

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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December's average temperatures reversed November's cold temperatures by registering near normal for the entire Region except for the northwest corner of Franklin County which was, on average, a degree or two above normal. Winter storm Diego in the middle of the month and Eboni just after Christmas tracked mostly south of the area and had minimal impact. Precipitation (melted equivalent) totals for the month increased from 2-3" in the north of Region 7 to 4-5" in the southern portions of Essex and Hamilton Counties.

January, unlike December, was colder than average by as much as five degrees throughout the Region. This was due in large part to an extended polar vortex near the end of the month during which the daytime high temperature often did not get above zero. Precipitation totals again increased from 3-4" in the north of the Region to 6-7" in the south. Winter storm Harper in the middle of the month dropped 12" on Plattsburgh and upwards of 20" in the mountains. However, tracking a little more to the south, winter storm Jayden just dusted the upper Champlain Valley with 1-3" and left a modest 5-8" in the south of Region 7.

Overall February's temperatures were close to normal with only a small area around Lake Placid/Saranac Lake averaging several degrees above normal. This area is usually colder than its surroundings. For most of The Region precipitation averaged between 3" and 4". The greatest deviations from this occurred in the south of Hamilton County which averaged 5" and a small strip which included the border between Clinton and Essex Counties, which received only 1-2". The winter clipper system became established in this month with winter storms Kai, Lucian, Maya, Nadia, Oren, Petra, Quiana, and Ryan forming and tracking east in rapid succession. Maya left 10" of snow in the Champlain Valley and more than double that in the mountains. A little more than a week later Oren deposited roughly half those amounts throughout the area. Quiana left only a few inches in the Champlain Valley. The others had no significant impact.

Largely due to January's polar vortex and the accompanying subzero temperatures, the lake froze solid for the first time since 2015. As previously mentioned, this, which used to be the rule, has become the exception. However, ferries at Cumberland Head and Essex kept channels open and ice free for overwintering waterfowl and gulls. The flow of the Saranac River, augmented by the warm water from the sewage treatment plant, also kept an area open at the river's mouth. Often a Peregrine Falcon could be seen perched on a nearby cell tower, and occasionally observed diving to prey on the birds concentrated there.

The various forecasts for winter finch appearances proved accurate. Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, expected to be widely distributed, were present in moderate numbers. Red Crossbill was reported only five times. Scattered reports of Purple Finch and a single record for White-winged Crossbill along with ten widely distributed reports of Pine Siskin were also in line with last fall's predictions. The prediction of a flight year for Common Redpoll was also born out, though the numbers were not as great as in other flight years. There were just two reports of Hoary Redpoll.

All or part of five CBC circles are within Region 7. Red-tailed Hawks made a particularly good showing with 35 individuals counted. The vast majority, 31, were found on the three counts that are held in The Champlain Valley. The same disparity was observed for Bald Eagles with only two of thirteen counted in the circles in the Adirondacks. The Saranac Lake count reported the only Northern Goshawk of the season. Notable birds on the Plattsburgh count included Snowy Owl and both Iceland and Glaucous Gulls.

The appearance of a white phase **Gyr Falcon** the day before and the day after Christmas in nearly the same place and at nearly the same time as last year was documented with a photograph by Tara Fuller, the same woman who found the 2017 bird. Everything was the same, but there is no way to know whether it was the same bird both years. Now an almost annual occurrence, a **Tufted Duck** was present in the Crown Point area for most of the season, spending time in both Vermont and New York waters. An exceptionally late Red-throated Loon was recorded on Lake Abanakee **14 & 15 February**. A Common Loon at Noblewood Park on **7 February** was a late date for Essex County, as was the Double-crested Cormorant at Port Henry on **12 January**. Vesper and Chipping Sparrows also remained **into January**, well beyond their normal departure times.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt; **Bk** – Beekmantown; **BC** – Belmont Center; **BB** – Bloomingdale Bog; **BR** – Brushton; **BWB** – Bulwaga Bay; **CR** – Chazy

Riverlands; **CV** – Clintonville; **CH** – Cumberland Head; **CP** – Crown Pt; **Es** – Essex; **EF** – Essex ferry; **FtC** – Fort Covington Marsh; **GBM** – Gilbert Brook Marina; **IL** – Indian L; **KV** – Keene Valley; **LAb** – Lake Abanakee; **LL** – Long L; **MM** – Maple Meadows; **MB** – Monty’s Bay; **NP** – Noblewood P; **OH** – Owls Head; **PB** – Plattsburgh; **PBC** – Plattsburgh CBC; **PtR** – Point Au Roche SP; **PH** – Port Henry; **RR** – Reynolds Road; **SbB** – Sabattis Bog; **SI** – Saranac Inn; **SRM** – Saranac Ri Mouth; **TI** – Ticonderoga; **TB** – Trombly Bay; **VTV** – Vermontville; **WB** – Wallons Bay; **SCBC** – Saranac Lake CBC; **WC** – West Chazy; **WI** – Willsboro; **WP** – Westport.

