

REGION 7 - ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The first half of the season was generally pleasant, with Lake Champlain continuing its summer decline, from 96.78' on 1 September to a low of 95.38' on 17 October. The first frost hit Saranac Lake on 11 September, with a low of 27°, and later in the month winds there reached 45 mph on the 24th. Plattsburgh was a balmy 63° on 2 October, but Inlet had snow on the 5th, and higher elevations like Azure Mt. saw another dusting of snow on the 13th. Conditions changed at mid-month, with 0.54" of rain at Saranac Lake on the 18th, followed by 3" of snow at Duane and rain elsewhere on 20 October. Depending upon elevation, rain or snow dominated the remainder of the season, with 22 inches of snow on the ground at Inlet by 29 October. Although much of November was warm, with Plattsburgh hitting 62° on the 9th, Saranac Lake received another 1.23" of rain on the 11th. The autumn rains and melting snow raised Champlain to a seasonal high of 98.10" on 19 November. The end of the month was unseasonably warm, with Elizabethtown hitting 53° on the 29th, but the lake level was 97.50', higher than at the start of the season.

Geese, diving ducks, and grebes were present in good numbers and variety. Eagles and falcons appeared to be doing well, and seven reports of Golden Eagle were especially encouraging. Moorhens were unusually successful breeders this

year, with young found in several places. At least three different broods were present on the Laurin Farm at Chazy Rivers. Migrant shorebirds were scarce, with even some fairly common species represented by only a single report, and numbers were similarly low, despite the continuing drop in the lake level prior to mid-October. A jaeger, gulls, and terns provided a few highlights. Most boreal birds were found where expected but with a few surprises. Tufted Titmouse and Carolina Wren continued to be found in good numbers and new places, with the wren penetrating the central Adirondacks at Long Lake this fall. American Pipit on Noonmark Mt. followed the reports of previous autumns from the summits of Cascade, East Dix, Marcy, Rocky Peak, Skylight, and Whiteface; clearly the alpine zone that resembles tundra is an attraction. Numbers of migrant northern warblers and sparrows were modest, but Rusty Blackbird and Common Grackle were abundant at times.

The wild food crop was judged excellent. By late November, White-winged Crossbills were feeding on tamarack cones, and all conifers except white pine were loaded with a variety of cones to support any invasion of winter finches that might occur. Yellow birch and striped maple were loaded with seeds, the remaining American beech not killed by the blight produced a heavy nut crop, and American mountain ash were weighted with berries. Despite the full larder, most finches were widely scattered and sparse, as were frugivorous species such as bluebirds, robins, and waxwings. Reports of both crossbills, however, lent hope for the winter to come.

The total of 173 species surpassed the counts of 2003 and 2005 by 1, but fell just short of the record 175 located in 2004. All of the notable rarities came from the Champlain shoreline: **Western Grebe** swimming at Port Kent, **Great Cormorant** southbound at Cumberland Head, **Snowy Egret** lingering on the Laurin Farm at Chazy Landing, a juvenile **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at the same farm, **Parasitic Jaeger** flying south off the north mouth of the Ausable River, a juvenile **Sabine's** Gull near Mullen Bay in Moriah, **Fish Crow** chasing a Rough-legged Hawk in Essex, and **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Ausable Marsh State Wildlife Management Area. Note also the number of record-early county arrivals and departures. A Northern Shrike at Westville on 28 September not only set a new early arrival date for Franklin County, but also New York State, and six other northern species arrived early in a given county. Late county departure records were set for another 19 species, strongly suggestive of the influence of global warming. Since records in *The Kingbird* date back 56 years, to 1950, and county records have been well-maintained since the early 1970s (with those of all four counties now published), to see 26 old records broken in an otherwise unremarkable season is quite striking and noteworthy. We urge observers to continue to submit seasonal lists of all species seen—providing numbers, places, and dates—and not simply report highlights on Northern New York Birds, a growing trend.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AMR - Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve; AP - Ausable Pt; BB - Bloomingdale Bog; CH - Cumberland Head; Cr - Chazy Rivers; CRF - Cedar R Flow; FB - Ferd's Bog; IL - Indian L, Franklin Co.; LL - Long L; LP - L Placid; MRP - Malone Rec Pk; NP - Noblewood Pk; PtR - Pt au Roche; SB - Sabattis Bog; SPB - Spring Pond Bog; TL - Tupper L; WB - Whallon's Bay; WD - Wilcox Dock, Plattsburgh.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: arr 15 CH 14 Sep (BK); snow/blue intergrade PtR 14 Sep (BK,CM); 3 MRP 25 Sep (TW), early FRAN; 600 Noonmark Mt 20 Nov (ET), one blue; still 1000s MRP thru (JT).

