

REGION 7—ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

Bill Krueger

40 Colligan Point Rd, Plattsburgh, NY 12901
billkrueger@hotmail.com

Derek Rogers

54 Corlear Drive, Willsboro, NY 12996
drogers0031@gmail.com

Precipitation in December (melted equivalent) ranged from 2-3" in almost all of the southern half of Region 7, the Champlain Valley and the eastern half of Franklin County. The rest of the Region got at least 3-4" except for the High Peaks Region and the area surrounding Lyon Mountain which got 4-5". The month was 3-5° warmer than normal throughout Region 7 apart from an area that included Lake Placid and Saranac Lake which was 1-3° warmer.

January's precipitation ranged from 1-2" in almost the entirety of Region 7. The exceptions were the extreme northwest which got only 0-1" and the High Peaks area which got from 2-3". The month was 5-7° colder than normal for all of Region 7 except for the southern halves of Hamilton and Essex Counties which were 3-5° colder than average. A deep freeze mid-month had an adverse impact on the annual waterfowl count. At end of the month and into 1 February, Winter Storm *Kenan* grazed the Region with minimum snow fall totals throughout.

The same was not true of two winter storms in February. Classed as a bomb cyclone, Winter Storm *Landon* dropped 12-14" in the northern Champlain Valley on the 4th and more in the higher elevations. Dooryard numbers soared as did sightings of gritting birds on roadsides, but no wind-driven birds were reported.

Snowfall totals for Winter Storm *Oaklee* on 25 February were similar. Temperatures for the month warmed over most of Region 7 to within a degree plus or minus of average. Only the northern half of Essex, the southwestern corner of Clinton, and the western portion of Hamilton Counties were 1-3° colder than normal. The highest elevations of Region 7, Lyon Mountain, the High Peaks, and southwestern Hamilton County, received 5-6" of precipitation with patches getting 6-7". Only the Champlain Valley and the western edge of Franklin County got less, at 3-4".

Despite an increased effort the total of 3,670 individuals in the annual waterfowl count on Lake Champlain and on inland lakes and rivers was lower than usual. The severe cold snap cited above in the week prior froze many of the interior lakes and rivers, froze the north end of Lake Champlain, and formed extensive ice shelves well out into the lake in the south. On the morning of the count the frigid air over the much warmer water formed a hovering mist that severely limited visibility. Despite all this, 18 species were recorded, highlighted by three sightings of Harlequin Ducks. Also notable for January were late Wood Duck, Gadwall, Northern Pintail and Red-breasted Merganser.

All or part of four CBCs were compiled in Region 7 in December. Plattsburgh's counted 53 species and 17,117 individuals. The highlight was a very late Baltimore Oriole which ultimately stayed all winter. The Saranac Lake CBC counted 2,715 individuals and 44 species. With its center in Vermont, Champlain Islands' CBC circle included a segment in Region 7, which added 31 species and 6,108 individuals. The New York side of the Ferrisburgh, VT CBC contributed three species not found by any other group, American Kestrel, Northern Shrike, and Red Crossbill.

The Winter Finch Forecast, (WFF) expected that White-winged Crossbill would irrupt this year with breeding likely. Sightings of this species in the Adirondacks of Region 7 abounded and included an early report of "male feeding behavior". As predicted Red Crossbills were abundant as well. According to Matt Young, president of the Finch Research Network, in the 20+ years that he's been doing crossbill work in New York State, the 2021-2022 winter has been the best overall year for both crossbill species at the same time. (See Notes and Observations pp. 134-135 for a more in depth account.) Some Purple Finches may have remained in Ontario as predicted, but there were more than 100 reports of this bird. Assessment of this prediction is complicated by their resident populations. Redpolls were expected "to stay north with some trickling later". The 75+ reports of Common Redpoll may or may not be a trickle, but this year's showing was nothing like the great irruption of the 2020-2021 winter season. Also, unlike last year, there were no reports of *rostrata* or either race of Hoary Redpoll. There were over 125 reports of Pine Siskin even though no southward movement was forecast. The expected limited movement south of Evening Grosbeak was borne out with fewer than ten reports from Region 7. Deemed unlikely to move south, Bohemian Waxwing was also reported fewer than ten times.

