

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M.C. PETERSON

Discovery Farm, RR 1 Box 230, Elizabethtown NY 12932-9721

Most of the winter of 1996-97 managed to squeeze into the spring season. The biggest storm of the season to date hit on 6 March, leaving a foot of snow blowing in 18 mph winds. March winds reached gusts of 33 mph on the 1st and 37 mph on the 12th. Clinton County even enjoyed a thunderstorm on St. Patrick's Day, in spite of -1° temperatures. Monthly snowfall was 27", more than twice the lower-elevation average of a foot. In spite of only 47% of possible sunshine, there was enough starshine and moonglow to provide great views of comet Hale-Bopp and the partial lunar eclipse 23 March, with Mars on the moon's shoulder. Two early April snowstorms were followed by a thaw that saw Plattsburgh reach 63° on 6 April, before a drop to 14° on 9 April (and a daily high of 26° , the lowest for that date). Another brief thaw, then serious snow on 18 April: 18" at Ellenburg Depot, 17" in Keene Valley, and 11" at Lake Placid, the heaviest 24-hour snowfall this late in the season. But the remainder of the month was relatively sunny, with 70° at Plattsburgh on the 30th. A cool, wet, and even snowy May followed, with snow at Inlet on May 2nd, 4th, and 22nd, plus 16 days with showers or rain. After opening on 9 May, the Crown Point banding station experienced a solid two weeks of adverse north and west winds. A southerly flow finally arrived on Saturday, 24 May. Then a return to adverse winds on Sunday and Memorial Day served to ground the mixed waves of migrants who had finally decided to make the final push to Canada. Elsewhere on Memorial Day, the Thaxtons found Boreal Chickadee

and singing Winter Wren on the Big Slide side of Third Brother (3,500'), where there was still four feet of snow.

Despite the late spring, a record 219 species were reported, exceeding the 216 found in spring 1993. This includes a **Barnacle Goose**, whose final status is left to NYSARC. N. Bobwhite, an obvious release, subspecies or morphs ("Blue" Snow Goose, both Horned Larks, both Palm Warblers, and differing Red Crossbills), and an apparent hybrid (White-throated Sparrow x Dark-eyed Junco). Whatever the actual count, the weather had anything but an adverse effect on final numbers. This was the second most productive season in 22 consecutive years of Crown Point banding, with 1,238 birds of 62 species banded and released. Regional rarities included a **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Ausable Point, a **Glossy Ibis** headed to Four Brothers Islands, the **Barnacle Goose** at Lake Flower, a **Eurasian Wigeon** and Hudsonian Godwit at Chazy Landing, **Short-eared Owls** near Essex, a **Loggerhead Shrike** at Saranac Lake, and an apparent singing male **Kentucky Warbler** at Carpenter Flats. **Wilson's Phalaropes** were again found at their Chazy Rivers nesting grounds, and there were several reports of **Wilson's Warbler** from habitats and on dates suggestive of nesting, albeit difficult to assess with such a late migration.

The return passage of waterfowl was exceptionally good. Bill Krueger resumed reading neck collars on "Greater" Snow Geese at Champlain, the Chazy Rivers, Point au Roche, and Rouses Point, noting several radio collars in the course of his search. In addition to increased numbers of normally uncommon species of ducks, this was an exceptional spring for Hooded Mergansers, found in "every wet spot along the road," as Tom Barber put it, and with reports from Ausable Point, Barber Pond, Bulwagga Bay, Chazy Rivers, Chilson Marsh, Cumberland Head, Lewey Lake, Penfield Pond, Port Douglas, and Westport only suggestive of their invasion.

Two pairs of Osprey may have nested in the used Great Blue Heron nests at Webb Royce Swamp this year, joined in the old treetop colony by nesting Canada Goose, Mallard, and Great Horned Owl. Bald Eagles continued their increase, with the largest concentration of six reported from Tupper Lake in early April. In an ironic twist, John D. Delehanty found an immature Bald Eagle feeding on a Turkey Vulture carcass at Bog River Falls on 19 April. Merlins at Fish Creek 19 April, Saranac Lake high school pond 10 May, Raquette Lake 26 May, and a pair at Moody Pond 31 May were likely nesters, with others at Rugar Woods and Wadhams in late April probably birds of passage.

