

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Following the passage of the last of Hurricane Katrina on 31 August, most of September was sunny and warm, reaching 86°F at Plattsburgh on the 13th, and Lake Champlain remained just above the 95-ft. level throughout the month. The remnants of Hurricane Ophelia brought much-needed rain on the weekend of 16-18 September, and a strong wind warning was issued for the Adirondacks and Champlain on 29 September. Winds reached 54 mph on the lake and were even stronger at higher elevations; the worst winds to hit the Region since Hurricane Floyd in 1999. This was the 7th warmest September on record, with the average temperature a degree or two above normal. But precipitation fell on only four days at Inlet and was 1/3 below normal along the lake. October

began sunny and hot, with Plattsburgh 80° on the 5th, but the arrival of Tropical Storm Tony on the 7th began 13 straight days of rain that only ended on the 20th. Saranac Lake dropped to 23° by the 21st, followed by 6" of snow at Keene Valley and elsewhere on the 23rd. This was just a prelude to a major Nor'easter on 26 September that left 10" of snow at Ellenburg Depot and two feet on Whiteface Mountain and other High Peaks, downing still-leafy trees and cutting power to 3,300 NYSEG customers. Inlet saw 16 wet days, and all of this precipitation raised Champlain three feet during the month, from 95.22' on the 3rd to 98.54' by the 28th. Rain on 10 November fell as snow at higher elevations. More rain 16-17 November turned to snow at Saranac Lake and Ray Brook, with gusts to 41 mph at Saranac Lake on the 16th. Another Nor'easter on 22 November brought yet more precipitation, with winds to 35 mph, and Champlain stood at an even 99.00" for a gain of almost 4-ft. in little more than a month. Flood stage is the even 100-ft. level. Looking ahead to spring, even a normal runoff from the winter snow pack and expected April showers could easily bring Champlain to flood stage or higher. Although Inlet saw a low of 6° on the 25th, the season ended at a record balmy 68° in the Champlain Valley on the 29th, but with power out in the Lake Placid region due to high winds.

Clinton County enjoyed what one observer there called an embarrassment of riches, and that may have been an understatement. A winter adult **Western Grebe** at Gravelly Point of Cumberland Head on 2 November was followed by a 1st-winter juvenile at the same locale on 28 November, the second differing in its dusky foreneck, which separated the white chin and throat from the white breast, the back and sides a lighter gray. A **Great Cormorant** was spotted from a boat on Cumberland Bay on 5 September, for only the third Regional report, all from Clinton County waters. A juvenile **Red Phalarope** resting on a sandbar at the mouth of the Ausable River on 21 September provided a first county record. On 10 October, a Vermont observer watched a juvenile **Black-legged Kittiwake** fly north between Cumberland Head and Grand Isle, then veer toward Treadwell Bay. The next day, two other Vermont observers saw what may have been the same juvenile or 1st-winter **Black-legged Kittiwake** some 30 mi. to the south off Split Rock Point for a 3rd Essex County record. The following month, on 8 November, the original VT lake-watcher spotted a southbound flock of about 14 **Black Guillemot** (including roughly four immatures) veer west from mid-lake to NY State for quite a while, then fly back into the face of the wind out of the north. Both the kittiwake and guillemots were firsts for Clinton County.

On 13 September, a lone observer visiting the Laurin farm, between the two Chazy rivers, spotted a pipit-sized and shaped bird perched on a fencepost of the pasture. The bird was believed to be an American Pipit until viewed from 75 ft. through a 40x scope. "Its bright yellow undertail coverts guillotined that thought," according to the experienced birder. The crown was darker than its olive-gray back, and the bird had an off-white superciliary stripe that extended well back on the head. The cheek patch below was dark and bordered beneath by the same off-white, a faint malar stripe giving this the appearance of another stripe. Wings were dark with whitish streaks and without prominent wingbars. The rump was slightly lighter olive-gray than the back, the tail dark.

