

THE BIRD OBSERVER SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 1974

The month of February began with subzero temperatures and alternating periods of cloudy, then clear weather. The heaviest snow (4 to 8 inches) fell over Cape Cod and the Islands on the 7th. A prolonged southwesterly flow brought warm air across our area on February 14th, with highs in the 40's and a few readings of 50 degrees. This warm spell was short-lived, and by Saturday, February 16th, temperatures dropped about 10 degrees below normal. A heavy rain occurred on Sunday night, February 17th. At midmonth, temperatures were above normal with periods of rain on the 19th, 22nd and 23rd. Boston recorded 1.33 inches of rain, and the wind gusted to 62 m.p.h. on the 23rd. At months end, temperatures remained moderately above normal with a high of 56° at Boston on the 28th.

With the exception of some interesting feeder birds, birding in February is usually dull and nonproductive. Stragglers are being eliminated by the weather, food supplies are depleted and the winter residents are wandering more. The warmer weather during the last week of the month gave promise of spring with the arrivals of the Redwings and Grackles.

Loons and grebes were present in fair numbers, and the Northern Fulmar continued to recuperate on Nantucket. Anseriformes were seasonably low but the following were noteworthy: two Whistling Swans, 22 Gadwalls at Plum Island, 33 Pintails, two European Wigeons, 10 Barrow's Goldeneyes, 15,000 Oldsquaws at Surfside, Nantucket, and as many as 9 Harlequin Ducks at Magnolia.

Good numbers of raptors were seen. The number of Goshawks remained above normal; there were five reports of wintering Red-shouldered Hawks, yet the reports for Rough-legged Hawks were way down. A Golden Eagle as well as a Bald Eagle were found in the Newburyport area. A Gyr Falcon was observed in Eastham, and a Peregrine Falcon was found in Salisbury. A female American Kestrel killed a Bobwhite outside the office window of the Manomet Bird Observatory; certainly an interesting report considering the quail outweighs the Kestrel by about 50 grams.

The Common, Black-headed and Little Gulls continued in Newburyport Harbor. Alcids remained in very low numbers. A Barn Owl was photographed in a heavily populated area of Cambridge. There were three reports of Snowy Owls, and a Long-eared Owl was present in Orleans. The Red-headed Woodpeckers continued in their respective localities, and the Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen again in South Natick.

Early in the month, many reports of dead or dying Blue Jays were reported. Several carcasses were taken to the University of Massachusetts field station in Waltham, however, as yet no diagnosis as to the cause has been determined. The Boreal Chickadee continued at Plum Island, and 185 Fish Crows were at West Roxbury. A Long-billed Marsh Wren continued in Harwich, and a Varied Thrush was in Billerica. An Ovenbird was present in Sandwich for several days, and two reports of Yellow-breasted Chats were received. Dickcissels were reported from seven localities, and nine Hoary Redpolls were observed among the increasing number of Common Redpolls.

R.H.S.

Common Loon:			
28	P.I.	34	R.Forster,K.Hamilton
Red-throated Loon:			
28	P.I.	5	R.Forster,K.Hamilton
Red-necked Grebe:			
thr.,16	Dennis,Cape Ann	4,3	B.Nikula,BBC(R&D Hale)
16,23	Manomet	7,1	B.Sorrie,W.Petersen#
Horned Grebe:			
16,23	Cape Ann,Manomet	6,6	BBC(R&D Hale),W.Petersen#
Pied-billed Grebe:			
9,10	Dartmouth,Lakeville	4,4	R.O'Hara#,K.Anderson#
<u>Northern Fulmar</u> :			
thr.	Nantucket	1(from Dec.28)	E.Andrews
Great Cormorant:			
16	Nahant(Egg Rock)	100	W.Petersen#
Double-crested Cormorant:			
24	North Scituate	1	D.Briggs#
Great Blue Heron:			
thr.	13 localities	22 individuals	v.o.

