

REGION 7 – ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Heavy rain and a tornado hammered northern Franklin and Clinton counties on the evening of 1 June. The tornado touched down at Ft. Covington and Westville, taking down trees and powerlines, with the hamlet of Constable worst hit. Continuing eastward, the tornado finally crossed Route 9 before disappearing as a waterspout over Lake Champlain. Clintonville was hit by 0.25" hailstones on 3 June. Despite Plattsburgh reaching a sweltering 88°F on 8 June, most of the month was cool and rainy. There were 50 mph winds on 31 July, with a possible tornado at Malone. Most of that month was also extremely wet, however, with 7.61" of rain in July. Since normal rainfall is 3.84", this left a surplus of 3.77", the tenth wettest July on record. The rain and cool weather persisted through August, and the season wound up as the coolest summer since 1992.

Atlas 2000 observers faced two major challenges at the beginning of summer: first, a large gap in Regional coverage along the Clinton-Franklin line, with smaller holes down near the Clinton-Essex line and in the vicinity of the Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve in NW Franklin County; second, another large gap in northern Hamilton County, extending up into SW Franklin County. A team of about 14 experienced volunteers, most from the Plattsburgh area, volunteered to tackle the Clinton-Franklin hole of some 27 virgin blocks. By season's end, they had succeeded in covering all but one of these, and that was a block within the Adirondack Park near Ingraham Pond in NE Franklin County, where the only access was blocked by a steel-bar gate. Coverage of the Hamilton-Franklin hole of about 33 virgin blocks was less successful, despite the work of ten volunteers. At the end of the season there were still 21 blocks in this gap that had never been surveyed, largely because of problems with either access or their remoteness. Had only a few of the many visitors to Ferd's Bog offered to explore new areas of Hamilton County, the results might have been better, but, as Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. observed in *Slaughterhouse-Five* or *The Children's Crusade*, "So it goes." By the 15 September deadline for records, there were only 33 of the 690 Region 7 Blocks still lacking any records, thus ~95% with some coverage. But we'd also managed

to get into each of the 182 map squares, so the distribution on the species maps should be fairly representative.

Matt Medler's almost-daily August hikes down to Noblewood Park to check the black sand beaches of the Boquet River delta below Willsboro were extremely productive. Many species seen there, e.g. Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Ring-billed, Herring and Great Black-backed gulls and **Caspian Tern**, came from the nearby Four Brothers just five miles NNE. But he also found a number of other interesting waterbirds and shorebirds. Present daily, Bonaparte's Gull reached a high of 750 birds on 16 August. This was undoubtedly the best spot in NYS to see Little Gull this summer, with 1-2 regularly seen and more than that present based upon age and plumages. There were five pairs of **Caspian Tern** on Four Brothers on 14 June and although their nests reportedly failed in late June, Medler saw an adult flying north with a fish on 31 July and there were up to 11 Caspians present throughout August. Common Terns were at Noblewood Park from 1 August, growing in numbers to 71 by 19 August and a maxima of 92 by 21 August before declining. None appeared to be color-banded, indicating that they didn't originate in the Vermont colonies on Popasquash and Rock islands some 40 miles NNE. Some 16 shorebirds showed up at the mouth of the river, including a **Whimbrel** on 3 August and a **Red-necked Phalarope** on 31 August. Meanwhile, the lakewatch from the Vermont shore spotted a juvenile Parasitic Jaeger five miles south of Four Brothers on 31 August. They also spotted two **Long-tailed Jaegers** in Clinton County waters 24 August, plus another **Long-tailed Jaeger** headed from Vermont to Point au Roche 26 August. Another unexpected marine visitor was a **Black Skimmer** that frequented Westport from 29 June to 3 July.

