

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M.C. PETERSON

The lack of hawkwatchers and shortage of warbler-watchers, indeed the general scarcity of birders across the Region, is reflected in this autumnal report. There were, as always, more than a few interesting sightings, notably among the waterfowl, raptors, and boreal specialties. But just 105 species were reported, surely only a token listing of those present. There were, for example, no reports of any accipiters, of Herring Gull, Rock Dove, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, any swallows, European Starling, or of House Sparrow. There were undoubtedly a few around.

Weather was certainly mixed. Thermometers reached a record monthly high of 81°F on 2-3 September, followed by an inch of rain at Peru 4 Sep and a cold front that had chickadees fluffing their down at Newcomb and Ray Brook, where temperatures on 8 Sep were 30°F. Elizabethtown's first frost hit 16 Sep, but 18-19 Sep saw highs in the 70's. Lowest monthly temperature was a cool 20°F on 29 Sep. The month saw only 1.5 inches of rain. October began warm, with Plattsburgh reaching 72°F on the first. There were 2 inches of snow and sleet at Elizabethtown 22 Oct. The month ended with rain, flurries, and snow on the Adirondacks at higher elevations. The Champlain Valley had just 0.3 inches of snow in October. November began with rain over much of the region on the first, with 4 inches of snow at Indian Lake. The next day there was a snowfall of 11 inches at Malone yet less than an inch at Elizabethtown and elsewhere. By 23 Nov, Newcomb registered a seasonal low of 5°F. On Thanksgiving, Lake Champlain stood at 96.10 ft. with a water temperature of 45°F. An earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale rocked the Region at 6:40 PM on the evening of 25 Nov. Hopefully the quake shook a few couch potatoes out into the field for the winter season.

At 4 PM on 13 Nov, 73-year old Carl Davis loaded his shotgun with No. 4 shot, stepped outside his Plattsburgh home, and brought down what he allegedly mistook for a goose or duck perched in a tree across the road. The bird fell into the South Junction Road where a passing motorist who witnessed the incident stopped and told Mr. Davis to call the NYS DEC. The dead "duck" was, in fact, a Bald Eagle. Moreover, the immature bird was a 1988 release from the New York restoration program. Captured in Alaska, the eaglet had been transported to Alcove Reservoir and hacked back into the wild at a cost of \$6,000. Davis was charged with a criminal violation of taking and possessing an endangered species under NYS law and appeared before Plattsburgh Town Justice Philip Drollette, who imposed the maximum State fine of \$250. The shooting was also a violation of the Federal Eagle Act, Endangered Species Act, and Migratory Bird Treaty Act, where stiffer penalties are available. However, it is reportedly the policy of the U.S. Dept. of Justice not to pursue Federal criminal charges in such cases already before a State court. Sources close to the case suggest that Federal civil proceedings are still possible; civil cases are tried before an Administrative Law Judge and financial penalties can be imposed.

Other species shot in this Region in recent years include Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, American Kestrel, Merlin, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, and Belted Kingfisher. Until and unless State penalties are strengthened, which

we urge, to help curtail this mindless killing of protected birds, the appropriate course of action might be to allow the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to lead in taking such cases before the Federal courts. Otherwise, the DEC must apprehend and prosecute two dozen perpetrators (each fined the NYS maximum, which is not always the case) to pay for just one eagle. Lt. King and the NYS DEC are to be commended in this case, but surely \$250 is a small price for our National bird. This might be an opportune time for the Department to ask the Legislature to bring NYS penalties in line with Federal law.

Seasonal banding efforts were limited: 28 individuals of 14 species banded in the Cedar River valley 8-11 Sep and 52 individuals of 16 species banded near Elizabethtown 9 Sep-1 Oct.

Contributors: Merry Baker, Geoffroy Carleton, Charlcie Delehanty, Michael DiNunzio, George Doyle, Robert Gillis, Anne Hungerford, Garry Lee, Theodore Mack, Norman Mason, Robert McKinney, John & Susan Peterson, Margaret & Toby Secone, Betsy Tisdale, Jan Trzeciak, Hollis White, Frank Witebsky.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: Indian L 14 Nov (JT). Com. Loon: migrant over Scofield Mt ESSE 4 Sep (MB). Pied-billed Grebe: n L George 26 Nov, late. Horned Grebe: max 28 Westport 7 Nov (GC), high. Green-backed Heron: Westport 6 Oct (GC), late. Snow Goose: 100+ Lower St. Regis L 10 Oct unexpected. Brant: many arr Mt View and Indian L 3 Oct (JT). Canada Goose: thousands Mt View and Indian L during Oct, two wearing yellow collars; one of 60 on second pond near Baker's Mills 26 Sep also sporting a yellow collar. Canvasback: arr Tupper L 19 Oct (CD). Ring-necked Duck: arr Westport 6 Oct (GC) early; max 61 Tupper L 8 Nov. Black Scoter: 170 Mirror L 3 Nov. Surf Scoter: 23 Tupper L 19 Oct, three Mirror L 3 Nov. White-winged Scoter: 25 Mirror L 3 Nov (RH); all scoters unusual inland.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: migrant Gothics 24 Sep, two Tupper L 17 Nov, late. Bald Eagle: ad Franklin Falls to 1 Sep (TM), ad Eagle L early Sep (M&TS), Winch Pd ESSE 16 Oct (BT), imm Mt View L 18 Oct, two there RR bed same date (JT), *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: arr Tupper L 3 Nov. Merlin: crossed summit of Gothics low 24 Sep (TM). Ring-necked Pheasant: 490 released CLIN Sep, 490 released ESSE Sep, none reported. Wild Turkey: one near L Utowana 4 Nov unexpected (CD). Greater Yellowlegs: arr two Hogansburg 27 Sep (HW). Pectoral Sandpiper: arr two Hogansburg 15 Oct, max 5 Westport 1 Nov.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Great Horned Owl: put up domestic geese Westport 2:30 PM dark afternoon of 6 Oct. Long-eared Owl: yipped a few times night of 12 Oct Paradox, seen and heard Westport 31 Oct.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Alder Flycatcher: with fledglings in Paradox swamp 19 Aug (MB). Gray Jay: max 15 Keese Mill Rd 3 Sep, Sabattis Road Bog 4 Sep (TM), tamarack bog s of Paul Smiths 28 Oct (CD), Moose River Plains. Boreal Chickadee: Ferd's Bog and Cedar River. Tufted Titmouse: Elizabethtown 20 Sep (JP). Gray-cheeked Thrush: migrant Elizabethtown 29 Sep (JP). Hermit Thrush: last heard Paradox 19 Oct. Water Pipit: 100 Hogansburg 15 Oct only report. N. Shrike: arr Elizabethtown 13 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Golden-winged Warbler: struck window Ausable Forks 17 Oct (GD), record late for Region. Palm Warbler: Ferd's Bog 29 Sep (FW) only report.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: male Cedar R Rd 1 Nov unusual. Field Sparrow: Tupper L feeder 2-3 Nov, late. Savannah Sparrow: transient banded Elizabethtown 20 Sep. Fox Sparrow: Oct reports from Bloomingdale, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake. Lincoln's Sparrow: banded Cedar R early Sep, three transients banded Elizabethtown 12-30 Sep. White-crowned Sparrow: arr Owls Head 2 Sep to Tupper L 25 Sep. Dark-eyed Junco:

