

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Summer '08 was wet. Over the 92 days, Inlet had rainfall on 56 of those, including three deluges of 3" or more. Heavy rain greeted visiting birders at the 6th Great Adirondack Birding Celebration on 6 June, but by the following day Plattsburgh was sweltering in 94° record heat. Storms on 10 June brought 60 mph winds to Malone and pea-sized hail at Cumberland Head. Precipitation, from showers to downpours, continued, and June saw just six entirely dry days. July brought even more rain, with 2" at Auger Lake on the 20th and straight line winds of 80-90 mph damaging Chazy. The Route 11 corridor got another 2" the following day, and there had been only ten dry days in July before Newcomb received 1.46" on the 24th. The pattern continued into August, with 2" of rain at Auger Lake on the 4th and a further 2" in western Essex County on 6 August. Lake Champlain reached a record high for the month on the 11th and continued to rise for two more days before finally dropping back. The lake had stood at 97.33' on 1 June, gradually dropped to 96.18' by 18 July, then swollen rapidly to an all-time August high of 98.81' by the 13th, before receding to 97.80' at season's end, offering few beaches or mudflats for southbound shorebirds.

The high water along the Clinton County shoreline may account for the variety of puddle ducks at the Chazy Riverlands, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Green-winged Teal. Only 14 shorebirds were found, however, and almost all were found on the Gravelle

or Laurin farms at Chazy Riverlands or the thin strip of black sand beach at Noblewood Park. Five shorebird species at the Laurin farm included late northbound migrants, recorded well before the lake reached record levels: Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs 7 June, Least and White-rumped sandpipers 6 June, and Dunlin lingering to 8 June.

The abundant rainfall doubtless had a positive effect upon the wild food crop, however. Cones were heavy on northern white-cedar, tamarack, and eastern white pine, less so on balsam fir and red spruce. American beech and northern red oak were loaded with beechnuts and acorns. Apples and cherries weighted down every tree, and berries loaded almost every bush. The most obvious impact upon birds was the invasion of crossbills. Red Crossbill, last reported 6 February, was found at Madawaska on 5 July, and by August there were reports from Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton counties, including at least two of the types described by Jeff Groth, based upon voice recognition and recordings. White-winged Crossbill was last reported during count week of the Saranac Lake CBC, but after the first summer report at Lake Placid 9 July they became even more abundant than Red Crossbill in the same three counties. The white-winged birds were seen feeding on dead tamarack and live balsam fir at Chubb River, tamarack cones at Moose River Plains, and tamarack and spruce at Newcomb, although their summer preference is often white spruce. During the most recent 2006-07 crossbill invasion, Red Crossbills didn't appear until August and not until November were White-wingeds feeding on tamarack cones. All of the other winter finches were relatively scarce this summer, however. Red elderberry in a forested Keene yard attracted Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hermit Thrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak; the fruit is known to be favored by over 40 avian species.

Several species were notably late or early, with Snow Geese at Chazy Riverlands and Brant at Four Brothers into June, although neither is unprecedented. A record-late **Fox Sparrow** at a feeder on Rand Hill in Beekmantown on 1 June was quite unexpected, however, since the '08 spring passage took place during a three-week window between 31 March and 20 April. An equally surprising early arrival was the hen-plumaged **Bufflehead** at Noblewood Park on 23 August. A Red-necked Grebe there the same month also seemed early, although there are previous August records from Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve, Long Lake, and Mirror Lake. Also noteworthy were a Sandhill Crane at Westport 25 August and an adult **Black-headed Gull** in alternate plumage at Noblewood Park on 23 August. A respectable total of 189 species was reported during Summer 2008, just short of the 191 in Summer 2007 and the record 192 species in Summer 2004, an Atlas year.

