
REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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Temperatures in December continued the warming observed in November. The bulk of Region 7 was 3°-5° F warmer than normal. The exceptions were a strip along the border with Canada which was 5°-7° warmer than average and an area which included Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and most of Hamilton County that was only 1°-3° warmer. Precipitation (melted equivalent) in the northern half of the Region measured 2"-3" except for a nearly circular area around Lyon Mountain and Averill Peak where it was 3"-4". Most of Hamilton County and the High Peaks area recorded 5"-6".

Winter storm John ushered in January with 6"-8" of snow over the first two days. Overall most of the region got 1"-2" of melted precipitation in the month. The exceptions were the eastern two thirds of Essex, the southwest corner of Franklin County, and an area astride the Clinton/Franklin County border which got 2"-3". Lyon Mountain and environs were the wettest with 3"-4" for the month.

Temperatures for the month averaged 3°-5° above normal in the north of Region 7 with a segment along the border with Canada that was 5°-7° above normal. Most of Essex County was only 1°-3° above normal. The southern two thirds Hamilton County, only 1°-3° warmer than average, was the coolest.

Winter storm Orlena opened the month of February dumping 15"-17" of snow in the upper Lake Champlain Valley. Surprisingly the snowfall totals ranged from 2"-5" in the southern portions of Region 7. The next winter storm to impact the Region was Uri which left 5"-6" in the Lake Champlain Valley on 16-17 February. The difference in Orlena's snowfall totals, north and south, is reflected in a comparison of the overall precipitation totals for the month. The northern half of Region 7 recorded 2"-3" while the southern half only 1"-2". Temperatures in February ended the three month warmer-than-average period. The warmest section of the Region was an area that included the north of Hamilton and the south of Franklin Counties where the average was within a degree either way of normal. The balance of Region 7 was 1°-3° below normal for the month, except for the High Peaks area which was 3°-5° below normal.

The water level of Lake Champlain began the winter season at just a fraction above 94'. At this level an extensive gravel bar was exposed at the mouth of the Saranac River. This and the warm effluent from the sewage treatment plant attracted large numbers of larids and waterfowl including both white-winged gulls and Barrow's Goldeneye. On at least one occasion a Peregrine Falcon found the numbers inviting. However, in winter the timing and extent of ice coverage has a greater effect on avian activity than the lake level.

Once again Lake Champlain did not ice over completely. This was surely due to the exceptionally warm December and January noted above. Ice was also later than normal in forming in the bays and upper and lower ends of the lake. Thus the lake was nearly ice free for the annual waterfowl count in mid-January. The shallow bay to the north and east of Ausable Point did not ice over permanently. The resulting open water provided suitable forage for Bald Eagles throughout the season. A Belted Kingfisher was present into March, and a Great Blue Heron was reported as late as the last week of January. Bluebirds also overwintered. To the south the ice didn't reach Westport until early February. The edge of the ice was an active spot for waterfowl, including Barrow's Goldeneye, Tufted Duck, and Red-throated Loon. Two Northern Pintail lingered at least to the end of the season even as the open area contracted when the temperatures returned to seasonal values.

The Winter Finch Forecast (WFF) suggested that this would not be a flight year for Pine Grosbeak. After a modest showing in the fall this winter produced nearly 50 records with a maximum 36 individuals. Red Crossbills, predicted to drift south, were reported dozens of times with a maximum of 42. Expected to stay west, White-winged Crossbill was reported fewer than two dozen times. Though a moderate to good flight was expected for Common Redpoll, the season for this species was astonishing. The tremendous numbers of redpolls were difficult at times to comprehend with the vast majority of sightings taking place

