

## REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The cool, wet spring was followed by a warm, generally pleasant summer, more similar to the drought of '95 than to the rains of '96. Lake Champlain stood at a relatively high 97 ft in early June, dropping only to 96.24 ft in mid-July, and 95.46 in early August. There were heavy rains on 21 June and a downpour that saw a welcome 1 in. to 3 in. fall across the Region 13 August, but neither was enough to break the drought, and most other precipitation came from passing showers. The immediate impacts may have been improved nesting success and poorer shorebirding. Future months may show effects of the failure of the wild food crop to develop -- especially gray dogwood, grapes, and other berries.

A total of 75 Double-crested Cormorants, two Cattle Egrets, 74 Black-crowned Night-Herons, 1,046 Ring-billed Gulls (1,000 chicks, plus 46 adults), 129 Herring Gulls, and six Great Black-backed Gulls were banded on the Four Brothers 14 June-18 July. Five hundred Ring-billed Gulls again received yellow, numbered color bands as part of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection study. The number of cormorant nests declined 29%, from 1,184 in '96 to 836 this year. Great Blue Herons also dropped from 27 nests to a dozen. Both declines are largely attributed to loss of branches on dead trees used for nesting. Cattle Egrets moved from Island "D" to "B" and slipped to about three pairs, perhaps due to the incredible spurt by Black-crowned Night-Herons, up 90% from 90 nests to 171, an all-time high. (Normand St. Jacques found 90 nests in 1954, the DEC 89 in 1979, and High Peaks Audubon 90 last year, although numbers have fluctuated below that level over the last four decades.) Two hen Red-breasted Mergansers were flushed and an old nest with cold eggs found. Tree Swallows, which have nested in crevices in the cliffs for over a century, are now nesting more conventionally in dead pines on Island "D."

The NYS DEC surveyed 53 Adirondack Osprey nests by air, with 24 productive, ten failed, 12 inactive, three partly down, three down, and one unknown. A total of 50 young were produced this year, up from the 30 in the wake of the Mother's Day snowstorm of '96 produced last year. Add to that two young at Ausable Point, one at Scotion Creek, and two at Webb Royce Swamp outside the aerial survey and the total is 55 young Ospreys. Bald Eagles had their best year ever, with six successful nests, plus one failed, all located in Franklin County. These produced eight eaglets (plus an abandoned egg), a remarkably heartening result.

All nine active Peregrine Falcon eyries were located in Essex County, and all were successful: Chesterfield (two fledged), two Keene sites (one young

each), Moriah (one fledged), North Elba (one fledged), Westport (one fledged), Willsboro (two fledged), Wilmington (one fledged), and a new Schroon site (one fledged); the Elizabethtown site appeared inactive. An adult and newly fledged immature Peregrine were seen at Willsboro Bay 18 July.

In Essex County, two young Merlins from Moody Pond were hand-reared, banded, and released at Ray Brook 15 August. A Hamilton Co. pair produced three fledglings at Long Lake. Most Merlin sightings came from Franklin County: a Middle Saranac Lake pair produced two young, a male was seen on Lower Saranac Lake, a female at Owls Head was seen carrying nesting material and the male heard calling back, while another pair was at nearby Mountain View. A male Merlin at Camp Topridge on Upper St. Regis Lake was taken in with a fractured left phalange, rehabilitated, banded, and released there 15 June. Altogether, another great year for these falcons.

Charlie Mitchell found an agitated male **Wilson's Phalarope** attending a nest with four eggs at the Chazy Rivers site 7 June. The male (present since late May) remained until 11 June, when dairy cows were let into the nest field, then nothing was seen for five weeks (and six visits) until Mitchell and Bill Krueger found a single juvenile phalarope on 18 July.

Bud Lanyon counted nine singing male **"Yellow" Palm Warblers** at Spring Pond and Willis Brook Bogs, FRAN, during June. On the former bog a female was carrying nest material 15 June, the pair carrying food 6 July, and the next day a **photograph of the nest with four young was taken**; this is the first nest with young found in New York State. Sabattis Bog, HAMI, again had **"Yellow" Palm Warblers** in late June, according to Nick Leone and Bill Purcell. Meanwhile, at Bloomingdale Bog, FRAN, where Bill Barber had earlier reported a **Wilson's Warbler** on 26 May, Mark Gretch also found a singing male on 14 June.