Yet another work has joined the growing library of Adirondack-Champlain books with the publication of *Adirondack Birding: 60 Great Places to Find Birds* (2008) by John M.C. Peterson and Gary N. Lee. Published by Lost Pond Press of Saranac Lake, the 240-page book is illustrated with superb color photographs of 46 regional birds by Jeff Nadler and site photos by Phil Brown, Carl Heilman, Jr., Gary Randorf, John Thaxton, and others as well as drawings by Mike Storey and cartoons by Jerry Russell. Hand-drawn maps for each of the

60 sites are by cartographer Matthew Paul. In addition, the book includes an 8-page chapter on “A History of Adirondack Birding” by Peterson, an annotated bibliography of regional bird books, and other features. Price is \$20.95, available online from Lost Pond Press at www.lostpondpress.com or the Adirondack Mountain Club at www.adk.org and can be found in local retail outlets that deal in outdoor books. This Region has long been a mecca for birders, and the authors hope *Adirondack Birding* will help fill the growing need for a current guidebook.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; BTS – Brown's Tract Stream; CH – Cumberland Head; CP – Crown Pt SHS; CR – Chazy Riverlands; CRF – Cedar R Flow; FB – Ferd's Bog; FBI – Four Brothers islands; GBM – Gilbert Brook Marina; IL – Indian L; KB – King's Bay; LP – L Placid; MRP – Moose R Plains; NP – Noblewood Pk; PS – Paul Smiths; PtF – Pt au Fer; PtR – Pt au Roche; SB – Sabattis Bog; SC – Scotion Cr; SL – Saranac L.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 4 ads, 3 imm CR 6-7 Jun (BK); 4 there 13 Jun (BK, NO), late.

Brant: FBI 25 Jun (LS), late, but 5th imm record there since 1954.

Canada Goose: max 27 ads, 9 imm CRF 8 Jun (GL).

Mute Swan: Raquette L 1 Jun (GL), 1st record HAMI.

Wood Duck: max 50 SC 19 Jul (MAMc, MDM).

Gadwall: 2 CR 7 Jun (BK), rare breeder.

Am. Wigeon: 2 CR 7 Jun (BK), rare breeder.

Blue-winged Teal: Madawaska 8 Jun (BC); CR 20 Jun (BK), only reports.

N. Shoveler: 2 pr CR 7 Jun (BK), rare breeder.

Green-winged Teal: 20+ CR 7 Jun, only report.

BUFFLEHEAD: f-type NP 23 Aug (MDM), early ESSE & Reg. 7.

Com. Goldeneye: ad, 8 y CH 7 Jun (BK); f, 3y Oseetah L 13 Jul (LL); 1-14 f-types NP 3 Aug thru (MDM).

Gray Partridge: 3-4 Am Legion field, Malone 27 Jun (M&WM); seen & heard there 28 Jun (LL, M&WM, GN), but only reports from the

former stronghold along the Border.

Com. Loon: Corlear Bay 1-2 Jun (DR); 2 CH 18 Jun (NO); ad NP 2 Aug (MDM); numerous inland reports; both Chazy L platforms successful (CH), 4 y.

Pied-billed Grebe: ad, 6 y SC 5 Jun (NO); CRF 8 Jun (GL); ad, 4 y SC 11 Jun (NO); juv AP 21 Jun; ad, juv CR 25 Jul (BK); Macomb Res 30 Jul (MDM), a good showing.

Horned Grebe: 2 CH 27 Jul-31 Aug (NO), unexpected.

Red-necked Grebe: alt NP 28 Aug (LS, EDT)-30 Aug (MDM), 2nd Aug record ESSE, 4th in Reg 7.

Double-crested Cormorant: 8 Auger L 1 Jun (GH); eggs in 2221 of 3811 nests oiled FBI 1st wk Jun; 378 ads shot FBI by early Jul; 500 ads & imms shot CP May-Jul (NYSDEC), disgusting; 5 Middle Saranac L 11 Aug (WS); ad & imm Ausable R, Wilmington 13 Aug (WS); record 11 Auger L 18 Aug (GH), unusual inland numbers.

Am. Bittern: nest with 3 eggs FB 29 Jun (GL), a nice find.

Least Bittern: WM 8 Jun (MAMc,MDM); PtF 15 Jun (BK); SC 19 Jul (MAMc, MDM), great showing.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: ad, 4y SC 5 Jun (NO); max 60 SC 19 Jul (MAMc, MDM), record high CLIN; 4 SC 29 Jul (NO), again no reports from FBI.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: Beaver Bk; Jones Pd; Lower Saranac L; NP, Osgood Pd, Raquette L; Wilmington, only suggestive.