Brant: arr 20 CH 10 Oct (BK,CM), early CLIN; 50 Sagamore 10 Nov; Seventh L Mt 20 Nov (GL); 3 TL 21 Nov (CD), excellent showing.

Gadwall: BB 4 Sep (J&PT); CR 14 Nov (BK), good finds.

Am. Wigeon: 2 CR 15 Nov (BK), only report.

Ring-necked Duck: max 233 Moody Pd 27 Oct (LM).

Greater Scaup: arr NP 13 Nov (ET); max 1500 NP 27 Nov (L&PO), ESSE record.

Lesser Scaup: arr 100+ NP 13 Nov (ET) to 27 Nov (JP,ET).

Surf Scoter: arr 5 WB 7 Oct (WR); 2 hens LL 14 Oct (JE,PH,MM), early HAMI; WB 15& 21 Oct (J&PT); f WB 27 Nov (L&PO); IL 27 Nov (JT), late FRAN, a good showing.

White-winged Scoter: arr 3 IL 3 Oct (JT); max 65 NP 13 Nov (ET); 36 IL 27 Nov; 2 pr there to 30 Nov (JT).

Black Scoter: arr Pt Kent 29 Oct (DR); max 4 NP 13 Nov (ET); 2 NP 27 Nov (L&PO); IL 27 Nov (JT), late FRAN.

Long-tailed Duck: arr 4 NP 13 Nov (ET); CH 22 Nov (NO); 3 NP 27 Nov (L&PO); IL 27 Nov (JT), late FRAN.

Com. Goldeneye: max 5000 NP 27 Nov (L&PO), ESSE record.

Barrow's Goldeneye: ad drake arr NP 13 Nov (ET), early ESSE.

Wild Turkey: max 50 Seventh L Mt 20 Nov (GL).

Red-throated Loon: arr 3 CH 8 Sep (EB,MD), early CLIN; CH 22 Sep (BK).

Pied-billed Grebe: FY CR 1 Sep (BK); 2 AP 30 Nov (J&RH) & 2 WD 30 Nov (NO), fairly late.

Horned Grebe: arr AP & Mirror L 22 Oct (BK,CM,LM); max 30 NP 6 Nov (ET).

Red-necked Grebe: arr 6 LP 27 Oct (LM); Pt Kent 30 Oct-5 Nov (DR); NP 6-13 Nov (ET); Essex 18 Nov (EDT); Coll Bay 19

Nov (J&PT); AP 27 Nov (BK,CM); max 4 WB 27 Nov (L&PO), an excellent showing.

WESTERN GREBE: Pt Kent 29-30 Oct (DR), long, thin neck, white foreneck down to & including visible breast, with ad & 1st yr Red-necked Grebes for comparison.

GREAT CORMORANT: imm CH 6 Sep (BK,CM!), southbound, 3rd CLIN & Regional record.

Am. Bittern: AMR 2 Oct (HW), late FRAN.

Least Bittern: AP 22 Oct (J&PT), close view.

Great Egret: max 4 CR 1 Sep (BK); AMR 4&20 Oct (HW), late FRAN.

SNOWY EGRET: CR 1 Sep (BK), present from 31 Jul.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: AMR 20 Sep (HW), late FRAN.

Turkey Vulture: max 32 Jay 5 Oct (PO,NW), 20 in one kettle, high ESSE; AMR 23 Oct (HW), late FRAN.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 3 Jay 10 Sep, singles LL, Noonmark Mt, NP, WM, now normal numbers.

