

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Drought? Fire? Flood? Landslide? Windfall? Whatever one's preference, September provided them all. The season began with Hurricane Dennis off North Carolina and continued drought here. Plattsburgh tied the old high of 90°F on 2 September and broke the 1894 record high (of 91°) with 94° on 4 September. Forest fires began on the 2nd, the largest on 3556' Noonmark Mt. spotted by the summit steward on Mt. Marcy and assistant ranger on Giant. Five helicopters drew 250-600 gallon buckets from Lower Ausable Lake, a Blackhawk making water drops of 33,000 gallons in four hours. As the fire raced downhill, inmates from Moriah Shock Incarceration Unit worked beside forest rangers to dig a deep trench in the three-mile long fire line, so dynamite could blow a half-mile break. With temperatures still in the mid-80s, the remnants of Dennis brought 0.5" of rain 7 September to help control the 92-acre Noonmark burn and other fires at Desolate Brook, Lincoln Pond, Pinnacle Mountain and Split Rock. Even after Dennis arrived, annual rainfall was still 6" below normal, at just 16.84", and Lake Champlain had dropped to 94.00'. The sun returned, until a cold front from the west brought rain on 14 September. Then on the 16th, the remnants of Hurricane Floyd ended the severe Drought of '99, and the world came crashing down. Rain began that evening, with 1.5" at Plattsburgh by 10 pm and 25 mph wind gusts. By the next day, winds were a full 60 mph, and Tropical Storm Floyd drenched Plattsburgh with 4.41" and Lake Placid with 4.98" (versus 6.17" in all of June, July and August). In Essex County, 8000 residents were without power due to downed trees, the temporary Mill Pond dam in Lake Placid failed, and the landslides began: three on Mt. Colden, one 2500' long, plus 500' slides on Algonquin and Wright Peak and smaller slides on Armstrong, Basin, Gothics, Sawtooth and Saddleback. Trickle Falls at the height of land in Avalanche Pass no longer sends water to both the Hudson and St. Lawrence rivers, just to the Hudson. Crews took four days to reopen 200' of Avalanche Pass and nine days to go 4.8 miles through Indian Pass, with many High Peaks trails still unopened. Breeding Bird Atlas squares 5788 (Avalanche and Indian passes) and 5988 (Noonmark Mt.) promise to be extremely interesting. Champlain had risen to 95.40' by month's end, and with over 10" of rain, this was the

rainiest September on record and *second wettest month ever*. But the fires were out.

The first snowfall of up to 4" came on 4 October and Saranac Lake was down to 25° on the 7th, but this was followed by 10 days of Indian Summer. A half-inch of rain 14 October fell as 2" of snow at higher elevations, and Saranac Lake was again nippy with 18° by 19 October. But mild weather then returned, with Plattsburgh 63° at month's end.

November continued warm, sunny and dry. Monthly temperatures were 5.7° above normal, providing the third warmest November on record, with 49% possible sunshine versus the usual 30%. Monthly rainfall, normally over 3", was just 1.86". Mineville had 2" of snow 12 November, while a snowstorm across northern and higher areas on 16 November left a foot at Lyon Mountain, 9" at Whippleville and 6" at Lake Placid and Tupper Lake. Most melted by 24 November, when Plattsburgh tied the record high temperature of 55°, accompanied by winds to 45 mph. At season's end, Champlain stood at 96.06' and 44°, while the air temperature dropped to 1° in Saranac Lake the night of 30 November.

Our greatest debt this fall was to a group of Vermont observers who provided reports of **Glossy Ibis**, an interesting assortment of geese and pioneering work on **jaeger** flights on Lake Champlain. Ted Murin, in Vermont, noted two immature **Glossy Ibises** wearing left-leg bands on the Colchester side of the old RR crossing to South Hero 4-5 September, undoubtedly banded as nestlings on Four Brothers 23 July. On 6 October, Mike Peterson saw a **Glossy Ibis** flush with Ring-billed Gulls from a cornfield south of Rouses Point as the Amtrak "Adirondack" passed. This northward dispersal, similar to that of other Four Brothers waterbirds, may explain five single sightings of this ibis in the Montréal area between 1 August and 25 September.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** spotted at Cumberland Head by Jim McGraw was a good find, as were multiple sightings of **Ross's Geese** reported by Dave Hoag from Point au Roche. Hoag reported a variety of small forms of Canada Geese from the same state park, while Jan Trzeciak had another small race among the Canadas at Malone.

