

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M. C. PETERSON

The summer of 1992 was generally cool and wet, in marked contrast to the preceding drought year and snowless winter. On 16 Jun, Saranac Lake village was 31°F and, in fact, there was a frost somewhere in the Region during each summer month. June precipitation was below normal at 1.72 inches, but fifteen of the first 21 days of July were rainy, and on 23 Jul the record *lowest* high, just 59°F, for the date was set in the Champlain Valley. Yet, in spite of the damp weather, annual rainfall was still 3 inches below average at the end of July. August saw high water levels along Lake Champlain with a paucity of shorebird habitat.

The greatest impact of this weather was noted with Tree Swallow, although other less obvious insectivorous species may have been affected similarly. Charlcie Delehanty had only one pair of swallows occupy her five available boxes at Tupper Lake. Gary Lee "lost more than half" at Inlet. At Ausable Chasm they "did not nest at the campground, as in other years," according to Sharon Bennett.

A bright spot was the first documented and successful nest of **Merlin** in New York State. The nest was located in a large red spruce at the Cather camp on the south shore of Spitfire L., Town of Brighton, Fran. The adult pair was present 4 May, the day after ice out, according to Abbott and Kay Swift. One was identified as a Merlin on 14 Jun by Wright Montgomery, who notified other birders in early July after seeing the pair. The nest with young was located on 12 July

by Lewis and Sheila Rosenberg, and was subsequently determined to contain three almost fully fledged young with downy heads and half-grown tails. The nest appeared to be an old (1991) American Crow nest, perhaps 4-5 feet from the tip of a tall, mature red spruce which was situated between the lakeshore and the shoreline camp. Sheila Rosenberg reported the three young fledged about 20 Jul, and the family group departed Spitfire Lake about 12 Aug, according to Montgomery. Intriguingly, Don Perry observed two adult and three young Merlin in a large conifer at the Bladgen camp at the end of Rockefeller Camp Road on the west shore of Upper Saranac Lake, Town of Santa Clara FRAN, during the first two weeks of August. The noisy falcons would circle over Perry as he fished, with much activity by the adults near what he believes was the nest tree. This site is 7 miles southwest of the Spitfire Lake site. Montgomery recalls the family group there disappearing for part of the same period, so whether there were indeed two nests can only be resolved if field notes of dates and times are compared, as this editor has urged. Although this appears to be the first documented nest with young of Merlin in New York State, Merriam said it was "Rather rare, but doubtless breeds," in the Adirondacks. Eaton concurred, "This species undoubtedly breeds within the boundaries of the State...," reporting F. T. Pember had a young bird scarcely able to fly at Indian Lake HAMI, and Eaton's party had one on Skylight ESSE in July 1905. Saunders saw an adult male on the Heart Lake Road ESSE 22 Jul 1926. Frank Nicoletti reports having seen a young bird barely capable of sustained flight on Cascade Mt ESSE in summer 1985. The nearest Ontario Atlas record was near Newbore Lake, only about 100 miles west of Spitfire Lake, and in Quebec nesting is reported from the Laurentians, north of Montreal. Observers should be especially alert for reports of noisy hawks about lakeside summer camps, as this raptor continues its recovery from the DDT years.

Other recovering raptors also did relatively well, with Adirondack Ospreys about the same as 1990 and 1991, according to the New York State DEC. The new Crown Point platform was unused, although three Ospreys were still at Bulwagga Bay on 11 Jul. To the north, the Ausable Point WMA platform was again successful, with birds still on the nest 25 July. The three Bald Eagle eyries in FRAN were again active, combining to fledge five young. Although productivity remains stable, there has been no increase in the number of nest sites or eaglets produced since 1989. Gary Lee reported a Golden Eagle at the head of Fourth L HAMI 4-5 Jun; he then had a pair near there 9 Jun. Although

they no longer nest, the continued presence of a pair provides hope; perhaps they should inspect the Vermontville Burn area next year; this burn is the site of the only significant Adirondack forest fire in recent years. Four of *seven* ESSE Peregrine Falcon sites fledged a total of six young: Elizabethtown (two fledged), Keeseville (one fledged), Westport (one fledged), and Wilmington (two fledged). Two Keene pairs (one at a new site) were active, but both failed, while a new North Elba site had a territorial pair; a CLIN site was inactive. In spite of the addition of two sites, productivity remains in a downward trend since 1988 and 1989, when ten young per year fledged.