Rough-legged Hawk: arr Townsend Rd, T Bombay 3 Oct (DW), early FRAN.

Golden Eagle: arr Jay 6 Oct (PO); Wadhams 29 Oct (J&PT); Brown's Tract 3 Nov (SF); Pillsbury Mt 10 Nov (TS); BB 18 Nov (J&PT); Noonmark Mt 20 Nov (ET); Essex 30 Nov (MM), greatly encouraging.

Merlin: 2 Jay 10 Sep (PO); L Clear 17 Sep (BC); family Plattsburgh 18 Sep (TA); Paul Smiths 19 Sep (WR); AP 22 Sep (EF); BB 11 Nov (J&PT), increasingly common.

Peregrine Falcon: Pok-o-Moonshine 7 Sep (MM); 2 Jay 5 Oct (PO,NW); Jay 6 Oct (PO).

Com. Moorhen: 2 ads, 3 groups of chicks CR 1 Sep (BK); 3 imm AP 15 Sep (BK,CM); 3 juv PtR 22 Sep (HK), a successful season.

Am. Coot: 1-2 WD 13-30 Nov (BK,C&JM,NO), only site.

Black-bellied Plover: CR 13 Oct (BK), only fall report.

Semipalmated Plover: CR 2 Sep (BK,CM); max 6 NP 7 Sep (J&PT).

Greater Yellowlegs: 4 AP 22 Oct (BK,CM), only report.

Lesser Yellowlegs: CR 2&4 Sep (BK,CM), only report.

Solitary Sandpiper: CR 4 Sep (BK), sole sighting.

Spotted Sandpiper: CH 18 Oct (BK), late CLIN.

Sanderling: 4 CR 1 Sep (BK); max 6 CR 2 Sep (BK,CM); 2 NP 1-3 Sep (JH,MDM,J&PT).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 4 CR 2-4 Sep (BK,CM).

Least Sandpiper: 8 CR 2 Sep (BK,CM), low.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 9 AP 22 Oct (BK,CM), good, but only report.

Dunlin: Monty's Bay 18 Oct (BK,CM), same.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER: juv CR [Laurin Farm] 1 Sep (BK!), 3rd CLIN & 4th Regional record, a great find.

Short-billed Dowitcher: CR 2 Sep (BK,CM); NP 13 Nov (ET), late ESSE & Reg 7.

Wilson's Snipe: LL 11 Nov (JC), late HAMI.

PARASITIC JAEGER: intermediate phase AP 7 Sep (BK,CM!), offshore N mouth Ausable R.

Little Gull: ad NP 2 Sep (JH,MDM); ad CH 17 Oct (CM), both nice finds.

Bonaparte's Gull: 300 NP 1 Sep (J&PT); max 982+ NP 3 Sep (JH,MDM), declining to 3 NP 13 Nov (ET); 70 Coll Bay 12 Nov (J&PT); AP 30 Nov (J&RH).

SABINE'S GULL: juv mid-lake near Mullen Bay, Moriah 23 Sep (RB,JL,TM,HR!), viewed from Oven Pt, VT, 3rd ESSE & Reg record, details to NYSARC.

Caspian Tern: 6 CR 1-4 Sep (BK); NP 1-7 Sep; max 26 CR 2 Sep (JH,MDM).

Com. Tern: 3 NP 1 Sep (J&PT); max 20 NP 2 Sep (JH,MDM); last NP 7 Oct (WR), late ESSE.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Rand Hill 5 Oct (PG), window-kill, late CLIN and Region 7.

E. Screech-Owl: Elizabethtown 1 Sep (J&PT), rarely reported.

Snowy Owl: arr CR 15 Nov (BK), moving to nearby Pt au Fer 16-17 Nov, then back to CR 22 Nov thru, but presumed to be same owl.

Com. Nighthawk: Essex 1 Sep; Keene 3 Sep (J&PT, rather sparse).

Belted Kingfisher: Fifth L 27 Nov (GL), late HAMI.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Bigelow Rd, Duck Hole, LL, N-P Trail, known spots.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: Inlet 3 Nov (GL), late HAMI.