The total of 179 species (plus an apparent escape) reported fell between the 185 in the drought of '95 and 171 in last year's wet summer. Other highlights included a dark-phase **Swainson's Hawk** migrating north at Witherbee, two **Willetts** at Valcour, **Stilt Sandpiper** at Chazy Rivers, **Little Gull** and **Caspian Tern** at Tupper Lake. All said, an interesting -- if dry -- summer.

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**Abbreviations:** BB - Bloomingdale Bog; CR - between the Chazy & Little Chazy Rivers; FBI - Four Brothers Islands; IL - Indian L, HAMI; PAFB - former Plattsburgh AFB; RB - Ray Brook; SB - Sabattis Bog; SLB - Silver Lake Bog; SPB - Spring Pond Bog; TL - Tupper Lake; TLP - Tupper Lake municipal park; WBB - Willis Brook Bog; WRS - Webb Royce Swamp.

**LOONS-DUCKS:** **Com. Loon:** downy chick Mt View L 27 Jul (JT), first since observer moved to area in '73. **Double-crested Cormorant:** 836 nests FBI, 9% of 9,129 in NYS; Blue Mt L.(BF); RB 10 Jun (TD); IL 27-29 Jun (BM); SLHS 9 Aug (TD), increasing inland. **Great Egret:** max 3 WRS 6 Aug (NO,JP,MS,DS); 1 WRS to 19 Aug (mobs.); Barber Pd Aug; CR 22 Aug (BK,CM). **Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 171 nests FBI; 1-5 ads WRS 17 Jul-29 Aug; 3 Plattsburgh Bay 5 Jul; 3 Scomotion Cr 22 Jul, outstanding. **Canada Goose:** 25 migrating n Saranac L 6 Jun; 86 migrating n TL 7 Jun, late. **Gadwall:** 3 FBI 16 Aug. **Redhead:** 3 Rouses Point 14 Aug (RM), unusual. **Com. Goldeneye:** hen with 4 ducklings off Wickham Marsh 17 Jul (JP), rare breeder.

**HAWKS-ALCIDS:** **Osprey:** seven on nest WRS 19 Jul (JP,DS); ad & 2 yg in nest WRS 4 Aug (MM,JP,DS); last WRS 18 Aug; fledged 2 Ausable Pt & 1 Scomotion Cr; *intro*. **Bald Eagle:** six nests fledged eight eaglets, FRAN; *intro*. **SWAINSON'S HAWK:** dk phase migrating n Witherbee 10 Jun (GC), "Hawk all dark. Back dark gray from above, tail short, throat white... those previously seen in Texas all light birds." **Golden Eagle:** ad Keene 16 Aug (J&PT), now rare in summer. **Merlin:** pr Moody Pd 2 Jun-6 Jul, two yg hand-reared released RB 15 Aug; 2 ad, 3 fl Long L 26 Jul-1 Aug; 2 ad, 2 juv Middle Saranac L 27 Jul-5 Aug; male Lower Saranac L 13 Aug; pr Owls Head 29 Jun - mid-summer, female carrying nest material, male calling; pr Mt View from 23 Jul; male Upper St. Regis L 16 May, fractured one phalange, released there 15 Jun; another great year. **Peregrine Falcon:** nine eyries fledged 11 yg; ad & imm Willsboro Bay 18 Jul (RM,JP); transient CR 24 August (BK,CM), a fairly good year, but with continuing low nest productivity. **Virginia Rail:** TL 5 Jun; WRS 6-12 Aug, only reports. **Sora:** WRS 6 Aug, only report. **Com. Moorhen:** RB Marsh 7 Jun (TD), new ESSE location. **Semipalmated Plover:** two Westport 29-30 Aug (JP,DS), only report. **Greater Yellowlegs:** arr CR 14 Jul; max 4 CR 16 Jul; Malone 28 Jul-10 Aug. **Lesser Yellowlegs:** arr 3 CR 16 Jul; max 9 CR 24 Jul; Malone 3 Aug; Little Colby Pd 17 Aug. **Solitary Sandpiper:** arr CR 28 Jul; Westport 12-29 Aug; Spellman Rd CLIN 26 Aug, all fairly typical. **WILLET:** two Valcour 30 Aug (J&RH), third CLIN record. **Upland Sandpiper:** 1-2 Banker & Stetson Rds, CLIN, 26 Jun 14 Jul, only report, but there is virtually no coverage of n. FRAN stronghold. **Semipalmated Sandpiper:** arr CR 16 Jul; 3 Middle Saranac L 5 Aug (RM,MP), a surprise find. **Western Sandpiper:** Westport 12 Aug (TD). **Least**

