

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

JOHN M.C. PETERSON

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

The season commenced with Lake Champlain at 95.44', the level reached the previous fall only after the passage of Hurricanes Dennis and Floyd, and Inlet saw the first frost on 2 September. Saranac Lake experienced September lows of 27°F on the 5th, 26° on the 6th, 24° on the 25th and a nippy 19° on the 29th. By month's end, the lake had dropped nearly a foot to 94.70'. Inlet had the first snows 8-10 October, while at lower elevations Ellenburg Depot received a 2" snowfall on the 30th and Malone saw an inch on the same day. More snow fell at Inlet and Lake Placid on 14 November, covering the ground by the following day. The first major storm covered Inlet with 8" on 22 November. Inlet recorded the seasonal low of -10° on 24 November. Overall, there were many cloudy days, but not that much precipitation, and although it was warmest at the start of the period, thermometers managed to reach 65° even in the central Adirondacks during mid-October, when black flies briefly hatched out again at Shallow Lake. Only 143 species were reported, well down from 171 in the Fall 1999 seasonal report, but the decline may reflect a certain amount of Atlas 2000 fatigue.

Once again, the most significant fall records came from Vermonters stationed at their lakewatch on Thompson's Point, VT, who witnessed a number of notable

birds crossing into Essex County waters during their passage through the Split Rock narrows. In addition to large numbers of loons of two species during November, highlights included a first-year **Northern Gannet** and record flocks of two scoters in October, and an immature **Black-legged Kittiwake** in early November. Marine species weren't confined to Lake Champlain. A wayward **Atlantic Puffin** that turned up on Sherman Lake, Crown Point, in early November was taken in for rehabilitation 6 November, but died on the 11th. Interesting Champlain larids included an adult Little Gull at Westport on 21 October and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** on the Plattsburgh mudflats 17 September that provided the second Clinton County record.

Record numbers of grebes and diving ducks gathered off the Boquet River delta at Noblewood Park, south of Willsboro, where 70 Horned Grebes were tallied on 21 October for a new Regional and Essex County record. By 11 November, rafts of 1000+ Buffleheads and Common Goldeneyes had gathered off the mouth of the river. Observers are urged to visit this lovely area, which promises to provide more interesting sightings in future years. For directions, see *The Kingbird* March 2000; 50(1), p. 86.

Winter arrivals included Rough-legged Hawk 24 November, Snowy Owl in early November, Northern Shrike and Bohemian Waxwing 11 November, American Tree Sparrow 12 November, Snow Bunting 29 October and Common Redpoll 24 November, none particularly early. However, the bumper crop of wild foods promised a bountiful winter. Ruffed Grouse were feeding on highbush cranberries at Tupper Lake. As white pine ripened and opened at Westport 11 November, Black-capped Chickadees clung beneath clumps of cones. American Robins were gorging on silky dogwood berries at Tupper Lake 18 October, stripping mountain ash berries on Jay Mt. 22 October and feasting on buckthorn near the Webb Royce Swamp 11 November. Purple Finches at Keene fed on spruce, also favored by Pine Siskins on Jay Mt. 22 October, before switching to hemlock 3-4 November. The crossbill invasion continued, with six singing male White-winged Crossbills in the High Peaks between Bushnell Falls and Slant Rock 5-7 September and some with recently fledged young in Hamilton County, where they had switched to black and red spruce from their summer diet of tamarack and white spruce. American Goldfinches favored deciduous catkins near Westport on 11 November. A flock of 20 Evening Grosbeaks at Keene 21 October were in eastern hemlock. Given such a wide variety of berries, seeds and cones, the winter was expected to be good for bluebirds, robins and waxwings at lower elevations, and a variety of winter finches in Adirondack conifers. Needless to add, there were the usual complaints and laments of "Where are all the birds?" from feeder-watchers.

CONTRIBUTORS

Larry Berrin, Bernie Carr, Charlcie Delehanty, John David Delehanty, Bill Frenette, Judy Heintz, Roger Heintz, David Hoag, Larry Hogan, Johanne Huchro, Euclid

Jones, Sue Jones, Paul Kelly, Gary Lee, Peter Littlefield, Richard MacDonald, Norton Miller, Scott Morical, Theodore Murin, James Osborn, Lydia Osenbaugh, Paul Osenbaugh, Daniel Peters, John Peterson, Susan Peterson, Frederick Pratt, Craig Provost, Peter Riley, Dana Rohleder, Tony Shrimpton, Charles Spagnoli, Allan Strong, John Thaxton, Patricia Thaxton, Robert Wei, Michael Winslow

ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Point WMA; CR – Chazy Rivers; FB – Ferd's Bog; FBI – Four Brothers islands; KB – King's Bay; MRRRA – Moose River Recreation Area; NP – Noblewood Park; PCB – Plattsburgh city beach; PtF – Point au Fer; PtR – Point au Roche; SR – Split Rock; TL – Tupper Lake; WRS – Webb Royce Swamp

