

## REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Although the season began pleasantly, with a sunny, warm 1 March that saw a high of 57°F at Plattsburgh, snow began to fall about noon on 4 March, and before midnight Indian Lake already had 10". This was the biggest storm of the season and fifteenth on the list of the all-time March snowfalls. By 5 March the depths varied from just 6" at Malone to 16" at Elizabethtown and Peru. Newcomb felt temperatures fall to -17°F on 7 March and then again on 19 March. Plattsburgh thermometers climbed to the 60's on 27-28 March, but Newcomb was 22° on 29 March. Monthly temperatures averaged several degrees above normal, but seasonal averages remained over seven degrees below normal, and only 45% sunshine penetrated during March. Lake Champlain stood at 97.30' on 31 March.

All Fools' Day was marked by three to five inches of sleet and snow over the region, but by 5 April it was 53° in balmy Plattsburgh. Cool temperatures then set in, blocking any major waves of arrivals through the first half of the month, while up to seven and one-half feet of snow covered the summits of the High Peaks in mid-April. Finally, a high pressure system to the north and stalled frontal system to the south encouraged hawkwatchers to get out. Coot Hill had 70 birds 20 April, one (!) on 21 April, 29 on 22 April, and seven migrants on 30 April. Hollis White discovered a new hawkwatch at Hogansburg on the St. Regis Indian Reservation, counting 49 birds on 24 April and 44 birds on 25 April; hawks were approaching from the southwest, presumably following the St. Lawrence River from Lake Ontario. During the four days between 20-30 April a total of 107 migrant raptors were counted from Coot Hill, plus another 93 passing Hogansburg 24-25 April.

The first week of May saw cool nights (19° at Newcomb on 4 May), but warming days that brought good migrant waves by the second week. This marked the tenth consecutive year of spring bird-banding operations on Crown Point peninsula, with about ten nets open from 10-15 May. The migration was exceptional, and a record 429 individuals of 43 species (also a new record) were banded. Variety is suggested by the 19 species of warblers banded, with Yellow-rumped (181), Tennessee (39 plus a foreign retrap), and Yellow (29) most numerous. Monthly temperatures were just slightly warmer than long-term averages. There were 3.53" precipitation for the month and 51% sunshine. Champlain was 40° at the start of May, 50° by the end, and dropping from 97.98' to 96.61', providing additional nesting areas around the shingle beaches of the Four Brothers Islands for Herring Gulls and a few Com. Mergansers. A total of 179 species was reported, much lower than last year, although this was judged by all a "better" spring.

On 21 May, non-toxic rhodamine green liquid dye was sprayed on each active Ring-billed Gull nest on Island C of the Four Brothers, site of the largest colony on Lake Champlain. A joint team from High Peaks Audubon, the Adirondack Conservancy, Huntington Wildlife Forest, and the University of Vermont counted and marked 16,329 active nests and, since both parents share incubation

duties, a potential 32,658 adults could have been marked. Four days earlier, 10,558 nests on Young Island (or South Sister), Vermont, were sprayed with red dye, representing perhaps 21,116 adult gulls with pink bellies. The project is being conducted by U. of Vt. graduate student Diane Jay and will attempt to delineate "A Population Model of Ring-billed Gulls on Lake Champlain." If each breeding adult picked up the dye, as many as 53,774 nesting birds could have been marked this year, making this apparently the largest color-marking project undertaken anywhere in the world. The dye usually shows as a faint greenish tinge or pinkish blush on the gulls' bellies, often only visible with binoculars. The color-marking will help identify the foraging range of Ring-billed Gulls from these two largest Champlain colonies as a first step towards understanding their population dynamics. The dye lasted into July and disappeared with the post-breeding molt in late summer. Reports of summer 1985 sightings would be appreciated and will be forwarded to Diane Jay.

Nesting by crossbills and siskins continued into the spring season. There were few seasonal rarities, although several individuals showed up in surprising locations like the Upland Sandpiper walking about in Newcomb.

