

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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An influx of northern raptors, a record number of species for several Christmas Bird Counts, and a paucity of passerines, especially winter finches, marked the winter of 1991-92. The season began clear and cold with Saranac Lake -4°F on 5 Dec. One of the biggest storms of the season managed to drop only 3-8 inches of snow on 18 Dec, and weather for the Christmas Bird Counts was good, with only about 2-5 inches of snow cover. The 15 Dec Plattsburgh CBC found a record 63 species, plus four species during count week. The 18 Dec Old Forge CBC found 33 species, plus two in the count period, up dramatically from only 22 last year. The Saranac Lake CBC on 28 Dec also set a record of 44 species, plus three in the count week.

Gary Lee recorded the lowest barometric reading ever, 28.45 inches, at Limekiln on 14 Jan, a day of heavy rain and 40°F temperatures that returned bare ground to much of the Region. But this respite was followed by a week-long frigid spell in time for that nadir of the birding year, the NYS Waterfowl Count. On 16 Jan, Plattsburgh was only -6°F at noon, while Saranac Lake enjoyed a wind chill of -32°F. February remained generally cold and snowless, with only patchy ground cover over much of the Region. Avian variety stood at a healthy 90 species, but short of the 96 species found in 1983-84.

An adult drake **Barrow's Goldeneye** was reported from Plattsburgh by Bill Krueger on 6 Jan, just prior to the 11-18 Jan NYS Waterfowl Count, which turned up a healthy 2,417 Common Goldeneye. Northern raptors put in an especially strong showing. Tom Barber and Mike Peterson found a gray **Gyr Falcon** near the intersection of the Cutting and Denton Roads, Lewis, just north of Elizabethtown during the 21 Dec Elizabethtown CBC. Between 3 Jan-3 Feb, a total of at least eight Snowy Owl were reported, all from Clinton County. Although not large compared to the numbers reported in neighboring Vermont (30+ sightings statewide) or Quebec (30 alone taken to rehabilitators in just the Montreal area by early Dec), this was the largest Regional invasion of which we are aware. Given the expanse of open habitat, with no observers, along the Clinton-Franklin border with Canada, it seems likely that many more may have been present. Certainly present in good numbers were 14 Northern Shrike scattered over all four counties.

Winter finch counts were generally low. Pine Grosbeak failed to appear. Purple Finch spent most of the winter at higher elevations. Red Crossbill was reported just four times, White-winged Crossbill only twice. There were scattered reports of Common Redpoll, and Hoary Redpoll was not reported. Jan Trzeciak found 175+ Pine Siskin along a two-mile stretch of road near Owls Head FRAN after an 8 Dec snowstorm, and the Saranac Lake CBC tallied an impressive 783. On 13 Jan, Gary Lee spotted a flock of 1,000+ Pine Siskin in Hamilton County, "like a cloud moving in the sky." But they remained scarce at lower elevations until the end of the season when there was a major influx. "Moby Siskin" at the Furness Feeder in Mineville in late Feb was almost completely white with a pale brown-red blush on the sides of the head, tail and most of the wings almost a canary yellow, beak pink and eyes dark, so it was not a true albino. American Goldfinch was abundant until mid January, when numbers began to decline. Evening Grosbeak also peaked in December.

On 9 Jan, a crew from Niagara-Mohawk erected an Osprey nest platform at the Crown Point State Historic Site. Initiated by High Peaks Audubon, this was a joint project with the NYS OPRHP, DEC, and NiMo. On 31 Jan, a crew of volunteers cleaning Wood Duck boxes along Bulwagga Bay noticed a Bald Eagle sitting in a dead tree by Sheephead Rock, quite close to the newly erected Osprey (or eagle?) platform.

Contributors: Merry Baker, Ron Bruno, Dewey & Joan Clark, Shirley Cook, Charlie Delehanty, Greg Furness, Candy & John Hess, Tom Hicks, Mary Humiston, Judy & Roger Huntz, Hal Klein, William Krueger, Gary Lee, Steve Mahoney, Larry Master, Robert McKinney, John Parke, John & Susan Peterson, Tom Rodriguez, Jan Trzeciak.