Most prominent feature was the bright yellow undertail coverts, shading gradually lighter until becoming a dull wash at the breast with brownish speckles, giving the appearance of a band of discontinuous streaks across the breast. Flight was undulating. NYSARC has been left the unenviable task of deciding whether to accept this as a first record of **Yellow Wagtail**, a female, for New York State. The observer, who has birded Attu, felt that once all other possibilities were exhausted, this was the only conclusion that could be made.

Birds that would have been especially noteworthy only a few years ago, in some cases only a season or so back, have now become so regular that they're almost expected here: Barrow's Goldeneye, Great Egret, Gyrfalcon, Western Sandpiper, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, and Carolina Wren, to provide but a few examples. Local rarities, like those in Clinton County this season, help continue to keep observers afield and thus sending in reports for a wide variety of species. Other rarities included a **Ross's Goose** at Malone on 18 November, associating not with Snow Geese, but with Canadas. And surprising finds can be made even in the interior of the Adirondacks, as proven by the **Worm-eating Warbler** well-studied at Long Lake on 13 September, only the fourth Regional record since 1979. A total of 172 species were reported, short of last year's record 175, but tying the previous Fall record set just two years ago.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMR - Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve; AP - Ausable Pt WMA; BB - Bloomingdale Bog; CH - Cumberland Head; CP - Crown Pt SHS; CR - Chazy Rivers; GP - Gravelly Pt; LL - Long L; LP - L Placid; MB - Monty's Bay; MRP - Malone Memorial Recreational Pk; NP - Noblewood Pk; PtR Pt au Roche SP; SR - Split Rock Pt; TL - Tupper L; WD - Wilcox Dock; WM - Wickham Marsh; WRS - Webb Royce Swamp.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr 2 Plattsburgh 23 Sep (EF); 10,000 PtR 29 Oct (JH,BK,CM,MM); max 20,000 CR 7 Nov (DR); 2,000 over LL 25 Nov (WL), record max HAMI; 1000s MRP Sep - 21 Nov draw down; 3 "Blues" MRP 5 Nov; 2 "Blues" MRP 18 Nov (JT); some "Blues" among 4,000 PtR 30 Nov (NO).

ROSS'S GOOSE: MRP 18 Nov (JT); among Canada Geese, but separate from 100s of Snow Geese, 1st FRAN record.

Cackling Goose: 2 "Richardson's" PtR 29 Oct (JH,BK,CM,MM).

Canada Goose: 500-1000 NP 16-23 Sep (MM, J&PT); 1000s MRP thru.

Brant: 30 CR 20 Oct (MM); Pt Kent 6-8 Nov (JN,DR), scarce here.

Am. Black Duck: one with teal/turquoise speculum, lighter head WD 9 Sep (J&RH).

Blue-winged Teal: Inlet golf course 14 Oct (GL), shot.

N. Pintail: max 10 SR 20 Oct; drake CR 5 Nov (MM).

Green-winged Teal: 1-3 NP 6 Sep & 29 Oct (JH,MM); 4 AP 14 Oct (EF); max 6 WM 8 Nov (L&PO), good finds.

Redhead: arr 3 WD 10 Oct (BK); max 7 AP 24 Oct (DR).

Ring-necked Duck: max 72 Moody Pd 10-12 Nov (TM).

Greater Scaup: max 60 AP 24 Oct (DR).

Lesser Scaup: max 500 AP 24 Oct (DR).

Surf Scoter: arr 9 Mirror L 9 Oct (LM); ad drake SR 20 Oct (MM); 2-3 NP 20-29 Oct (JH,MM), good finds.

White-winged Scoter: arr 24 Mirror L 9 Oct (LM); max 20 SR 20 Oct (MM); 1-11 NP 20 Oct-28 Nov (JH,MM,PO); 7 GP 4 Nov (DH,BK), also good.

Black Scoter: arr 16 Mirror L 9 Oct (LM); max 25 NP 9 Oct (MM); NP 29 Oct-28 Nov (JH,MM,PO), completes the sweep.

