

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The winter of 2010-11 was a typical North Country winter, with temperatures averaging at or just below normal across the Region and average to slightly above average snowfall totals. December began with warmer temperatures and heavy rainfall, but by the 10th a cold front brought most of the Region to temperatures below zero, with an extreme of -14° F in Lake Placid, and temperatures averaged 1-3° below normal for the remainder of the month. The first measurable snow accumulation occurred on the 6th, bringing 2-5" across the Region, with subsequent snowfalls on the 14th, 17th, and 26th forming the beginning of a snowpack that would blanket the Region for most of the winter. January also began with a warm front that brought the highest temperatures of the month, reaching 53° in Lake Placid and 50° in Willsboro on the 1st. The coldest days of the winter season occurred on the 24th and 25th, keeping daytime temperatures below zero across the Region and nighttime lows to the -30s in the Adirondacks and -20s in the Champlain Valley. A persistent weather pattern brought frequent smaller snowstorms to the Region, with January snowfall totals ranging from 10-16" in the Champlain Valley to 26-40" across the Adirondacks. February did not enter with a warm front like the previous months but instead began with heavy snowstorm that dumped 16" of snow in the Champlain Valley. This trend continued, and produced one of the snowiest Februaries on record, with monthly snowfall totals of 40-50" across the entire Region, including 46" of snow in Peru. Temperatures for the month were slightly above normal in the Adirondacks and slightly below for the Champlain Valley and ranged from -11° in Tupper Lake on the 1st to a high of 59° in Chazy on the 19th.

Average temperatures and above average snowfall took its toll on the Region, the evidence of which can still be seen in numerous potholes in the roads, houses with caved in roofs, and the lack of species diversity in the winter bird reports. Many of the season's highlights came from Christmas Bird Count reports. Fortunately the counts draw out dozens of birders in the Region and help to motivate us to continue birding through winter even as bird numbers drop. There was an impressive number of bird reports by numerous individuals throughout the winter period despite the fact that few irruptive species were present this year. The greatest number of reports came from birdfeeders, where redpolls made an impressive appearance and were frequently reported in numbers ranging from dozens to hundreds. With such large numbers of redpolls, there were multiple reports of Hoary Redpolls that supported the theory that for every 100 Common there is likely to be a Hoary in there somewhere. There was also one report of a "Greater" Redpoll, a rarer subspecies of Common Redpoll from Greenland and the Arctic Islands. Redpolls were the only widespread finches this winter, though there were a few isolated reports of Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, Evening Grosbeaks, and Pine Grosbeaks. There were zero

reports of Red Crossbills, and American Goldfinches disappeared from most of the Region after mid-December. White-winged Crossbills were recorded on the Elizabethtown CBC and at feeders in small numbers during February.

Many North Country winters are highlighted by owls and raptors that winter in the fields of the Champlain Valley, but the constant snowpack made conditions less than favorable for birds of prey this season. The only northern owl seen was a single Snowy Owl at Point Au Roche SP on 9 December, though an Eastern Screech-Owl in a barn on the Plattsburgh CBC was also an impressive owl sighting. There were a few reports of Rough-Legged Hawks and Northern Harriers in December, but no reports in the snowier months of January and February. Snow Buntings and Horned Larks were abundant in the month of December, and three Lapland Longspurs, always a good find, were found in December. Northern Shrikes were seen throughout winter across the Region, and one was banded in Inlet. Bohemian Waxwings continued to be seen in fields and backyards throughout the season, with flocks in the hundreds reported in December and February.

While the snow-covered fields became quiet beyond December, the open water of Lake Champlain provided birding opportunities throughout the winter. Narrower portions of the lake north of Cumberland Head and south of Willsboro Point froze solid by late January, but the wider portions of the lake remained open all winter. The temporary ferry at Crown Point provides a new location for wintering dabbling ducks, the highlight being an American Wigeon on 16 February. The NYS winter waterfowl count on 19 January yielded good numbers this year, with 2,533 Common Goldeneye, one Barrow's Goldeneye, 579 Common Mergansers, 69 Bufflehead, and one Redhead. On the Plattsburgh CBC a Northern Shoveler was seen at Cumberland Head, a new CBC record and late record for the County. Another good CBC find was a lingering Blue-winged Teal in Westport on the Elizabethtown CBC.

Despite the harsh winter there were a number of hardy migrants that decided to stick around longer than normal, with some toughing it out the entire winter. The **Great Cormorant** first sighted in November was last seen on 3 December. A Double-crested Cormorant was seen as late as 18 December. Belted Kingfishers were reported by CBC observers and seen again as early as 1 February. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker visited a Peru birdfeeder from 20 January-1 February and a Westport birdfeeder on 22 January. Red-bellied Woodpeckers seem to be increasingly overwintering in the Region, with mid-winter reports at locations throughout the Region. Tufted Titmice and Carolina Wrens also seem to be increasing their winter numbers in more interior parts of the Region. Other stragglers included a lingering Fox Sparrow at my feeders on 13 December and a Yellow-rumped Warbler in Plattsburgh on 9 January, a new late record for the County.

