

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Except for two minor snowstorms, the first week of March was uneventful, but snow resumed late on the 7th and by the following day had turned to freezing rain, sleet, and then more rain that began to freeze. Branches cracked, trees crashed, and lines broke, leaving 30,000 across the Region without power and many residences without telephone service. The Ice Storm of '08 was not as severe as the Great Ice Storm of '98, but the impact on both humans and birds was considerable. Power was restored within five days, but some residents were without telephone/internet service for ten. Winter snowfall in the Champlain Valley had reached 112" by 12 March, 45" above the average of 67", and the surface was now covered by a thick layer of ice. One wildlife rehabilitator in Chazy took in five Barred Owls, which were held for banding and not released until 14-18 April when the ice and snow cover had melted, but many more owls may have succumbed to the elements. A windstorm 21 March brought renewed power outages. Weather for the remainder of the season was rather anticlimactic. April Fool's Day saw winds reach 60 mph, and a heat wave 18-22 April saw temperatures in the 80s for five days, reaching 82° at Westport on the 21st. May was largely sunny, cool, and windy, and, although the Central Adirondacks saw some heavy rains, the only noteworthy rain in the Champlain Valley fell on the morning of the 15th, followed by sun showers 21-23 May. A deluge then closed the season, with 1" hailstones drumming on Clinton County on the afternoon of 31 May.

Lake Champlain stood at 97.33' on 1 March and had returned to exactly the same level by 31 May, but rose above the 100' flood stage between 13 April and 6 May, following spring runoff in the mountains, and reached a peak of 100.75' from 22-25 April. As the waters receded in May, beaches were covered with dead alewives, which arrived in the lake only two years ago, and mudflats were covered with shorebirds. More than 45,000 Snow Geese gathered in huge flocks from Point au Roche to the Chazy Riverlands by 25 March, feeding and flying, carpeting at least nine extensive fields, and clouding the sky—a new spring maxima for the county and Region, although short of the 57,000 seen in the same vicinity 13 November 2002 [*The Kingbird* 53:1, p. 75]. The farmland between the Little and Great Chazy rivers, much of it flooded during the April thaw, also attracted a rich mix of waterfowl, the first Gray Partridge in five years, Great Egret, Common Moorhen, Bonaparte's Gull, and Caspian and Common terns. As the lake fell, the 13 shorebird species included the third Clinton County record of **Marbled Godwit** on 17 and 21 May, as well as a male **Wilson's Phalarope**—the first in six years—on 16 May.

The Crown Point banding station was in operation for the 33rd consecutive

season between 9 and 26 May. With no major fronts to ground migrants and the migration of many passerines running late, a relatively low total of 384 birds of 51 species was banded, including just 13 species of warblers versus the record 23 warblers in 2007. These included, however, a half-dozen “Western” Palm Warbler plus Blackpoll and Wilson’s warblers. There was also a record 45 returns of a dozen species banded at Crown Point in previous years, the oldest a Common Grackle now six years, 11 months old. Species seen or heard but not banded, include: a late Snow Goose, nesting Osprey, seven migrant Bald Eagle, calling Whip-poor-will, and leucistic American Robin. Four OPR & HP staff members from Albany paid an on-site visit and met with representatives of the Crown Point Banding Association to discuss control of invasive species, notably Common Buckthorn, in the vicinity of the banding station. Since 1976, a total of 14,982 birds of 98 species plus four subspecies and hybrids has been banded at the State Historic Site.

