

CORRIGENDA

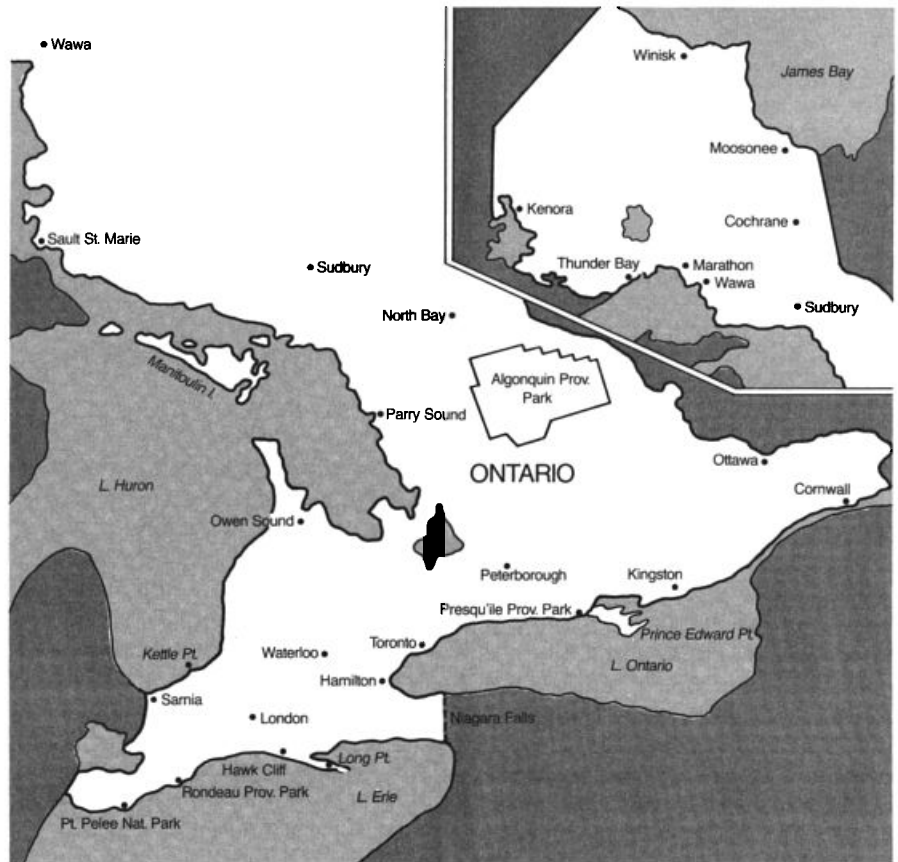
The Purple Sandpiper at Big Pine Key (FN 51:861) was found originally by Jo and Tom Heindel Apr. 16, 1997. The thrush fallout reported by Wilfred Yusek et al. (FN 51:861) was at H.I.S.R.A., not F.D.C.P. The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow reference (FN 51:990) should read, "41 nests . . ."

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ontario region



RON RIDOUT

What an unbelievable spring it was . . . if you like summer! Record-breaking temperatures arrived early and continued throughout much of the season across the Region. Combined with lower-than-normal precipitation, conditions were perfect for a speedy migration for most species. Observers across the province declared it the worst spring ever for finding birds. Fortunately, most have come to realize that clear, dry skies are to blame and not declining populations (in most cases). Provincial observatories reported numbers not significantly different from average.

As mentioned in the winter report, waterfowl migration began in earnest in February and was pretty well finished, in southcentral regions, by late March. Some notable concentrations came from scat-

tered locations across the southern Great Lakes. Passerine migration began in early April with late-spring temperatures ushering in a rush of record-early arrivals. This report is littered with many examples. Of course, with such ideal conditions, very few weather-related fallouts were noted and, compounded with vegetation leafing out two to three weeks ahead of schedule, led to some very difficult and, at times, frustrating birding. A well-tuned ear was a necessity by early May.

