

Western Great Lakes Region

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As always, weather played a major role in the spring migration. Warm weather in early March resulted in the early arrival of several species; however, the rest of the month and all of April remained cool, causing migration to lag behind schedule. In both months precipitation was at or below normal. May was also rather dry and cool, with the exception of the second and last weeks, when warm weather induced excellent migration. Both Michigan and Minnesota observers commented that warbler, vireo, and thrush migrations were the best in recent memory, while Wisconsin birders wondered where all the birds had gone. Exceptional species reported this season included the first Minnesota record for White Ibis, Painted Buntings in both Minnesota and Michigan, and Purple Gallinules in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Abbreviations: M.B.R.C. (*Michigan Bird Records Committee*); W.P.B.O. (*Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Chippewa Co., Michigan*).

Loons to Ibises

For the 2nd consecutive year, W.P.B.O. reported record numbers of loons, with 623 Red-throats, nearly doubling last season's 361, and 10,278 Commons. The peak migration of 117 Red-throats occurred May 4, while Commons peaked May 2 with 1486. Away from W.P.B.O., Michigan had Red-throated reports April 21 at Harbert, *Berrien* (BD), and April 19 at Nayanquing Pt., *Bay* (MW); neither Wisconsin or Minnesota reported this species. Exceptional were 1300 Horned Grebes massed on L. Superior in *St. Louis*, MN in early May (PS). Another spring season high for W.P.B.O. was 1285 Red-necked Grebes, with a peak of 343 April 24, far exceeding the old record of 537 in 1991. Wisconsin had another good migration of Eared Grebes, with reports from Milwaukee March 29–31 (DG), *Oconto* May 1–3 (KS, JS, MP, DT), *Dane* May 7 (SRo), and two May 23 at L. Maria (TS, JB, SB, DT). Michigan also had a good movement with reports from *Allegan* (TSM), *Berrien* (PU), *Muskegon* (DMc, BA), and *Roscommon* (JG). For the 2nd consecutive year Am. White Pelicans made an excellent showing, with reports from 3 counties in Michigan and 6 in Wisconsin. In the latter, a maximum of 30 individuals in Green Bay was noteworthy. A Great Egret May 4 at W.P.B.O. was well n. of normal and provided only the 3rd spring Observatory record. Minnesota had a Snowy Egret May 6 in *Big Stone* (KB), while Wisconsin reported at least two individuals in Green Bay and Michigan had one May 5 in Rouge Park, *Wayne* (EC). The only Little Blue Heron re-

ported in the Region was in Minnesota, where one was present in *Hennepin* May 12 (*fide* AH). Exceptional for Michigan was a **Tricolored Heron** May 3–5 at Nayanquing, *Bay* (MW, RW, LW, MPe). Minnesota reported 11 Cattle Egrets from 6 counties, Wisconsin had at least 20 in Green Bay, while Michigan had only a single report April 13 at Point Mouillee, *Monroe* (WP). Minnesota had reports of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons April 29 in *Hennepin* (RA), and in early May in *Ramsey* (*fide* AH), while Wisconsin had a report in *Dane*. Certainly the best bird of the season was the long-anticipated first state record of **White Ibis** in Minnesota. The bird appeared May 13 in *Winona* (HT, CS) and remained a scant 3 hours, just long enough for photographs to be obtained. Also remaining only a few hours was a **White-faced Ibis** in *Racine*, WI April 24 (JD).

