

THE BIRD OBSERVER SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY, 1976

February was remarkably mild and brought New Englanders much dry and sunny weather. The temperature averaged 37.3 degrees, 6.9 degrees above normal; this was second only to 38.0 degrees of February, 1925 in all of the 106 years of official weather record keeping. New daily records were set twice, with 59 degrees on the 22nd, topping the 58 degrees of 1943, and 63 degrees on the 28th, breaking the 62 degree mark of 1903. The lowest temperature was 12 degrees on February 2nd. Precipitation totalled only 2.45 inches, 1.09 inches under normal. Only 1.4 inches of snow fell, the least snowfall in February since 1.3 inches in 1941. No measurable snow fell after the 8th. The storm of February 2nd brought scattered wind damage, with most of the effects felt on Cape Cod and the Islands. Nantucket reported winds in excess of 100 m.p.h., while Boston winds gusted to a maximum of 62 m.p.h.

Unlike February, 1975, there were few special birds around (White Pelican, Sandhill Crane, Black Brant, Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, Varied Thrush and Western Tanager). The highlight, of course, still belonged to the Ivory Gull of Salisbury accepting handouts from birders who shared their lunches with the tame gull. The Smew continued in Newport, Rhode Island, with Massachusetts birders hoping it would fly to the "promised land." A few birders travelled to northern Maine for a look at a Hawk Owl.

Kerry Elkin, a field biologist from the Manomet Bird Observatory, compiled an impressive list of 56 Northern Fulmars, a Northern Skua, 200 Black-legged Kittiwakes and 4 Common Puffins, on board the research vessel, Albatross IV, out of Woods Hole. These are the highest counts during a two-week transect of George's Bank.

Red-necked Grebes totalled 23 in Dennis, and Brant peaked at 750+ at Squantum by months end. Three Blue-winged Teal spent the month in Sandwich and 24 Harlequin Ducks were reported.

Two Turkey Vultures highlighted the raptor reports, which also included 4 Goshawks, 4 Cooper's, 6 Red-shouldered, 2 Bald Eagles and 1 Merlin at Salisbury. Woodcocks returned at midmonth and were reported "displaying" in Lakeville on February 26th. Purple Sandpipers numbered 800+ in North Scituate. An adult Laughing Gull was found at Point of Pines, Revere. Over 500 Bonaparte's Gulls were on Nantucket, and as many as 5 adult Little Gulls were reported from Newburyport Harbor. A Common Murre in Provincetown Harbor appeared to be oiled, and 1 Dovekie was reported from Cape Ann.

There was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reported from Nahant, and Bluebirds were observed in four places. The week of February 14-21 brought a great change to woodland bird life. According to Leif Robinson, during the first half of the month, "The woods were as barren as I've ever seen them - both in species and in numbers, and even Blue Jays nearly disappeared. By the 21st the titmice, chickadees and nuthatches were in song and more abundant than anytime during the winter."

The blackbirds arrived nearly two weeks earlier than usual, with large flocks reported by months end. Two adult Brewer's Blackbirds were reported from the Herring Creek Farm at Katama, Martha's Vineyard. There was a surge in winter finch numbers, with the exception of Evening Grosbeaks which were almost lacking.

R.H.S.

Common Loon:			
15,19	Cape Ann, Cohasset-Hull	8,7	BBC(H.Weissberg), D.Brown
Horned Grebe:			
1	P.I.	25	R.Veit#
15,28	Cape Ann	22,38	BBC(H.Weissberg), BBC(P.Parsons)
Red-necked Grebe:			
8,25	Hull-Scituate, Dennis	22,23	W.Petersen#, B.Nikula
28	Gloucester Harbor	19	R.Forster
Pied-billed Grebe:			
8	Worcester	1	H.Merriman
Northern Fulmar: *			
20	George's Bank	56	K.Elkin
Gannet: *			
20,22	George's Bank, Gloucester	285,10	K.Elkin, R.Heil
24,28	Nauset, Rockport	75,10	B.Nikula, R.Forster