Despite the warm spring, "southern overshoots" were found in low numbers. Perhaps the warm temperatures began too early to push these "rarities" north of their usual range in one sudden rush, as is usual in the first weeks of May. Exceptional rarities were few, though they included Ferruginous Hawk, two Black-necked Stilts, Sage Thrasher, Sprague's Pipit, and Painted

Bunting. All rarities mentioned are subject to the approval of the Ontario Bird Records Committee (O.B.R.C.).

Abbreviations: N.P.H. (*Niagara Pen. Hawk-watch*); Pelee (*Pt. Pelee Nat'l Park and vicinity*); P.E.Pt. (*Prince Edward Pt., Prince Edward*); L.P.B.O. (*Long Pt. Bird Observatory, Norfolk*); T.C.B.O. (*Thunder Cape Bird Observatory Thunder Bay*). Algonquin, Presqu'île, and Rondeau are Provincial Parks. Place names in *italics* refer to counties, districts, or regional municipalities.

LOONS TO IBISES

Red-throated Loons were reported from scattered locations on the lower lakes. The highest count came from Grand Bend, with 71 reported Apr. 28 (AR). A bird inland at Pittock L., *Oxford*, May 22 (JMH) was exceptional. A count of 1008 Red-necked Grebes off Bonnibrae Pt., *Durham*, Apr. 22 (RP) was exceptional that far east. The Bronte pair was back and nesting on a floating tire in the harbor by Apr. 13 (GE). High counts of Horneds included 200 off Vineland Mar. 29 (PY) and 174 off Bonnibrae Pt. Apr. 21 (RP). Reports of lone Eareds came from P.E.Pt. Apr. 14 (KE), Pelee Apr. 18 (JL), Blenheim Apr. 21 (KB), Grand Bend Apr. 28 (AR), and Burlington Apr. 28–29 (*vide* MS). For the 3rd consecutive spring, there was a report of a Double-crested Cormorant of the *albociliatus* subspecies at Pelee May 3 (AW). There are only a handful of records for the province. The only Am. White Pelicans involved individuals at Britt Apr. 22–24 (JMa) and Long Pt. May 23 (SM).

Reports of "southern" herons were nicely distributed among all 3 traditional species. Lone Tricoloreds were seen at Long Pt. May 8–23 (SW, m.ob.) and Pelee May 16 (NB) & 23 (TH). Single Little Blues were at Pelee May 17 (GE), Dundas May 17–18 (DM), and near Port Dover May 19–21 (JM et al.), while individual Snowy Egrets were at Pelee Apr. 27 (JF et al.), Cranberry Marsh, *Durham*, May 12 (BA), and possibly the same bird over Thickson's Woods, *Durham*, May 18 (DL, BG). A Great Egret at Amherst I., *Lennox Addington*, Apr. 26 (TS) was notable that far east. The only Cattle Egrets included a Ontario record-early bird at Tilbury Mar. 29 (S&PB) and Amherst I. May 27 (AS). An early Green Heron at Pelee Apr. 12 (DBo) was exceeded by an Ontario record-early bird at Flamborough Apr. 2–4 (RD,BC). The only ibis of the spring was an unidentified *Plegadis* at Pelee May 10 (*vide* AW).

WATERFOWL TO RAILS

Two unbanded Trumpeter Swans at Copper Cliff May 5 (CB, JLe) were notable that far north. A concentration of 10,000 Tundra Swans at Grand Bend Mar. 28 (m.ob.) was noteworthy in such a warm spring. Reports of Greater White-fronted Geese included singles at Bearbrook, *Ottawa-Carleton*, Apr. 6 (DD et al.), Bourget Apr. 10 (AG), Westport Apr. 10–11 (AB-J), and Nepean May 6 (RB, GP), all well east of the usual locales, as well as two at Rainy R. May 16 (DG) furnishing the District's 2nd record. A count of 700 Snow Geese at Deseronto Apr. 22 (JD) was exceptional that late, while a lone bird at L. Victoria, *Perth*, May 9 (BM) was interesting both for the late date and location. A flock of 182 Brant high over High Park, Toronto, May 13 (GC) was noteworthy, while farther east on L. Ontario in the normal route over Amherst I., a count of 2400 May 16 was impressive (K.F.N.).

