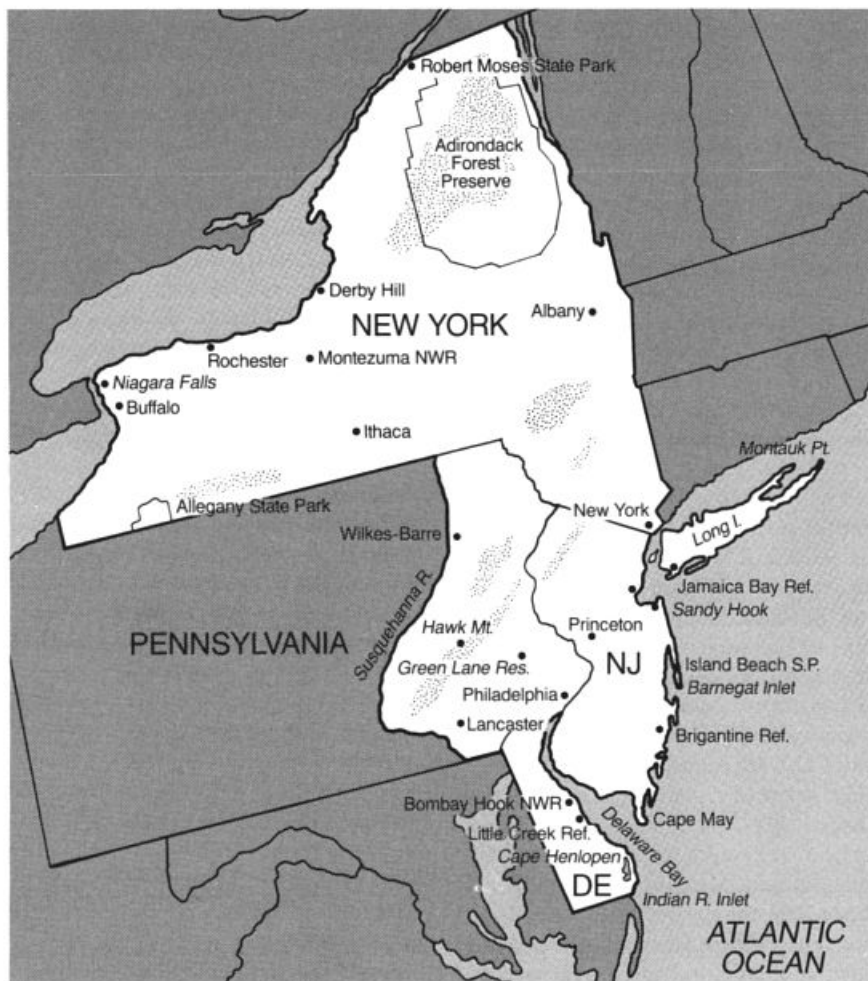


HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION



**WILLIAM J. BOYLE, JR.,
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In stark contrast to Spring 1997, the season was one of the warmest on record and very wet over most of the Region. March was well above average in precipitation, with Lake Champlain cresting April 5 at near-record height, while Syracuse recorded the first snow-free April in history. The first third of May was cool and wet in the south, but the rest of the month was warm and dry, with an average temperature for the month six degrees above normal in upstate New York.

Birding was generally slow, especially during the peak migration period in May. The cool, wet weather of the first 10–12 days slowed the migration significantly, then the migrants moved rapidly through during the clear, warm days that followed, not bothering to stop off at the usual spots along the way. Most of the rarities were either holdovers from the winter season, or appeared in early spring. Among them were the Region's first Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Delaware and first Lazuli Bunting in New York. Other highlights included White-faced and White ibis in New Jersey, briefly seen Fork-tailed Flycatcher in New Jersey, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and White-

winged Tern in New York, and a more cooperative Harris's Sparrow, also in New York.

