

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

John M.C. Peterson

RR 1, Box 230, Elizabethtown NY 12932

jmcp7@juno.com

March pranced in like a lamb, with Plattsburgh reaching a record high 59° F on the 3rd, a day of rain and winds to 60 mph that caused a 20-hour power outage in Westport. Lake Champlain stood at a relatively low 94.78'. Lake Placid received 4" of snow on 10 March, but lower elevations saw only flurries and the ground remained bare. Crown Point got 4" on the 20th, but the major snowfall of the year came on 27 March, with 7" at Plattsburgh and 6–12" elsewhere. The month ended with a high of 60° on Easter Sunday. April was warm, with Plattsburgh 67° on the 9th; normal is 50°. At 6:50 a.m. on 20 April, a 5.1 earthquake shook the North Country, with the epicenter near Schuyler Falls, Clinton County. Peru received 5" of snow on 22 April, but by the 25th temperatures were back up to 58° and Lake Champlain had risen to 98.12', due to melting snowpack in the High Peaks and Green Mountains. Plattsburgh reached 80° by 6 May, but most of the month was colder than average, and rains finally brought the drought to an end, with 2" of snow at Inlet on the 18th and sleet/hail falling along Lake Champlain as late as 20 May. Inlet was a nippy 26° on 25 May. Memorial Day, however, was sunny and 80°, and the month ended on a balmy 75° day, with the lake at 97.72'.

Winter birds always provide a strong component of the spring season, and this year was no exception. The previous extreme late date for **Bohemian Waxwing** in NYS was 28 April (Feustel. 1998. in *Bull's Birds of New York State*, pg 450). That was pushed ahead by some three weeks in Plattsburgh in 2002. Charles Mitchell had ~50 on Park Avenue West 14–15 May, but the last were reported by Rick Mikkelsen from Sandra Avenue on **18 May**. The waxwings were eating apple blossom petals, certainly not a dietary staple of this species.

Although a **Wilson's Phalarope** pair was found near the Chazy Rivers in May 1981 (*The Kingbird*, 31:182), breeding was not confirmed there until 1993, so the species was not included in *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State* (1988). The phalaropes either nested successfully, or attempted to do so, annually 1993–1997, but between 1990 and 2001 there were no sightings at Chazy Rivers, although there was a 4 May 2001 report from the nearby Riley Brook potholes in Clinton County. On 29 May 2002, Bill Krueger and Charles Mitchell found them back at the Chazy Rivers site. According to Krueger, "Three adult birds, one female and two males, in breeding plumage were found on the Laurin farm in the traditional field. One male was observed to jump into the air on fluttering wings and to lift a wing on landing. This appeared to us to be courtship display; however, Sibley and others state that it is the female and not the male which displays."

We call attention to the two "Common-type" **terns** (sp.) flying north over the Mohawk casino at Hogsburg, headed toward the St. Lawrence River, seen by Hollis White on **13 March**. The early arrival date of Common Tern is 2 April,

“exceptionally on the coast as early as 20 Mar.” (Hays. 1998. in *Bull's Birds of New York State*, pg 302). Interestingly, Geoffrey Carleton accepted a record of Common Tern in his *Birds of Essex County, New York*, of “Two floating on a piece of driftwood, Essex, on the remarkable date of March 30, 1975.” None of the other smaller terns seem to arrive in NYS until after March, although there are a few December-February records of Forster's, and Common Terns nest on the St. Lawrence River, as they do on Lake Champlain.

This marked the 27th consecutive year of operation of the bird-banding station on the Crown Point State Historic Site, open 10–27 May. Three days of rain and cold shortly after the station opened were followed by a clearing trend that saw 142 birds banded on the 16th and 134 birds the following day. Numbers declined daily thereafter as the weather generally improved (despite sleet/hail on the 20th), until an afternoon shower on 24 May grounded migrants and pushed the day's catch to 52 birds. By the time the station closed on Memorial Day, we had enjoyed the third best year ever for numbers, with 852 birds banded, and the fourth best for variety, with 61 species recorded. Warbler variety was excellent, and the 22 species tied with the record season of 1996. Best days for warbler variety were 16 and 24 May, with a dozen species banded on both days. The highlight was the third-ever Orange-crowned Warbler on 19 May. Also noteworthy were the first-ever Bank Swallow and Tufted Titmouse, second-ever Dark-eyed Junco and third-ever Philadelphia Vireo and Gray-cheeked Thrush. There were 24 returns of ten species banded at Crown Point in previous years, the oldest an American Goldfinch at least five years, 11 months old. Heavy return flights of Blue Jays and Black-capped Chickadees were noted, and record numbers of the latter were banded. The permitting process for the green ash thinning project is nearing completion, and we appreciate the support of staff at the Historic Site, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and NYS DEC.