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**LOONS - DUCKS: A RED-THROATED LOON** in basic plumage was on Bulwagga Bay near the tip of Crown Point peninsula 11 May (TB, GF, JP). First Com. Loon was on Mt. View L. 19 April (JT), with a max. 11 at Westport 6 May (JP, WP). A Pied-billed Grebe was at Port Henry beach 31 March (CW) and Westport had six Horned Grebes 6 May. Two Double-crested Cormorants were at Port Henry by 17 April and were nest-building on Islands A and B of the Four Brothers through May. A Black-crowned Night-Heron was at Westport by 6 May and nest-building on Islands A, B, and D of the Four Brothers by the end of the month. The Snow Goose migration seemed concentrated, with over 500 rafted off Crown Point peninsula 20 April, 35 at Tupper Lake Marsh 21 April, and the last on Mountain View L. 22 April. Tupper L. had three No. Pintails 31 March, and Mountain View L. had a pair of Blue-winged Teal 19 April. No. Shoveler: male, Whallon's Bay 16 March (CW). Pairs of Gadwalls were seen on Bulwagga Bay and around the Four Brothers Islands during May. Whallon's Bay had a Canvasback 16 March. Five Ring-necked Ducks arr. Tupper L. 23 March, max. 68 on 7 April, pairs in May. Whallon's Bay had 30 Lesser Scaup 16 March. Rather unexpected was the pair of Oldsquaws on Mountain View L. 22-23 April (JT), not to be outdone by the adult male White-winged Scoter that stopped on Harris L. 23 May (A & WC)! Com. Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, and Com. Mergansers were widely reported, with a number of sightings from inland lakes. Com. Mergansers were nesting on the Four Brothers, as usual, but less usual was the sight of one dropping down the chimney of an abandoned house in Whallonsburg 14 April (BB). Six pairs of Red-breasted Mergansers were on L. Champlain by 31 March, and a pair at Westport 6 May.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** Add to the January sightings a Turkey Vulture at Inlet on 12 March (GL) and one hunting over snow-covered fields at Westport on 2 April (GC); max. 11 Coot Hill 20 April. Ospreys arr. at Owls Head and Tupper L. 6 April; max. 10 Hogansburg 25 April. Bald Eagle: adult Whallon's Bay 1 March (JPa); adult Tupper L. 1-31 March; imm. Tupper L. 1 March-7 April (CD); two adults Conifer 15 March; two adults Raquette Pond 31 March; one, 27 April (RM). No. Harrier: max. 3 Hogansburg 25 April. Sharp-shinned Hawk: max. 7 Coot Hill 20 April; Cooper's Hawk: max. one Coot Hill 22 April and Elizabethtown 25 April; No. Goshawk: max. 2 Hogansburg 25 April. Red-shouldered Hawk: max. two at Coot Hill and at Belfrey Mt. on 20 April. Broad-winged Hawk: max. 11 Coot Hill 22 April. Red-tailed Hawk: max. 29 Coot Hill 20 April. Rough-legged Hawk: max. two Hogansburg 24 and 25 April. Golden Eagle: Coot Hill 20 April (HPAS); Moody Pond 3 May (MB, WC)-6 May (D & MB). Am. Kestrel: no more than one in a single day seen at Coot Hill or Hogansburg. Merlin: one, Hogansburg 24 April; adult female roadkill found near New Russia about 8 May (PT). A Peregrine Falcon appeared to be hunting locally at Coot Hill on 30 April (GC), while pairs were Confirmed nesting near Keene Valley and Wilmington for the first time in many years, and other pairs frequented sites near Hawkeye and Westport through May; this brings the list of species Confirmed in the region since 1980 to 186! An Upland Sandpiper was somewhat of a surprise at Newcomb 21 May (A & WC). Ticonderoga had Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, and a Dunlin 18 May (DR), while Bulwagga Bay had five Least Sandpipers 21 May (GC); otherwise the spring shorebird migration was about as uninspired as usual in this region. An Am. Woodcock nest with eggs had hatched by 12 May at Tupper Lake (CD). The census of Ring-billed Gulls on the Four Brothers colony on Island C showed a slight decline for the second straight year to 16,329 active nests, from a high of 17,347 in 1983. While Ring-bills are confined to Island C, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls are distributed over all four islands.

**PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS:** A nestling Great Horned Owl came down in a logging operation near Altona 7 May (PJ) and is being reared at the raptor center at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Barred Owl owlets began peeking out of their nest hole near Paradox 13 May and the younger, still incapable of flight, was perched in a balsam below 17 May, perhaps pushed out by its larger sibling (MB). No. Saw-whet Owls began calling at Tupper Lake 1 March, Moody Pond 3 March, Elizabethtown 9 March, and heard at St. Regis Pond 27 April. Whip-poor-will: arr. Witherbee 25 April (CW). Red-headed Woodpeckers were found nesting near Ticonderoga, Three-toed Woodpeckers at Ferd's Bog.

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS:** Olive-sided Flycatcher: Dix Pond 23 May; Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Moose Mt. Pond 15 May (MB). Horned Lrk: Crown Point 7 March (JB). Purple Martin: Westport 6 May. Two Gray Jays were carrying nesting material at Sabattis Road Bog 23 March (F & RM), where there were sightings thru the period, and one was seen near Spring Pond Bog 7 May, Ferd's Bog 26 May. Com. Ravens were carrying food at Eagle L. by 21 March, and a group of six were at Tahawus 17 April, with numerous other sightings. Boreal Chickadees were noted at Hurricane Mt., Ferd's Bog, Sabattis Road Bog, and Spring Pond Bog. A Marsh Wren was at Tupper Lake Marsh 18 May. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Ferd's Bog 26 May (AB, SC). E. Bluebird young had hatched at Tupper Lake by 30 May. A migrant Gray-cheeked Thrush was at Moriah 19 May (GC). No. Mockingbirds were reported from Teboville Rd., Franklin Co., in late April and Crown Point peninsula in early May. A flock of 35 Bohemian Waxwings was along the Whallon's Bay Rd. on 13 March (JPa).