Sightings of Eur. Wigeon involved singles at Port Royal Mar. 15–29 (Kbr, m.ob.), Cranberry Marsh Mar. 31 (MB), Mountsberg, *Wellington*, Apr. 5 (MW), Tavistock Apr. 1–22 (JMH), Amherst I. Apr. 21 (AS), and Alfred May 23–30 (JBo et al.). A *crecca* Green-winged Teal at Saltfleet, *Hamilton-Wentworth*, Mar. 29 (KM, RC, GS) continued the trend of one every 2 years or so. A teal at Tilbury May 14 (KM, BKe) was believed to be a Cinnamon × Blue-winged hybrid.

Ten Canvasbacks at Atikokan Apr. 14 (DE) was a high count well to the n. of their usual migration route. Several King Eiders were scattered around L. Ontario, with the peak of 20 at Vineland Mar. 22 (MM), while an imm. male at Pelee May 15–16 (KM) was notable there. Reports of Harlequin Ducks included an imm. male at Burlington Mar. 1–Apr. 29 (m.ob.), a male and female on various dates between Mar. 28 and May 3 at Toronto (m.ob.), three at Darlington P.P., *Durham*, Apr. 1 (THo), and two at Sault Ste. Marie until at least May 6 (m.ob.). A concentration of Oldsquaws several kilometers long and estimated at 80,000 birds off Oakville Mar. 1 (GC, GB) was impressive. Conversely, and surprisingly, there were no large numbers of White-winged Scoters reported from w. L. Ontario. A Barrow's Goldeneye at Toronto Mar. 28–29 (GC, GB) was the only reported.

VULTURES TO GULLS

Two Black Vultures, one each at Harrow Apr. 5 (FU) and Toronto Apr. 11 (NM), were double the spring average of late. A

record 858 Turkey Vultures were counted at the N.P.H., Grimsby, Mar. 29 (m.ob.) Single Ospreys there Mar. 28 & 29 (m.ob.) were quite early. Nests at Dundas (m.ob.) and Cayuga (BS) both provided first breeding records for the *Hamilton-Wentworth* and *Haldimand* regions. An ad. Mississippi Kite seen at Arner May 15 (JS, MJ) appeared at Pelee a few hours later (SS, LF). Another adult was seen at Pelee May 31 (LF). One was also reported from London May 28 (MMA). A pair of Bald Eagles nesting on a school roof in Marathon (m.ob.) provided an up-close and personal natural history lesson. A Swainson's Hawk at the N.P.H. Apr. 28 (m.ob.), followed by two the next day (m.ob.), provided a record-breaking total for that watch. A **Ferruginous Hawk** seen there Apr. 12 and nearby May 6 (DC) furnished the province's first record since 1995. Record-early Am. Kestrels were found at Matachewan Mar. 1 (LT) and Thunder Bay Mar. 6 (JLi), while early Merlins were seen on Manitoulin I. Mar. 1 (CB) and Nipigon Mar. 8 (NH). Peregrines are now firmly established urban dwellers in London, Hamilton, Mississauga, Toronto, and Ottawa. A pair nesting on the gorge wall below Niagara Falls provided the first natural nesting in s. Ontario in decades, if not this century.

Always an exciting discovery, reports of Yellow Rails included one at Hog L., Manitoulin, May 30 (CB) and three at the Richmond fen the same day (BD). Observations of Kings were confined to the southwest and included one at Rondeau Apr. 22 (KB, JB), one at Selkirk Apr. 25 (JM), and two at St. Clair N.W.A. May 1 (JH). Sightings of Sandhill Cranes were numerous across the south as far east as Lansdowne May 20 (EC). Five radio-tagged birds, part of an experimental flock, landed in several schoolyards on their way N, mingling with the children at each stop. The only report of Piping Plover came from Lake-of-the-Woods, *Rainy River*, where two males held territories in the last breeding area in the province (DG, DE).