A total of 210 species, including **Eurasian Wigeon** and **Sandhill Crane**, was reported, short of the all-time spring season of 1997 when 219 species were found, but still an excellent showing.

Atlas observers are reminded that all of their Annual Summary Forms should be submitted to the Regional Coordinator *no later than* the deadline of **15 September**.

CONTRIBUTORS

Susan Baker, Thomas Barber, Helen & Robert Booth, James Cayea, Joan Collins, William Cook, Daniel Crane, Charcie Delehanty, Walter Favro, Elizabeth Fitts, Donna Fletcher, Judy & Roger Heintz, Candace Hess, Gordon Howard, Mary Huniston, Anne Hungerford, Suzy Johnson, Harold Klein, Steve Krieg, Bill Krueger, Linda LaPan, Julie Lattrell, Gary Lee, William Lenhart, Mark Manske, Larry Master, Melanie McCormack, Janet Mihuc, Rick Mikkelson, Charles Mitchell, Charles Mitchell Jr., Keith Murphy, Daniel Nickerson, Sean O'Brien, Nancy Olsen, Dan Peters, John & Susan Peterson, Emily Pugsley, Steve Reed, Dana

C. Rohleder, David M. Rutkowski, Marilyn Smith, Sally Smith, Dean Spaulding, John & Patricia Thaxton, Janet Webb, Hollis White.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt WMA; CH – Cumberland Head; CP – Crown Pt SHS; CR – Chazy Rivers; FB – Ferd's Bog; IL – Indian L; LA – L Alice WMA; LL – Long L; LP – L Placid; PtF – Pt au Fer; PtR – Pt au Roche; RPt – Rouses Pt; TL – Tupper L; WB – Whallons Bay; WM – Wickham Marsh WMA; WRS – Webb Royce Swamp.

LOONS – DUCKS

Pied-billed Grebe: arr Coopersville 30 Mar (WC); IL 31 Mar (DS), early HAMI; also AP, CR, WM, WRS; a strong showing.

Red-necked Grebe: max 25 off WM 14 Apr (DCR); CH 22 Apr (SJ, BK).

Double-crested Cormorant: arr AP 30 Mar (WC, DCR); only ~ 3 nests CP May (J&SP).

Great Egret: arr CR 17 Apr (KM, JP) thru 30 May (BK); max 4 CR 27 May (BK, CM); also Helena, n FRAN 26 May (JC, DN, SR).

Turkey Vulture: Rt 374 5 Mar (J&RH), early CLIN; TL 28 Mar (CD), early FRAN; 4 other Mar reports exceptional here.

Snow Goose: max 50,000 CR 24 Mar (DP, DCR), "The dense mass of geese was about a mile long and 30-80 yards wide, mostly on the south side of the [Great Chazy] river," according to Rohleder; 20,000 CR 25 Mar (DCR); miles & thousands seen from Amtrak in fields CR to RPt and beyond to Cantic, Québec, 28 Mar (JP); 2 "Blues" in flock of 1000 CR 17-18 Apr (KM, JP).

Canada Goose: max 5080 CR 30 Mar. **Brant:** ~150 CH 20 May (BK), only report.

Mute Swan: imm AP lingered to 11 Mar (JC, DCR).

Tundra Swan: 5 AP lingered to 4 Mar.

Gadwall: max 16 AP 18 Mar.

EURASIAN WIGEON: Brasher 28 Apr

(MM), 1st FRAN & 5th Reg record.

