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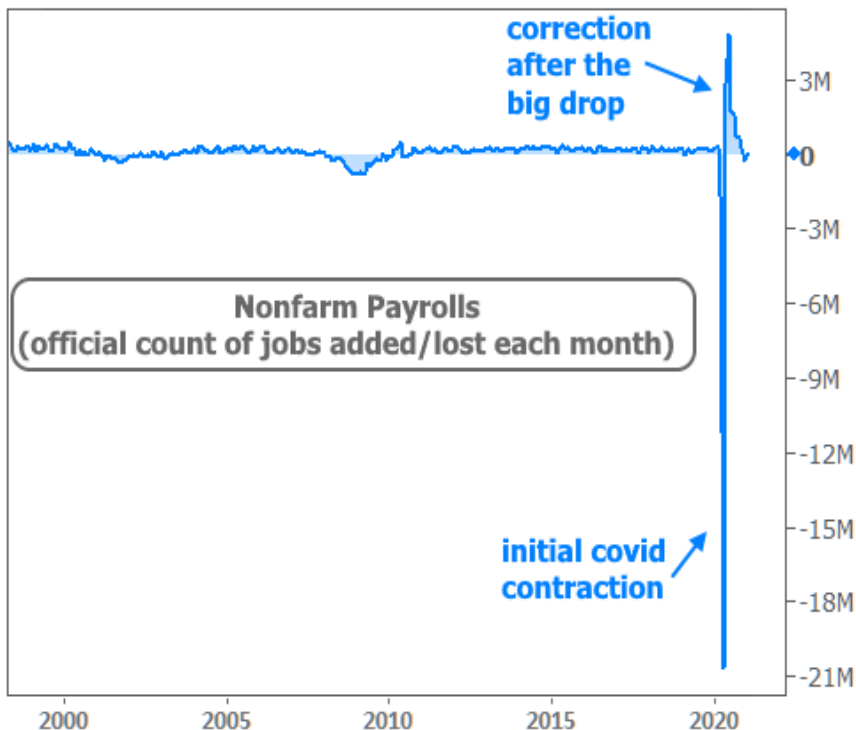
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## Rates Under Pressure Despite Weak Jobs Report

Economic data is traditionally one of the key contributors to interest rate movement. Of the regularly-scheduled reports, none has more market-moving street cred than The Employment Situation--otherwise known as "the jobs report" or simply NFP (due to its headline component: Non-Farm Payrolls).

The relationship between econ data and rates can wax and wane. Covid definitely threw a wrench in the works, and economists still don't know exactly how things will shake out. In general, the market is trading on the assumption that things continue to improve **even if** the data isn't making that case today.

In fact, today's jobs report specifically suggests something **quite different**. The economy only created 49k new jobs in January, and the last few reports were revised much lower to boot. Taken together, these reports effectively put an end to the "correction" phase of the labor market recovery.



## National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
<b>Mortgage News Daily</b>			
30 Yr. Fixed	7.07%	+0.02	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.45%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.51%	+0.02	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.26%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	7.02%	-0.01	0.00
<b>Freddie Mac</b>			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.86%	-0.01	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	+0.03	0.00