Abbreviations: Braddock Bay (*Braddock Bay S.P. and vicinity, Monroe, NY*); Bombay Hook (*Bombay Hook Nat'l Wildlife Ref., near Smyrna, DE*); Brig. (*Brigantine Unit, Forsythe Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Atlantic, NJ*); Cape Henlopen (*Cape Henlopen S.P., Sussex, DE*); Derby Hill (*Hawk watch near L. Ontario, Oswego, NY*); Hamlin Beach (*Hamlin Beach S.P. and adjacent lakeshore, Monroe, NY*); Jamaica Bay (*Jamaica Bay Wildlife Ref., Queens, NYC*); L.I. (*Long Island, NY*); Port Mahon (*marshes and bayshore along road east of Little Creek, Kent, DE*); Sandy Hook (*Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway Nat'l Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ*); Thompsons Beach (*bayshore and tidal mudflats, near Heislerville, Cumberland, NJ*); N.Y.S.A.R.C. (*New York State Avian Rarities Committee*).

LOONS TO STORK

The loon watch at Hamlin Beach recorded an excellent 211 Red-throated Loons Apr. 19, and a peak of 36 Red-necked Grebes Mar. 30 (WS). Otherwise, Red-necked Grebes were scarce, with only a single report from the New Jersey coast. The season's Eared Grebes were all in New York: one at L. LaSalle, Buffalo (*vide RA*), another continuing at Larchmont to Mar. 6 (TWB), and one at Onondaga L. Apr. 10 (M. Rusk). We received no reports of pelagic trips, so don't know what variety and numbers of tubenoses may have been offshore. A Leach's Storm-Petrel seen from the Staten I. Ferry May 12 was certainly out of place (R. Veit). American White Pelicans showed up in May, as usual, with singles at Bivalve, *Cumberland, NJ*, May 23 (F. Lesser) and another at Brig. May 27 (M. Hannisian); the last was at Depeyster, *St. Lawrence, NY*, May 31 (NL). The recent decline of Great Cormorant in winter has been noted previously. Nevertheless, the species continues to pop up in out-of-the-way places, such as Cocksackie, *Albany, NY*, May 27 (C. Lamere), and Irondequoit Bay, *Rochester, NY*, Mar. 17.

A Tricolored Heron was far afield at

Greece, Monroe, NY, May 2–6 (DSH et al.), as was a Cattle Egret at Pt. Peninsula, *Jefferson*, NY, May 1 (R&J Barry). The year's first White Ibis at Cape May Apr. 4 was just a portent of things to come during the summer (TP), while a White-faced Ibis, also at Cape May, May 10–12 continued a long-string of annual reports from the s. part of the Region (J. Walddie, m.ob.).

WATERFOWL

The increasing numbers of Trumpeter Swans from reintroduction programs in Ontario and elsewhere continue to contribute additional reports in the Region. As many as nine were in *Wayne*, NY, e. of Rochester, Mar. 7, and up to eight were at Perch River W.M.A., *Jefferson*, NY, in April. Ross's Geese are no longer a rarity over much of the area, but one in *Clinton*, NY, Mar. 27 was unusual (BK); the lingering bird at Sharptown, *Salem*, NJ, was last seen Apr. 12. Another continuing bird, the Black Brant at Riis Park, *Queens*, NY, was also present until at least Apr. 12.

Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian subspecies were present at Jamaica Bay and at 2 sites in coastal New Jersey during March and April, but reports of this form tend to remain fairly constant over the years, despite increased observer awareness. In addition to the usual coastal collection of Eur Wigeon, one in *Wyoming*, in w. New York, was a first for the county.

The previously reported Tufted Duck at Patchogue, L.I., continued to at least Mar. 15 (*fide* TWB), while a King Eider at Oswego, NY, Mar. 7–Apr. 2 was exceptional. In addition to the usual assortment of Harlequin Ducks along the coast, a single at Artificial I. Apr. 26 provided a first for *Salem*, NJ (WDA, T. Wilson). Also unusual was an individual at Derby Hill Mar. 6, and a pair at nearby Mexico Pt., *Oswego*, NY, May 3. A Barrow's Goldeneye was off Fire I., *Suffolk*, L.I., in early March, but more unusual was a drake at Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay, *Cayuga*, NY, overlooked in the winter report, but remaining until Mar. 5.