Great Cormorant:			
1,14	Rockport, Nantucket	60,100	R. Veit, C. Jackson
15	Cape Cod Canal	150+	A. Clarke
Great Blue Heron:			
1	Orleans, Acoaxet	5,8	BBC (H. Baines), W. Petersen
12,14-17	Canton, Nantucket	1,5	S. Zende, C. Jackson
Black-crowned Night Heron:			
5,9	Falmouth, Winthrop	5,2	G. Gove, P. Swanson
American Bittern:			
1	Eastham	4	BBC (H. Baines)
American Brant:			
5,19,28	Squantum	150+, 400+, 750	C. Clark#, E. Morrier, B. Sorrie
29	Plymouth	500	B. Adelson
Snow Goose:			
thr., 5,21	Chatham, Falmouth, P. I.	1,1,2	v.o., G. Gove, S. Garrett#
Gadwall:			
12,18 on	Cohasset	1,2 m.	R. Emery#, W. Petersen#
14,22	Ipswich	1,3	J. Berry
1-20,21	Barnstable, Eastham	2 m., 1 f.	R. Pease, W. Petersen#
Pintail:			
1-29	Barnstable	25	R. Pease
5,8	Plymouth, Hingham	3 m. & 1 f., 3	G. Wilson, W. Petersen
Green-winged Teal:			
21	E. Orleans	16	W. Petersen#
Blue-winged Teal:			
thr.	Sandwich	3	R. Pease
European Wigeon:			
14 on, 16	Cohasset, Nantucket	1 m., 2 m.	v.o., E. Andrews#
American Wigeon:			
16,20	Nantucket, E. Falmouth	100,76	C. Jackson, A. Clarke
21	E. Orleans	45	W. Petersen
Shoveler:			
thr.	Barnstable	2 prs.	R. Pease
Wood Duck:			
thr.	7 localities	14 individuals	v.o.
Redhead:			
8,16	Hull, Squantum	1 f. (on ocean), 2	B. Sorrie#, T. Atkinson
16,27	Nantucket, Falmouth	30,115	C. Jackson, B. Nikula
Ring-necked Duck:			
15,16	E. Falmouth, Nantucket	57,27	A. Clarke, C. Jackson
Canvasback:			
1	Falmouth, Acoaxet	175,300+	G. Soucy, W. Petersen#
1,8	Assonet, Newburyport	100,35	B. Sorrie#, BBC (Timberlake)
8,15-16	Worcester, Nantucket	2,40	H. Merriman, C. Jackson
15,20	W. Newbury, Weston	126,9	R. Stymeist#, J. Hines
Greater Scaup:			
1,16	Newburyport, Nantucket	4000+, 100	R. Veit, C. Jackson
Common Goldeneye:			
15,21	Nantucket, Newburyport	200,300	C. Jackson#, BBC (W. Ervin)
29	Boylston	7+	H. Merriman
Barrow's Goldeneye:			
8,15	N. Scituate, Revere	1,2	W. Petersen, S. Zende
15 on, 19-27	Newburyport, Plymouth	2-3, 1	v.o., J. Loughlin#
21,28	N. Chatham, Cape Ann	2,1	W. Petersen, BBC (P. Parsons)
Oldsquaw:			
1	Newburyport	500+	R. Veit
Harlequin Duck:			
14-15,15	Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket	6,14	G. Daniels, E. Andrews
21	E. Orleans	1 m. (from Jan.)	W. Petersen
21	Magnolia	1 m. & 2 f.	K. Hamilton
Common Eider:			
7	Duxbury	10,000	SSBC (S. Higginbotham)
King Eider:			
1	Nahant	1 m.	S. Garrett#
8	Salisbury, Beverly	1 m., 1 imm.	J. Barton#, T. Lawrence
8 on, 19	Hull, Sesuit	1 m., 1 m.	R. Veit & W. Petersen#, K. Hamilton
White-winged Scoter:			
17	Nantucket	5000	C. Jackson