Rates as of: 6/28

## Market Data

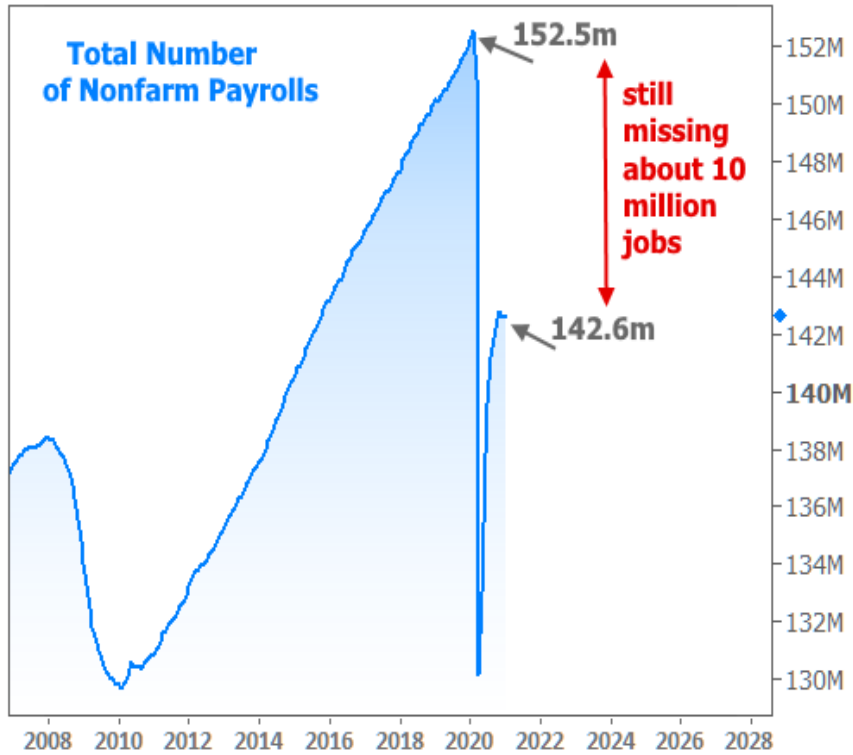
	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.5	98.49	-0.45
MBS GNMA 5.5	99.10	-0.44
10 YR Treasury	4.3931	-0.0049
30 YR Treasury	4.5597	-0.0043

Pricing as of: 6/30 10:43PM EST

## Recent Housing Data

	Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jun 12 208.5	+15.58%
Building Permits	Mar 1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar 1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar 693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb 75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb 3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar 51	+6.25%

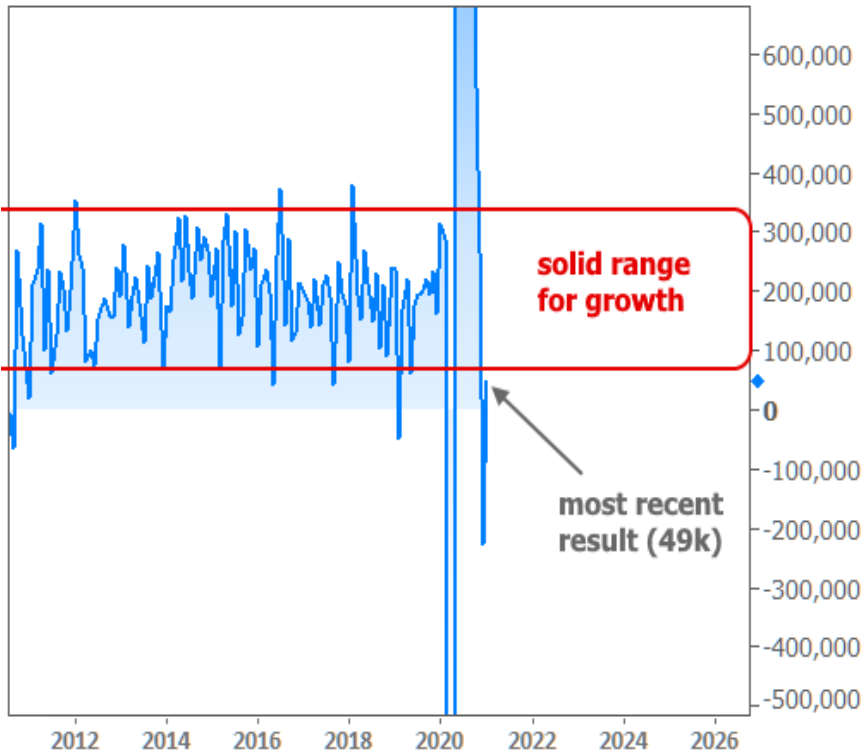
In other words, payrolls plummeted at the onset of covid ("contraction" phase). They'd been bouncing back in record fashion through September, but have since returned to **closer to zero** growth. That's not great news considering we're still roughly 10 million jobs away from pre-covid levels.



