

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Fall birding this year consisted largely of random observations, some startlingly good. The Coot Hill hawk watch was visited only on 25 September for five hours with southeast winds, ending with the wanton shooting of a migrating falcon. Bird-banding near Elizabethtown was limited to just nine days between 29 September-30 November, with only 66 individuals of 13 species banded. A trip to the Four Brothers Islands on 19 September discovered a record-late shorebird, while the last trip to the islands on 23 October was turned back at mid-lake by wind and waves, but the crew was rewarded later the same afternoon with a rare sparrow at the Westport beach. Birding was judged "pretty interesting" near Tupper Lake and that seemed a fair regional assessment as well. September was generally warm and sunny, with temperatures averaging 4° F above normal and sunshine 9% above average. Rainfall was 3.77 inches and average wind speed 8.2 m.p.h. This provided several late departures, a few good shorebirds, and some scattered groundings of passerines on foggy mornings, but migration was sluggish.

An earthquake registering a magnitude of 4.5 to 5.0, its epicenter near Newcomb, struck on the morning of 7 October, with the first and major shock felt at about 6:20 a.m. At Paradox, flock after flock of Canada Geese flew over all night before, and all day after the shaking and rumbling, and—with more tremors just before dark—kept coming, to the shrieking of a Barred Owl. Meanwhile, earthquake day at Tupper Lake marked the passage of 1,212 geese in 18 flocks. When skies cleared on 9 October, the great goose migration started up again with 40 flocks, some of over 100 honkers, going over Paradox, where the pulsing rumble of another aftershock was felt early the next morning. Speculator was the coldest spot in the nation on 20 October, with a low of 7°, and Saddleback Mt. and other peaks were snow-covered by the 27th.

November was warm and wet, with temperatures 1.5° F above average and the average monthly temperature 44° F. This was the second wettest November on record, boasting precipitation of 6.85 inches. Otherwise, weather conditions were about normal (4.7" snowfall, 27% possible sunshine, and 9.1 m.p.h. winds). Snowfalls early in the month were confined to higher elevations, but most of the region was dampened by a heavy, wet storm 15-16 November that missed only the lowest valleys. By the end of the season, however, the ground was largely bare under about 1,000' elevation.

Some 130 species, plus a hybrid, were reported, with many more birds undoubtedly present. Rarities included a Little Blue Heron, a Long-billed Dowitcher, a Connecticut Warbler, and a Sharp-tailed Sparrow, plus a number of birds no less noteworthy. If a relative handful of observers (fewer than twenty submitting written records) can locate so many good birds, while building up woodpiles and attending autumn bird conferences, one wonders how many birds were missed. This is always true to a certain extent, but more so following an active Atlas season. To those who return to quarters outside the region come fall, we miss you.

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LOONS-DUCKS: a Com. Loon was on Tupper L. thru the period and one at Port Douglas 8 Oct.; multiples included three on Lower Ausable L. and five on Upper Ausable L. 6 Sept. (KD), and three on Tupper L. 15 Oct. (MV). A Pied-billed Grebe was at Westport 3 Oct. (GC, EJ, JP); one at Tupper L. from 6 Oct., with two present 7 Nov. (CD). A Horned Grebe was on Heart Bay, L. George, 3 Sept. (DC), with later reports from North West Bay in Oct. and northern L. George in Nov. Red-necked Grebes included two at Westport 24 Oct. (RH), four at Bulwagga Bay 15 Nov. (TB, GC), and one at Essex harbor 21 Nov. (EJ, JP). A Great Blue Heron was flying toward Penfield Pd. 1 Nov. The Great Egret in a wetland along the Northway near milepost 103 on 11 Sept. was unexpected, yet provides at least the tenth regional record (EJ). An imm. **LITTLE BLUE HERON** was at Plattsburgh 4-9 Sept. (CM, TO), together with two Snowy Egrets present from 3-10 Sept. (BB, JG, MG, TO, SM, CM). Snow Goose: 40 Clinton Co. 28 Sept. (HB, RB), 115 Moriah 17 Oct. (GC), two Tupper L. 29 Nov. (CD). A Green-winged Teal was on Dug Mountain Ponds 8 Oct. with blacks and mergansers (HJ). Am. Black Duck: max 75 Westport 18 Oct. Mallard: max 25 L. George 5 Nov.; hybrid Westport 24 Oct. A few female No. Pintails were at Ausable Point 12 Sept. (SM). Ring-necked Duck: arr Tupper L. 10 Oct., max 30 there 7 Nov.; two Westport 18 Oct. Two White-winged Scoters were on L. George 28 Oct. (DC). Com. Goldeneye: arr Tupper L. 25 Oct.; max 110 L. George 13 Nov. Bufflehead: three arr North West Bay 27 Oct. Hooded Merganser: max 41 Tupper L. 19 Nov. (CD). Com. Merganser: max 10 L. George 13 Nov. The five Ruddy Ducks at Tupper L. 7 Nov. provide only the sixth regional record (CD).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: four passed over Coot Hill hawk watch 25 Sept. (EJ, JP). Osprey: one Coot Hill 25 Sept.; one Tupper L. 7 Oct., where a hardy bird continued fishing in falling snow 17-18 Nov. (CD). Bald Eagle: imm Paradox L. 22 Oct. (TM); two imm frequented the Crown Point historic site 1-14 Nov. (GF); one at Tupper L. 29-30 Nov. made repeated passes at a duck that dove as the eagle came near (CD). No. Harrier: irregular reports from the Champlain district and Tupper area to early Nov. Sharp-shinned Hawk: three Coot Hill 25 Sept.; one chasing feeder birds at Tupper L. 6 Oct. and thru Nov. seen taking a male Evening Grosbeak on 25 Nov. A No. Goshawk was heard calling at dawn on 14 Nov. near Paradox. Broad-winged Hawk: 10 Coot Hill 25 Sept. Red-tailed Hawk: three Coot Hill 25 Sept.; many reports from lower elevations, and one at Tupper 13 Nov. Rough-legged Hawk: arr Crown Point and Essex in Oct. Am. Kestrel: 12 Coot Hill 25 Sept., including one shot from the sky as it migrated past; when confronted, the perpetrator denied hitting the bird, but soon left the summit, accompanied by others in a convoy of four-wheel drive trucks. Curiously, all Ring-necked Pheasants were reported this fall from highland areas away from the main Atlas breeding range: a male was at Paradox 30 Sept., while four cocks and six hens visited a Tupper L. feeder 10 Nov., and several frequented the village of Saranac L. The numerous Ruffed Grouse included one partridge in a cherry tree at Tupper L. As L. Champlain water levels slowly dropped, exposing mudflats, the shorebird picture belatedly brightened. Westport beach had a Black-bellied Plover 18 Oct. (GC, EJ, JP) to 24 Oct. (EJ, JP), as well as Lesser Golden-Plover 3 Oct. (GC, EJ, JP). Bulwagga Bay campsite had a Semipalmated Plover 20 Sept. (GC). Westport had a Lesser Yellowlegs 3 Sept. (GC) and a Solitary Sandpiper 25 Sept. (EJ, JP). Much remains to be learned about migrant stopovers on the Champlain island, but a