Black Scoter:				
14-17,15	Nantucket,Cape Ann	100,20		C.Jackson,H.Merriman
Ruddy Duck:				
1,21,27	Orleans	64,85+,75		BBC(Baines),W.Petersen#,J.Clancy
Hooded Merganser:				
8-14,15	Newburyport,E.Falmouth	1 pr.,17		v.o.,A.Clarke
26	Lincoln	6		W.Harrington
Common Merganser:				
21	Belmont,Newburyport	31,30		BBC(J.Barton),BBC(
27	Lincoln,Plymouth	40,45		F.Hamlen,J.Loughlin
Red-breasted Merganser:				
1,14-17	Cape Ann,Nantucket	200,200		R.Veit,C.Jackson
Turkey Vulture:				
28	Sturbridge	2		J.O'Regan
Goshawk:				
4,5-22	E.Bridgewater,Wellfleet	1,1		J.Flaherty,W.Bailey
7,15	P.I.,Newburyport	1,1		C&T Baines,R.Stymeist#
Sharp-shinned Hawk:				
29	Lancaster	1		H.Merriman
Cooper's Hawk:				
1,5	Barnstable,Cambridge	1,1 ad.m.		R.Pease,R.Stymeist
12,14	Milton,Lancaster	1,1		J.O'Regan,H.Merriman
Red-tailed Hawk:				
15-29,26	Weston,S.Natick	3,1		L.Robinson,E.Taylor
Red-shouldered Hawk:				
4 on	Bridgewater	3 ad.,1 imm.		v.o.
23,29	Salisbury,Bolton	1,1		E.Taylor#,H.Merriman
Rough-legged Hawk:				
7,12	Marshfield,Bridgewater	8,5		SSBC(W.Harrington),R.Emery#
Bald Eagle:				
thr.	E.Orleans,Lakeville	1 imm.,1 imm.		v.o.,J.Ervin#
Marsh Hawk:				
thr.	1-2 birds reported from 5 places			v.o.
14-16	Nantucket	6		C.Jackson#
Merlin:				
23	Salisbury	1		E.Taylor
Ruffed Grouse:				
29	Plymouth	4		M&A Argue#
Virginia Rail:				
16	Chiltonville	1		D.Briggs#
Sora:				
16	Concord(GMNWR),Orleans	1,1 dead		BBC(Hinds),B.Nikula
American Coot:				
1,14	Eastham,Lynn	130,50-60		BBC(Baines),M.Gardler
Killdeer:				
7-29,18	6 localities,Marshfield	1-2,3		v.o.,W.Petersen#
18 on	Lancaster	3-32		H.Merriman
Black-bellied Plover:				
1	Acoaxet	1		B.Sorrie & W.Petersen
1,7	Eastham,Duxbury	3,1		BBC(Baines),H.Harrington
Ruddy Turnstone:				
8,28	N.Scituate,Squantum	60,12		R.Veit,B.Nolan
American Woodcock:				
16 on	9 localities	13 individuals		v.o.
26,29	Lakeville,Lancaster	3 displaying,5		R.Turner,H.Merriman
Common Snipe:				
1,21	Orleans	2,6		BBC(Baines),W.Petersen#
7,22	S.Duxbury,Ipswich	1,2		SSBC(H.Harrington),BBC(J.Berry)
Red Knot:				
8,28	N.Scituate	12+,8		W.Petersen & R.Emery,R.Veit
Purple Sandpiper:				
19	N.Scituate,Cohasset	800+,100		W.Petersen,D.Brown#
28	Rockport	97		BBC(P.Parsons)
Dunlin:				
1	Acoaxet,Eastham	200,125		B.Sorrie#,BBC(Baines)
Sanderling:				
1,8	Eastham,Manomet(MBO)	12,40		BBC(Baines),Staff
15	Nantucket	50		C.Jackson#