in the Champlain Valley lowlands, mostly from Willsboro south to Westport. Most agricultural lands with suitable seed crops hosted hundreds, if not thousands of redpolls. Multiple reports of a thousand or more birds were filed with a maximum of 2,250 individuals along Sayre Road in Wadhams at the Art Farm. This huge crush of redpolls were feeding on many acres of hemp seeds, and they persisted here in large numbers throughout much of the second half of the season. Among these flocks as many as twenty Hoary Redpolls were extrapolated based on a ratio of 1 Hoary Redpoll per 100 Common Redpolls, many of which were photographed by several observers. And there were dozens of individual Hoary reports from widely scattered locations throughout Region 7, but mostly in the Champlain Valley. As a bonus, subspecies of both **Common Redpoll**, *rostrata* (max eight), and **Hoary Redpoll**, *hornemanni* (max two), were reported. There were more than a dozen sightings of the former and four of the latter, some with photos. To put it in technical terms redpolls of all types were all over the place. Pine Siskin, expected to move south in small numbers, was reported fewer than three dozen times with a maximum of 30. Up to 80 Evening Grosbeaks were noted in nearly two dozen reports. The WFF suggested Bohemian Waxwing “will most likely stay north”. This winter there were fewer than 20 reports, though numbers as high as 90 individuals were recorded.

Tufted Duck has been seen on the NY side of Lake Champlain every year since 2013 except 2015. This winter it was present in the Crown Point area from late December to 12 February. On that day and the day after it was found about ten miles north, suggesting the latter was the same bird moving north. An adult **Golden Eagle** was photographed extensively as it was mobbed by a Bald Eagle. The hostile interaction included the Golden Eagle at times flying inverted with its talons extended. After a prolonged stay in spring 2020 and a second appearance for a day in November, **Say’s Phoebe** was present at Crown Point for a nine day encore from the end of December into January. It seems highly unlikely that three individuals were involved.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFT – Art Farm Trail; **AHR** – Angier Hill Rd; **AM** – Ausable Marsh; **AP** – Ausable Pt; **APN** – Ausable Pt, north of entrance; **AR** – Anfier Hill Rd; **BaR** – Bay Rd, Plattsburgh; **BB** – Bloomingdale Bog; **BEC** – Bellmont Center; **BHT** – Blueberry Hill Trail; **BP** – Bicentennial P; **BRd** – Burdick Rd, ESSE; **BRR** – Bull Rock Rd; **CB** – Cole Bay; **CDR** – Camp Dudley Rd; **CH** – Cumberland Head; **ChP** – Cheney Pd; **ChR** – Christian Rd; **CP** – Crown Pt; **CR** – Chazy Riverlands; **CRd** – Cross Rd; **CZ** – Chazy; **DRd** – Delano Rd; **DyR** – Duprey Rd; **EC** – Essex County; **Es** – Essex; **FWC** – Fisk Rd., West Chazy; **HBO** – Hoisington Brook Outlet; **HBr** – Halfway Brook; **Ke** – Keeseville; **LCI** – Lake Clear; **LCo** – Lake Colby; **LP** – Lake Placid; **MB** – Monty’s Bay; – McCaughen Rd; **MEC** – Middle Rd, ESSE; **MM** – Maple Meadows; **MR** – Moffitt Rd; **MTE** – Military Turnpike Extension; **NP** – Noblewood P; **NRd** – Nappier Rd; **OPR** – Oregon Plains Rd; **PB** – Plattsburgh; **PBy** – Plattsburgh Bay; **PD** – Port Douglas; **PH** – Port Henry; **PL** – Plattsburgh; **PP** – Pine Pd; **PS** – Paul Smiths; **PtR** – Point Au Roche SP; **RRd** – Reynolds Rd; **SB** – Sandy Beach; **SF** – Schuyler Falls; **SL** – Saranac L; **SP** – Santanoni Pres; **SRM** – Saranac Ri Mouth; **SRWF** – Split Rock Wild Forest; **TB** – Trombly Bay; **TFBL** – Ticonderoga Ferry and Boat Launch; **TI** – Ticonderoga; **TRd** – Trimble Rd, ESSE; **WB** – Wallons Bay; **WBR** – Wallons Bay Rd; **WD** – Wilcox Dock; **WRF** – Willsboro Research Farm; **WP** – Westport; **WPG** – Westport Grasslands.

WATERFOWL – HUMMINGBIRDS

Snow Goose: 75,000 MB 20 Dec (AB); 7 RRd 13 Feb (BB, late).

Ross’s Goose: MB 20 Dec (AB).

Snow x Ross’s Goose hybrid: MB 20 Dec (AB).

Greater White-fronted Goose: TB 10 Dec (SR), ph; PBy 29 Dec (AB).

Cackling Goose: CH 22 Dec (BK).

Gadwall: 3 HB 23 Dec (SR).