Two different **Black-necked Stilts** were exceptional, providing the 3rd and 4th records this decade. Birds were at Bath May 26 (CW, DEB et al.) and Toronto May 31–June 1 (LM et al.). An Am. Avocet was at Toronto Apr. 30 (*vide* CW), while five were at Hillman Marsh May 14 (JC et al.). Two Lesser Yellowlegs at Hillman Marsh, *Essex*, Mar. 6 (DW) were record-early there. Willet sightings at Pelee totalled 15 May 3–7 (m.ob.), while a lone bird was seen at Cranberry Marsh May 21 (DL). Lone Hud-

sonian Godwits were at Grand Bend May 18 (AR) and Rainy R. May 19 (DG); Marbleds involved singles at Pelee May 19 (AR, CBu), Amherst I. May 25 (AS), and Nonquon, *Durham*, May 31 (m.ob.). Both species are equally rare in the spring.

Noteworthy counts of Ruddy Turnstones at sewage lagoons included 233 at Harrow May 21 (FU) and 310 at Blenheim May 22 (JB,KB). Other rare spring occurrences included an province record-early W. Sandpiper at Pelee Apr. 21–22 (AW), another at Blenheim May 16 (m.ob.), a Baird's there the same day (KB), a Curlew Sandpiper at Grand Bend May 18 (AR), a record-early Stilt Sandpiper at Pelee May 2 (AW), other Stilts at Dundas May 17 (DM) and Amherst I. May 21 (AS), a Ruff at Harrow Apr. 25–26 (KM, JMn), and a Reeve at Amherst I. Apr. 27 (JE, RDW). A Long-billed Dowitcher at Nonquon Apr. 25–30 (BH et al.) was very early. Later reports included two at Blenheim May 14 (JB) and one at Amherst I. May 30 (JE, RDW).

Laughing Gulls sightings were confined to L. Erie, with one at Pelee May 16 (AW), another at Long Pt. May 18 (JT) and two there May 20 (AM&RR, A&BF). One of the Long Pt. birds was found dead May 22 (KM). Fifty Franklin's loafing in fields near Rainy R. May 29 (DE, DG et al.) was considered a good spring count. Little Gulls were confined to the lower lakes, and numbers seemed reduced from recent springs. A total of 22 Lesser Black-backed met the recent spring average. Nepean and Ottawa continued to be the hot spot, with nine different birds March 3–May 11 (m.ob.).

TERNs TO THRUSHES

A Caspian Tern at Hamilton Mar. 29 (AE) was record-early for that region. A count of 500 nests at Presqu'île May 15 (DJ) was exceptional. The only report of Arctic Tern was a individual at Amherst I. May 30 (JE, RDW), while a Forster's at Bath the same day (JE, RDW) was noteworthy that far east. A pair of N. Saw-whet Owls fledged 4 young from a nest in Onondaga Twp., *Brant*, providing that county's first breeding record (DWi). The first two Chimney Swifts of the season were early at Grimsby Apr. 11 (m.ob.). A Red-headed Woodpecker at Pelee Apr. 6 (TB) was considered to be a record early spring migrant.

An Olive-sided Flycatcher at Sault Ste. Marie May 3 (RK) set a record-early date there and was exceptionally early for the province as a whole. Three singing Willow Flycatchers at Rainy R. May 29 (DE, DG)



No fewer than eleven Western Kingbirds were found in Ontario this spring, far more than usual. This individual was at Point Pelee National Park May 21, 1998. Photograph/ James N. Flynn



Now very rare in Ontario, this Bewick's Wren was especially noteworthy as far north as Thunder Cape Bird Observatory, Thunder Bay, where it was captured for banding May 2, 1998. Photograph/ Graeme Gibson

provided that District's 2nd record. A follow-up to check for breeding was planned. Eastern Phoebes pushed into the c. and n. regions at a frantic pace. Sightings included record-early birds at Evansville Mar. 1 (DB), and Elk L. Mar. 28 (BK), and others just plain early at N. Bay Mar. 25 (RTa), Pukaskwa N.P., *Thunder Bay*, Mar. 29 (KW), and Sudbury Mar. 30 (CBI). Keeping pace, a Great-crested Flycatcher at Windsor Mar. 29 (A&BB) set an Regional record-early date, while one at Rideau Ferry Mar. 31 (JA) was just as exceptional. An astounding 11 W. Kingbirds were reported from widely scattered locations, far exceeding the recent average of two–three per spring. The only Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen at T.C.B.O. May 2 (GG et al.).