<u>Northern Skua</u> : *			
20	George's Bank	1	K. Elkin
<u>Glaucous Gull</u> :			
thr.	5 localities	8 individuals	v.o.
1,15	Gloucester	3,4-5	R. Veit, W. Petersen
8,20	Worcester, George's Bank	1,3	H. Merriman, K. Elkin
<u>Iceland Gull</u> :			
1,6	P. I.	75+,100	R. Veit, M. Gardler
15,21	Cape Ann	85+,70	BBC (H. Weissberg), R. Veit
<u>Ring-billed Gull</u> :			
1	Newburyport	125	R. Veit#
<u>Black-headed Gull</u> :			
1	Newburyport, Squantum	2 ad., 2	R. Veit, E. Morrier
19,24	Hull, Wollaston	22,11	R. Veit & S. Perkins, J. Murphy
26	Newburyport	3	R. Heil
<u>Laughing Gull</u> :			
8-14	Revere & Lynn	1 ad.	O&N Komer# & M. Gardler
<u>Bonaparte's Gull</u> :			
1,16	Newburyport, Nantucket	40,500	R. Veit, C. Jackson#
<u>Little Gull</u> :			
1	Salisbury	1 ad.	J. Berry
15,21	Newburyport	3 ad., 5 ad.	W. Petersen, R. Veit#
<u>Ivory Gull</u> :			
thr.	Salisbury	1 imm. (from December)	v.o.
<u>Black-legged Kittiwake</u> : *			
20	George's Bank	200	K. Elkin
<u>Razorbill</u> :			
28	Rockport	2	R. Forster
<u>Common Murre</u> :			
13	Provincetown	1 (oiled)	fide W. Bailey
<u>Thick-billed Murre</u> : *			
1;20	Gloucester; George's Bank	1;2	R. Veit, R. Emery, F. Hamlen; K. Elkin
<u>Dovekie</u> : *			
16,20	Gloucester, George's Bank	1,9	P. Parsons, K. Elkin
<u>Black Guillemot</u> :			
8,21	N. Scituate, Cape Ann	12,15	W. Petersen & B. Sorrie, K. Hamilton
<u>Common Puffin</u> : *			
20	George's Bank	4	K. Elkin
<u>Barn Owl</u> :			
16-24	Boston (Long Island)	1	B. Morrissey, J. Murphy
<u>Screech Owl</u> :			
5,15	Middlesex Fells, Lancaster	2,1	S. Zende# , H. Merriman
7	Weston, Abington-Pembroke	1,5	L. Robinson, W. Petersen
21	Gloucester, Brewster	1,4	E. Taylor# , B. Sorrie
<u>Great Horned Owl</u> :			
7	Bridgewater-Middleboro	7	J. Flaherty
<u>Snowy Owl</u> :			
1-6,21	Squantum, Salisbury-P. I.	3,3	E. Morrier, BBC (W. Ervin)
8	Hull, Duxbury	1,1	B. Sorrie# , J. Loring
<u>Barred Owl</u> :			
1-20,5	Nahant, Groton	1 (from Jan.), 1	v.o., N. Powell
9,21	Boston (South End), Boxford	1,1	T. Leverich, R. Veit & S. Perkins
29	Boston (Marlboro Street)	1	Mrs. Clarke
<u>Long-eared Owl</u> :			
14 on, 16	Bridgewater, Jamaica Plain	1,1	W. Petersen, Kousky
<u>Short-eared Owl</u> :			
9, 14 on, 21	Squantum, Bridgewater, Chatham	3,4,2	E. Morrier, W. Petersen# , J. Loughlin
<u>Saw-whet Owl</u> :			
2-5,16	Cambridge, Nantucket	1,1	J. Clancy, C. Jackson
19,21	Lincoln, Gloucester	1 dead, 1 dead	J. Baird, S. Perkins
<u>Belted Kingfisher</u> :			
21	Outer Cape	14	W. Petersen#
<u>Common Flicker</u> :			
14-16	Nantucket	30	C. Jackson
<u>Pileated Woodpecker</u> :			
thr.	Lancaster, Weston	1,1	H. Merriman, L. Robinson# & v.o.
9,26	Lincoln, S. Natick (Broadmoor)	1,1	M. Donnell, E. Taylor#

