

# The Winter Season

## December 1, 1974 – March 31, 1975

### HUDSON-ST. LAWRENCE REGION / P. A. Buckley and Richard Kane

The winter of 1974 - 1975 was uniformly characterized as being extraordinarily mild, relatively different terms on the south shore of Long Island and the north shore of the St. Lawrence, but nonetheless in agreement. Snowfall and snow cover were very light, in



some areas as to set new lows. Water remained open for record-breaking periods, sometimes not closing at all; parts of the St. Lawrence River never froze and Lake Champlain was closed for only the period Feb. 13-26. In the northland, cone crops on virtually all conifers were extraordinarily good; coupled with equally abundant berry and fruit crops, this kept most winter finches (except of course the increasingly independent Evening Grosbeaks) well to the north. With few exceptions, most were not seen south of the Adirondack-Green-White Mountains line. The fine berry and fruit crops allowed many passerines to remain inland in record numbers until they had depleted their natural foods late in the season. Consequently, coastal Christmas Bird Counts did not fare as well, relatively, as many inland counts did. Waterfowl, too, remained inland in almost unprecedented numbers. Very cold weather and snow — when they did finally come in late February and early March, after spring had arrived, as most observers expressed it — probably hit many birds hard, although kills were not commented on as in some recent years. Virtually all observers did comment on the incredible numbers of half-hardies, again a relative term. But the following species were characterized as in abnormally high numbers, depending of course on their normal

status as a local half-hardy: Am. Bittern, Wood Duck, Merlin, Turkey Vulture, Am. Coot, Com. Snipe, Am. Woodcock, Dunlin, Laughing Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Com. Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (15 in n. New Jersey alone), all three mimids, Am. Robin, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, (n. to the Adirondacks), Loggerhead Shrike, Palm Warbler (seven in one day at Mecox Bay, L.I. in late January), Com. Yellowthroat, Baltimore (N.) Oriole (eight on L.I., ten in N.J., two in w. Massachusetts, one in n.e. Pennsylvania, etc.), Field Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Rufous-sided Towhee (n. to several locations in P.Q.), White-throated Sparrow (ditto), White-crowned Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow. The mild weather and open water were probably in largest measure responsible for some great increases over previously high counts on the annual mid-January N.Y.S. waterfowl census in the N.Y.C.-L.I. area; e.g. Gadwall 848, up 136%; Pintail 400, up 101%; Green-winged Teal 410, up 73%; Blue-winged Teal 30, up 207% (and see later text); Wood Duck 53, up 253%; and Am. Coot 1582, up 96%.

Aside from having been a winter finch year only in the extreme northern part of the region, it was a raptor year only in the north as well. Northern Shrikes, Rough-legged Hawks, Snowy Owls were all quite scarce after some good November counts in the south. Alcids and eiders were conspicuously low as well, as were other typical half-hardies (but insect eaters) as E. Phoebe and Tree Swallow. More unusual winter lingerers are discussed in the appropriate place in the following text, and there are many indeed this year. For some observers, especially, again, further north, the winter highlight was the unprecedented incursion of both species of three-toed woodpeckers. Other outstanding rarities this winter included N. Fulmar, Franklin's Gull, Hawk Owl, Boreal Owl, Mountain Bluebird, Painted Bunting and Black-throated Sparrow, with a host of lesser luminaries also reported.

**GREBES THROUGH HERONS** — Only two Eared Grebes surfaced this winter, one on Onondaga L., Syracuse, Dec. 14-26 (Bill Brosseau, FGS *et al.*), and another at Great Kills, Staten I. remained through at least Dec. 7 (m.ob.). No coastal N. Fulmars were reported, but one on L. Ontario just east of Oswego harbor, N.Y., was only the second local record, the first found dead a few years ago (FGS, PDeB, DWC). What can only be described as extraordinary numbers of Double-crested Cormorants occurred throughout the region this winter, on many CBCs, and several survived the winter. One Feb. 14 - Mar. 10 at Oswego was only the third local wintering record in 21 years (m.ob.); most of the remainder were coastal, with 13 found in the (Long Island - New York City) area on the mid-January (New York State) waterfowl census (SD).

The mild weather allowed numerous heron overwinterings or attempts, with astonishing numbers of white herons, notably 8-10 Great Egrets and six Snowies, at J.B.W.R. (m.ob.), one of the latter overwintering in the H.M. (RK *et al.*). Little Blues were scattered throughout December, the maximum being a flock of eight on the Oak Beach marsh Dec. 15 (m.ob.), and while the last report received was one Jan. 22 at Tobay (L. Schore, W. Baumann), one at J.B.W.R. Mar. 2 (THD) probably also wintered locally. Two Yellow-crowned Night Herons were noted, one adult remaining until Jan. 4 at Southaven Co. Park, Shirley, L.I. (JB). One Least Bittern overwintered in the vast Hackensack Meadows (H.M.) (DS), only the second known to have done so in the N.Y.C. region. Curiously, no late or wintering Glossy Ibis were reported; is this in any way related to the apparent decline in their L.I. breeding numbers in 1974 (see AB, 29:133)?

**WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS** — Probably now safe to consider a trend is the increasing incidence of overwintering Whistling Swans in this region, evident again this year even as far inland as Fairhaven Beach S.P., near Oswego, N.Y. (M. Rusk) in mid-January, and up to 12 on Hook Pond, Easthampton, L.I. (m.ob.). Blue-winged Teal responded to the mild weather, a pair overwintering at Fairhaven S.P. (PDeB *et al.*) as did an unprecedented flock of up to 22 at tiny Sage Pond in Lawrence, L.I. (RKe *et al.*). Canvasback seem to be increasing dramatically in our region: previously virtually unknown in the Essex Co., N.Y., area, "thousands" were found on L. Champlain in fall 1974 (Vt. Fish & Game Dept.), with up to 1270 still there on the waterfowl census in mid-January; 9000 wintered in Upper N.Y. Bay's last remaining natural shallows at Caven Pt., N.J. (now threatened by landfill development); and the L.I. - N.Y.C. portion of the N.Y.S. waterfowl census in mid-January reported almost 11,000, in increase of 90% over any count since the winter of 1968-69 (SD). A pair of Tufted Ducks wintered again in the East R. under the Triborough Bridge in N.Y.C. (m.ob.). What was originally suspected of being a Com. Pochard on a coastal pond in Monmouth Co. N.J. has apparently been identified as a probably Red-head x Canvasback hybrid (PW Smith). The Barrow's Goldeneye returned to Shark R., N.J. Dec. 28 and stayed through Mar. 15 (m.ob.), for the sixth consecutive winter. Eiders and Harlequin Ducks were almost unreported the entire winter. All three scoters, on the other hand, turned up at a variety of inland locations: L. Champlain, L. Ontario, St. Lawrence R. and lakes in western Massachusetts.

Similarly responding to the milder weather, Turkey Vultures were reported throughout the winter in small numbers, even where traditionally uncommon as on Long Island and in the Berkshires. All three Accipiters were down, although several Goshawks apparently again wintered along barrier beaches on Long Island's south shore. The pair of Red-shouldered Hawks whose 1974 nest in the N.Y. Botanical Garden was destroyed by vandals has apparently re-nested successfully in a more remote area this year (JDiC). An early Broad-winged Hawk was seen at L. Dunmore, Vt. Mar. 24-28 (A. Pistorius); a few other very early April records came from the N.Y.C. region. Rough-legged Hawks

were generally rather scarce in Canadian parts of the region, in good numbers in upstate N.Y. and then scarce southward. A pair of Golden Eagles wintered on Quabbin Res., Mass. (SK & B.N.W.M.), as did an adult and immature on Stissing Mt., Dutchess Co., N.Y. (THD *et mult.* *al.*). Bald Eagles were usually scattered singles, but up to 15 again wintered at Mongaup Res., Sullivan Co. N.Y. (*vide* RKa). Two or three Ospreys were reported into late December in New Jersey and Connecticut, but details were lacking. One at Quabbin Res. Nov. 25 was seen being attacked and killed by a Golden Eagle, a striking example of how wintering Ospreys are selected against. The only Gyrfalcons reported were two in January in Québec, where not exceedingly rare, and one in the black phase Jan. 2, s of Sellkirk, Albany Co., N.Y. (K. Able and R. Ferren). Two non-lingering, widely separated Peregrines were also reported.

King Rails were reported on the Old Lyme-Saybrook and New Haven, Conn., and Boonton, N.J. CBCs, at least one overwintered on the H.M. (DS) and at Tobay Pond, Jones Beach, where it was still present in late May (m.ob.)! Common Gallinules apparently also overwintered at Sage Pond, Lawrence, L.I., at J.B.W.R., on the H.M. (27+!), and perhaps at Cruger's I., Dutchess Co. (O.T.W.B.C.); one at Brielman's Marsh, Pittsfield, Mass. Feb. 23 might have also (R.J. Goodrich). Despite the mild weather, Clapper and Virginia Rails seemed to be in only ordinary numbers, but Sora was reported on the Old Lyme-Saybrook (2), Smithtown, L.I., Putnam Co. N.Y. and Lower Hudson CBCs — more than usual.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS** — An Am Oystercatcher reached Moriches Inlet Mar. 22 (D.L. Larsen), paralleling recent years' dates. Late-lingering shorebirds were legion this year, highlights being: up to four Semipalmated Plovers at Jones Beach (AW); up to 60 (!) Ruddy Turnstones on the Orient Pt., L.I. CBC, 20 on the Staten I. CBC, with other smaller flocks and scattered singles noted. Greater Yellowlegs were more numerous than usual, five overwintering on the H.M. (RKa *et al.*) possibly accompanied by one Lesser; peep were scarce, a Western Dec. 7 & 8 and a White-rumped Dec. 8 at Old Lyme (BB), a Pectoral Sandpiper on the Lower Hudson CBC Dec. 15 (RR) and 12 Semipalmateds on the S. Nassau Co. CBC (E. Levine, J. Zaretsky), being most noteworthy. One Marbled Godwit stayed at Shinnecock Inlet to Dec. 8 (AJL, THD *et al.*); successful overwintering is overdue.

Two Pomarine Jaegers were seen ca. 22 miles e of the mouth of Shark R., Monmouth Co., N.J. on a pelagic CBC (RR *et al.*); this is the "expected" species in winter, although there are hardly volumes of reports. White-winged gulls were spotty this winter, more numerous in some places, less so in others, than in past years. Mid-winter concentrations were generally not evident inland, owing to the absence of severe freezeups. Exceptions, though, were the 100 Glaucous and 40 Iceland Gulls seen between mid-December and mid-January, with up to 10,000 Herring Gulls, at Beauharnois, P.Q. (MM *et al.*). A good coastal count was 12 Iceland Gulls on Central Park Reservoir, N.Y.C., Feb. 17 (E. Mills)

**Thayer's Gulls**, now becoming better known and certainly identifiable most of the time as observers gain field experience with them on the Pacific Coast and at Churchill (and PAB is a recent convert, despite past pronouncements), were largely absent from our region this winter, although in average low numbers at Buffalo. The only two reports with details, and by experienced observers known to be previously familiar with the species in life (two bare-minimum criteria, along with detailed descriptions and preferably photographs, for publication in this column) were: 1st year, Nov. 12, Montreal, P.Q. (Normand David), and 2nd year, Oswego R., Fulton, N.Y. Jan. 12 (PAB). PDeB *et al.* report the occurrence of a Thayer's-like, but large light-eyed adult gull, on the Oswego R. in January which they believe was a Glaucous x Herring hybrid. An immature gull, also thought to be this hybrid, was observed at Long Branch, N.J., Feb. 17 (RKA *et al.*). If hybridization between these species is still continuing in Iceland and occurring elsewhere, this is a further confusing factor to be borne in mind when identifying white-winged gulls.

**Lesser Black-backed Gulls** continue to be found in places where previously unknown: this winter, one adult was at Burlington, Vt. Jan. 21-23 (Walter Ellison, Barbara and Oliver Eastman), and a second (?) on the Connecticut R. at Agawam, Mass. Jan. 4-5 (S.A. Eliot *et al.*); both were accurately described and leave no doubt as to the identification of Vermont's and w. Massachusetts' first records for this species. It is still unknown in winter from coastal New England, despite concentrations of observers; these and other inland records lead one to the conclusion the species reaches our shores most often by way of the St. Lawrence R. and Great Lakes. A thorough analysis of North American records needs to be done. Around N.Y.C., where it was first reported from North America (1934) and where it has been seen almost annually every year since, at least two (adult and sub-adult) were seen on and off all winter on Jerome Res., Bronx (m.ob.), and at least three different adults were in various parts of n. New Jersey coast (*vide*, RKA). New Jersey's first **Franklin's Gull** was an adult in almost full breeding plumage on the H.M. Feb. 9-20 (RKA, Dave Roche *et al.*). As far as known, it was never photographed, although well seen by many experienced observers. This is only about the seventh N.Y.C. region occurrence. About 10,000 Bonaparte's Gulls (at March peak) wintered in Jones Inlet, L.I. and with them were up to 8 Little and 3-4 Black-headed Gulls; both these species were widely scattered in singles, twos and threes on virtually all coastal areas in the region from Old Lyme, Conn. (BB) to Manasquan Inlet, N.J. No wintering terns were reported, but exceptionally early arrivals were a pair of Commons floating on driftwood on L. Champlain in Essex, N.Y. Mar. 30 (Elizabeth Peterson). The last Black Skimmer reported on Long Island

was at Jones Beach Nov. 28 (AW). Alcids were unusually scarce, so a flock of six Thick-billed Murres at Montauk Pt. Jan. 4 (JB) was especially noteworthy.

