

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Early December was uneventful, with temperatures ranging from -13° at Saranac Lake on the 8th to the 40s at Plattsburgh on the 10th. A major storm left a foot of snow at Inlet on the 19th and at Westport by the following day. By 21 January, there was 22" of new snow on Whiteface Mt. and a foot of snow at Peru by the next day, the greatest December snowfall on record. The end of the month saw winds of 44 mph at Saranac Lake on the 28th and 45 mph at Plattsburgh on the 31st. January was cold: Inlet -22° on the 14th, Saranac Lake -21° on the 15th, Newcomb -31° on the 16th, and Saranac Lake -23° on 26 January, with Lake Champlain closing from north and south. Unseasonable cold continued into February, with Inlet dropping to -20° on the 4th. Skiers were pleased to see 12" of fresh snow at Whiteface Mt. on 23 February, but most areas received only a few inches, and monthly snowfall in the Champlain Valley was only about a foot. Thanks largely to the December storm, this was the sixth snowiest winter season on record. Inlet saw snow on 56 days, rain on ten, and freezing rain on two days. Lake Champlain dropped to 95.97' on 4 January before rising to a high of 97.22' on New Year's Day, a foot and a half above the 73-year median. It then fell back to 96.34' at season's end. The wide lake never froze entirely, allowing a number of waterfowl species to overwinter in open water between Wickham Marsh and Whallon's Bay.

The concentration of waterfowl at just a few shoreline locations may have helped observers locate rarities, including two drake **Tufted Ducks** off Port Kent, a subadult in late December and an adult during mid-February. Now expected, but still welcome, were a drake Barrow's Goldeneye at Willsboro Point in December and a pair of Barrow's at Port Kent during late February, but only the drake usually found there. Both Pied-billed Grebe and Great Blue Heron lingered into December and Common Loon into January. Bald Eagles were numerous along the lakeshore, with several inland reports. Gull-watchers were rewarded with 1-2 first-winter Iceland Gulls at Westport, a carefully-observed Lesser Black-backed Gull flying south past Cumberland Head, a Glaucous Gull at Ausable Point, and another Glaucous found inland on the ice of the Saranac River near Morrisonville.

Following November reports of Snowy Owl from the Towns of Champlain

and Peru, there were late December reports from Essex and Peru. The most sought-after bird of the winter, however, was **Northern Hawk Owl**, with two present in the Region. The first was found near Clark Road in the Town of Peru during the Plattsburgh CBC on 14 December. The second was spotted just south of the Québec border along Rte 276 in the Town of Champlain on 15 February. Both remained through the end of the season. Although a total of four hawk owls were found in New York State this winter, this was but a fraction of the 70 N. Hawk Owls found just to the north in inhabited regions of Québec outside the boreal forest through February '09. This was the most important irruption since the winter of 2000-01, when there were also two hawk owls in the Region, at Bloomingdale Bog and near Plattsburgh, but an astounding 200 reported in Québec. [The province also experienced a major hawk owl invasion in 2004-05, but mainly concentrated along the Lower North Shore and none reaching New York.] This was also a good winter for Short-eared Owl, with reports from the Towns of Dickinson, Essex, Peru, and Willsboro representing three of the four Regional counties.

Half-hardies, recent arrivals, and winter visitants also enlivened the season, with four Belted Kingfisher, four Red-bellied Woodpecker, five Northern Flicker, at least 50 Tufted Titmouse, and seven Carolina Wren reports. A **Townsend's Solitaire** in the Town of Keene in late January provided a second Regional record, the first having been at Crater Club, Essex, in December 1988. Northern Mockingbird was found in Port Kent and Plattsburgh. Bohemian Waxwing was abundant, especially in the vicinity of Peru orchards, with some flocks numbering up to 500. Cedar Waxwing was also found in good numbers, but smaller flocks, and both waxwings were largely confined to the Champlain lowlands. A Yellow-rumped Warbler was a one-day wonder at a Hogsburg feeder in mid-February, but the same feeder hosted a White-crowned Sparrow almost daily from 29 January.