Krueger and Charlie Mitchell found two female **Wilson's Phalaropes** on the Gravelle Farm at Chazy Rivers 27 May, where Hal Klein saw a pair the same day and where the Booths also located a pair two days later. The census of Ring-billed Gulls nesting on Island "C" of the Four Brothers Islands was conducted for the first time in a decade on 11 May. A total of 15,033 nests was

counted, down less than 1% from the 15,184 nests tallied back on 19 May 1987. Four Black Terns on the Laurin Farm, Chazy Rivers, 27 May were noteworthy. Similarly encouraging were the four **Short-eared Owls** that Dean and Trisha Spaulding found near Essex the evening of 21 April, where a displaying pair remained into early May. Bohemian Waxwings finally put in a late, but strong, appearance, with 250 arriving at Peru 22 March and flocks remaining in the Essex-Westport area to 22 April and on the SUNY Plattsburgh campus to 23 April, some mixed with Cedar Waxwings, which is quite atypical here. Tom Dudones had a close look at a **Loggerhead Shrike** at Saranac Lake High School on the early date of 29 March. Bob Yunick made three last trips to Hamilton County in March to look for crossbills and other winter finches. All Red Crossbill roadkills in this Region measured as *Loxia curvirostra minor* of the Pacific Northwest and had *minor*-shaped bills (specimens to Columbia-Greene Community College). White-winged Crossbills were more abundant than Reds, especially along Uncas Road near Inlet. By the same month, Pine Siskins banded near Elizabethtown and Keene began to show brood patches and cloacal protuberances as proof of nesting.

As mentioned, the banding at Crown Point State Historic Site was rewarding. Moreover, there were 61 returns of 16 different species banded at Crown Point in previous years, with the oldest a N. Flicker now at least 7 years, 11 months old. Obviously these thickets are critical to local nesters who return year-after-year, as well as long-distance migrants headed to Canada. Species new to the station included Pileated Woodpecker and House Sparrow, bringing the list of species banded since 1976 to 90. A bird captured and photographed 25 May was an apparent **White-throated Sparrow** x **Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco** hybrid. Above, it appeared to be a dull, tan-striped morph white-throat, with normal yellow lores. It had the gray upper breast and white belly typical of a junco, but no trace of white in the throat. The three most abundant species were American Goldfinch (376, eclipsing the previous high of 187 set in '93), Yellow-rumped Warbler (264, but down from last year's incredible 694), and Common Yellowthroat (102, beating last year's record of 65). Nineteen warbler species were banded, compared with 17 in 1995 and 22 in 1996.

As always, the birding on Crown Point Peninsula was as good as the banding: 4-6 Red-necked Grebes 10-11 May, daily Ospreys, three Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcon 24 May, a Black-billed Cuckoo from 25 May, calling Eastern Screech-Owl 20-21 May, Common Nighthawk 25 May, late American Tree Sparrow 24 May, Grasshopper Sparrow 20 May, and immature male Orchard Oriole 17-18 May a few of the highlights. All in all, a memorable spring season, even if much of it did seem like winter.

Contributors: Ethel & Tom Baker, Thomas Barber, William Barber, Helen & Robert Booth, Rick Bruce, John Ciaccio, Dean Cook, Charlcie Delehanty, John D. Delehanty, Marian Delehanty, Janet Downs, Tom Dudones, Bill

Frenette, Robert Hagar, Judy & Roger Heintz, Gordon Howard, Anne Hungerford, Paul Kelly, Hal Klein, Russ Koch, Bill Krueger, Daphne Kutzer, Wesley Lanyon, Gary Lee, Richard MacDonald, Theodore Mack, Sidney Maxwell, Charles Mitchell, Scott Morical, Ted Murin, Keith Murphy, Sean O'Brien, Nancy Olsen, John & Susan Peterson, Mary Purcell, George Roberts, Dean Spaulding, Trisha Spaulding, Eric Sullivan, Mary Ann Tebo, John & Patricia Thaxton, Jan Trzeciak, Robert Wei, Robert Yunick.