**OWLS** — Barn Owls of late apparently are either being seen more frequently or are actually increasing and possibly extending their range; *e.g.*, one was seen on the Ferrisburg, N.Y. CBC in Essex Co. (JMCP) and several were reported from the Pelham area of the Berkshires (*vide* SK). Great Horned Owl is more widely distributed as a breeder than many persons realize, as evidenced by the location of some nine breeding pairs in n. Nassau Co., L.I. (O. Heck). Also concerning Horned Owls, Poulin reports from the Ottawa area the following: "Spectacular invasion involving two northern subspecies, *subarcticus* (*wapacuthu* of AOU Checklist — Editors) and *heterocnemis* (both races specimen - substantiated); a few more of the former than the latter. It is interesting to note that the Great Horned Owl invasion did not correspond with that of Goshawk, which shows that Goshawk is more responsive to fluctuations in Ruffed Grouse, high this season, while the Great Horned Owl is responsive to the Snowshoe Hare cycle, at a low this winter." After a moderately heavy Nov. flight, Snowy Owls faded through the rest of the winter, being thinly although widely distributed. Two **Hawk Owls** were noted: one at Tewkesbury, P.Q. Mar. 1 (J.J. Grondin), and another well-photographed and seen by hundreds of people at North Gage, Oneida Co., N.Y. Dec. 20 - Mar. 15 (Elva VanDresser *et mult. al.*). Long Island's first Barred Owl in 20 years was heard on the CBC in the Smithtown swamp where the Eds. last saw one in November 1954. Short-eared Owls occurred in flocks of 10-20+ in areas as widespread as New Jersey and the L. Champlain area, where the mouse/vole populations was reported at a cyclic high (BPG). One of several outstanding rarities this season was a dead



*Boreal Owl. Photo / Ken Feustel.*

**Boreal Owl** picked up in the road at Cedar Beach, L.I., Jan. 15 (Ken Feustel; \*A.M.N.H.; see photo). This is L.I.'s first, the fourth for the N.Y.C. region (2nd specimen) and the southernmost N.Y.S. record. That it came from the best area on Long Island for migrating and wintering Saw-whets we feel is no coincidence. Another was seen near St. Julie (Mt. Bruno), P.Q. Mar. 29 (Mark Tomalty and Albert Kuhnig), and a third was carefully described as having been heard on Magic (*sic*) Mountain, Londonderry, Vt. the night of Jan. 31, by owl enthusiast Otto Heck, who was convinced of the correctness of the identification after hearing recordings of the species.

S.A.

**THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS** — The more northern areas experienced a major influx of both species, probably the largest ever recorded. Poulin (Ottawa area) said: "Fantastic! Hundreds, found in every suitable woodlot and small patch of trees — 19 and 25 respectively (i.e., of Black-backed and Northern — Eds.) on CBC in only a seven and a half mile radius circle! Greatest invasion ever recorded in this area; peaked in late December, gradually decreasing through winter, but still to be found in choice sites at the end of the period." McIntosh noted "only seven Black-backed in the period in the Montreal area, but at least 25 Northerns in early December. Many had moved out by mid-January but began to appear again in late March." A ♂ Northern appeared in JMCP's yard in Essex, N.Y. Jan. 13, but disappeared that day; a female was seen at Marietta, Onondaga Co., N.Y. Dec. 29 (David Muir *et al.*) but not thereafter. A ♀ Black-backed was in Oneida, N.Y. Jan. 14 - Mar. 15 (Paul Paquette, (m.ob.) and another reached Oradell Reservoir, Bergen Co., N.J. (site of the 1956-57, and 1958-59 records of several wintering birds) Dec. 29 (Steve Quinn *et al.*). In Vermont, a Black-backed was at Londonderry in late January (Angus Black, *fide* WJN), a male was in Burlington Mar. 18, where a female and a male Northern were seen Feb. 3 & 10, respectively (all by W. Ellison). The irruption barely reached w. Massachusetts (in November) but both species were found in numbers to coastal Maine and the Maritimes, and even south to e. Massachusetts. Efforts should be made to see if any breeding range extensions follow the winter incursion.

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS** — A late, unidentified *Empidonax* was at Lawrence, L.I. Dec. 1 (JA); was it eastern or western? Identity verification of such lingerers is badly desired. Each winter several reports of Gray Jays are received, without excessive detail or photos, from the Berkshires; two was this year's complement. If these are genuine, a trend would be thereby indicated, so confirmation is desired. Gray Jay records have been suspect over a wide area in recent years, so our concern for detail should be read as region-wide. Common Raven is definitely increasing in New York and New England, as breeder and winterer; this year Norse recorded his largest single flock (6) in

the Winhall area, and many other reports of singles were received. Unfortunately without detail was a report of a count of 100 at Greensboro, Vt.; ravens are known to roost in numbers in winter but this count is immense. No extralimital Boreal Chickadees were reported this winter, and Red-breasted Nuthatches generally stayed put in those cone-rich north woods.

Carolina Wrens continue to give the lie to their vernacular name as they expand northward, even into Canada. Are they merely responding to the milder recent winters, or has the species undergone some genetic change fostering hardiness and range expansion? SK in the Connecticut River valley of Massachusetts reports it is "definitely increasing"; two were noted in n. Vermont (BPG); PDeB writes "after third consecutive mild winter present in almost unprecedented high numbers; 25-30 known to be in the Syracuse - Oneida area"; JMCP says it has "staged an incursion in the High Peaks area of the Adirondacks," noting, as have most other observers, that they come to feeders readily, thereby surviving hard weather. Under totally natural conditions, the Gardiner's I. population continues its expansion, some 70 being found there on the Montauk CBC.

The Lower Hudson CBC reported a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; with increasing November records in the N.Y.C. region, this is not too surprising. American Robins were present in inordinately high numbers this winter (e.g. in low 100s in s. Onondaga Co., N.Y. (*fide* PDeB), but these figures are dwarfed by the roost of some 8000 discovered on the Boonton CBC at Denville by Bill Tremayne, and the gigantic roost in a spruce plantation near New Paltz, Ulster Co., N.Y., estimated by several counters to contain between 36,000 and 50,000 (S.J. Spencer, H. Weber, R. Vorisek, B. Snyder). This roost apparently persisted throughout the winter, although explicit information past January is lacking. These figures are some *ten* times higher than previous all-time maxima for N.Y.S., and *one hundred* times previous winter maxima.



Mountain Bluebird. Photo / Alan B. Schroeder.

No doubt *the* winter bird was the ad. ♂ **Mountain Bluebird** discovered Dec. 20 in Coxsackie, Ulster Co., N Y by R. Guthrie and subsequently seen by hundreds of people — until their fickle attention was diverted by some seagull in Massachusetts. Photographed in color and black & white by several persons (see photo), it remained until at least March, although no certain date is available at this writing. This is the first N.Y.S. occurrence, but follows recent reports from Ontario and Pennsylvania of this highly migratory, hardy berry eater. Scurrilous reports about this bird's being a release or escape have been circulating; if anyone knows this to be true, please write to the Eds. with supporting details.

Two Varied Thrushes appeared in our region this winter — a male at the Murphy feeder in Calumet, P.Q. from mid-December to at least Mar. 15 (MMcI *et al.*), and another (probably immature) male at the MacLean feeder in Athol, Worcester Co., Mass. from Dec. 16 to at least Feb. 26 (B.N.W.M). Bohemian Waxwings occurred in P.Q. in a few places, the maximum being a flock of 250 Mar. 19 at Rimouski (R. Pelletier). SK saw one in a flock of Cedars in Southwick, Hampden Co., Mass. Feb. 25: details on a few other upstate N.Y. reports are not at hand, except for a flock of 50 carefully described from Keene Co., N.Y. Mar. 23 (G. Randorf), but Ellison had a pair/singles on several occasions in Burlington, Vt. in January and March.

A Black-and-white Warbler was on the Walnut Valley CBC in N.J. Dec. 29, and a few more than usual Orange-crowned Warblers were reported, notably one at Wilkes-Barre, Penna. Feb. 17 (WR, Scott Brent). A late Nashville was found on the Queens Co. CBC Dec. 28 (SD, Al Bell, R. Dieterich), and the usual tiny complement of Pine Warblers was found. Exceedingly late-lingering was a ♀ Black-throated Green Warbler visiting several feeders in Athol, Mass. Nov. 23 - Jan. 6 (Kent Hager *et al.*). Two (or one?) Cape May Warblers were visiting feeders in Essex and Westport, Essex Co., N.Y. in late December (*fide* JMCP); the latter town also boasted an Ovenbird at a feeder from Dec. 21-24. (G. Carleton *et al.*), and finally a singing Ovenbird was in Essex on the amazing date of Mar. 30 (JMCP); did it overwinter locally? Very few Yellow-breasted Chats were reported, among them the first winter report for w. Massachusetts, at the Booker feeder in Wilbraham from (?) until at least Feb. 27 (B.N.W.M).

**ORIOLES THROUGH SPARROWS** — More Baltimore (N.) Orioles than usual occurred this winter, over the entire U.S. portion of the region south of the higher mountains, but no Bullock's. A ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird was in Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx, Dec. 22 - Jan. 6 (m.ob.). No Western Tanagers were seen.

A spring-plumaged ♂ **Painted Bunting** was carefully described from a feeder in Montgomery, Orange Co., N.Y. Nov. 23-29 (J. Tramontano, E. Treacy *et al.*). Recently there has been an increase in reports of this species from the northeast; it is unlikely any of these are cagebirds, inasmuch as the species is highly migratory, and has in the last few years been extending its breeding range northward along the North Carolina coast; excessive cagebird traffic is a thing of the past.

At least 11 *Pheucticus* grosbeaks were reported this winter. Some were accurately described, well seen and clearly referable to one species. But several were not, and one "Black-headed" seen by several reliable observers was described as having a "stripy head but underparts solidly white." It appears one school of observers seem to feel all winter *Pheucticus* grosbeaks are Black-headed, the other that all are Rose-breasted. If past trends are borne out, both will probably turn out to be about equally frequent, rendering the need for careful description that much more critical. In fact, all such birds should be routinely photographed; the same holds true for orioles and "Western Tanagers," since more than one of the latter has proved to be an oriole (and not always a Baltimore!). People are getting careless. Unqualified Rose-breasteds were found in Athol and Greenfield, Mass., on the Boonton and Lower Hudson CBCs, and in Mountain Lakes, N.J.; definite Black-headed, all imm. males, were seen in Ware, Mass., and three in New Jersey: Dec. 4-11, Denville (Hannisians, RKa *et al.*); Dec. 10-Jan. 1, Rumson (Zobel, RKa, m.ob.); Dec. 12-Mar. 31, Essex Falls (m.ob.; banded and photographed).

Winter finches (except Evening Grosbeaks) were almost totally absent from the southern parts of the region, as they ate their way through one of the best conifer cone crops in the northwoods in many years. In February Purple Finches began to appear out of the woods not far south, and in places like Schenectady, N.Y., Yunick reported banding 278 by the end of March, "the best invasion in ten years." They were however, virtually unknown in the N.Y.C. region throughout the period. The first N.Y.S. proven nesting of White-winged Crossbill occurred at Chubb R. Swamp in the Adirondacks when a female was found building a nest Feb. 22 (JMCP *et al.*). The eventual outcome of the nest is unknown, however. Pine Siskin was suspected of breeding in the same location in March, but no nest was found. The only Hoary Redpolls — a handful — were seen in colder portions of Québec in mid-to-late winter.

House Finches continue their range expansion, one reaching Westport, N.Y. in the Adirondacks in Mid-December (Tom Barber and T. Norman Mason); in Schenectady, Yunick banded 66, his best winter total yet; over 50 were seen in one area on the e. side of Syracuse in January (PDeB); and one wintered at Berne, Albany Co., N.Y., quite high in the hills (K. Able).