N. Harrier: juv L Snow, T IL 22 Aug (MM), rare HAMI.

N. Goshawk: 4 banded T Franklin (MAMA).

Am. Kestrel: 7 of 27 FRAN nest boxes produced 25 chicks, with an additional 17 ads banded; late nest with 3 eggs T Moira 6 Aug (MAMA).

Merlin: Chateaugay; Elizabethtown; Golden Beach; IL; Keene; Mt View; MRP; Owl's Head Lookout; PS; Peru; Plattsburgh; Trudeau; Wakely Mt, only suggestive of numbers; nesting woods Plattsburgh HS cut down for ballfield & parking after y fledged, family there to 18 Aug (NO).

Peregrine Falcon: active eyries T Elizabethtown, T Keene, T Moriah, T Willsboro, T Wilmington; also seen NP, Plattsburgh, SC, Whiteface Mt; Inlet town pk 19 Jul (GL), 1st HAMI record in decades.

Virginia Rail: AP, Barnum Pd, KB, PS, PtF, SC, a fair showing.

Sora: The Gulf 14 Jun (MDM), only report.

Com. Moorhen: 1-2 CR 5 Jun-26 Aug (BK); 2 PtF 13 Jun (BK, NO), always good finds.

Sandhill Crane: Westport 25 Aug (EDT), 3rd ESSE record.

Black-bellied Plover: CH 16 Aug (BK), only report.

Semipalmated Plover: NP 4 Aug (MDM), only report.

Greater Yellowlegs: last CR 7 Jun; arr 3 CR 25 Jul (BK).

Lesser Yellowlegs: last CR 7 Jun; arr 3 CR 8 Jul; max 20 CR 25 Jul (BK).

Upland Sandpiper: confirmed breeding reported, but no details (MBW).

Sanderling: alt ad arr NP 19 Jul; NP 23 Aug (MDM).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: NP 4 Aug (MDM), only report.

Least Sandpiper: last 3 CR 6 Jun (BK); arr juv NP 4 Jul (MDM); max 21 CR 10 Jul (BK); 1-2 NP 19-20 Jul (MDM); 8 GBM 22 Aug (BK); 3 juv NP 24 Aug (MDM).

White-rumped Sandpiper: last CR 6 Jun (BK), no southbound reports.

Dunlin: max 5 CR 6 Jun; last CR 8 Jun (BK).

Wilson's Snipe: CRF 8 Jun (GL); singing & distraction flight Keene 10 Jun (J&PT); Gadway Barrens 20 Jun; max 4 winnowing T Essex 20 Jun (MDM); Raquette L 20 Jun (GL); CH 1 Jul (NO), low numbers.

Little Gull: 2 ads NP 4 Aug; basic ad NP 23 Aug; NP 26 Aug (MDM), rare ESSE.

BLACK-HEADED GULL: alt ad NP 26 Aug (MDM, ph), 2nd ESSE, 5th Regional record.

Bonaparte's Gull: 7 basic CR 6 Jun to 2 basic there 20 Jun (BK); NP 19 Jul thru, max 1000 there 26 Aug (MDM); Limekiln L 24 Jul (GL), 8th HAMI record; many Essex 5 Aug (JC); CH 17 Aug (NO); 112 GBM 22 Aug (BK), good numbers.

Ring-billed Gull: banded FBI 12 Jun '99 returned Shelburne Bay, VT 2 Jul (TM); 4th return, aged 9 yrs, 1 mo.

Caspian Tern: 1-4 CR 7 Jul-25 Jul (BK); NP 12 Jul (NO) thru; max 27 there 25 Aug (MDM).

Black Tern: 1-4 PtF 8-12 Jun; 4 imm CR 28 Jul (BK); NP 23 Aug; 5 NP 30 Aug, headed south; max 13 NP 31 Aug (MDM).