Long-tailed Duck: arr 4 GP 4 Nov (BK); max 8 NP 5 Nov (JH,MM);

NP 8 & 28 Nov (L&PO); 2 AP-Pt Kent 14 Nov (DR), uncommon here.

Barrow's Goldeneye: drake arr NP 5 Nov (JH,MM), early ESSE & ties early NYS arrival set in CLIN; remained NP to 13 Nov.

Red-breasted Merganser: 3 CH 7 Nov (BK), only report.

Wild Turkey: max 32 Inlet feeder (GL); 23 Owls Head 12 Nov (JT), FRAN record high.

Red-throated Loon: GP 17 Oct-28 Nov (BK,CM); NP 29 Oct-5 Nov (JH,MM), always welcome.

Com. Loon: ad feeding chick Lower Sister L 14 Oct (GL), late; Adk Coop Loon Proj transmitter on loon L Colby 12 Nov (TD); max ~295 southbound SR 23 Nov (TGM,PR), ESSE record high; 65 Mt View L 8 Nov (MT); 12 adjoining Indian L same day (JT), FRAN record high.

Pied-billed Grebe: downy chick CR 3 Sep (NO); last 3 AP-Pt Kent 14 Nov (DR).

Horned Grebe: arr NP 9 Oct; max 70 NP 5 Nov (JH,MM), ties ESSE record high.

Red-necked Grebe: basic ad LP 3-10 Sep (AH,LM); CH 13 Oct (BK,CM); LP 15 Oct (LM); 7 Coll Bay 29 Oct (JP,J&PT,YT); Indian L 8 Nov (JT); max 11 Coll Bay 13 Nov (JH,MM); Whallon's Bay 28 Nov (PO), a strong showing.

WESTERN GREBE: basic ad GP 2 Nov (BK,CM), 1st CLIN record; GP 28 Nov (J&RH,BK,CM), 2nd CLIN record.

GREAT CORMORANT: ad Cumberland Bay 5 Sep (HK), viewed from boat, headed toward VT, 3rd Reg & CLIN record.

Double-crested Cormorant: ad Owls Head 1 Sep (JT); L Colby 12 Nov (TM), unusual inland, with only 28 records FRAN since 1879; last MB 13 Nov (BK,CM).

Great Egret: Bulwagga Bay 19 Sep (BJ); 2 Bulwagga Bay 26 Sep (J&SP); Paradox L 2 Oct (C&JH), 2 AMR 18 Oct (HW), a strong fall showing.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Red-tailed Hawk: max 50 migrants Jay 17, 20 Oct (PO); 30 migrants Crow Hill, Indian L 21 Oct (JE,M&WM), new max HAMI.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr Jay 10 Oct (PO).

Golden Eagle: Phelps Mt summ 30 Sep (J&PT); 6 migrants Jay 10 Oct-26 Nov (PO); subad Westport 29 Oct (JP,J&PT,YT), a strong showing.

Merlin: BB 10 Oct (MAM); also 1-2 Jay Oct (PO).

Peregrine Falcon: AMR 5 Sep (BG); Cascade Mt Sep (LM); injured imm eating Ring-billed Gull Skyway Plaza, Plattsburgh early Sep (NO), taken in for rehab 22 Sep (DF,CM), transported to Cornell for surgery; 2 Phelps Mt 30 Sep (J&PT); transient Jay Oct (PO).

Gyr Falcon: arr gray-phase Phelps Mt 30 Sep (J&PT), close, right over the summit, early & 12th ESSE record.

Sora: juv CR 3 Sep (N0), excellent sighting.

Com. Moorhen: 1-2 CR 13, 23 Sep (BK,CM), only site.

Am. Coot: WD 13 Nov (TM,JP), only report.

Black-bellied Plover: arr NP 16 Sep (MM); NP 8-22 Oct (JH,MM,DR).