Abbreviations: ECBC - Elizabethtown CBC; FCBC - Ferrisburg CBC; WFC - Waterfowl Count; OFCBC - Old Forge CBC, 18 Dec; PCBC - Plattsburgh CBC, 15 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake CBC, 28 Dec.

LOONS-DUCKS: Great Blue Heron: one FCBC, two PCBC, one ECBC reflective of the mild early winter. Snow Goose: five PCBC only report; down dramatically from last winter's influx. Gadwall: one PCBC, two WFC uncommon in winter. Com. Goldeneye: *intro*. **Barrow's Goldeneye**: *intro*.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: *intro*. Bald Eagle: *intro*; ad Coll Bay, subad Tupper L 6 Dec, ad and subad there 11 Dec; one FCBC; one PCBC; 5 WFC; subad Tupper L 28 Jan; ad Valcour 10 Feb; ad Wickham Marsh 20 Feb. N. Harrier: one PCBC a good find. Rough-legged Hawk: max five ECBC; relatively common at lower elevations. **Gyr Falcon**: *intro*. Wild Turkey: max eight Lewis exit I-87 19 Feb; three overwintered at deer feeders Seventh L HAMI (GL), also seen Chateaugay. Iceland Gull: Bas I imm at

mouth of Saranac R 20 Dec (HK). Great Black-backed Gull: max 142 PCBC, strong showing.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: E. Screech-Owl: two PCBC; roosting in Wood Duck nest box Crown Pt peninsula 29 Jan (TR), scarce in Champlain lowlands. Snowy Owl: *intro*. N. Saw-whet Owl: Brown's Tract stream 29 Jan; Wheeler's Creek 16 Feb, scarce in interior Adirondacks in winter. Belted Kingfisher: one PCBC, one SLCBC reflect mild early winter. Black-backed Woodpecker: two SLCBC, Eighth L. carry 29 Jan. N. Flicker: one PCBC, returned to the Spaulding feeder in Wadhams for second straight winter, subsisting on sunflower seeds. Pileated Woodpecker: total of 25 on five CBCs, a good showing.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: Gray Jay: max seven SLCBC; three Ferd's Bog 15 Feb. Blue Jay: more numerous at higher elevations. Com. Raven: max 21 SLCBC. Boreal Chickadee: three ECBC, seven SLCBC; also Ferd's Bog and No Luck Creek 12 Feb. Tufted Titmouse: two ECBC only report. Carolina Wren: two near Grog Harbor ESSE on the FCBC; another at Sutter suet feeder in Tupper L during Feb. E. Bluebird: one FCBC; two PCBC. Am. Robin: max 23 FCBC. N. Mockingbird: four PCBC; one Chateaugay all winter. Bohemian Waxwing: 50 Terry Mt CLIN 31 Jan (C&JH); 15 w Plattsburgh 13 Feb (C&JH); 15 Chateaugay 21-29 Feb (MH), reported Regionally in 11 of the past 13 winters. Cedar Waxwing: max 217 FCBC, plus 21 PCBC and 59 ECBC, slightly more common than Bohemians this winter. N. Shrike: *intro*.

VIREOS-WARBLED: None.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: N. Cardinal: max 54 PCBC and total of 95 on CBCs down only slightly from last year. Lapland Longspur: max six Route 9 CLIN 23-24 Feb. Snow Bunting: max 80 SLCBC. Red-winged Blackbird: two ECBC; arr Inlet feeder 27 Feb, early. Com. Grackle: injured bird Owls Head feeder to 7 Dec (SC); max six PCBC, one SLCBC unusual; Peru feeder 17 Dec more expected. Brown-headed Cowbird: max 22 PCBC, one SLCBC, only reports. Purple Finch: max 292 SLCBC. House Finch: max 116 PCBC; 14 arr Tupper L 28 Dec-29 Feb, first ever in winter (CD). Com. Redpoll: max 12 SLCBC. Pine Siskin: *intro*. Am. Goldfinch: max 243 PCBC; *intro*. Evening Grosbeak: max 907 SLCBC.

ADDENDUM: **Gyr Falcon**: dark bird Cumberland Head 20 Nov (WK!).

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