LOONS – DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 46 midlake SR 6 Nov (TM, PR); 2 Westport 11 Nov (JP, RW); ~ *half of 61* SR 12 Nov in NYS waters (TM, JO, FP, CP, AS).
Com. Loon: 20 FBI 10 Sep (LB); ~ *half of 379* SR 6 Nov in NY (TM, PR).
Horned Grebe: max 70 NP 21 Oct (J&SP, J&PT), new Region 7 & ESSE record.
Red-necked Grebe: arr KB 8 Oct (J&RH); 3 NP 21 Oct (J&SP, J&PT); max 23 Westport 11 Nov (JP, RW), new fall max Region 7 & ESSE.
N. GANNET: 1st yr SR 16 Oct (SM, TM), **first Regional record**.
Double-crested Cormorant: TL 2 Sep (CD), uncommon FRAN; max 200+ FBI 10 Sep (LB).
Great Blue Heron: TL 12 Nov (CD), late inland.
Great Egret: Plattsburgh 17 Sep (J&RH).
Snow Goose: arr CR 8 Sep (BK, CM), early CLIN by 4 days; some "Blues" among 200+ L Alice 9 Oct (NO); max 35000 PtR and 10000 PtF 1 Nov (DH).
Ross's Goose: 3 ads PtR 18 Nov (L&PO), now an almost annual discovery.
Canada "Richardson's" Goose: *B.c. hutchinsii* PtR 12 Oct (DH!).
Brant: 2 Raquette L 31 Oct (GL),

uncommon in HAMI.

Mute Swan: L Alice 19 Sep (NO), origin unknown.

Gadwall: PtF 7 Nov (DH), only report.

Am. Wigeon: PtF 7 Nov (DH), only report.

Blue-winged Teal: 2 Beaver L 1-2 Nov (GL), late HAMI.

N. Pintail: 20 AP 7 Nov (DR), only report.

Canvasback: 3 PtF 7 Nov (DH); 10 KB 18 Nov (J&RH), now uncommon.

Redhead: 12 Trombley Bay 18 Nov (J&RH), a good find.

Ring-necked Duck: 10 TL 23 Sep (CD); 2 hens L Alice 9 Oct (NO); KB 7 Nov (DR).

Greater Scaup: max 1000 PtF 7 Nov (DH) and scaup (sp.) nearby KB same day (DR).

Lesser Scaup: 43 AP 20 Oct (NO).

White-winged Scoter: ~ *half of 488* SR narrows 15 Oct in NY (SM, TM), new max ESSE.

Black Scoter: ~ *half of 940* SR narrows 15 Oct in NY (SM, TM), new Regional & ESSE max; another 280 in ESSE waters at SR 31 Oct (TM, PR); 5 Whallon's Bay 11 Nov (JP, RW).

Bufflehead: arr 100 NP 21 Oct (J&SP, J&PT); mixed flock 1000 NP 11 Nov (JP, RW) included this species and Com. Goldeneye.

Hooded Merganser: 5 NP 11 Nov (JP, RW); 2 TL 22 Nov (CD).

Red-breasted Merganser: AP 1 Nov (J&RH), another nice find.

Ruddy Duck: hen Port Kent 7 Nov (DR), rare ESSE where there are now 8 records, including a specimen hen collected Port Kent 3 Nov 1955 in the SUNY Plattsburgh collection.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: imm TL 4 Nov; 6 (1 ad, 5 imm) TL 23 Nov (CD), on offal dump at hunting camp.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr Crown Pt 24 Nov (MW).

Golden Eagle: over Keene 5 Sep (J&PT).

Merlin: transient AP 7 Nov (DR).

Peregrine Falcon: ad Wadhams 1 Nov (JP, RW).

Ring-necked Pheasant: TL feeder 30 Sep-12 Oct (CD), "harvested" by hunter.

Wild Turkey: 2 Speculator 23 Oct (PK); 13 (11 poults) TL 20 Sep-23 Oct; 19 daily TL from 24 Oct (CD); only suggest HAMI & FRAN increase being detected by Atlas 2000.

Black-bellied Plover: PCB 18-22 Sep (BK, CM).

Semipalmated Plover: 2 NP 2 Sep (MM); PCB 22 Sep (BK).

Greater Yellowlegs: PCB 2 Sep (BK, CM).

Solitary Sandpiper: KB 25 Sep (BK, CM), only report.

Sanderling: 2 CR 5 Sep; 4 PCB 22 Sep (BK, CM).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 4 NP 2 Sep (MM).

Least Sandpiper: 4 NP 2 Sep (MM); TL 17 Sep (CD).

Dunlin: KB 25 Sep (BK, CM); max 12 KB 8 Oct (J&RH); 2 NP 21 Oct (J&SP, J&PT), a good showing.