Semipalmated Plover: MB 1 Sep (BK,CM); NP 3-24 Sep (MM); PtR 12 Oct (BK,CM).

Greater Yellowlegs: 2 NP 6 Sep (MM); CR 23 Sep (BK,CM); AP 29 Oct (JH,MM); CR 1 Nov (BK), fairly late.

Lesser Yellowlegs: CR 1-3 Sep (BK,NO,CM), only site.

Sanderling: AP 6 Sep (J&RH); NP 3-11 Sep (MM).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 4 MB 1 Sep (BK,CM).

Western Sandpiper: MB 1 Sep (BK,CM), a nice find.

Least Sandpiper: 18 MB 1 Sep (BK,CM), good number.

Pectoral Sandpiper: CR 14 Sep (SJ,BK), only report.

Dunlin: NP 8, 22 Oct (JH,MM).

Am. Woodcock: Lewis 25 Oct (KL), in snowstorm; Peru 30 Nov (EF),

in wet field.

RED PHALAROPE: imm AP 21 Sep (BK,CM), on sandbar at mouth of Ausable R, 1st CLIN & 5th Reg record.

Parasitic Jaeger: 2 off Schuyler I, ESSE 5 Sep (DR), harassing gulls.

Little Gull: basic ad NP 3 Sep; basic ad & 2nd winter NP 24 Sep; molting ad NP 25 Sep (MM); ad CH 31 Oct (BK,CM); ad Essex 9 Nov (WC); ad AP 11 Nov (BK,CM), unprecedented here.

Bonaparte's Gull: max 1,500+ off Coll Bay 12 Nov (J&PT), Reg & ESSE record; others AP, NP, Pt Kent, Westport, WM.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: juv mid-L Champlain, VT 9 Oct (DH), on 10 Oct flew n between CH & Grand Isle, then veered to Treadwell Bay at 7:50 am, 1st CLIN record; juv or 1st winter SR 11 Oct (RL,TGM), perhaps same bird, 3rd ESSE & 4th Reg record.

Caspian Tern: 12 NP 2 Sep (J&PT); max 17 ads NP 3 Sep to 2 NP 16 Sep (MM), late ESSE.

Com. Tern: MB 1 Sep (BK,CM); 15 ads & imm NP 3 Sep, 2 with metal bands; max 46 NP 16 Sep; 2 NP 26 Sep (MM), 1st yr SR 28 Oct (JH,RL,TGM, *et al*), record late Reg & ESSE.

BLACK GUILLEMOT: ~14 (~10 ad, 4 imm) CH 8 Nov (DH), flying s midlake past Grand Isle on n wind, then turned w and flew to NY, apparently to avoid L Champlain ferry, 1st CLIN & 3rd Reg record, good details to NYSARC.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: CR 18 Nov (DL); Norman Ridge, St. Armand 19 Nov (MA), may bode well.

Short-eared Owl: CH 25 Nov (NO), twice flew 3' over obs at dusk.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: LL 7 Oct (*fide* JC), feeding on impatiens before snowstorm, late HAMI; Plattsburgh 25 Oct (HB), late Reg & CLIN.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: imm NP 3 Sep (MM), 11th ESSE record.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: LL

5 Nov (RK), late HAMI.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Cascade Mt, FB, Madawaska, Whiteface Mt.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: arr AP 11 Oct (E&HF), early CLIN; later at BB, Jay, Inlet, Peru, Stetson Rd.

Gray Jay: BB, FB, LL, Madawaska.

Com. Raven: max ~100 Jay Range 29 Oct (PO), in display flights.

Horned Lark: "Northern" arr 6 Rt 37 Malone 18 Nov (JT); Inlet 21 Nov (GL); 7 Essex 28 Nov (PO); 12 PtR 20 Nov (MAM,ET), all 4 counties.

Tree Swallow: 2 CR 13 Nov - CR 30 Nov (BK,CM), late CLIN.

swallow (sp.): 2 PtR 8 Nov (L&PO), plump-bodied with blunt wings & tails, also late.

