

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The wet conditions of spring extended into summer and the first field season of Atlas 2000. The last official day of Spring on 20 June was a lovely day, with a high of 78°F, but 24 June was actually the first day in 24 days with no rain. Rains extended into July, and by mid-month Lake Champlain still stood at a relatively high 96.6'. Not until 23-25 July did the Region enjoy the best stretch of Summer '00, with temperatures reaching 83° in the Champlain lowlands at Ticonderoga and Westport and the water level at 96.32', still a foot and a half above the Drought of '99 level. Rainfall finally diminished in August, with just 3.67" falling during the month (compared to a normal 4.06"), although it still managed to rain on 13 of the 31 days. The heaviest storm brought less than an inch of rain on 16 August and the coldest day on the 18th saw thermometers dip to 45° at lower elevations. By season's end, annual precipitation was still running more than 5" higher than usual at 28.12". (Normal is 22.70".) In spite of these soggy conditions, more than 100 observers set out to provide coverage in about half of the 182 Atlas Squares (or 690 Blocks) in Region 7.

By midsummer it was obvious that a bumper crop of wild foods was forming: berries, fruits, nuts and – most importantly perhaps – cones. Cedars, firs, pines, spruces and tamaracks were loaded to the point of being top-heavy. Not unexpectedly, David Fiske found White-winged Crossbills feeding young near Blue Ridge (Essex County) during July, and large numbers of singing males were reported across Essex, Franklin and Hamilton counties. By season's end, males seemed to move from treetop singing perches to the mid-level of spruces and females disappeared, suggesting nests with eggs or young. During this first nesting, White-winged Crossbills were seen feeding on tamarack (eastern larch) and white spruce. Only a few Red Crossbills were reported, but conditions suggest that winter might bring an invasion of both species, similar to the great crossbill nesting of 1984-85 during the first Atlas. Red-breasted Nuthatches and other conifer specialists also seemed to have a good summer, but Pine Siskins were still notable mostly by their absence. Given the cone crop, this may change by winter and siskins join the crossbills by early '01. Atlas observers have been urged to visit boreal forests and record all sightings.

West Nile virus reached the Region. Among birds testing positive were an American Crow in Tupper Lake, Blue Jays in Jay (!), Schroon and Wilmington, a young American Robin in Westport and Yellow-rumped Warbler in Altamont. In Essex County alone, 146 ill or dead birds were reported, and of 56 sent for testing 5 have turned up positive for the virus, the latest a Sharp-shinned Hawk in Elizabethtown 7 September. The young robin points to infection by local mosquitoes, and observers are urged to take every precaution against bites.

By season's end, Notable Species Forms had been submitted for Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, Three-toed Woodpecker, Bicknell's Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, "Yellow" Palm Warbler and Clay-colored Sparrow. Forms were also submitted for Great Egret, Common and Black terns, Carolina Wren and "Lawrence's" Warbler.

Three-toed Woodpeckers were found at Bloomingdale Bog, Oseetah Lake and Powley Place, for a strong initial showing, while singing male **Clay-colored Sparrows** were located along the Heart Lake Road and near Whallonsburg. **Great Egrets** nested for the first time on the Four Brothers, and the "**Lawrence's**" **Warbler** hybrid was in the Town of Bombay, Franklin County, sharing a stretch of Reardon Road with a pair of Golden-winged Warblers.

