

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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With the exception of an extremely deep cold snap between 27 December and 15 January temperatures for the season were above normal. The monthly averages discussed below tend to smooth out this dip. The below-average temperatures at the end of November moderated through most of December only to move to extreme subzero readings. Negative twenties and even thirties were seen daily from the last days of the month into the middle of January. There was, however, a sharp rise in temperature on 11-12 January. In some places it was -30°F one day and raining heavily enough to wash out driveways the next. Temperature swings of up to 80° were noted. With this exception, high temperatures often failed to reach positive numbers. Overall December temperatures were 3° to 5° below normal in the St Lawrence and Champlain Valleys. In the Adirondacks they averaged 7° or more lower than normal. In the last half of January temperatures moderated enough that the monthly averages were only 3° below normal. This warming trend continued into February, where temperatures for the month averaged 5° to 7° above normal. It is interesting to note that feeder watchers reported many lingering sparrow species. Most notably White-throated and Fox Sparrows may have over-wintered. This warming would also have been a welcome and welcoming trend for the Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles, which returned the last two days of the month.

Precipitation (liquid equivalent) totals for December ranged from 4-5" the southwest corner of Hamilton Co. to 3-4" in the balance of Hamilton and the adjacent portion of Essex Co. and 2-3" in the remainder of Region 7. A heavy snow storm on 26 December dropped up to 20" in the Adirondacks a week after a heavy rain on 19 December. On the whole, January's cold didn't reduce precipitation. Totals in the mountains averaged nearly 5" while those in the Champlain Valley were somewhat lower at from 2-4". Up to 4" of snow was recorded on 3 January, but the big contributor was 4" of rain on 11 January. In February precipitation across the Region was close to 2" with only slight variation one way or the other. Snow falls of 9" on 7 February and 6" on 10 and 11 February in the Champlain Valley were significantly heavier in the Adirondacks.

The winter finch forecast proved accurate. As predicted, both crossbills and Pine Siskin were prevalent throughout the Adirondacks but less so in Clinton Co. Though expected to stay north, Purple Finch was present in good numbers. Common Redpoll (7 reports, 30 max), Hoary Redpoll (0 reports), Pine Grosbeak (4 reports, 2 max), and Evening Grosbeak (8 reports, 2 max), as predicted did not venture this far south in significant numbers.

Significant freezing of Lake Champlain began in mid December, early enough to adversely affect the number of waterfowl species observed on the Plattsburgh CBC. Notable misses included both scaup, Hooded Merganser, and Bufflehead. The three weeks of sub-zero deep freeze caused a complete ice-over from Rouses Point to Cumberland Head, and on the annual January Waterfowl Count also covered the limited open areas south to Ausable Point with an impenetrable blanket of “steam” from condensation in the super cold air. Only five species and 270 individuals were reported from northern Lake Champlain, while 1,617 individuals of fourteen species were reported from the southern end. Once again Lake Champlain did not freeze solid this winter. In recent years this has become the rule, where before it was the exception.

Region 7 CBC highlights include Ring-necked Pheasant from the NY side of the Ferrisburgh, VT count. The Elizabethtown CBC included Snow Goose, Gray Catbird, and eight White-throated Sparrows—a number indicative of the unusual numbers of lingering sparrows observed throughout Region 7. The Saranac Lake count had Rusty Blackbird for only the fourth time in 62 years and, rare for the count, Wilson’s Snipe, Fox Sparrow, and House Finch. The NY side of the Champlain Islands, VT count’s most notable bird was an E. Screech Owl. Plattsburgh’s CBC included Snowy Owl and Gyrfalcon detailed below.

The highlight of the season was a white phase GYRFALCON seen on 13 and 16-17 December at locations approximately four miles apart. Found on both occasions by women (ABd & TF) more interested in photography than birds, its presence was announced with both perched and in-flight photos. On 16 December Michael Burgess and Bill Krueger observed a brief talon-to-talon interaction between it and a Rough-legged Hawk.