Other rarities included a **Little Blue Heron** at Bear Pond, Hamilton County, on 22 July. A fortunate Atlas find was a hen **Northern Shoveler** with brood at Akwesasne on the Fourth of July. While visiting Lake Alice WMA in 1999, Tom Barber observed that Red-headed Woodpecker should be found there during Atlas 2000 based upon habitat. This July Nancy Olsen found a pair of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** at Lake Alice, and Marilyn Smith reported the species from the nearby Military Turnpike during the same month. Finally, the most tantalizing sighting of the season was the singing male **Common Redpoll** at Paul Smiths on 5 June, well-seen by Medler and the Thaxtons. Breeding was confirmed during the 1984-89 Québec Atlas at Alma and at Lake Mistigouèche, near the Rimouski Wildlife Reserve, both in 1989, and redpolls breed irregularly on the Magdalen Islands. In the British Isles, Common Redpoll nests throughout Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and to the extreme south coast of England. At least 192 species were reported, the best total of the five years of Atlas 2000. Read and enjoy.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMR – Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve; AP – Ausable Pt WMA; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CR – Chazy Rivers; KB – Kings Bay WMA; LA – L Alice WMA; NP – Noblewood Park; PtR – Pt au Roche SP.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: 5 CR 2 Jul-27 Aug

(BK,CM), present from Apr, summered.

N. SHOVELER: Cook Rd AMR 4 Jul (DN,JP), hen with brood, rare Atlas duck.

Com. Goldeneye: Raquette Ri 3 Jul (JC), hen with 4 yg; Valcour I 17 Jul (NO); good finds.

Hooded Merganser: Burke 5 Jul (DN,JP), hen with brood, north of main range.

Com. Loon: alt NP 25 Jun (MM); Valcour I 17 Jul (NO); 2 alt NP 3 Aug; alt & 2 basic NP 21 Aug (MM); all L Champlain; 2 chicks new Chazy L platform.

Pied-billed Grebe: LA 23 Jun (NO); AMR 3-4 Jul (DN,JP,HW), 2-4 chicks; Military Pd 6 Jul (E&HF); Cedar Ri Flow 26 Jul (GL).

Least Bittern: AMR Jun (HW), always a good find.

Great Egret: NP 25 Jun-29 Aug (MM); max 10 Bombay 4 Jul (DN,JP); CR 19 & 24 Jul (BK,CM); L Clear early Aug (SSL); Plattsburgh 6 Aug (HK); a strong showing here.

SNOWY EGRET: CR 17 Aug (BK,CM), 1st Aug record CLIN.

LITTLE BLUE HERON: ad Bear Pd HAMI 22 Jul (ME), earlier Aug-Sep 1985 CLIN report not accepted by NYSARC.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: AMR, Bombay, prs Cook Rd AMR 4 Jul (DN,JP); juv NP 29 Aug (MM).

HAWKS – ALCIDS

Osprey: 3 yg AP 26 Jul (DR); NP Aug (MM); both L Champlain sites.

Bald Eagle: ad near Lows L nest 20 Jun; imm vs. ad Com. Loon Bog Ri same day (JN); imm Chapman Rd Ft. Covington 6:15 am 4 Jul (DN,JP), just s. of 3 imm on St. Lawrence Ri Québec seen the previous day (HW).

N. Harrier: 5 Bombay, plus singles Burke, Ft. Covington, Moira early Jul (DN,JP), still a fairly common raptor in n. FRAN.

Broad-winged Hawk: dark-morph Jay 25 Jun (PO), body solid chocolate, bib, belly, vent & undertail coverts brown; 12 migrants Jay 31 Aug (PO).

Golden Eagle: Champlain 29 Jul (NO).

Merlin: True Bk Rd CLIN 21 Jul (BK); Mt View Aug (MM); Essex 9 Aug (MM); Hanging Spear Falls 20 Aug (JC); ad m BB 22 Aug (JH,NH,MM); suggests continued spread.

Peregrine Falcon: nest with yg Trout Pd Rd 12 Jun (KL); 1 yg fledged Jay 1 Jul (L&PO).

Virginia Rail: 5 Scotion Cr 18 Jun, with chick 12 Jul (NO); AMR 4 Jul (DN,JP); CR 11 Jul (BK,CM).

Sora: no reports.

Com. Moorhen: KB 19 Jun (BK,CM); ad CR 19 Jul-17 Aug (BK), good finds.