Black-crowned Night Heron:			
thr.	Eastham, Chatham	15,6	B. Nikula, v.o.
American Bittern:			
thr., 13	Eastham, Chatham	2,1	B. Nikula, v.o.
17, 24	Adamsville, Harwich	1,1	T. Athearn, R. Veit#
Mute Swan:			
thr.	Acoaxet	max. 45 (Feb. 27)	R. Emerson
<u>Whistling Swan:</u>			
thr., 27	Magnolia, Acoaxet	1,1	v.o., D&R Emerson
Canada Goose:			
thr.	So. Dartmouth	500+	P. Regan
Brant:			
2, 9	Duxbury, Squantum	40+, 130	BBC (W. Harrington), E. Morrier
18, 23	Chatham, Plymouth	22, 80	J. Bryant, W. Petersen#
Snow Goose:			
9 on	Newburyport	2	v.o.
Black Duck:			
23	Newburyport	1000	BBC (C. Littlefield)
Gadwall:			
thr., 18, 28	Orleans, Manchester, P.I.	2, 4, 22	B. Nikula#, J. Berry, R. Forster#
Pintail:			
thr.	11 localities	33 individuals	v.o.
Green-winged Teal:			
thr.	Orleans	10	v.o.
European Wigeon:			
thr.	Orleans, Cohasset	1, 1 m.	v.o.
American Wigeon:			
thr.	Orleans, Belmont	40, 21	v.o.
Northern Shoveler:			
thr., 18, 22	Orleans, Eastham, E. Orleans	1, 6, 5	v.o., J. Bryant, C. Goodrich#
Wood Duck:			
thr.	4 localities	10 individuals	v.o.
Redhead:			
9	Falmouth	3	CCBC (D. Baines)
Canvasback:			
9, 28	Falmouth, Newburyport	120, 17	CCBC (D. Baines), R. Forster#
Greater Scaup:			
9	Newburyport	4000	R. Stymeist, R. Veit
Barrow's Goldeneye:			
9, 17	Newburyport, Nantucket	6, 2	R. Stymeist#, R. Veit#
18, 23	Wellfleet, Plymouth	1, 1	W. Bailey#, W. Petersen#
Bufflehead:			
23	Plymouth	120	SSBC (W. Petersen)
Oldsquaw:			
18	Nantucket (Surfside)	12-15,000	E&C Andrews
Harlequin Duck:			
9-19	Magnolia	4-9	v.o.
Common Eider:			
12, 17, 23	Revere, Nantucket, Plymouth/2500+, 4000+, 2500+	R. Arnold, R. Veit#, W. Petersen#	
King Eider:			
15, 17-23	Newburyport, Rockport	1, 1	R. Forster, S&J Harrison
19, 26, 27	P.I., Nahant, S. Duxbury	singles	W. Petersen#, S. Garrett, D. Briggs
White-winged Scoter:			
17	Nantucket	850	R. Veit
Surf Scoter:			
16, 23	Salisbury, Manomet	2, 1	J. Berry, W. Petersen#
Black Scoter:			
17, 18	Nantucket, Magnolia	120, 2	R. Veit#, L. Robinson#
Ruddy Duck:			
9, 17	Falmouth, Orleans	12, 10	D. Baines#, B. Nikula#
Hooded Merganser:			
thr.	6 localities	12 individuals	v.o.
Common Merganser:			
1, 9	Rowley, W. Newbury	9, 8	D. Alexander, R. Stymeist#
17	Adamsville, Squantum	10, 4	T. Athearn, R. Pasquier#
Goshawk:			
thr.	9 localities	singles	v.o.