A **Mute Swan** found in late January lingered near the Essex Ferry for a month. It was the first record for Region 7 since the spring of 2008 when a pair, present for two weeks, was trapped and removed as a nuisance. **Tufted Duck** continued its recent streak of appearances covering the past nine years with sightings being reported through the end of February and into March from two widely separate locations. Adding to the collection of interesting *Aythya* species was an apparent Redhead x scaup sp. (hybrid) found at the south end of Lake Champlain in Bulwagga Bay on 30 December just off the western shore of Crown Point State Historic Site. In an embarrassment of riches at least two distinct **Harlequin Ducks** were discovered. The first involved an immature drake at Bulwagga Bay Beach in Port Henry on 30 December, where it favored the edge of a steep rock wall along the lake shoreline. On 10 January, a hen was discovered riding the icy rapids inside of the La Chute River in Ticonderoga where it remained through 10 February.

At least two **Razorbills** continued from the fall season at Crown Point State Historic Site following an unprecedented inland incursion of the species. Sightings on 2 and 5 December constitute a winter season first for Region 7 and added to the very short list of alcids recorded in the NY waters of Lake Champlain.

Herring x Great Black-backed Gulls (hybrid) continue their regular appearance at known gull congregations along Lake Champlain in Clinton and Essex Counties. Regular year-round sightings at the Boquet and Saranac River mouths prove Region 7 to be a relatively reliable area for studying these interesting hybrids. While their natal site remains a mystery, it's highly probable they originate from the Four Brothers Islands in the middle of Lake Champlain (Essex County), approximately 5.5 miles northeast of Willsboro.

Four reports of **Golden Eagle** were a strong showing. A **Snowy Owl** was present for several days at the north end of the lake in Clinton County in mid-December. There were also two reports of Snowy Owls from the south end of the lake in Essex County. Both Essex County birds were photographed, which solidified the distinction between both individuals. The **Long-eared Owl** found in the Willsboro area at the end of December was the only winter record in more than 20 years. The bird was found in a large, overgrown hayfield adjacent to a substantial, mature red cedar forest. There is no way of knowing whether the scarce detection of Long-eared Owls in Region 7 is in any way a reflection of the deliberate killing of 162 individuals on Valcour Island in a predator control program in the 1940s (*The Kingbird* 1989: Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 24).

A Hermit Thrush was photographed at Willsboro Bay Marina on 30 January and marked a first January record for this species in Region 7. In addition, there are no February records of Hermit Thrush. Only a handful of winter season records exist, with the previous late date being 30 December 2021.

A couple of additional hardy late-season birds were discovered this season. An adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed at a backyard bird feeding station on 4 December in Saranac Lake and constitutes the first winter season record for this species in Region 7. A bright adult male Baltimore Oriole

overwintered in Plattsburgh with the aid of a private feeding station, yet another winter season first for Region 7.

CONTRIBUTORS

Suzanne Beaumont, Jeff Biby, Marian Bodine, Adam Bradshaw (AdB), Mark Burns (MBu), Cesar Castillo, Gary Chapin, Glen & Malinda Chapman, Chris & Marie Chappell, Joan Collins, Jeremy Collison (JeC), Timothy Demers, Jacoba Freeman, Ellie George, Edward Grant (EGr), Tim Healy, Suzy Johnson, Janelle Jones, Stefan Karkuff, Cindy Kindle, Bill Krueger, Gary Lee, Nicolas Main, Brian McAllister, Kevin McGrath, Matthew Medler, Alissa Milillo, Betsy Miner, Michael Moccio (MMo), Dan Nickerson, Jennifer Norman, Nancy Olsen, Joseph Poliquin, Stacy Robinson, Derek H Rogers (DHR), John Shea (JSh), Will Sherman, Owen Stainken, Janet Stein, Noah Khanti Steinberg, Jan Trzeciak, Connor Vara, Donna Williams, Kathleen Woodruff, Fran Yardley, Jen Zahorchak.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP – Ausable Pt; **APN** – Ausable Pt; north of entrance; **BB** – Bloomingdale Bog; **BRR** – Bull Rock Rd; **BBB** – Bulwagga Bay Beach; **Cad** – Cadyville; **Cpt** – Crown Pt; **CRi** – Chazy Riverlands; **Ess** – Essex; **MB** – Montys Bay; **MM** – Maple Meadows; **PBy** – Plattsburgh Bay; **PCBC** – Plattsburgh CBC; **PH** – Port Henry; **SL** – Saranac L; **SRM** – Saranac Ri Mouth; **TI** – Ticonderoga; **TL** – Tupper L; **WB** – Whallons Bay; **WBR** – Whallons Bay Rd; **WMO** – Lake opposite Wickham Marsh; **WMS** – South of Wickham Marsh; **WP** – Westport; **WPB** – Westport boat launch; **XAB** – Old Air Force Base.