RAPTORS TO CRANES

Black Vultures continue their spread to the north and even the east, with an individual over Forest Park, *Queens*, May 6; two different birds were at Derby Hill during the season, and a single at Braddock Bay Mar. 27. The raptor count at Derby Hill recorded a record number of Ospreys, but was otherwise lackluster, highlighted only by a single Swamson's Hawk Mar. 30 (N. Maumee). Ospreys returned early to New Jersey, but

the cold and wet weather of early May caused many nests to fail or be deserted. Mississippi Kites returned to Cape May, as usual, with up to four present during the 2nd half of May; one farther afield was at Dorbrook Park, *Monmouth*, NJ, May 22 (R. Spears). After a year's absence, Swallow-tailed Kite returned to the Region, with one at Cape Henlopen, DE, Apr. 14 (K. Jenkins), and another, perhaps the same, at Cape May the same day (TH).

Wild Turkeys continue to spread throughout the Region, but one in Central Park, New York City, in May, was a bit unexpected. The only Yellow Rail of the season was heard at Port Mahon May 3 (MG), where several Black Rails were heard by different parties a week later. A Purple Gallinule was found in a yard at Breezy Pt., *Queens*, NY, Mar. 22, but later died in rehabilitation (*fide* D. Riepe). Another Purple Gallinule was at Cape May May 16 (SB, M. Griffin, S. Woods).

Sandhill Cranes continue to increase as spring migrants throughout the area. Two different birds in Delaware were extremely unusual, with one at Cape Henlopen Apr. 12 (R. Multhopp), and another at Augustine Beach Apr. 21. No less than seven different individuals (repeats cannot be ruled out) were detected in New Jersey from Apr. 11 to May 24.

SHOREBIRDS

Three different Black-necked Stilts were around the Cape May area in May, but there doesn't appear to have been any repeat of earlier nesting attempts. Another stilt was reported from Lawrence, *Nassau*, L.I., May 21 (T. Tierno). The only Am. Avocet n. of Delaware was at Jamaica Bay May 7–13 (v.o.). A Marbled Godwit, probably a holdover from the winter, was at Wildwood Crest, *Cape May*, NJ, May 29 (SF, PL), and a couple were seen on Long Island during the season.

A Purple Sandpiper at Piermont Pier, *Rockland*, NY, on the Hudson R. n. of New York City May 15 was clearly lost (C. Weiss et al.). The only Curlew Sandpiper was at Brig. May 10 (T. Young), but a couple of Ruffs returned to Pedricktown, *Gloucester*, NJ, in late March and early April, and at least four were in Delaware, including one near Lewes, *Sussex*, Apr. 26–30 (CB).

Several Red-necked Phalaropes appeared in s. New Jersey during the May 13–14 period, when numerous Red Phalaropes also were blown ashore in Delaware, with two at Prime Hook May 14 (E. Reimann) and two at Indian R. the same day Two Red

Phalaropes were at Brig. May 12, and a single was in Cape May May 13 with the Red-necked Phalaropes.

GULLS TO ALCIDS

Parasitic Jaegers were very evident from shore in Cape May during early May, and an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger was harassing terns there May 9 (M. Barrett, J. Burgiel). Only a few Little Gulls were at the usual L.I. spots in March, but up to four were at Artificial I. during April (WDA et al.). A Thayer's Gull was at Greece, *Monroe*, NY, Mar. 10 (KG), and a Lesser Black-backed Gull was unusual at Oswego, NY, Mar. 27–28 (GP, J. Tietz).

An influx of Roseate Terns at Cape May was highlighted by a flock of nine May 12 (JDo). Black Terns returned to Perch River W.M.A. in late May, with 60+ there May 29, but the species continues to decline in its breeding haunts in the n. part of the Region. A White-winged Tern was a reported fly-by at Shinnecock Inlet, *Suffolk*, L.I., May 9, one of the few New York state records, if accepted by N.Y.S.A.R.C. (A. Baldelli). Finally, although alcids were not much in evidence during the winter, a flock of about 260 large alcids flying by Southampton during a 45-minute period Mar. 8 were predominantly Razorbills (TWB).

DOVES TO SHRIKES

A White-winged Dove was at Gilgo, *Nassau*, L.I., May 17 only (TL). Upstate, an aggressive Snowy Owl killed a tom Wild Turkey on Limekiln Rd., *Hamilton*, NY, Mar. 21 (GL&K Lee), and a late-lingering Snowy was at Three River W.M.A., *Onondaga*, NY, on the late date of Apr. 17. One of the finds of the season was the discovery of nesting N. Saw-whet Owls at Palmyra, *Burlington*, NJ, across the Delaware R. from n. Philadelphia. Adults were present in March and April, and two juveniles were found in mid-May for one of the few confirmed nesting records for the state (TB, WDA).