SNOWY OWL was present throughout, with records from before 1 December and into March with one additional sighting in April. At least five individuals were seen from Crown Point to Rouses Point with a sixth in Saranac Lake, making this the biggest irruption since the winter of 2013-2014.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AH – Angier Hill Rd; **AP** – Ausable Pt campground; **APw** – Ausable Pt WMA; **BPW** – Beaver Pd Way; **BKT** – Beekmantown; **BB** – Bloomingdale Bog; **BR** – Bull Rock Rd; **CB** – Cole Bay; **CH** – Cumberland Head; **CP** – Crown Pt; **CR** – Chazy Riverlands; **DR** – Deer Ri; **Del** – Delano Rd; **DRd** – Dudley Rd; **EC** – Essex Church Yard; **HB** – Hoisington Beach; **FC** – Fort Covington; **IN** – Inlet; **LA** – Lake Abanakee; **LC** – Lake Colby; **LR** – Limekiln Road; **LL** – Long L; **MT** – Majic Triangle; **MA** – Malone; **MR** – Maple Meadows; **MF** – Miner Farm; **MR** – Moffitt Rd; **MB** – Monty’s Bay; **NE** – Newcomb; **NP** – Noblewood P; **NFR** – N. Farm Rd; **ON** – Onchiota; **PI** – Plattsburgh; **PtF** – Point au Fer; **PtR** – Point au Roche; **PH** – Port Henry; **PK** – Port Kent; **RR** – Reynolds Rd; **RB** – Riley Brook; **RW** – Rugar Woods; **StH** – St. Home; **SH** – St. Huberts; **SPM** – Sand Pd Marsh; **SB** – Sandy Beach; **SRm** – Saranac Ri mouth; **SR** – Sawyer Rd; **SLB** – Silver L Bog; **Ti** – Ticonderoga; **TB** – Trombly Bay; **TL** – Tupper Lake; **WP** – Westport.

WATERFOWL - VULTURES

Snow Goose: 3000 PI 14 Dec (GCh); 2000 PI 25 Feb (NO).
Cackling Goose: CH 3 Dec (BK).
Canada Goose: 65 PH 17 Dec (SR).
TUNDRA SWAN (R7): 3 PH 13 Dec (SR).
Wood Duck: CP 1 Dec (JP).
Gadwall: 11 CP 7 Dec (SR); AP 3 Feb (AB).
Am. Wigeon: 2 WP 2 Dec (J&PT).
Am. Black Duck: 300 SRm 1 Feb (SR).
Mallard: 1200 SRm 1 Feb (SR).
N. Pintail: HB 30 Dec (SR); SRm 1 Feb (SR).
Canvasback: PH 17 Dec (SR).
Redhead: 8 AP 3 Feb (BMc).
Ring-necked Duck: LA 9 Dec (MM); 14 WB 14 Jan (SR).
Greater Scaup: 9 WP 24 Feb (SR).
Lesser Scaup: PK 25 Jan (SR).
White-winged Scoter: 4 CP 7 Dec (SR).
Black Scoter: PL 7 Dec (BK).
Long-tailed Duck: TL 11 Dec (SR).
Bufflehead: 108 NP 4 Dec (SR); 26 CP 14 Jan (SR).
Com. Goldeneye: 951 CP 14 Jan (SR).
Barrow’s Goldeneye: 3 WD 9 Dec (SR); CP 14 Jan (SR).
Hooded Merganser: 34 TL 11 Dec (SR).
Com. Merganser: 400 HB 30 Dec (JD).
Red-breasted Merganser: CH 3 Dec (BK).
Ring-necked Pheasant: AH 13 Dec (SR).
Ruffed Grouse: SC 17 Feb (JC).
Wild Turkey: 20 MA 21 Jan (AB).

Red-throated Loon: RP 3 Dec (GC); 2 WB 9 Jan (SR).

Com. Loon: CH 1 Dec (SJ).

Pied-billed Grebe: CP 7 Dec (SR).

Horned Grebe: 27 NP 4 Dec (SR); 15 CP 14 Jan (SR).

Red-necked Grebe: 2 NP 4 Dec (SR).

Double-crested Cormorant: CH 3 Dec (BK); 8 PH 17 Dec (SR).

Great Blue Heron: SB 19 Dec (SR).

Green Heron: 11 Dec, late.

Black Vulture: 2 Ti 28 Feb (SR).

Turkey Vulture: Ti 28 Feb (SR).

HAWKS - LARIDS

Bald Eagle: 2 LL 11 Dec (JC); 4 PH 17 Dec (SR).

N. Harrier: MR 17 Dec (EB, LL); BKT 4 Jan (SR).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: MA 13 Jan (JT); Ham 9 Feb (GL).

Cooper’s Hawk: MR 17 Dec (BMc, CP); CH 30 Jan (NO).

N. Goshawk: LL 18 Feb (JMc).

Red-shouldered Hawk: WD 26 Dec (MD, TH).

Red-tailed Hawk: 3 MA 21 Jan (AB).

Rough-legged Hawk: 2 MB 26 Dec (TH).

Am. Coot: 8 CP 7 Dec (SR).

Wilson’s Snipe: NE 1 Jan (LM).