<u>Sharp-shinned Hawk:</u>			
thr.	7 localities	singles	v.o.
<u>Cooper's Hawk:</u>			
8,9,10	P.I.,Newbury,N.Middleboro	singles	H.Bates#,R.Veit#,fide D.Briggs
<u>Red-tailed Hawk:</u>			
thr.	9 localities	17 individuals	v.o.
<u>Red-shouldered Hawk:</u>			
9,15	Salisbury,W.Roxbury	1 ad.,1	M.McClellan#,F.Atwood
16	Orleans	1	C.Goodrich#
19	Ipswich,Newburyport	1,1	W.Petersen#,R.Forster#
<u>Rough-legged Hawk:</u>			
2,10	P.I.,Bridgewater	4,4	M&A Argue#,K.Anderson
17,27	Nantucket,Marshfield	1,1	R.Veit#,D.Brown#
<u>Golden Eagle:</u>			
8-9	Salisbury	1 ad.	N.Claflin,P.Butler,C.Wyman, R.Veit#
<u>Bald Eagle:</u>			
5-10,8-18	Brewster,Rowley-Newburyport	1 imm.,1 imm.	B.Chase & v.o.,D.Alexander & v.o.
<u>Marsh Hawk:</u>			
thr.	10 localities	14 individuals	v.o.
<u>Gyr Falcon:</u>			
1	Eastham(Marconi Station)	1	W.Bailey
<u>Peregrine Falcon:</u>			
8	Salisbury	1	H&M Bates#
<u>Merlin:</u>			
thr.	Sandwich	1	R.Pease
<u>Bobwhite:</u>			
thr.	Middleboro	100+	D.Briggs#
<u>King Rail:</u>			
23	Plymouth	1	W.Petersen#
<u>Clapper Rail:</u>			
15-28,18	Manomet,Marion	1,2	B.Sorrie,G.Mock,Jr.
<u>Virginia Rail:</u>			
2,9	Marshfield,Ipswich	2,1	BBC(W.Harrington),J.Berry
12-26,23	W.Roxbury,Plymouth	1,1	J.Pickup,W.Petersen
<u>Common Gallinule:</u>			
1	Harwich	1	B.Nikula
<u>Killdeer:</u>			
2 on	10 localities	28 individuals	v.o.
<u>Black-bellied Plover:</u>			
24	Chatham(North Beach)	15	R.Veit#
<u>Common Snipe:</u>			
2,9	Marshfield,Dartmouth	2,3	W.Harrington,R.O'Hara#
15,26	Bourne,W.Roxbury	12,5	B.Sorrie,J.Pickup
<u>Red Knot:</u>			
16	Revere	130+	W.Petersen#
<u>Purple Sandpiper:</u>			
16	Rockport	150	BBC(R&D Hale)
<u>Sanderling:</u>			
16	Revere	110	R.Emery#
<u>Glaucous Gull:</u>			
15-18,16	Gloucester,W.Roxbury	3,1	v.o.,W.Petersen
<u>Iceland Gull:</u>			
19	P.I.	46	W.Petersen#
<u>Great Black-backed Gull:</u>			
15	W.Roxbury	1000	F.Atwood
<u>Herring Gull:</u>			
15	W.Roxbury	15,500	F.Atwood
<u>Common Gull:</u>			
thr.	Newburyport	1 ad.	v.o.
<u>Black-headed Gull:</u>			
thr.	Newburyport,Squantum	1-2,max.7(Feb.17)	v.o.
1,18	Chatham,Orleans	2,2	W.Bailey & v.o.
<u>Laughing Gull:</u>			
27	Plymouth	1	D.Briggs#
<u>Little Gull:</u>			
thr.	Newburyport	1 ad.,2 imm.	v.o.

