

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M.C. PETERSON

Although the weather was often less than ideal, a late April warm spell pushed in numbers of early migrants, and the Coot Hill hawk-watch and Crown Point banding station celebrated their fifteenth seasons with the second best totals ever, eclipsed only by the spring of 1989. A total of 190 species was reported regionally, including several rarities. The arrival of nine warbler species before the end of April is alone worthy of note.

The season began with a 55°F jump in temperature, from a low of -2°F (due to a blocking high pressure cell) at Ellenburg Depot 1 Mar to a high of 53°F at nearby Plattsburgh AFB the following day. March had 10.2

inches of snow at lower elevations, with half of that falling 20-21 Mar, and seasonal snowfall was 4 inches less than normal by month's end, when L. Champlain stood at 99.13 ft, with 4 ft of snow left on the High Peaks. By 5 Apr, Champlain stood at 99.7 ft (100 ft is flood level). Weather in weeks following was erratic, with a 10 inch snowfall on the St. Regis Indian Reservation 11 Apr, yet not a flake in Elizabethtown that same day. It was warm on 19, 22, 25-26 Apr, and hot on 27-28 Apr, helping to push in warblers and other early migrants. May saw several pleasant days, but rain seemed to be the norm, with everything from passing showers to cloudbursts during the 11-21 May period that the spring bird banding station was open at the Crown Point State Historic Site.

Coot Hill hawkwatch received 33 days (160 hours) of coverage between 24 Mar-14 May, much of it by Elsbeth Johnson, who was again supported by High Peaks Audubon. A near record 695 raptors of 15 species were recorded, including five Bald Eagle and one Golden Eagle, plus a Peregrine Falcon. The best flight days were 26-27 Apr, with 128 and 143 raptors respectively. Unhappily, the fifteen years of unbroken coverage at this scenic site may be at an end, the hill's owner having informed High Peaks Audubon that local members are no longer welcome at the summit due to the National Audubon Society's support of the highly controversial report of the Commission on the Adirondacks. In addition to the raptor passage, other interesting transients at Coot Hill included over a hundred Double-crested Cormorant and two Bohemian Waxwing on 8 April.

Bald Eagle was widely reported: Eighth Lake HAMI 8 Mar, ad Saranac Lake, 12 Mar, ad Ticonderoga 18-19 Mar, ad Mountain View Lake FRAN Apr, mottled ad Deer River Flow FRAN 17 May, and two ad and an imm Salmon River FRAN 17 May. Migrants also passed the Coot Hill hawk watch on 24 Mar and 8, 15, 26, and 28 Apr, suggesting a Regional total of about 13 individuals.

The banding station near the northern tip of Crown Point peninsula opened two days before Coot Hill closed, and remained in operation from 11-21 May. A total of 465 individuals of 48 species were banded, and the cumulative list of species banded since 1976 now stands at 80. There were also 11 returns of birds previously banded at Crown Point, including a Tree Swallow, two Black-capped Chickadee, a Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Red-winged Blackbird, and a Northern Oriole, all from 1989. Other returnees included a Black-capped Chickadee from 1987, a Brown Thrasher from 1984 (now 6 years, 11

months old), and a geriatric Blue Jay originally banded on 9 May 1981 (now 9 years, 11 months old); the present longevity record for the species belongs to a 16 year, 4 month Blue Jay from Glens Falls. Most numerous species this spring were 149 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 34 Cape May Warbler, and 32 American Goldfinch.

As usual, the birding at the State Historic Site was as superb as the banding, from a Common Loon on Bulwagga Bay 21 May to over 50 Double-crested Cormorant migrating overhead on 18 May. If the Great Egret that Gordon Howard and others spotted flying south down Bulwagga Bay the morning of 14 May was rather unexpected, the two **Glossy Ibis** that Keith Murphy and others witnessed following the same route the evening of 15 May were a total surprise, providing not only excitement, but also a first record for Essex County. Brant are unusual enough along L. Champlain, but Brant spotted grazing on the lawn beside the ruins of historic Fort St. Frederick by site manager Greg Furness is even more so, remaining from 25-29 May. Overhead migrants included two flocks of White-winged Scoter 18 May, the second with Oldsquaw, two late transient Red-shouldered Hawk 18 May and a Peregrine Falcon winging north 17 May. A newly fledged Great Horned Owl was seen well the evening of 18 May. Northern Mockingbird and Philadelphia Vireo both appeared on 19 May. A cooperative Orange-crowned Warbler posed at the banding station for most of 14 May, managing to avoid the nearby mist nets. And a similarly adult male Orchard Oriole was feeding in the hawthorns on the morning of 12 May. The ever changing variety of birdlife made even the calf-deep clay mud and unceasing rains more tolerable.

Nor was all of the avian action confined to Coot Hill and Crown Point peninsula. Candy and John Hess found 3-4 **Ruddy Duck** on Lake Champlain near Chazy 5 May, for only about the eighth regional record and first spring occurrence (all others were between 20 Oct and 10 Nov). Norman Mason was fortunate enough to spot a white morph **Gyr Falcon** along the Northway south of Plattsburgh on 21 Mar. Dean Cook had a **Yellow-breasted Chat**, rare in this region, at Ticonderoga on 24 May. A number of other good finds are included in the species listings, as well.

Northern Adirondack Audubon Society (Clinton County) has relinquished its charter and merged its membership and activities with those of High Peaks Audubon Society (formerly Essex County). High Peaks Audubon Society, Inc., now serves the entire Adirondack-Champlain Region.

