

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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After a pause last summer, Double-crested Cormorant resumed its increase on the Four Brothers Islands, where a pre-fledging die off of Ring-billed Gull chicks was a cause for concern. Continued gains were seen in Adirondack nesting Osprey populations, and Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon held their own. If there are more Cedar Waxwing with orange tail tips being reported, there also seem to be fewer Black Tern. A decline in observer reports resulted in just 142 species being documented, far short of the 200 found in summer 1984 at the height of the Atlas effort. In spite of the reduced effort, a number of good birds were located.

Weather was fairly typical, alternating between sunny/warm and rainy/cool. There was a heat wave 17-19 July, with over ten consecutive days without rain, yet by mid August rainfall was some 5 inches above normal, and the end of the season saw some lovely days, with Lake Champlain just above the 97-ft. mark.

A total of 15 nestling Black-crowned Night-Herons, 1,000 Ring-billed Gull, and 115 Herring Gull chicks were banded on the Four Brothers Islands 9-10 June. Wardens Rachel Hopkins and Neil Rizos counted 404 active Double-crested Cormorant nests, up from 270 in last year's census. Other interesting species at the islands included Canada Goose with 3 goslings on 27 Jul, Gadwall (max. six at the islands on 2 Aug), a Sanderling on 27 Jul, four Least Sandpiper and two Pectoral Sandpiper on 9 Jun, and at least five pairs of nesting Great Black-backed Gull. The 19-ft. "Four Winds" required a \$2,000 motor repair and was out of service for almost two months.

During late July, the USF&WS and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources found numbers of dead and dying Ring-billed Gulls, mostly young birds, on Young Island (South Sister) in Vermont waters of Lake Champlain. A visit to Island "C" of Four Brothers on 23 Jul found a similar situation there. The National Wildlife Health Center in Wisconsin suspected an outbreak of Chlamydiosis, based upon preliminary necropsies done at the islands. About 1500 dead gulls were collected on Young I. and their carcasses incinerated. On 27 Jul, a team of four NYS DEC biologists and wildlife manager Mike Peterson landed on Island "C" to count and incinerate carcasses, collect further specimens, and remove bird bands as an index of mortality. Protocols

called for disposable white coveralls, high rubber boots, surgical gloves and masks, rubber gauntlets, goggles, and clorox disinfectant. About 2500-3000 carcasses were disposed of that day, and bands were removed from 25 chicks on the island between 25 Jul and 2 Aug, or just 2.5% of the thousand chicks that had been banded. To place this in perspective, similar sweeps of the island have been conducted in previous years for dead banded chicks. These searches were obviously not as diligent or thorough as this summer, when every dead bird was handled and examined. Nevertheless, here are the figures for the years when searches have been done during the past decade:

1984	46 bands	4.6%
1986	15 bands	1.5%
1987	29 bands	2.9%
1988	9 bands	.9%
1990	26 bands	2.6%

This provides an overall average rate of mortality of 2.50%, based upon the standard sample of 1,000 chicks banded each season. Thus the 1990 event seems statistically insignificant, especially if one assumes a potential year class of 45,000 chicks, based upon the 15 thousand nesting pairs on Island "C." Following the cleanup, High Peaks Audubon placed bilingual warning signs in both English and French on all four islands on 2 Aug, advising boaters not to land ("En raison d'une maladie contagieuse..."). Necropsies at NWHC in Wisconsin, the USDA laboratory in Iowa, and DEC wildlife pathology lab in Delmar showed only expected diseases, such as avian salmonellosis, aspergillosis, and nematode infestation. Some gull experts on both sides of the lake believe that regular die offs of this relative magnitude may simply be common on Champlain nesting islands, especially just prior to fledging when parents are foraging in open landfills during hot weather. Certainly, there was not — as was first reported — a loss of the entire 1990 cohort of Ring-billed Gulls on the Four Brothers.

Preliminary figures provided by the NYS DEC show that they surveyed 52 historic Osprey nest sites in the Adirondacks, finding 38 active. Of these, 20 nests produced a total of 43 young (up considerably from 20 young in 1988 and 33 young in '89). Bald Eagles again nested at three Franklin County sites. One nest failed when the male disappeared, while the other two combined to produce a total of three eaglets (down from 5 last year, but still encouraging, in view of the nest failure). Four of the five Essex Co. Peregrine Falcon eyries

yielded a total of nine young, although there were losses: Elizabethtown (two young, but both died after fledging), Keene (two young), Keeseville (none; territorial birds present, but may have been disturbed by rock climbers), Westport (one young), and Wilmington (an impressive four young). A sixth pair was also found frequenting a cliff within the High Peaks. Although the number of active Peregrine sites increased, production was below the ten young produced in each of the past two years here.

Tennessee, Cape May and Bay-breasted Warbler, boreal rarities, were found at Lake Placid on land due to be "improved." Ted Mack called the APA, "and it looks like it will be protected." Mack adds: "Last year's Bay-breasted Warbler breeding site at Madawaska was improved this year. It is a log landing of an acre at least."