Red-bellied Woodpecker:			
11-18	Cohasset	1	H.Hooper
Red-headed Woodpecker:			
thr.,9	Gloucester(E.P.),Lincoln	1 mm.,1	S.Robbins & v.o.,fide R.Forster
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:			
1-20	Nahant	1	BBC(A.Murphy),H.Wiggin
Hairy Woodpecker:			
22	Weston	20	BBC(L.Robinson)
Downy Woodpecker:			
29	Hamilton	2(courting)	J.Berry
Eastern Phoebe:			
21	Dennis	1	C.Naegelin
Horned Lark:			
1,7	S.Dartmouth,Halifax	200+,60	W.Petersen#,B.Sorrie#
Swallow: (species)			
28	Eastham	1	C.Goodrich
Common Crow:			
3-4	Waltham	250+	J.Luck
Fish Crow:			
thr.	Weston,Natick(dump)	24,50	L.Robinson,E.Taylor
Black-capped Chickadee:			
21	Weston	51	L.Robinson
Boreal Chickadee:			
thr.,6	Jamaica Plain(A.A.),P.I.	2(from Dec.),1	v.o.,M.Gardler
10 on,15 on	Norwell,Beverly	2,1	J.Enright,T.Martin
Tufted Titmouse:			
15	Sherborn	178	fide E.Taylor
Red-breasted Nuthatch:			
thr.	Norwell(2 places)	5,3 b.	J.Enright,M&B Litchfield
1,6-28,26	N.Falmouth,P.I.,Dennis	5-6,2,2	A.Clarke,v.o.,F.Bouchard
Brown Creeper:			
thr.,8	Lancaster,Westwood	3+,2	H.Merriman,J.Clancy
26-28,29	S.Natick,Hamilton	3,2	E.Taylor,J.Berry
Winter Wren:			
1-8,3	Westport,Norwell	1,1	R.O'Hara,B.Litchfield
Carolina Wren:			
14;29	Middleboro,Woods Hole;Marion	2,1;2	E.Cushman,C.Jackson#;G.Gove
Mockingbird:			
15	Sherborn	21	fide E.Taylor
Gray Catbird:			
1,5-15	Acoaxet,Falmouth	1,1	W.Petersen#,v.o.
Brown Thrasher:			
23,27	Waltham,Eastham	1,1	P.Housley,J.Clancy
American Robin:			
5,6	Waltham,E.Sandwich	20,20	J.Gibbs,C.Harding
Hermit Thrush:			
1,3	S.Dartmouth,Cambridge(Mt.A.)	1,1	W.Petersen#,S.Zendeh
13	Jamaica Plain(A.A.)	2	J.Murphy
Eastern Bluebird:			
16,18	E.Dennis,Cummaquid	1,4	R.Sharron,W.Hodgkinson
28,29	Canton(F.M.),Lincoln	1,2	B.Nolan,P.Swift
Water Pipit:			
21	Chatham(North Beach)	1	J.Loughlin
Cedar Waxwing:			
5,8	Norwell,Mattapoissett	72,35	J.Flaherty,G.Mock
15,21	Woods Hole,Orleans	25,31	C.Jackson,W.Petersen
Northern Shrike:			
4,14-15	Middleboro,Squibnocket(M.V.)	1,1	R.Maxim,G.Daniels
11,15	Harvard,Fitchburg	1,1	C.Read,N.Powell
24,27	Chatham,Barnstable	1,1	B.Nikula,R.Pease
Loggerhead Shrike:			
1,14-15	Barnstable,Vineyard Haven(M.V.)	1,1	R.Pease,G.Daniels
Yellow-rumped Warbler:			
9	Squantum	10	E.Morrier
Pine Warbler:			
thr.	Chatham	2	V.Saunders# & v.o.
Yellow-breasted Chat:			
10	Plymouth	1	S.Parsons

