

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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As September began, Lake Champlain stood at a relatively high 96'. Labor Day saw the passage of Hurricane Edouard, and both were celebrated on a hot, hazy, 79° day, with Plattsburgh sweltering at 81° on 3 Sep. Hurricane Fran did manage to bring rain to the area on 7 Sep, with the following week also cloudy and wet. By 24 Sep, the lake had dropped to 95.14', and skies were clear for the second full lunar eclipse of the year on 26 Sep. The first seasonal snowfall on 10 Oct left the High Peaks white the next day, but the month was generally pleasant, with 43% of possible sunshine and temperatures about normal. Winds gusted to 25 mph on 14 Oct. 12" of rain fell on 21-22 Oct, and winds reached 24 mph on 30 Oct. The month was slightly warmer than average, but with somewhat more rain than usual. Champlain was at 95.26' at month's end. Although Inlet received 5" of snowfall during just the first three days of Nov, there was never more than 6" on the ground there throughout the month. Plattsburgh was a mild 55° on 6 Nov, and strong southerly winds continued to pump warm air until reaching a record-high 74° on 8 Nov. The front stalled, then moved backward, while waves of low pressure moved north, bringing steady rains that seemed like they would never end. But end they did on 9 Nov.

after dumping a 3 to 5-inch deluge across the Region, with Peru soaked by 5.22". All rivers left their banks: the Ausable above historic flood stage... the Boquet... the Chazys, Great and Little... the Salmon... rail lines washed out, even the Adirondack Northway closed. To help imagine the force of this event, consider that the Champlain Valley averages under 3" of precipitation for the entire month of Nov. The flood was followed by freezing weather, with Mountain View Lake iced over by 13 Nov after a low of -1°, and by 28 Nov the mercury had dropped to -15° at nearby Owls Head. Limekiln Lake also froze over, but blew out the night of 30 Nov. Although much of the period was wet and gloomy, with Inlet seeing precipitation on 33 days, a seasonal record 192 species turned up, an improvement even over last year's record 186.

The importance of Point au Roche State Park, CLIN, as a stopover for "Greater" Snow Geese from Bylot Island, N.W.T., has become apparent in recent years. [There are two subspecies of Snow Goose that occur in NY State, the smaller nominate *caerulescens* and the larger *atlanticus*, which is referred to as "Greater". (EL)] This fall, Bill Krueger, with the help of Charlie Mitchell and others, continued the effort to read and report neck-collared Snow Geese. During Oct. 81 black-on-yellow collars were read, with 83 more black-on-yellow combinations added in November, for a total of 164 — all apparently placed on nesting female "Greater" Snows from Bylot I. in various years by the Canadian Wildlife Service. This year, for the first time, CWS researchers also placed 2-digit white-on-green satellite radio collars on 60 Bylot I. females, and six of these (plus a paired green-collared gander) showed up at Point au Roche. Canada Geese wearing collars or bibs were also reported from Crown Point, Point au Roche, and Westport. A small Canada Goose with stubby bill and plumage lighter than other Canadas, reported as "Richardson's," spent over a month with Snow Geese at Point au Roche. At Westport, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was grazing with a Snow and flock of Canadas (report to NYSARC). The three Snow Geese at Tupper Lake since May remained into early November.

Although the Champlain shoreline was inundated by the heavy rains of '96, shorebirds could be found by those willing to check flooded fields and inland ponds. A surprising 22 species, up from 18 last fall, were reported. Tom Dudones and Bob Hagar found a **Whimbrel** at the Saranac Lake airport for a first FRAN record. Krueger and Mitchell encountered a **Hudsonian Godwit** at King's Bay and a **Western Sandpiper** at the Chazy Rivers, CLIN, which responded to a taped call of the species. After four summer Stilt Sandpipers, another two were added this fall: at the Chazy Rivers by Krueger and Mitchell and at the North Country Community College pond along an abandoned railroad grade in Saranac Lake, ESSE, by Dudones.