The maxima numbers provided in the species list that follows offer a good representation of relative abundance of winter finches: 44 Pine Grosbeak, 12 Purple Finch, 50 House Finch, 14 Red Crossbill, 119 White-winged Crossbill, 150 Common Redpoll, singles of Hoary Redpoll, 2021 Pine Siskin, 434 American Goldfinch, and 128 Evening Grosbeak. Among the redpolls, there were two "Greater" Redpoll (*C.f. rostrata*) banded at Inlet in January-February. Among the hordes of siskins, there were at least 17 encounters with the attractive green morph Pine Siskin: eight banded at Elizabethtown and another eight banded at Inlet during January-February, plus a January sight record at a Long Lake feeder. With 16 green morphs among the 646 Pine Siskins banded in Essex and Hamilton counties during Winter 2008-09, it appears that 2% of siskins exhibited this distinctive olive shade. Ian A. McLaren, *et al.* (*American Birds* 43:5, pp. 1268-74) examined 1525 specimens from six museum collections and found 15 green morphs (0.98%); Robert P. Yunick (*North American Bird Bander* 21:3, pp. 85-87) banded 4045 Pine Siskins near Schenectady in 1990, of which 51 were green morphs (1.26%). These data suggest that a flock of a hundred siskins might be expected to include one or two green morphs, for those interested in seeking them out at feeders. The winter

total of 98 species was short of the record 109 of 2001-02, 2005-06, and 2006-07.

Although there is some disagreement among experts, many welcomed the news that the NYS DEC has done DNA studies of Spruce Grouse, toward a plan to stock birds in order to supplement the dwindling Adirondack population, as Vermont began to do in the Northeast Kingdom during 2008, with imports there coming from Maine and Québec. If implemented in New York, the plan should include habitat management of release sites, as well as the introduction of genetically appropriate stock.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

APt – Ausable Pt; CH – Cumberland Head; ECBC – Elizabethtown CBC, 27 Dec; FCBC – Ferrisburgh CBC, 20 Dec; IL – Indian L; LL – Long L; LP – L Placid; NP – Noblewood Pk; PS – Paul Smiths; PtK – Pt Kent; SL – Saranac L; SLCBC – Saranac L CBC, 3 Jan; SB – Sabattis Bog; SPB – Spring Pd Bog; TL – Tupper L; WC – NYS Waterfowl Count, 17-18 Jan; WPt – Willsboro Pt.

WHISTLING-DUCKS - VULTURES

Snow Goose: max ~350 Westville 6 Dec (WS); ~50 Inlet 24 Dec (GL), late HAMI; CH 15 Feb (BM).

Cackling Goose: T Beekmantown 7 Dec (BK,CM), a good find.

Canada Goose: max 1586 PCBC; 8 Peru 13 Feb (JL), flying NW.

Mallard: 3 hybrids WC, including apparent Mallard x Am. Wigeon Essex harbor 17 Jan (GL,JP,RW).

N. Pintail: 2 WC, late; arr m Peru 9 Feb (HP); CH ferry 21-23 Feb (BK,CM).

Ring-necked Duck: max 80 WPt 10 Dec (DR).

TUFTED DUCK: 1st winter m PtK 29 Dec (J&WP); ad m PtK 12 Feb (DR)-15 Feb

The Kingbird 2009 June; 59 (2)

(J&PT), superb finds.

Greater Scaup: max 4 NP 2 Feb (EKT), identified to species.

Lesser Scaup: max 300 PtK 12 Feb (DR), identified to species.

scaup (sp.): max ~600 PtK 12 Feb (DR), in raft of ~4000 with Ring-necked Ducks & goldeneyes.

White-winged Scoter: imm AP 28 Dec (PO), only scoter.

Long-tailed Duck: max 3 WC; m NP 2 Feb (EKT); 2 PtK 12 Feb (DR), a scarce duck here.

Bufflehead: max 120 NP 2 Feb (EKT), late for so many.

Com. Goldeneye: max 3000 AP 7 Jan & 3000 PtK 12 Feb (DR), late for so many.

Barrow's Goldeneye: m WPt 10 Dec (DR); ad m PtK 17 Feb (NR); pr PtK 19 Feb (DR); PtK 21 Feb (MH), welcome finds.

Red-breasted Merganser: pr CH 24 Jan; m there to 28 Feb (BK,CM), late CLIN.

Ring-necked Pheasant: FCBC; ECBC; T Beekmantown 4 Jan (BK), hanging on.

Wild Turkey: max flock of 150 Elizabethtown 2 Dec (JDP), new high ESSE & Reg 7; 8 River St, Elizabethtown 16 Dec (JP), in village; Boynton Avenue, Plattsburgh 4 Jan (BK), in city.

Com. Loon: CH 8 Jan (SJ,BK), last.

Pied-billed Grebe: Westport 31 Dec (J&SP,DR), rare in winter.

Red-necked Grebe: Whallon's Bay 29 Dec (EKT), only report.

Great Blue Heron: WD 5 Dec (BK); Ticonderoga 13 Dec (NC); 2 PCBC, late.