Ring-billed Gull: 67 NP 4 Dec (SR).

Herring Gull: 18 NP 4 Dec (SR).

Iceland Gull: SRm 16 Dec (BK, SR); HB 30 Dec (SR).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 Jan

Glaucous Gull: WD 15 Dec (BMc); SRm 26 Dec (SR); HB 30 Dec (RB).

Great Black-backed Gull: 28 Pl 14 Dec (GCh).

PIGEONS - PARROTS

Mourning Dove: 2 MA 13 Jan (JT).

E. Screech-Owl: PtR 17 Dec (ABl).

Great Horned Owl: MO 28 Feb (SR).

Snowy Owl: NFR 1 Dec (ABd); 2 MR 16 Feb (NO); irruption year, *intro*.

Barred Owl: IN 10 Feb (GL).

Short-eared Owl: CP 9 Dec (MC); SR 3 Feb (SR).

N. Saw-whet Owl: LC 15 Feb (ABl).

Belted Kingfisher: CH 20 Dec (BK); WP 24 Feb (SR).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 2 CP 7 Dec (SR).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: EC 21 Dec (SR).

Downy Woodpecker: LA 28 Feb (MM).

Hairy Woodpecker: LA 28 Feb (MM).

Black-backed Woodpecker: 3 SC 17 Feb (JC).

N. Flicker: FC 21 Jan (AB).

Pileated Woodpecker: NP 4 Dec (SR).

Am. Kestrel: RB 14 Dec (BK).

Merlin: RR 31 Dec (TF, DR).

GYRFALCON (white morph): RB 13 Dec (TF); MR 16 Dec (ABd, BK, MB); MR 17 Dec (ABd); *intro*.

Peregrine Falcon: AR 16 Dec (SJ).

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: Peru 17 Dec (LL).

Gray Jay: 10 LL 17 Feb (JC).

Blue Jay: 5 CP 7 Dec (SR).

Am. Crow: 750 MR 16 Dec (MB, BK).

Com. Raven: Essex 13 Dec (J&PT).

Horned Lark: 40 RR 14 Dec (BK); 120 MA 21 Jan (AB).

Black-capped Chickadee: 8 NP 4 Dec (SR).

Boreal Chickadee: 20+ SPM 22 Feb (JC).

Tufted Titmouse: MA 30 Dec (JS).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: LL 9 Dec (JC).

White-breasted Nuthatch: 21 RR 17 Feb (SM).

Brown Creeper: LL 9 Dec (JC).

Winter Wren: MM 3 Jan (SR).

Carolina Wren: CH 8 Jan (NO).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: LL 9 Dec (JC).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: CP 7 Dec (SR), rare in winter.

E. Bluebird: 5 AP 18 Feb (BB).

Am. Robin: 12 CH 8 Jan (NO).

N. Mockingbird: DRd 21 Dec (SR).

European Starling: 45 WP 17 Feb (J&PT).

Am. Pipit: 24 Dec, late.

Cedar Waxwing: 50 LL 22 Dec (JC).

LONGSPURS - WARBLERS

Lapland Longspur: 11 MA 21 Jan (AB); 2 NFR 10 Feb (BK).

Snow Bunting: 100 MR 16 Dec (ABd, MB).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 MT 4 Dec (J&PT).

TOWHEES - WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: 21 RB 14 Dec (BK).

Savannah Sparrow: 5 17 Dec.

Chipping Sparrow: BR 21 Dec (GCh).

Fox Sparrow: SL 23 Dec - 1 Feb (AB); MM 15 Feb (SR).

Song Sparrow: BR 21 Dec (GCh).

White-throated Sparrow: SL thru (AB).

Dark-eyed Junco: 8 CH 17 Feb (NO); 42 Ham 31 Dec (GL).

N. Cardinal: 6 CH 18 Feb (NO).

Red-winged Blackbird: BR 21 Dec (GCh).

E. Meadowlark: Del 27 Dec (SR).

Rusty Blackbird: NE 30 Dec (BMc, JD).

Brown-headed Cowbird: 4 MA 21 Jan (AB).

House Finch: 10 LL 20 Jan (KM).

Purple Finch: 2 LR 17 Feb (GL).

Red Crossbill: 20 SPM 3 Dec (JC); 11 LR 17 Feb (GL).

White-winged Crossbill: 27 BR 21 Dec (SR).

Com. Redpoll: 4 ON 21 Jan (AB); BPW 16 Feb (MN).

Pine Siskin: 3 LR 24 Feb (GL); 20 ON 21 Jan (AB).

Evening Grosbeak: NE 21 Jan (JC).

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