On 10 June, a Red Fox was found on Island "A" (2.3 acres) of Four Brothers, and another was on Island "B" (2.4 acres) the same day, both presumed to have come out on the ice earlier in the year. Their presence discouraged colonial waterbird nesting on those islets, allowing the vegetation a year to recover, especially young basswoods and other saplings used by egrets and night-herons. Glossy Ibis were absent, but other waterbirds moved to the other two islands, and on 10 June there were 4 adult **Great Egrets** on Island "D". Two nests with eggs were found on 25 June, and 4 almost fully-fledged nestlings from 2 nests were banded 11 August. Other waterbirds banded at Four Brothers included 29 Double-crested Cormorants, 7 Cattle Egrets, 63 Black-crowned Night-Herons, 1015 Ring-billed Gulls (990 chicks and 25 color-banded adults) and 73 Herring Gulls. A total of 1346 cormorant nests was counted, down from 1372 last year, which in turn was down from 1394 in 1998. Great Blue Herons had 21 nests, Cattle Egrets 15 and Black-crowned Night-Herons 157 (down from last year's record 227, but still excellent). The NYS DEC visited the other 7 islands in New York waters, but the only colonial waterbirds were Great Blue Herons in the large colony on Valcour Island, Great Black-backed Gull on Garden Island, a young Great Black-backed loafing on Sheepshead Island and used stick nests on "No-Name" or Phelps Rocks below Crown Point.

Four of the seven Franklin County Bald Eagle nests had young, but only four eaglets fledged from three of those, with several deaths attributed to the wet weather and/or human disturbance during a critical wet weekend. The number of known Peregrine Falcon sites increased to 16, two of which are now in Clinton County, where adults were on territories in Black Brook and Ellenburg. In Essex County, seven of the eyries produced 12 young: two Chesterfield sites (adults at one, two fledged at the other), Crown Point (adult present), Elizabethtown (one fledged), Jay (nest with eggs failed), three Keene sites (one fledged two, other two active), Moriah (two fledged), two in North Elba (one fledged, pair at the other), Westport (two fledged), Willsboro (active pair) and Wilmington (two fledged). In spite of the increase in active sites, productivity was still below the record 20 chicks produced during the 1999 drought. Merlins also nested in Clinton County, with young reported from Peru, as well as at numerous sites in the other counties.

Rare transients included a **Red Knot** in alternate plumage at the Chazy riverlands on **20 June**, **2-3 Caspian Terns** at the same productive area **25 June-16 July** and another headed NE between Four Brothers and Willsboro Point **11 August**. Diligent Atlas observers Sheila Arthur, Eve Marshall and Christine Murphy of Montréal were rewarded with a rare vagrant **Western Tanager** while upgrading Block 6198C in northern Clinton County on the morning of **24 August**. The tanager was along Southwick Road, south of Perry Mills in the Town of Champlain, and while there have been some 30 records in NYS (as well as 14 in neighboring Québec), this is a first Regional record. Details have been submitted to NYSARC. By season's end, a total of 182 species plus a hybrid had been reported, an improvement over 165 species the previous summer, and with the annual summary forms for Atlas 2000 still to arrive. The total suggests, however, that we're still short of the 202 *breeding* birds (179 Confirmed) recorded in Region 7 during the 1980-85 Atlas project. Finally, congratulations to Matt Medler on his Blackpoll Warbler, although we'd note that Jeff Carleton didn't have the advantage of global warming.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Point WMA; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; CR – Chazy Rivers; FBI – Four Brothers islands; LA – Lake Alice WMA; PARC – former Plattsburgh AFB; SLB – Silver Lake Bog; SPB – Spring Pond Bog; TL – Tupper Lake.

LOONS – DUCKS

Pied-billed Grebe: y Fort Covington 7 Jul (DN, JP) and Oseetah L 26 Aug (LL).
Double-crested Cormorant: 1346 nest FBI, 29 banded.
Am. Bittern: CR, Essex Station, Oseetah L.

Great Blue Heron: 21 nests FBI; colony Valcour I.

GREAT EGRET: 4 ad FBI "D" 10 Jun; 2 nests with eggs 25 Jun, 4 nestlings from 2 nests banded 11 Aug (RM, JP); CR 8 Jun (DH); Fort Covington 7 Jul; 2 Ft. Covington Center 8 Jul (DN, JP); AP 17

Jul (J&RH); Boquet R mouth 27 Jul (P&PW); Penfield Pd 10-15 Aug (DR); Piseco L 22 Aug (CK); or 8 sites in all 4 counties!

Cattle Egret: 15 nests FBI, 7 banded.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 157 nests FBI, 63 banded; Scomotion Cr 30 Jul (NO, MS).