Based **solely** on the data above, interest rates shouldn't be eager to rise. A 10 million job deficit is a big deal and it speaks to a level of economic activity that promotes risk-aversion (which, in turn, benefits rates).

But rates have **other factors** on their mind. In fact, we don't even need to move on to other factors to consider one counterpoint. Simply put, the labor market recovery is **still playing out**. While it's true we've seen the big contraction and correction, there's a lot of uncertainty surrounding the coming months. It's too soon to declare the death of the labor market based on the past few months--especially when seasonal adjustments are considered.

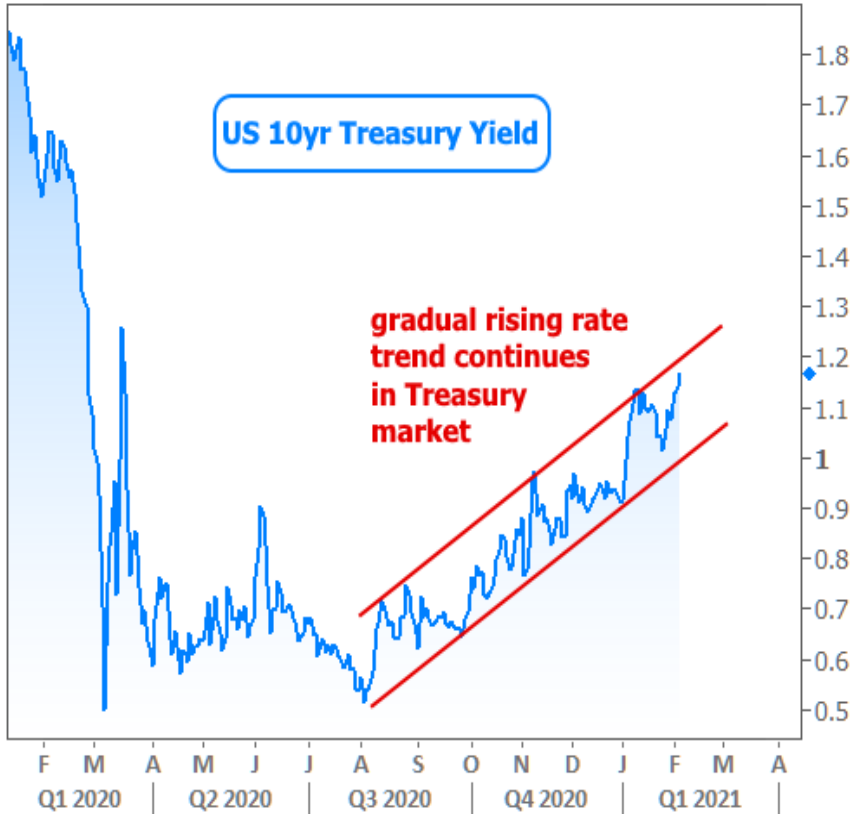
The following chart zooms in on the monthly job count to show the recent volatility and the normal range for solid job growth. One could easily imagine returning to that range as lockdown restrictions are eased and vaccine distribution improves. To a large extent, the bond market (and thus, interest rates) is operating based on its **best guesses about the next 6-12 months** as opposed to what it mostly already knew about January 2020. Bottom line: if job growth is going to end up in that "solid range," we wouldn't necessarily know it yet.