A Red-throated Loon, trapped in a foot wide opening on iced over Mirror Lake 27 Nov, eventually crawled to shore over thin ice, was captured by Larry Master, and released on open water at Westport 30 Nov. Other northern visitors began to appear, including Rough-legged Hawks by 28 Oct and a first-winter **Iceland Gull** at Westport the same day, spotted by Mike & Susan Peterson and Dean Spaulding. The first Snowy Owl was at - where else? - Owls Head, FRAN, 16 Nov. The next sighting was at the Ray Brook, ESSE, golf course two days later. This bird was taken into custody by guards at the Federal prison there the next day, after coming down inside the coil of razor wire during the night. The emaciated owl was turned over to wildlife rehabilitator Dr. Nina Schoch to have its feet sutured and was held for further treatment before release. Fortuitously, Dudones spotted a **Northern Hawk Owl** perched in a dead tree along Route 28, 42 miles north of Long Lake, HAMI, on 18 Nov - the same day he saw the Snowy Owl at Ray Brook! The first Northern Shrikes were at Inlet and Jay by 26 Oct, while American Tree Sparrows arrived at Ausable Point 2 Nov.

The wild food crop rebounded after the Drought of '95, with lots of buckthorn, gray dogwood, mountain ash, red cedar, staghorn sumac, and wild grape available to flocks of Eastern Bluebirds, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings. On 7 Sep, Bob Yunick checked the HAMI cone crop along Routes 10, 8, and 30: "On Rt. 10 cones were spotty. Spruce and balsam crops were modest. White pine was variable, from none to a few trees with modest numbers." At Essex Chain Lakes, ESSE, on 21 Sep, he found 50% to 75% of white pines along the lakeshore were heavily laden and about 50% of spruces had good cone crops. Nearby Minerva had a modestly good crop of cones on balsam, pine, and spruce. Nevertheless, only small numbers of Purple Finches, Red and White-winged crossbills, and Evening Grosbeaks were reported. At the same time, Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches increased in numbers as the season progressed, promising a winter invasion by at least two species.

Dudones was able to compare a **Western Tanager** in St. Bernard's Cemetery along Little Lake Colby in Saranac Lake with nearby Scarlet Tanagers on 11 Sep for a first FRAN and Regional record (details to NYSARC). With all of the northern visitants to come, it was a real joy to have a western stray to help open a memorable, if soggy, fall.

High Peaks Audubon Society looks forward to welcoming visitors to the Federation's 50th Annual Meeting in Lake Placid, 12-14 Sep 1997.

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Abbreviations: AP-Ausable Point WMA; CR - between the Chazy & Little Chazy Rivers; ECL - Essex Chain Lakes; IL - Indian Lake, FRAN: MRRRA Moose River Recreation Area; WRS - Webb Royce Swamp.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Red-throated Loon:** Mirror L 27 Nov, released Westport 30 Nov (LM). **Com. Loon:** 6-8 ad ECL 21 Sep; 18-20 Essex to Port Henry 19-24 Oct; IL to 12 Nov (JT). **Horned Grebe:** arr six Whallon's Bay 24 Oct. **Red-necked Grebe:** arr AP 8 Oct (BK,CN.); max three Whallon's Bay 19 Oct. with one thru; two Raquette L 18 Nov (TD); Westport 19 Nov, a strong showing. **Double-crested Cormorant:** L Colby 3 Oct (RH), unusual inland; max 100 Crown Point 10 Oct; Plattsburgh 23 Nov (RH, TM), late. **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** last WRS 2 Sep (JP, DS). **Tundra Swan:** AP 1 Nov (HK, IL), first CLIN record. **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:** Westport 18 Nov (RM, DS!). **Snow Goose:** 164 neckbands read, see summary in *intro*; three Tupper Lake pk to 12 Nov (TD); Essex 27 Nov (DN); flock Uncas 3 Nov (GL), late for interior. **Brant:** imm Tupper L pk 7-11 Nov (CD, TD). **Canada Goose:** *intro*; max 1,000+ Malone pk 22 Nov. **Canada "Richardson's" Goose:** one Point Au Roche for over a month with Snow Geese. **Gadwall:** six Sochia Pd, Fish Cr 11 Sep (TD); hen Westport 27 Oct (RM, MP, DS), good finds. **Redhead:** hen Westport 18-19 Nov, recently rare. **Ring-necked Duck:** max 25 Moody Pd 11 Nov (RH). **Greater Scaup:** Moody's 11 Nov (TD), only definite report. **Lesser Scaup:** ten Mountain View L 29 Oct-7 Nov (JT); 2 Moody Pd 9 Nov (TD); 8 there 11 Nov (RH), definite. **scaup sp.:** max 1,000 off Wickham Marsh 27 Nov (DS). **Oldsquaw:** four Essex 20 Oct; drake IL 12 Nov, rarely reported. **Black Scoter:** four Monty Bay 14 Nov, only report. **Surf Scoter:** max five Plattsburgh 20-26 Oct; AP 24 Nov. **White-winged Scoter:** IL 10 Nov, only report. **Bufflehead:** 80 IL 12 Nov (JT), high number inland. **Ruddy Duck:** hen Wilcox Dock 25-31 Oct (J&RH, BK, CM), early CLIN; four drakes IL 12 Nov (JT), rare in FRAN.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Bald Eagle:** imm Crown Point; ad Malone; imm Saranac Inn; Saranac Lake airport; ad Tupper L; imm Tupper L Marsh; imm Wadhams; imm Westport; Willsboro Bay; Willsboro Pt. a strong local showing. **Rough-legged Hawk:** arr Essex & Whallonsburg 28 Oct. **Golden Eagle:** two imm Essex 19 Oct (JP, DS), kettling with N. Harrier & Peregrine Falcon; imm Split Rock Falls 27 Oct (RS, MP, D&TS). **Merlin:** last SLHS 15 Sep (TD). **Peregrine Falcon:** ad male CR 10 Sep (BK, CM); migrant Essex 19 Oct (JP, DS); Willsboro eyrie 18 Nov (JP); ad Reber 30 Nov (DN), may have come from same eyrie. **Gray Partridge:** two Pt au Roche 15 Oct (GR), only report. **Wild Turkey:** max 14 Willsboro, with other reports from Lake Clear, MRRRA,