Winter Grasshopper Sparrows continue, being seen this year on the Montauk CBC Dec. 14 and Lower Hudson CBC Dec. 15. The Northeast's and New Jersey's second **Black-throated Sparrow** was found in a N. Arlington, Bergen Co., N.J. cemetery Dec. 14 by Art Barber; it was seen by probably several hundred persons, and remained into some time in January; exact dates of departure or demise are not known (see photo). After last fall's phenomenal White-crowned Sparrow invasion, it was to be expected that some would linger through the winter. Nonetheless, the numbers involved



**Black-throated Sparrow.** Photo / Mrs. R.P. Wehner. are amazing, and the birds were distributed on CBCs throughout the region, even well towards, and in a few cases into, Canada. High counts included 12 on the Bronx-Westchester CBC, 13 on the New Haven, 14 on the Smithtown, L.I., 26 on the Lower Hudson, and an astounding 56 on the Princeton, N.J. CBCs. Finally, N.J.'s fourth **Harris' Sparrow** was at a Mt. Pleasant feeder from Feb. 25 through the period, in a flock of 12 **White-crowns** (RKa *et al.*).

**EXOTICS** — Monk Parakeets, recently "exterminated" from N.Y.S., were seen on the following CBCs: Hartford, Conn. (1); Lower Hudson (2); Queens (3); Bronx-Westchester (4). The single Rose-ringed Parakeet on the Springfield, Mass. CBC, was out-classed by the 46 on the Bronx-Westchester.

**CORRIGENDUM** — The Smith's Longspur collected on Long Island last September was not the first on the East Coast in 100 years. We forgot the yearling female collected in Connecticut in March 1968 (*Auk*, 86:345, 1969) and thank Dr. George Clark for reminding us.

**OBSERVERS** — (sub-regional compilers in boldface): J. Ash, J. Black, B. Burt, D.W. Crumb, **T.H. Davis** (N.Y.S. portions of N.Y.C. region; editor, N.Y. Rare Bird Alert: 94-46 85th Road, Woodhaven, N.Y. 11421); **P. DeBenedictis** (Oneida Lake Basin: Dept. of Biology, Syracuse Univ., Syracuse, N.Y. 13210); S. Dempsey, J. DiCostanzo, **B.P. Guyette** (Vermont: 14 Comfort Hill, Vergennes, Vt. 05491); **R. Kane** (New Jersey: see below); S. Kellogg; R. Kelly, A.J. Lauro, **M. McIntosh** (Montreal area: 136 Millhaven Ave., Pointe Claire, P.Q., Canada H9R 3V8); W.J. Norse, **J.M.C. Peterson** (Adirondacks: P.O. Box 300, Essex, N.Y. 12936); **W. Reid** (Pennsylvania: 65 Academy St., Wilkes-Barre, Penna. 18702); R. Ryan, F.G. Scheider, D. Smith, and A. Wollin; B.N.W.M. = Bird News of Western Mass.; H.M. = Hackensack Meadows; J.B.W.R. = Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; O.T.W.B.C. = Otis T. Waterman Bird Club. — P.A. **BUCKLEY**, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, 150 Causeway St., Boston, Mass. 02114 and **RICHARD KANE**, New Jersey Audubon Society, Scherman Wildlife Sanctuary, P.O. Box 693, Bernardsville, N.J. 07924.

## MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION /F. R. Scott and David A. Cutler

Despite all predictions to the contrary, the winter turned out again to be warmer and more open than normal, with only March having below-average temperatures. Precipitation was quite heavy after a dry late



fall, and there was more than adequate ground water throughout the Region, although snowfall was well below normal. The mild, open weather obviously encouraged the wintering of both waterfowl and ground-feeding birds in larger numbers and farther inland than normal. This was the fifth consecutive above-normal winter in this Region, and the weather's effect on birdlife might have been even greater had it not been for the preceding cool fall. Migration during March seemed to be quite slow in getting underway.

**LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS** — Twelve Com. Loons at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg Co., Va., Dec. 15 were an unusual number for a Piedmont impoundment (KMF *et al.*), although 11 were also counted at Swift Creek Res., just west of Richmond, Va., Jan. 18 (FRS *et al.*). A probable **Arctic Loon** was observed under good conditions at Great Bay, N.J., Mar. 30 (HWby, WPC, AHF & SHR). Peak counts of Horned Grebes included 225 at Kerr Res., Mar. 27 (KMF) and 850 at Chincoteague N.W.R., Va., Mar. 1 (LKM), and two **Eared Grebes** were reported, one at Ocean City, Md., Dec. 27 (JS) and another at Craney I., Portsmouth, Va., Feb. 28 (RC, MBwt, GP *et al.*). Twenty Pied-billed Grebes at L. Galena, near New Britain, Pa., Feb. 15 were considered a good number here (AM & JM). Perhaps the record of the season was a subadult **Yellow-nosed Albatross** watched for some 2 hours 57 mi. e. of Ocean City Feb. 1 (RAR, PGD, HM, *et al.*). This was apparently a first report for this Region, and numerous excellent photos were obtained. Another surprise was a **Manx Shearwater** 15 miles off Ocean City Jan. 12 (RAR & HWga), probably a first regional winter report of this species. Peak numbers of Gannets included 680 at Virginia Beach, Va., Dec. 31 (PWSy *et al.*) and 1000 along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Va., Mar. 16 (MAB *et al.*). Farther up Chesapeake Bay, three were seen at Gwynns I., Va.,

Mar 6 (RAB & CS) and one at Reedville, Va., Mar. 16 (FRS) Great Cormorants — up to six individuals — wintered again on the Potomac R. in the St. Georges I., Md area (EJW *et al.*), and there were the usual reports along the coast. Four at Reedy Pt., Del., near Wilmington, Jan. 5 were rather far up the Delaware R. (WAB). A peak of six Double-crested Cormorants were seen at Kerr Res., Mar. 27 (KMF), and J.M. Abbott reported 1000 at Heron Reef, St. Marys Co., Md., Mar 23.

**HERONS, IBIS** — Wintering herons were in good but not record numbers along the coast. There were at least five Green Heron records in the Delaware Valley area (RJB *et al.*), and two Louisiana Herons were found at Indian R. Inlet, Del., Jan. 4 (JL), as well as in other places in the n. part of the Region. Four Cattle Egrets at Virginia Beach Dec. 11 (RJT) were the only winter report of this species, and the first spring arrivals appeared at Norfolk, Va., Mar. 2 (RC & MBwt) and Berlin, Md., Mar. 6 (MH). There were a few winter reports of Glossy Ibis in s.e. Virginia, and two apparent migrants were seen over Chincoteague Ref., Feb. 6 (LKM) and one at Snow Hill, Md., Mar. 6 (SHD). Early peak numbers included 450 Black-crowned Night Herons at Fisherman I., Va., Mar. 28 (MAB *et al.*) and 200 Glossy Ibis at Locustville, Va., Mar. 29 (MAB *et al.*)

**WATERFOWL** — The Mute Swan count in Barnegat Bay, N.J., Dec. 31 was 350 (PWSm), and in the Chincoteague area up to six were present during the winter, increasing to eight in late March (LKM, FRS *et al.*). Inland, one was seen at Alexandria, Va. during December (DFA *et al.*), and up to five were reported in the Culpeper, Va. area January-March (JBB, ST). This last location is far from any other known feral population of this species. The origin of these birds is unknown, but they were free-flying. Whistling Swans wintered in small numbers inland in s. and c. Virginia again, with 11 during the period at Swift Creek Res. (FRS *et al.*), 14 at Culpeper Jan. 6 (ST), 9 at Newport News all winter (DLM), and smaller numbers elsewhere. In contrast to last year, they did not winter at Kerr Res., though three were seen here Mar. 27 (KMF) and 31 appeared at Culpeper Mar. 24 (JBB). At Washington Boro, Pa. the peak count was 5000 on Mar 16 (TRH). Ten thousand Canada Geese wintered at Longwood Gardens, Pa. (JG), a major increase over the 200 or so of ten years ago, and single White-fronted Geese were reported in four coastal localities. The peak Snow Goose count at Brigantine N.W.R., N.J. was 15,000 on Jan. 20 (JCM), and 14 were noted far inland at Kerr Res., Mar. 15 (KMF). A Blue Goose wintered at Kerr Res. (KMF *et al.*), and the top count at Blackwater N.W.R., Md. was 900 on Jan. 4 (PGD); a single individual appeared at Middle Creek Wildlife Mgt. Area, Pa. (W.M.A. below) Dec. 26 (MC). There were two reports of **Fulvous Tree Ducks**. One was present at W Ocean City, Md. apparently from Nov. 10 at least to Mar. 15 (CPW, JMA, CSR *et al.*), and another was seen at Middle Creek W.M.A., Mar. 16-24 (KB *et al.*), the latter apparently a first state record.

Forty Gadwalls at Moselem Springs, Pa., Feb 15 (RWIt) and 20 at White Oak, Lancaster Co., Pa., Feb 21 (CRG) were locally unusual. A **Cinnamon Teal** at New Gretna, N.J., Feb. 20-23 (BCH, JFA) was probably the same individual previously reported off and on since June 1974 at nearby Brigantine Ref., and there were numerous reports of Blue-winged Teal in mid-winter, mostly along the coast. A Eur. Green-winged Teal wintered at Pomona, N.J. for the third consecutive year (JDD, JFA), and there were two reports of single Eur. Wigeon, one at Chincoteague Ref., Dec. 28 (FH & JHt) and one at Taylors Bridge, Del., Mar. 22 (DPln) Peak Redhead counts of 250 at Barnegat Bay, N J, Dec. 30 (PWSm) and 40 inland at Kerr Res., Mar 27 (KMF) were excellent. Inland records of Canvasbacks seem to be increasing in Virginia, perhaps in part owing to the increasing numbers of lakes and reservoirs. Up to 12 were noted near Culpeper during the winter (JBB), 117 were counted at Kerr Res., Dec 15 (KMF *et al.*), 50 were seen on the Staunton R, Mecklenburg Co., Mar. 12 (PEM), and 11 were found at Danville Mar. 26 (PWW & FD). There were far fewer reports of Harlequin Ducks and both eiders than in recent years. One ♂ Harlequin spent much of the winter along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Va (JMA, MAB *et al.*), and six Com. Eiders at Barnegat Inlet, N.J., Mar. 6 (CJ) was the maximum number of either eider species reported. The peak count of Red-breasted Mergansers at Kerr Res. was 125 on Mar 27 (KMF). This may be a record state count west of the Coastal Plain.

**VULTURES, HAWKS** — Unprecedented numbers of Black Vultures were found in the mid Delmarva Pen The best counts were 119 at Crisfield, Md., Dec 26 (CRV *et al.*) and 188 at Ocean City, Md., Dec 27 (CSR *et al.*). *Accipiters* seemed in better-than-usual numbers in the s. part of the Region, especially on Virginia's Eastern Shore (LKM *et al.*), and Red-tailed Hawks were unusually common in Virginia and Maryland in late December. Excellent counts included 77 at Seneca, Md., Dec. 15 (JWO *et al.*), 64 at Crisfield, Md., Dec. 26 (CRV *et al.*), 35 at Hopewell, Va., Dec 14 (FRS *et al.*), and 25 at Lynchburg, Va., Dec 14 (MPM *et al.*). Northward migrating Red-taileds included 26 at New Hope, Pa. (DJH) and 28 at Elverson, Pa. (REC), both on Mar. 23. A pair was feeding one or more young in a nest at Blackwater Ref., Md., Mar 7 (JMA & DFA). Gamber found nine different Red-shouldered Hawks in Lancaster Co., Pa., Dec 1, perhaps late migrants, and the Lancaster Co. Bird Club recorded 35 Rough-legged Hawks in the county Feb 9 A single Rough-legged was seen at Elm Hill W.M.A, Mecklenburg Co., Va., Jan. 10 (KMF), and up to two different ad. and two imm. Bald Eagles were noted along the Roanoke R., Mecklenburg Co., Va., January-March (KMF *et al.*). An Osprey at Ocean City Dec. 27 (GF & DW) and another at Browns Mill, N J, Dec. 30 (LL) were the only winter reports, and the first spring arrival at Yorktown, Va. was noted Mar 3 (MAB). A dark-phase **Gyrfalcon** appeared at Brigantine Ref., Mar. 15 and was joined several days later by a light-phase bird (FMet *et al.*). Both were present about two weeks.

**GROUSE, RAILS** — Blicharz reported two Ruffed Grouse at Princeton, N.J., Dec. 15, and Danzenbaker noted both Clapper and Virginia Rails being attacked and killed by Herring Gulls during high tides at Linwood, N.J., Dec. 1. Two Virginia Rails were found at Danville, Va., Mar. 31 (PJS *et al.*), and the Crisfield CBC totaled 266 on Dec. 26 (CRV *et al.*). Chandler and Fielder flushed a Black Rail at Back Bay N.W.R., Va., Dec. 29. An outbreak of avian cholera in the Am. Coot population at Back Bay Ref. in February resulted in the death of approximately 19,000 birds owing to the disease and the removal of 6000 others by Federal and state wildlife agents to inhibit the spread of the disease to other migrating waterfowl.

