

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The summer was exceptionally wet. Although June began sunny and hazy, there was rain for 17 of the first 24 days, with the start of 9 days of rain on 12 June. Many Adirondack loon nests were lost to flooding. Between 13-27 June, Auger Pond, ESSE, received **12.35 inches**, with 7.96 inches of that falling on nearby Keeseville in just the last three days. The fourth major flood in little more than a year began on 25 June, with Lake Champlain at 97.02 ft. The next day 16 cars of a CPR freight derailed at one of 19 major track washouts near Port Douglas, spilling 3,000 gallons of deisel oil and a tanker of Canadian whiskey into Little Trout Brook and the lake. By 27 June, the Ausable, Little Ausable, Great Chazy, and Saranac rivers were flooded, the Adirondack Northway closed, as well as Routes 3 and 9N, and power was off over parts of the Region. At the height of the deluge, 5 inches fell in 24 hours. By month's end, Champlain had risen to 98.28 ft, or over a foot in just 4-5 days!

July was little better. Peru had more rain on 1 July than normally received in all of the month. Another 1-3 inches that day brought more flooding. A 3.0 Richter earthquake rattled Dannemora at 10 pm on 8 July. Mid month was hot and humid, with almost daily thunderstorms, and Champlain was at 98.80 ft, Ellenburg got 2 inches in an hour on the 16th, and it rained 15 days during the month. With **9.31 inches** of July rainfall (3.65 is normal), this was the wettest July on record! Champlain had only dropped to 97.73 ft at month's end.

And August was wet, with 15 more rainy days. The rainiest August day on record saw 3.5 inches fall on Keene Valley 11 August. A mere .01 inches more on 17 Aug made this the wettest summer ever, breaking the 1892 record of 22.74 inches. With a monthly total of 6.80 inches, it was the fifth wettest August. By season's end, with the lake at 96.87 ft, yearly precipitation stood at 40.97 inches, with four months left to challenge the Champlain Valley record of 50.16 inches, set in 1983. But, as Gary Lee pointed out, "Berries, cherries, nuts and cones are the best in years; crossbills should stick around this winter."

Following 3 inches of rain in Hamilton Co. on 13-14 June, Lee placed a loon platform on Mitchell Pond on 23 June. A Common Loon laid eggs on the platform on 25 June, and there was a chick on the water on 24 July, the first on this pond in at least 32 years. An adult and chick on Beaver Lake and adult on Lower Mitchell Pond were banded and had blood samples taken 8 August.

A total of 45 Double-crested Cormorants, 20 Black-crowned Night-Herons, 1,100 Ring-billed Gulls (100 color-banded adults and 1,000 chicks), 57 Herring Gulls, and 3 Great Black-backed Gulls were banded at The Four Brothers Islands June 13 and 20. Some 1,394 Double-crested Cormorant nests were counted, 17% above the previous high of 1,184 in 1996. Great Blue Herons

rebounded from a dozen nests last year to 23. Cattle Egrets remain on Island "B", with some six nests. Black-crowned Night-Herons on Islands "A", "B", and "D" have at least 164 active nests. Newly hatched Red-breasted Merganser chicks were found on Island "D" on 13 June. High Peaks Audubon is cooperating with the NYS DEC Nongame & Habitat Unit on the Great Lakes Colonial Waterbird Census, which includes Lake Champlain (a great lake, even if Congress finally determined it's not a Great Lake).

Two Franklin County Bald Eagle nests were successful, each producing 2 eaglets. This represents a decline from 7 nests (6 successful), producing 8 eaglets in 1997; one of those nest trees was going down in 1998. Of 11 known Peregrine Falcon eyries, all in Essex County, 8 were active and produced young this year: Chesterfield (1 chick fledged), Crown Point (pair in May, but attempt apparently aborted), Elizabethtown (rock climber reported territorial bird, but no nesting), two Keene sites (2 and 3 chicks, respectively), Moriah (1 fledged), North Elba (2-3 fledged), Schroon (no details, apparently inactive), Westport (1 fledged), Willsboro (2 fledged), and Wilmington (2 fledged), for a total of 14-15 chicks produced. This compares with 11 chicks from 9 eyries active in 1997. Merlins were undoubtedly far more widespread than the reports of nesting pairs in Franklin and Hamilton counties might suggest.

After five consecutive years of nesting along the Clinton County shoreline near the Chazy Rivers, there were no signs of Wilson's Phalarope this year.

On the positive side, Tufted Titmouse nested near Elizabethtown, and Carolina Wren nested at the Plattsburgh city beach. The saga of "Yellow" Palm Warblers continued, with 2 at Sabattis Bog in late June and 2 seen carrying food for young at Bloomingdale Bog in early July. A female Red Crossbill was feeding young on larch at Rankin Pond near Minerva in late July, and there were several other sightings of both crossbills.