HAWKS - ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: numerous reports Ausable Forks, APT, Essex, IL, NP, Peru, Pt Douglas, PtK, Seventh L, SL, SLCBC, Ticonderoga, TL, Westport, Willsboro Bay, WC, WM.

Merlin: Peru 14 Dec (JB,JH); ECBC, new to count; ad Chain Lks Rd, IL 1 Feb (MM), good finds.

Peregrine Falcon: PCBC; ad Jay 6 Jan (PO); CH 1 Feb (BK), good finds.

Iceland Gull: 1st winter Westport 6 Dec (BM,PO)-20 Dec (SO,JP,J&PT,YT,RW); two 1st winter there 28 Dec (PO), one much paler.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: CH 5 Dec (BK), 3rd CLIN & 6th Reg record.

Glaucous Gull: APT 7 Jan (DR); 3rd winter Saranac R, Morrisonville 30 Jan (CH), on ice.

Great Black-backed Gull: max 13 PCBC, rather low.

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Snowy Owl: Middle Rd, T Essex 20 Dec (EDT); Rte 22B, T Peru 25 Dec (ND), lovely finds.

N. HAWK OWL: Clark Rd, T Peru 14 Dec (JB,JH), early CLIN, thru; Rte 276, T Champlain 15 Feb (D&TG), thru; 2nd & 3rd CLIN records; there are now ~16 records in Reg 7.

Short-eared Owl: Middle Rd, T Essex 10 Dec (DR); T Dickinson 18 Jan (MAMa); Reber Rd, T Willsboro 25 Jan (DR); T Peru 1 Feb (JR), attacked by hawk owl & crows.

Belted Kingfisher: Arnold Bk, T Peru 2 Dec (EF); FCBC; ECBC; count wk SLCBC, all late.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: T Essex 20 Dec (JP,SO,CS,J&PT,YT,RW) thru; WPt feeder Jan (RL) thru; WPt 17 Jan (GL,JP,RW); T

Beekmantown 22 Jan (BK), increasingly expected.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Beaver Bk trail & PS expected locales; Cook Mt Preserve, Ticonderoga 16 Feb (NC), unexpected.

N. Flicker: FCBC; 2 ECBC; count wk SLCBC; WPt feeder 30 Jan-1Feb (GL,RL), good finds.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 12 individuals, about average.

Gray Jay: max 4 SLCBC; 2 Beaver Bk trail 16 Feb (GL); 2 Bigelow Rd 26 Feb (DG,RG), rather low.

Blue Jay: banded Crown Pt 21 May '05 found dead Notre-Dame-du-Rosaire, QC, 8 Feb '09 (BL).

Am. Crow: max 1548 PCBC, with large roost just n. of city.

Com. Raven: max 67 SLCBC; 61 Inlet 23 Jan (GL), high HAMI.

Horned Lark: max 154 PCBC; 7 FCBC; 6 Chazy 8 Feb (NO), scarcer with closing of dairy farms.

Black-capped Chickadee: max 984 SLCBC; 503 ECBC; 466 PCBC; 61 FCBC; 102 banded Inlet feeder (GL); 51 new chickadees banded Elizabethtown feeder (JP), clearly an invasion winter.

Boreal Chickadee: Bigelow Rd, Hurricane Mt; 3000' Little Whiteface; Oregon Plains Rd, expected sites.

Tufted Titmouse: max 17 PCBC; also CH; Elizabethtown; Essex; Inlet; Keeseville; Peru; PtK; SL; Ticonderoga; Westport; Witherbee, with a total of 50+ titmice.

Carolina Wren: count wk ECBC; WPt Jan thru (RL); New Russia Jan-Feb (EKT); CH 15 Jan (NO); CH 24 Jan (BK); NP 2 Feb (EKT); Plattsburgh 15 Feb (BM), outstanding.

E. Bluebird: max 14 ECBC; seven other reports of 1-12, rather low.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE: Keene 16 & 22 Jan (JT), with 80+ siskins; 2nd ESSE & Reg 7 record.

Am. Robin: max 187 ECBC, widespread at lower elevations.

N. Mockingbird: Plattsburgh 14 Dec (JC, NO); Plattsburgh 1 Jan (BK); PtK 14 Feb (J&PT), always a good find here, although regular in the city.

Bohemian Waxwing: max 500 T Peru 5 Feb (JL), where abundant thru; other flocks of 4 to 335 Champlain, Chazy, Jay, NP, Plattsburgh, Reber, Westport; 21 T IL 13 Feb (M&WM), new max & 3rd record HAMI and only report from the central Adirondacks.