**Sandpiper:** max 8 CR 14 Jul; 1-4 Westport 4-29 Aug (JP,DS); 3-6 Malone 28 Jul-10 Aug (JT), typical. **Pectoral Sandpiper:** arr CR 28 Jul (BK,CM), always a good find here. **STILT SANDPIPER:** CR 18 Aug (BK,CM), a rarity that has been turning up in recent years. **Short-billed Dowitcher:** arr 3 CR 16 Jul (BK,CM), another good find. **WILSON'S PHALAROPE:** male CR 4 Jun; nest with 4 eggs, agitated male 7 Jun (CM); male, cows in nest field 11 Jun; juv 18 Jul, after six visits over intervening 5 wks (BK,CM). **LITTLE GULL:** 1- 4 TLP 9 Jul (TD!); imm Raquette Pd 9 Jul (CD), feeding on insects on water surface. **Bonaparte's Gull:** arr 8 Westport 4 Aug (MM,JP,DS); Middle Saranac L 5 Aug (RM,MP); 3 ad, 2 imm TLP 11 Aug (CD); max 100+ FBI 16 Aug (RM). **Ring-billed Gull:** 15,033 nests FBI. **CASPIAN TERN:** 4 TLP 9 Jul (TD); 3 TLP & Raquette Pd 10 Jul (CD). **Com. Tern:** CR 14 Jul; max 36 CR 30 Jul; CR 12 Aug, reflects successful nesting year in VT. **Black Tern:** molting ad & juv CR 14 Jul; ad feeding yg there 16 Jul; 2 ads & juv 20 Jul (BK,CM), slightly encouraging, but these are the only sightings.

**DOVES-WOODPECKERS:** **Black-billed Cuckoo:** two Rugar Woods 23 Jun; IL 25 Jun; two Bombay Aug; TL 1 Aug, "first in many years." **Short-eared Owl:** mobbed by kestrel & crows Essex 19 Jul (JP,DS), where present from Dec '96 and where 1- 4 were displaying 18 Apr-10 May. **Com. Nighthawk:** 1-2 Ames Plaza TL Jul (CD); WRS 12-19 Aug (RM,JP,DS); Wadhams 19 Aug (DS); max 8 migrants Plattsburgh 20 Aug (JC,JP); TL 24 Aug (PK), a good showing here. **Whip-poor-will:** Wakely Mt 17 Jul (MP), only report! **Three-toed Woodpecker:** Speculator yard 25 Jul (PK). **Black-backed Woodpecker:** Elk L 28 Jun (BM); two Feldspar Brook trail 18 Aug (J&PT).

**FLYCATCHERS-STARLING:** **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Churubusco 13 Jun (BK,CM), outside usual range and new northernmost location in NYS. **Willow Flycatcher:** Ausable Pt 1 Jul (BK,CM), known location but only report. **Gray Jay:** FB 20 Jun (BK). **Com. Raven:** fledgling fell into L Placid 12 Jun, rehab and released there at Pulpit Rock 8 Jul (NS). **Boreal Chickadee:** Algonquin-Iroquois col; Avalanche L; FB; Giant; Slant Rock, all expected locales. **Tufted Titmouse:** Westport 4 Aug (MM,JP,DS), only report. **Marsh Wren:** WRS 6-18 Aug (NO,JP,DS); eutrophication of marsh following beaver trapping has led to increased cattail and other vegetative growth. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** two Scotion Cr 3 Jun (NO), only bird of summer. **Bicknell's Thrush:** two Blue Mt 26 Jun (BP), only report, but certainly not indicative of status. **Swainson's Thrush:** 20+ Elk L 27-29 Jun (BM). **N. Mockingbird:** Banker & Stetson Rds. CLIN, 11 Jun (BK,CM), nice find. **Brown Thrasher:** IL 25 Jun (BP); TL 8 Jul (CD), usually scarce in interior Adks.