**SHOREBIRDS** — As usual, Am. Oystercatchers wintered in some numbers between Chincoteague and Cape Charles, Va. farther north, two at Indian R. Inlet, De., Jan. 4 (JL) were the only real winter report. At Holgate, N.J., four on Feb. 28 (BCH) and 25 on Mar. 27 (MBrn) were considered spring arrivals, the latter an excellent count. Wintering shorebird numbers along the coast were good but were in general not up to those of the previous winter. Some 428 Killdeer were recorded on the Crisfield, Md. CBC Dec. 26 (CRV *et al.*), and two Am. Golden Plovers were seen at Brigantine Ref., Mar. 31 (CFH). An Am. Woodcock incubating four eggs in James City Co., Va., Feb. 26 hatched out three of them Mar. 18 or 19 (BW). An unusual number of Spotted Sandpipers were reported in Virginia. J.M. Abbott found one at Fort Belvoir Dec. 21, three were recorded at Hampton Dec. 30 (JHz & DL), one was seen near Capahosic, Gloucester Co., Jan. 5 and again Mar. 22-Apr. 1 (EDP *et al.*), and Stinson saw one at Yorktown Feb. 4. The wintering flock of willets near Cape Charles totaled a record 190 on Dec. 27 (HTA *et al.*), and a Lesser Yellowlegs was reported inland at Alexandria, Va., Dec. 14 (RMP). Seventy-five Red Knots wintered at Longport, N.J. (JDD), and the wintering flock of Purple Sandpipers at Ocean City peaked at 200 in late January (PP). Sykes and others found a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Chincoteague Ref., Dec. 28, and Long-billed Dowitcher reports included 11 at Back Bay Ref., Dec. 29 WP & TRW), 24 at Chincoteague Dec. 28 (PAD & PGD), and one at Brigantine Ref., Jan. 12 (JDD). About 100 W. Sandpipers were present at Longport January and February (JDD, PWSm), and the DuMonts counted over 1200 at Chincoteague Dec. 28. Six Marbled Godwits were seen at Brigantine Ref., Dec. 14, and three were present here Dec. 27-Jan. 19 (JDD, JFA), while the wintering flock near Cape Charles consisted of 110 birds Dec. 27 (HTA *et al.*). The only Ruff reported was one at Locustville, Va., Mar. 28-29 (MAB, BW & TFW). At Bombay Hook N.W.R., Del. 12 Am. Avocets were seen as late as Dec. 15 (RMK) and four again on Mar. 30 (DG), whereas there were 230 at Craney I., Va., Mar. 31 (RLAnd). **Red Phalaropes** apparently wintered at sea off the Delmarva coast. Rowlett and Barnhill counted 113 40-50 mi. e. of Ocean City Jan. 12, and Rowlett observed a few in this area Feb. 5-10.

**JAEGERS THROUGH GULLS** — Lesser and Hiatt observed a Pomarine Jaeger at Island Beach, N.J., Dec. 15, and seven Parasitics were seen from the beach at

Back Bay, Va., Dec. 29 (RLAnd *et al.*). There were a record 29 sightings of **Skuas** off the Delmarva Pen, Jan. 12-Mar. 16, with a maximum of nine off Ocean City Feb. 1 (RAR *et al.*). White-winged gulls were well represented in the Region, with Glaucous Gulls reported from at least eight localities and Icelanders from at least seven. Of special interest was a Glaucous Gull inland at Alexandria, Va., Feb. 9-Mar. 16 (JMA *et al.*) and three 45 mi. off Ocean City Mar. 16 with about 1000 Herring Gulls (RAR, PGD *et al.*). Four more **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were reported in addition to the three found last fall. These were one at Ocean City, Dec. 1 (PGD), one at Belmar, N.J., Dec. 13 (PWSm), two at Virginia Beach, Va., Dec. 31 (PWSy), and perhaps one of the same birds also at Virginia Beach Mar. 2 (RC & MBwt). Both Black-headed and Little Gulls were found in several localities along the coast with up to three of each at Ocean City during the period (JMA *et al.*). A few Bonaparte's Gulls wintered inland at Kerr Res., Va., and 45 were counted here Mar. 27 (KMF). At Craney I., Va., R.L. Anderson estimated 5000 on Mar. 31. Black-legged Kittiwakes were found onshore at least five times, including one at Back Bay Dec. 29 (PWSy) and one at Barnegat Inlet Feb. 8 (JDD & JFA).

**TERNs, ALCIDS** — An unusual inland **Com. Tern** was found on the Roanoke R., Va. near Kerr Dam Dec. 15 (RC) and 16 (KMF), perhaps the first winter Piedmont record for the state. Another was carefully observed at Back Bay Ref., Dec. 29 (PEM). Caspian Terns had build up to 200 at Craney I., Mar. 31, outnumbering the Royal Tern almost 20 to one (RLAnd). The winter pelagic trips off the Delmarva Pen. were unusually productive of alcids. Two Razor-bills were found off Ocean City Jan. 12 and one on Mar. 16 (RAR *et al.*), and at least one unidentified murre was seen here Feb. 1 (RAR). Strangely, the most common alcid in this area this winter was the **Com. Puffin**, a species rarely recorded previously in this Region. Some 39 individuals were noted offshore on six different days between Feb. 1 and Mar. 16 from Delaware south to Chincoteague, with a peak of 16 off Ocean City Feb. 2 (RAR, PGD, LKM *et al.*). None were seen closer to shore than 40 miles. These reports constitute the first sight records for Maryland; there was only one previous Virginia sight record. There were 35 sightings of Dovekies off Delmarva Jan. 12-Mar. 16 (RAR *et al.*).

**DOVES THROUGH PARAKEETS** — A Mourning Dove nest at Lynchburg had two eggs Mar. 5 (WM), and a large Barn Owl roost at Franconia, Montgomery Co., Pa. had ten birds Dec. 31 (AM & JM). Excellent owl counts were reported on some of the CBCs. Among these were 100 Screech Owls and 78 Great Horned Owls at St. Michaels, Md., Dec. 22 (*vide* JR), 71 Screech Owls at West Chester, Pa., Dec. 21 (*vide* PH), 54 at Cape Charles, Va., Dec. 27 (*vide* HTA), 51 at Lynchburg, Va., Dec. 14 (*vide* MPM), and 30 Barred Owls at Back Bay, Va., Dec. 29 (*vide* PWSy). An ad Great Horned Owl was incubating on an old crow nest at Dyke marsh, Fairfax Co., Va., Jan. 12 (JMA & DFA). As noted in the fall report, a mild invasion of



Snowy Owls moved into the n. part of the Region, with perhaps ten or 12 reports. The farthest south bird was one at Cambridge, Md. seen by numerous observers about Jan. 4-Feb. 25 (PGD *et al.*). Long-eared Owls were reported more commonly than usual, perhaps because observers are more competent in locating them now. The best counts were 13 in s. Dorchester Co., Md., Dec. 30 (*vide* CSR) and 6 near Crisfield, Md., Dec. 26 (*vide* CRV). Good Short-eared Owl counts included 24 at Cape Henlopen, Del., Dec. 22 (*vide* WAB), 15 at Chincoteague, Dec. 28 (CSR *et al.*), and 11 at Bolling field, D.C., Dec. 14 (PP *et al.*). At Kutztown, Pa. six wintering Short-eareds were found roosting in pine trees (AN). The best Saw-whet Owl count was seven at Thorofare, N.J., Dec. 28 (JCM).

#### S.A.

Although *American Birds* is not the place to list reports of escaped cage birds, it may be significant that three species of parakeets survived the winter at least into mid-March. These were two Yellow-headed Parrots and one to four Canary-winged Parakeets at Wilmington, Del. (AEC) and one Orange-fronted Parakeet at Sellersville, Pa. (AM & JM). Although many identifications of parakeets in the wild are subject to question, these are thought to be accurate.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH SHRIKES** — Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers seemed more common than normal in the Delaware Valley area, and a count of 11 in the Bethlehem-Easton, Pa. area Dec. 21 was considered excellent (*vide* TM). A **Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker** was present near Reading, Pa., Dec. 4-Jan. 4 and was seen by many observers (RWyr *et al.*)

Swallows arrived fairly early this year. Rough-winged Swallows were first noted at Newport News, Va., Mar. 18 (MAB), while Barn Swallows first showed up Mar. 22 at both Culpeper (JBB) and Capahosic, Va. (EDP). At Kerr Res., Va. there were 18 Cliff Swallows Mar. 27 (KMF), and a Purple Martin showed up at Aston, Pa., Mar. 23 (JG). A Brown-headed Nuthatch at Rustburg, near Lynchburg, Va., Mar. 15 was unusual (DPte, *vide* RSF) as was a Bewick's Wren at Kerr Res., Nov. 24-Dec. 15 (KMF *et al.*) American Robins wintered in higher numbers than usual in much of the Region, with many areas having a big influx in January. Thousands were present at times in the Lynchburg area during January and February (RSF). Eike noted 700 at Clifton, Va., Jan. 31, and some 500 wintered between Summeytown and Skip-pack, Pa. (RJM *et al.*). A Swainson's Thrush was noted at Brigantine Ref., N.J., Mar. 2 (VA & HD), apparently a winter survivor rather than an early migrant, and single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were seen at Fort Foote, Md., Dec. 11 (LT), Alexandria, Va., Dec. 14 (RMP), and Back Bay, Va., Dec. 29 (HTA). Cedar Waxwings were very common over much of Maryland and Virginia during the winter, and a N. Shrike was found at Avalon, N.J., Mar. 4 (HGA).

**VIREOS, WARBLERS** — Chandler and Fielder found a White-eyed Vireo at Back Bay Dec. 29, and

Solitary Vireos were noted on three CBCs in s.e. Virginia. Three Black-and-white Warblers were present in the Bethlehem-Easton, Pa. area in late December, with one seen on the Dec. 21 CBC (*vide* TM). An apparent early migrant appeared at Madison Heights, Va., Mar. 22 (MBwt). Two **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were seen at Newport News, Va., Jan. 23, and one, an apparent imm. male, was trapped, banded, and photographed (DLM). The banded bird was seen later on six different occasions up to Mar. 17. R.H. Peake recorded the first singing Black-throated Green Warbler at Norfolk, Va., Mar. 26; note that this was undoubtedly the s.e. race, which regularly arrives several weeks before the more northern birds. Among the other unusual winter warbler records was a **Nashville Warbler** near Cape Charles Dec. 27 (PGD), an **Audubon's Warbler** at Cape May Pt., N.J., Jan. 5 (DEK), a **Prairie Warbler** near Chincoteague Dec. 28 (CSR *et al.*), and a **Wilson's Warbler** at Chesapeake, Va., Jan. 5 (DLH & MJH). Single **Ovenbirds** were reported at Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (RJT), Westtown, Pa., Jan. 15-Mar. 4 (JD, EG *et al.*), and Cape May Dec. 22 (*vide* KS). Up to four Com. Yellowthroats were observed during January at Kerr Res. (KMF), and four at Delaware City, Del., Jan. 4 (BM) were considered a good wintering number. Coastal areas, of course, had higher numbers, with 54 reported at Back Bay Dec. 29 (PWSy *et al.*). A Yellow-breasted Chat was seen at Ephrata, Pa., Dec. 23-31 (EW) and another at Longwood Gardens, Pa., Jan. 15-Feb. 4 (JG).

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH TANAGERS** — Yellow-headed Blackbirds were noted in several locations. Two were present during January at Prospect Park, Pa. (JCM), one was seen in late January at Wenonah, N.J. (EM), one was noted at Mickleton, N.J., Feb. 24 (CB), and there were additional reports without adequate details. Eight to ten Baltimore Orioles wintered in the Princeton, N.J. area (RJB), and six were reported at Lynchburg during the winter (KMF *et al.*). The Brewer's Blackbird flock at Bombay Hook, Del. totaled 35 birds Mar. 23 (KR), and a **Western Tanager** was reported at Ambler, Pa., Dec. 24-30 (DZ, KR *et al.*).

**FRINGILLIDS** — An imm. ♂ **Black-headed Grosbeak** was present near Elverson, Pa., Feb. 18 to the end of the period (REC), and one **Blue Grosbeak** was seen at Elm Hill W.M.A., Va., Jan. 8 and two on Jan. 18 (JML, KMF *et al.*). An almost fully plumaged ♂ **Lazuli Bunting** visited feeders near Elverson Jan. 1-Mar. 16 and was photographed and observed by many persons (REC, DAC, CN *et al.*). Northern finches were in general in low numbers, though there were small local flocks of wintering Evening Grosbeaks. One spectacular exception was a concentration of Evening Grosbeaks estimated at 1100 at Brookneal, Campbell Co., Va., Feb. 9 (EA & KMF). Four **Pine Grosbeaks** were noted in this flock (KMF), the only regional report of this species. Common Redpolls were reported only twice, five at Norristown, Pa., Feb. 6 (RJM) and one at Charlottesville, Va., Dec. 28 (ES), and there was one White-winged Crossbill report, one at Madison Heights, Va., Mar. 9 & 16 (MBwt, LRB). The increase in the House Finch population continued

with numerous record counts throughout the Region. Sample CBC counts included 950 at Princeton, N.J., Dec. 15 (RJB *et al.*), 277 at Washington, D.C., Dec. 14 (RLP *et al.*), and 196 at St. Michaels, Md., Dec. 22 (JR *et al.*). At many feeders in the n. part of the Region they are displacing House Sparrows to a large extent, and at Hampton, Va., W.P. Smith had banded a record 270 by Mar. 20.