A major criterion for naming Crown Point SHS not only an Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) but also a New York State Bird Conservation Area (BCA) was the congregations of birds at the tip of Crown Point peninsula. Under one set of criteria, these consist of at least 2,000 waterfowl, including such birds as cormorants. Large numbers of Double-crested Cormorants have gathered on the west spit in Bulwagga Bay for many years, nesting there in 2000 (31 nests), ‘01 (24 nests), ‘02 (three nests), and ‘03 (16 nests), an apparent result of the onset of “control” operations in Vermont. There has been no subsequent nesting attempted for five years. On 12 May there were 160 cormorants sunning on the spit and diving for invasive alewives, while Turkey Vultures and Common Grackles cleaned the beaches of dead fish. At 9:10 a.m. the following day, a DEC boat arrived and two men began shooting. They killed a reported 69 cormorants, both adults and subadults, on 13 May, collecting carcasses in large bags. The DEC returned for longer periods on following days, their heavy shotgun fire difficult to explain to groups of adjudicated youth visiting the banding station on 16 May and sixth graders on 21 May. Radio conversation between boats about the shooting of “hangers” and “flopplers,” cripples in trees and on the water, followed by shots, was clearly overheard on the banding station sport radios by the students until the banders advised the Department staff to switch channels. Adult visitors were astounded to hear the steady shooting and learn that the killing of these native birds was allowed on an IBA and BCA. On 20 May the number of cormorants gathered at the spit had reached 200, and by late May the sight of birds flying east to Vermont signaled the pending arrival by boat of the DEC across Bulwagga Bay and commencement of the day’s shooting. Similar “control” shooting continued in Vermont during May, and the DEC planned a big cormorant shoot on The Four Brothers bird sanctuary, another Audubon IBA, during Summer ‘08 as well as oiling eggs there.

Elsewhere, and ending on a happier note, there was a Cackling Goose at Cumberland Head, gray-phase **Gyr Falcon** at Cumberland Head, Gray Partridge

near Bangor and North Bangor, a rarely reported Long-eared Owl calling at Saranac Lake, Golden-winged Warbler at Spring Pond Bog, **Henslow's Sparrow** at Owls Head, and several further reports of "Greater" Redpoll (*C.f. rostrata*) at Cumberland Head and Elizabethtown during the redpoll invasion of 2007-08. There were also some interesting American Robins studied at Crown Point, Plattsburgh, and Point au Fer. A total of 205 species was reported, fewer than last year's 214 and well short of the 1997 record of 219 species.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt; CH – Cumberland Head; CP – Crown Pt SHS; CR – Chazy Riverlands; LA – L Alice; LL – Long L; LP – L Placid; NP – Noblewood P; PS – Paul Smiths; PtF – Pt au Fer; PtR – Pt au Roche; SB – Sabattis Bog; SL – Saranac L; TL – Tupper L; WB – Whallon's Bay; WD – Wilcox Dock; WM – Wickham Marsh.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 45,000+ PtR to CR 25 Mar (BK,CM), spring record high CLIN & Reg 7; the same flocks extended from Chazy north into Canada 27 Mar (JP); 6 CLIN wearing neck collars Mar-Apr (MM), banded Bylot & Ellesmere islands, Nunavut; last CP 11 May (TB,GH).

Brant: arr Lewis 11 May (GH); TL 29-30 May (CD), fishing lure in bill.

Cackling Goose: arr CH 25 Mar (BK,CM0, early CLIN & Reg 7; CR 26 Apr & 11 May (BK), late CLIN & Reg 7.

Mute Swan: 4 CR 8 Apr (DL)-25 Apr (MM); max 5 CR 25 Apr; last CR 11-21 May

(BK,CM), late CLIN.

Gadwall: WB 11 Mar (DL,MM); 2 pr AP 18 Mar (DR); 1-3 CR 25 Apr-28 May (MM,WS), nice finds here.

Am. Wigeon: 1-2 AP 11-29 Mar (C&JH,BK,CM); 2 WB 11 Mar (DL,MM); pr CR 8-19 Apr (DL,J&PT); Beekmantown 10 Apr (MM); L Flower 12 Apr (TD), a good showing.

N. Shoveler: 2 m Beekmantown 10 Apr (MM); pr Ft Covington 11 Apr (HW); 4 CR 21-28 May (DL,MM); WD 28 May (CH), similarly good.

N. Pintail: max 55 AP 2 Apr (MM).

Canvasback: CH 28 Mar (BK, CM), only

report.

Redhead: CH 26 Mar (BK); a few King's Bay 6 May (WS), scarce here.

