

## REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Early September was warm, 84°F on the 3rd and 4th, becoming hot the following week, reaching 98° on the 9th. A cold front pushed in 11 September, dropping the temperature to a high of 73° with light rain. More rain arrived with the remnants of Hurricane Isidore on 27-29 September, helping to break the drought. Monthly rainfall was 2.45" above normal. Early October was similarly warm, reaching 80° on the 3rd. The following evening the edge of Hurricane Lily brought more rain, and the accompanying high winds felled trees that closed roads around Lake Placid and left 300 without power in Keene Valley. The first heavy frost at Inlet was 9 October, and first snowfall was on the 17th. Month's end saw 3" of snow at Witherbee on the 26th. The first major snowfall of up to 8" began 5 November. During the past four years, Lake Placid has had only 4" and Elizabethtown none on the ground by 6 November; this year Lake Placid had 8"+ and E-town 5". Another warming trend began on the 8th, reaching a high of 71° by Veterans Day. On 17 November a much-needed foot of snow fell on the Mt. Van Hoevenberg ski area, with another 9" at Inlet between 29-30 November. Studies suggest that the Adirondacks are heating up twice as fast as the rest of the state. Between 1995 and 1999, the state warmed by 1°, while the Adirondacks were 1.8° warmer.

Some of the most interesting sightings came from the continued autumn lakewatches being conducted on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain by David Hoag, Theodore Murin and others. About half of 80 Red-throated Loons seen flying south through the narrows off Thompson's Point, VT, by Murin and others on 16 November were in NYS waters, passing Split Rock. A juvenile **Northern Gannet** was also on the Split Rock side, within Essex County, on 19 November. From Grand Isle, VT, Hoag witnessed vast flocks of Snow Geese flying in clouds in Clinton County: 40-50 thousand on 22 October, 25-30 thousand on 10 November

and 40-60 thousand on the 12th. He also noted an adult male **King Eider** in basic plumage in a flock of White-winged Scoters off Gravelly Point at the north end of Cumberland Head at 11 a.m. on 6 October, also from his vantage point on Grand Isle. A juvenile **Black-legged Kittiwake** was observed over Split Rock by Murin's team on 16 November.

The enormous numbers of Snow Geese gathering in Clinton County now exceed numbers at the Goose Viewing Area of Dead Creek WMA near Addison, VT, where Murin & Pfeiffer (*Birdwatching in Vermont*, 2002) reported, "[Snow] Geese numbers peak roughly around the middle of October, with as many as 15,000 to 20,000 birds." The numbers also obliterate the NYS maxima in *Bull's Birds of New York State* (1998), including the fall maxima 12,000 at Point au Roche State Park, Clinton County, 16 December 1990. In addition to Point au Roche, the Chazy Rivers area to the north is also a favored rafting and staging ground, with vast fields for feeding extending north into Québec. Visiting Clinton County on 13 November, Dave Hoag found ~57,000 **Snow Geese**, most of them at Point au Roche.

Lest these counts be questioned, a word on methodology is offered. During his 13 November visit, Hoag estimated 55-60 thousand on the water at Point au Roche, but photographed them for future recount. At the time, he visually estimated twice in various blocks of 100, 500, 1000 and 5000. Nine cliff-top fields-of-view in the spotting scope yielded:

$1.5K+2.5K+2.5K+13K+12K+10K+7.5K+5K+2.5K = \sim 56,500$ .

Later, after inking grids onto the photos, he counted each individual near goose. In middle-distance areas, orange beaks x 1.3 were counted, to account for those facing away, not to mention many more asleep. Geese were packed tighter into the far-distance grids, adding to the problems of compressed perspective and film grain, so the estimated dimensions of far flocks were multiplied. This decreased the original estimate, yielding a new total of ~50 thousand on the water, perhaps more. Adding 4250-4750 that landed at Point au Roche after photography, 500 on the water at Chazy Landing and 2000 in a Cooperville field yields the 13 November total of Snow Geese in Clinton County of ~57,000. This also exceeds the previous single-day record counts of 40-45 thousand Snow Geese set over the past three years in the same vicinity. We commend Dave Hoag for his persistence and care in documenting this increase.