Observers: Merry Baker, Thomas & William Barber, Dirck & Mary Benson, Bev Brown, Geoffrey Carleton, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Dean Cook, Shirley Cook, Charlcie Delehanty, William Endocott, Rita Fitzgerald, Greg Furness, Robert Hagar, Candy & John Hess, Gordon Howard, Anne Hungerford, Elsbeth Johnson, Ruth Kuhfahl, Gary Lee, Theodore Mack, Mark Manske, Laura Meade, Nancy Miller, Keith Murphy, John & Nathaniel Parke, John & Susan Peterson, David Rutkowski, Ross Sutton, Jan Trzeciak, Margaret Tsuda, Hollis White.

Abbreviations: CH - Coot Hill hawkwatch; CPt - Crown Point peninsula.

LOONS-DUCKS: Pied-billed Grebe: arr Ausable Pt 14 Apr; calling and whooping all over Webb Royce Swamp ESSE 6 May. Double-crested Cormorant: *intro*. Great Egret: *intro* (WE, GH, NM, KM, JP). Black-crowned Night-Heron: 1-3 nests Webb Royce Swamp 6 May (J&NP). **Glossy Ibis**: *intro*. (RK, GL, KM, JP). Snow Goose: 5 inland flocks sighted. Brant: 200+ flying n Upper St. Regis L 22 Apr; *intro*. Gadwall: pair Bulwagga Bay 7 Apr (EJ). Am. Wigeon: two pair arr Ausable Pt 22 Mar (C&JH). Canvasback: 6-10 Ausable Pt 22 Mar good find. Oldsquaw: *intro*. White-winged Scoter: *intro*. Red-breasted Merganser: drake Duck Hole ESSE 24 May (T&WB), unexpected in the High Peaks. **Ruddy Duck**: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Turkey Vulture: arr CPt 21 Mar, very early; total 10 past CH. Osprey: total 38 past CH. Bald Eagle: *intro*: N. Harrier: total 14 past CH. Sharp-shinned Hawk: total 103 past CH. Cooper's Hawk: 20 past CH. N. Goshawk: total 6 past CH. Red-shouldered Hawk: total 7 past CH. Broad-winged Hawk: total 283 past CH. Red-tailed Hawk: total 160 past CH. Rough-legged Hawk: only one past CH 11 Apr. Golden Eagle: one past CH 15 Apr. Am. Kestrel: total 14 past CH. Merlin: one past CH 14 Apr. Peregrine Falcon: one past CH 17 May; Wilmington Notch bird present by 15 Mar. **Gyr Falcon**: *intro*. Bonaparte's Gull: arr Plattsburgh 17 Apr.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Great Horned Owl: *intro*. N. Saw-whet Owl: Chilson 15 Mar, Owls Head 31 Mar. Whip-poor-will: arr Ticonderoga 28 Apr, relatively early. Red-headed Woodpecker: Owls Head 12 May (JT), a good find. Three-toed Woodpecker: excavating nest hole Ferd's Bog 17 May (GL); Duck Hole area 31 May (T&WB) a good showing for this species. Black-backed Woodpecker: also at Duck Hole 26 May.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Gray Jay: Ferd's Bog 27 Apr; Moose River Plains 19-20 May (GL) only reports. Com. Raven: pair nesting CH 8 Apr. Boreal Chickadee: reports from Armstrong Mt, Duck Hole, Ferd's Bog, Mt Jo. Tufted Titmouse: transient arr Elizabethtown 17 Mar. Carolina Wren: Port Henry 12 Apr-15 May (GC), perhaps the only breeding locale for this species in the Region (see Atlas map). Marsh Wren: Webb Royce Swamp 6 May only report. Gray-cheeked Thrush: territorial birds at Duck Hole 28-30 May. N. Mockingbird: *intro*; widely reported this spring from Blue Mountain L, Chilson, CPt, Hogsburg, and Ticonderoga. Am. Pipit: 12 Bloomingdale 11 Apr (RH) a good find. Bohemian Waxwing: *intro* (JP *et al.*). Cedar Waxwing: 15 transients Elizabethtown 13 Mar. N. Shrike: transient ad Elizabethtown feeder 4 Apr the only report.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: Philadelphia Vireo: *intro*; singing male Duck Hole 27May (T&WB). Orange-crowned Warbler: *intro*. Cape May Warbler: *intro*. Yellow-rumped Warbler: record early arr Moriah feeder 1 Apr (GC). Palm Warbler: "Yellow" arr 21 Apr; "Western" arr CPt 12 May. Louisiana Waterthrush: arr Elizabethtown 28 Apr (J&SP). **Yellow-breasted Chat**: *intro*.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Fox Sparrow: arr Mountain View 11 Apr. Rusty Blackbird: max 20 Bloomingdale 17 Mar (RH). Orchard Oriole: *intro*. White-winged Crossbill: pr Westport 8 Mar, 28-29 Mar (GC); max 20 Paradox swamp 21 Apr, some singing (MB); Duck Hole 31 May (T&WB). Com. Redpoll: Inlet 8 Mar (GL) only report.

ADDENDA: Canada Goose: neck banded bird sighted Westport on 16 Dec 1989 Ferrisburg CBC (JP) had been banded in Maryland as an ad male 21 Jan 1986. Pine Siskin: banded bird found dead Golden Beach Pk HAML 14 Dec 1989 (GL) had been banded by D. G. Follen at Wisconsin Rapids, WI, 24 Jan 1988.

Discovery Farm, RD 1, Elizabethtown, NY 12932