Am. Wigeon: max 25 AP 16 Mar.

N. Shoveler: max 7 AP 16 Mar.

N. Pintail: max 120 CR 25 Mar.

Green-winged Teal: max 16 AP 30 Mar.

Redhead: pr CR 9 May (BK, CM), only report.

Ring-necked Duck: max 65 AP 31 Mar; numerous reports.

Bufflehead: pr CP 11 May (TB, DC), fairly late.

Red-breasted Merganser: 4 m, 3 f PtR 17-24 Apr (HK), hens remained to 30 May; 3 pr CH 19 Apr.

Ruddy Duck: molting m AP 14 Apr (DCR).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: Essex nest moved 28 Mar from power pole to platform by NYSDEC & NYSEG.

Bald Eagle: pr Oseetah L 3 Mar (LL), copulating & breaking off birch twigs for nest; pr nest-building new site TL 5 Mar (CD); max 18 CP 15 Mar, 12 there 21 Mar (Amtrak crew), ESSE record high; imm CR 25 Mar (DCR), eating Snow Goose on ice.

Merlin: AP 18 Mar (DCR); LL 5 May (JC); Raquette L 20 May (GL); a good showing.

Peregrine Falcon: Westport 6 Apr (JP, J&PT); Keene 7 Apr (J&PT); CR 20 Apr (BK, CM); CP 22 & 25 May (GH, KM, JP); good number.

Gray Partridge: pr e. of Burke FRAN 25

May (DN, SR), 1st Reg Atlas report.

Wild Turkey: max 30 Inlet feeder 24 Mar (GL), record number HAMI.

Virginia Rail: arr Ray Brook 15 Apr (LL), record early ESSE.

Sora: Clinton Forest 18 May (JC); PtF 21 May (BK, CM); good finds.

Com. Moorhen: PtF 21 May (BK, CM); scarce here.

Am. Coot: 2 Westport 8 Mar; 4 AP 11 Mar; AP 7 Apr; pr CLIN pine barrens pd 4 May (JL); scarce here.

SANDHILL CRANE: singles Wadhams 13 & 14 Apr (SS), seen & heard overhead, headed north.

Semipalmated Plover: arr CR 12 May; max 13 CR 21 May; 2 Malone 25 May.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 2 AP 11 May.

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr Moffitt Rd CLIN 14 Apr (J&RH), early.

Solitary Sandpiper: arr CLIN 11 May; CP 14-16 May; Clinton Forest 18 May; scarce here in spring.

Ruddy Turnstone: arr CR 16 May (BK), a good find.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: arr 2 CR 20 May.

Least Sandpiper: arr 15 CR 12 May; max 33 CR 21 May (BK); 17 Malone 25 May (JC, DN, SR), new FRAN high; Ft Covington 28 May (DN, SR), late FRAN.

Dunlin: arr 2 CR 12 May; max 16 CR 16 May.

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 5 CR 20 May; max 53 CR 21 May (BK, CM); 8 CR 30 May.

Com. Snipe: arr 3 CP peninsula 6 Apr (JP, J&PT), early ESSE.

Am. Woodcock: 4 yg LL 11 May.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: 2 m, 1 f CR 29 May (BK, CM), a welcome find!

Bonaparte's Gull: 4 AP 18 May (CH), only report.

Glaucous Gull: 2 1st winter AP 22 Apr (SK, DCR), one a possible Herring x Glaucous hybrid.

Caspian Tern: Westport 3 May (JP, J&PT); CR 23 May (BK, CM); always a

good find here.

Com. Tern: 4 CR 12 May.

TERN (sp.): 2 "Common-type" flying n. Hogansburg 13 Mar (HW), a "remarkable date" for any smaller tern, as Carleton might say.

Black Tern: 8 PtF 21 May (BK, CM), an excellent find.

DOVES – WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr CP 12 May (GL, JP), only report.

Barred Owl: killed & ate Am. Crow TL yard (SB, ph).

N. Saw-whet Owl: LL 5 May; CP 12 May; only reports.

Com. Nighthawk: arr Miner 20 Apr (NO, MS); CP 26 May (PT), uncommon.