record-late Sanderling on the shingle beach of Island D, Four Brothers Islands, 19 Sept. was noteworthy (TB, RD, GF, RM JP). Other Westport visitors included a White-rumped Sandpiper 18 Oct. (GC, EJ, JP) to 29 Oct. (EJ, JP); up to three Dunlin on 18 Oct. (GC, EJ, JP); and a **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** 25 Sept. thru 18 Oct., for only the second regional record (EJ, JP). Bonaparte's Gulls were reported from Westport in Sept.-Oct., max 400 there on 2 Oct. (GC); Willsboro Bay in Oct.; and Bulwagga Bay in Nov. Up to four Great Black-backed Gulls frequented North West Bay.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Snowy Owls are rare and irregular in this region, so one at Little Simonds Pd. 12-13 Nov. (JM) and two at Gabriels 14 Nov. (TM) represented an invasion of sorts. Barred Owls were engaged in active courtship calling, including the woofing display, at Paradox from 1 Sept.-1 Oct., where a Whip-poor-will was also heard calling on 3-4 Sept., last of the season (MB). A flight of Com. Nighthawks hunted insects along the Saranac R. near Cadyville in mid-Sept. (TO). Last Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were at Tupper L. 19 Sept. (CD) and near Elizabethtown 1 Oct. (JP).