Cedar Waxwing: max 141 PCBC; others CH, T Essex, ECBC, FCBC, IL, Jay, Keene, NP,

Peru, Plattsburgh, Ticonderoga, Wadhams, but usually not with Bohemians.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Hogansburg feeder 16 Feb (HW), only warbler of the winter.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Song Sparrow: max 2 Hoisington Bk, Westport on FCBC; PCBC; SLCBC; Ticonderoga 12 Feb (NC).

White-throated Sparrow: CH 1-24 Dec (NO); PCBC, scarce.

White-crowned Sparrow: imm Hogansburg feeder 29 Jan thru (HW), only report, but also overwintered there 1996-97 and 1998-99.

Dark-eyed Junco: 273 PCBC; 217 ECBC; 141 FCBC; 66 SLCBC, most numerous at lower elevations.

Lapland Longspur: 2 CR 21 Jan (BK); 4 Magic Triangle, ESSE 25 Feb (DG, RG), always fun to find.

Snow Bunting: max 927 PCBC; flocks of 6 to 350 Burke, Essex, Malone, Peru, Reber, Westport; 35 Raquette L 11 Dec (GL), uncommon winter visitant HAMI.

N. Cardinal: max 78 PCBC; 26 SLCBC; 14 FCBC; 11 ECBC, several other reports.

Red-winged Blackbird: 2 Inlet 5 Dec (GL); 2 FCBC; ECBC; PCBC, low winter numbers; arr Ti 12-13 Feb (NC); 2 Wilmington 27 Feb (WS).

Com. Grackle: arr Big Brook Rd, T IL 12 Feb (M&WM), early HAMI.

Brown-headed Cowbird: max 67 PCBC; 10 SLCBC; 2 FCBC; singles CH, IL, Peru, fairly scarce.

Pine Grosbeak: max 44 Mt Van Hoevenberg 4 Jan (MAMu, EKT), high single flock ESSE; 24 ECBC; 7 SLCBC; reports of 1-15 from IL, Inlet, Jay, LP, New Russia, Peru, Rainbow L, SL, Willsboro, a strong showing.

Purple Finch: max 12 IL 3 Jan (M&WM); 8 SLCBC; 5 ECBC; scattered reports of a few Essex, Peru, Plattsburgh, PtK, Ticonderoga, Witherbee,

House Finch: max 50 PCBC; a few others CH, Keeseville, Peru, Ticonderoga, all Champlain Valley.

Red Crossbill: max 14 ECBC; 4 SLCBC; Peru 28 Dec (LL); 2 Peru 16 Jan (CH); Newcomb 21 Feb (J&PT), scarce.

White-winged Crossbill: max 119 SLCBC; 106 ECBC; 30 FCBC; reports of 1-30 Bigelow Rd, Bloomingdale, Champlain, Elizabethtown, Inlet, Hurricane Mt, Jay, LL, Newcomb, NP, Peru, PS, SB, SPB, Ticonderoga, TL, Westport, Willsboro, Wilmington, Witherbee, including several feeder reports, abundant.

Com. Redpoll: max 150 T Peru 10 Feb (EF); 30 banded Inlet 21 Jan-28 Feb (GL); 25 PCBC; 14 SLBC; 12 ECBC; other scattered reports; "Greater" Redpoll (*C.f. rostrata*) banded Inlet 27 Jan, 24-28 Feb (GL).

Hoary Redpoll: arr Inlet 27 Jan; banded Inlet 30 Jan & 26 Feb (GL); LL 20 Feb (WL), only reports.

Pine Siskin: max 2021 SLCBC; 470 ECBC, new highs; 337 banded Elizabethtown (JP); 309 banded Inlet (GL), for a regional record 646 banded; the most abundant winter finch; **8 green morphs** banded Elizabethtown 19 Jan-25 Feb; **8 green morphs** banded Inlet 30 Jan-28 Feb (GL); **green morph** LL feeder 25 Jan (WL).

Am. Goldfinch: max 434 PCBC; 253 SLCBC; 232 ECBC; 40 FCBC, second only to siskins in abundance.

Evening Grosbeak: max 128 SLCBC; 7 ECBC; flocks up to 30 at some feeders, encouraging.

EXOTICS

SCARLET-RUMPED CACIQUE (*Cacicus uropygialis*): ad Rte 3 between Indian Carry Rd & SL, T Harrietstown, 22 Feb (MEB,CH); a black icterid with striking triangular red rump patch was believed to be this Neotropical species, following an internet search by observers; NYSARC report requested.