Black-legged Kittiwake:			
17,18	Rockport, Eastham	1 imm., 4-5	S&J Harrison, W. Bailey
Razorbill:			
16,17	Gloucester, Nantucket Sound	1,1	R.O'Hara, R. Veit
Black Guillemot:			
thr.	Rockport	4	v.o.
Monk Parakeet: (Exotic Escape)			
thr.	Haverhill	1	W. Drummond
Ring-necked Parakeet: (Exotic Escape)			
23	Plymouth	1	SSBC (W. Petersen)
<u>Barn Owl:</u>			
5	Cambridge	1 (photographed)	G. Miller
Screech Owl:			
2,25,27	Cambridge, Lincoln, S. Dartmouth	1,1,1	A. Horn, P. Swift, P. Regan
Great Horned Owl:			
thr., 1,10	Milton, Danvers, Ipswich	1,1,1	H.D'Entremont, E. Pyburn#, J. Berry
Snowy Owl:			
thr.	Newburyport Area	1	v.o.
15-19,17	Eastham, Squantum	1,1	W. Bailey, R. Pasquier#
Barred Owl:			
thr.	Danvers	1	v.o.
Long-eared Owl:			
2,23	Orleans	1	C. Goodrich, B. Nikula, Harris
Short-eared Owl:			
thr.; 8	Eastham; Newburyport	1;1	R. Forster#, R. Veit; N. Claflin
6&8	Squantum	1	E. Morrier
Saw-whet Owl:			
thr.	P.I.	1	v.o.
Pileated Woodpecker:			
3,11,19	Carlisle, Dover, Wayland	1,1,2	R. Thompson, F. Royce, J. Mansfield
<u>Red-bellied Woodpecker:</u>			
3	S. Natick	1	H. Biggart
Red-headed Woodpecker:			
thr.	Woburn, Littleton, Rockport	1,1,2	v.o., fide J. Baird, v.o.
Horned Lark:			
9,19	Dartmouth, Ipswich	125,75	R.O'Hara, W. Petersen#
Common Crow:			
10,23	Bridgewater, Natick	707,1296	SSBC (Anderson), R. Forster
Fish Crow:			
15	W. Roxbury (Dump)	185	F. Atwood
<u>Boreal Chickadee:</u>			
thr.	P.I.	1	v.o.
Red-breasted Nuthatch:			
thr.	11 localities	18 individuals	v.o.
Brown Creeper:			
thr.	12 localities	14 individuals	v.o.
Winter Wren:			
2,10	Middlesex Fells, Princeton	2,2	R. Stymeist, L. Milton
13	Manomet	1	P. Donahue
Carolina Wren:			
thr.	10 localities	11 individuals	v.o.
<u>Long-billed Marsh Wren:</u>			
1	Harwich	1	B. Nikula
Gray Catbird:			
thr., 14	Lakeville, Middleboro	1,1	S. Erwin, E. Lemmo
15&19,23	Bourne, Plymouth	1,1	B. Sorrie, SSBC (W. Petersen)
Brown Thrasher:			
thr.	S. Wellfleet (WBWS), Plymouth/4 (Feb. 15), 3 (b.) / W. Bailey, B. Sorrie		
<u>Varied Thrush:</u>			
4-7	Billerica	1	E. Durgin, N. Smith
Hermit Thrush:			
5,6,9	Milton, Manomet, Marion	singles	O. Kerr, M. B.O., G. Mock, Jr.
Eastern Bluebird:			
2,11	W. Yarmouth, Dorchester	3,1	P. Aiken, T. Long
Cedar Waxwing:			
7,9	Framingham, Rockport	17,6	R. Forster, H. Bates
Northern Shrike:			
thr.	8 localities	8 individuals	v.o.

Loggerhead Shrike:			
10,24	Wellfleet, Barnstable	1,1	C. Goodrich, R. Pease
<u>Ovenbird:</u>			
10-17	Sandwich	1	v.o.
<u>Yellow-breasted Chat:</u>			
2,2-6	Falmouth, Winchester	1,1	M. Wilson, Stevenson
Eastern Meadowlark:			
thr., 19	Bridgewater, Ipswich	40+, 17	D. Briggs, W. Petersen#
Redwinged Blackbird:			
thr., 26	Abington, Sudbury	300, 300	E. Pearson, R. Forster
Northern Oriole:			
thr.	7 localities	10 individuals	v.o.
Rusty Blackbird:			
thr.	Nantucket	18	R. Veit & S. Perkins
17, 26	Westport Pt., Hingham	1, 5	BBC(T. Athearn), C. Clark
Common Grackle:			
26	Framingham	15	R. Forster
Brown-headed Cowbird:			
17	Westport	75	BBC(T. Athearn)
Dickcissel:			
thr.	7 localities	singles	v.o.
Evening Grosbeak:			
2, 2-18	Byfield, Ipswich	50+, 40+	T. Joyce, J. Berry
Purple Finch:			
2	Framingham	30	K. Hamilton
Pine Grosbeak:			
3, 7	Weston, West Yarmouth	3, 15	D. Dumaine, P. Aiken
<u>Hoary Redpoll:</u>			
9 on	Rockport (2 places)	1, 1	R&D Hale
14	Vineyard Haven (M.V.)	1	M. Hancock# & A. Keith
16-20	Eastham	1	R. Clem & W. Bailey, v.o.
22-25, 25	Mansfield, W. Yarmouth	3, 2	A. Richardson, E. Matthewson
Common Redpoll:			
2 on	35 localities	1-50 (tot. 522)	v.o.
10, 16, 17	Plymouth, P.I., Nantucket	50 (b.), 250+, 95	B. Sorrie, H. Wiggin#, R. Veit#
22-25, 23	Mansfield, Rockport	65, 65	A. Richardson, L. Jodrey
Pine Siskin:			
thr.	14 localities	1-50 (tot. 171)	v.o.
thr., 9	W. Boxford, Falmouth	65, 75	R. Chadwich, CCBC (Baines)
Red Crossbill:			
16 on, 17	P.I., Framingham	max. 80 (Feb. 19), 7	W. Drummond, R. Forster
2, 17	Falmouth, Nantucket	5, 120	M. Wilson, R. Veit#
White-winged Crossbill:			
thr.	17 localities	1-12 (tot. 70)	v.o.
thr.	P.I.	50+	v.o.
Seaside Sparrow:			
24	Eastham	1	R. Veit#
Tree Sparrow:			
thr.	Middleboro, W. Roxbury	150+, 55	D. Briggs, F. Atwood
Field Sparrow:			
thr., 7	Beverly, Wellesley	max. 5, 9	G. Soucy, K. Hamilton
10, 23	Newburyport, Plymouth	9, 6	M. Poore, SSBC (W. Petersen)
White-crowned Sparrow:			
8, 23	Cambridge, S. Dartmouth	1, 1	A. Horn, P. Regan
Fox Sparrow:			
thr.	7 localities	8 individuals	v.o.
Lapland Longspur:			
2	Duxbury, P.I.	5, 5	BBC (W. Harrington), R. Emery#
10, 15-19	Dartmouth, Bourne	1, 55	R. O'Hara#, B. Sorrie
Snow Bunting:			
9	Dartmouth; Salisbury, P.I.	5; 3, 2	R. O'Hara#; R. Stymeist#
15&19	Scusset Beach State Resvn.	26	B. Sorrie