Abbreviations: AP-Ausable Point WMA; BB-Bloomington Bog; CP-Crown Point peninsula; CR-between the Chazy & Little Chazy Rivers; TL-Tupper Lake; TLP-Tupper Lake municipal parks; and WRS-Webb Royce Swamp.

LOONS-DUCKS: **Com. Loon:** Whallon's Bay 2 Mar (RM,J&SP,DS), early. **Horned Grebe:** TL 20-22 Apr (CD), unusual inland. **Red-necked Grebe:** max 26 Westport 6 Apr (TB,JP); Whallon's Bay and CP to 11 May. **Double-crested Cormorant:** AP 3 Apr (WK) and Westport 5 Apr (TB,JP), record early for CLIN & ESSE; three FRAN 10 May (JT), unusual for that county. **Great Blue Heron:** arr 12 AP 30 Mar (TD, TM), walking on ice; CP 30 Mar (TB); two CR 30 Mar (NO), all CLIN-ESSE and Regional records. **Great Egret:** CR 31 May (WK). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** arr Westport 9 Apr (TB,JP), record early ESSE & Region. **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON:** AP 30 Mar (DK, *fide* RH, BK), first Regional record, but without details. **GLOSSY IBIS:** one frequenting Shelburne Farms, VT, seen flying to apparent roost Four Brothers 24 May (SM, TM). **Snow Goose:** max 1,000+ Pt au Roche 29 Mar; "**Blue**": CR 13 Apr (NO). **Brant:** Raquette L 25 May (ES). **BARNACLE GOOSE:** Lake Flower FRAN 8 May (TD, RH, TM, photo!). **Canada Goose:** tree nest Webb Royce Swamp Apr; on nest Essex Station 22 Apr (JP, DS), new location. **Green-winged Teal:** 20 Whallonsburg 16 Apr (TB,JP), new ESSE max, although higher numbers present CR in CLIN. **Am. Black Duck:** max 96 CR 13 Apr (NO). **N. Shoveler:** CR 13 Apr (NO); WRS Apr (MG), uncommon here. **Gadwall:** three drakes AP 30 Mar (TD, TM); two drakes Essex 3 Apr (TB,JP), ESSE record; also Westport 5-12 Apr. **EURASIAN WIGEON:** CR 5 May (HK, BK). **Am. Wigeon:** arr six AP 30 Mar (TD, TM); pair there 13 Apr; four Beekmantown 17 Apr; CP 4-6 Apr; drake WRS 16 Apr (TB,JP) and pair there 22 Apr (JP, DS), suggestive of nesting. **Lesser Scaup:** four Coll Bay 31 Mar (TB), early. **Oldsquaw:** arr CP 6 Apr (TB, RM, JP), early. **Black Scoter:** four Westport 6 Apr (TB,JP), early. **White-winged Scoter:** 22 Whallon's Bay 22 Apr (JP, DS). **Com. Goldeneye:** St. Germaine Pd FRAN 3 May (TM), possible nester. **Hooded Merganser:** pr Westport 9 Mar (JP, DS); abundant thereafter. **Red-breasted Merganser:** four drakes Willsboro Pt 3 Apr (TB,JP); displaying pr AP 15 Apr (BK); six Beekmantown 29 Apr (NO).