Perhaps 25 years ago, Jerry Rosenband proposed that a late fall lake-watch from Split Rock would discover a significant southbound jaeger flight through the historic narrows. Private ownership, however, precluded any action from the NYS side. This autumn, though, a watch was maintained opposite Split Rock, from Thompson's Point, VT. Rosenband's prescience was proven by sightings of all three jaeger species and, happily, many crossed into Essex County waters. On the NY

side, **Pomarine Jaegers** (new to Essex County) passed between 4-17 November, while **Parasitic Jaegers** were southbound from 24 October to 25 November. Best bird was a dark type juvenile **Long-tailed Jaeger** carefully identified by Dave Hoag, Ted Murin and Allan Strong on 4 November. A further 7 **jaeger (sp.)** flew into Essex County waters, while another was spotted by Hoag at Gravelly Point, Cumberland Head, on 27 November for the first Clinton County **jaeger (sp.)** record.

Among the 17 species of shorebirds reported, there were some good finds by Krueger and Mitchell: Western and Pectoral sandpipers at the Chazy riverlands and Baird's Sandpiper at King's Bay. Tufted Titmice produced a strong showing, with reports from seven locations. Northern birds appeared early and in good numbers, promising an interesting winter: Northern Shrike 30 October, Bohemian Waxwing 1 November, American Tree Sparrow 19 October, Snow Bunting 9 November, Pine Grosbeak 5 November and Common Redpoll 10 November. Fifty Pine Siskins were banded near Elizabethtown between 28 September and 27 October, but following this passage there was only a single November report from Tupper Lake. American Goldfinches also moved out, but Evening Grosbeaks began to appear at feeders once again. A respectable 171 species were reported, up from 154 in the warm and windy fall of 1998.

The Town of Willsboro has provided public access to an outstanding birding area with the opening of Noblewood Park on the south bank of the Boquet River delta. We invite observers to visit the black sand beaches, sandbars and neighboring mixed forest, which may still harbor the NY record Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana*). Entrance is south of Willsboro on the east side of Rt. 22; in summer a \$5 non-resident day-use fee is charged, but foot access is free year-round if the gate is closed. The park has a launching area for canoes and kayaks, convenient for exploring the lower Boquet flatwater, which Carleton felt was suitable for Cerulean Warbler.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Point WMA; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; CR – Chazy Rivers; CRF – Cedar River Flow; FB – Ferd's Bog; JBL – John's Brook Lodge; KB – King's Bay; PtR – Point au Roche SP; SL – Saranac Lake; SLB – Silver Lake Bog; SR – Split Rock; TL – Tupper Lake.

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: migrant SR 28 Nov (TGM).

Horned Grebe: arr 3 Coll Bay 23 Oct (JP, J&PT); max 20 AP 29 Nov (NO).

Red-necked Grebe: arr 3 Coll Bay 23 Oct (JP, J&PT); Westport 6 Nov (J&PT); Raquette Pd 8 Nov (CD); migrant SR 28 Nov (TB).

Double-crested Cormorant: CRF 5 Sep (C&RGM) and Utowana L 29 Oct (GL), unusual inland.

Am. Bittern: Westport 20 Nov (JG, TDM), record late ESSE.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: AP 8 Sep (BK, CM), last.

GLOSSY IBIS: 1 s. Rouses Pt 6 Oct (JP), flushed from cornfield with Ring-billed Gulls by Amtrak "Adirondack." See *intro* for VT and Québec sightings.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: CH 28 Nov (JM), in flock of Canadas.

Snow Goose: arr CR 19 Sep (Amtrak crew); 600 L Placid 5 Oct (AH), high for the interior, but flocks of 12-14 thousand could be found in the PtR, CR, and Rouses Pt areas Oct-late Nov; only 3 of 38 neck collars read 11 Nov matched the 65 seen 29 Oct (DH), suggesting considerable turnover in the "Greater" Snows marked on Canada's Bylot Island NWT.

ROSS'S GOOSE: PtR 8 Oct; 3 PtR 29

Oct, 1 classic Ross's, the others so stunningly different from surrounding Snows that they had little Snow bloodline; 1 pure, 1 hybrid PtR 11 Nov (DH).