Two different Barn Swallows on Manitoulin I. Mar. 29 (DB, EM) were very early. An Am. Crow at Kashabowie Mar. 20 (AH) was noteworthy for the place and the date, as was a Com. Raven at the N.P.H. Apr. 3 (m.ob.). A Tufted Titmouse nesting at Dundas May 16 (MMi) furnished that region's first breeding record. For the 3rd

consecutive spring, a Bewick's Wren was recorded, this time well to the north at T.C.B.O. May 2 (GG et al.). Several House Wrens were reported in March, the most notable at Rondeau Mar. 7 (MT) and Warton Mar. 29 (JJ). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Misery Bay, *Manitoulin*, May 13 (JN) and T.C.B.O. May 16 (GG et al.) were well n. of range. A Mt. Bluebird near Rainy R. Apr. 5 (RS) provided that District's 4th record. Eastern Bluebirds were as far north as New Liskeard by Mar. 29 (IT). A Wood Thrush at Erie Beach Apr. 13 (JB) was record-early there. Wintering Varied Thrushes remained at Thunder Bay until Mar. 25 (JCI), Kingston Mar. 28 (NT), and Kilbride Mar. 29 (D&JCh).

MIMIDS TO WARBLERS

Ontario's 9th Sage Thrasher, and 3rd in as many years, was recorded on Pelee I. May 17 (JHa). The province's 3rd record and *Thunder Bay's* first Sprague's Pipit was seen and photographed at T.C.B.O. May 29 (GG, DDe). Though not a particularly invasive winter, notable numbers of lingering



Only the third for Ontario was this Sprague's Pipit at Thunder Bay, Ontario, May 29, 1998.
Photograph/ Graeme Gibson

Bohemian Waxwings included 120 at Bolton Mar. 22 (v.o.) and 800 at Ottawa Mar. 28 (BD). A White-eyed Vireo e. to Presqu'île May 24 (TC) was noteworthy, while a Blue-headed Vireo at Pelee tied the Ontario record-early date Mar. 31 (DW).

A Blue-winged Warbler set an Ontario record-early date at Pelee Apr. 15 (JF), while one banded at T.C.B.O. May 13 (GG) furnished the 5th record for n. Ontario. Six singing Golden-winged at Rainy R. May 15 (m.ob.) were considered a very good total. Reports of the rare hybrid, "Lawrence's," came from Pelee May 2 (Jhu, NHo) & 10 (MC, LN), and Toronto May 16 (PS-S). A Nashville Warbler at Kingsville Apr. 9–12 (C&BGr) set an Ontario record arrival date. Two at Pelee Apr. 16 (GGe) were record-early there. A record-early N. Parula at Pelee Apr. 15 (AR, FU) was also eclipsed by a provincial record early one at Grimsby Mar. 27 (JDo et al.). A record-early Yellow at Bond Head, Durham, Apr. 2–8 (ML) paid regular visits to a feeder to survive. A Cape May at Selkirk Apr. 23 (JM) was 2 weeks ahead of others.