Snow Goose: FBI 10 Jun.

Canada Goose: nested FBI and many Atlas Blocks; max 133 TL municipal pk 8 Aug (CD).

Mute Swan: LA 7 Jul (DH), origin unknown.

Gadwall: pair FBI 10 Jun.

Blue-winged Teal: y East Fort Covington 6 Jul (DN, JP).

N. Pintail: pair Mary Riley Rd, FRAN 5 Jul (DN, JP).

Com. Goldeneye: 5 hens Valcour I 19 Jun (JP).

Red-breasted Merganser: hen FBI "D" 25 Jun.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 4 fledged from 7 FRAN nests.

N. Harrier: 18 Notable Species Forms; hen distracting E. Coyote Ft. Covington hayfield 8 Jul (DN, JP).

Merlin: y Peru (E&SJ); imm Keene 12 Aug (J&PT); also L Placid, Merrill, Wilmington, with many Atlas reports expected.

Peregrine Falcon: 12 chicks fledged from 7 ESSE eyries; 16 sites now monitored (NS).

Ring-necked Pheasant: TL 4 Jul (CD), unexpected.

Wild Turkey: many broods reported.

Virginia Rail: nest-building RR bridge marsh, Raquette R 5 Jul (CD); other Atlas reports.

Sora: 2 AP 26 Jun (BK), a good find.

Com. Moorhen: CR 1 Jul, 20 Jul (BK, CM), scarce here.

Am. Coot: 1-3 CR 10-19 Jul (BK, CM),

scarce here.

Semipalmated Plover: arr Constable 5 Jul (DN, JP); CR 20 Jul; max 5 CR 30 Jul (BK, CM).

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 2 CR 1 Jul (BK, CM); Westville 5-6 Jul (DN, JP).

Lesser Yellowlegs: alt plumage CR 25 Jun; 14+ CR 1 Jul (BK, CM); 1-3 Westville 5-7 Jul (DN, JP); max 29 CR 30 Jul (BK, CM).

Solitary Sandpiper: arr Constable and Westville FRAN 5 Jul (DN, JP), where rarely reported.

Spotted Sandpiper: nest with eggs AP 26 Jun (BK), serendipitous.

Upland Sandpiper: chicks Rouses Pt CLIN Jun (DP) and Dickinson Center FRAN Jul (MM); only reports; not found in 14 FRAN Blocks south of Québec 4-9 Jul (DN, JP).

Ruddy Turnstone: 2 FBI 10 Jun.

RED KNOT: alt plumage CR 20 Jun (BK, CM), rare here and very late date.

Sanderling: 5 Boquet R mouth 27 Jul (P&PW); only report.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 2 CR 23 Jul; max 6 CR 30 Jul (BK, CM); 5 Boquet R mouth 27 Jul (P&PW).

Least Sandpiper: arr Constable 5 Jul (DN, JP); 25 CR 11 Jul; max 50 CR 30 Jul (BK, CM).

White-rumped Sandpiper: CR 3 Aug (BK, CM), early CLIN by 11 days.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 2 CR 23 Jul (BK, CM); only report.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 3 alt plumage CR 23 Jul (BK, CM), uncommon.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 250 Westport 9 Aug (JP, RW).

Ring-billed Gull: 990 chicks banded, 25 ads color-banded FBI 10 Jun.

Herring Gull: 73 chicks banded FBI 10 Jun.

Great Black-backed Gull: nested FBI and Garden I; imm Sheepshead I.

CASPIAN TERN: 2-3 CR 25 Jun-16 Jul (J&RH, BK, CM); between FBI and

Willsboro Pt 11 Aug (RM, JP).

Com. Tern: FBI 10 Jun (RM, JP); 2-4 CR 25 Jun-10 Jul, building to max 45 (23 ad, 22 imm) CR 20 Jul; ad feeding y CR 10 Jul (BK, CM).

