

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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With so much recent news regarding the decline of many species of birds, it's gratifying to be able to pass along at least a few positive reports from the North Country.

The recovery of the Bald Eagle is, of course, well-documented, even being featured on network news. This nationwide improvement is reflected in our Regional reports. This fall there were sightings of at least seven birds from eight locations: over Raquette Pond 23 Sep, a migrant crossing Bulwagga Bay from Crown Point peninsula to Coot Hill on 26 Sep, perhaps the same immature at both Port Henry and Westport in late Oct, an adult at Valcour Island 28 Oct, a subadult near Essex 4 Nov, one at Moose River 14-15 Nov, and an adult at Indian Lake (the one in northern Franklin Co.) on 19 Nov. Back in the fall of 1969, by contrast, *none* were reported in this Region. By fall 1979, there were just five eagles at three locations. Slowly, we're seeing improvement.

Commenting on the Bohemian Waxwing back in 1981, Ted Mack speculated, "They have been at Essex three winters so this may be indicative of an extension of the winter range," later adding, "This species is seen each winter." By 1987, the present editor noted that, "Bohemian Waxwings now seems to be an annual visitant in the Champlain district...." A review of the records for the just completed decade now reveals that we were only slightly overoptimistic. Since the winter of 1979-80, this northerner actually failed to appear only in the winters of 1982-83 and 1988-89, a remarkable record for a bird that not too long ago was considered "one of the very rarest winter visitors to New York State" (J. Bull, *Birds of New York*, 1974). This fall Bohemian Waxwing arrived exceptionally early and in good numbers, following reports from neighboring Quebec as early as 10 Oct. Hal Klein and Charlie Mitchell saw the first flock of a hundred or more at Point au Roche on 28 Oct, a new record early date for New York State and Clinton County. Then Eileen McCartney and Hollis White spotted four near Hogsburg 30 Oct for a new Franklin Co. arrival record. Mike Peterson had a flock of 90 or more stop in his yard near Elizabethtown on the morning of 6 Nov for a new Adirondack Park and Essex Co. arrival date (breaking the old record by some two weeks). And they kept coming: Bob Hagar saw a large flock of 250 in Peru on 20 Nov, and Anne Hungerford added 21 at Owls Head on 23 Nov. Given the early arrival dates, perhaps these were birds pushing down from the Hudson Bay Lowlands of northern Ontario (or even northern Quebec?), rather than from the far west. Clearly, another invasion had begun, following major flights in 1980-81 and 1985-86.

Almost absent last winter, Pine Grosbeaks also moved southward out

of Canada, with the first feeding on Highbush Cranberries at Tupper Lake on 25 Nov. Subsequent arrivals were noted soon after at Eighth and Raquette Lakes on 27 Nov, Limekiln Rd. on 29 Nov, Moose River Recreation Area and Onchiota on 30 Nov, and Owls Head on 5 Dec.

Following their 3-county invasion the previous summer, White-winged Crossbills also continued to arrive in force from the boreal forests of Canada. In Franklin County, Ted Mack reported, "There are 50 to 100 anywhere a car stops from Lake Placid to Paul Smiths...." From Hamilton County, Gary Lee noted, "White-winged Crossbills all during the period, everywhere — several dead on the highway killed by cars and picked up by [Common] Ravens." The last Adirondack incursion of this magnitude was the "Atlas Invasion" that began in July 1984 and continued into early 1985.

Thanks largely to sustained efforts by Greg Furness at Crown Point peninsula (Lake Champlain), Charlcie Delehanty (Champlain, Raquette Pd., Tupper L), and Jan Trzeciak (Indian-Mt. View Lakes, Franklin Co.), a wide variety of waterfowl was reported. Geese and diving ducks were well-represented, with six reports of Snow Geese, including a few "Blue" morphs. Also noteworthy were records of all three scoters from a variety of waters. An apparent "Arctic/Pacific" Loon along the Vermont shore near the Champlain Bridge in early Nov was seen swimming out toward Crown Point, but, alas, was never observed crossing into NYS waters. But both Red-throated and Common Loons were reportedly seen safely on the Essex Co. side of the narrows in following days.

The autumn weather was largely unremarkable. The few highlights included 1.98 inches of rain at Plattsburgh on 20 Sep, the first killing frost at Owls Head on 10 Oct, rains 20-21 Oct, followed by a mild spell from 24-28 Oct, and temperatures in the 60°Fs at Plattsburgh 14 Nov. The period closed with thermometers dropping to 9°F at Ellenburg Depot and Ray Brook on 27 Nov, the shooting to 55°F (accompanied by winds of 60 mph) at Plattsburgh the following day.

Although, as always, there were a few easy "misses" of birds that were surely here, a total of 147 species was reported, up significantly from the 105 species in the fall of 1988. A number of further avian nuggets are buried within the seasonal records that follow, but certainly the occurrence of five different gulls in the Lake Placid area on 25 Nov is without precedence. And finally, for lack of a suitable Bird-of-the-Season candidate (the loon having failed us), we offer as Mammal-of-the-Season [MOTS Award] the four River Otter, seen daily at Owls Head, who enjoyed startling the staid Canada Geese by poking their heads up suddenly through the ice behind them!

Contributors: Merry Baker, Sue Boettger, Geoffrey Carleton, Walter Carsten, Jan Cooper, Charlcie Delehanty, Greg Furness, William Gruenbaum, Robert Hagar, Anne Hungerford, Hal Klein, Gary Lee, Theodore Mack, Eileen

McCartney, Robert McKinney, Charles Mitchell, Edith Mitchell, Keith Murphy, Nathaniel & John Parke, John & Susan Peterson, Langdon Stevenson, Jan Trzeciak, Jackie Viestenz, Hollis White.