HAWKS-ALCIDS: **Turkey Vulture:** arr Pt au Roche 19 Mar (HK), followed by four more Mar sightings. **Osprey:** on nests WRS mid-Apr; on nest Scomotion Cr 28 Apr. **Bald Eagle:** max six TL 5-6 Apr (CD), numerous reports from all four counties. **N. Harrier:** arr Essex 3 Apr; many ad males sighted throughout that month. **Rough-legged Hawk:** last Ticonderoga 12 Apr (DC). **Golden Eagle:** Westport 22 Mar and early Apr. **Merlin:** Fish Cr 19 Apr; Wadhams 22 Apr; Rugar Woods 23 Apr; SLHS pd 10 May; Raquette L 26 May; pr Moody Pd 31 May, prob nesting again. **Peregrine Falcon:** CP, CR, Keene, Plattsburgh, Wilmington, includes nesting pairs. **Gray Partridge:** Barber Rd. CLIN, 31 May (BK). **Spruce Grouse:** Shallow Lk trail 15 May (GL). **Sora:** Essex Station Marsh 25 May (WB). **Com. Moorhen:** TL, Moody's 8 May (TD). **Black-bellied Plover:** CR 29 May (H&RB), scarce in spring. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 20 CR 27 May (BK,CM), a good number. **Upland Sandpiper:** Stetson Rd. CLIN, 31 May (BK), only report. **HUDSONIAN GODWIT:** CR 27 May (BK,CM) to 29 May (H&RB), on Laurin Farm. **Least Sandpiper:** 15 CR 27 May (BK,CM), good spring number. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** CR 3 May (BK), in stubble field. **Dunlin:** CR 5 May (HK,BK), early CLIN on Laurin Farm. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** CR 27 May (BK,CM), on Gravelle Farm. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** two females CR 27 May (BK,CM), on Gravelle Farm; pr there same day (HK) to 29 May (H&RB). **Bonaparte's Gull:** arr Port Henry & Westport 6 Apr (TB,JP); CR 16 Apr; TLP 6-10 May (CD,TD). **Com. Tern:** max 8 Gilbert Cr Marina CLIN 4 May; copulating pr CR 11 May, on Laurin Farm.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: **Black-billed Cuckoo:** CP 25 May (KM,JP,DS,RW), only report. **E. Screech-Owl:** calling CP 20-21 May (GL,JP). **Great Horned Owl:** on nest in old heronry WRS 22 Apr (JP,DS). **SHORT-EARED OWL:** four Essex 21 Apr (DS,TS); displaying pair present at dusk through 10 May (DS), strong evidence of probable nesting. **Com. Nighthawk:** CP 25-26 May. **Red-headed Woodpecker:** Siarkowski feeder, Lake Shore Rd ESSE 20-25 May (DS,TS). **Three-toed Woodpecker:** The Gulf CLIN 21 May (J&RH), northernmost known location in NYS along Quebec border. **Black-backed Woodpecker:** Shallow Lk trail 15 May; Floodwood Rd 28 May; BB & Ferd's Bog 31 May, usual locales, but a good showing.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLINGS: **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** arr Whiteface Mt 29 May. **Horned Lark:** 50 "Northern" Westport 9 Mar (JP,DS); "Prairie" arr Westport 22 Mar (TM,SO,JP); last "Northern" Westport 9 Apr (TB), late departure and early arrival for ESSE. **Gray Jay:** Whiteface Mt 22 Mar (NO), rare in High Peaks; three Raquette L feeder to 6 Apr; Raquette L 6 May; Marion R May, more expected. **Am. Crow:** took, plucked, and consumed Pine Siskin Speculator 12 Apr (PK). **Boreal Chickadee:** Big Slide, BB, MRRA, and

Vermontville, expected locations. **Tufted Titmouse**: Carpenter's Flats, Ticonderoga, and Westport, similarly expected. **Marsh Wren**: arr WRS 20 Apr (DS); Wickham Marsh 14 May (J&RH). **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**: pr CP 17 May (JC,GH,JP,DS), only encounter. **Gray-cheeked Thrush**: two banded CP 24-25 May (JP), the first "warm" brownish, the second "cold" grayish. **Bicknell's Thrush**: arr Dannemora 24 May (J&RH). **Hermit Thrush**: arr Rugar Woods 9 Apr (BK), early CLIN. **N. Mockingbird**: arr Elizabethtown-Keene 5 Apr, unusually high elevation; CP from 21 Apr, more expected. **Brown Thrasher**: arr Inlet feeder 1 Apr (GL), exceptionally early and unusual in interior Adks. **Am. Pipit**: Ridge Rd CLIN 20 Apr (J&RH); 6-15 TLP 6-10 May (CD,TD), good finds in spring. **Bohemian Waxwing**: arr 250 Peru 22 Mar (JD) to 27 Mar (RH); six BB 1 Apr; 5-25 in mixed waxwing flocks SUNY Plattsburgh 30 Mar-23 Apr (BK); 75 Westport 3 Apr; 30 WRS 5 Apr; 150+ in three flocks Westport 13 Apr (all TB,JP); 50 Essex 22 Apr (JP,DS), obviously a month long return flight, but from whence? **Cedar Waxwing**: max 200+ SUNY 7 Mar, after being numerous all winter. **N. Shrike**: banded Keene 6 Mar; Wadhams 9 Mar; Keene 11, 28 Mar, only sightings. **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE**: SLHS 29 Mar (TD), close look.