The Bicknell's Gray-cheeked Thrush survey located birds on 18 Adirondack peaks: Algonquin, Big Slide, Blue, Cascade, Dix, Giant, Haystack, Hurricane, Lower Wolfjaw, Lyon, Phelps, Porter, Rocky Peak, Sawtooth Range, Sentinels, Vanderwacker, Wakely, and Whiteface. Mark Gretch, who found these high altitude thrushes all about his camp below the summit of Hurricane 26-27 June, summed up the feelings of most observers by noting, "I can't remember the last time I had so much fun birding.... It was a textbook perfect search, as far as I'm concerned." The survey also yielded a number of records of other high elevation birds. Those interested in taking part in either the Adirondacks or Catskills in 1993, should the project continue, are asked to contact the New York State coordinator Mike Peterson [RR 1, Box 230, Elizabethtown, NY 12932].

A total of seven Double-crested Cormorant, ten Black-crowned Night-Heron, 1,000 Ring-billed Gull chicks plus six adults, and 200 Herring Gull were banded at the Four Brothers Islands on 13 Jun. The first of the recently fledged, banded Ring-billed Gull cohort was captured alive and released at Montreal on 11 Jul.

The Webb Royce Swamp between Essex and Westport, revitalized in recent years by beavers, continues its renaissance. On an 11 Jul canoe trip, Ted Mack and Mike Peterson found a half dozen Pied-billed Grebe, six Great Blue Heron nests, numbers of adult and immature Black-crowned Night-Heron, Wood Duck with broods, several American Black Duck, about 75 Mallard, eight Blue-winged Teal, an **American Wigeon**, Virginia Rail, several adult and young Common Moorhen, Common Snipe, and many singing Marsh Wren. Now the most extensive wooded swamp in ESSE, a decade ago this

was forested bottomland surrounded by shrubby fields, its name but a memory on the old topographic map.

An **American Tree Sparrow** at Blue Mountain Road (near Madawaska) FRAN on 9 Jun (WK) is a record late date for New York State; Bull gives a late date of 11 May (inland — banded and photographed), adding that, "late May dates lack confirmation and require substantiation — preferably by specimen evidence." Accepting this, the single experienced observer stands by the identification, and the sighting is published simply as a matter of record.

A total of 161 species was reported, up from 156 last year and 142 in 1990, yet there were still many obvious misses, undoubtedly seen or heard, but not reported. Reports of "Eurasian Jackdaw" at Saranac Lake 10 Jul-20 Aug probably pertained to a bald American Crow with featherless gray head and neck, or to a "white-winged" crow with one white inner primary on each wing subsequently found there. Finally, to close on a more somber and cautionary note, Jan Trzeciak reports there are now seven reported cases of Lyme Disease in the Malone area.

Observers: Clarence Anderson, Deborah Anson, Timothy Barnett, Sharon Bennett, Geoffrey Carleton, Elizabeth Chanona, Walter Chapman, Dewey Joan Clark, Dorothy Crumb, Paul DeBenedictis, John Brown, Greenleaf T. Chase, Craig Fosdick, Richard Gershorn, Neil Gifford, John Graham, Mark Gretch, Richard Guthrie, Robert Hagar, Elizabeth Hedges, Judy & Roger Heintz, Candy & John Hess, Rachel Hopkins, Selma Isil, Elsbeth Johnson, Hal Klein, William Krueger, Charlotte & Robert Ladwig, Wesley Lanyon, Fuat Latif, Gary Lee, Rich MacDonald, Theodore Mack, Robert McKinney, Joe Marshall, Charles Mitchell, Wright Montgomery, Frank Nicoletti, Bruce Oppenheim, John Parke, Valerie Pawlewicz, Don Perry, John & Susan Peterson, Madeline Pierce, New York State Police, Gary Randorf, Atea Ring, Lewis & Sheila Rosenberg, David Smith, Rita Steel, Langdon Stevenson, Abbott & Kay Swift, Patricia Taber, Jim Throckmorton, Judy Thurber, Jan Trzeciak, Hollis White.

Abbreviations: APt - Ausable Point Wildlife Management Area; FB - Ferd's Bog, HAMI; MR - Moose River Recreation Area; TL - Tupper Lake.