one "Pink-sided" or "Oregon" in flock of 15 Owls Head 24-25 Oct (JT). Snow Bunting: Inlet and Cedar R Nov only reports. Com. Grackle: max 300 Owls Head 15 Oct. Pine Grosbeak: Moriah feeder late Nov only report. Evening Grosbeak: extremely scarce; McKinney observed, "In 28 years of deer hunting in the central Adirondack area in November, I don't think I ever had a week without a single northern finch, including Evening Grosbeak."

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REGION 8 - HUDSON-MOHAWK

LINDA ARMSTRONG

The birding, or should I say the reporting of birding activities this fall, was scarce. Reports are scattered and few in number. September was cooler than normal but there were few rainy days to interfere with being outside, in fact, this was the driest September on a statewide basis since 1969. October followed as another cold month, again with below normal precipitation in most of the Region. Finally November was simply an average month weather wise. So with no terrible weather patterns to disrupt time spent outside there were some exciting birds seen. Golden Eagles were observed from two different locations, one at Haines Falls on 14 Oct and the other in Cherry Plain on 12 Nov. At Pinnacle, one of our hawk watching spots, Peregrine Falcons were seen on 18 Sep, 5 Oct and two were seen on 6 Oct. A Barred Owl was described as performing 'magnificently' at North Lake near Haines Falls 15 Oct. The bird was visible at fifty feet for over one half hour. Red-bellied Woodpeckers appear to have found directions to Region 8. One was seen feeding at a suet feeder in W. Taghkanic on 3 Nov, another was observed at Stockport Station on 30 Sep and, although it's early for this report, another was observed on a New Year's Celebration bird count at Five Rivers.

Arthur Long spent time on both 14 and 16 Sep at Pinnacle. During these two days he reports seeing ten different species. His totals for the two days were: Turkey Vulture: 2,1; Osprey: 7,0; Northern Harrier: 0,1; Sharp-shinned Hawk: 3,1; Cooper's Hawk: 1,1; Red-shouldered Hawk: 0,1; Broad-winged Hawk: 48,10; Red-tailed Hawk: 4,2; American Kestrel: 3,1; and Merlin: 0,1, respectively.

Contributors: Estelle Anderson, Linda Armstrong, Joseph Bach, Kate Beale, Juna Beaty, Bob Boehem, Melissa Brewer, Paul Connor, Bill Cook, Bruce Craig, Donald Davis, Paul Davis, Dolly Kennedy, Arthur Long, Betty McGuire, Laura Meade, Barb Putnam, Elton Rising, Joan Robertson, Jim Sotis.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: reported commonly from Alcove Res, Embough Bay, Hague, Saratoga L, Tomhannock Res throughout period. Pied-billed Grebe: small numbers seen Bell's Pd, Tamarac, Tomhannock Res Oct and Nov. Horned Grebe: singles Embough Bay 5 Oct, Tomhannock Res 6 Nov. Double-crested Cormorant: max 25 Embough Bay 1 Sep. Great Egret: one Churchtown 16 and 24 Sep, three Stockport 30 Sep. Green-backed Heron: last Churchtown 10 Sep. Mute Swan: single report five Embough Bay 15 Oct. Snow Goose: max 540 Pinnacle 5 Oct. Canada Goose: max 2000 plus both Stuyvesant and Tomhannock Res Nov. Wood Duck: last Embough Bay 15 Oct. Green-winged Teal: two reports, few Sikule Pond 19 Sep, eight Raymertown 6 Nov. Am. Black Duck: max 100 Embough Bay 5 Oct. Mallard: max 75 Embough Bay 15 Oct. N. Pintail: two locations, four Embough Bay 15 Oct, four Stockport Station 30 Sep. Blue-winged Teal: last six Vischer's Ferry 4 Oct. N. Shoveler: single report, two Sikule Pd 19 Sep. Gadwall: two locations, dozen Coeymans Hollow 10 Oct, two Raymertown 6 Nov. Am. Wigeon: last two Raymertown 6 Nov. Canvasback: max 30 Tomhannock Res 6 Nov.