Tupper L. and Wadhams, all known locales. **Com. Moorhen:** CLIN 24 Sep, only report. **Black-bellied Plover:** Raquette Pd. FRAN. 23 Oct (CD), unexpected; AP & Pt au Roche more expected. **Am. Golden-Plover:** three Saranac Lake airport 15-16 Sep (TD,RH) unusual; Deyo Rd, CLIN. 5 Nov (BK), late. **Killdeer:** last two Moody's 12 Nov (TD), in snow squall. **Greater Yellowlegs:** max six AP & CR 6 Sep; five SLHS 21-23 Oct (TD), locally high numbers. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** max 31 AP & CR 6 Sep; present 3 Sep-3 Oct; NCCC 25 Sep (TD), unusual inland. **Whimbrel:** Saranac Lake airport 16-17 Sep (TD, RH). **HUDSONIAN GODWIT:** max five King's Bay 19 Oct (BK, CM); three Point au Fer 27 Oct (J&RH), great finds. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** CR 6-10 Sep quite expected, but Tupper Lake Pk 9 Sep (TD), rare in FRAN. **Western Sandpiper:** CR 6 Sep (BK, CM), responded to taped call. **White-rumped Sandpiper:** Pt au Roche 5 Nov (BK), rump seen and call heard. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** CR & King's Bay 2 Sep-3 Oct (BK, CA), max three there 3 Oct. **Dunlin:** AP & CR 3 Oct-14 Nov (BK,CM); max eight there 3 Oct. **Stilt Sandpiper:** CR 6-7 Sep (BK, CM), "greenish legs & drooped bill;" NCCC pd Saranac Lake, ESSE. 15 Sep (TD- excellent details). **Short-billed Dowitcher:** CLIN 15 Sep (J&RH); AP 17 Sep (BK, CM), possibly the same bird. **Long-billed Dowitcher:** CR 6-7 Sep, 24 Sep (BK, CM), seen well, responded to tape with same vocalization. **Am. Woodcock:** MRRA 4 Nov (GL), late for interior Adks. **Bonaparte's Gull:** last two Westport 1 Nov. **Iceland Gull:** 1st winter Westport 28 Oct (J&SP, DS), early ESSE fall arrival.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Snowy Owl:** Intro.; Owls Head, FRAN, 16 Nov (JT); Ray Brook 18-19 Nov (TD, NS). **N. HAWK OWL:** Long Lake, HAMI, 18 Nov (TD). **Barred Owl:** Keene 26 Sep (J&PT), gave mad "kip-brrrr" all at eclipsing full moon. **N. Saw-whet Owl:** tooting Wadhams 27 Oct. **N. Flicker:** three Essex 23 Nov, good number for that date.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **Horned Lark:** 12 Malone 21 Nov (JT), only report. **Cliff Swallow:** CR 9 Sep (BK, CM), late CLIN by 8 days. **Gray Jay:** pr Chubb R, ESSE. 10 Sep; Raquette L, HAMI. 3 Oct; four Bloomingdale Bog, FRAN. 16 Nov, a widespread showing. **Boreal Chickadee:** four Third Brother (3,760') 26 Oct, were found 300' higher than Black-capped Chickadee flock; max ten Bloomingdale Bog 16 Nov; other reports from Indian R and Wolf Cr. **Tufted Titmouse:** vagrants Inlet Sep and Elizabethtown 20 Nov. **Carolina Wren:** Westport 2 Sep (TD), only report. **Marsh Wren:** WRS 2 Sep (JP, DS); Saranac Lake 22 Oct (TD), fairly unusual. **Am. Robin:** MRRA 3-4 Nov, feeding on mountain ash berries. **Brown Thrasher:** trans Elizabethtown 24-30 Sep (JP). **Am. Pipit:** CR 24 Sep (BK, CM); Tupper Lake 9 Oct (TD); two Essex 19 Oct (JP, DS); max 20 WRS 27 Oct (RM, MP, D&TS), a fine showing.