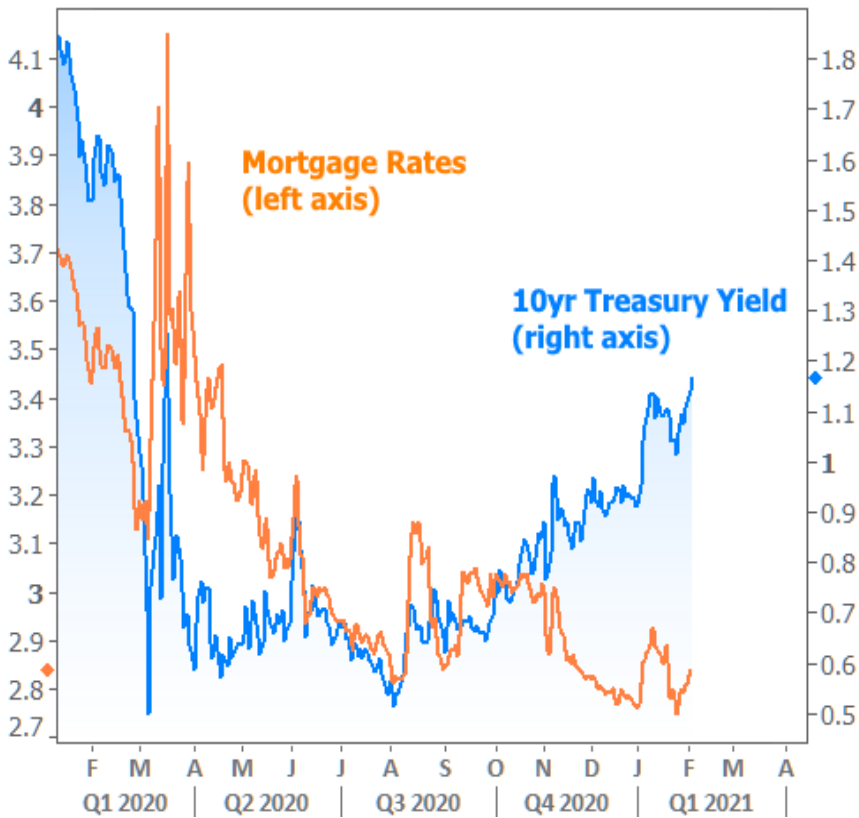
Moving on from jobs data, the bond market has other timely concerns. Next week brings another round of record-setting Treasury issuance. Treasuries = US government debt. The more money the government needs to spend (and the less revenue it takes in), the more Treasuries it must issue. The greater the issuance, the more **upward pressure on rates**--all other things being equal.

At the same time, congress passed a budget resolution that paves the way for the **\$1.9 trillion covid relief bill** to pass in as little as 2 weeks. Stimulus hurts bonds/rates on two fronts by increasing Treasury issuance and by (hopefully) strengthening the economy. A stronger economy can sustain higher interest rates, in general.

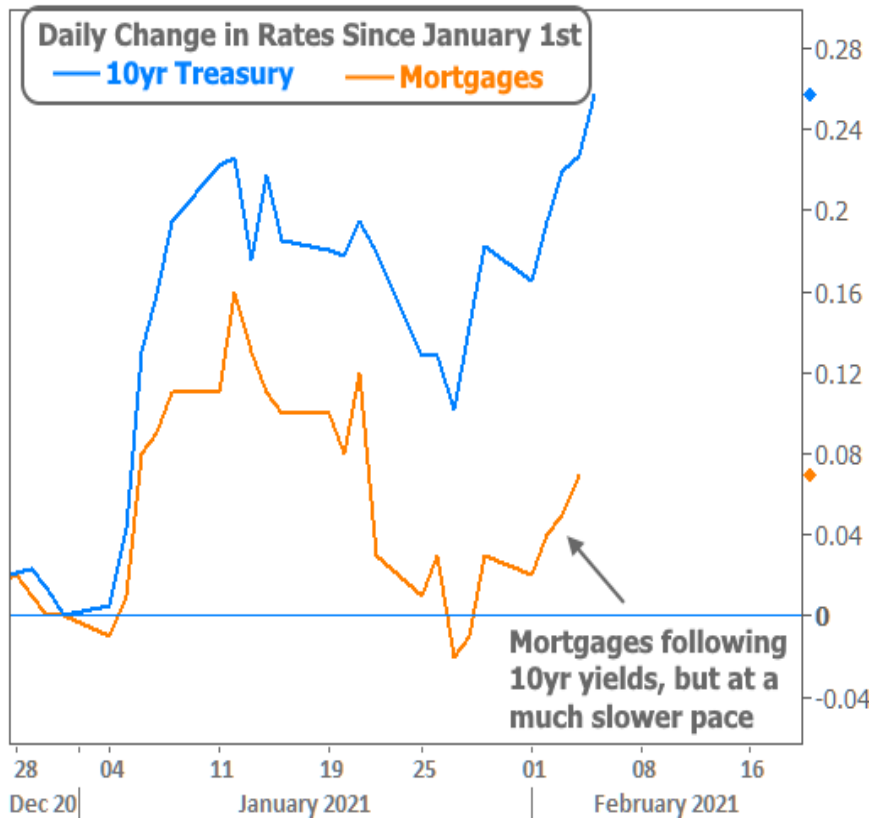
With all of the above in mind, it's no great surprise to see a continuation of a **well-established trend** toward higher yields in 10yr US Treasuries. The 10yr yield is the benchmark for longer-term rates in the US and it tends to correlate extremely well with mortgages. As such, this chart would normally be a concern for the mortgage market.