Boreal Chickadee: BB, Cascade-Porter col, Henderson L, Hurricane Mt, LL, McNaughton Mt, Nundagao Ridge, Phelps Mt.

Tufted Titmouse: Elizabethtown, Jay, NP, Peru, TL, & Ticonderoga now expected; but Henderson L, Newcomb 2 Oct (JN) noteworthy.

Carolina Wren: ad banded Elizabethtown 1 Sep (JP), returned 29 Oct & 16 Nov; L Placid 22 Nov (LL); Moriah Center 24 Nov (TS), outstanding.

Sedge Wren: FL CR 9 Sep (BK,CM), excellent Atlas record.

European Starling: max 21,000 Plattsburgh 3 Sep (DR), on Rt 9 TV towers & guy wires, Reg & CLIN record high.

YELLOW WAGTAIL: f CR 13 Sep (BK), the obs. leaving what he believes he saw to the judicious minds at NYSARC.

Am. Pipit: arr CR 3 Sep (NO); max 10 CR 23 Sep (BK,CM); NP 24 Sep & 8 Oct (MM), all pipits and not wagtails.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: CH 15 Sep (SJ,BK), late CLIN & still a rare find here.

Palm Warbler: "Yellow" Mt Adams

trail 30 Sep (TB); presumed "Yellow" BB 8 Oct (BM); "Western" LL 10 Oct (JC).

WORM-EATING WARBLER: LL 13 Sep (PG), observed carefully for 1.5 hr, 1st HAMI & 4th Reg record.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

E. Towhee: Plattsburgh feeder 15 Nov (TS), late.

Am. Tree Sparrow: arr Inlet 12 Oct (GL), early HAMI.

Field Sparrow: Peru feeder 26-29 Oct (E&HF), only report.

Vesper Sparrow: Essex 29 Oct (JP,J&PT,YT), only report.

Fox Sparrow: arr Jay & TL 11 Oct; Inlet 13 Oct (GL), early HAMI; Elizabethtown 29 Oct; 3 TL 31 Oct.

White-throated Sparrow: "scores" CP 15 Oct (JH,MM); Inlet feeder to 12 Nov (GL).

White-crowned Sparrow: arr BB 8 Oct; max 20 Keene 14 Oct; last Elizabethtown 23 Oct; others CP, Inlet, Jay, LL, L Placid, Peru, TL, a strong showing.

Snow Bunting: arr 2 NP 20 Oct (DR); thereafter Chilson, Essex, Jay, Gabriels, L Durant, L Placid, Malone, Plattsburgh, TL, & Vermontville, but largest flock only 35.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Cook Mt 9 Oct (NC), record late ESSE.

Red-winged Blackbird: max 80 Whallonsburg 13 Nov (TM,JP); 20 LL 25 Nov (WL), late for such numbers.

Rusty Blackbird: CP 15 Oct (JH,MM), only report.

Com. Grackle: max 50 Jay 22 Oct (PO); 2 L George 24 Nov (NC); 4 LL 25 Nov (WL), ties late HAMI departure date.

Brown-headed Cowbird: 2 LL 25 Nov (WL), quite late in HAMI.

Purple Finch: many Elizabethtown, L Placid, and elsewhere into October, but increasingly scarce to absent thereafter.

Red Crossbill: Rand Hill, CLIN 7 Oct (J&RH), only report.

Com. Redpoll: arr 2 Jay 18 Nov (L&PO).

Pine Siskin: ~50 L Placid feeder Sep-Oct; a few Elizabethtown early Nov, then scarce to absent; 6 Chasm Falls 18 Nov, last report.

Am. Goldfinch: ~50 L Placid Sep-Oct; 26 banded Elizabethtown 1 Nov, but then scarcer.

Evening Grosbeak: max 24 Inlet 19 Nov (GL); others BB, Elizabethtown, Jay, Peru, Redford, TL, but nowhere abundant.