Just 157 species were reported, down from 179 in last summer's drought (and 185 in the drought of '95 and 171 in the similarly wet summer of '96). Some of the decline is attributable to high lake levels, the low count of 8 shorebird species including Killdeer, Upland Sandpiper, and American Woodcock. Some may also be an artifact the rain's impact upon observer activity, a number of normally active birders not reporting by the seasonal deadline. An inland **Caspian Tern**, photographed on Auger Pond 20 July by Gordon Howard, was unexpected, as was a **Fish Crow** at the Lower Saranac Lake boat launch by John & Pat Thaxton on 9 August. Matt Perry's tally of **118** Red-eyed Vireos in the Piseco-Powley Road area on 15 July is also noteworthy.

In addition to the five Adirondack-Champlain Regional sites previously designated Important Bird Areas by the National Audubon Society, another six IBAs have been approved: Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness, Chazy Landing/King's Bay, Moose River Plains, Plattsburgh Airfield, Ticonderoga Marsh, and Webb Royce Swamp.

Contributors: Helen & Robert Booth, Lee Chamberlaine, Joan Clark, Charlie Delehanty, Tom Dudones, Dan Fasking, Greg Furness, Joseph Gentles, Richard Gershon, Richard Godin, Evelyn Greene, Judy & Roger Heintz, Bettye Hughes, Roger Johnson, Joy Keithline, Paul Kelly, Hal Klein, Bill Krueger, Gary Lee, Bill Lenhart, Theodore Mack, Mark Manske, Matt Medlar, Charles Mitchell, Edith Mitchell, Nancy Olsen, Matt Perry, John & Susan Peterson, Judy Phillips, Bill Purcell, George Roberts, Peter Saenger, Marilyn Smith, John & Patricia Thaxton, Sue Turner, Robert Wei, Gary Worthington.

Abbreviations: BB - Bloomingdale Bog; BTP- Brown's Tract Ponds; CR - between the Chazy & Little Chazy Rivers; FB - Ferd's Bog; FBI - Four Brothers Islands; PCB - Plattsburgh city beach; SB - Sabattis Bog; TL - Tupper Lake.

LOONS-DUCKS

Com. Loon: Long Pd, ESSE 18 Jul (MM), unusually close to L Champlain.

Double-crested Cormorant: 1,394 nests FBI; 7 Raquette L 17 Jun; 1 Cedar Lakes 6 Aug (GL), far inland.

Great Blue Heron: 23 nests FBI; 40 nests Hoffman Rd beaver pd, Schroon, ESSE 27 Jul (EG), still a few young around.

Great Egret: Keene 5 Jul (ST); West Bangor 19 Jul (TD); Boquet R, Elizabethtown 22 Aug (JG); still colonizing Quebec, with nests on Heron I in the Lachine Rapids this summer, as well as the large colony on Ile Dickerson near Dundee since 1984.

Cattle Egret: 6 nests FBI; alt plumage Redford, CLIN 18 Jun (DF).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 164 nests FBI.

Snow Goose: PCB 17 Jun (BK), late CLIN by a day.

Canada Goose: nested FBI; 150 Raquette Pd (EM); 125 TL mun pk 8 Jul (CD), "A very good year."

Ring-necked Duck: 4 ducklings Muskrat Pd.

Hooded Merganser: hen AP 2 Jun (NO), late for there.

Red-breasted Merganser: newly hatched chicks FBI I "D" 13 Jun (JP).

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: nested AP & WRS; nest on rock 7 ft above water of Big Pd, ESSE 27 Jul (EG), 1-2 yrs old, little whitewash; 2 early migrants Azure Mt 3 Aug (MM); no figures available on Adirondack nesting.

Bald Eagle: "many reports" TL (CD); ad diving on Raquette R goslings (RG); ad & imm Whitney property 14 Aug; ad s branch Moose R 22 Aug (GL); 2 FRAN nests produced 4 eaglets.

Red-shouldered Hawk: West Bangor 19 Jul (TD); ad & yg Mud-Sampson Lks 9 Aug (JK); West & Brooktrout Lks 12-13 Aug (J&PT).

Merlin: 2 cavorting CR 7 Jun (CM); stooping on 3 Turkey Vultures & Osprey Owls Head 7 Jun; stooping on 3 Am Kestrels Owls Head 16 Jun (MM); nest with 4 yg The Antlers, Raquette L 14 Jul; 2 yg Whitney property 15 Aug (GL).

Peregrine Falcon: 14-15 chicks produced 8 ESSE eyries (DEC).

Wild Turkey: 3 of 6 eggs hatched Cedar R 5 Jun; chicks Limekiln L 28 Jul (GL); max 30 Westport 25 Aug (JG); others Lake Pleasant, Piseco, TL.

Virginia Rail: Piseco L 25 Jun (MP), only report.

Sora: Ausable Pt 21 Jun (BK,CM), only report.

Am. Coot: CR 23 Jun (CM), late CLIN by 26 days.