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Geese were reported in Michigan from *Huron* April 15 (MW), *Shiawassee N.W.R.*, *Saginaw*, April 28 (DP), and W.P.B.O. had its first record ever with two May 1. Wisconsin had reports of 15–20 on Arlington Pond in March and 4–13 in the Shiocton area. Minnesota had four April 14 in *Cook* (KH, MH) and 14 near Duluth (*fide* KE). Unusual were reports of Ross' Geese from all 3 states. In Michigan a single report came March 12 at Fish Point, *Tuscola* (MW, RW, SR), while Wisconsin had reports of two March 16 near Beaver Dam (DT), March 24 and April 8–9 near Shiocton (DT, DN, JH), and a single from late-March–early April at L. Barney, *Dane* (SRo, DT *et al.*). In Minnesota there were several in Duluth May 16 (DE), a single there May 28 (KE), and individuals April 4–14 in *Goodhue* (CS *et al.*) and April 6 in *Rock* (BJ). Also in Minnesota were reports of single Cinnamon Teal May 31 in *Ottertail* (HD), and April 14 in *Lincoln* (*fide* AH) and *Big Stone* (*fide* AH). Eurasian Wigeons were seen April 25 in *Racine*, WI (JD) and from April 8–23 at Maple River State Game Area, *Gratiot*, MI (JR). A **Tufted Duck**, perhaps the same individual from the St. Clair R. in the winter season, was reported at Nayanquing Pt., *Bay*, MI (RA, m.ob.) April 14–May 3. A ♂ **King Eider** made a rare spring appearance March 11 & 23–24 on L. Michigan in *Dane* (BS); record is pending approval by the Wisconsin Rare Bird Committee. The four Harlequin Ducks in Sheboygan, WI lingered into April, while W.P.B.O. had reports of singles April 30 and May 13 & 16. Also lingering in Wisconsin was the ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye, which was seen well into March at Virmond Park, *Ozaukee*, while the drake in Minnesota re-



mained to March 24 at Pig's Eye L. in *Ramsey* (KB). The waterbird census at W.P.B.O. was exceptional, with record numbers of Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Lesser Scaup, Oldsquaw (2,332 individuals, nearly 4 times the 1984–1995 average), Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Com. Goldeneye and Red-breasted Merganser. Much of this might be explained by excellent weather and early departure of the ice from Whitefish Bay.

Raptors

After 3 years of low totals, the raptor census at W.P.B.O. returned to average numbers. A record total of 35 Golden Eagles were reported and near-record totals for both Turkey Vulture and N. Harrier were tallied. More significant were 6416 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 968 Broad-winged Hawks, both totals significantly up from last season, but still far below their peak of 14,434 in 1986 and 5634 in 1990. Rare species reported during the census included single Swainson's Hawks May 18 & 22 and a Gyrfalcon April 9 (DMc). Also in Michigan was a Swainson Hawk April 21 in Bay City, *Bay* (EP, GP), while Wisconsin had reports of this species May 7 in *Oconto* (KS, JS) and May 14 in Milwaukee (MK). In Minnesota, Ferruginous Hawks were reported from *Lac Qui Parle* April 22 (AB, *et al.*) and April 23 in *Yellow Medicine* (BM, DM). Golden Eagles were reported from 5 Minnesota counties, and in Wisconsin March 22 near Shiocton (DN) and April 27 in *Vilas* (JDa). Minnesota had reports of Prairie Falcon March 23 in *Norman* (*vide* AH) and April 22 in *Traverse* (TBr), while the individual in *Hennepin* remained to March 13.

Rails to Shorebirds

In Minnesota Yellow Rails were reported in increased numbers in *Aitkin*, *Cass*, *Clay*, *Clearwater*, *Lake of the Woods*, *Mahnomen*, *Polk*, *Roseau*, and *St. Louis*. Wisconsin reported this species in decreased numbers, with reports of five in Comstock Bog, *Marquette* (CS, JB, SB, DT), three in Crex Meadows WA (MP), and one May 6 at Tiedeman Pond, *Dane* (SRo). Michigan had reports from the normal areas at Sency N.W.R., *Schoolcraft*, and near Houghton L., *Roscommon*, while a possible migrant was seen May 24 near Vermilion, *Chippewa* (SS, ABY, m.ob.). A Purple Gallinule was found dead on the beach of L. Michigan near Frankfort, *Benzie* April 19 (KW), providing Michigan its 6th record for this southern species. Another was seen briefly in Wisconsin May 6 at Tiedeman Pond, *Dane* (SRo), the acceptance of the report pending Wisconsin Rare Bird Committee review. Piping Plovers continue to be scarce in the Region, with reports from