But as we discussed last week, mortgage rates have diverged from Treasury trends in an unprecedented way.

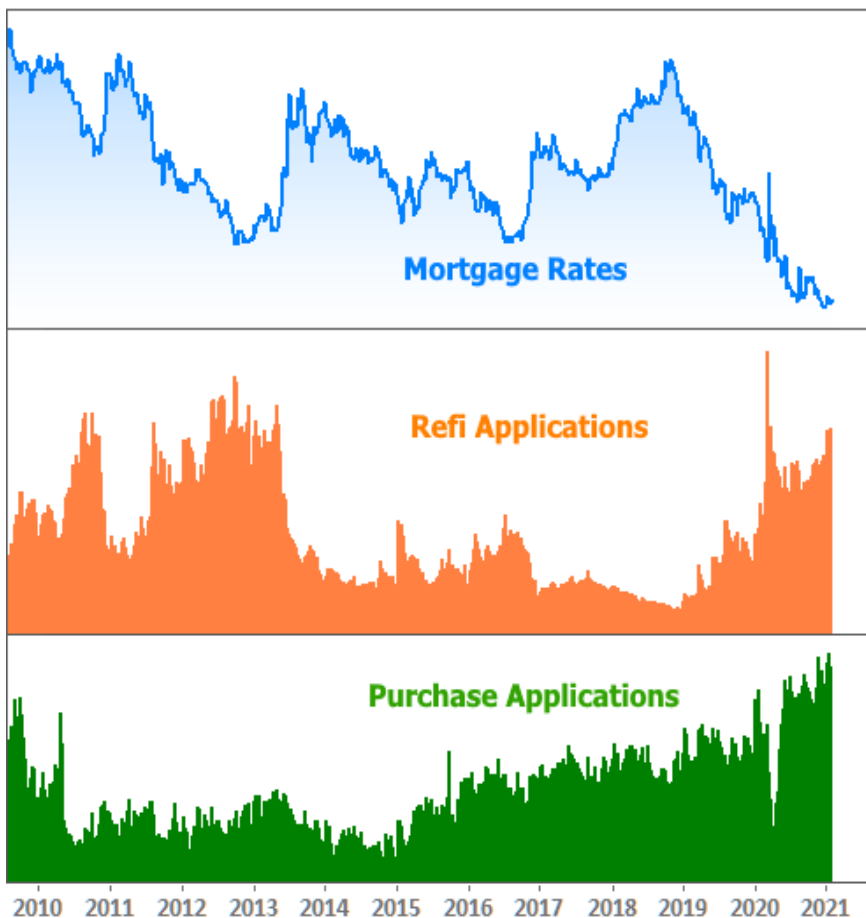


Despite the departure, the point of last week's newsletter was to provide another reminder that mortgage rates **can't keep this up forever**. Indeed, when we zoom in on the actual day-to-day changes in 10yr yields and mortgage rates, we can see strong correlation again--just with much smaller steps taken by mortgages.