The "Ipswich" Sparrow population at Brigantine I., N.J. peaked at 27 on Jan. 4 (JDD & JFA). The Peakes found a Grasshopper Sparrow near Back Bay Dec. 29, and another was discovered near Norfolk Jan. 2 (PWSy, DLH *et al.*). A **Henslow's Sparrow** was located along the Roanoke R., Va., Jan. 12 (MBwt & RC). There were three reports of **Le Conte's Sparrows** this winter. At Back Bay Ref. one was located Dec. 7 (GMW, DLH, RLake *et al.*) and apparently the same one Dec. 29 (PEM, PWSy *et al.*). Similarly, one located at Ocean City, Md., Dec. 27 (PWB & DN) was trapped, banded, and photographed Jan. 5 (MKK, RLP, PP *et al.*). The third bird was carefully identified at Lynnhaven Inlet, Va., Dec. 31 (PWSy). Two good Oregon Juncos were reported, one at Camp Hill, Pa., Jan. 1-Mar. 15 (CJ) and one at Rosemont, Pa., Jan. 26-28 (EEH). Fielder and Lynch located a **Harris' Sparrow** at Elm Hill W.M.A., Va., Jan. 8-Mar. 27, and another remained at Mickleton, N.J., Feb. 21-Apr. 5 (CB *et al.*). After being unusually common during the fall, White-crowned Sparrows remained that way through the winter, with unusual numbers even in s.e. Virginia. Record counts included 53 at Oxon Hill, Md., Dec. 14 (PAD *et al.*), 54 at Hopewell, Va., Dec. 14 (FRS & WKS), 12 at Salisbury, Md., Dec. 29 (CRV *et al.*), and 250 at Warren, Va., Dec. 29 (CES *et al.*). More Lincoln's Sparrows than normal were reported. There were single birds near Hopewell, Va., Dec. 14 (RLake), near Crisfield, Md., Dec. 26 (PB), and in Virginia Beach Dec. 29 (RHP & DEP); an amazing count of five was made in the Cape Charles area Dec. 27 (JMA *et al.*). Although Lapland longspurs were quite scarce in Virginia this winter, there were excellent counts in s.e. Pennsylvania and South Jersey, with a peak of 40 at Brigantine I., Feb. 1 (JDD). An almost record-sized flock of 500 Snow Buntings wintered at Dutch Neck, Mercer Co., N.J. (RJB).

**CORRIGENDA** — Laughing Gull eggs at the Little Beach I., N.J. colony were hatching June 11, not May 11 (WAM — AB 28: 887, 1974). The Yellow-headed Blackbird, nine Dickcissels, and Clay-colored Sparrow reported at Longwood, Pa. in September were actually seen at Island Beach, N.J. (JG — *ibid.* 29: 39, 1975).

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## SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION / Robert P. Teulings

It was warmer than normal and wet in the Region this winter. Most sections were touched by only brief spells of sub-freezing weather, but there was plenty of rain, especially on weekends, which tended to dampen the enthusiasm of observers. The Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) generated the usual excitement, yet the season as a whole was rather uneventful. Two rare northern invaders, a Goshawk and a Snowy Owl, were sighted in the Region and Rough-legged Hawks were seen with above-average frequency, but there was no major influx of winter finches.



**LOONS THROUGH IBISES** — CBC data indicate that the wintering population of Com. Loons in the coastal area of the Carolinas was noticeably up this season with the total reported count well above the past five years' average. Red-throated Loons seemed to be present in about normal numbers, although one observer noted a local scarcity of this species through the winter at Morehead City (JF). Inland, a large concentration of Horned Grebes was present at Roanoke Rapids L., Halifax Co., N.C. in early January where a peak count of 196 was recorded Jan. 2 (ML). Two Eared Grebes were unusual visitors at L. Benson near Raleigh Dec. 21 - Jan. 13 (RH, CM, ML), and three Red-necked Grebes were observed on the Hilton Head I. CBC Dec. 28. An individual of the latter species was also found at Charleston Mar. 9 (SG, HL). Good numbers of Brown Pelicans wintered at Hilton Head I. where flocks of up to 100 were seen (LL) and a few wintered as far n. as Pea I. and Cape Hatteras (JH). Nine late-lingering Cattle Egrets were seen near Grandy, N.C., Dec. 14 (RT) and three overwintered at Bogue Banks near Morehead City (JF). One was also seen near McClellanville, S.C., Jan. 24 (DF). February sightings of White Ibis and Glossy Ibis were reported from the N.C. Outer Banks (JH, RT), and both species were present in the Charleston area all winter (DF, PN).

**WATERFOWL** — Mattamuskeet N.W.R. continued to attract the main wintering population of Whistling Swans in the Region with a high count of 18,000 recorded there in December (*vide* DH). Up to 200 swans also wintered at Pea Island N.W.R., and a few wandered as far south as Savannah, Dalton and Macon, Ga. A peak winter concentration of 7200 Snow Geese was reported from Pea Island N.W.R., including 25 birds of the blue form (JHa). No mention was made of sizeable wintering flocks of Snow Geese elsewhere, but observers did take note of the presence of blue morph geese at several other places including eight seen at Charleston Jan. 19 (TB), one seen regularly through the winter at Columbus (RU, *vide* LAW), and two at Garysburg, N.C., Jan. 5 (ML). A White-fronted Goose was seen Feb. 18 at Santee N.W.R. (DF). Fulvous Tree Ducks again wintered in the Region with small flocks noted at Magnolia Gardens near Charleston (TB), Savannah N.W.R., (*vide* PY) and Altamaha N.W.R. (TM). Sightings were also recorded farther north where 17 tree ducks were seen Apr. 7 at Cape Hatteras (CG) and three at Bells I., Currituck Co., N.C., Apr. 5 (FA). A ♂ **Cinnamon Teal** was found at Greenfield L. in Wilmington, N.C., Dec. 29 (KK). CBC data, refuge censuses, and the comments of various observers indicated Canvasbacks were generally more abundant this year, which is good news. Four N. Shovelers were uncommon inland visitors at Raleigh Feb. 8 (JM) and two were at Clemson Mar. 24 (HL). A flock of 18 Greater Scaup was also unusual at Raleigh Mar. 10 (JM), and four were seen inland at Pendleton, S.C., Mar. 29 (HL). Single Com. Eiders were found at Pea Island N.W.R. Dec. 27 (NFW) and in the Charleston area at Fort Sumter Mar. 9 (DF *et al.*) and Sullivans I. Mar. 20 (JRH).

**RAPTORS** — A **Goshawk** was sighted in n.w. Caswell Co., N.C. near the Virginia border Dec. 22 (Danville CBC, *vide* PW). This was the only reported occur-

rence of the season with no additional indications of an incursion noted elsewhere in the Region. A Rough-legged Hawk was seen several times during December at Pea I. (*vide* NFW), and one was observed at Wilmington Dec. 1 (KK). Another was later present for at least 10 days during March at Seaforth in Chatham Co., N.C. (SA, AC *et al.*). A Golden Eagle was seen at Okefenokee N.W.R. Jan. 11 (BDeB), and two others (an adult and an immature) were recorded on the Georgia side of Eufala N.W.R. in late Jan. and early Feb. (WM, SP, TM *et al.*). A pair of Bald Eagles nesting on South I. near Charleston appeared to have young hatchlings as early as Jan. 19 (TB). Peregrine Falcons were seen at three coastal locations during the winter period and one was sighted inland in Warren Co., N.C., Jan. 31 (MS).

**CRANES THROUGH JAEGERES** — A Sandhill Crane was present at Clemson Dec. 2 (HL) while elsewhere four were seen at Charleston Jan. 19 (TB). The first nesting of cranes at Okefenokee N.W.R. was noted as early as Mar. 7 (*vide* EC). A Black Rail was a good find at Kiawah I. near Charleston Jan. 26 (DC). Flocks of at least 300 Com. Snipe were seen at Magnolia Gardens near Charleston Feb. 13 (TB), and over 100 at Raleigh Mar. 28 (RH). A Long-billed Curlew found on the Morehead City CBC Dec. 23 remained in that area at least through the winter (JF). A good count of 20 Purple Sandpipers was recorded at Georgetown, S.C., Dec. 8 (JEC). A locally unusual winter occurrence of a Least Sandpiper was noted near Atlanta Jan. 18 (DCo), and two Dunlin were late lingerers at L. Hartwell near Clemson until early January (HL). Twenty-eight **Red Phalaropes** were seen Jan. 26 at Wrightsville Beach, N.C. after a storm (JWe), and another was sighted by observers during a pelagic cruise 28 mi. off St. Simons I., Ga., Mar. 8 (TM *et al.*). Karl Mayer (*vide* EY) reported seeing five Parasitic Jaegers along the Jekyll I. beach Jan. 27. Two were also seen by the aforementioned pelagic party off St. Simons I. Mar. 8. A light-phase Pomarine Jaeger was sighted off the Charleston jetties Mar. 9 (DF).

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS** — A white-winged gull, identified as a Glaucous by one observer and reported as an Iceland by another, was present at Cape Point, Hatteras I., N.C. in late Dec. and early January. Recent winter occurrences of both species have been reported in North Carolina (*Am. Birds* 27:602; 28:290, 28:626), but the problem of identification is difficult and no specimens of the Iceland Gull have yet been taken in the state. A Bonaparte's Gull at Thomasville, Ga. was a first record for that inland locality (RLC). At other inland sites, two Bonaparte's were seen at L. Surf near Vass, N.C., Dec. 9 (JC) and four at L. Wheeler near Raleigh Mar. 22 (RH). A Forster's Tern was unusual at the latter location Mar. 29 (JM). Black Skimmers were unusually common at Sea I., Ga. this winter with flocks of up to 200 seen regularly (JK, *vide* EY). A fresh specimen of a **Razorbill** was found Feb. 22 at Pawley's I., S.C. (JEC), marking the Region's only Alcoid record for the season.

**OWLS THROUGH SWALLOWS** — A **Snowy Owl** made a very rare appearance in the Region at Pea Island

N.W.R. in early December (NFW), but apparently did not linger more than a few days. Short-eared Owls were remarkably abundant at Eufala N.W.R. where a season high count of 23 was recorded (MF, *SP et al.*). A rather late W. Kingbird was seen near Georgetown, S.C., Dec. 8 (JEC). An early northward movement of some 3000 Tree Swallows was observed at Jekyll I. Feb. 6 (KM), and a few were seen at Cape Hatteras as early as Feb. 27 (JH). Elsewhere, several thousand were noted Mar. 9 at Morehead City (RH) and others had arrived at Raleigh by Mar. 10 (JM). Rough-winged Swallows were seen Mar. 12 at Columbus (JMi) and by Mar. 25 at Raleigh (JM). Purple Martins returned to Charleston as early as Feb. 2 (DG) and Columbus Feb. 11 (*fide* LAW).

**NUTHATCHES THROUGH PIPITS** — Red-breasted Nuthatches were listed on over half the CBCs in the Region and occurrences were noted as far s. as Thomasville, Ga., but the influx was generally light. Eden, N.C., was the only place where they were reported common through the season (EB). A Long-billed Marsh Wren was a late-lingering and unusual visitor in the Winston-Salem area Jan. 2 (JO), and a Bewick's Wren wintered at Townville, S.C. where it was last seen Mar. 6 (HL). A winter sighting of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was unusual at Zebulon, N.C., Jan. 22 (EP). Record-breaking numbers of Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were tallied on this year's CBCs, indicating a very strong influx of both species. The CBC totals were double last year's counts in the Carolinas. **Sprague's Pipits** were an outstanding find at Rocky Mount, N.C. where up to 12 birds wintered at M.C. Braswell's farm in a mixed flock with Am. Pipits (LF). The birds were observed on several occasions Jan. 5 - Mar. 9.

