Co., N.B., Apr. 24 (Nettie Moore, Theresa Pearce, et al., fide DSC). The species is quite scarce as a spring migrant in the Maritimes. Several notable counts of Willets in the relatively Willet-free zone between New York and Nova Scotia were 22 at Nantucket Apr. 28 (EA), 19 on Cape Cod at Yarmouth Beach, May 1 (KH, fide RAN), and on the same day on Martha's Vineyard, 15 at Chappaquiddick and 20 at Squibnocket (CAG & WRP). A W. Sandpiper in bright rusty breeding plumage was easily identified in a flock of about 200 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Mary's Point near Harvey, Albert Co., N.B. June 13 (DSC, Mary Majka, et al.). The bird's somewhat larger size and long, drooped bill were also apparent. On the East Coast north to Massachusetts, this species is quite rare as a spring migrant, and was previously unknown as such in the Maritimes. With great regularity, Ruffs appeared at their favored localities in Massachusetts. One or perhaps 2 Reeves were seen at Rowley, Apr. 4 & 25 (Donald Alexander, et al., fide RPE), a Ruff was at Newburyport, Apr. 28–30 (Pat Garrey, PA, RAF, et al.), and a Reeve was there May 7–8 (DWF, et al.). In addition, a Reeve was seen at Nauset, on May 17 (WB, fide RPE) and a Ruff was seen at Bolton, Worcester Co., Apr. 19–20 (DHC, et al.), an unusual inland occurrence. In the same state, an Am. Avocet at M.B.O. May 18 (PKD, et al., fide RAN) was quite unusual, there being hardly any other spring records in the Region. A Black-necked Stilt was seen at Hammonasset State Park in Madison, Conn. May 28 (Wilford J. Schultz, et al.). Previously in the state there had been only two or at most three sight records. The 2 Wilson's Phalaropes reported in the Region were both inland, a ♀ at South Windsor, Conn., May 8–10 (PJD, et al.), this being the species third consecutive spring occurrence in the Hartford area, and a ♂ at Durham, N.H., May 20–21 (JJB, CC, et al., fide EWP).

**JAEGER, GULLS, TERNS**—A Pomarine Jaeger on the beach at Sable I., N.S., May 23 (DAW, fide IAMcL) was unusual there. A few white-winged gulls lingered in the Region, the later being single Glaucous Gulls at Rye, N.H., May 9 (DJA, et al.) and at Seal I., N.S., May 22 (BKD, fide PRD). An Iceland Gull was still present at Plum I.,

Mass. as late as May 23 (BGB, et al., fide RPE), 2 Icelanders were at Brier I., N.S., May 27-29 (ELM, et al.), and an even later one remained at Sable I. until June 14 (IAMcL). The Mew Gull mentioned in the previous report was last seen at Newburyport, Mass. Apr. 30 (PA & RAF, fide RPE). Two Little Gulls were found on Cape Cod at Chatham, May 30-31 (HWH, fide RPE). The only Caspian Terns reported were single birds at Moonstone Beach in Kingstown, R.I., May 22 (DW, fide SSD) and on Cape Breton at Dingwall, Victoria Co., also on May 22 (WPN, FMack, BR, et al.). The species is quite rare in Nova Scotia. A **White-winged Black Tern** was present at McGowan's Corner, N.B., May 23-26 (PAP, et al., photographed). The bird was rediscovered in early July, and details will follow in the next report.

**CUCKOOS, OWL, GOATSUCKERS**—Two Yellow-billed Cuckoos at Sable I. in the period June 10-16 (IAMcL, et al.) were far off course. The northernmost Barn Owl to occur in recent years was discovered on an unstated date this spring in a factory at Amherst, N.S. It was captured, photographed and released (Evelyn Lowerison, A.D. Smith, et al., fide PRD). Two Chuck-will's-widows reached Massachusetts, a ♀ banded at M.B.O., May 26 (RAN), and a bird heard again as last summer at Chappaquiddick I., Martha's Vineyard, May 29-30 (EMS, fide RPE).

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS**—W. Kingbirds are virtually unknown as spring migrants in the Northeast, yet this year there were 3 reliable reports, as follows: 1 at Sable I., N.S. on the surprising date of Apr. 10 (DAW, fide IAMcL), 1 at Plum I., Mass., May 14-15 (RAF, PSM, et al.), and 1 at Atwood's Brook, just west of Barrington Passage, Shelburne Co., N.S., June 5 (Marie Henry, Dr. & Mrs. J. Roswell Gallagher, et al.). A very early nest of *E. Phoebes* containing 1 egg was discovered on Apr. 2 in Middleboro, Mass., where 2 birds of this species wintered (Clyde Gurney, fide RPE). A typically late migration of Empidonaces was apparent this spring from banding figures at M.B.O., where 15 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers and 52 Traill's Flycatchers were netted in the period May 27-June 12 (RAN). Even more interesting, and perplexing, were 4 Acadian Flycatchers netted there June 3, 6, 7 and 8, two of which were preserved as specimens. The Region's only known breeding Acadians had returned to Devil's Hopyard State Park in East Haddam, Conn. by May 22 (Mr. & Mrs. KB, fide RCD). The long-term northeastward expansion of Rough-winged Swallows was evident this spring in Nova Scotia, where hitherto the species had been known only as a Sable I. vagrant. Sable I. did record Rough-wings, 2 on May 8 and "singles May 13-16" (JB, WTS, DAW, fide IAMcL), but more occurred along the s.w. shore of the province, 1 as early as Mar. 17 at Cape Sable, where another was seen May 19 (Mr. & Mrs. SS, fide PRD). In addition, a single bird was seen at Seal I., May 16 (ELM, IAMcL, et al.) and May 22-24 (BKD,