Summer reports: **Pied-billed Grebe:** *intro*; four nests (two with eggs) Cedar R Flow 14 Jun, five family groups there Jul-Aug; two TL Marsh 6 Jul; ad with four y Stoney Creek Pds Jul; pair APt 12 Aug an outstanding summer here. **Double-crested Cormorant:** *intro*; two Indian L FRAN 6-13 Aug, unexpected. **Least Bittern:** two Scotion Creek CLIN 27 Jun (C&JH), seldom reported. **Great Egret:** two Bombay 26 Jun (WK, CM); max 11 Hogansburg 17 Jul (HW); Lewis 3-6 Aug (NYSP, MP, GC), outstanding for this once rare wader. **Snowy Egret:** Point au Roche 23 Jun (WK), no less impressive. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** *intro*; also two Scotion Creek 27 Jun; 6-8 Hogansburg 17 Jul. **Canada Goose:** record 94 TL municipal park 26 Aug. **Wood Duck:** *intro*. **Am. Black Duck:** *intro*. **Mallard:** *intro*. **Blue-winged Teal:** *intro*. **Gadwall:** pair Four Brothers I 13 Jun. **AM. WIGEON:** *intro*, first summer record for ESSE, extending range s along Champlain from CLIN. **Ring-necked Duck:** hen with duckling Indian L Pd FRAN. **Greater Scaup:** Plattsburgh 10 Aug, early CLIN date by many weeks.

Turkey Vulture: nest upper dam Miner Inst. **Osprey:** *intro*. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*; Seventh L 10 Jun; imm Cedar R Flow 14 Jun-11 Jul; imm Plattsburgh 2 Jul; imm e Chapel Pd 24 Jul, a good summer. **Broad-winged Hawk:** "very scarce" (CD); "shortage" (GL). **Golden Eagle:** *intro*. **MERLIN:** *intro*. **Peregrine Falcon:** *intro*; Whallon's Bay Road 15 Jun probably came from nearby Palisades. **Spruce Grouse:** hen, three-four chicks near Helldiver Pd, MR, 10 Jun (DC, JT, JT); hen with chicks same area 27 Jun (JS); dusting areas with scat Helldiver Pd, seen many times, last with three half grown chicks (GL), extends known breeding range s in HAML. **Wild Turkey:** Hope Falls 7 Jul; hen with six y plus two other ad MR. **Virginia Rail:** *intro*; one APt 14 Jun; two TL 6 Jul; three APt 25 Jul; plus ad with three y on deck of Westport home each morning (AR)! **Com. Moorhen:** *intro*. **Greater Yellowlegs:** four Wickham Marsh beach 19 Aug (SB, JP); one calling in fog Mountain View L 26 Aug (JT). **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr Westville FRAN 6 Aug. **Upland Sandpiper:** Bombay 26 Jun. **W. SANDPIPER:** with four Least Sandpiper for comparison, Mary Ruby Road, Westville FRAN 6 Aug (HK,WK, LS!); only the second county record, the first being 13 Sep 1880, according to Eaton! **Bonaparte's Gull:** 300 Westport 13 Aug. **Ring-billed Gull:** *intro*. **Herring Gull:** *intro*. **Great Black-backed Gull:** Plattsburgh breakwater 10 Aug, early CLIN arr; Port Kent ferry dock 23 Aug. **Com. Tern:** two Plattsburgh harbor 11 Jul (WK, CM), not often reported, although the species nests on Young I, Vt. **Black Tern:** one Hogansburg entire summer (HW), only report!