N. Shrike: arr imm Westville 28 Sep (HW), early NYS, Region 7, & FRAN record by 8

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days; Keene 29 Oct (J&PT); FB 3 Nov (SF).

Blue-headed Vireo: T Franklin 28 Oct (MDM,WO), late FRAN.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Keene 6 Sep (J&PT), late ESSE.

Gray Jay: BB, Bigelow Rd, FB, LL, Madawaska, SPB expected sites; Keene 10 Sep (J&PT), singing; Jay mid-Sep (PO), with Blue Jay; Paul Smiths VIC mid-Nov (LW), at feeders, less expected.

FISH CROW: Essex 29 Oct (J&PT), chasing light-phase Rough-legged Hawk, 2nd ESSE & 5th Region 7 record.

Com. Raven: NP 2 Oct (BM), Boquet R delta on L Champlain.

Horned Lark: max 200+ Essex 21 & 29 Oct (J&PT).

N. Rough-winged Swallow: CRF 6 Sep (GL), late HAMI.

swallow (sp.): Jay 26 Oct (PO), silhouette plump, broad-winged, flight level, wingbeat deliberate.

Boreal Chickadee: BB; FB, LL, Oregon Plains; SB; SPB, expected locales.

Tufted Titmouse: max 4 Elizabethtown feeder 25 Nov (JP); also 2 AP; 2 CH; Essex; Mineville; NP; Ticonderoga.

Carolina Wren: LL 3 Sep-28 Oct (WL), 2nd HAMI record; 2 Cook Mt 8 Sep-20 Nov (NC); CH 17 Sep (BK,CM); 2 CH 15-30 Oct (NO), as invasion continues

Gray-cheeked Thrush: TL 5 Oct (CD), "larger than other thrushes," late FRAN.

Swainson's Thrush: TL 5 Oct (CD), late.

Am. Robin: max 300+ Jay 26 Oct (PO); 200 Brown's Tract 3 Nov (SF), max HAMI.

Am. Pipit: 2 Noonmark Mt 24 Oct (ET), 7th ESSE peak with a fall report.

WARBLERS

Cape May Warbler: Blueberry Mt 3 Sep (DD), only report.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: m Keene 16 Oct (J&PT), late ESSE.

Black-throated Green Warbler: Keene 18 Nov (J&PT), late ESSE & Region 7.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: AP 15 Nov (BM,JS), possibly same warbler there next day (J&RH), 2nd CLIN & 4th Regional record.

Palm Warbler: "Western" Salmon R, LL 4 Sep (JC); Jay 5 Oct (PO); Madawaska 9 Oct (MS).

Wilson's Warbler: BB 3 Sep (BM), only report.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Fox Sparrow: Bigelow Rd 9 Oct (MS); TL 13-30 Oct (CD); Keene 30 Oct (J&PT), sparse.

White-crowned Sparrow: max 12 Jay 5 Oct (PO) & TL 23 Oct (CD); other Oct reports Elizabethtown, LL, Westport, a good showing.

Snow Bunting: arr 25 Newcomb 12 Nov (ER); 3 NP 13 Nov; max 120 Essex 13 Nov (ET).

Rusty Blackbird: transient TL 2 Oct (CD), in hedge; many migrants Drum St, AMR 4 Oct (HW); 50+ AP 16 Oct (BK,CM).

Com. Grackle: 1000s flying w Rand Hill, CLIN 25 Sep (J&RH); 300+ Jay 26 Oct (PO), high numbers.

Red Crossbill: CRF 6 Sep (GL); L Clear 17 Sep (BC); flocks Sagamore 10 Nov; Moose R 19 Nov (GL); SB 24 Nov (JC), suggestive of invasion.

White-winged Crossbill: 8 Long Pd & 11 Osgood Pd 7 Oct (BM); SB 22 Nov & 15 Little TL 24 Nov (CD), feeding on tamarack cones & similarly encouraging.

EXOTIC

ORANGE-CHEEKED WAXBILL

(*Estrilda melpoda*): Peru, CLIN 22-24 Sep (E&HF), 16 Oct (EF); native of Africa (including Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Zambia), popular cage bird.

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