

REGION 7 — ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The cold, late spring finally gave way to a generally warm and pleasant summer. Periodic cloudbursts brought downpours that kept the level of Lake Champlain high, concentrating shorebirds at just a few spots. The lake was at 96' at the end of July and was still well above 95' through August.

Merlin had an exceptional year, with breeding now confirmed in three counties and probable in a fourth. The pair at Mirror Lake ESSE had 2-3 fledglings "weeping" and begging daily in late July according to Pat Tarkowski, and they were seen 21 Jul by Greenleaf Chase, Bob Hagar, and Larry Master. Marylou Schwartau reported Merlin calling at Osgood Pond FRAN on the Fourth of July, just 3.5 miles from the 1992 nest at Spitfire Lake; on 26 Jul, Chase and Hagar saw two adults with five young there. Fuat Latif reported Merlin calling on the west shore of Tupper Lake FRAN 20 Jul. Al Mapes found Merlin at Lake Eldon HAM 22 Jul; on 25 Jul Bob Budliger located two adults and a juvenile at nearby Racquette Lake, presumably the same birds. Unfortunately, the displaying pair at Morrisonville CLIN were not seen after late Apr. In hindsight, Tom Barber's Atlas period report of Merlin at Duck Hole may well have been correct. Note that all sightings appear to be near lakeshores, often near camps and human activity, and that the falcons are highly vocal.

However, the second consecutive cold, wet spring again had an adverse impact upon several other raptors. Osprey fledged 19 young

from a dozen active, productive nests in the Region, but another 25 active nests failed. The Ausable Marsh WMA platform was active, but failed, and a second platform was erected there 12 Aug. A bird was seen perched on the Crown Point platform, where a male was sky-dancing in May. The Lake Alice WMA platform also failed, and a new platform is planned for Wickham Marsh, the fifth for the NYS side of Lake Champlain. All Bald Eagle nestings failed. Peregrine Falcon also had their problems. Three of the eight active aeries in the Region fledged a total of just three young (down from ten young in 1993): Elizabethtown (one fledged), Chesterfield (failed), Keene (failed), North Elba (single adult), Schroon (new site, territorial pair), Westport (territorial pair), Willsboro (two young, one fledged), and Wilmington (one fledged). Who would have predicted a decade ago that Merlin would fledge more than twice as many young as Peregrine Falcon in the Adirondacks by 1994?

A total of 17 Double-crested Cormorant, 14 Cattle Egret, 43 Black-crowned Night-Heron, a Common Merganser, 1,004 Ring-billed Gull, and 207 Herring Gull was banded at the Four Brothers Islands 12 Jun-3 Aug. A record 785 Double-crested Cormorant nests were counted, up from 532 last year. Several pairs of Great Blue Heron again nested, and Cattle Egret returned to nest on Islands "B" and "D" after an absence of more than a decade. Thanks to a grant from the Lake Champlain Partnership Program, a study of cormorant food, based upon pellets or castings, was conducted and blood samples taken. Unhappily, on the first day of the study 21 adult cormorants and a Herring Gull were found shot on Island "D." More cheerful sightings at the islands included Common Loon, collared Canada Geese, Greater Scaup, Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper (all reported by Warden Rich MacDonald), and Common Tern noted by Stevenson. WPTZ Plattsburgh television news carried a two part story on the Four Brothers 4-5 Aug, featuring interviews with Warden MacDonald and Wildlife Manager Mike Peterson.

Wilson's Phalarope again nested at the Laurin farm CLIN as anticipated in the spring report. Mark Gretch saw and heard the male 16 and 28 Jun, and finally on 29 Jun Bill Krueger spotted the male with a nearly grown chick. The last sighting was of three phalaropes, two of them clearly juveniles, on 15 Jul. In recognition of the access and hospitality provided to visiting birders while confirming recent nesting by Wilson's Phalarope, landowners Francis and Rita Laurin were presented with a plaque by the American Birding Association. The

Federation and High Peaks Audubon join in extending thanks to the Laurins.

After consultation with Clinton County observers, the collective abbreviation "CR" will be used henceforth to denote the several rich birding areas along Lake Shore Road between the Chazy and Little Chazy Rivers; this includes the Gravelle farm, Laurin farm, and the wildlife management area to the north of the farms. In addition to the nesting Wilson's Phalarope, this stretch of shoreline between the Chazys had a number of exciting birds this summer. Gretch spotted three *Northern Shoveler* 28 Jun, and Krueger and Charlie Mitchell spotted a brood on 13 Jul, finally confirming what has been suspected since the Atlas era. Black Tern were present from 16 Jun-15 Aug, but did not nest this year. The best of many shorebirds there (aside from the phalarope) was a *Marbled Godwit*, a first for the Champlain Valley, the Region, and CLIN. Other highlights included Great Egret, Greater Scaup, and Caspian Tern.