There was a total of 93 species reported this winter, well below the record of 109, as would be expected with the harsh weather conditions. Thank you to the many observers who braved the inhospitable winter weather to provide these reports.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Point; BB – Bloomingdale Bog; CH – Cumberland Head; CP – Crown Point; CR – Chazy Riverlands; Etown – Elizabethtown; ELCBC – Elizabethtown CBC; LC – Lake Champlain; LP – Lake Placid; LL – Long Lake; Pburgh – Plattsburgh; PLCBC – Plattsburgh CBC; PK – Port Kent; PtR – Point Au Roche State Park; SL – Saranac Lake; SLCBC – Saranac Lake CBC; TB – Treadwell Bay; TL – Tupper Lake; West – Westport; WWC – NYS Winter Waterfowl Count.

WHISTLING-DUCKS – VULTURES

Snow Goose: max 1000 PtR 12 Dec (BK); 200 TB 17 Dec.

Canada Goose: max 104 LP 10 Dec (LM).

Am. Wigeon: arr LC 5 Feb (LC, AB, ET); CP 16 Feb (RG).

Am. Black Duck: max 49 LC 15 Jan (WWC); 46 CP 19 Feb (BH).

Mallard: max 524 LC 1/15 (WWC).

BLUE-WINGED TEAL: West 18 Dec (J&PT), only report.

N. Shoveler: CH 19 Dec (LH, AB, BMc), late record CLIN.

Redhead: LC 15 Jan (BK), only report.

Ring-necked Duck: Piseco 5 Dec (LH); LC 15 Jan (BK).

Lesser Scaup: West 18 Dec (J&PT); 14 LC 15 Jan (WWC).

Bufflehead: 20 West 18 Dec; max 69 LC 15 Jan (WWC).

Com. Goldeneye: 176 West 18 Dec; SL 2 Jan (SLCBC); max 2533 LC 15 Jan (WWC).

Barrow's Goldeneye: Montys Bay 9 Jan (SO, TM, JS); LC 15 Jan (WWC).

Hooded Merganser: max 10 AP 1 Jan, 9 LC 15 Jan (WWC).

Com. Merganser: 50 LC 17 Dec (NO); max 579 LC 15 Jan; 25 Port Douglas 2 Feb (DR).

Red-breasted Merganser: TB 6 Dec (HK); 2 West 18 Dec (J&PT); LC 19 Dec (PLCBC); 2 SL 12 Feb (TA).

Ring-necked Pheasant: 2 Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC); 2 Essex 22 Feb (ABA).

Wild Turkey: max 38 Etown 19 Dec (J&PT); 31 Inlet 9 Dec (GL).

Com. Loon: max 38 LC 19 Dec (PLCBC); Inlet 20 Dec (GL), late; 2 West 5 Dec (J&PT).

Horned Grebe: 5 LC 19 Dec (PLCBC); max 7 LC 15 Jan (WWC).

Double-crested Cormorant: West 18 Dec (J&PT).

GREAT CORMORANT: RP thru 3 Dec (NR).

Great Blue Heron: 5 LC 19 Dec (PLCBC); West 18 Dec (J&PT), late.

Bald Eagle: max 6 LC 15 Jan (WWC); 4 AP 15 Feb (NO); 2 CP 16 Feb (RG).

N. Harrier: max 5 West 18 Dec (J&PT); Moffitt Rd 19 Dec; PtR 22 Dec (NO).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Essex 22 Feb (ABA).

Cooper's Hawk: Saranac Ri 9 Dec (BF); West 18 Dec (J&PT); PK 23 Jan (DR).

N. Goshawk: West 18 Dec (J&PT); 13 Feb Willsboro (RuL).

Rough-legged Hawk: West 18 Dec (J&PT); Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); Chazy 20 Dec (DL); West 1 Jan (J&PT), few reports.

Merlin: Moffitt Rd 19 Dec; PtR 22 Dec (NO).

Killdeer: PtR 9 Dec (HK).

Great Black-backed Gull: 4 West 18 Dec; max 10 LC 15 Jan (WWC).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

E. Screech-Owl: West 18 Dec (J&PT); Peru 19 Dec (PLCBC).

Great Horned Owl: Pburgh 8 Jan (DR).

Snowy Owl: PtR 9 Dec (AS).

N. Saw-whet Owl: Pburgh 24 Dec (LV).

Belted Kingfisher: Etown 19 Dec (J&PT), late; AP 1 Feb, LP 13 Feb (LL).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 3 West 18 Dec (J&PT); Cadyville 19 Dec (CO); West 22 Jan; PK 30 Jan (SL); overwintered Inlet (GL) & Willsboro (RoL).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: West 18 Dec (J&PT); West 22 Jan (S&AH); Peru 20 Jan-1 Feb (DL), 2nd Jan record CLIN.