Northern Pintail: MM 22 Dec (SR); HB 2 -26 Feb (SR, mo).

Green-winged Teal: MB 27 Jan (BW).

Redhead: 6 APN 28 Dec (SR).

Ring-necked Duck: 10 WP 11 Feb (JG).

TUFTED DUCK: CP 24 Dec-12 Feb (SR, mo); SB 17- 24 Jan (SR); HB 12-13 Feb (AB, RB, SR).

Greater Scaup: 750 WP 14 Feb (SR).

Lesser Scaup: 1500 WP 14 Feb (SR).

Scaup sp: 1950 CP 3 Jan (SR).

White-winged Scoter: LP 12 Dec (OS).

Black Scoter: LCI 8 Dec (SMc); HB 11-12 Feb (SR, RB), late.

Long-tailed Duck: 2 SB 17 Jan (SR).

Bufflehead: 119 NP 7 Dec (SR).

Common Goldeneye: 535 CP 1 Jan (SR).

Barrow’s Goldeneye: APN 23 Dec (KMc); SRM 6 Feb (JH); 9 HB 11 Feb (SR), max.

Hooded Merganser: 25 CB 27 Jan (TL).

Common Merganser: 39 PtR 20 Dec (AB).

Red-breasted Merganser: 5 CP 31 Dec (SR).

Ruddy Duck: CP 24 Dec (SR).

Ring-necked Pheasant: 3 WB 28 Dec (SR).

Ruffed Grouse: 6 PD 21 Jan (OS).

Wild Turkey: 32 CZ 11 Dec (JB); 42 CRd 26 Dec (SR).

Pied-billed Grebe: PH 22 Dec (JS).

Horned Grebe: 6 WB 22 Dec (RB); 2 HB 6 Feb (MCp).

Red-necked Grebe: WP 22 Dec (JS, BMc, JB).

RAILS – TROPICBIRDS

Killdeer: arr. CB 20 Feb (IW); CH 24 Feb (SJ), early Clin.

Bonaparte’s Gull: 3 NP 2 Dec (GC).

Herring Gull: SRM 21 Dec (SR).

Iceland Gull: MTE 5 Dec (SR); GBM 6 Dec (JB); 2 SRM 7 Jan (SR); NP 17 Jan (DHR); HBO 29 Jan (TL, SW).

Glaucous Gull: SRM 28 Dec (SR).

Great Black-backed Gull: 65 SRM 10 Dec (JB).

Herring X Great Black-backed Gull: NP 31 Dec - 17 Jan (SR, DHR); HBO 13 Jan (SR); AM 18 Feb (SR).

LOONS – PARAKEET

Red-throated Loon: CP 27 Dec (JK); HB 31 Jan (BMc), late.

Common Loon: 5 WP 18 Feb (SR).

Double-crested Cormorant: HB 12 Dec (JS).

Great Black Heron: CB 17 Dec (SR); 29 Dec-23 Jan (AB, DR, mo).

Black Vulture: 6 BP 24 Dec (SR); 15 TI 23 Jan -24 Feb (SR, mo), cont.

Turkey Vulture: MEC 10 Dec (SR).

GOLDEN EAGLE: BRd 31 Jan (EG), photos.

Northern Harrier: MR 29 Dec (AB).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: CH 31 Dec (SJ).

Cooper's Hawk: PL 14 Feb (JH).

Northern Goshawk: SWF 18 Dec (DHR); HBr 3 Jan (JS); Es 17 Feb (DHR).

Bald Eagle: 3 CH 28 Jan (SJ).

Red-shouldered Hawk: SF 19 Jan (DD), ph.

Red-tailed Hawk: 4 DRd 18 Jan (SR).

Rough-legged Hawk: 3 WPG 31 Dec (SW).

Eastern Screech Owl: AR 19 Dec (GC); 2 CB 8 Feb (RB).

Great Horned Owl: CH 5 Dec (SJ); 2 EC 19 Dec (SR).

Snowy Owl: PD 13 Feb (SJ).

Barred Owl: 3 Es 26 Feb (G&MC).

Short-eared Owl: 2 MEC 4 Dec – 11 Jan (DHR, mob); WRF 10 Dec (DHR); WBR 19 Jan (DHR), ph.