Competing with a bunting for bird of the season, although accessible to only a few, was a hummingbird present in Delaware throughout the winter and previously identified as a female Rufous Hummingbird. Upon closer examination by 2 experienced observers, it proved to be a female **Broad-tailed Hummingbird**, a first for the Region. The bird was banded and last seen Mar. 22 (MG, B. Petejohn). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, the only one of the season, was a local first in the Genesee region of upstate New York at Avon, *Livingston*, May 26 (J. Dombrowski). Rarer still was a **Fork-tailed**

Flycatcher seen briefly at Cape May May 18 (PD, CS et al.).

A Black-billed Magpie was present at Sandy Hook Apr. 8 (M. Davison), for one day only; although the identification is not in question, the origin of the bird will remain a mystery. Of the many records of this species in the northeast, the majority of which must be of wild origin, a large percentage occur in early spring. A Sedge Wren took up residence in the S. Cape May Meadows in early April, and remained throughout the month (SF, MO et al.); elsewhere, a single was at Jamaica Bay May 16 (P. Jorit et al.). The species continues as a breeding bird in upstate New York in numbers much reduced from former times.



Well north of usual limits was this Swainson's Warbler in Clark's Valley, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, May 20, 1998.

Photograph/ Rick Wiltraut

VIREOS TO WARBLERS

Unprecedented numbers of Philadelphia Vireos, normally a rare migrant in the s. parts of the Region, were found at Cape May this season, with at least five birds during the last 1/3 of May (PL et al.). There were 3 reports from the New York City area, also in late May. The only warbler rarity was the continuing **Townsend's Warbler** at Drums, Luzerne, PA, which remained until at least Mar. 28, while the wintering Ovenbird at Shavertown, Luzerne, PA, was last seen Mar. 18 (*vide* WR).

TANAGERS TO FINCHES

Six or seven Summer Tanagers were in the New York City area in May, as usual, but far out-of-range was one at Cape Vincent, Jefferson, NY, May 16 (BMW). Also well n. of its usual haunts was a Blue Grosbeak at Nassau, Rennsalaer, NY, May 16 (K. Dun-

ham, E. Grace). Completely unprecedented was a male **Lazuli Bunting** at a feeder in Bethany, Genessee, NY, from Mar. 15 for several weeks, a first state and Regional record (V&D Tiede et al.) The few previous records from the northeast have been of immatures in the fall. The several pairs of Dickcissels returned to Bright View Farm, Burlington, NJ, in late May, where the enlightened mowing practices of the owner have allowed the species to breed successfully in recent years.

Clay-colored Sparrow were much in evidence in New York; an individual at Jones Beach, L.I., May 25, was surely just a migrant (A. Guthrie), but others at Oswego May 16; Onondaga Township, Onondaga, from May 25; and two at Ft. Drum, Jefferson, May 30 (m.ob.), were clearly attempting to nest. Grasshopper Sparrows are doing well in appropriate habitat in the Region, with a maximum of 20 at a former landfill in Region 5, NY; 10 singing males at Colliers Mills W.M.A., Ocean, NJ (SB); and an incredible 230 singing males at Lakehurst Naval Air Station, Ocean, NJ, May 31 (D. Sutherland et al.).

Several pairs of Henslow's Sparrows were at traditional sites in n.e. Pennsylvania and w. New York, while the Le Conte's Sparrow discovered during the winter at the Cape May National Golf Course was still present as late as May 9 (K. Karlson). The rarity of the season in this family, however, was a Harris's Sparrow at Galway, Saratoga, NY, Apr. 26-May 4 (JG, m.ob.). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were scarce, with only one each in Delaware, New Jersey, and New York.

In addition to numerous reports of left-over Red and White-winged crossbills from the winter season, a late winter influx of redpolls produced numerous reports of Hoary Redpoll in upstate New York. Two were at Hastings, Oswego, Mar. 3 (BP, ph.); one at Cato, Cayuga, Mar. 23 (GP); and another at Greece, Monroe, Mar. 28 (KG).

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