Com. Tern: CR 13 Jun (BK,NO); NP 7 Jul (NO) thru; 92 there 30 Aug (MDM); max 294 GBM 22 Aug (BK), high CLIN & Reg 7.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Rock Pigeon: banded racing pigeon Plattsburgh feeder Jul (JH).

Black-billed Cuckoo: 5 T Essex & T Westport 20 Jun, giving short rattle flight calls early

a.m.; PTR 31 Jul (MDM), scarce in wake of forest tent caterpillar crash.

E. Screech-Owl: CH 25 Jul (JM); Keene 29 Aug (J&PT), more common than reports suggest.

Com. Nighthawk: 15 Pt Kent 2 Jun (DR); Plattsburgh 12 Jun (PO); 1-6 Peru 4 & 13 Jun, 24 Aug (EF); 2 Madawaska 4 Jul (MDM,SO); 12-14 Terry Mt 16 Aug (C&JH); 16 CH 18 Aug (NO); max 25 Chesterfield 18 Aug (DR); 2 Ausable Forks 23 Aug (DD); L Everest, T Wilmington 28 Aug (J&PT), simply outstanding.

Whip-poor-will: nest with 3 eggs Altona Flat Rocks 16 Jun (KA, ph), 1" CLIN; Clintonville Jun (JL); max 5 Mooers survey 11 Jun (JH,NO,MS); Terry Mt 19, 25 & 28 Jun (C&JH); T Essex 20 Jun (MDM); Peasleeville & Peru thru (EF), numbers bolstered by survey.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: ad m Keene 3 Jul (J&PT), eating red elderberries.

Am. Three-toed Woodpecker: f FB 5 Jun (GL); f FB 15 Jul (JN), yet again the only locale.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Armstrong Mt & Upper Wolfjaw; Beaver Bk; Beaver L; Boreas R; Boulder Brk; BTS; FB; Helldiver Pd; Ice House Pd; Jones Pd; Marion R; MRP; Newcomb; Osgood Pd; Owls Head; PS; Raquette L; Red R; Shallow L; Summer Stream; 2m, f FB 15 Jul (JN), one m with orange crown patch and whitish spots on back (see LaFrance, *Kingbird* 23:190-91 & 33:165-66).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Willow Flycatcher: CR 8 Jun (BK); SC 11 Jun (NO); AP 21 Jun (BK), only reports.

Yellow-throated Vireo: singing m Rand Hill 15 Jun (JH), only report.

Philadelphia Vireo: singing m Lewey L 15 Jun (JC), only report.

Gray Jay: BB; Beaver Bk; Bigelow Rd; BTS; FB; Helldiver Pd; Madawaska; MRP; Osgood R, expected sites.

Com. Raven: 4 y tree nest Limekiln L 2 Jun (GL).

Purple Martin: 3 SC 19 Jul (MAMc,MDM); 3 families SC 29 Jul (NO,MS); 2 PTR 31 Jul (MDM), increasingly scarce due to housing shortage.

Tree Swallow: "not a lot" in central Adks (RM).

N. Rough-winged Swallow: CH (NO); NP 2 Aug (MDM), only reports.

Barn Swallow: "almost non-existent in the central Adirondacks" (RM).

Boreal Chickadee: BB; Bigelow Rd; Dix; FB;

Hough Pk; LL; Madawaska; MRP; Osgood R; SB; Wakely Mt, known sites.

Tufted Titmouse: CH; Elizabethtown; NP; SL; Witherbee, but surely more abundant.

Carolina Wren: Rte 3, Plattsburgh Jul (MAMc); Willsboro Bay 24 Aug thru (MDM), good finds.

Sedge Wren: singing m T Essex 2:25 a.m. 20 Jun (MDM); Treadwell Bay 22 Aug (SJ,BK), excellent finds.

Marsh Wren: 6 WM 8 Jun (MAMc,MDM); Rte 9N Elizabethtown 15 Jun (DP,DR); singing m T Essex 20 Jun (MDM), in dry field 1 mi north of Sedge Wren; max 40 SC 19 Jul (MAMc,MDM), a good showing.

Bicknell's Thrush: Blue Mt; Hough Pk; Lyon Mt; Macomb Mt slide (3480'); Pillsbury Mt; Upper Wolfjaw; Whiteface, undoubtedly many other peaks.