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Rock Dove: band and skeleton only of a racing pigeon found in fireplace chimney of Wells Memorial Library, Upper Jay, 10 Jul, belonged to an owner in Fabreville Laval, Quebec. **Black-billed Cuckoo:** three reports, about average. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** max three Cedar Lakes lean-to; also Paul Smiths and Saranac L. **Three-toed Woodpecker:** only report FB early Jun. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** FB 12 Jul, pair feeding single y there 21 Jul; male Vermontville Burn 22 Aug, where many other woodpeckers were noted.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: North Meadow June, South Pd, "really in trouble" (RM). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** FB 11 Jun; Haystack 27 Jun; St Regis Falls 1 Jul; Cedar R Flow 10 Aug, a reasonable showing. **Willow Flycatcher:** APt 14 June-27 Jul, now expected; St. Regis Falls 1 Jul (TM), less expected. **Tree Swallow:** *intro*. **Gray Jay:** two ad Osgood Pd 11 Jun (CA); FB 22 Jul (GL). **Blue Jay:** TL max was only 5, numbers appeared down near Elizabethtown as well. **Com. Raven:** max 15 Gabriels BBS 24 Jun; 7 St. Regis Falls BBS 1 Jul; also found by Bicknell's team on Algonquin, Gothics, Haystack, Lyon, and Porter. **Boreal Chickadee:** three banded North Meadow Jun (WL); reported by Bicknell's team from Algonquin, Big Slide, Giant, Haystack, Indian Falls, Porter, and Third Brother; also at Helldiver Pd. **Tufted Titmouse:** three FL Port Kent 31 Jul (SB). **Marsh Wren:** *intro*. **Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Elk L 20 Jun; Haystack 27 Jun; St. Regis Falls BBS 1 Jul; Giant 12 Jul; Whiteface 13 Jul; Phelps 16 Jul; a good showing, assisted by the Bicknell's survey. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** APt 27 Jul and nearby Au Sable R delta 13 Aug, good finds although a known locale. **Bicknell's Gray-cheeked Thrush:** *intro*. **N. Mockingbird:** Beekmantown, Ft. Ticonderoga, Plattsburgh, and Port Kent typical for this locally uncommon species. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:** only attempted nesting Ft. Covington abandoned (HW); only 1992 report of this species!

Tennessee Warbler: singing male L Placid; at 600-900 m Phelps 16 Jul (J&RH), only reports. **Cape May Warbler:** max three singing males Lake Placid (TM); North Meadow Jun (WL); at 600 m Lower Wolfjaw 8 Jul (J&RH), a respectable showing; Cedar R early Aug, a possible transient. **PALM WARBLER:** ad Yellow race carrying food Spring Pd Bog early Aug (TB) provides continued evidence of nesting on this bog since they were discovered in 1986. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** three

singing males L Placid (TM), only report. **Blackpoll Warbler:** Helldiver Pd; found at higher elevations on Blue Mt, Cascade, Giant, Gothics, Haystack, Hurricane, Lyon, Phelps, Porter, Rocky Peak, Wakely, and Whiteface; almost like the Atlas days of a decade ago.

AM. TREE SPARROW: *intro.* **Clay-colored Sparrow:** Sharon Road, Westville FRAN (WK), same spot where found by JP during Atlas fieldwork a decade ago. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** Mary Riley Road, Westville Fran 4-6 Aug (J&RH, WK), rarely reported here. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** at 600-900 m Phelps 16 Jul (J&RH), rather unexpected; Clear Pd 12 Jun and North Meadow Jun, more expected locations. **Dark-eyed Junco:** Oregon type mated with Slate-colored type and raised a family in Inlet backyard, remaining at feeder entire summer season (GL); no description provided of plumage of young. [Female Slate-colored type Junco may closely resemble Oregon Junco and sometimes can be distinguished only in hand; juveniles are nearly indistinguishable — *The Editor.*] **Rusty Blackbird:** St Regis Falls BBS I Jul, only report. **Purple Finch:** one banded as ad male near Elizabethtown 26 Jan 89 was added to Pumpkin the cat's "lifeless list" a mile east of the banding station 7 Aug, having reached reached an age of at least 5 years, 2 months, and apparently slowed down somewhat; other breeding birds left by late Aug. **White-winged Crossbill:** small flock FB Jun-Jul, only report, although a good spruce cone crop is forming. **Pine Siskin:** stayed HAMI entire Jun. **Am. Goldfinch:** banded Elizabethtown 9 Apr 92 retrapped Jenny L 20 Jun. **Evening Grosbeak:** fledglings arr Elizabethtown feeder 17 Jul; other reports from Hope Falls, Gabriels, Spitfire L, St. Regis Falls and Wilmington.

Addendum: The **Yellow-rumped Warbler** retrapped at Crown Pt 18 May 92 had been banded as an imm near Kiptopeke, VA, 16 Oct 89.

Discovery Farm, RR 1, Box 230, Elizabethtown, New York 12932