Belted Kingfisher: AP 21 Dec-28 Feb (SR, DR, mo).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 3 BRR 31 Dec (G&MC).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: BRR 3 Jan-14 Feb (G&MC).

Black-backed Woodpecker: 3 ChP 14 Jan (GC).

Northern Flicker: 4 TFBL 12 Dec (SR); BRd 14 Feb (MC).

Pileated Woodpecker: 2 SP 11 Dec (G&MC).

American Kestrel: EC 5 Jan (LM); WP 28 Jan (TL).

Merlin: CP 4 Jan (ZC).

Peregrine Falcon: ESSE 12 Jan (BMc, JS); HB 28 Jan (SR).

FLYCATCHERS – SNOWBUNTING

SAY'S PHOEBE: CP 26 Dec-4 Jan (RB, GC, JE, mo).

Northern Shrike: several reps at traditional locs.

Canada Jay: 10 BB 22 Feb (DM).

Blue Jay: 21 BRR 26 Dec (G&MC).

Fish Crow: WD 5 Dec (BK).

Common Raven: 15 BRR 26 Dec (G&MC).

Horned Lark: 130 CP 2 Jan (SR).

Boreal Chickadee: 5 Jay 13 Dec (MM).

Tufted Titmouse: 6 CH 20 Dec (NO).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 12 BB 28 Feb (S&JB).

White-breasted Nuthatch: 5 SL 28 Feb (JS).

Brown Creeper: WP 18 Feb (SR).

Winter Wren: MM 2 Jan (SR).

Carolina Wren: 2 CH 1 Dec-28 Feb (NO).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 3 PP 3 Jan (RC).

Hermit Thrush: WP 19 Dec (RB).

Gray Catbird: WP 13 Dec (RB).

Northern Mockingbird: SRM 4 Dec-17 Feb (mo).

Bohemian Waxwing: 41 BEC 8 Dec (SR); 90 WP 3 Feb (DC), max.

Cedar Waxwing: 80 WP 15 Feb (SR).

Evening Grosbeak: 80 WP 17 Dec (SR), max.

Pine Grosbeak: widespread with reps in all 4 counties; max 36 WP 2 Dec (DHR).

Common Redpoll: max 2250 AFT 12 Jan (DHR); widespread throughout Region.

Common Redpoll (*rostrata/islandica*): AHR 2 30 Dec (SW); ChR 30 Dec- 13 Feb (mob); WBR 2 Jan (SW); CP 13 Jan (GC); 2 Jan (SW); WPt 28 -31 Jan (DHR); BaR 29 Jan (TL); BB 26 Feb (RM).

Hoary Redpoll: reps in all 4 counties; 60 ESSE, 8 CLIN, 4 FRAN, 1 HAMI.

Hoary Redpoll (*hornemanni*): DyR 10 Jan (GC); AFT 27 Jan (SW); 2 AHR 30 Jan (SW); 2 BaR 29 Jan (TL, SW).

Red Crossbill: 12 PS 5 Jan (BMc, JS, JB); 42 OPR 22 Feb (ZC), max.

Red Crossbill (type 10): CP 25 Feb (SR), rec'ing.

White-winged Crossbill: widespread; 35 CB 3 Jan (KMc), max.

Pine Siskin: 9 PB 21 Dec (JK); 30 WB 18 Jan (SR), max.

Lapland Longspur: 8 FWC 8 Dec (GFG).

Snow Bunting: 50 CR 10 Dec (SR).

NEW WORLD SPARROWS – CARDINALIDS

American Tree Sparrow: 30 AFT 17 Jan (SW).

Field Sparrow: Peru 1 Jan (KC), late, ph.

Savannah Sparrow: RRd 9 Jan (AB), late.

Fox Sparrow: SL 1 Dec (AB).

Song Sparrow: McC 11 Jan (SR); 2 Peru 18 Feb (HC).

Swamp Sparrow: APN 21 Dec (SR), late.

White-throated Sparrow: 3 SL 15 Dec (AB).

Red-winged Blackbird: SL 15 Dec (AB), late;
arr. CH 14 Feb (BB) .

Brown-headed Cowbird: 30 DRd 2 Jan (GC).

Northern Cardinal: 11 WP 6 Jan (JS).