Am. Coot: CR 11 Jul; 2 ad & 3 imm CR 19 Jul; CR 4-27 Aug (BK,CM); the only site.

Black-bellied Plover: arr NP 22 Aug (JH,NH,MM).

Semipalmated Plover: 1-2 NP 3-29 Aug (MM).

Greater Yellowlegs: last CR 8 Jun (BK,CM); arr NP 1 Aug; ad NP 12 Aug (MM).

Lesser Yellowlegs: 2 CR 24 Jun & 11-24 Jul, max 18 CR 24 Jul (BK,CM); 1-2 NP 1-12 Aug (MM).

Upland Sandpiper: CR 8 Jun (BK,CM), only report.

WHIMBREL: NP 3 Aug (MM), 4th ESSE record.

Ruddy Turnstone: arr NP 1 Aug (MM), early ESSE; NP 21 Aug (JH,NH,MM).

Red Knot: arr 4 NP 1 Aug (MM), early ESSE & new county max.

Sanderling: arr 14 NP 31 Jul; 4 NP 12 Aug (MM).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: last CR 8 Jun (BK,CM); arr 2 NP 1 Aug; 3 NP 29 Aug (MM).

Least Sandpiper: arr 4 CR 11-24 Jul (BK,CM); NP 1-29 Aug; max 6 NP 7 Aug (MM).

White-rumped Sandpiper: arr NP 21 Aug (JH,NH,MM), a good find.

Baird's Sandpiper: arr juv NP 14 Aug (MM), early ESSE; NP 26 Aug (LM); max 4 NP 29 Aug (MM), ties county max.

Pectoral Sandpiper: arr NP 21 Aug (JH,NH,MM); 2 juv NP 28 Aug (JH,MM,TM,SO); max 5 juv NP 29 Aug (MM).

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr CR 11 Jul (BK,CM), early.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE: arr NP 31 Aug (DW), spinning & feeding 5:30-6:30 pm, 6th ESSE record.

Parasitic Jaeger: juv 5 mi s. Four Brothers 31 Aug (HK,RL,TM,BP).

LONG-TAILED JAEGER: 2 CLIN 24 Aug, seen from VT; 1 headed w. toward PtR from Bixby I VT 26 Aug (DH).

Little Gull: arr NP 3 Aug (MM); 6 sightings NP 19-28 Aug (MB,JH,NH,LM,MM,TM,SO); max 2 NP 24 Aug (JH,MM) & 2 Pt Kent 27 Aug

(DR), with observations & digital photos suggesting perhaps as many as a half-dozen individuals of this rare transient.

Bonaparte's Gull: arr 96 NP 20 Jul-29 Aug (MM); 50 AP 1 Aug (J&RH); max 750 NP 16 Aug (MM).

CASPIAN TERN: 2-3 CR 1 Jun-24 Jul (BK,CM); 2 AP 1 Aug (J&RH); 5 prs nesting Four Brothers 14 Jun (DH), nests failed late Jun; but 20 sightings NP 25 Jun-29 Aug (MM *et al.*), flying n. with fish 31 Jul (MM), and max 11 NP 21 Aug (JH,NH,MM), all suggestive of site fidelity to islands, if not a second nesting attempt.

Com. Tern: 4 AP 1 Aug (J&RH); NP 1-28 Aug (MM), but present there from 22 May; max 92 (41 ads, 51 juvs) NP 21 Aug (JH,NH,MM), new ESSE max; no color bands noted and nearest VT colonies (and a long-term color-banding project) lie 40 mi NNE of Noblewood.

Black Tern: CR 19 Jun-24 Jul (BK,CM), max 5 & feeding yg 19 Jul.

BLACK SKIMMER: Westport 29 Jun-3 Jul (LM,MM,J&SP,RW,P&PW), 1st Reg 7 & ESSE record and apparently 7th upstate NY record; a dramatic bird.

PIGEONS – WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Sciota 16 Jun (DH); True Bk Rd 7 Jul (BK); good finds.