Abbreviations: CPP - Crown Point peninsula; IL - Indian Lake, Franklin Co.

LOONS-DUCKS: Red-throated Loon: *intro*. Com. Loon: *intro*. Pied-billed Grebe: Saranac L 3 Oct, unusual location. Horned Grebe: 2 arr IL 19 Nov. Double-crested Cormorant: CPP to 10 Nov, late. Black-crowned Night-Heron: Seventh L inlet 19 Oct (GL), unusual inland location. Snow Goose: 75 arr Point au Roche 14 Oct, max 300+ Raquette Pd 17 Oct, 35 IL 19 Oct, 200 CPP 28 Oct with few "Blue" morphs, flock with few "Blue" morphs at Vermontville 25 Oct and Franklin Flow 28 Oct; *intro*. Canada Goose: one summered Westport with domestic geese, max 1000 Malone Rec Pk, feeding in cornfields 10-21 Nov. N. Pintail: pr arr CPP 25 Oct. Canvasback: arr Tupper L 24 Oct. Ring-necked Duck: max 65 Tupper L 5 Nov. Lesser Scaup: arr Mt View L 23 Oct. Oldsquaw: arr CPP 25 Oct. Black Scoter: arr Malone Rec Pk 16 Oct, max 35 IL 19 Oct, CPP 26 Oct-10 Nov. Surf Scoter: arr IL 12 Oct, max 4 CPP 11 Nov. White-winged Scoter: arr pr Corlear Bay, ESSE, 6 Oct (LS), max 21 IL 19 Oct. Com. Goldeneye: arr two CPP 25 Oct. Bufflehead: arr IL 17 Oct, max 100 there 23 Oct, males throwing heads back and growling. Hooded Merganser: max 11 Whallonsburg 24 Oct (JP). Com. Merganser: max 90 Corlear Bay 6 Oct. Red-breasted Merganser: one L Abenake Sep (RM), uncommon inland.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Bald Eagle: *intro*. Rough-legged Hawk: arr CPP 19 Oct. Peregrine Falcon: still at Webb Royce Swamp, ESSE, 12 Oct (JPa). Am. Coot: max 12 CPP 25 Oct extraordinary for Region. Semipalmated Plover: Mt View L 8 Oct, unusual inland. Greater Yellowlegs: a flock of 60 yellowlegs (sp.) at Bryant's Siding, FRAN, 18 Oct were mostly Greater (JT). Lesser Yellowlegs: 4 arr Seventh L 19 Oct, 6 there 24 Oct (GL), unexpected. Semipalmated Sandpiper: max 50 sand bar in Mt View L end of channel 20 Oct (JT), an exceptional number anywhere in this region. Least Sandpiper: max 10 IL-Mt. View L channel 19-21 Oct. Bonaparte's Gull: max 30 Westport 26 Sep, last Whallon's Bay 22 Oct. **Iceland Gull**: two j L Placid 25 Nov (RH,LM). **Glaucous Gull**: two j L Placid 25 Nov (RH,LM). Great Black-backed Gull: three Lake Placid 25 Nov (RH,LM).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Black-billed Cuckoo: Saranac L 7 Sep a good find; calling at night Owls Head 1 Oct last report. Long-eared Owl: calling Essex 19 Nov (JPa). Black-backed Woodpecker: Moose River RA 30 Nov the only report.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Horned Lark: max 25 Normans Ridge 25 Oct; Moose River RA 27 Oct an unusual spot. Gray Jay: six trips to look for this species at Paul Smiths were all successful, with two landing on Ted Mack's car on the last trip in mid Nov; also reported from Carry Pd lean-to, Eighth L, Moose River RA, and Sabattis Rd. Com. Raven: continues to frequent CPP. Boreal Chickadee: one visited a Mountain View feeder on 5 Nov, a day of bird movement (AH). Tufted Titmouse: two Port Henry feeder only report. Golden-crowned Kinglet: giving short song near Paradox 3 Nov (MB). Bohemian Waxwing: *intro*. Cedar Waxwing: another with an orange tail band reported at Crown Point 30 Oct (JC). N. Shrike: arr Tupper L 23 Oct; others seen at S Schroon 12 Nov, Owls Head 21 Nov, and Saranac L 30 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Palm Warbler: Madawaska 30 Sep (TM), probably a migrant who found some familiar habitat for a stopover.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Am. Tree Sparrow: arr two Owls Head 19 Oct. Field Sparrow: still in hawthorn thickets at CPP 26 Sep. Fox Sparrow: arr Tupper L 18 Oct, remained to 5 Nov. White-crowned Sparrow: arr Tupper L 27 Sep; birds lingered late this year with an ad at a Saranac L feeder to 19 Nov (RH), an imm at a L Placid feeder to 25 Nov, and the last imm at a Tupper Lake feeder to 27 Nov. Dark-eyed Junco: one with white wing bars visited a Mountain View feeder 20 Nov (AH). Snow Bunting: arr Uncas Rd, Inlet, 21 Oct (GL), max 50+ Normans Ridge 25 Oct, also at Paul Smiths 27 Oct, CPP 28 Oct. Red-winged Blackbird: large flocks headed south CPP 28 Oct. Rusty Blackbird: one Point au Roche 28 Oct the only report. Pine Grosbeak: *intro*. White-winged Crossbill: *intro*. Evening Grosbeak: 20 flying near Elizabethtown 4 Nov typical, with few visiting feeders by the end of the period, although numbers could be heard overhead.

CORRIGENDUM: The Com. Black-headed Gull on L Champlain 29 Oct 1988 (*Kingbird* 39:241) should be deleted; it was not observed in New York waters.

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