Cackling Goose: PBy 9 Dec (SR).

Mute Swan: Essex Ferry 26 Jan - 26 Feb (m. ob.).

Gadwall: WB 6-24 Feb (m. ob.).

American Wigeon: Ess 19 Feb (JZ).

Northern Pintail: MB 6 Jan (SR); 2 WMS 14 Jan (SR); 2 AP 12 Feb (TD).

Green-winged Teal: 2 AP 5 Jan (OS).

Redhead: 9 CP 7 Dec (SR); 10 APN 11 Feb (BM).

Redhead x scaup hybrid: Cpt 30 Dec (DHR), *intro.*

Ring-necked Duck: 13 WPB 20 Jan (SR).

TUFTED DUCK: 2 Cpt 7-30 Dec (SR, m. ob.); 2 APN 10-24 Feb (SR), *intro.*

Greater Scaup: 3000 APN 20 Feb (JeC).

Lesser Scaup: 500 APN 20 Feb (m. ob.).

Greater/Lesser Scaup: 4000 APN 10 Feb (SR).

Harlequin Duck: BBB 30 Dec-1 Jan (DHR); TI 10 Jan-5 Feb (m. ob.); WPB 19-20 Jan (DHR); *intro.*

White-winged Scoter: PH 14 Dec (SR); 5 PH 5 Jan (GC), *late.*

Long-tailed Duck: Trombly Bay 19 Dec (JS).

Bufflehead: 45 WMO 16 Dec (SR).

Common Goldeneye: 800 APN 24 Feb (OS).

Barrow's Goldeneye: Cpt 30 Dec-1 Jan (SR); 4 WMO 14 Jan & 10-24 Feb (m. ob.); PBy 10 Feb (SR); AP 10 Feb (SR).

Common x Barrows Goldeneye: PH 5 Jan (SR).

Hooded Merganser: 21 AP 30 Dec (KMc).

Common Merganser: 300 MB 24 Dec (DHR); HBO 14 Jan (SR).

Red-breasted Merganser: Cpt 7 Dec (SR); 8 Plattsburgh 3 Feb (SR).

Wild Turkey: 69 WP 26 Feb.

Ruffed Grouse: 6 Lake Clear 18 Feb (AdB).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Riverview 6 Jan (BM).

Pied-billed Grebe: PH 21 Dec (SR).

Horned Grebe: 6 WB 16 Jan-21 Feb (BMc).

Red-necked Grebe: WPB 20 Jan (SR), *late.*

RAZORBILL: 2 CPt & PH 2-5 DEC (mob), *intro*.

Iceland Gull: 2 Cad 9 Dec (JB); PBy 7 Jan-21 Feb (m. ob.).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: XAB 17-18 Feb (SR), scarce in winter.

Glaucous Gull: PBy 6 Dec -17 Feb (m. ob.); Cad 18 Feb (JB).

Great Black-backed Gull: 46 SRM 9 Dec (SR).

Herring x Great Black-backed Gull (hybrid): WD 16 Dec (SR); PBy 13 Jan (SR); Noblewood P 19 Dec thru 3 Feb (DHR); *intro*.

Common Loon: 5 BWB 1 Jan (SR).

Double-crested Cormorant: 5 BWB 1 Jan (SR).

Great Blue Heron: 3 AP 16 Dec (m. ob.).

Black Vulture: 10 TI 1 Jan (GC).

Turkey Vulture: BRR 17 Feb (G&MC), rare in winter.

Golden Eagle: Rouses Pt 9 Dec (SR); North Hudson 29 Jan (MY); Franklin Co 29 Jan (JF); BRR 17 Feb (G&MC), *intro*.

Northern Harrier: 5 WBR 1 Dec (MB, BM).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Eight Acre Wood 7 Feb (GL).

Cooper's Hawk: 2 MM 15 Jan (SR).

Northern Goshawk: TI 14 Dec-2 Jan; Sunset Pd Bog 24 Dec (C&MC); Newcomb 29 Jan (MY).

Bald Eagle: 4 XAB 21 Feb (SR).

Red-shouldered Hawk: Hogback Rd 8 Feb (SR), rare in winter.

Red-tailed Hawk: 3 PCBC 19 Dec.

Rough-legged Hawk: 3 WBR 24 Dec (WS).

Eastern Screech Owl: WBR 20 Dec (NKS).