**VIREOS-WARBLEDERS:** **Yellow-throated Vireo:** IL 27 Jun (BP), an excellent find, esp in HAMI. **Philadelphia Vireo:** transient Point au Roche 26 Aug (J&RH), scarce in CLIN. **Tennessee Warbler:** SB 24 Jun (BP); Blue Mt 26 Jun (BP), only birds reported. **Cape May Warbler:** one River Rd & two Connery Pd Rd ESSE 18 Jun (WE.NM), always a nice find. **Pine Warbler:** Scotch pines RB 27 Jul (TD); Lincoln Pd 17 Jun (WE.NM), not often reported. **"Yellow" PALM WARBLER:** female carrying nest material SPB 15 Jun, pr carrying food 6 Jul, 4 yg in nest 7 Jul (WL-photo); nine singing males SPB & WBB Jun (WL); two SB 24 Jun (BP); one SB 29 Jun (NL), all excellent observations, although there is still much for patient bog sloggers to learn. **Mourning Warbler:** pr Orebed Brook, Gothics at 3,000'-3,500' 2 Aug (JT), quite unexpectedly high. **Bay-breasted Warbler:** near summit Wakely Mt 17 Jul (MP), with Blackpolls [see *Atlas* p. 392]. **WILSON'S WARBLER:** singing male BB 14 Jun (MG), where present from 26 May. **Canada Warbler:** singing male Avalanche L 17 Aug (J&PT).

**TANAGERS-WEAVERS:** **Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** good yr TL. **Vesper Sparrow:** seven PAFB (MG), down from high of 12 in '94. **Savannah Sparrow:** 19 PAFB (MG), same as '94 survey. **Grasshopper Sparrow:** seven PAFB (MG), down from high of 17 in '94; PAFB 8 Jul (BK,CM). **Lincoln's Sparrow:** The Gulf, CLIN, 20 Jun (J&RH), probably the northernmost locale in NYS, but where found during Atlas. **Bobolink:** McCanes Resort HAMI 24 Jun (BP), a county where found in just a dozen Atlas blocks. **Rusty Blackbird:** three Piseco 27 Jun (MP), surprisingly hard to find. **Purple Finch:** "schizochromatic" or leucistic bird Euclid Jones feeder, CLIN, 24 Aug (J&RH), pale buff & white all over with dark eyes. **House Finch:** returned Speculator 12 Jun, occ thereafter (PK). **Red Crossbill:** IL 25 Jun (BP); Wakely Mt 17 Jul (MP); female with newly fledged yg Westport 19 Jul (DS). **White-winged Crossbill:** Lincoln Pd 17 Jun (WE.NM); Black Brook 30 Jun (WE.NM). **Pine Siskin:** two Lincoln Pd & one North Elba 18 Jun; one Black Brook 19 Jun (WE.NM); dep Speculator about 20 Jun; returned 31 Aug (PK). **Evening Grosbeak:** returned to breed Speculator 15 Jun, ads with yg mid-Jul, dep by 20 Jul; large numbers Towns of Lake Pleasant & Wells, HAMI (PK); also summered Elizabethtown (JP) and TL (CD).

**ESCAPE:** **N. Bobwhite:** Ticonderoga 5-10 Jun (Glen Chapman), suspiciously similar to recent Chukar sightings in other parts of ESSE, although there was a "possible" Atlas record in CLIN. The last ESSE occurrence was at Willsboro 6-9 Aug 1893 (Augustus G. Paine, specimen collected).