et al.), and a series of sightings on lower Digby Neck and Brier I., May 26-28 probably involved no fewer than 5 birds (2 photographed, RRA, DWF, DWL, ELM). By collecting a **Cave Swallow** on May 16 at Seal I., Ian McLaren added another chapter to the remarkable story of this species in Nova Scotia, briefly outlined here: 9 appeared on Sable I., May 17, 1968, and 1 was picked up dead there on June 21, later determined as the West Indian race. In 1969, a series of positive sight records at Sable I. involved at least 3 birds, June 14-30 (see AFN 22:589; AFN 23:22; AFN 24:18). This year's record should convince everyone that spring migrant Cliff Swallows along the coast deserve a second look. Cave Swallows are slightly smaller, with unmarked buffy throat, dark forehead, and darker chestnut rump patch.

**CROWS, WRENS, THRASHER, THRUSHES**—Four Fish Crows at Kingston Pond, Rockingham Co., N.H. Apr. 2 were the first to be found in the state (DWF). They were seen by many other observers through at least May 20 (fide EWP). A Long-billed Marsh Wren, a rarity in Nova Scotia, was in song at Seal I., May 16 (RRA, IAMcL & ELM), and even rarer was a **Short-billed Marsh Wren**, believed to be a second provincial record, closely observed in song at Brier I., May 26 (RRA, DWF & ELM). The only other Short-billed Marsh Wren this spring was found at Star I., Isles of Shoals, N.H., June 6 (PSM, RWS, et al.). A Brown Thrasher appeared at Sable I. on the early date of Apr. 2 (DAW, fide IAMcL), and single Wood Thrushes were seen there May 18 and June 2 (JB & DAW, fide IAMcL). On Brier I., 2 Wood Thrushes were found in song May 27-28 (RRA, DWF & ELM). There are to date only a few Nova Scotia records of this species, which is of course expanding northeastward.

**WARBLERS**—The customary scattering of Prothonotary Warblers appeared in the Region, the earliest being a bird at Egypt, Mass., Apr. 7 (Ruth Osgood, fide RPE); another reached Sable I. Apr. 18 (JB & DAW, fide IAMcL), and a third showed up Apr. 18 in a beaver pond in Hanover, N.H., where it remained until May 13 (Charles Kellogg & Robert Shaw, et mult. al., fide EWP). This was one of only a few New Hampshire records. In May and June, at least 4 other Prothonotaries were reported in Massachusetts (fide RPE). An early Worm-eating Warbler was banded at Block I., R.I. Apr. 11 (Elise Lapham, fide SSD). An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen at Seal I., N.S., May 16 (RRA, IAMcL & ELM), and 9 individuals of this species were reported in Massachusetts during May (fide RPE). Cerulean Warblers occurred as 6 single birds in Massachusetts and 1 in Rhode Island. A Yellow-throated Warbler was banded at M.B.O. May 6 (RAN) and another was seen at Attleboro, Mass., May 11 (Roy Ajjala, fide RPE). A Louisiana Waterthrush was seen at Sable I., May 27 (DAW, fide IAMcL); the 3 records to date of this species at Sable I. are the only ones known from the



ALVIN E. STAFFAN of Galloway, Ohio didn't discover which end of a camera to point, until he was 35, but two years later he sold his first photograph, and was on his way to making a name for himself in nature photography. Since then he has photographed about 100 species of birds and many other animals large and small. His illustrations have been featured in children's books on snails and chipmunks, he has illustrated articles on frogs and salamanders and other subjects for magazines, books, and encyclopedias. Eastern United States and Canada and Central America are his preferred habitat. Al Staffan's equipment is entirely Hasselblad, including Hasselblad lenses from wide angle to 500 mm. He shoots from blinds frequently and tripods almost always, although a gunstock mount sometimes comes in handy for "offhand shooting." Only when needed to fill is speedlight used.

The immaculate portrait of the Atlantic Puffin was shot from a blind at Machias Seal Island, New Brunswick, in June, 1969. The Hasselblad was equipped with a 250 mm. lens with yellow filter. The exposure of 1/500 second at f: 11 was taken on Plus X film.