Gretch continued his survey of Plattsburgh AFB for the NYS Natural Heritage Program, finding an unexpected 17 Grasshopper Sparrow along 3.6 miles of runway on 16 Jun, plus a nest with young the same day; 3-4 males were still vocal there as late as 4 Aug. Tentative plans following base closure now include a rail car manufacturing facility to be set up by Bombardier, Inc., of Canada and possible management by the Mohawk tribe.

A total of 331 individuals of 45 species (15 of them warblers) were banded near Elizabethtown between 31 Jul-31 Aug; among the highlights were two Wilson's Warbler 31 Aug. Bud Lanyon netted and banded an adult male Sedge Wren at North Meadow ESSE on 16 Jun; he also banded two male Philadelphia Vireo at Tahawus ESSE on 1 Jun. Judy and Roger Heintz encountered a *Blue-winged Warbler* at Sciota 28 Aug, the second CLIN record (and just two months after the first at Lake Alice).

Thanks to an active band of observers, a total of 171 species (plus an exotic) was reported, down just slightly from 174 last summer, and a good showing given the limited amount of shorebird habitat this year.

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Abbreviations: APt - Ausable Point; CR - between the Chazy & Little Chazy Rivers; CRF - Cedar River Flow; FB - Ferd's Bog; FBI - Four Brothers Islands; PAFB - Plattsburgh AFB; TL - Tupper Lake.

Summer reports: **Com. Loon:** one Bas FBI 16 Jun. **Pied-billed Grebe:** nested CRF. **Double-crested Cormorant:** *intro*; record max 1,250 FBI 29 Jul (RM, JP). **Least Bittern:** two Scomotion Creek 4 Jul (HK, BK). **Great Blue Heron:** *intro*. **Great Egret:** one CR 29 Jul-15 Aug, two on 7 Aug; Barber Pd ESSE 26 Jul (GC)-29 Jul (RM, JP); up to six daily beaver ponds Bombay FRAN (HW). **Cattle Egret:** *intro*. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** *intro*; Hogansburg Jul. **Canada Goose:** two with white neck collars FBI Jul-Aug; 45 migrating north Cheever 5 Jun late; max 85 TL municipal park local flock from 10 Aug. **Green-winged Teal:** St Regis Falls 18 Jun (TM); max 11 CR 28 Jun (MG); CRF 2 Jul, a good showing. **N. Shoveler:** *intro*. **Greater Scaup:** one CR 15 Jul; pair FBI 21 Jul (LS). **Com. Merganser:** *intro*.

Osprey: *intro*; PAFB 9 Jun; Split Rock 29 Jul. **Bald Eagle:** *intro*; CR 9 Jun; two CR 16 Jun; subad King's Bay 28 Jun; ad King's Bay 21 Jul; subad Whey Pd 31 Jul. **N. Harrier:** pair PAFB 9 Jun-29 Jul; six hand-reared banded and released Keeseville 13-19 Aug (JP, NS). **Red-tailed Hawk:** two nestlings banded Bangor 11 Jun. **Golden Eagle:** APt 9 Jun (J&RH), unexpected. **Am. Kestrel:** two nestlings banded Bangor 9 Jul. **Merlin:** *intro*. **Peregrine Falcon:** *intro*; Crown Pt 27 Aug (JB). **Gray Partridge:** Pt au Roche 16 Jun, only report. **Ring-necked Pheasant:** Cumberland Head 6 Jul, only report. **Com. Moorhen:** CR 6-19 Aug. **Semipalmated Plover:** one FBI 12 Aug. **Greater Yellowlegs:** CR 17 Jun (HK, BK, CM, EM), late CLIN date by eight days; Ausable R mouth 12 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** mouth Ausable R 12 Aug. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr FB 6 Aug (R&TN), where unexpected. **Upland Sandpiper:** Beekmantown, Brushton, Ft Covington, and Malone representative. **Marbled Godwit:** one CR 4 Aug and 20-21 Aug (HK, CM). **Ruddy Turnstone:** seven FBI 19 Aug. **Sanderling:** two FBI 12 Aug. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** one FBI 12-19 Aug. **Least Sandpiper:** one FBI 19 Aug; arr CR 6 Aug (JP). **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr CR 13 Jul (BK, CM), early CLIN by three days. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** CR 6-12 Aug (D&JC, BK, RM, CM, JP, LS); two mouth Ausable R 12 Aug (LS), unusual. **Wilson's Phalarope:** *intro*. **Bonaparte's Gull:** arr Abanaki L HAMI 25 Jul (GL), where highly unusual; Auger Pd ESSE 2 Aug (GH),

another unusual inland locale; reports from CR, Westport, and King's Bay 3-6 Aug more expected. **Ring-billed Gull:** *intro*. **Herring Gull:** *intro*. **Great Black-backed Gull:** *ca.* nine pair nesting FBI. **Caspian Tern:** one CR 24 Jun (HK, CM). **Com. Tern:** one FBI 7 Jul. **Black Tern:** *intro*; 3-4 breeding King's Bay WMA 21 Jul (MG).