**VIREOS AND WARBLERS** — At Clemson a Solitary Vireo was seen Dec. 4 (HL) and another was noted as late as Dec. 22 at Raleigh (GW). Elsewhere an unusual number of this species remained through the winter in the Augusta area as reported by Gerald Knighton. An out-of-season White-eyed Vireo was found at Raleigh Feb. 2 (JM). The list of late-lingering warblers included a Black-throated Green Warbler Dec. 29 at Wilmington (KK), a Wilson's Warbler at Charleston Dec. 29 (PN), and a Chat at Garysburg, N.C., Jan. 7 (ML). A chat was also present during February and March at Winston-Salem (RS). Before the end of the period, unusually early spring arrivals were reported of Prothonotary Warblers Feb. 23 in the Charleston area (TB), a Worm-eating Warbler Mar. 23 at Winston-Salem (CF), a Cape May Warbler Mar. 25 at Pawley's Island, S.C. (FP), and N. Waterthrushes at Atlanta Mar. 30 (MAN, MAV, RHO).

**Brewer's Blackbirds** were seen in half a dozen areas scattered over the Region this winter, indicating a possibly significant trend. The species was reported from Brunswick, Augusta and Athens, Ga.; Rock Hill and Charleston, S.C.; and Halifax County, N.C. A N. Oriole believed to be of the Bullock's race wintered in Southern Pines, N.C. (MJ, JC), and a ♂ Orchard Oriole was reported to have wintered in Dalton, Ga. (*fide* HDiG)

#### S.A.

**BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES** — A listing of major blackbird roosts in North Carolina by Don Harke of the Fish and Wildlife Service included a huge roost of an estimated 50 million birds near Cofield in Hertford County. Roosts of about 2 million birds were located near Selma in Johnston County and Burlington in Alamance County. Smaller roosts of 500,000 and 350,000 were reported from Union and Mecklenburg Counties. The Winston-Salem CBC also indicated the presence of a roost containing at least 300,000 grackles and 15,000 Rusty Blackbirds in that locality.

**WINTER FINCHES** — A **Black-headed Grosbeak** was a regular visitor at a feeder in Reidsville, N.C., from mid-January through the end of the period (EB), and a female (or imm. male) turned up Dec. 26 at a feeder in Pinehurst, N.C. where it stayed through the end of February (JC). Evening Grosbeaks made a poor showing in the Region this winter and Pine Siskins were very scarce. For both species it was the lowest season in five years, based on CBC comparisons. Purple Finches were present in about the same numbers as last year, but fewer House Finches were counted. Red Crossbills were virtually absent with only three sightings reported during the entire season (Bodie I., Southern Pines and Atlanta).

**SPARROWS THROUGH SNOW BUNTING** — Lark Sparrows were recorded for the first time in the Morehead City area this winter, where single birds were seen on Dec. 22-23 & Feb. 7 (JF). Sam Pate reported as many as six Le Conte's Sparrows present at Eufala N.W.R. during the season, and one was noted Jan. 18 at Santee N.W.R. (DF). A Clay-colored Sparrow was noteworthy Dec. 1 near Atlanta (RM). **White-crowned Sparrows** wintered in the Region in record numbers, the total recorded in the Carolinas on CBCs this season was 2.5 times last year's tally and 5 times the number recorded five years ago. At Roanoke Rapids, N.C., 98 White-crowneds were seen by a single observer Jan. 9 (ML), and 106 were recorded on the CBC at Clemson. Other localities substantial populations were Rocky Mount, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Greensboro, Aiken and Athens. A Tree Sparrow was a rare winter visitor at Winston-Salem Dec. 16 (RS, FB). A Lincoln's Sparrow returned to Perry Nugent's feeder in Charleston where it was seen regularly Dec. 9 through the end of the period. This was undoubtedly the same bird which wintered there last year. The only other reported winter occurrence of the species in the Region was a Jan. 7 observation of an individual near Townville, S.C. (HL). Lapland Longspurs once again wintered in small numbers in the n. section of the Region in the Roanoke Rapids, N.C. area (ML). Elsewhere, one was seen at Hatteras I. on the North Carolina Outer Banks Mar. 5 (CG, JH). A Snow Bunting was an unusual visitor at a feeder in Gastonia, N.C., Dec. 10-11 (RR *fide* AS). Snow Buntings were scarce this winter with reports of only a few individuals being seen on the coast.

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## FLORIDA REGION / Henry M. Stevenson

On balance, the winter of 1974-75 was another mild one. Temperatures averaged close to normal in December and March, but well above in January and February. A succession of mild winters doubtless has allowed an increasing number of semi-hardy birds to winter in Florida, but how is it related to more frequent records of the Great Cormorant, scoters, Common Merganser, Iceland Gull, Horned Lark, and Lapland Longspur? More than any other feature of bird-

watching, perhaps, its unpredictable nature is what makes it so attractive. More likely related to the mild weather was the early nesting of Carolina Wrens, Mockingbirds, and Common Grackles (HWK).

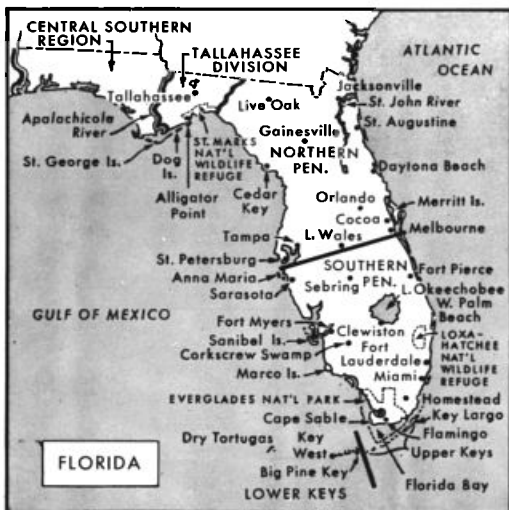
**MIGRATION** — The usual mix of very early, normal, and late-arriving spring migrants occurred this year. Almost without exception, extremely early records featured isolated localities, with no evidence of a concerted early movement of any species. Only 16 birds of 7 species were recovered at the WCTV tower during March (RLC).

**COMPARATIVE ABUNDANCE** — Field counts related to time afield (briefly explained in previous issues of *American Birds*) provided a basis for considering various species as significantly more common or less common when compared with the averages for 1946-74. Keeping separate sets of data for Leon County and the coastal counties (Nov.-Feb.) resulted in 8 "months" of possible departure from normal for species occurring in significant numbers throughout. The following species were well below normal for all 8 months: *Gadwall*, *Pintail*, *Ruddy Duck*, *Redheaded Woodpecker*, *Golden-crowned Kinglet*, *Palm Warbler*. Other species were low on 7 "counts," some of which were high in the remaining month and others close to their norms: *Canada Goose*, *Mallard*, *Black Duck*, *Black Vulture*, *Red-bellied Woodpecker*, *E. Phoebe*, *Tree Swallow*, *Com. Crow*, *Brown Thrasher*, *E. Bluebird*, *Cedar Waxwing*, *Red-winged Blackbird*, *Brown-headed Cowbird*, and *White-throated Sparrow*. Low in 6 months of record were: *Great Egret*, *Snow Goose*, *Am. Wigeon*, *Ring-necked Duck*, *Am. Coot*, *Hermit Thrush*, *Water Pipit*, *Starling*, *Yellow-rumped Warbler*, *Com. Grackle*, and *Vesper and Field Sparrows*. Italicized species were considered low by at least one other observer in the Region.

As is so often the case, it is much easier to state results than to give reasons for them. Another mild winter may have permitted larger numbers of ducks, geese, and several other winter residents to remain farther north, yet some species in the same category were more common than usual this winter (e.g., *Swamp and Song Sparrows*). Whatever the explanation for some birds on the above lists, though, most of the insect-eaters have been below normal for many years, and their decreases may be related to lethal build-ups of pesticides.

**LOONS, GREBES** — *Red-throated Loons* (one-4) on the Gulf Coast were seen off *Alligator Pt.*, *Franklin Co.*, in January and February (JHH, HMS, JMS), and one was at *Carrabelle Beach* Jan. 26 (JHH). *Eared Grebes* appear to be increasing. One was collected near *St. James, Franklin Co.*, Dec. 19 (\*T.T.; HMS), one seen near *St. Petersburg* Dec. 26 - Mar. 17 (JBE, JJD, WB *et al.*), and one at *Merritt I.*, Feb. 18 (RDB).

**SHEARWATERS, PELICANS, AND CORMORANTS** — The very rare *Manx Shearwater* was seen and well described off *Cape Canaveral* Mar. 24 (JJ), and a dead *Greater Shearwater* was found at *Indialantic Beach* Dec. 10 (Muriel Seegers; \*U.S.F.). The number



of White Pelicans wintering near Lakeland reached 2000 (JBE *et al.*); 60 were late at Alligator Pt., Dec. 1 (JHH, JEH, BW), and three seen 6 mi. off Key West Mar. 31 (LPD) are the first of record for the Lower Keys. The **Great Cormorant** was reported only at Alligator Pt., Dec. 8 (JBE, NOW *et al.*).

**WADERS** — Cattle Egrets again left the Tallahassee area in winter, 12 reappearing near Crawfordville Mar. 11 (HMS). Rare on the Keys, the Black-crowned Night Heron was found at Crawl Key Feb. 9 (RTP) and W. Buchanan Key Mar. 26 (AS). Another winter record of the Least Bittern in the Tallahassee Division was made at St. George I., Jan. 18 (JMS). A few Wood Storks were early in s.e. Leon County Mar. 22 (JMS). A recent increase in Glossy Ibis near St. Marks Light was reflected by counts of nine and 18 in March (CSG, GEM, HMS). A **Scarlet Ibis** appeared at L. Washington, Brevard Co., Jan. 5 (RDB, JJ *et al.*). Five Roseate Spoonbills were early at Dundee Feb. 20 (BB). Single Am. Flamingos, two very red, were found near St. Petersburg Feb. 8 (JBE *et al.*), south of New Smyrna Beach Mar. 31 (Reginald Hicks, Geo. Murray; photo), and on Ramrod Key, Monroe Co., Jan. 10 - Feb. 15 (MRB, JBE, PWS *et al.*).

**WATERFOWL** — Two Whistling Swans were at Guana Lake Refuge, St. Johns Co., Dec. 22 (JG), and a Canada Goose at Myakka Feb. 10 & 14 (Maces, *et al.*). Fulvous Tree Ducks occurred in winter as far north as Paynes Prairie (near Gainesville) Jan. 30 (JHH), as far south as Stock I., Monroe Co., Feb. 8 (*fide* FTH), and numbered up to 46 at Myakka River S.P., Mar. 17-18 (Corrine Waner, Maces). A Eur. Wigeon was at Merritt I., Dec. 16 - Jan. 4 (JG & m.ob.), as was an Oldsquaw Dec. 7 - Jan. 2 (Hugh Nicolay & m.ob.). A very high count was that of 246 Canvasbacks on Eagle L., near Winter Haven, Jan. 12 (PJF, CG). The three species of scoters wintered at Alligator Pt. (m.ob.), with Black Scoters estimated at 200 (JHH). Rare in Florida, the Com. Merganser occurred at three localities in the Tallahassee Division: near St. Marks Light Dec. 1 (JHH, JEH, Bob Wallace; seen with Red-breasted), at St. Marks Jan. 26 - Feb. 16 (photo; WB, Larry Hopkins, m.ob.), and at Alligator Pt., Jan. 17 (JMS).

**DIURNAL RAPTORS** — A **White-tailed Kite** seen well near St. Marks Light Feb. 2 (JBE) was a new species for the Tallahassee Division, and a Swallow-tailed Kite at Stock I., Mar. 6 (Thurlow Weed *et al.*), may have been only the second spring record for the Lower Keys. Also appearing in an unusual area was an Everglade Kite at L. Tahopekaliga, Highlands Co., Mar. 1-30 (E. Bostleman). Red Tailed Hawks rarely reach the Keys, but single birds were found Jan. 2 at Key West (Gustave Yaki), Feb. 10 on Cudjoe Key (AS), and Feb. 11 on Key Largo (AS). Careful descriptions were provided for single **Rough-legged Hawks** — a dark-phase bird on Big Pine Key Feb. 15 (Harry Darrow) and a light-phase one at Spruce Creek (loc.?) Feb. 25 (JJ); the species has never been collected or photographed in Florida. Swainson's Hawk rarely winters on the Keys or in n. Florida, but one was at Stock I., Jan. 19 (Philip Gosling *et al.*) and one at Sugarloaf Key Feb. 2 (L. P. Brown), others were at Crystal River Mar. 7

(RDB, JJ) and the lower Suwannee R., Mar. 25 (JHH, SAN *et al.*). Successful nests of the Bald Eagle were found in Wakulla County (2 nests, one and 2 young — CSG) and near Hastings (2 young fledged by Mar. 16 — MCD). Records of single Golden Eagles came from n. Leon County Jan. 4 (NOW *et al.*) a wounded adult near Lake City Jan. 7 (Michael Carter; photo filed), and near Gainesville — an adult Dec. 17 (JHH) and an immature Feb. 18 (SAN). Although the Osprey is almost wholly piscivorous, one caught and ate a Red-winged Blackbird at Winter Haven Mar. 2 (CG). Rare in winter northward, the Merlin was seen at St. George I., Feb. 9 (JHH, JEH).