JACK SWEDBERG, Maryland's entry in our Salon, like so many other professional photographers, passed through a long period of training as a amateur—in his case something like fifteen years. He does not consider himself a bird photographer, or even a still photographer, devoting most of his energies to wild life motion pictures. But his prints have been published in *AUDUBON*, *National Wildlife Review*, and elsewhere. His area of activity is northeastern North America, and mammals such as deer, moose and beaver are his special quarry. Jack has the professional's array of photographic tools, including Bolex, Nikon, and Hasselblad cameras, with lenses ranging from 10 mm to 500 mm. He shoots from a variety of blinds, from portable to floating to holes in the ground. He favors a Miller tripod with a fluid head. Films include Plus X, Kodachrome II, Ektachrome High Speed and Ektachrome Commercial.

The fledgling Barred Owl above was taken at West Millbury, Me., in 1969. The Hasselblad 500C camera was equipped with 500 mm lens, and the film was Plus X. Exposure was 1/250 second at f:8. The bird was barely able to fly and easily approached.

Maritimes. Six Kentucky Warblers in Massachusetts and 1 in Rhode Island were reported in the period May 12–June 4. An early Hooded Warbler appeared at Cohasset, Mass., Apr. 8 (Judith Bauer, fide RPE), and 2 others were seen at Sable I. May 16 (JB & DAW, fide IAMcL) and June 12–14 (IAMcL).

**ICTERIDS, TANAGERS**—A singing W. Meadowlark at Rowley, Mass. May 8–22, was seen by many observers, and constituted the sixth Regional record since June of 1969, all of them having occurred in the rather limited area from Cape Cod to s. Maine. Orchard Orioles were said by observers in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts to be unusually abundant this spring, and much as last spring, a number of them reached the Maritimes, no fewer than 9 in Nova Scotia and 1 in New Brunswick in the period May 16–28. A bird identified as Black-cowled Oriole, (*Icterus dominicensis*) was well seen at Seal I., N.S. on May 24 by Ben Doane, whose sketches and detailed description are quite convincing. The bird had a solid black back and tail, conspicuous black wings, black hood extending far down on the breast, and lemon yellow underparts. The report is all the more credible since another West Indian species, the Cave Swallow, was collected there the previous week. A W. Tanager was seen at Duxbury, Mass., May 29 (JWL, fide RPE), 3 separate Scarlet Tanagers reached Cape Breton and another reached Sable I., all in the period May 12–June 1, and Summer Tanagers were distributed in a typically sparse fashion in s. New England, 1 in Rhode Island and 6 in Massachusetts in the period May 10–29.

**FRINGILLIDS**—Spring migrant Blue Grosbeaks numbered 13, as compared with 3 in 1969 and 2 in 1970. This year's birds were 8 in Massachusetts and 5 in Nova Scotia, in the period April 6–June 4, and it is interesting to note the near simultaneous arrival of 2 at Nantucket, Apr. 25 (EA), 2 at Cape Sable, Apr. 25 (SS, fide PRD) and 1 at Sable I., April 27 (JB & WTS, fide IAMcL). At least 10 Indigo Buntings also reached Nova Scotia, occurring at 5 localities in the period Apr. 9–June 10. A total of 6 House Finches in North Hampton and Rye, N.H., May 8 (DJA & DWF) were indicative of the species' continued increase along the New England coast north of Massachusetts. Eur. Goldfinches of unknown origin continue to turn up in the Region, and 3 individuals appeared in a rather brief period this spring, in Massachusetts at Gloucester, Apr. 19–20 (Ann Robinson, fide RPE) and at Holden, Apr. 21 (RSJ, fide RPE), and in New Hampshire at Plaistow, Rockingham Co., May 1–4 (Eleanor Wright, fide RPE). A ♂ Lark Bunting in West Newbury, Mass., June 2–5 (JFK, RAF) was unique this spring. The Green-tailed Towhee mentioned in the previous report was last seen in Westport, Mass. May 1 (FK). Also unique was a Lark Sparrow at Hampton, N.H., May 6 (EWP & LGP). Vagrant Field Sparrows reached Sable I.

May 2 (JB, fide IAMcL) and May 16 (JB & DAW, fide IAMcL), and the season's first Song Sparrow arrived there Apr. 2, followed by a sharp peak of 90 on Apr. 4. Interestingly, on the latter date a remarkable concentration estimated at 1000 birds was found at Plum I., Mass. (CAG & MLG).

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## HUDSON–ST. LAWRENCE REGION / Ned R. Boyajian

Continuing cold, the prevalence of adverse winds, and in the north, substantial amounts of snowfall well into April, resulted in one of the slowest, latest springs in recent years. As is usually the case, it was the birdwatchers, rather than the birds, who suffered most. Though there was evidence of some delay in the return of populations, two or three to ten days, depending on species and locale, what was missed most sorely was the occurrence of flights or waves during the period May 3 through 16; usually the high point of the season. Actually, most of April was reasonably normal. The first major delay occurred during the last week of the month when species normally returning at that time did not appear in numbers until the first few days of May. Major flights during this period were:

April 4. Widespread flight of Snow/Blue Geese, Seneca River Flats, N.Y., 800 (GS), Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, L.I. (J.B.W.R.) 50 (E & KA)