Black Tern: Akwesasne Mohawk tribal lands 8 Jul (DN, JP, DW); CR 11 Jul (BK); encouraging.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Com. Nighthawk: TL village 26 Jun, 2 there 13 Jul (CD); LA 21 Jul (NO); also Malone and Saranac L.

Three-toed Woodpecker: Oseetah L FRAN Jun (LL); 2 Powley Place HAMI Jul (DCR); BB, FRAN Aug (JG); a good start on mapping this rarity.

Black-backed Woodpecker: BB, L Colden (nest), Fishhole Pd, Hopkins Mt, L Lila, SLB; also a good start, with more reports expected.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Basin Mt, Hurricane Mt, L Lila, SLB, Whiteface Mt; early reports.

Willow Flycatcher: LA 21 Jun (NO); AP 26 Jun (BK); n FRAN Jul (DN, JP).

Philadelphia Vireo: L Eaton 28 Aug (BC); first Atlas report.

Gray Jay: Barnum Pd Jun (TM); L Lila Jul (WL); more expected.

Com. Raven: new cliff nests with yg Haystack in Jay and Trout Pd.

Cliff Swallow: 40-50 n CLIN 2 Aug (DH).

Boreal Chickadee: Bushnell Falls, Calamity Bk, L Colden, Flowed Land, Giant, Hurricane, L Lila, Slant Rock; but the tip of the iceberg.

Tufted Titmouse: pair CH 19 Aug (NO).

Carolina Wren: Clinton Comm.

College; Peru; Plattsburgh; y from nest transported into ESSE in RV hand-reared and released CLIN (NS).

Sedge Wren: marsh with sedges near RR bridge Raquette R (5389B) 5 Jul (CD,

MD), rare here.

Bicknell's Thrush: Mt Adams, Giant, Hopkins, Hurricane, Whiteface; still sketchy.

N. Mockingbird: Stafford Rd CLIN 1 Jun-11 Jul, feeding y (HK); juv Champlain Jul (DH); CH 20 Aug (NO); an excellent start.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: pair Reardon Rd Bombay FRAN 7 Jul (DN, JP); should be more.

"LAWRENCE'S" WARBLER:

Reardon Rd FRAN 7-8 Jul (DN, JP), a lovely bird.

Tennessee Warbler: Whitney headquarters 12 Jun (BP); only report to date.

Yellow Warbler: 2 CH 19 Aug (NO), late.

"Yellow" Palm Warbler: Charley Pd Outlet 14 Jun (BP), only Notable Species Form received.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Flowed Land 10 Aug (J&PT); only report.

Blackpoll Warbler: on territories Whiteface 3 Jun and Hurricane 4 Jun; 2 late transients CH 4 Jun (NO); FBI 10 Jun (CH, RM); Willsboro Bay 10-11 Jun (MM), record late ESSE transient, breaking the 4 Jun 1926 Elizabethtown record of the late Geoffrey Carleton, then 16 years old.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

WESTERN TANAGER: Southwick Rd, 2 mi. south of Perry Mills, T Champlain CLIN, 9:30 a.m., 24 Aug (SA, CM, EM), first Regional record (!) (NYSARC).

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW:

singing male North Elba 23-30 Jun (SB, DH, BM); disturbed singing male Essex 24 Jun (CS); both excellent Atlas finds.

Grasshopper Sparrow: 8 singing males PARC 14 Jun (MG); 2-3 singing males PARC 18-25 Jul (BK, CM); judged "okay."

Red Crossbill: Powley Place 5 Aug (DCR); BB 26 Jun, 4 Jul (SB), 14 Aug (JG); otherwise scarce.

White-winged Crossbill: FY Blue Ridge 29 Jul (DF); FL Keene 12 Aug (J&PT); singing males widely reported from Bog R, Bloomingdale, BB, Boreas R, Newcomb, North Hudson, Osgood Pd, Tahawus and many other locales.

ADDENDUM

FISH CROW: Plattsburgh 17 Apr-4 May 2000 (J&RH); first CLIN record.

White-crowned Sparrow: Redford 29 May 2000 (Don Fasking), late CLIN by 7 days.