STILT SANDPIPER: CR 5 Sep (BK, CM), accidental CLIN and only 5th

Regional record.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 10 CR 13 Sep (BK, CM).

Long-billed Dowitcher: CR 19 Sep (BK).

LITTLE GULL: 3rd yr Westport 21 Oct (J&SP, J&PT), rare transient ESSE.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: Plattsburgh mudflats 17 Sep (J&RH), 2nd CLIN record.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: juv SR 12 Nov (TM, JO, FP, CP, AS), **first Regional record**, although among the 10 species expected in ESSE by Geoffrey Carleton in Apr 1980.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN: Sherman L, Crown Pt, ESSE, early Nov, taken in for rehabilitation 6 Nov (JH), but died 11 Nov, **first Regional record**.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: midpoint Rouses Pt Bridge and between Rouses Pt & Champlain border crossing early Nov (DP), only indications of invasion.

Short-eared Owl: Crown Pt 22 Nov (MW); Red R 19 Oct (GL), apparently 1st HAMI record.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Beaver Bk & L; FB, Raquette L; Sumner Stillwater (GL).

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Alder Flycatcher: Slide Bk 1 Oct (RM), record late ESSE.

N. Shrike: arr Essex 11 Nov (JP, RW).

Yellow-throated Vireo: Adirondak Loj trail 2 Sep (J&PT), unexpected.

Gray Jay: Brown's Tract Inlet; FB; Helldiver & Lost Pds; Marion R; West Mt trail (GL).

Com. Raven: max 15 TL offal dump 23 Nov (CD).

Boreal Chickadee: The Brothers; Bushnell Falls-Slant Rock; Phelps; HAMI Gray Jay sites (GL).

Carolina Wren: Peru 9 Sep (E&SJ), where present all summer.

Am. Robin: 30 TL 18 Oct, eating silky dogwood berries; 6 Jay Mt 22 Oct, eating mountain ash;
Inlet 2 Nov; hundreds WRS 11 Nov, eating buckthorn, only suggestive of numbers.

Gray Catbird: Marion R 6 Oct (GL), late HAMI.

N. Mockingbird: pr Plattsburgh 18 Sep (JP), wing-flashing passing Amtrak "Adirondack."

European Starling: number of leucistic birds Plattsburgh, "one almost entirely white" (J&RH).

Am. Pipit: 6 summit Mt. Marcy 22 Sep (NM), now the 6th ESSE peak with Sep-Oct sightings.

Bohemian Waxwing: Westport 11 Nov (JP, RW), only report.

Cedar Waxwing: 100 Westport 11 Nov (JP, RW).

WARBLERS

Palm Warbler: max 20 FB 23 Sep (BC, TS), HAMI and Regional max; Inlet 6 Oct (GL), subspecies not noted.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Raquette L 11 Oct (GL); PtR 1 Nov (DH), scarce here.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr 4 TL 12 Nov (CD).

Fox Sparrow: Lost Pds trail 25 Oct (GL), only report.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr CLIN 1 Oct (J&RH); TL 8-19 Oct (CD); Limekiln L 10 Oct (GL); only reports.

Dark-eyed Junco: many from early Sep.

Snow Bunting: arr MRRA 29 Oct (GL); Rouses Pt feeder 12 Nov (DP).

Red-winged Blackbird: Inlet feeder 22 Nov (GL); imm TL feeder 25 Nov (CD), late.

Rusty Blackbird: Raquette L 14 Oct (GL); TL feeder 18 Oct (CD).

Brown-headed Cowbird: TL feeder 23-30 Nov (CD); Speculator feeder 24 Nov (MW), late.

Purple Finch: The Brothers; Elizabethtown; Keene; Inlet; TL; Westport; scattered reports, but nowhere abundant.

Red Crossbill: Rugar Woods, Plattsburgh 1 Sep (BK); The Brothers 1 Oct (RM); only reports.

White-winged Crossbill: ~6 singing males Bushnell Falls-Slant Rock 5-7 Sep; female First Brother 20 Oct (J&PT); several HAMI sites, some with newly-fledged y (GL).

Com. Redpoll: heard overhead Inlet 24 Nov (GL), only report.

Pine Siskin: 6 Jay Mt 22 Oct (J&PT), feeding on spruce; Red R 2 Nov (GL); 12 Keene 3-4 Nov (J&PT), feeding on hemlock; only reports.

Am. Goldfinch: L Alice 9 Oct; 90 Westport 11 Nov; abundant Inlet feeder from 20 Nov; 7 TL 29 Nov; only reports after departure of breeding birds in early fall.

Evening Grosbeak: 20 Keene 21 Oct (J&PT), in hemlock; flying overhead Inlet 19 Nov (GL); only reports.

jmcp7@juno.com