**RAILS, GALLINULES, OYSTERCATCHERS, PLOVERS** — A Black Rail called briefly at Mashes I., Wakulla Co., Dec. 8 (GEM, HMS), and a Purple Gallinule remained at Wakulla Springs until Dec. 31 (Henry & Joy Buba); one arrived near St. Marks Light as early as Mar. 28 (Vicki Corbin). A spate of "Caribbean Coot" records over Florida leads some of us to suspect that most, if not all, of these are merely aberrant Am Coots showing the variations of shield color and shape known to that species. A high count of 65 Am. Oystercatchers was made in the Ten Thousand Islands Mar. 15 (Wm. J. Bolte, HPL, PWS). Unusual were a Snowy Plover on the Keys (Caloosa Cove) Dec. 23 & Jan. 17 (RTP, PG) and an Am. Golden Plover at St. George I., Dec. 8 (JBE, NOW *et al.*).

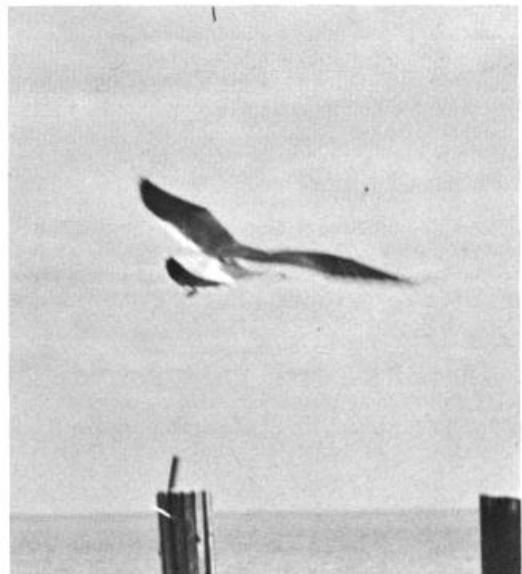
**SHOREBIRDS AND GULLS** — The annual enigma of many wintering Stilt Sandpipers near Lakeland, as against few or none in other parts of Florida, was dramatized again this year by a count of 60 on Jan. 31 (JBE). A winter rarity was a W. Sandpiper at inland L. Jackson, Leon Co., Feb. 5-6 (HMS, JMS *et al.*), but a greater rarity was a **Ruff** at Merritt I., Mar. 27 (Helen Cruickshank, Lon Ellis, J. & L. Cadbury). An early Black-necked Stilt reached Tampa by Mar. 1 (JJD). An Iceland Gull remained at Port Canaveral from Jan. 19 into April (RDB, JJ *et al.*). Lesser Black-backed Gulls, almost unknown in Florida a few years ago, appeared near St. Petersburg from mid-December to March (m.ob.) and at Stock I., 1-2 from Nov. 16 to Mar. 22 (FTH & m.ob.). A **Little Gull**, very rare, was seen off Canaveral Mar. 16 (RDB, JJ, Ron Navine). Until 1974 no Bonaparte's Gulls had been reported in Leon County in February, but more than 100 were on L. Talquin Feb. 15 (HMS). But the prize of the winter was a **Band-tailed Gull** (*Larus belcheri*), of South America, seen at Cape Romano, Collier Co., Nov. 11 - Jan. 29 (Ted Below, Winnie Burkett, Gardner Stout; photographs identified at A.M.N.H.); details will be published elsewhere.

**TERNS AND ALCIDS** — A **Bridled Tern** seen at Key West "for about a week" beginning Jan. 17 (PG, photo filed) is thought to be the second winter record for Florida; two were earlier in spring than ever before off Canaveral Mar. 31 (JJ). A Royal Tern paid a rare visit to inland Lakeland Dec. 7 - Jan. 26 (JBE). A Dovekie off Canaveral Jan. 8 (JJ) may be the first Florida record later than December.

**PIGEONS, ANIS, OWLS, NIGHTJARS** — White-crowned Pigeons were more frequent than usual in win-



*Although Massachusetts' Ross' Gull produced all the publicity and drew the hordes of birders, the Band-tailed (Belcher's) Gull that visited Florida's west coast was perhaps of even greater rarity. While there are logical explanations for the presence of the Ross', the appearance of this native of the southern west coast of South America defies explanation. The photos are by Clare Stout.*



ter on the Keys and in the Everglades National Park (m. ob.). The inland occurrence of two Groove-billed Anis in n. Leon County Dec. 27 - Jan. 2 (RLC, NOW, Stephen Stedman) was most unusual, and a coastal record was made at St. Marks Dec. 10 (HMS). A **Snowy Owl** (Fla. Hypothetical List) was reported at Lakeland Feb. 11 by an observer (Geo. J. Horel) who, unfortunately, did not promptly notify others who might have corroborated the record or photographed the bird. A Short-eared Owl was on St. George I., Jan. 18 (HMS). Perhaps influenced by mild weather, 1-3 Chuck-will's-widows *sang* at Lakeland from late January into February (JBE). A Com. Nighthawk near Delray Beach Dec. 16 (PWS) probably wintered in that area.

**SWIFTS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS** — Two Chimney Swifts were early at Tallahassee Mar. 19 (GEM). The usually coastal Gray Kingbird made news by two inland occurrences — an extremely late or wintering bird 9 mi. west of Arcadia Dec. 7 (HMS; \*T.T.) and a very early one east of Lake Wales Mar. 29 (BB); but one near St. Marks Light Mar. 14 (CSG) was much earlier. Western Kingbirds were considered uncommon on the Florida Keys this winter, but two winter records were made in n. Florida — Alligator Pt., Jan. 4 (NOW) and Paynes Prairie Dec. 22 - Feb. 18 (SAN, *et al.*). Northerly winter records of Great Crested Flycatchers came from s.e. Hillsborough County Dec. 17 (HMS) and Bartow Feb. 1 (PJF); despite snow flurries, one appeared in my yard on the remarkably early date of Mar. 3 (12 days early). *Empidonax* flycatchers wintered as far north as Tallahassee Jan. 25 - Mar. 2 (called like Least Flycatcher — GEM) and the Itchetucknee River S P., Feb. 13 (JHH). Single Vermilion Flycatchers wintered at Tallahassee (GEM; to Mar. 2) and Paynes Prairie (m. ob.; to Mar. 16).

**LARKS, SWALLOWS, CROWS, NUTHATCHES** — Five Horned Larks wintered at the mouth of the St. Johns R. (JHH, Steve Davis *et al.*). Three Barn Swallows at Lakeland Feb. 26 (JBE) seemed too early to be migrants, but a Purple Martin at Lake Alfred Jan. 13 was the earliest for the Northern Peninsula. A Fish Crow on Summerland Key Feb. 12 (MRB, FTH) is thought to be the second ever reported from the Keys. A White-breasted Nuthatch that remained at Gainesville into February (Caroline Coleman) added to the skimpy evidence that the species occasionally migrates. Red-breasted Nuthatches again wintered on the Gulf islands of Franklin County, and single birds ranged as far south as Brooksville Jan. 11 and Feb. 8 (Steve Fickett *et al.*) and Myakka River S.P., Mar. 25 (late; Mrs. S. Rosenberg).

**THRUSHES, PIPITS, AND WAXWINGS** — A very early Wood Thrush sang at Tallahassee Mar. 21 (Mrs. F.H. Stoutamire). The fourth record of the E. Bluebird on the Lower Keys occurred at Key West Dec. 3 ff. (FTH), and a Water Pipit was at Plantation Key Dec. 4 (JCO). Cedar Waxwings, largely absent over much of Florida until mid-winter, reached their usual great abundance northward in February and March

**VIREOS AND WARBLERS** — The rare Bell's Vireo was seen at Homestead Jan. 18 & 25 (EJF), and a Yellow-throated Vireo was early at Tallahassee Mar. 14 (HMS). A wintering Blue-winged Warbler near Miami Jan. 9 to March (JK) was a rarity. Early records of warblers on Mullet Key (Tampa Bay) involved the Blue-winged, Nashville, and Cape May on Mar. 30 (WDC, *et al.*). At least three N. Parulas reached Leon County in February, singles at the WCTV tower on the 24th and 26th (RLC) and one at Tallahassee on the 27th (HMS). A count of six Yellow Warblers at L. Washington, Brevard Co., Mar. 17 is puzzling, as the date seems early for migrants, but the number high for a winter population (RDB). Black-throated Green Warblers wintered as far north as Lake Wales (JBE) and n.w. De Soto County Dec. 6 (HMS); the earliest known to n. Florida was at Tallahassee Mar. 14 (GEM) Two Yellow-breasted Chats wintered at Lakeland (JBE *et al.*), and a surprising four reached s.e. Leon County by Mar. 22 (JMS; earliest Tallahassee Div.). Also early for that division was a Hooded Warbler at St. Marks Light Mar. 14 (CSG). Wintering Wilson's Warblers were at Gainesville Feb. 25 (JHH), Merritt I., Dec. 10-17 (RDB *et al.*), and Melbourne Jan. 19 - Feb. 12 (RDB *et al.*)

**BLACKBIRDS AND TANAGERS** — A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Paynes Prairie Feb. 18 (Frank Mead), and others wintered at Winter Haven and Lakeland (JBE *et al.*). A W. Tanager was at Miami Dec. 28 (JK), and Summer Tanagers wintered near Lake Wales (CG) and at Jacksonville (JPC).

**GROSBEAKS, BUNTINGS, AND FINCHES** — Winter records of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks came from Tallahassee (Feb., *fide* Mrs. Guyte McCord) and Homestead (EJF), and a Blue Grosbeak remained at Jacksonville from Dec. 10 until killed by a predator Mar. 1 (MCD). At the latter place an Indigo Bunting was far north Jan. 5-12 (JPC), as was a Painted Bunting at Gainesville Jan. 4 (Nesbitts). At least two Purple Finches ranged as far south as Bartow Dec. 28 - Jan. 12 (PJF, CG), but Pine Siskins were virtually absent. Although only moderately common elsewhere, thousands of Am. Goldfinches flocked along the lower Suwannee R., Mar. 22-25 (JHH, HMS *et al.*). A Dickcissel was seen at Miami Dec. 28 (JK).

**SPARROWS** — A Savannah (**Ipswich**) Sparrow was carefully identified at New Smyrna Beach, a new southern limit, Feb. 10 - Mar. 24 (RDB, JBE, *et al.*) Single Le Conte's Sparrows wintered at two localities in the Tallahassee Division — L. Miccosukee (HMS) and near Newport (JBE, NOW *et al.*); at the latter station at least 8 Henslow's Sparrows were found (m. ob.). Single Clay-colored Sparrows near Cocoa Jan. 16 (RDB) and at nearby Rockledge Jan. 21 - April (RDB, m. ob.) apparently could have been the same bird. White-crowned Sparrows are not known to have wintered on the coast near Tallahassee, and one at St. Marks Light was late on Dec. 10 (HMS); a wintering bird at Lakeland Dec. 28 - Jan. 26 *sang constantly* (JBE *et al.*). Leon County had two records of Lincoln's Sparrows — one at the WCTV tower Dec. 2 was very late (RLC), and one trapped near there Mar. 5 (Wilson Baker, \*T T) may have wintered. Most of Florida's



few previous records of **Lapland Longspurs** have involved wanderers in early winter, but 1-3 remained near the mouth of the St. Johns River Dec. 29 - Feb. 23 (JHH, m.ob.).

**EXOTICS** — The rash of records of introduced species continued unabated. A single roost at Ft. Lauderdale Feb. 22 contained 21 Red-crowned Parrots, a Lilac-crowned Parrot, and one each of the conspecific Yellow-crowned and Yellow-headed Parrots (PWS *et al.*). Five more Red-crowneds were seen at Miami Mar. 22, where one pair investigated a hollow; also there was a pair of Hispaniolan Parrots and 6-8 Canary-winged Parakeets (PWS *et al.*). Monk Parakeets were nesting in March at Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, and Boca Raton (PWS). Farther up the east coast as many as 6 Black-hooded Parakeets were seen in the area from Titusville to Melbourne, beginning Dec. 2 (RDB, JJ, Margaret Bowman *et al.*). Hill Mynas, probably already established in Florida, were “apparently nesting” at Delray Beach in February (Geo. Wenzelburger) and on the University of Miami campus in March (PWS). Two Saffron Finches were reported in North Miami during the period (PWS). The usual result of such introductions was graphically illustrated by the Budgerigar, which had a headstart on the other species; a single roost at St. Petersburg contained about 1000 individuals Feb. 8 (JBE, PJF, CG).

