

REGION 7 – ADIRONACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The season began with a 6-7 December Nor'easter that left 23" of snow at Ellenburg Depot, 41" on Whiteface Mt. and wound up ninth on the all-time list of Champlain Valley storms. This was followed by a new claimant to the eighth greatest snowstorm on 15 December, with totals of 30" at Ellenburg Depot, 24" at Plattsburgh and 18" at Inlet. A thaw began on the 22nd, lasting until month's end, with daytime temperatures in the 40's, reaching 47°F on 30 December. By the end of the month Lake Champlain stood at 99.40', just below the 100 foot flood stage. January was brutally cold. Inlet experienced a low of -28° on the 9th, Wawbeek was -37° the following day, Inlet was -38° on 14 January and Titus Mt. ski center closed the following day with a low of -27°. Saranac Lake dropped to -37° on the 16th, so a high of 10° at Plattsburgh the next day felt like a heat wave. Champlain had dropped to 98.30' by the 22nd and was freezing in the widest parts. To close out the month, Inlet was -26° on the 24th and 26th and Saranac Lake was -21° on 26 January. February was a modest improvement, with Plattsburgh reaching 33° on the 3rd. Tupper Lake dropped to -20° on 16 February but Plattsburgh was back to a balmy 39° by the 18th.

There were numerous sightings of Bald Eagles, with highs of nine on the Bald Eagle Survey, eight at Lake Simond on a deer carcass, five on a deer carcass at Port Douglas and five adults at Crown Point. Two of the Lake Simond adults wore blue and silver bands, while another adult had a yellow wing tag. A Bald Eagle was an unexpected visitor at an Inlet feeder on 27 February. There were also many reports of Wild Turkeys, with a total of 135 on the four Christmas Bird Counts. There were 14 sightings of Northern Shrikes, with a record eight of those on the Elizabethtown CBC. American Robins were widespread, with 80 near Essex on 23 February the largest flock.

Bohemian Waxwings staged a welcome invasion, with reports from Ausable Point, Chateaugay, Elizabethtown, Essex, Jay, Lake Placid, Ticonderoga, Upper Jay and Westport, with the largest flocks of 80 each feeding near Westport on 15 February and Lake Placid 21 February, as well as a Jay flock that reached 75 birds by season's end. Smaller numbers of Cedar Waxwings were found, with a maximum of 15 on the Elizabethtown CBC.

Among the winter finches, there were a half-dozen reports of Pine Grosbeak. Purple Finches were found on three CBCs but were otherwise absent. As expected, the Plattsburgh CBC tallied the greatest number of House Finches with a total of 56. Red Crossbills were limited to an adult male at Indian Lake 1 January, a few at the Olympic cross-country ski area 21 January and a pair at Chilson 11 February. The only White-winged Crossbills were at Bigelow Road and Bloomingdale Bog on 7 December. Finch-of-the-winter honors went to Common Redpoll, with large flocks at most feeders and a high of 1019 tallied on the Saranac Lake CBC. Again, snow-burrowing and tunneling by redpolls was observed and videotaped at Long Lake. As now expected during an invasion year,

there were also reports of Hoary Redpoll from Chilson, Essex, Inlet, Jay, Lake Placid and Long Lake. Pine Siskins also appeared at a few feeders, but the largest number was 15 on the Plattsburgh CBC. The same count boasted 386 American Goldfinches, which were erratic, but more abundant than siskins. Evening Grosbeaks enjoyed their best winter in many years, with a flock of 50-150 at Long Lake and 120 on the Saranac Lake CBC.

Rarities included a **Western Grebe** off Gravelly Point, Cumberland Head, on 7 January, drifting south at 9:15 a.m., five hours ahead of a cold front. A Great Blue Heron at Fish Creek, Franklin County, 2 February was certainly noteworthy. Also unexpected was a **Black Guillemot** in winter plumage at Noblewood Park 28 December, the second Essex County and Region 7 record. Yet another surprise was the **Brewer's Blackbird** that visited a Wild Turkey feeding area at Tupper Lake on 31 December.

Christmas counters are most grateful to Matthew Medler for stepping forward to serve as compiler of the Elizabethtown CBC following my retirement after 30 years of service from 1973-2002. Matt did a superb job.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt WMA; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; ECBC – Elizabethtown CBC 27 Dec; FB – Ferd's Bog; FCBC – Ferrisburgh CBC 20 Dec; LL – Long L; NP – Noblewood P; PCBC – Plattsburgh CBC 14 Dec; SLCBC – Saranac L CBC 4 Jan; TL – Tupper L; WB – Whallons Bay; WC – NYS Waterfowl Count 10-12 Jan.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 55 FCBC; 12 Keeseville flying s 4 p.m. 13 Feb (JL).
Canada Goose: max 1418 PCBC; 75 Raquette R 2 Dec (CD), late for interior.
Mute Swan: pr AP 14 Dec (DCR).
White-winged Scoter: hen CH 1 Feb (TM).
scoter sp.: WC.

Long-tailed Duck: PCBC; WC; drake CH 23 Feb (L&PO).

Barrow's Goldeneye: drake WB 10-11 Jan (GL, JP, DCR); pr Essex 12 Jan (DCR); CH to 29 Feb (EV).

Ruddy Duck: hen Essex 23 Feb (DCR), rarely reported.

Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 wintered Essex (CS); 5 wintered TL village feeders (CD).

Wild Turkey: max 61 SLCBC; total 135 on 4 CBCs.

Red-throated Loon: CH to 8 Dec (MD).

WESTERN GREBE: Gravelly Pt CH 7 Jan (MD), drifting s. 9:15 a.m., 5 hrs. ahead of cold front.