The NYS Department of Health informed the Essex County Public Health Department on 20 September that a Blue Jay from the Town of Ticonderoga (submitted 8 September) and an American Crow from the Town of Westport (9 September) tested positive for West Nile Virus, the first positive tests for birds in the county this year. The finds are not unexpected, since the county Public Health Department has been vigilant in collecting and submitting specimens for testing, but demonstrate that WNV continues in the Adirondack-Champlain Region.

Among unexpected sightings were the 2800-3000 Ring-necked Ducks on Highlands Forge Lake on 11 November, the large, dense raft covering the entire length of this pond at 564', just above and west of Willsboro Bay. Another surprise was the **Purple Gallinule** seen by many at Ausable Point GMA between 23

September and 3 October, and amazingly just one of three locations where this southerner was found in the state this fall. A magnificent color photo by photo editor Dave Paczak of the bird in ungainly flight appeared in the *Press-Republican* on 6 October, accompanying an article by staff writer Jeff Myers. Yet another **Fish Crow** was reported, this latest in Rugar Woods, Plattsburgh, 1 October. **Prairie Warbler** is difficult enough to find here during Atlas season, so two fall records from Clinton County are noteworthy: Miner Institute 12 October and Point au Fer 27 October, the latter with chickadees and kinglets.

In spite of the various rarities, just 152 species were reported, down from 156 last fall and well below the high of 171 species reported in 1999, just prior to Atlas 2000. Only a half-dozen contributors submitted fall departure date reporting forms. Due to a general lack of interest, the Fall Departure Date Table has been dropped. There is still statewide interest in a Spring Arrival Date Table, so observers are asked to be somewhat more diligent about spring arrival forms, available from the Regional Editor. Finally, sincere thanks to the many observers who contributed to an outstanding Atlas 2000 season in this Region, and especially to those who met the stated deadline of 15 September. To you few, this Regional Coordinator is most grateful.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt WMA; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; CR – Chazy Rivers; FB – Ferd's Bog; IL – Indian L; KB – King's Bay WMA; LL – Long L; PtR – Point au Roche SP; SB – Sabattis Bog; TL – Tupper L; WM – Wickham Marsh.

### LOONS – DUCKS

**Red-throated Loon:** arr 2 Comfort Bay, CH 13 Sep; 3 there 15 Sep (MD); 5 Coll Bay 18 Oct (JP, J&PT); ~40 Split Rock southbound 16 Nov (LH, TM, JO), a good showing.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** AP 21 Sep-26 Nov; TL 16 Oct (JEC); Hadley Pd 11 Nov (DR), good.