the normal breeding areas in Michigan as well as a migrant May 14 at Tawas Pt., *Iosco* (JDu) and another in Minnesota May 6 in *Lac Qui Parle* (KB). Wisconsin had only one Am. Avocet report, an individual April 27–28 in Milwaukee (DG, MK); Michigan had one May 25 at Ithaca, *Graiot* (RW). Minnesota tallied 13 birds in 4 counties, all April 28–30. There were good numbers of Willets with >80 birds in 14 counties. Wisconsin reported this species from 5 sites, including 32 April 28 at Milwaukee (MK). Whimbrels were reported in good numbers from all 3 states, mostly along the lakeshores—although a few birds were reported inland, including a Michigan report of 130 May 21 near Flint, *Genesee* (JL, KO, SS). The W.P.B.O. reported a record number for this species, with 531 individuals and a peak of 158 on May 22. Minnesota had reports of Hudsonian Godwits from 7 counties. Wisconsin reported a good migration of this species, including a very early individual April 8 in Mead WA, *Portage* (DB), while Michigan had only one report May 18 at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw* (DP). Marbled Godwits were reported in good numbers in Wisconsin, including a group of 11 May 17 in Madison. Michigan reports of this species included one April 14 at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw* (DP), April 22 at Nayanquing Pt., *Bay* (KO, JL, RW, JGo), May 11 at Arcadia Marsh, *Benzie* (BA), and May 14 at Tawas Pt., *Iosco* (JDu). Minnesota had reports of single Red Knots May 20 in Duluth, May 21 in *Clearwater* (DJ), May 26 in *Anoka* (RG), and two May 31 in *Cass* (CE, SM). Wisconsin reported single W. Sandpipers May 26 in Shiocton (DT), May 30 in *Dane* (SRo), and May 31 in *Columbia* (DT), while Minnesota had a report May 12 in *Fairbault* (RJ). A Curlew Sandpiper reported May 28–29 Arlington Pond, *Dane* (BF, m.ob.) provided a rare Wisconsin record, while in Michigan, where the species is more regular, an individual was reported May 15 at Quanicassee, *Tiscola* (DD). A black Ruff was seen May 5 at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw*, MI (BG), while in Wisconsin a red male was recorded on DeBoer's Pond, *Racine* May 6.

Jaegers to Terns

A Parasitic Jaeger was seen May 25 at W.P.B.O. (ABY, m.ob.). Exceptional was an inland report in Michigan of an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger May 7 at the Fairlane Estate, *Wayne* (CP); the report is pending M.B.R.C. approval. An unidentified jaeger was reported May 28 in Duluth, MN (MHe). Very rare for Michigan was the report of an inland Laughing Gull May 30–31 at Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw* (DP, RW *et al.*). An early Franklin's Gull was reported from Wisconsin March 26 in *Dunn* (JP), while another was reported May 9–31 in Green Bay and two May 25 into