Whip-poor-will: arr Miner 20 Apr; Wadhams 5 May; CP 17 May; spotty.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: arr LL 6 Apr (JC), early HAMI.

Three-toed Woodpecker: FB 20 May (GL).

Black-backed Woodpecker: FB 4-20 May.

N. Flicker: intergrade yellow-shafted x red-shafted AP 14 Apr (DCR). "being hassled by 2 yellow-shafted."

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: last WRS 8 Apr (DCR).

Philadelphia Vireo: banded CP 24 May (JP).

Gray Jay: 2 FB 4 May.

Com. Raven: Keene 10 Mar (J&PT), carrying lg strips of birchbark; CR 25 Mar and AP 31 Mar (DCR), both low lakeshore elevations.

Black-capped Chickadee: 55 banded CP May.

Boreal Chickadee: LL 6 Apr (JC); FB 4 May (WL).

Tufted Titmouse: CP, Elizabethtown, Port Kent, Westport; a decline from winter reports.

Carolina Wren: singing m Westport 9 Mar (MM, SO); CH 31 Mar (JW); s

Westport 6 Apr (JP, J&PT); promising for Atlas.

Sedge Wren: Stillwater Swamp CLIN 27 May (J&RH), a great find.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 12 banded CP.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: CP 10 May (GL); breeding-condition pr banded CP 26 May (JP).

Hermit Thrush: Keene 22 Apr, puffed up and shaking on 21° – 31° a.m., while scratching in leaf litter for food; max 15 Loon L same day (SK, DCR), getting grit on road during snowstorm.

N. Mockingbird: Rpt 8 Apr (WF); CP 25-27 May (GL, JP); scarce here.

Bohemian Waxwing: 40 Keene 9 Mar (J&PT); mixed flock Port Kent 21 Mar; 2 PtR 25 Mar (DCR); ~50 Plattsburgh 14-15 May (CM) & 18 May (RM), record late NYS.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: PtR 31 May (BK), still relatively rare here.

Golden-winged Warbler: Reardon Rd Bombay FRAN 25 May (DN, SR), where found Jul 2000.

Orange-crowned Warbler: arr Keene 19-20 Apr (J&PT); m banded CP 19 May (GH, JP).

Black-throated Green Warbler: arr Port Kent 11 Apr (DCR), early ESSE.

Prairie Warbler: m banded CP 26 May.

“Western” Palm Warbler: 8 banded CP 11-18 May (JP).

Ovenbird: arr LL 7 May (JC), early HAMI.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Savannah Sparrow: arr Port Kent 25 Mar

(DCR), fairly early.

Fox Sparrow: arr LP 24 Mar;

Elizabethtown 5 Apr; Wadhams 6 Apr; Plattsburgh 22-23 Apr; a fair showing.

White-throated Sparrow: 23 banded CP 11-23 May, high there.

Lapland Longspur: CR 27 Mar (H&RB), only report.

Snow Bunting: max 500+ CR 24 Mar (WF); 4 Inlet 24 Mar (GL) far less expected.

Bobolink: arr AP 14 Apr (DCR), record early Reg & CLIN.

E. Meadowlark: arr 2 Peru 9 Mar (EF), early CLIN.

Baltimore Oriole: m Peru 14 May (EF), eating suet daily during cold spell; 36 banded CP 11-26 May.

Pine Grosbeak: 2 Whitney area 2 Mar, last of winter.

Purple Finch: numbers began to return Apr.

Red Crossbill: 5 IL 20 Apr, only report.

White-winged Crossbill: Akey Rd 17 Apr-24 May (BK, CM, CMJr.), pr with fledged yg 24 Apr, 1st CLIN Confirmed.

Hoary Redpoll: LL 10 Mar (JC); LP 24 Mar (LM); Elizabethtown 4 Apr (JP); 2 LP 7 Apr (LM); 2 TL 19 Apr (CD); many more undoubtedly present among flocks of Com. Redpoll.

Evening Grosbeak: max 62 Inlet 24 Mar (GL); pairs at feeders by May.

EXOTICS

Budgerigar: Ft. Covington 28 May (DN, SR), yellow & green with bluish tail, skittish.