**Red-necked Grebe:** arr AP 18 Sep (J&RH).

**N. GANNET:** juv Split Rock 19 Nov

(TM), 2nd ESSE & Reg record.  
**Snow Goose:** arr 3 KB 3 Sep (BK, CM), early; max ~57,000 CLIN 13 Nov (DH), of which ~50,000 were at PtR, new record max CLIN, Reg 7 and NYS; flock over Indian L HAMI 6 Oct (J&SP, DS, J&PT); ~50 Bald Mt HAMI 16 Nov (JEC), few previous county records; hundreds over CH in snowstorm 17 Nov (NO).  
**Brant:** arr 2 juv CH 11 Oct (BK).  
**Blue-winged Teal:** Barnum Pd 17 Sep; only sighting.  
**Green-winged Teal:** CR 6 Oct; AP 17 Nov, only sightings.  
**Canvasback:** arr 2 KB 21 Oct (DR); 4 L Adirondack 15 Nov (JE, M&WM), 2nd HAMI record.  
**Redhead:** arr AP 20 Oct (DR).  
**Ring-necked Duck:** 16 TL 16 Oct; 25 AP 26 Oct; max ~2800-3000 Highlands Forge L Willsboro 11 Nov (DR), eclipsing previous ESSE record of 312 at Moody Pd; 18 L Adirondack 15 Nov (JE, M&WM), new max HAMI; outstanding numbers.  
**Greater Scaup:** 12 AP 4 Nov (DR).  
**Lesser Scaup:** 250 AP 4 Nov (DR); 30 Shallow L 5 Nov (GL), 2nd HAMI record & new max.  
**scaup sp.:** max 600 KB 21 Oct (DR).  
**KING EIDER:** basic ad drake north of Gravelly Pt CH 6 Oct (DH), 1st CLIN & 3rd Reg record.  
**Surf Scoter:** arr CH 12 Oct (NO); max 9 PtR 18 Oct (BK), rare here.  
**White-winged Scoter:** arr 4 Willsboro 25 Sep (PW); max 10 midlake CLIN 6 Oct (DH); 2 CH 21-26 Oct (NO), uncommon here.  
**Long-tailed Duck:** arr drake + 2 hens Plattsburgh Bay 22 Nov (NO).  
**Bufflehead:** arr AP 20 Oct; 30 Shallow L 5 Nov (GL), new max HAMI; 3 L Adirondack 15 Nov (JE, M&WM), 2nd fall record HAMI.  
**Com. Merganser:** hen & 11 yg Elk L 19 Sep (JD), later than Atlas 2000 *Handbook for Workers*.

**Ruddy Duck:** arr 3 AP 2 Nov (J&RH), rarely reported.

#### HAWKS – ALCIDS

**Bald Eagle:** widespread reports of a dozen or more of various ages.  
**Golden Eagle:** imm north of Northway Exit 30 7 Sep (DR), grabbed one of 7 Am. Crows; imm The Brothers Keene 20 Oct (J&PT); imm Coot Hill Moriah same day (MM); a good showing here.  
**Merlin:** Bigelow Rd FRAN 16 Sep (DR); AP 28 Sep (SJ, BK); only reports.  
**Peregrine Falcon:** CR 3 Sep (BK, CM) & 21 Oct (DR); only reports.  
**Sora:** AP 24 Sep (J&RH), only post-nesting report.  
**PURPLE GALLINULE:** imm AP 23 Sep (GD, ph)-3 Oct (!BK, CM), 1st CLIN & Reg record of this NYS rarity, viewed by many.  
**Am. Coot:** AP & Westport Nov, where found in recent winters.  
**Black-bellied Plover:** arr 2 AP 18 Sep (J&RH).  
**Am. Golden-Plover:** WRS 4 Nov (DR), late ESSE.  
**Semipalmated Plover:** max 12 KB 3 Sep (BK, CM).  
**Lesser Yellowlegs:** AP 20 Oct-3 Nov (DR), only report.  
**Greater Yellowlegs:** AP 9 Sep & 2 Nov; PtR 28 Sep (J&RH).  
**Ruddy Turnstone:** arr AP 18 Sep (J&RH).  
**Sanderling:** AP 18 Sep (J&RH), only report.  
**Least Sandpiper:** max 4 KB 7 Sep (BK, CM).  
**Baird's Sandpiper:** KB 7 Sep (BK, CM), always a good find.  
**Pectoral Sandpiper:** max 6 Westport 18 Oct (JP, J&PT), only report.  
**Dunlin:** arr KB 13 Sep; 2 Monty's Bay 9 Oct (BK, CM).  
**Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr AP 18 Sep (J&RH), a good find.  
**Wilson's Snipe:** AP 3 Nov (DR), late.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** 10 Westport 19 Oct (JP, J&PT); Westport 23 Nov (EA, SO); low numbers.

**Iceland Gull:** arr Plattsburgh 24 Sep (J&RH), record early CLIN & Reg.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** juv over Split Rock 16 Nov (LH, TM, JO), 2nd ESSE & Reg record.

#### DOVES – WOODPECKERS

**Long-eared Owl:** Dickinson FRAN 24 Oct (MM), an excellent find, but surely more widespread than Atlas 2000 records suggest.