Swainson's Thrush: singing m near 4867' summit Whiteface Mt 8 Jun (J&PT), higher than the "somewhere near" 4000' expected in the High Peaks (Atlas 1988) and well above the limit of 3609' on Mt Mansfield, VT (Noon & Able 1978).

Gray Catbird: Blue Mt 21 Jun (JC), near 3760' summit.

N. Mockingbird: Plattsburgh 14 Jul (EF), only report.

WARBLERS

Golden-winged Warbler: Hurricane Rd, T Keene 15 Jun (DP, DR), a fortuitous find.

Tennessee Warbler: singing & feeding y Witherbee 1 & 8 Jun (CW), "good views"; CRF 8 Jun (GL), only reports.

Cape May Warbler: migrant ad NP 30 Aug (MDM), only report.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: m & imm Keene 3 Jul (J&PT), eating red elderberries.

Palm Warbler: Barnum Pd; Madawaska; Osgood Pd; PS; SB; Shallow L; max 6 BB 3 Aug (MDM,SO), now typical.

Bay-breasted Warbler: singing m 3100' Upper Wolfjaw 5 Jun (DD), near Blackpoll Warbler; MRP 28 Jun (JV), welcome reports.

Blackpoll Warbler: max 10 Lyon Mt 7 Jun (MDM).

Am. Redstart: 4249' Macomb Mt 4 Aug (DD), extremely high.

Ovenbird: 3 singing night song T Essex 20 Jun (MDM).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Highlands Rd, T Chesterfield 7 Jun (MDM), only report.

Mourning Warbler: see Wilson's Warbler.

Wilson's Warbler: m 2579' Hough Pk, Dix Range 23 Aug (DD), apparent food exchange to y Mourning Warbler.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Savannah Sparrow: Madawaska 7-8 Jun (BC), rather unexpected locale.

FOX SPARROW: Rand Hill feeder, T Beekmantown **1 Jun** (PG), record late CLIN & Reg 7.

Lincoln's Sparrow: nest with 4 eggs FB 29 Jun (GL), 2' from Am. Bittern nest.

Swamp Sparrow: max 15 SC 19 Jul (MAMc,MDM).

White-throated Sparrow: 3 banded Elizabethtown 30-31 Aug (JP), *orange* lores & bend of wings

Rusty Blackbird: MRP 28 Jun; Beaver Bk 15 Jul (GL); L Everest, T Wilmington 15 Jul (J&PT); pr MRP 15 Jul (WL), only reports & troubling.

Com. Grackle: leucistic f feeding y Peru 2 Aug (E&HF), white feathers on face & head.

Purple Finch: max 6 banded Elizabethtown 26 Jul-30 Aug (JP), most reports from feeders.

House Finch: CH thru (NO), but only report!

Red Crossbill: 2 Groth Type 4s recorded Madawaska 5 Jul (MDM,SO); lg-billed New Russia 17 Jul (EKT); Eighth L 17 Jul (SF); LL 29-30 Jul (JC); 7 New Russia 4 Aug (EKT); 2 Blue Mt L 9 Aug; FB 9 Aug; Groth Type 1 Madawaska 10 Aug; Type 4 Madawaska 11 Aug (MY), may bode well for winter.

White-winged Crossbill: LP 9 Jul (BM), first report since Dec '07; increasingly abundant thereafter, with reports from Adk Loj Rd, Ausable R, BB, Bigelow Rd, Blue Mt L, Chubb R, Eighth L, FB, Icehouse Pd, Leonard Pd, LL, Madawaska, T Moriah; MRP, Mt View, Newcomb, New Russia, SB, Spring Pd, Whiteface Mt, with some flocks as large as 35-40, presaging an invasion winter.

Pine Siskin: a few Newcomb Jul (GB,TB); LL 3-6 Aug (JC); LL feeder 10 Aug (WL), scarce.

Am. Goldfinch: max 8 banded Elizabethtown 14-15 Aug (JP), most reports from feeders.

Evening Grosbeak: scattered reports of breeding birds, mostly at feeders.