WATERFOWL-GREBES

Snow Goose: 30 CH 12 Jan, last.
Cackling Goose: PBC 16 Dec.
Am. Black Duck: 25 BWB 11 Dec (JR), max.
Green-winged Teal: PtR 16 Dec (AB), last.
Canvasback: CP 8 Jan (SR), last.
Redhead: 4 AP 6 Jan (P&RW), only report.
Ring-necked Duck: 4 WP 14 Jan (SR), late.
TUFTED DUCK: CP 27 Dec (SR), EF 26 & 27 Feb (EG).
Greater Scaup: 325 AP17 Dec (SR), max.
Lesser Scaup: 570 CP 5 Jan (TK), max.
Surf Scoter: PH 10 Dec (SR), last.
White-winged Scoter: WB 10 Dec (RB), only report.
Long-tailed Duck: 2 BWB 30 Dec (JMc), only report.
Bufflehead: 25 WP 67 Jan (SR), last.
Com. Goldeneye: 750 BWB 11 Dec (JR), max.
Barrow's Goldeneye: 4 CP 8 Jan (SR), max.
Hooded Merganser: 26 TI 14 Dec (SR), max.
Com. Merganser: 300 MB 10 Jan (SR), max.
Red-breasted Merganser: MB 10 Jan (SR).
Ring-necked Pheasant: 4 WB 28 Dec (PC), max.
Ruffed Grouse: 3 VTV 12 Feb (AB), max.
Wild Turkey: 20 IL 16 Jan (MM), max.
Horned Grebe: 3 BB 12 Jan (AB), late.

RAILS-LARIDS

Iceland Gull: 3 SRM 19 Jan (AB), max.
Glaucous Gull: PBC 16 Dec.
Great Black-backed Gull: 15 SRM 13 Dec, max.

LOONS-FALCONS

Red-throated Loon: LAb 14 & 15 Feb (M&WM), late.
Com. Loon: 2 NP 7 Feb (SR), last.
Double-crested Cormorant: 2 PH 12 Jan, late.
Great Blue Heron: Peru 9 Dec (GC), last.
Black Vulture: 8 TI 26 Dec (SP), rare.
N. Harrier: AP 6 Jan P&RW), last.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: CH 14 Feb (SJ).
Cooper's Hawk: WP 5 Jan (ED).
N. Goshawk: SCBC 15 Dec, only report.
Bald Eagle: 10 EF 27 Feb (EG).
Red-tailed Hawk: 15 PBC 16 Dec.
Rough-legged Hawk: 3 PBC 16 Dec.
E. Screech Owl: PtR 16 Dec (AB).
Great Horned Owl: CH 11 Feb.
Snowy Owl: WD 16 Dec, CP 30 Dec (SR).
Barred Owl: SbB 18 Feb.
Short-eared Owl: Peru 25 Dec (EP); Es 22 Feb (SR).
Belted Kingfisher: PBC 16 Dec.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 2 WI 16 Feb (ET).
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Es 29 Jan - 12 Feb (G&MC).
Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 SI 12 Jan (RG).
N. Flicker: SRM 26 Jan (SR).
Pileated Woodpecker: 2 WI 16 Feb (ET).
Am. Kestrel: WC 16 Dec (JS).
Merlin: BR 16 Dec (JF), only report.
GYRFALCON: GBM 24 Dec (DR); MB 26 Dec (TF), white phase.
Peregrine Falcon: PBC 16 Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-SNOW BUNTING

N. Shrike: PBC 16 Dec.
Canada Jay: 3 BB 18 Feb (ThM).
Common Raven: 4 BB 13 Jan (BB).
Horned Lark: 40 RR 10 Jan (SR), max.
Boreal Chickadee: 3 CV 27 Dec.
Tufted Titmouse: 4 PBC 16 Dec.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 6 OH 7 Feb (JT).
Brown Creeper: 9 OH 21 Feb (JT).
Winter Wren: PH 3 Dec (SR), only report.
Carolina Wren: PB 17 Feb (RB).
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 3 BB 20 Jan (EM).
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 3 BB 20 Jan (EM).
E. Bluebird: 4 CR 1 Dec-28 Feb, overwintered.
N. Mockingbird: SRM 13 Dec.
Bohemian Waxwing: 190 AP 15 Dec (JS), max.
Cedar Waxwing: 150 PH 5 Dec (RB), max.

Evening Grosbeak: 70 TL 27 Jan (MC), max.
Pine Grosbeak: 19 KV 12 Jan (SR), max.
Purple Finch: 4 Es 16 Feb (VP), only scattered reports.
Com. Redpoll: 100 Es 12 Jan (SR), max.
Hoary Redpoll: TL 2 Feb (TH); 2 OH 22 Feb (JT), only reports.
Pine Siskin: 2 BC 1 Dec (NR); SL 28 Feb (ED).
Lapland Longspur: 6 RR 10 Jan (SR), max.
Snow Bunting: 150 MB 6 Jan (KA), max.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS-CARDINALS

Am. Tree Sparrow: 21 AP 11 Dec (ED).
Chipping Sparrow: PL 12 Jan (KF), late.
Vesper Sparrow (R-7): 2 MB 6 Jan (KA), rare.

Savannah Sparrow: WP 6 Dec (ED); TI 13 Jan (SR), v. late.
Song Sparrow: Jay 12 Jan (PO), late.
White-throated Sparrow: 2 Es 15 Feb (CS).
Dark-eyed Junco: 30 TB 17 Feb (AF).
Red-winged Blackbird: IL 14 Dec (MMo), late.
Brown-headed Cowbird: Bk 7 Dec (TF); 7 FtC 16 Feb (DW), max.
Common Grackle: LL 5 Dec (SR), only report.
N. Cardinal: 14 CH 18 Feb (NO); 16 Es 18 Feb (CS), max.