Cedar Waxwing with burnt-orange tail tips continue to turn up. Dirck and Mary Benson spotted a recent fledgling, incapable of sustained flight, at Moody Pond, Saranac Lake village, on 15 Aug. Lang Stevenson picked out *three* orange tail tips from a flock of Cedar Waxwing on the Styles Brook Rd., Keene, on 31 Aug.

At the request of the DEC, Charlcie and Jack Delehanty did a boat survey of the Tupper Lake marshes for Black Tern: "NONE. As far as I know, there were none last year, either, so it looks as though the Tupper Marsh population is gone — a sad story. I believe that Dibrom 14 played a part in their (I want to say extirpation) disappearance, because I watched Jeff Duflo spray the marshes." Perhaps due to hazards to birders there, no word was received from the St. Regis Indian Reservation straddling the NYS-Quebec line, the last Regional marshes known to have Black Tern. Except for a handful of projects and surveys, we seem to be losing track of the many "discoveries" of the 1980-86 Atlas period and may find that some birds will not survive to be rediscovered in the coming century.

Observers: Dirck & Mary Benson, Charlcie Delehanty, John E. Delehanty, Betsy Franz, Richard Gershon, Robert Gillis, William Graham, Evelyn Greene, Richard Guthrie, Candy & John Hess, Rachel Hopkins, Michael Kudish, Gary Lee, Theodore Mack, Richard Marrus, Robert McKinney, Fern Merrill, John Peterson, Charlotte Quist, Gerry Rising, Neil Rizos, Carole & Laura Slatkin, Ed Spoon, Langdon Stevenson, Gen Sutter, Joyce Thomas.

Abbreviations: FB - Ferd's Bog; MRRA - Moose River Recreational Area; NPT - Northville-Placid Trail; TL - Tupper Lake.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: "Doing well in the area," one-two chicks on FRAN area ponds (CD); "Doing well, with young on every [HAMI] pond, except Bug L; several with 2" (GL). Double-crested Cormorant: *intro*. Black-

crowned Night-Heron: two Scomotion Cr CLIN 9 Jun, uncommon in that county (C&JH); *intro*. Canada Goose: 58 in TL population; *intro*. Gadwall: *intro*. Ring-necked Duck: Indian L (MRRRA) 31 Jul, south of main range.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: *intro*. Bald Eagle: Port Henry 28 Jul and imm Upper Saranac L late Aug only reports away from nesting areas; *intro*. Peregrine Falcon: *intro*. Spruce Grouse: Tahawus trailhead late June only report (EG). Wild Turkey: 11 y Indian L, seven y Cedar R (down to 2), one TL indicative of continued success in central Adks. Com. Moorhen: pair Scomotion Creek 9 Jun (C&JH) only report. Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Cedar R 31 Aug (GL). Sanderling: *intro*. Least Sandpiper: *intro*. Pectoral Sandpiper: *intro*. Bonaparte's Gull: arr Corlear Bay 23 Aug. Ring-billed Gull: *intro*. Herring Gull: nest Indian L, 24 West Canada L had nine y; *intro*. Great Black-backed Gull: *intro*. Black Tern: *intro*.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Com Nighthawk: one-two TL village 9 Aug (CD) only report. **Red-bellied Woodpecker**: Essex 31 Aug (C&LS), rare here. Three-toed Woodpecker: nest FB, one at bog off Rt 30 s TL 14 Jun. Black-backed Woodpecker: Brown's Tract, FB, Helldiver Pd., NPT, nest with y Wilmington Notch, nest excavated and occupied at Newcomb was taken over by wrens (EG)!

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Gray Jay: with y Helldiver Pd 6 Jun; 3 NPT near Moose Pd/Chubb R 28 Jun. Boreal Chickadee: Cedar L, FB, MRRRA, NPT. Marsh Wren: 6-10 Scomotion Creek 9 Jun only report. Hermit Thrush: feeding y at nest on *window sill* of 90-year old camp Upper St. Regis L (RG). Cedar Waxwing: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLED: Tennessee Warbler: singing male L Placid. Cape May Warbler: two singing males L Placid. Bay-breasted Warbler: singing male L Placid.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: Rose-breasted Grosbeak: two-three TL feeder Jun, unusual. Indigo Bunting: TL sunflower feeder, unusual. Rusty Blackbird: Lanfear and Otter Brooks; two Cedar R Flow 25 Jun new location. Purple Finch: absent, then 1-5 TL feeder late Aug. House Finch: four Cedar R Jun, two Hope Falls BBS, FY Inlet P.O. 11 Jul (all HAM). Evening Grosbeak: 3 in breeding condition banded Elizabethtown 2 Jul; several Bog R 25 Jul.

ADDENDA: **Red-headed Woodpecker**: Newcomb 19 May, highly unusual in Adk interior (WG). Bay-breasted Warbler: early arr date 11 May.

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