Killdeer: max 47 West Bangor flooded field 19 Jul (TD).

Solitary Sandpiper: arr Willsboro 24 Jul (NO,MS).

Upland Sandpiper: Banker & Stetson Rds, CLIN 19 Jun, only report, but n FRAN is scarcely birded.

Ruddy Turnstone: CH 6 Jun (GR), late CLDN by a day.

Dunlin: PCB 4 Jun (H&RB); CR 10 Jun (BK,CM), late CLIN by 4 days.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 250 Westport 13 Aug (JK,JP).

Ring-billed Gull: 1,000 chicks, 100 ads (yellow bands) banded FBI; 2 Brooktrout L & West L, HAMI, 12-13 Aug (J&PT), unusual inland.

CASPIAN TERN: Auger Pd, ESSE, 20 Jul (photographed, GH), unusual, but especially away from L Champlain.

Com. Tern: CR 10 Jun; 3 CR 19 Jun.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: Keeseville & Willsboro Jun; feeding young Wadhams 25 Jul (DS).

Black-backed Woodpecker: Cheney Pd 16 Jun (BP); 4 BB 20-23 Jun (PS); 2 BB 2 Jul (MP); with yg FB 18 Jul (GL); drumming FB 1 Aug (BL); Helldiver Pd 18 Jul (GL).

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Olive-sided Flycatcher: The Gulf 22 Jun (J&RH), northernmost.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: BB, BTP, Carry Pd, FB, Jay.

Willow Flycatcher: 2 singing males AP 21 Jun (BK,CM); 2 West Bangor 19 Jul (TD), across road from Alder Flycatcher.

Warbling Vireo: Indian Lake 19 Jun (BP), unusual in Adks.

Red-eyed Vireo: max 118 Piseco-Powley Rd 15 Jul (MP).

Gray Jay: Bigelow Rd, Bloomingdale; FB; Helldiver & Lost Pds.

FISH CROW: 1 Lower Saranac L boat launch 9 Aug (J&PT).

Com. Raven: occupied nest Valcour 1 7 Jun (HK), low, but not unexpected in light of probable nesting at Crown Point in May.

Tree Swallow: population down TL (CD).

Boreal Chickadee: BB, BTP, FB, Helldiver Pd, Hopkins Mt, Mt Haystack, SB, all expected locations, but many reports.

Tufted Titmouse: pr Elizabethtown to 1 Aug; PCB 6 Jul; Mineville feeder Aug.

Carolina Wren: nested PCB, present 8 May-27 Jun; 4 there 1 Jun (GW).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: BB, Orebed Bk, Roostercomb, typical.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: PCB 6 Jul (BK).

Bicknell's Thrush: BTP 3 Jun (RJ), early & unexpectedly low; Lyon & Whiteface Mts more expected.

N. Mockingbird: BTP 3 Jun (RJ); Lake Pleasant 6 Jul (PK), unusual in HAMI.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Willsboro golf course 24 Jul (MM), rarely reported.

Yellow Warbler: male Essex 13 Aug (JK,JP), fairly late.

Cape May Warbler: The Gulf (J&RH), northernmost; ad male & imm BB 2 Jul, within usual range.

"Yellow" Palm Warbler: 2 SB 17 Jun (BP); carrying food for yg BB 2 Jul (RG), new confirmed breeding bog.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Lost Pds & Sumner Stream stillwater, HAMI (GL).

Blackpoll Warbler: BTP, Blue Mt, Hopkins Mt, Whiteface Mt.

Canada Warbler: female Mossy Cascade Bk (2,750 ft) on side of Hopkins Mt 6 Jul (J&PT), relatively high.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Eastern Towhee: St Regis Falls BBS (TM); pr Rattlesnake Mt 19 Jul (J&RH), not often reported.

Vesper Sparrow: erstwhile Plattsburgh AFB 25 Jun, only report.

Savannah Sparrow: McCane's Resort 20 Jun; 2 Indian Lake town garage field 21 Jun (BP), unusual in HAMI.

Grasshopper Sparrow: PAFB 25 Jun (BK,CM), only report, but from most consistent regional site & IBA.

Lincoln's Sparrow: BB, FB, Piseco, SB, many reports.

Bobolink: 1 Wells 18 Jun (BP), a good HAMI find.

Rusty Blackbird: Indian L, MRRA 27 Jul (GL); 3 Piseco 30 Jul (MP), only reports.

House Finch: BTP 3 Jun (RJ); pr Lake Pleasant 23 Jun (PK), good finds in HAMI.

Red Crossbill: BB; FB; MRRA; female feeding young on Am. Larch Rankin Pd, Minerva, 26 Jul (EG), holds promise for winter.

White-winged Crossbill: Bloomingdale, BB, SPB, ditto.

Pine Siskin: Elizabethtown feeder in breeding condition to 2 Jun (JP); Lake Pleasant 7-25 Jun (PK); 2 FB 1 Aug (BL), only reports.