Canada Goose: 1 small race Malone 3 Sep (JT); leucistic-necked Westport 23 Oct (JP, J&PT); 1 tiny *hutchinsii* PtR 28-29 Oct; larger and longer-necked *hutchinsii* / *minima*-type north of PtR 29 Oct; 2 small stubby-necked, stubby-billed *hutchinsii* / *minima*-type PtR 11 Nov (DH); max 1750 Westport 6 Nov (J&PT).

Gadwall: Westport 3 Oct (TB, JP), uncommon.

Blue-winged Teal: CRF 5 Sep (C&RGM); Westport 24 Sep (JT); NCCC pd 27 Sep (TD), uncommon transient.

N. Shoveler: 3 Willsboro 13 Nov (TDM, JP), rare fall transient ESSE.

N. Pintail: PtR 20 Nov (JG, TDM), only report.

Green-winged Teal: 4 CRF 5 Sep (RGM), uncommon HAMI; Westport Sep more expected.

Greater Scaup: arr SR 28 Nov.

Lesser Scaup: arr 20 TL 18 Oct.

Surf Scoter: 5th L first wk Nov (GL), uncommon HAMI transient according to Eaton.

White-winged Scoter: arr 8 Essex 1 Oct; Westport 13 Nov.

Bufflehead: 450 Willsboro 13 Nov (TDM,

JP), ESSE record.

Com. Goldeneye: 1350 Willsboro 13 Nov (TDM, JP), ESSE record.

Barrow's Goldeneye: arr Plattsburgh marina 17 Nov (CM).

Ruddy Duck: L Alice 16 Oct (BB), early CLIN by 9 days.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: ad Owls Head 5 Sep; 3 Willsboro 16 Nov.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr Champlain 23 Oct.

Golden Eagle: imm Sochia Pd, Saranac Inn 14 Oct (TD); Port Henry 25 Oct (MG).

Merlin: CR 4 Sep; 4 chasing Am. Crows NCCC pd 11 Sep (TD).

Peregrine Falcon: JBL 8 Sep (J&PT); migrant Catamount Pk 3 Oct (GA, TDM).

Ring-necked Pheasant: 4-5 Wawbeek Cnrs 14 Sep (TD), unexpected; cock Westport 3 Oct, a more usual stocking area.

Spruce Grouse: Uncas Rd by No Luck Bk, HAMI, 25 Sep (GL), always encouraging.

Ruffed Grouse: family 3700' Yard Mt Sep, high.

Wild Turkey: max 18 Inlet feeder 28 Nov, with other reports from Blue Ridge, Jay, Long L, Sabbatis Rd, TL, and Westport indicative of continued spread prior to Atlas 2000.

Com. Moorhen: CR 2-6 Sep (BK, CM, GW), scarce here.

Am. Golden-Plover: arr 3 CR 4 Sep (NO), rare transient.

Greater Yellowlegs: 2 Malone 3 Sep; Mill Pd, L Placid 19 Sep, dam out due to Hurricane Floyd, unusual inland reports.

Western Sandpiper: CR 2-4 Sep (BK, CM), accidental CLIN.

Baird's Sandpiper: KB 9 Sep (BK, CM), accidental CLIN.

Pectoral Sandpiper: CR 2 Sep (BK, CM), only report.

Dunlin: Westport 19 Sep (J&TD), a good find.

Short-billed Dowitcher: CLIN 28 Sep (J&RH), where rare.

POMARINE JAEGER: juv SR 4 Nov (TGM); SR 7 Nov (DH, AS); juv SR 11 Nov (TGM, FP, PR); juv SR 17 Nov (TGM), first ESSE records. There is a previous FRAN record of an imm Oseetah L 5 Sep 1965 (*The Kingbird* 16:25).

PARASITIC JAEGER: 2 intermediate to dark-morphs SR 24 Oct (TGM); 1 on open lake headed to Westport later the same day (DH, TGM); dark morph SR 8 Nov (TGM); SR 25 Nov (TH, DH, TGM), brings the number of ESSE birds since 1970 to c. 8-10. Eaton reported an old HAMI record of 22 Aug 1886, without details.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: dark type juv SR 4 Nov (DH, TGM, AS), second Regional and ESSE record (Carleton 1999).

jaeger (sp.): 5 SR 24 Oct (TGM); SR 7 Nov (DH, AS); SR 25 Nov (TH, DH, TGM); Gravelly Pt, CH 27 Nov (DH), the last a first jaeger record for CLIN.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 200 Westport 24 Sep (JP, J&PT).