Com. Goldeneye: max 400 AP 18 Mar (DR); nesting pr AP 1 May (WS).

Red-breasted Merganser: several Westport 17 May (ET), but only report.

Gray Partridge: Bangor & N Bangor early Mar (GD), 1st FRAN since May 2002; m, 2f CR 26 Mar (BK,CM); 4 CR 28 Mar (SG), 1st CLIN since July 2002.

Wild Turkey: max 50 Saranac manure pile 28 Mar (EF); Big Lots store, Plattsburgh 16 Apr (JH), pecking at door; banded Inlet as jake '07 (NYSDEC) shot 31 May as a 20 lb tom with double beard (GL).

Pied-billed Grebe: Terry Mt pd 31 May (C&JH), unexpected; also AP & CR as expected.

Double-crested Cormorant: 160 CP roost 12 May (GH,JP); 69 shot CP roost 13 May (NYSDEC); many more shot there 16, 19, & 21 May (DEC); 200 CP roost 20 May (GH); 11 banded Four Brothers 2002-03 killed in control operations Grand Isle, Pantan, Rock Island, & St. Albans, VT, 2004-08.(JP); 2-7 Auger L 6-31 May (GH), unusual inland.

Least Bittern: PtF 20 May (BK,CM), always a good find.

Great Egret: 11 Chapman Rd, T Ft Covington 9 Apr; max 14 there 11 Apr (HW); AP 16 Apr (WS), early CLIN; 2 PtF 10 May (BK,CM); CR 11-13 May (BK), continued regional increase.

Cattle Egret: T Saranac 1 May (BM), only report.

Turkey Vulture: arr Plattsburgh 1 Mar (EF); later Mar sightings CP, Harkness, LP, SL, Terry Mt, TL, & Wilmington; max 15 CP 16-19 May (GH,JP), feasting upon dead alewives on beaches.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: ad & juv Inlet feeder Mar (GL); 3 ad, 4 imm Westport 5 Apr (J&PT); 3 ad, 4 imm northbound migrants CP 18-19 May (TB,GH,JP); new nest with y Chesterfield (DB), failed by 9 May (PN,DR); ~20 other reports.

Rough-legged Hawk: on deer carcass Inlet feeder 4 Apr (GL), 3rd HAMI record.

Golden Eagle: imm Ebenezer Mt & imm Wilmington 27 Mar (PO), always good.

Am. Kestrel: f nestling banded Moira 2 Jul 07 (MAM), found dead Houma, LA 19 Mar.

Merlin: AP, Carpenter's Flats, IL, Mt View,

North Farm Rd, Oseetah L, Plattsburgh, SB, TL, Trudeau, only suggestive of distribution.
GYRFALCON: gray-phase imm CH 2 Mar (BK).

Peregrine Falcon: Azure Mt, Peru, Pickett's Corners, only reports.

Virginia Rail: LA 25-27 Apr (BK,CM,MM); max 4 PtF 10 May (BK,CM).

Com. Moorhen: 1-2 PtF 8-25 May (BK,DL,MDM,MM); CR 16 May (BK), good finds.

Am. Coot: PtF 10 May (BK), only report.

Black-bellied Plover: CR 10-14 May; max 4 CR 11 May (BK); last 2 CR 25 May (MDM,MM).

Semipalmated Plover: arr 11 CR 14 May; max 42+ CR 15 May (BK,CM); last 30 CR 28 May (MDM,MM).

Solitary Sandpiper: Keene 10 May (J&PT); SLHS 10 May (TD); Saranac R 11 May (LL); Malone 14 May (NR), a good spring showing.

Greater Yellowlegs: arr 3 Riley Brook 20 Apr (BK); SL 26 Apr (TD); CR 6 May (WS)-28 May (MM); max 12 CR 11 May (BK).

Lesser Yellowlegs: arr 3 TL 8 Apr; 6 TL 1 May (CD); CR 17 Apr (J&PT)-18 May (BK,MM); max 10 CR 16 May (BK); 2 Riley Brook 20 Apr (BK,CM).