**N. Saw-whet Owl:** calling CR 20 Sep-2 Oct (H&RB), seemingly uncommon CLIN.

**Com. Nighthawk:** 7 Ausable R 12 Sep (DR), always welcome.

**Belted Kingfisher:** Inlet 23 Oct (GL), late HAMI.

**Black-backed Woodpecker:** Paul Smiths & FB; only reports.

**N. Flicker:** max 60 Bigelow Rd 16 Sep (DR), record high FRAN & Reg.

#### FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

**N. Shrike:** arr Westport 28 Nov (DN).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Keene 7 Sep (J&PT), only report.

**Gray Jay:** Beaver Bk, Bigelow Rd, FB, Hitchens Pd, L Clear feeder, Madawaska, Oregon Plains, Paul Smiths, SB; mostly known areas.

**Blue Jay:** max 50 Shallow L trail 5 Nov (GL), high HAMI.

**FISH CROW:** Rugar Woods Plattsburgh 1 Oct (BK), 2nd CLIN & 5th Reg record.

**Boreal Chickadee:** BB, Brown's Tract, FB, LL, McNaughton, Mt Marcy, Paul Smiths, Second Brother, Tioga Pt; a good showing, but expected locations.

**Tufted Titmouse:** AP, Wadhams, Westport, but undoubtedly many more present.

**Carolina Wren:** Elizabethtown 27 Oct (MG), at 1100', relatively high location; Hogansburg 15 Nov (HW), where present

at feeder winter 2001-02.

**Winter Wren:** family Yard Mt 4 Sep (J&PT), NYS record late for fl.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** family Slide Mt 4 Sep (J&PT), record late for fl.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** family 4440' Mt Marcy 5 Sep (J&PT), record late ad defending imm.

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** CLIN 7 Sep (BK), only report, but a good find here.

**Am. Pipit:** arr 6 CR 22 Sep (NO); max 30 CR 21 Oct (DR); last WM 26 Nov (GW).

**Cedar Waxwing:** max 100+ Westport 18 Oct, feeding on red cedar; numerous other reports; one Plattsburgh Oct flew to ground, then back to tree with cat-killed shrew (JH)!

#### WARBLERS

**Prairie Warbler:** Miner Inst CLIN 12 Oct (NO); Pt au Fer KB 27 Oct (J&RH), record late CLIN & Reg.

**Palm Warbler:** 4500' Mt Marcy 5 Sep (J&PT), unexpected; *D.p. palmarum* LL 21-22 Sep (JEC); max 4 FB 29 Sep (GL); *D.p. palmarum* Hitchens Bog 30 Sep (JEC); a fine showing.

**N. Waterthrush:** Plattsburgh 7 Oct (JAC), late.

#### TANAGERS – WEAVERS

**Fox Sparrow:** Elizabethtown 21 Nov (JP); Chilson c. 25 Nov (LC), record late ESSE.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Westport 18 Oct (J&PT), late.

**Swamp Sparrow:** Essex 3 Nov (J&PT), late.

**White-throated Sparrow:** Inlet 17 Nov (GL), late HAMI.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** 2 Indian L 6 Oct (J&SP, DS, J&PY), rare HAMI.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** 200-300 Inlet 28 Oct (GL), overhead at dark; 75 WRS 3 Nov (J&PT).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Plattsburgh 11 Oct (BK, CM), only report.

**Purple Finch:** 2 Second Brother 20 Oct; 3

Paul Smiths early Nov; 3 TL 15 Nov;  
Keene 23-25 Nov; only reports received,  
but reportedly more widespread at other  
higher elevation sites.

**House Finch:** CH 27 Oct, only report  
received!

**Am. Goldfinch:** 1600' Dannemora 19 Oct  
(J&RH), feeding yg, late NYS record  
according to *Handbook for Workers*;  
widespread at feeders as season  
progressed.

**Evening Grosbeak:** Paul Smiths early  
Nov (BM); 6-8 Wilson's Pd trail 25 Nov  
(GL); only reports following the breeding  
season.

#### **ADDENDA**

**Glossy Ibis:** juv CR 10 Aug (BK).

**Western Sandpiper:** AP 26 Aug (J&RH).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Patent Rd CLIN  
11 Aug (BK).