Cedar Waxwing: 27 Tupper Lake 25 Nov, as numbers increased. **N. Shrike:** arr Inlet & Jay 26 Oct; imm Wadhams 17 Nov.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Tennessee Warbler:** Rand Hill 4 Oct (J&RH), late CLIN by 7 days. **Orange-crowned Warbler:** St. Bernard's Cem., Saranac Lake, 20 Oct (TD), records appear to be increasing in recent years. **Chestnut-sided Warbler:** AP 1 Oct (BK, CM), late CLIN by 18 days. **Pine Warbler:** NCCC 25 Sep (TD); AP 1 Oct (BK, CM), late CLIN by 13 days. **PRAIRIE WARBLER:** male Bloomingdale Bog 2 Sep (TD), unexpected location for a regional rarity. **Palm Warbler:** "Yellow", Bloomingdale Bog 2 Sep (TD); Tupper Lake 15 Sep (CD).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **WESTERN TANAGER:** St. Bernard's Cem., Saranac Lake, FRAN, 11 Sep (TD--details to NYSARC). **Am. Tree Sparrow:** arr AP 2 Nov. **Chipping Sparrow:** max 25 Tupper Lake 22 Sep; one there 8 Nov (CD), late. **Field Sparrow:** two Inlet 2 Nov (GL), late. **Vesper Sparrow:** last Saranac Lake 21 Oct (TD). **Savannah Sparrow:** two Essex 28 Nov (DN - 2 locations). **Fox Sparrow:** one arr Second Brother 26 Oct (J&PT), an unexpected location; Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake more usual. **Song Sparrow:** Inlet 2 Nov and Essex 19 Nov, fairly late here. **Lincoln's Sparrow:** AP 8 Oct (CM), late CLIN by 8 days. **Lapland Longspur:** Reynolds Rd 7 Nov (CM), early CLIN by 2 days; Malone 21 Nov (JT), still a good find. **Snow Bunting:** arr MRRA & Raquette L 1 Nov; max 20 Keene dump 25 Nov; other reports from Cedar R & Malone. **E. Meadowlark:** seven Essex 28 Oct (J&SP, DS), a good number for that date; two Riverside Drive, Lake Placid, 30 Nov (NC), ground snow-covered. **Rusty Blackbird:** Saranac Lake 27 Oct (TD) and two WRS 28 Oct (J&SP, DS), the only reports. **Com. Grackle:** max 75 Moody Pd 27 Oct (RH). **Brown-headed Cowbird:** Inlet 26 Nov (GL), late there. **Purple Finch:** scattered reports from Elizabethtown, Inlet, Lake Placid, & Tupper Lake. **House Finch:** eye disease Wadhams 19 Oct (DS). **Red Crossbill:** Cedar R 9 Sep; two feeding on spruce ECL 21 Sep, the only reports. **White-winged Crossbill:** MRRA 30 Nov, only report. **Pine Siskin:** dozen Second Brother 26 Oct (J&PT), flew into a spruce for the first report of the season; max 75-100 Tupper Lake 10 Nov, with smaller numbers near Elizabethtown and Inlet. **Am. Goldfinch:** ad with begging yg Tupper Lake feeder 2 Sep (CD); max 120 Elizabethtown 21 Nov, with other feeders also reporting large numbers. **Evening Grosbeak:** max 7 Tupper Lake 4 Nov (CD), "only sighting"; Owls Head (J T), "small, sporadic flocks at feeders."

ADDENDUM: Black-billed Magpie: Gooley Club, Essex Chain Lakes, ESSE, deer feeders 23-26 May 1996 (Craig & Heidi Plumley, Crystal Tucker--photographs on file), first ESSE and Regional record.

EXOTIC: Black-hooded Conure: Lake Shore Rd near Hubble Pt, CLIN, 21
Sep (BK, CM), had metal band on leg.