Great Blue Heron: PCBC; Fish Cr FRAN 2 Feb (CD), late.

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 9 WC; 8 L Simond - 2 ads blue color-banded, 1 yellow wing-tagged; 5 Crown Pt 3 Jan (JF); 5 Pt Douglas 27 Jan (JP); Inlet feeder 27 Feb (GL); numerous other reports.

N. Harrier: Plattsburgh 18 Dec (HK), late.

Am. Kestrel: PCBC, late.

Glaucous Gull: 1st winter on ice Willsboro Bay 10 Jan (GL, JP).

BLACK GUILLEMOT: in winter plumage NP 28 Dec (MM), 2nd ESSE & Reg record.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

E. Screech-Owl: 2 FCBC, hard to find here.

Snowy Owl: imm f CH 23-29 Feb (L&PO, EV), only report.

Short-eared Owl: pr CH 27 Feb (NO), one pale, other orange-tinged.

Belted Kingfisher: count week PCBC; 2 ECBC, late.

Black-backed Woodpecker: m Olympic x-c ski center 14 Dec (J&PT); SLCBC; BB 5 Jan (BM); m LL 1 & 16 Feb; 2 drumming LL 29 Feb (JC).

N. Flicker: 4 FCBC; 2 PCBC; 1 ECBC; good numbers.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 8 ECBC; FCBC; SLCBC; 4 other reports.

Gray Jay: usual reports from BB, Bigelow Rd, FB, Oregon Plains Rd; max 9 SLCBC.

Com. Raven: max 31 SLCBC; 18 FCBC in lakeshore corridor; 16 ECBC; PCBC.

Horned Lark: 54 FCBC; 40 Essex 19 Jan

(DCR); 6 Oseetah L 27 Fed (LL).

Boreal Chickadee: BB; Bigelow Rd; Blue Mt L; FB; 16 SLCBC.

Tufted Titmouse: 17 ECBC; 15 FCBC; 7 Port Kent feeder 18 Dec (DCR); 4 Westport 13 Dec (J&PT); 2 PCBC; Wickham Marsh 1 Feb (SS); exceptional numbers.

Carolina Wren: FCBC; count week PCBC; CH Dec-Feb (MD); a strong showing.

E. Bluebird: max 16 PCBC; 4 Essex 23 Feb (DCR); rather scarce.

Am. Robin: max 80 Essex 23 Feb (DCR); 13 Akwesasne late Feb; about 10 other reports.

N. Mockingbird: max 3 PCBC; CH 12 Jan (NO), always a good find.

Bohemian Waxwing: arr Jay 24 Jan (L&PO); max 80 Westport 15 Feb (J&PT) & L Placid 21 Feb (*fide* PO); other flocks AP, Chateaugay, Elizabethtown, Essex, Ticonderoga, Upper Jay, with 75 in Jay 28-29 Feb (JN, EV), a superb showing.

Cedar Waxwing: max 15 ECBC; smaller numbers Chateaugay, Elizabethtown, Essex, Ticonderoga, Westport.

WARBLERS

None.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Song Sparrow: PCBC; FCBC; SLCBC; good finds.

White-throated Sparrow: 2 PCBC; FCBC; SLCBC; good finds.

Dark-eyed Junco: max 193 PCBC; 5 wintered TL feeder (CD) where less expected.

Snow Bunting: 30 CH 8 Dec (NO); 50 Essex 13 Dec (J&PT); 100 FCBC; 60 ECBC; 19 SLCBC; 4 PCBC; 10 TL turkey feeder 19 Dec (CD); 60 Essex 19 Jan (DCR); 50 Keene 8 Feb (J&PT); a good showing.

N. Cardinal: max 89 PCBC; record 26 FCBC; 7 SLCBC; 4 ECBC; good here.

Red-winged Blackbird: 2 FCBC; 2

overwintered L Pleasant (GL); good finds.
BREWER'S BLACKBIRD: TL 31 Dec (CD), at Wild Turkey feeding area.

Com. Grackle: PCBC; Essex 17 Dec (CS); ECBC; 3 SLCBC; a strong showing.

Brown-Headed Cowbird: 40 PCBC; 17 CH 23 Feb (L&PO); only reports but good numbers.

Pine Grosbeak: Heart L Rd; LL; L Placid; Raquette L; Saranac L; a modest showing.

Purple Finch: 18 PCBC; 7 FCBC; 6 SLCBC; largely absent this winter.

House Finch: 56 PCBC; 6 FCBC, 2 CH 11 Dec (NO), one with white head returned for 2nd winter.

Red Crossbill: ad m Indian L 1 Jan (DS); few Olympic x-c senter 21 Jan (J&PT); pr Chilson 11 Feb (DMR); only reports.

White-winged Crossbill: BB & Bigelow Rd 7 Dec (BM); only reports.

Com. Redpoll: max 1019 SLCBC;

widespread and most numerous winter finch; snow-burrowing & tunneling LL feeders.

Hoary Redpoll: reports from Chilson, Essex, Inlet, Jay, L Placid, LL.

Pine Siskin: max 15 PCBC; 6 FCBC; others at Chilson, Jay, Newcomb, Paul Smiths, Port Kent, Saranac L, TL, but in small numbers.

Am. Goldfinch: 386 PCBC; 66 ECBC; 48 FCBC; 22 SLCBC; 140 Essex 19 Jan (DCR); excellent numbers.

Evening Grosbeak: 50-150 LL Dec-Feb (DB); 120 SLCBC; also reported Elizabethtown, Plattsburgh, Paul Smiths, St. Regis Falls, TL; an encouraging showing.

ADDENDUM

Hooded Merganser: max 50 (25 drakes, 25 hens) Lincoln Pd 24 Nov '03 (MG), ESSE record.