**VIREOS-WARBLED:** Most arrivals were from several days to a week earlier than 1984. Solitary Vireo: Elizabethtown and Paradox 21 April (JP; MB). Philadelphia Vireo: one banded Crown Point 13 May. Golden-winged Warbler: arr. Witherbee 11 May (CW), male banded Crown Point 15 May, seen Hogansburg 22 May (HW). Tennessee Warbler: Crown

Point and Paradox 11 May (TB; MB); 39 banded Crown Point; Ferd's Bog 26 May. Nashville Warbler: Elizabethtown and Paradox 1 May (JP, MB); 11 banded Crown Point. No. Parula: Tupper Lake 22 May (CD). Yellow Warbler: Paradox 3 May (MB); 29 banded Crown Point. Chestnut-sided Warbler: Paradox 7 May (MB); two banded Crown Point. Magnolia Warbler: arr. Crown Point 13 May, eight banded. Cape May Warbler: arr. Crown Point 10 May, 11 banded, banded bird present to 18 May (MA, CW); Ferd's Bog 26 May. Black-throated Blue Warbler: Moriah 2 May (CW). Yellow-rumped Warbler: Coot Hill 20 April (HPAS); 25 feeding on insect hatch Little Long Pond 27 April; 181 banded Crown Point. Black-throated Green Warbler: Auger Pond 27 April (D & JC); one banded Crown Point. Blackburnian Warbler: Paradox 8 May (MB); 1 banded Crown Point. Pine Warbler: Saranac Lake 30 April (D & MB). Two 'Western' Palm Warblers banded Crown Point 12-13 May. Bay-breasted Warbler: arr. Crown Point 14 May, eight banded. Blackpoll Warbler: Tupper Lake 3 May (CD), one banded Crown Point 15 May, late migrant Essex 27 May (CS). Black-and-white Warbler: arr. Crown Point 29 April (GF), two banded. Am. Redstart: Paradox 8 May, three banded Crown Point. Ovenbird: Witherbee 2 May (CW). No. Waterthrush: Schroon Lake 7 May (MB), one banded Crown Point 12 May. Louisiana Waterthrush: Elizabethtown 26 April (JP); Westport 6 May (JP, WP). Mourning Warbler: Moriah 19 May (GC). Com. Yellowthroat: arr. Crown Point 10 May, nine banded. Wilson's Warbler: arr. Crown Point 11 May, three banded; migrants Moriah 17 May (GC) thru 24 May (CW). Canada Warbler: one banded Crown Point 14 May.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rufous-sided Towhee: Moriah 16 April (GC). **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:** singing male in scattered red cedar-juniper "old field" habitat on the tip of Crown Point peninsula 11 May (G & MC, KE, GH, JP). Fox Sparrow: Witherbee 2-5 April (CW); Elizabethtown, 12 April (JP). Lincoln's Sparrow: two banded Crown Point 11-14 May; Ferd's Bog 26 May. White-crowned Sparrow: arr. Moriah 4 May, four banded Crown Point. Snow Bunting: three, Ticonderoga 3 March (JC); 40, Tupper Lake 5 March (JED); one, Tupper Lake 6 March (CD); one near gravel pit at Paradox 7 March (MB). Purple Finch: an albino visited a Tupper Lake feeder 4 March and was seen at neighboring feeders (CD); many appeared after the early April storm at feeding stations. House Finch: even in Newcomb! Red Crossbill nesting continued, with fledglings near Paradox 29 March and seen with young during beaver season near Inlet; a used nest was found near the top of a balsam near Paradox 25 April. Migrants were passing steadily north over Coot Hill in late April, but at the same time a pair was noted near Auger Pond and a family group near Owls Head. White-winged Crossbills also continued to be reported into mid-April, with 15-20 at Owls Head 14 April and eight at Tupper Lake 16 April. Com. Redpolls were scarce; reports included one in woods near Elizabethtown 10 March, at a nearby feeder in early April, one at Witherbee 3 April, and the last at an Owls Head feeder 27 April. Pine Siskins seemed to be nesting virtually everywhere: building, doing song flights, displaying, harassing Barred Owls, feeding juveniles, and keeping the woods alive with song and movement through March and April; many road kills by mid-March had skulls incompletely pneumatized, but by May the numbers had declined. Evening Grosbeak: max. 300 near Paradox on 12 March and again on 2 April.

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There is no REGION 8 report, as *The Kingbird* has no Region 8 editor at the present time.