Glaucous Gull: SR 17 Nov (TGM), early ESSE record.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: 2 CH 1 Sep, only report.

Black-backed Woodpecker: BB, Helldiver Pd, Raquette L, SLB, usual haunts.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr Keene 30 Oct (ST); subsequent sightings CH, Elizabethtown, Inlet, Wadhams, Westport, Whallonsburg.

Gray Jay: BB, Brown's Tract Pd & Stream, FB, Helldiver Pd, Marion R, Raquette L, Red R, usual sites.

Black-capped Chickadee: leucistic bird Westport 13 Nov (TDM, JP), white back and white on crown, primaries, and rectrices.

Boreal Chickadee: Brown's Tract Pd, Bushnell Falls, FB, Helldiver Pd, Phelps, Red R, Shorey Short Cut, Third Brother, Yard, known areas, but a strong showing.

Tufted Titmouse: max 4 Elizabethtown feeder, with other reports from Jay, Keene Valley, Plattsburgh, SL, TL, and Westport, a remarkable number.

Winter Wren: singing 3000' Wright 12 Sep (J&PT), late and relatively high.

Marsh Wren: AP 15 Sep (BK, CM), only report.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: banded Elizabethtown 27 Sep (JP).

N. Mockingbird: PtR 27 Nov (RH), only report.

Am. Pipit: FRAN sightings 26 Sep included SLHS (TD), Hoel Pd, summit St. Regis Mt; last CLIN 10 Oct.

Bohemian Waxwing: arr Keene Valley 1 Nov (RWM); Keene 7 Nov; max 100 Essex 13-14 Nov (RH, TDM, JP); SL 20 Nov; 7 L Alice 27 Nov, bodes well for winter.

Cedar Waxwing: 50 Essex 13 Nov, mixed with Bohemians, which is unusual here.

WARBLERS

Yellow Warbler: AP 15 Sep (BK), record late date for Region.

Pine Warbler: TL *suet feeder* 14 Oct (CD), see *The Kingbird* 49:169-71.

Palm Warbler: BB 1 Sep (DR); BB 3 Oct (TDM); FB 20 Sep (GL); "Yellow" South Meadow 26 Sep (J&PT); SL 5 Oct; South Inlet 27 Oct (GL); Atlas observers should be alert in these and other boreal areas.

Mourning Warbler: Inlet 22 Sep (GL), provides late HAMI date.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr TL 19 Oct.

Fox Sparrow: TL 19 Oct-15 Nov; Inlet 4 Nov, fairly scarce

White-crowned Sparrow: max 20 TL 6 Oct.

Snow Bunting: arr 10 Lincoln Pd Rd 9-13 Nov; max 150 Boquet R delta 13 Nov.

Rusty Blackbird: Seventh L 8 Oct; TL 4-6 Nov (CD), under feeder.

Com. Grackle: max 125 TL 2-3 Oct (CD), provides FRAN maxima.

Pine Grosbeak: arr flocks Paul Smiths 5 Nov & 8 Nov (TDM), early FRAN; 10 Moody 16 Nov; 4 TL 16 Nov; 11 Rt 30, Blue Mt L/Indian L 17 Nov, could presage an invasion.

House Finch: Westport & TL had the only reports.

Red Crossbill: Raquette L 26 Sep (GL); Elizabethtown 25 Nov (JP), only reports.

White-winged Crossbill: Paul Smiths Nov (TDM), only report.

Com. Redpoll: arr 2 TL 10 Nov; max 80 PtR 27 Nov; others Elizabethtown & Inlet.

Pine Siskin: 50 banded Elizabethtown 28 Sep-27 Oct (JP); last TL 27 Nov.

Am. Goldfinch: 40 banded Elizabethtown 28 Sep-27 Oct; last TL 21 Nov.

Evening Grosbeak: max 32 TL 3 Nov; other reports from Elizabethtown, Inlet & Willsboro Oct-Nov.

ADDENDUM

Am. Pipit: CR 29 Aug (BK, GW), early CLIN by 16 days.