June in Oshkosh (TZ). Michigan's only report came from W.P.B.O. with an individual May 23. Also at W.P.B.O. was a single Little Gull May 9 and another three May 20. Minnesota reported an individual of this species May 10 at L. Calhoun, *Hennepin* (SC), while Wisconsin had individuals from April 25–29 at LaCrosse (BC, JD, FL), one May 12 and two May 13 at Neenah (DN, DT), and singles May 27–29 at *Oconto* (KS, JS). An unusual number of Tayer's Gulls were reported in Minnesota, including 15 in Twin City area lakes (KB). Wisconsin had an individual of this species remain into mid-May along L. Michigan, while in Michigan individuals were reported May 15 & 17 at W.P.B.O. The closely related Iceland Gull was reported in Minnesota March 29 in *Goodhue* (KB), and April 7 in *Dakota* (KB). Wisconsin had sightings along L. Michigan during March and one in Marinette during late-May; Michigan had 3 reports. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are becoming more numerous throughout the Region. This season Minnesota had three April 9–28 in *Anoka* (KB), Wisconsin had one March 30–April 12 in Middleton, and Michigan a maximum of two March 4–April 25 at Bay City SP, *Bay* (JGi, RW, m.ob.). Still considered casual in Minnesota, Great Black-backed Gulls were reported March 27 both in *Ramsey* (KB) and Duluth (MHe). An Arctic Tern May 16 at W.P.B.O. (ABY, KT) would provide a first spring record for Michigan if accepted by the M.B.R.C.

Owls to Wrens

In Wisconsin, a Barn Owl found April 18 w. of Antigo (MG) remained through the period. Minnesota had 2 reports of Burrowing Owl in *Pipstone*, although neither could be relocated. Once a breeding species in that state, Burrowing Owl is now only considered casual there. Snowy Owls were extremely scarce in the Region, with the only report of one in Michigan Mar. 25 at Nayanquing Pt., *Bay* (RW). Great Gray Owls were reported May 26 near the *Luce/Chippewa* counties line in Michigan (JR). In Minnesota the species bred in the Sax-Zim Bog, *St. Louis*, while in Wisconsin a bird was killed by a car s.e. of Antigo. Long-eared Owl numbers were up in Minnesota with reports from 15 counties. At W.P.B.O., 160 individuals were banded during the standard owl census. Short-eared Owls were also more numerous in Minnesota, with reports of 14 birds in 9 counties. They were also more common in Michigan, with reports throughout the state, particularly in the n.w. Lower Peninsula. Other notable results from the W.P.B.O. owl census included 72 N. Saw-whets and 3 Boreal Owls banded. A ♀ Black-backed Woodpecker March 28 in *Portage* (MB) was considered s. of normal for Wisconsin. Western Kingbird numbers were reported as down

in Minnesota, with reports from only 8 counties. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** made a brief appearance May 8 at W.P.B.O. (KT); the record is pending acceptance by the M.B.R.C. A Tree Swallow March 14 in *Winona* (CS) provided the 2nd earliest arrival for Minnesota. A somewhat cooperative **Black-billed Magpie** was present April 24–28 at Arcadia, *Benzie* (BB, BA, m.ob.), allowing many birders to add this accidental Michigan species to their state list. In Minnesota Carolina Wrens were reported April 29 in *Winona* (CS) and to March 11 in *Rice* (MS), while Wisconsin had reports in Madison and Appleton.

Thrushes to Warblers

The only Mt. Bluebird sightings in the Region came from Minnesota, with reports April 19 in *Winona* (CS) and March 12–April 2 in *Washington* (JF, m.ob.). Minnesota also had the only Townsend's Solitaire reports, with eight birds in 6 counties. Late south in Wisconsin was a Swainson's Thrush into June in Milwaukee (NZ). The two Varied Thrushes in Marquette, MI remained to March 5 (NI), while the bird at *Winnebago* in Wisconsin remained until April 30 (LB) and another appeared May 14 s. of Antigo. In Minnesota five new Varied Thrushes were reported during the spring, bringing the 1994–1995 total to an unprecedented 41 birds. Three Am. Pipits March 18 in *Dane* (PA) were early for Wisconsin. A **Sprague's Pipit** was found during the Minnesota County Biological Survey May 31 in *Polk*. A Bohemian Waxwing May 24 in Duluth (SS) provided a new late date for Minnesota. Encouraging Loggerhead Shrike numbers were up in Minnesota, with reports from 27 counties of at least 42 birds. Wisconsin had only 2 reports with individuals in mid-March at Mud L. WA, *Columbia*, and from May 20–21 in *Door* (CL, RL), while Michigan had only one report, from the Todd Farm, *Allegan*. White-eyed Vireos were more common in Michigan, with a high of 10 in *Hillsdale* (JR). In Minnesota, where the species is considered casual, there were reports from 2 locations in *Hennepin* May 12–15 and May 29 (TT, SC). Wisconsin reported Bell's Vireos on territory in Wyalusing and Governor Dodge State Parks. A Yellow-throated Warbler was reported on territory in Wyalusing S.P., WI, while in Minnesota a territorial bird returned to Sibley S.P., *Kandiyohi* May 18 (RF). Worm-eating Warblers continue to increase in Michigan, with reports coming from 4 counties including in *Allegan*, where breeding has been suspected over the past 3 years. Wisconsin had territorial birds at Hemlock Draw, Baxter's Hollow, and Wyalusing S.P., while Minnesota reported an individual May 15 in *Hennepin* (CM). A Kentucky Warbler returned to Seven Mile