The takeaway is that it's **no longer safe** to bank on a series of increasingly lower all-time lows in mortgage rates. As long as the broader bond market remains under pressure, so too will the mortgage market--even if it takes less damage by comparison. If these trends continue, mortgage rates may not rise as fast as Treasuries, but they'd still be rising.

For now though, the sun is still shining on the mortgage market. Both purchase and refi applications are soaring, and new housing inventory can't come fast enough.



Next week's focal point for interest rates will be the Treasury auctions in the middle of the week--especially the 10yr Note Auction on Wednesday. Last time around, that auction marked a turning point for a rising rate trend that shared several similarities with the current one.

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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
<b>Monday, Feb 01</b>				
10:00AM	Dec Construction spending (%)	1.0	0.9	0.9
10:00AM	Jan ISM Manufacturing PMI	58.7	60.0	60.7
<b>Tuesday, Feb 02</b>				
9:45AM	Jan ISM-New York index	818.2		817.6
<b>Wednesday, Feb 03</b>				
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	334.6		334.2
7:00AM	w/e MBA Refi Index	4746.2		4261.5
8:15AM	Jan ADP National Employment (k)	174	49	-123
10:00AM	Jan ISM N-Mfg PMI	58.7	56.8	57.2
<b>Thursday, Feb 04</b>				

Event Importance:

- No Stars = Insignificant
- ☆ Low
- ★ Moderate
- ★★ Important
- ★★★★ Very Important

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
8:30AM	Q4 Labor Costs Preliminary (%)	6.8	4.0	-6.6
8:30AM	Q4 Productivity Preliminary (%)	-4.8	-2.8	4.6
8:30AM	w/e Jobless Claims (k)	779	750	847
10:00AM	Dec Factory orders mm (%)	1.1	0.7	1.0
<b>Friday, Feb 05</b>				
8:30AM	Jan Non-farm payrolls (k)	49	50	-140
8:30AM	Jan Unemployment rate mm (%)	6.3	6.7	6.7
<b>Tuesday, Feb 09</b>				
1:00PM	3-Yr Note Auction (bl)	58		
<b>Wednesday, Feb 10</b>				
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	318.8		334.6
7:00AM	w/e MBA Refi Index	4549.2		4746.2
8:30AM	Jan Consumer Price Index (CPI) (%)	0.3	0.3	0.4
8:30AM	Jan Core CPI (Annual) (%)	1.4	1.5	1.6
10:00AM	Dec Wholesale inventories mm (%)	0.3	0.1	0.1
<b>Friday, Feb 12</b>				
10:00AM	Feb Consumer Sentiment	76.2	80.8	79.0
<b>Monday, Apr 12</b>				
1:00PM	10-yr Note Auction (bl)	38		
<b>Tuesday, Apr 13</b>				
1:00PM	30-Yr Bond Auction (bl)	24		

## Real Talk

At The Rate Shop, we're not your average mortgage banker. We specialize in bringing you ridiculously low interest rates that will make you wonder what the other guys are doing. In fact the ONLY objection we ever hear is "your rates sound too good to be true". Well they're not, and here is why...

After 15 years in the retail banking world I was frustrated with the high interest rates that came from that business model. As I looked around at all the bloated layers of management and their expensive salaries and the overhead of running a larger company (think rent costs, employee health and benefit costs, payroll taxes, and on and on) it dawned on me that I was a part of the problem, and the solution, for me at least, was so easy to see.

Start my own mortgage brokerage shop. No expensive executive salaries, no expensive building to pay rent at, no unnecessary employees and all the costs that are associated with that. What happens when you cut out all the fat? You can provide lower rates and lower closing costs. It's simple. Now here is the best part, you still get great service from a local Kansas City Lender. My mission is to let everyone know that low rates and great customer service are NOT mutually exclusive.

Thanks for coming along on this journey where Low Rates meet Great Service. The two do NOT have to be mutually exclusive. It's just a lie that the big box mortgage companies have been telling you for years. Don't believe me? Give me a call or shoot me a text on my personal cell phone today and compare my rates and costs up against any other lender in the country, and be prepared to be blown away.

**Mike Baker**