Sightings of "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warblers involved individuals at Toronto Apr. 23 (AA), Windsor May 1 (FU), and Pelee May 14 (S&WC). A Black-throated Green at Pelee Apr. 8–9 (AW, DDU) was very early. A Yellow-throated there Mar. 30–31 (DBe, JBr) furnished an Ontario record-early arrival. Pelee also hosted a Kirtland's Warbler May 15 (F&NL), maintaining a 4-year streak for the province. Prairie Warblers well to the north included a male at Mississagi Light, *Mani-*

toulin, May 17 (CWh) and *Rainy River's* first at Atikokan May 27 (DG). A Palm Warbler at Pelee Apr. 4 (PP, v.o.) set a park early date. In a spring with few fallouts, a record count of 51 Blackpoll Warblers at Pelee May 17 (FU) was noteworthy. A Black-and-white at Dundas Mar. 28 (GW) was exceptionally early. Provincial tallies of the traditional southern overshoots were quite low; they included 19 Prothonotarys, eight Worm-eatings, and 14 Kentuckys, totals which don't match a good year at Pelee. Two Yellow-breasted Chats at P.E.Pt. May 17 (JE, RDW) were notable that far east.

TANAGERS TO FINCHES

While not exceeding 1997's record total, this year's eight Summer Tanagers at Pelee Apr. 26–May 26 (m.ob.) was still well above average. The only other report came from Rondeau May 24 (JB). A *Pheucticus* grosbeak at Silver Islet Village, *Manitoulin*, May 10 (LR) left many experts scratching their heads as to its identification. The possibility of a hybrid Rose-breasted/Black-headed was considered. Though increasing in the north, a N. Cardinal at T.C.B.O. May 12 (GG) was still noteworthy. Lone Blue Grosbeaks included an ad. male at Toronto May 14 (LM, Jsm, CM), an ad. male at Pelee May 16 (G&KS, v.o.), and an imm. male there May 17–18 (C&WL, v.o.). An Indigo Bunting at Cranberry Marsh Apr. 30 (MB) was record early there. Northern Ontario's 2nd **Painted Bunting** was banded at T.C.B.O. May 15 (GG et al.). Sightings of Dickcissels involved three separate birds at Pelee May 12 (K&TC), May 18 (SP, CT), and May 19 (KK, v.o.), and one at L.P.B.O. May 31 (SM). An E. Towhee which wintered well n. at Madawaska was last seen Mar. 31 (AT). The Harmony, *Perth*, **Spotted Towhee** remained until at least Apr. 14 (m.ob.). Another was reported at Toronto May 7 (NMc).

Bucking the trend, very late Am. Tree Sparrows were seen at L.P.B.O. May 14 and Pelee May 13–14 (J&KD). The Dwight Chipping Sparrow successfully wintered and was last seen Mar. 21 (RT). A very early migrant was noted at Toronto Mar. 6 (BY). Individual Lark Sparrows at Pelee Apr. 20 (DS) and Long Pt. May 8 (CJ et al.) equalled the usual spring average. Perhaps the spring's excellent weather contributed to the low total, but just three Henslow's Sparrows, one at Rondeau Apr. 29 (KB, JB) and two at Pelee May 16 (AW, BL), speaks volumes about this species' continuing plight in the northeast. Conversely, above-average

counts of Le Conte's included four different birds at Pelee May 4–19 (m.ob.), singles at Rondeau Apr. 25 (BMa) and May 15 (JB), and an early one at T.C.B.O. Apr. 30. Pelee's seemingly annual spring Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was seen May 23 (m.ob.). A Fox Sparrow lingered at Presqu'île until May 15 (GBu), a record-late date. A Harris's Sparrow turned up at Bidwell, *Manitoulin*, Mar. 31–Apr. 19 (JJo). A Smith's Longspur found on Amherst I. Apr. 21–22 (AS, KE) furnished the Kingston area's 2nd record and was exceptional that far east.

Setting a provincial record-early date, a Baltimore Oriole appeared at Windsor Apr. 1 (WR). Shortly thereafter, one at Pelee Apr. 6 (TB) set another record there. Lone Orchard Orioles at Kingston May 7 (JE) and Smith Twp., *Peterborough*, May 18–31 (CS) were just beyond the limit of the species' range. Sightings of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were confined to the southwest with the exception of a female at Thunder Bay May 9 (ND) and one at Ignace May 15 (BMc). A W. Meadowlark spent time at T.C.B.O. May 18–22, obviously undecided as to which way to head next in the midst of all that boreal forest. Four Brewer's Blackbirds at P.E.Pt. Mar. 22 (K.F.N.) were well e. of their normal range.