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Late flycatchers at Tupper L included Least Flycatcher: 3 Sept., E. Phoebe: 2 Oct., and Great Crested Flycatcher: 11 Sept.; Tupper also had four Horned Larks in the municipal park 13 Nov., two there 22 Nov., and two late Barn Swallows 3 Sept. (CD). The only sightings of Gray Jays were of three at Sabattis Rd. Bog 17 Oct. (CD) and three encounters with at least five jays at Spring Pond Bog on 15 Nov. (TB, GTC, JP). Com. Ravens were widely reported. A hiker on Lower Wolfjaw saw eight Boreal Chickadees. Tufted Titmice were at several locations in Saranac L. A Winter Wren was at Paradox to 29 Sept., where Ruby-crowned Kinglets were last located in an alder swamp with Golden-crowned on 9 Oct. (MB). Last Hermit Thrush was at Tupper L. 15 Oct. A Water Pipit was strolling on the tarmac in the Tupper L. municipal park 13 Nov., feeding on worms. Cedar Waxwings cleared out of the region after a summer of teaching Atlas observers the meaning of ubiquitous, with the last three at Tupper 17 Sept. (CD). No. Shrike: arr The Glen, Jay, 26 Oct. (RH); later reported from Saranac L and Tupper L.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Late vireos included Solitary at Tupper L. 21 Sept., Philadelphia near Elizabethtown 10 Sept., and Red-eyed at Tupper L. 11 Sept. Observers wild over spring arrival dates generally fail to show the same enthusiasm for fall departure, with the result that many species simply fade with the passing of summer. This is especially obvious with warblers, but the following records provide at least a general picture: Nashville Warbler at Tupper L. to 8 Oct. (CD), No. Parula along the Raquette R. 18 Oct. (JDD), and Magnolia Warbler at Tupper L. to 11 Sept., where up to three Cape Mays were present 3-25 Sept., vigorously defending territory around a suet feeder from chickadees, nuthatches, vireos, and other warblers (CD). Black-throated Green Warbler: five at Moriah 17 Sept. (GC), last at Tupper L. 18 Sept. Palm Warbler: Tupper L. on 1 and 8 Oct. (CD) Bay-breasted Warbler: four Elizabethtown 10 Sept. (GC). Black-and-white Warbler was still singing at Tupper L. 10 Sept. Am. Redstart: Tupper L. 9 Sept. (CD). Ovenbird was still singing at Paradox 6 Sept. (MB). **CONNECTICUT WARBLER:** Elizabethtown 10 Sept. in grounded wave of migrants, including Nashville for comparison (EJ, KO, JP). Com. Yellowthroat: last three at Tupper L. 20 Sept. Wilson's Warbler: Tupper L. 6 Oct. (CD).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Scarlet Tanager: Tupper L to 22 Sept. (CD). A female No. Cardinal appeared at a Mountain View feeder (EH). Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Paradox to 28 Sept. Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Tupper L. 20 Oct. (CD), with widespread reports thereafter. Chipping Sparrow: last at Tupper L. 28 Oct. (CD). Among the several sparrows in stream-side willows and cattails at the Westport beach on 23 Oct., a day of southerly but blustery winds, was a **SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** (TB, GC, NM, JP, DR), remaining until the following morning, 24 Oct. (RH); this apparently provides a third regional record. Fox Sparrows arr Tupper L. 26 Oct. (CD), Bloomingdale 27 Oct. (WR); last noted 15 Nov. at Tupper. Swamp Sparrow: last at Westport beach on 2 Nov. (TB, GC, NM). White-throated Sparrow: max 16 Tupper L. 24 Sept. White-crowned Sparrow: Tupper L. 25 Sept.-24 Oct.

max eight on 9 Oct. Dark-eyed Juncos were widely abundant, with 15 at Tupper L. 12 Oct. and 16 banded near Elizabethtown 17 Oct., numbers then declining with the arrival of colder weather. A good early flurry of Snow Buntings was noted; three Collums 8 Oct., one Paradox 22 Oct. (TM), five Westport beach 29 Oct. (EJ, JP), 25 Tupper L. 18 Nov. (CD), and 25 near Elizabethtown 25 Nov. (EJ, JP). Tupper L. had 300 Red-winged Blackbirds 25 Oct., 300 Com. Grackles 6 Oct. A No. Oriole was still at Tupper L. 1 Oct. (CD), and an adult male appeared near a Keeseville feeder 28 Nov., apparently feeding on frozen apples (JG). First Pine Grosbeak was at Saranac L. 14 Nov. (GTC). Purple Finches accompanied by begging young were at Tupper L. 3 Sept., but numbers dwindled thereafter, with the last at Paradox 7 Nov. House Finch: max 15 Port Henry 12 Sept. (GC); one appeared at a Lake Placid feeder 23 Oct. (PT), although a pair that arr in Saranac L in the spring and spent the summer left with the Purple Finches. Com. Redpolls arr Tupper L. 13 Nov. (J & RK). Small numbers of Pine Siskins were reported from Elizabethtown, Moriah, Westport, and Tupper L. An Am. Goldfinch was feeding two begging young at Tupper L. 17 Sept., and small numbers remained present thru the period near Elizabethtown, Indian Lake, Keene, Newcomb, Paradox and Saranac L. Evening Grosbeaks began to visit feeders in late Oct. with flocks of up to 75 noted thereafter

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REGION 8 — HUDSON-MOHAWK

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What is a typical Fall Season? Apparently there is none quite typical except that we begin it 1 September and end it 30 November. Some birds operate on an internal clock which rings an alarm about a certain date on which the species head south; others use the weather combined with, probably, an internal alarm governed by sexual hormones in the spring and perhaps hunger and other stirrings in the fall. Despite the pronounced vagaries of the weather this fall in the Capital District area, those species with working internal alarms kept to their schedules. The vireos and wood warblers moved out of Region Eight pretty much on time. After mid-October only the Yellow-rumped was seen. Major hawk migrations were timely, aquatic species such as ducks, geese, etc. are usually pushed by the weather, moving to keep south of freezing ponds, creeks and rivers—many of these moved southward, then apparently returned to enjoy a long Indian Summer. The list tells the story of a warm September and October and an up-and-down November. Nuts, fruits, and berries were less plentiful this year than last and lingering flocks, like the man who came to dinner, may have left the cupboard at low stock for the wintering species to follow. Only reports of the following seasons will tell.

At Scotia on 2 September, Maude and P. L. Worthington report sighting a Western Kingbird.

Abbreviations: L—lake; R—river; T/O—throughout area or season.