Black-backed Woodpecker: Inlet 9 Jan (GL); SSP 30 Dec (JP); BB 18 Feb.

N. Flicker: arr Essex 19 Feb (J&PT); Essex 27 Feb (SF).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: LP 4 Dec (LM); Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC); Keene 28 Dec (MM); Inlet 2 Jan (GL), banded; PK 6 Jan (DR); LL 31 Jan (BL); Etown 5 Feb (AB); West 19 Feb (J&PT).

Blue Jay: max 47 West 18 Dec; 25 Essex 27 Feb.

Com. Raven: max 6 Inlet 25 Feb.

Horned Lark: 3 West 18 Dec (J&PT); max 108 Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); 7 Chazy 20 Dec (DL); 10 PtR 22 Dec (NO); 3 Essex 24 Feb (SF), few reports.

Boreal Chickadee: BB 25 Dec (LM); 3 SSP 30 Dec (JP); 2 BB 24 Feb.

Tufted Titmouse: max 16 West 18 Dec (J&PT); 2 New Russia 22 Jan (ET); 2 Keene 22 Jan (MM), 4 LL 21 Feb.

Carolina Wren: max 5 West 18 Dec (J&PT); 3 Pburgh 19 Dec; 2 Willsboro 15 Jan-19 Feb (RoL); New Russia 20 Feb (ET).

E. Bluebird: max 6 West 18 Dec; L Alice 24 Dec (T&DG); LC 15 Jan (WWC); 6 Peru 2 Feb; 3 Essex 27 Feb.

Am. Robin: max 200 Willsboro 19 Feb (RoL).

N. Mockingbird: Pburgh 1 Dec-24 Dec (CM).

Bohemian Waxwing: 220 Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); 300 Peru 26 Dec (LL); 30 Peru 28 Dec (L&HF); CH 26 Jan (BK, CM); max 400 Keene 5 Feb (AB); 300 Keene 21 Feb (RF), a good irruptive year.

Cedar Waxwing: 14 West 18 Dec (J&PT); max 383 Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); 9 Essex 19 Dec; 15 West 5 Feb (AB); Valcour 15 Feb (NO).

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 2 CRL 18 Dec (DL); PtR 22 Dec (NO).

Snow Bunting: 40 LP 10 Dec (LM); 38 Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC); max 200 Chazy 20 Dec (DL); 12 PtR 22 Dec (NO); 7 CP 11 Jan; 27 Essex 22 Jan.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Pburgh 9 Jan (SOB, TM, JS), late record CLIN.

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: 45 Wadhams 17 Dec; 18 West 18 Dec; max 129 Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC); 12 Peru 4 Jan; 10 Essex 24 Feb.

Fox Sparrow: Keene 13 Dec (MM), late.

Song Sparrow: West 18 Dec (J&PT); Essex 22 Feb (ABa).

White-throated Sparrow: PK 5 Feb (DR).

Dark-eyed Junco: max 70 Wadhams 17 Dec (DN).

Red-winged Blackbird: 25 CRL 18 Dec (BK, CM); 2 Essex 18 Dec (NR).

Brown-headed Cowbird: SL 2 Jan (SLCBC); 14 Wilmington 18 Feb (BS); 3 Belmont 19 Feb (NR).

Purple Finch: max 7 Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC).

Pine Grosbeak: Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC); Indian L 30 Jan (NV), only reports.

White-winged Crossbill: 3 Etown 19 Dec (ELCBC); 2 Newcomb 20 Jan-5 Feb (AF); 2 New Russia 30 Jan (ET); 2 Indian L 4 Feb (D&DS); 4 Gabriels 24 Feb (JS).

Com. Redpoll: arr 30 Cadyville 18 Dec; 19 Peru 19 Dec; 21 LP 23 Dec; 18 Keene 25 Dec; 10 PtR 4 Jan; 75 Peru 19 Jan; 250 Keene 20 Feb; 160 New Russia 20 Feb; 300 SL 24 Feb; max 400 LP 27 Feb; 250 LL 27 Feb; a strong irruptive year.

HOARY REDPOLL: 2 New Russia 22 Jan, 20 Feb (ET); 2 Keene 20 Feb (J&PT); LL 24 Feb (JC); max 3 LP 27 Feb (LM).

Pine Siskin: 2 Pburgh 19 Dec (PLCBC); LP 31 Dec (LM); SL 2 Jan (SLCBC); max 4 LL 16 Feb (JC); 2 BB 23 Feb.

Am. Goldfinch: 4 LP 10 Dec; 36 West 18 Dec; 3 Piseco 29 Dec; 3 BB 23 Feb; no Jan reports.

Evening Grosbeak: 12 Inlet 8 Jan (GL); max 110 LL 16 Feb (JC); 30 Newcomb 19 Feb (AF); 40 LL 23 Feb (RB).