Eastern Meadowlark:			
15	Ipswich	22	J. Berry
Red-winged Blackbird:			
wk. of 8	first arrivals in southeastern Massachusetts		v.o.
wk. of 15	general arrival in small flocks throughout Massachusetts		v.o.
wk. of 22	large flocks reported in many communities		v.o.
22, 28	Lancaster, Bridgewater	600+, 1800+	H. Merriman, W. Petersen#
29	Ipswich	750+	J. Berry
Northern Oriole:			
1-11, 10, 18	Framingham, Reading, Brockton	2, 1, 1	L. Campbell, V. Hall, R. LaBue
Northern (Bullock's) Oriole:			
1-22	Abington	1 imm. m. (from Nov.)	W. Petersen# & v.o.
	"Bird's plumage getting brighter, white wing patch beginning to fill in."		
Brewer's Blackbird:			
14 on	Katama (M.V.)	2 ad.	G. Daniels
Common Grackle:			
wk. of 15	first arrivals in small numbers		v.o.
wk. of 22	general arrival throughout, though no large flocks		v.o.
29	Lancaster	450+	H. Merriman
Brown-headed Cowbird:			
12, 15, 28	Abington, Falmouth, Middleboro	6, 1, 50+	G. Wilson#, A. Clarke, D. Briggs
Cardinal:			
15	Sherborn	68	fide E. Taylor
Evening Grosbeak:			
18	Pembroke	55+	W. Petersen#
	very few others reported, only small flocks		
Purple Finch:			
thr.	8 localities	23 individuals	v.o.
House Finch:			
13	Jamaica Plain (A.A.)	125	J. Murphy
21	Chatham-Orleans	150+	W. Petersen#
Pine Grosbeak:			
1-13, 5, 6	Lancaster, Lincoln, Maynard	22-1, 6, 8	H. Merriman, P. Alden, J. Baird
5, 9	Middlesex Fells, Acton	2, 7	S. Zende# , M. Herbert
22-29, 24	Weston, Harvard	2-9, 4+	L. Robinson# & v.o., N. Powell
Hoary Redpoll:			
29	Weston	2	W. Drummond, G. Soucy#
Common Redpoll:			
thr.	Weston, Lancaster	15-28, 5-100+ (Feb. 19)	L. Robinson# & v.o., H. Merriman
16, 20-26	Ipswich, Natick (dump)	35-40, 50+	J. Nove, E. Taylor
20, 22, 23	Carlisle, Hingham, N. Natick	50, 40, 50+	K. Harte, S. Osborne, E. Taylor
26, 29	Lincoln, Waltham	50-60, 40	W. Harrington, J. Luck
Pine Siskin:			
15, 16	Harvard, Weston	175, 38	N. Powell, L. Robinson
18, 22	Pembroke, Cohasset	35+, 20-30	W. Petersen#, S. Osborne#
American Goldfinch:			
24	E. Bridgewater	60+	J. Flaherty
Red Crossbill:			
thr., 19	P. I.	10-20, 90+	v.o., K. Hamilton
White-winged Crossbill:			
10, 18	Milton, Dedham	6, 6	J. Trumbull, A. Thatcher
Savannah Sparrow:			
12, 15	Edgartown (M.V.), Nantucket	1, 1	M. Hancock, C. Jackson#
Tree Sparrow:			
22, 29	Ipswich, Weston	15, 20+	BBC (J. Berry), L. Robinson
Field Sparrow:			
5, 22	Plymouth, Framingham	1, 1	R. Emery#, K. Hamilton
Fox Sparrow:			
5, 6	Plymouth, E. Sandwich	1, 1	R. Emery#, C. Harding
7	Manomet (MBO)	1	J. Loughlin
27, 29	Bedford, Harvard	1, 1	P. Wade, N. Powell
Swamp Sparrow:			
16	Concord (GMNWR)	1	BBC (J. Hines)
Lapland Longspur:			
8, 15	P. I.	30, 28	BBC (R. Timberlake), H. Butler#
Snow Bunting:			
14, 20	P. I., Bridgewater	400+, 1	K. Hamilton#, J. Flaherty

Abbreviations

ad.	adult	GMNWR	Great Meadows Nat'l. Wildlife Refuge
b.	banded	MBO	Manomet Bird Observatory
f.	female	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
imm.	immature	A.A.	Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain
m.	male	E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester
max.	maximum	F.M.	Fowl Meadow, Milton
thr.	throughout	M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
v.o.	various observers	Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge
yg.	young	P.I.	Plum Island
#	additional observers	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
BBC	Brookline Bird Club		
SSBC	South Shore Bird Club		

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