MARbled GODWIT: CR 17 & 21 May (BK,CM), 3rd CLIN record.

Sanderling: arr alt CR 14 May (BK), scarce in spring.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 2 NP 26 May (MDM), only report.

Least Sandpiper: arr 4 CR 11 - 28 May; max 100 CR 25-28 May (MDM,MM).

Pectoral Sandpiper: CR 14 May (BK), good spring bird.

Dunlin: arr 2 CR 18 Apr (BK,CM); max 50 CR 28 May (MM).

Short-billed Dowitcher: arr 2 CR 16 May (BK); max 100 CR 25 May (MDM,MM); last 23 CR 28 May (MM), excellent numbers.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE: m CR 16 May (BK), 1st there in 6 yrs.

Bonaparte's Gull: arr Saranac R, Oseetah L 12 Apr (LL), early FRAN; TL 21 Apr (CD); 3 basic CR 13 May (BK); 3 Westport 17 May (ET); max 13 CR 28 May (MM).

Caspian Tern: arr AP 16 Apr (WS), early CLIN; AP 21 Apr (BK,CM); 1-3 CR 25 Apr-28 May (MM).

Black Tern: arr CLIN 23 May (JH); PtF 25 May (MDM,MM).

Com. Tern: arr CR 10 May (BK); max 9 CR 28 May (MM).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Black-billed Cuckoo: arr Westport 24 May (MDM), singing *cu-cu-cu* 10:45 p.m.; Bug L 27 May (GL).

Great Horned Owl: Inlet golf course 1 Apr (GL), died after being driven into water by crows & ravens.

Barred Owl: TL feeder 12 Mar (CD); 2 Keene feeder thru (J&PT); 5 rehabilitated & released CLIN 14-18 Apr (DF); winter survivors calling Elizabethtown, Dannemora, & LA mid-Apr.

Long-eared Owl: calling SL 12 May (GL), rarely reported.

Com. Nighthawk: 14 Carpenter's Flats 29 May (DR), good number, but only report.

Whip-poor-will: CP 10 May (TB,JP); Rand Hill 13-16 May (JH); Pt Kent 17 May (DR); 2 Whallonsburg 24 May; 1, 2 Boquet 24, 25 May (MDM), encouraging.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Azure Mt; Chubb R; PS; SB; Table Top Mt, expected locales; Lake Shore Rd, Westport 23 Mar (J&PT), unexpected.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: transient banded CP 22 May; on territory Blue Mt 25 May (JC).

E. Kingbird: 2 LA 26 Apr (DL), early CLIN.

N. Shrike: 6 reports, last Elizabethtown 3 Apr (J&PT).

Yellow-throated Vireo: arr LA 25 May (MDM,MM), only report.

Philadelphia Vireo: singing m Rooster Comb trailhead 26 May (J&PT), only report.

Gray Jay: FB; PS; max 3-4 Upper Saranac L feeder 1 Mar (CD).

Blue Jay: 42 banded CP 9-24 May, with heavy return flight.

Tree Swallow: max 60 LA 25 Apr (DL), but numbers down TL (CD).

Barn Swallow: 15 banded + 7 returns CP, but none under Moody bridge, TL for first time (CD).

Boreal Chickadee: Chubb R; Raquette L; SB, usual sites.

Tufted Titmouse: AP; CH; Elizabethtown; Essex; LP; Plattsburgh; PtF; Ray Brook; SL; Witherbee, only suggestive of current distribution.

Carolina Wren: CH 28 Mar (NO), still a challenge to find.

Bicknell's Thrush: arr Blue Mt 25 May (JC).

Am. Robin: apparent dark *T.m. nigrideus* in flock of 50+ *T.m. migratorius* Hudson Hall, SUNY Plattsburgh crabapples 11 Mar (BK), a

lighter-mantled robin also present; schizochroic robin PtF 30 Apr, 8-10 May (SJ,BK, photo), left chest & belly white, right with red stripe on chest & partial red belly band, large white patches & spots on wings, back & tail white, except charcoal gray central rectrices; leucistic robin CP 10 May (GH).