Rock Dove: one found dead with "AU" band HAMI Jul (GL) belonged to Adirondack Racing Pigeon Club in Queensbury; one with "CU" band died CLIN 8 Jul (DF), belonged to Association Col. Ind. Maissoneuve in Montreal. **Black-billed Cuckoo:** Westport 3 Jul (TH, BK); singing FB 6 Aug (R&TN), where highly unexpected. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** 7th L all summer. **Com. Nighthawk:** four over downtown TL 15 Jun, one there 30 Jul (CD), only reports. **Three-toed Woodpecker:** FB 3 Jul-6 Aug, only location. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** North Meadow 18 Jun, FB 25 Jun-6 Aug, Helldiver Pd I Aug, FY Brown's Tract 27 Aug.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: arr Raquette L. 9 Jun; Hurricane Mt 12 Jun; FB 25 Jun-6 Aug; record early migrant heard Elizabethtown 30 Jul (JP); Helldiver Pd I Aug; down slope migrant banded Porter Mt 8 Aug (WL), also early. **Willow Flycatcher:** Beekmantown 14 Jun (BK); APt 11 Aug (BK, LS), always a good find here. **Horned Lark:** three PAFB 16 Jun. **Gray Jay:** two y FB 25 Jun; Helldiver Pd. 18 Jul-1 Aug; pair FB 6 Aug, chased by Solitary Vireo! **Boreal Chickadee:** Beaver Brook, FB, Gabriels, Giant Mt, Marion R, North Meadow, Raquette L, and Wakely Mt, a good showing. **Sedge Wren:** *intro*. **Marsh Wren:** CR 6 Aug. **"Bicknell's" Gray-cheeked Thrush:** four Hurricane Mt 12 Jun (JC, DS); Dean adds, "What is interesting is that we had one Bicknell's in the exact spot on the mountain, in the exact tree, in exactly the same spot in the tree, at exactly the same time, on exactly the same day that I saw it last year. Talk about being territorial;" Blue Mt I Jul, Wakely Mt 3 Jul. **Am. Robin:** pair Wilmington raised one white young in each brood (YF).

Philadelphia Vireo: *intro*. **Blue-winged Warbler:** *intro*. **Cape May Warbler:** one Gabriels BBS 16 June (TM). **Pine Warbler:** in fragmented pitch pine PAFB 9-10 Jun, 29 Jul. **Palm Warbler:** FB 18 Aug (GL), presumably a transient. **Blackpoll Warbler:** Hurricane Mt 12 Jun; Wakely Mt 3 Jul; FB 6 Aug, representative. **Louisiana Waterthrush:** pair giving distraction display Dry Mill Creek CLIN 10 Jun (HK, BK, CM), a good find. **Mourning Warbler:** five banded Elizabethtown 6-31 Aug (JP), a good showing. **Wilson's Warbler:** *intro*.

Scarlet Tanager: female feeding Brown-headed Cowbird L Alice 10 Aug. **Vesper Sparrow:** max 12 PAFB 16 Jun. **Savannah Sparrow:** max 19

PAFB 16 Jun. Grasshopper Sparrow: *intro*. **Red Crossbill:** one Helldiver Pd 1 Aug; flock FB 6 Aug; Elizabethtown I I Aug; small flocks of 3-7 birds Shallow L 28 Aug, may bode well for the coming winter. **White-winged Crossbill:** singles flying over HAMI Jul; Helldiver Pd 18 Jul; CRF 29 Jul, also bodes well. **Evening Grosbeak:** pair Hurricane Road 12 Jun (JC, DS); max 27 St Regis Falls BBS 18 Jun (TM); female, two dependent y banded Elizabethtown 5 Aug (JP).

Exotics: **Budgerigar:** Hogansburg feeder FRAN after 3 Aug (Denise & Hollis White). **European Goldfinch:** Plattsburgh feeder 7 Jul through Aug (CM).

Addenda: **Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Sciota CLIN 14 May 1994 (Rudy Bobka). **Clay-colored Sparrow:** Pt au Roche SP CLIN 26 Jun-1 Jul 1986 and 18-19 Jun 1988 (E.J. Meyers).

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