E. Screech-Owl: Uncas, Raquette L, HAMI 6 Jul (J&PT), where unexpected.

N. Saw-whet Owl: Rand Hill Aug (J&RH), little-known owl CLIN.

Com. Nighthawk: West Chazy 19 Jun (NO), only report.

Whip-poor-will: heard n CLIN (J&RH), only report.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: pr LA Jul (NO); Military Tpk Jul (MS); rare.

Am. Three-toed Woodpecker: Madawaska 6 Jun (BC); f FB 12 Jun-14 Aug (WL) but present from 8 May.

Black-backed Woodpecker: m, f with yg Debar Pd, plus 4 California Rd Duane 7 Jul (DN,JP), 1 m with orange crown;

other reports BB, Bigelow Rd, Bloomingdale, FB, Kempshall Mt, Madawaska, Moose Cr.

FLYCATCHERS – WAXWINGS

Yellow-throated Vireo: 3400' col between Slide & Yard Mts 13 Aug (J&PT), presumed transient.

Philadelphia Vireo: singing m 2500' Hurricane Mt ESSE 6 Jun (J&PT); True Bk Rd 17 Jun-10 Jul (BK,CM), 1st confirmed breeding CLIN; Bog Stream HAMI 24 Jul (JC).

Gray Jay: families California Rd 7 Jul (DN,JP) & BB 26 Jul (EVD), plus sightings Bigelow Rd, FB, Moose Ri Plains.

Horned Lark: Reynolds Rd 9 Jul (NO), only report.

Boreal Chickadee: Bigelow Rd, Bog Stream, FB, Hurricane Mt, Kempshall Mt, Moose Cr, Pillsbury Mt.

Tufted Titmouse: Plattsburgh 14 Jul (BK); feeding yg NP 20 Jul (MM).

Carolina Wren: CH 9 Jul (NO); Willsboro 28-29 Jul (P&PW); CH 8-16 Aug, fl 15 Aug (NP).

Marsh Wren: Scomotion Cr 18 Jun (NO); AMR 4 Jul (DN,JP); nice finds.

Bicknell's Thrush: Ampersand Mt, Hurricane Mt, Pillsbury Mt; none Kempshall Mt 11 Jul (JC).

Swainson's Thrush: singing m 1300' Military Rd CLIN 6 Jul (E&HF), low elevation.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: singing m Ellenburg (J&RH), present from 18 May; singing m Jay 4 Jun (L&PO); silent bird Cook Rd AMR 4 Jul (DM,JP).

N. Parula: Silver L Bog 20 Jul-3 Aug

(BK), late CLIN.

Cape May Warbler: singing m Bigelow Rd 5 Jun (BC), only report.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: imm eating elderberries Keene 9 Jul (J&PT).

Bay-breasted Warbler: Sabattis Bog 27 Jun (BC); ad & 2 juv Paul Smiths 22 Aug (JH,NH,MM); only reports.

Blackpoll Warbler: Hurricane Mt, Kempshall Mt, Pillsbury Mt, undoubtedly many other peaks.

TANAGERS – WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: 2 m Bombay 5 Jul (DN,JP), 1 an orange variant.

Savannah Sparrow: transient NP 26 Aug (JH,MM).

Grasshopper Sparrow: PARC former Plattsburgh AFB 15 Jun (BK,CM).

Lincoln's Sparrow: L Alice 22 Jul (NO); juv Ellenburg (J&RH); both outside core range.

Rusty Blackbird: Vanderwacker Mt 26 Jun (JC).

Red Crossbill: pr Jay 25 Jun (PO); 6 Bog Stream 24 Jul (JC), precursors of a flight?

White-winged Crossbill: Madawaska 6 Jun (BC), ditto?

COM. REDPOLL: singing m Paul Smiths 5 Jun (MM, J&PT), but apparently not sought again.

Pine Siskin: 50-60/day all summer L Placid feeder (LM).

ADDENDUM

Spruce Grouse: hen Bay Pd P Waverly FRAN 27 May 2004 (John Ozard, Angie Ross, Spruce Grouse Survey Team), flushed from nest with six eggs. Notable Species Form, map, photographs submitted to Atlas 2000.