After such an outstanding invasion, winter finches headed N in a hurry. The last Com. Redpoll was at Long Pt. Apr. 22 (L.P.B.O.). Seven different Hoary Redpolls lingered around Algonquin Mar. 7–Apr. 9 (m.ob.), and one was at Ancaster Mar. 5–10 (RPe, IS). The last White-winged Crossbills were at Long Pt. Apr. 8 (L.P.B.O.) and Ancaster Apr. 8–12 (RPe, IS), and the last Evening Grosbeak in the south was seen at London May 14 (AWH).

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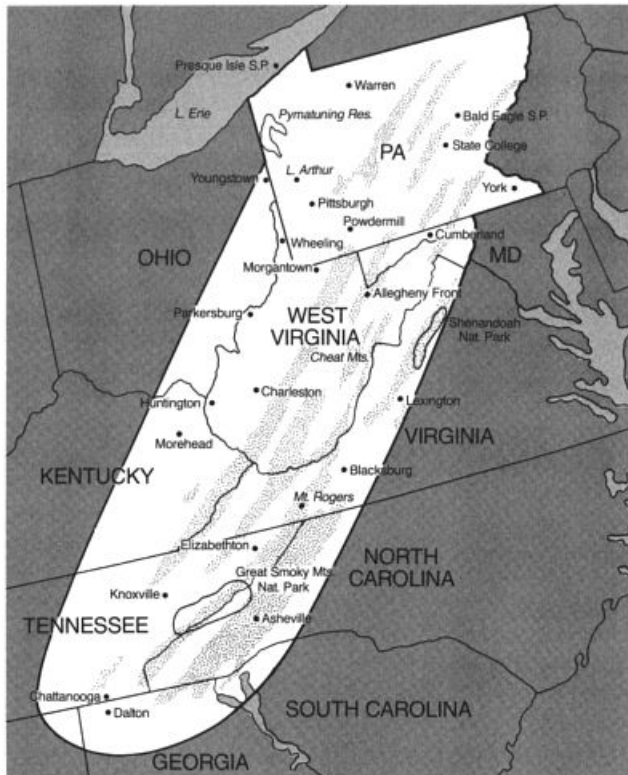
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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *Field Notes* are keyed on page 295.

appalachian region



GEORGE A. HALL

Surely a weird winter should be followed by a weird spring. If the season wasn't weird it was at least mixed up, both in weather and in birds. Can we blame it all on that "Latino infant" that has been in all the headlines? The last cold weather came in early March, and from mid-March to mid-May it was warm and rainy, with an April precipitation at Pittsburgh of 4.98 inches. Late May was warm and drier than normal. There were no major cold fronts to cause fallouts of migrants, but there were a series of heavy summerlike storms which caused flooding at some places. Plant development, including tree leaves, was more than two weeks ahead of schedule.

In March the migration was about on time, and a major cold front did cause a big fallout of waterfowl March 14. In April and early May, the migration fell behind schedule by as much as two weeks. When the warblers did come they were hard to see in the fully leaved out trees. But there was a

great paradox. While the bulk arrival of most passerine migrants was later than normal, there was a long list of very early arrival dates for individual birds. Some migrants were still passing through in the first week of June.

Most observers felt that migrants were in low numbers, but by the end of the period it appeared that the local breeding species were in near normal numbers, which suggests that in the absence of severe weather to ground them, and with the advanced plant development providing adequate food, the majority of migrants overflew the Region.

The only major banding station operating, Powermill Nature Reserve, banded only 1932 birds, lowest of the past 10 years. Of 46 species analyzed, 14 were one standard deviation (S.D.) below normal. These included nine Neotropicals migrants and Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, Field Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Song Sparrow. The other 32 species were netted in statistically average numbers (RCL, RM).