VIREOS-WARBLEDERS: **Yellow-throated Vireo**: arr Keene 12 May (J&PT). **Philadelphia Vireo**: banded CP 26 May (JP). **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: 264 banded CP 9-26 May. **Palm Warbler**: arr Cumberland Head 2 May (NO); three "Western" banded CP 12-14 May (GH,JP), narrow migratory window. **Louisiana Waterthrush**: singing male Westport 25 Apr (TB), only report, but from known brook. **KENTUCKY WARBLER**: heard only Carpenter's Flats CLIN 29 May (BK,CM). **Mourning Warbler**: Heart Lake Rd 25-29 May (WB), on territory; banded CP 25 May. **Com. Yellowthroat**: 102 banded CP 12-26 May. **WILSON'S WARBLER**: arr Cumberland Head 15 May (NO); seven banded CP 19-26 May (JP); SLHS pd 25 May (TD), likely transient; BB 26 May (WB); Tahawus Lake Sanford Rd 27 May (WB), quite possibly breeders.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Rose-breasted Grosbeak**: again widely reported from Regional feeding stations during May, as in '96. **Indigo Bunting**: also frequent at feeders from mid-May, as in the cold spring of '96. **E. Towhee**: arr Hogsburg 27 May (HW), only report. **Am. Tree Sparrow**: CP 24 May (DS,TS), late ESSE by ten days. **Vesper Sparrow**: Cross Rd ESSE 22 Mar (TM,SO,JP), early ESSE by four days. **Grasshopper Sparrow**: singing male CP 20 May (GL,JP). **Fox Sparrow**: Speculator & TL 8 Apr to Wadhams 21 Apr. **Song Sparrow**: major movement Essex-Willsboro 3 Apr. **Lincoln's Sparrow**: arr Little TL 30 Apr (CD); 15 banded CP 13-26 May. **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** x **DARK-EYED JUNCO**: apparent hybrid CP 24

May (JP et al.), banded & photographed; *intro*. **Lapland Longspur**: last Reynolds Rd CLIN 22 Mar (DK). **Snow Bunting**: max 200+ Westport 9-22 Mar; last Inlet 29 Mar (GL). **Rusty Blackbird**: WRS 20 Apr (DS); FB 9 May (GL); Pt au Fer 11 May (HK,BK); Ray Brook 19 May (TD), a strong showing. **Orchard Oriole**: imm male CP 17 May (JC,GH,JP,DS); imm male banded CP 17 May (JP), rare spring transient and summer resident here. **Red Crossbill**: one Hurricane Mt 2 Mar; three HAMI roadkill specimens 16, 23 Mar, measured as *L.c. minor* (RY); roadkill Paul Smiths 22 Mar; pr Westport same day darker, large-billed (TM,SO,JP); max 10 Westport 29 Mar; pr Westport 18 Apr; regular HAMI thru, breeding; *intro*. **White-winged Crossbill**: two males The Glen 2 Mar; 11 HAMI 16 Mar; 13 HAMI 23 Mar, where regular thru; Paul Smiths 22-23 Mar; two AP 28 Mar (HK,BK), unusual location; 30 BB 3-6 May; max 70 Lost Pd FRAN 3 May (TM), as nesting apparently concluded. **Pine Siskin**: large flocks at feeders, especially, during snowstorms, into early May. **Am. Goldfinch**: increasingly outnumbered previous species as season advanced; record 376 banded CP 9-26 May, plus 30 returns. **House Sparrow**: pr banded CP 13 May, first in 22 years to venture from nearby barnyard into hawthorn thickets.