ADDENDUM

Red-headed Woodpecker:			
Nov. 6	Mansfield	1 imm.	A. Richardson

Abbreviations

ad.	adult	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
b.	banded	GMNWR	Great Meadows Nat'l. Wildlife Refuge
f.	female	IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
imm.	immature	MBO	Manomet Bird Observatory Staff
m.	male	MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
max.	maximum	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
thr.	throughout	A.A.	Arnold Arboretum
unc.	uncommon	A.P.	Andrews Point
v.o.	various observers	E.P.	Eastern Point
yg.	young	F.H.	Fort Hill, Eastham
#	additional observers	F.M.	Fowl Meadow, Milton
CBC	Christmas Bird Count	Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	P.I.	Plum Island
PBC	Paskamansett Bird Club	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable

Corrigendum

In the Bird Observer Summary for November, 1973, it was stated that the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper seen at Newburyport was a first state record. This was, in fact, the second state record, the first being a bird collected at Plymouth Beach, June 30, 1971.

DISASTER ON CAPE COD

The terns of Cape Cod completed a very unsuccessful nesting season during the summer of 1973, an indication that they are losing the battle against natural predators augmented by people, vehicles, and dogs. According to Ian Nisbet of Massachusetts Audubon Society, the tern colonies are not doing quite well enough to maintain their population.

The posting of the breeding colonies by MAS, National Seashore, and various conservation groups of Cape Cod has afforded some protection. However, manpower to thwart violators is inadequate. Furthermore, at night, the terns also have to contend with rats, Black-crowned Night Herons, and Great Horned Owls. Rats, in particular, disrupted the colony at Plymouth Beach, while at Grey's Beach, Yarmouth, a Great Horned Owl ate about 3,000 chicks.

The colonies at Grey's Beach and Great Island increased in mid-June due to the influx of displaced terns from Plymouth Beach. This late nesting, coupled with a heat wave in early July, killed a large percentage of half-grown birds.

The following is a summary of the colonies' successes and failures last summer, compiled from these sources: Ian Nisbet and James Loughlin of MAS, Lucian Rowell of Cape Cod Bird Club, Richard L. Cunningham of National Seashore, Erma J. Fisk, Charles Schmidt, and the Cape Naturalist, bulletin of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.

Monomoy National Wilderness, Chatham (Nisbet)

Common Tern:	2,100 pairs	average 1.7 young per pair
Roseate Tern:	200-250 pairs	average 1 young per pair
Arctic Tern:	4 pairs	2 chicks found

Grey's Beach, Yarmouth (Nisbet)

Common Tern:	2,000 pairs	average 0.4 young per pair
Roseate Tern:	300-400 pairs	no data

Tern Island, Chatham (Nisbet)

Common Tern:	75 pairs	1 chick raised in July
Arctic Tern:	33 pairs	no chicks
Least Tern:	6 pairs	no data