Great Horned Owl: Cumberland Head 18 Jan (SJ).

Snowy Owl: CRi 15-19 Dec (m. ob.); 2 Ess 23-24 Dec & 1-23 Jan (m. ob.), *intro*.

Barred Owl: 2 MM 28 Dec (SR).

Long-eared Owl: Lilly Lane Fields 30 Dec (DHR), rare, *intro*.

Short-eared Owl: max 5 WBR 5 Dec (SR).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: TL 26 Dec (C&MC).

Belted Kingfisher: Summer Brook 13 Feb (CV); PS 24 Feb (EG).

Red-bellied Woodpecker: 2 BRR 23-28 Dec (G&MC).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: WP 16 Jan (BMc); BRR 23 Jan-28 Feb (G&MC).

Black-backed Woodpecker: 2 BB 28 Jan (JP).

Northern Flicker: Cumberland Head 8 Feb (SJ).

Pileated Woodpecker: 2 Cad 21 Feb (JJ).

American Kestrel: Ess 5 Dec - 11 Jan (SR, mob); WP 15 Dec - 12 Feb (RB, mob).

Merlin: Twin Valleys Loop 17 Dec (DN).

Peregrine Falcon: CPt 30 Dec (DHR); Charter Tower Plattsburgh 25 Jan & ff (SR).

Northern Shrike: reps at traditional locations

Canada Jay: 9 BB 21 Feb (JC); 1 juv Owls Head throughout (JT).

Blue Jay: 68 PCBC 19 Dec.

American Crow: 6239 PCBC 19 Dec.

Common Raven: 33 Pyramid L 9 Jan (EG).

Boreal Chickadee: 10 16 Feb (m. ob.).

Tufted Titmouse: 13 PCBC 19 Dec.

Horned Lark: 60 Reynolds Rd 23 Dec (SR).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: 11 BB 2 Jan (JC).

Bohemian Waxwing: < 10 reports; max 109 Keene Valley 22-26 Feb (DHR, mob), *intro*.

Cedar Waxwing: 55 Olmstedville 3 Jan (MMo).

Winter Wren: CPt 2 Dec (SR).

Carolina Wren: MM 1 Dec (SR).

Gray Catbird: MM overwintered (SR).

Brown Thrasher: Peru overwintered.

Northern Mockingbird: SRM 11 Feb (BM).

Hermit Thrush: Willsboro Pt 30 Jan (DHR), late, *intro*.

Evening Grosbeak: < 10 reports; max 5 Blue Mt Rd 27 Dec (MBu), *intro*.

Purple Finch: > 100 reports; max 35 Newcomb 29 Jan (MY), *intro*.

Common Redpoll: 75+ reports; first Vermontville 19 Dec (MB); max 33 Sandy Beach 24 Feb (TH), *intro*.

Red Crossbill: widespread, max 60 Piseco L 15 Dec (CK), *intro*, and see Notes and Observations pp. 134-135.

White-winged Crossbill: widespread, max 48 Paul Smith's College 4 Dec (NM), *intro*, and see Notes and Observations pp. 134-135.

Pine Siskin: > 125 reports; first 32 SL 2 Jan (JS); max 120 Swinyer Rd 20 Feb (JN), *intro*, and see Notes and Observations pp. 134-135.

32 SL 2 Jan (JS); 120 Swinyer Rd 20 Feb (JN).

American Goldfinch: max 35 CRi 31 Dec (KMc).

Lapland Longspur: 13 Reynolds Rd 23 Dec (SR).

Snow Bunting: 200 CRi 19 Dec (m. ob.).

Fox Sparrow: Paradox 6 Feb (EG).

American Tree Sparrow: 19 WBR 1 Feb (SR).

Dark-eyed Junco: 30 WBR 5 Jan (BM, MB).

White-throated Sparrow: Speculator 12 Feb (AM), late.

Savannah Sparrow: Delano Rd 7 Feb (SR), late.

Song Sparrow: TI 28 Jan (GC); MM 6-19 Feb (SR).

Swamp Sparrow: Malone 29 Dec (JSh), late.

Baltimore Oriole: Plattsburgh overwintered, *intro*.

Red-winged Blackbird: Peru overwintered.

Brown-headed Cowbird: 4 Malone 18 Feb (DW).

Rusty Blackbird: ES 6-16 Jan (SR).

Common Grackle: Peru 18 Feb (SB).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 2 Ess 19 Dec - 26 Jan (DHR), late.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Kewassa L Outlet 4 Dec (KW), late, *intro*.