N. Mockingbird: Plattsburgh had at least 5 different birds (JH,BK), but none found elsewhere.

Am. Pipit: arr 3 IL 26 Apr (M&WM); last CR 25 May (MDM,MM).

Bohemian Waxwing: 36 Peru 2 Mar (EF); 24 CH 3 Mar (NO); 13 Plattsburgh 13 Mar (TA); 21 NP 22 Mar (MDM); Westport 23 Mar (J&PT); 23 LP 30 Mar (PO); max 100 SUNY Plattsburgh 1 Apr (JH); ending invasion that began 28 Oct '07.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Spring Pd Bog 16 May (NO,MS), 11th FRAN record.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 52 banded CP 9-19 May.

"Western" Palm Warbler: 6 banded CP 9-11 May, but only location.

"Yellow" Palm Warbler: transient LA 25 Apr (DL); territorial birds PS 2-20 May (BM); max 3 PS 11 May (J&PT); BB 6 May (LM); SB 13-15 May (CD,JN).

Bay-breasted Warbler: arr PtF 21 May (DL); Raquette L 28 May (GL).

Blackpoll Warbler: arr CP 17 May (ET); Blue Mt, Hurricane Mt, Lyon Mt 25 May (JC,JH,J&PT); banded CP 26 May.

Wilson's Warbler: banded CP 21 May, only report.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

HENSLow's SPARROW: 2 seen & heard Teboville Rd, Owls Head 15 May (JT,RS), 1st FRAN & 2nd Region 7 record.

Fox Sparrow: arr Elizabethtown 31 Mar (JP); subsequent records Keene, LP, Pt Kent, SL, TL, Witherbee.

White-crowned Sparrow: arr Inlet 4 May (GL); max 6 Inlet 8 May; 4 banded CP 17-25 May; others Keene, Ticonderoga, West Chazy, & Witherbee.

Snow Bunting: last 75 Essex 17 Mar (J&PT).

Rusty Blackbird: arr Elizabethtown 20 Mar (J&PT); AP 23 Mar (BK), early CLIN; Elizabethtown 1 May (J&PT); pr French Settlement Rd, Malone 19 May (NR); St. Bernard's, SL 24 May (TD); somewhat

encouraging.

Com. Grackle: feeding on dead alewives CP 12 May (GH,JP).

Pine Grosbeak: 12 TL feeder 5 Mar (CD); 1-5 Elizabethtown feeder 8-13 Mar (JP), in wake of ice storm; ad m same feeder 22 Mar, in wake of windstorm; max 50-60 SUNY Plattsburgh 1 Apr (CH); last TL 7 Apr (CD), ending invasion that began 2 Oct '07.

Purple Finch: arr m Elizabethtown 12 Apr (JP), increasingly common thereafter.

House Finch: CH, Malone, SL, only reports, but surely in Plattsburgh & elsewhere.

Com. Redpoll: 3 "Greater" (*C.f. rostrata*) banded Elizabethtown 15-16 Mar & 8 Apr (JP); carefully described "Greater" CH 14 Mar (BK); max ~150 Keene feeder Mar (J&PT); last Elizabethtown & Witherbee 16 Apr (JP,CW), ending invasion that began 28 Oct

'07.

Hoary Redpoll: Elizabethtown 10-11 Mar (JP); Ticonderoga 26 Mar (NC); last Elizabethtown 13 Apr (JP), scarcer than *C.f. rostrata* in this invasion.

Pine Siskin: 1-9 Elizabethtown; Peru; Pt Kent; Ticonderoga; Witherbee May, generally scarce.

Am. Goldfinch: max 44 banded CP 10-23 May, widespread, but rather sparse.

Evening Grosbeak: max 84 SL 12 Apr (LL), numbers increasing Apr-May with return of breeding birds.

ADDENDUM

SANDHILL CRANE: 2 West Chazy Nov '07 (Steve Mahoney), 3rd CLIN & 10th Region 7 record..