Cr. County Park, *Nicollett* (MF, DN), where Minnesota's first confirmed breeding occurred last year; another was seen May 26 in *Ramsey* (CM). Michigan reported five individuals from 3 counties, while Wisconsin had good numbers at Wyalusing S.P. and a few other migrants elsewhere. A Yellow-breasted Chat was reported May 28–29 in *Murray*, MN (ND).

Tanagers to Longspurs

A Summer Tanager was banded at University of Michigan, Dearborn, *Wayne*, MI May 13 (JC) and another was found May 11 in *Rice*, MN (FS, KS). **Western Tanagers** staged a virtual invasion into the Region. Minnesota had no less than 18 individuals during May. Wisconsin added 3 additional sightings of this species April 29 in Antigo (LH), May 7 in *Vilas* (BGr, *et al.*), and May 17 in Milwaukee (DC). Michigan had 2 reports, May 13 at the Erie Marsh Preserve, *Monroe* (JM), and May 15 near Mio (MD), both reports pending M.B.R.C. review. In many cases these reports—from casual birders—were of males appearing at their feeders; one only wonders how many individuals of this species actually visited the Region. A **Black-headed Grosbeak** May 17 in *Clay* (BMA) provided a rare Minnesota record. Remarkably, Michigan had 2 reports of **Painted Bunting**, a female April 24–27 in Saginaw (DP *et al.*) and a male May 24–25 in Rapid River, *Delta* (*fide* ABy). Minnesota had its 5th state record of this species May 24 in *Anoka* (BE, ME). Unusual in n.e. Minnesota were Lark Sparrows May 20 in Duluth (DB), *Cook* (SL, OL) and May 22 in *Lake* (KE, PS). Michigan had a single Lark Sparrow May 9 in Munising, *Alger* (LG). Also in that state, a Sharp-tailed Sparrow May 8 was found at Pt. LaBarbe, *Mackinac* (DMc). A **Smith's Longspur** May 19 near Copper Harbor, *Keweenaw* (LB) provided Michigan its 3rd spring record.

Corrigenda

The 1994 total for N. Harriers at Hawk Ridge should be 1390 not 1370, while the peak Golden Eagle count Oct. 24 should be 23, not 25.

Observers: Brian Allen, Ruth Andberg, Philip Ashman, Karl Bardon, Jeff Baughman, Scott Baughman, Barry Barto, Dan Belter, Lynn Benedict, Murray Berner, Dave Benson, Laurence Binford, Al Bolduc, Terrence Brashear (TBr), Adam Byrne (ABy), Ernie Carhart, Steve Carlson, Brian Carson, Dorthea Carson, Julie Graves, Beth Dahl, Jeff Dankert (JDa), Jerry DeBoer, Harold Duebert, Jon Dunn (JDu), Dan Duso, Mike Duso, Kim Eckert, Bill Eckstrom, Margaret Eckstrom, Dudley Edmunson, Carol Estes, Bill Foster, Randy Fredrickson, John Futcher,

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