**CORRIGENDUM** — In the last issue (*Am. Birds* 29:46) appeared a photograph labeled simply “Golden-fronted Woodpecker,” although the text cast considerable doubt on the identity of the bird. Apparently this was not the photograph sent to the American Museum and examined by Lester Short, who was quoted as giving the bird “an 85% chance” of being a Golden-fronted. Marshall Howe, of the U.S. Nat. Museum found the species “impossible to determine” from the photographs he examined. The *Am. Birds* picture, however, shows that it is only a xanthic Red-bellied of the south Florida race (*perplexus*), as evidenced by white bars on the outermost rectrix and some white on the middle pair, dark chevrons on the upper tail coverts, and a relatively short bill (NOW, HMS). It is fortunate for the accuracy of Florida’s ornithological history that this particular photograph was selected for publication.

**INITIALED OBSERVERS** — Ben Bindschadler, Margaret R. Brown, Robert D. Barber, Wesley Biggs, Robert L. Crawford, William D. Courser, Julia P. Cocke, Jas. J. Dinsmore, Mary C. Davidson, John B. Edscorn, Erma J. Fisk, Paul J. Fellers, Chas. Geanangel, C.S. Gidden, Jeffrey Greenhouse, Philip Gosling, Frances T. Hames, James E. Horner, John H. Hintermister, Johnnie Johnson, Herbert W. Kale, James King, H.P. Langridge, Gail E. Menk, Donald and Grace Mace, Stephen A. Nesbitt, John C. Ogden, Richard T. Paul, Alexander Sprunt IV, James M. Stevenson, Paul W. Sykes, Bob Wallace, Noel O. Wamer. *Other abbreviations and symbols* — U.S.F., Univ. of South Fla.; T.T., Tall Timbers Research Station; \*, positive identification available. — **HENRY M. STEVENSON**, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Florida State Univ., Tallahassee, Fla. 32306.

## ONTARIO REGION / Clive E. Goodwin

As this summary was started on April 5 southern Ontario was digging out of the worst storm of the winter and the worst April blizzard of the century. Yet the account is of one of the mildest and most open winters in living memory, with record late departures and early arrivals. The pessimistic view, at least initially, was that maybe it was going to snow right through May to even things up!



Mild, cloudy and wet was the pattern along the lower Great Lakes for much of the winter. We expect it in December, but there was little change through January and February. Further north the rain was replaced by snow, with some heavy blizzards in the northwest, but everywhere temperatures were unusually high.

There were late lingerers, but not as many as might be anticipated from the open weather. Indeed, it was a dull winter on the whole, perhaps because of abundant food with nothing to force the scattered wintering birds to feeders and the sheltered localities birders like to visit. Some species which normally winter in some numbers — Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles for example — seemed relatively scarce, but a review of the CBSs still shows a good assortment of species, although as usual many vanished before the end of the period. Unless particularly noteworthy, CBC records will not be repeated here.

Horned Larks, Common Crows and Starlings, the usual February migrants, seemed to appear on schedule. Late February saw March migrants moving in, with Red-winged Blackbirds at Niagara Feb. 22 (GBr, RC, WZ), large numbers at Point Pelee National Park (below, Pelee) Mar. 1 with some 25,000 Red-wings and 1200 grackles (JAG), and many other scattered sightings along the lower lakes. At Thunder Bay Dark-eyed Juncos appeared Feb. 28 (KC, KD).

March brought the arrival of winter, however, and by mid-month arrivals were averaging a little behind schedule, although scattered early birds were still being

sighted which perhaps arrived in the late February push. Later in the period another mild spell brought scattered early arrivals, which seemed to fare badly once the "spring" season arrived!

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS** — A well-described **Arctic Loon** was seen off Pelee Dec. 13 with a Red-throated Loon the same day (BM), and another Red-throated was off Burlington Mar. 29 (CEG, JEG). Unusual numbers of Horned Grebes were reflected in a high of 34 on Dec. 14 at Rondeau (*vide* AHK), and an early bird was at Ottawa Mar. 20 (SSG, BD). The Niagara R. had a host of interesting observations over the period including an Eared Grebe Dec. 5 (HHA) and a Double-crested Cormorant to Jan. 12 (m. ob.). Most noteworthy among a number of Pied-billed Grebe sightings was a bird at Cornwall Dec. 7-29 (RH, AB). Great Blue Herons were widespread in the southwest, but elsewhere there were few sightings after the New Year. An Am. Bittern at Delaware Dec. 20 (DC) and a Com. Egret in Essex Co., Mar. 22 (JAG) were respectively remarkably late and early.

**SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS** — Whistling Swans were also both late and early: from seven at Kingston, Dec. 28, three remained to a record-late Jan. 16 (K.F.N.) and three at Hyde Park, Feb. 26 (REP) were in the early movement. The main spring flight started on Mar. 18, when there were 600 birds at Long Point (JP) and widespread reports of smaller numbers, and reached a peak about Mar. 22 with some 20,000 at Wallaceburg. A week later only 1500 remained there (CTB *et al.*). The expanding Toronto resident flock of Canada Geese reached 1788 this year from 65 twelve years ago and 608 in 1971. Even this does not tell the full story of the increase as birds from this flock have been taken for introductions elsewhere, and wintering geese are now appearing in neighbouring localities — at Terra Cotta to mid-February (AS), and 94 wintered on the Grand R. south of Kitchener (CAC, JLC, WHS). There were late reports of geese elsewhere, with 2000 at Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary (below, U.C.M.B.S.) to Dec. 7 and ten lingering to Jan. 25. The first migrants there were 200 on Mar. 20 (RH), but there were relatively few migrant reports to the end of the period. The first Snow Geese were nine at Melbourne Feb. 20 (RPo), and there were scattered reports of small numbers after Mar. 11, mostly blue-phase birds, as usual.

The increasing tendency for pond ducks to winter in small numbers was accentuated this year with the abundance of open water. Noteworthy Gadwall sightings away from their main centre of concentration west of Toronto were birds at Laurel Creek Reservoir, Waterloo, Feb. 2 (CAC), seven at Kingston, Jan. 4 (RDW) and two at Cornwall Dec. 11 and Mar. 3 (RH, AB). A Blue-winged Teal at Kingston Dec. 15 was the latest there (RDW), but a Pintail at Peterborough Feb. 22 (DCS) and two Green-winged Teal at Mindemoya, Feb. 16 (CB, JL) may have been part of the early movement. The Hamilton area recorded some high numbers: nine Green-wingeds and five Wood Ducks Jan. 19 (JD, NE, CE), and 22 N. Shoveler Jan. 1 (GBR, JO, RC *et al.*). The river adjacent to Niska Waterfowl

Research Station at Guelph also had high counts on Jan 19 with seven Pintail and 14 Wood Ducks (CAC, WHS) Wood Duck wintered north and east to Peterborough and the Kingston area had late and early shoveler with two on Wolfe I., Dec. 15 (MHE) and one at Mallorytown Landing Mar. 23 (GH). Both an Am. Wigeon and Ring-necked Duck were at Barrie, to Mar. 14 and Jan. 11 respectively (m.ob.).

The eastern counties along the St. Lawrence River have never been well covered in the past, so Rick Howie's observations of both duck and gulls from that area demand special attention. Com. Merganser were the commonest wintering duck with 3600 at Cornwall, and Com. Goldeneye were also common with 400 there. Once the Seaway opened on Mar. 20 goldeneye numbers built up with 2300 seen with the same number of Greater Scaup, between Cornwall and Summerstown. By Mar. 22 there were 7500 scaup there (RH, AB). Elsewhere Canvasback numbers were high with a remarkable 3076 on the Jan. 3-4 Kingston waterfowl inventory (K.F.N.), again reflecting the open water, and there were over 1000 in the southwest (*vide* AHK). Buffleheads also continue to increase, with a record 511 on the Toronto waterfowl census (T.O.C.). The two hybrid Hooded Merganser and goldeneye reappeared on the St. Clair River for the fourth and seventh successive years respectively (AR, DR) but the only Barrow's Goldeneye this winter was the Ottawa bird, as the Oakville birds failed to reappear. Harlequin Ducks, by contrast, were in even better numbers: the Clarkson and Toronto birds were present throughout (*vide* JAK), and other individuals were seen at Niagara to Jan 17, Sombra to Mar. 22 (m.ob.) and Port Hope, the second ever there, Dec. 15-22 (ERM). The most outstanding waterfowl sighting of the winter was of two full-plumaged drake **Com. Eiders** off Wolfe I., Jan. 1 (GF). With very few exceptions full-plumaged eiders just do not occur on the Great Lakes, and in any case our birds are usually King Eiders. For some time Kingston observers have felt they periodically get Com. Eider females and immatures, and this unprecedented sighting supports this idea. Noteworthy scoters apart from the CBC records were a late Surf Scoter at Sandhurst Dec. 28 (AEB) and Black Scoters at Sarnia Dec. 3 (DR) and Pelee Jan. 5 (JPK). A Ruddy Duck was on the Sauble R., Dec. 25 (JWJ).

**HAWKS** — Winter Turkey Vultures are always noteworthy, and there were birds at Packenham Jan 12 (MR) and Kilworth Dec. 14 (MP, ML). Accipiters were well represented particularly early in the season, and excluding the CBCs there some 25 Goshawks reported, which was more than usual but certainly not of invasion proportions. Ten Sharp-shinned Hawks included one north to Potter L., Algonquin P.P., Jan. 11 (RP, JDL), the first there in winter, and there were some 15 Cooper's Hawk records. It was a good year for Red-tailed Hawks, although numbers in the favoured Toronto region were rather low (GB *et al.*). They were north to Parry Sound (CAC) and there were three Algonquin area records (RP) as well as a late bird at Killarney Dec. 29 (DF). A pair were nest building at Stanley Mills, Mar. 16 (AD). Red-shouldered Hawks, always rare in winter, were also unusually far north to Kintail on L. Huron Feb. 15 (NHM, RCM) and there

were ten sightings reported in all. An early Broad-winged Hawk was seen at North Bay Mar. 10 (JMG). The Rough-legged Hawk invasion did not live up to its early promise, although the birds were widespread in the south. The highest count was from Wolfe I., with 195, Dec. 15 (RDW) but few birds reached the southwest. This is a species whose return movements are rarely recorded, hence the interest in a migratory concentration of eleven Rough-leggeds in a two-mile area south of Kleinburg Feb. 14. The birds seemed to be moving northward (AD), and none were to be found there the next day. There were two Golden Eagle reports from Algonquin P.P. and up to seven Bald Eagles there (*vide* RP). There were fourteen Bald Eagle reports elsewhere, all along the lower Great Lakes with the exception of two on Manitoulin I., and ten of them in March. Marsh Hawks wintered in good numbers particularly west and east of Toronto to Oshawa (m.ob.), and there was an early bird at Ottawa Mar. 1 (MB). An Osprey at Kingston Mar. 25 (RDW) was also early. There were two Gyrfalcons seen, at Sudbury Dec. 15 (CBI) and Parry Sound Dec. 21-22 (CAC, JLC), and very good numbers of other falcons reported. These included eight Peregrine reports of at least five birds, a similar number of Merlins, and Am. Kestrels north to Manitoulin Feb. 16 (CB, JL) and generally widespread further south along the lower lakes.

Hawk migration was noteworthy. Movement was occurring in the southwest Mar. 23 (*vide* AHK) and in Chingacousy Twp. Mar. 16 (GB, AD). At Grimsby on Mar. 27 there were 217 birds of six species, although Red-taileds were the major components of all these movements. It is intriguing that the three eastern counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry had only 27 hawks for the period, including migration (RH), which contrasts with Kingston to the west.

GROUSE, RAILS — A December 28 trip to Moosonee yielded 28 Sharp-tailed Grouse between there and Cochrane (RP, TH). Following a release of a ♂ Bobwhite in the Staffa area, Perth Co., a covey of 13 birds wintered (MD), and 61 were recorded in the southwest. By contrast those areas (Toronto and Waterloo) commenting on Ring-necked Pheasant numbers both mentioned scarcity. Early winter rails were reported as usual, including a Sora at London Dec. 1 (TNH). More Am. Coots than normally were seen: There were 14 at Hamilton over the period (*vide* RC), three on the Toronto waterfowl census (T.O.C.), and one at Cobourg Jan. 21 (WO) is also noteworthy.

SHOREBIRDS — Killdeer were well represented in the February movement: one at Vineland Feb. 22 (RC, WZ), seven in the Oshawa area, Feb. 22-23 (DB *et al.*) and two at Kingston, Feb. 28 and the earliest ever there (JAW) were the most noteworthy. A scattering of other shorebirds were seen during March, but the group are of interest chiefly for late and wintering birds: there were several Com. Snipe, including one throughout the period as far east as Cobourg (ERM), and Niagara Falls had up to three Dunlin and eight Purple Sandpipers frequenting rocks at the crest of the Horseshoe Falls until at least Jan. 4 (m.ob.). There were also four Purple Sandpipers at Eriean Dec. 4 (KJB) and at Pelee a Red Phalarope was seen Dec. 13-14 (BM, NC)

GULLS — In recent years Kingston seems to have lost its preeminence as the Provincial centre for white gulls, and they were scarce there this year. Further west they were in record numbers, with a high of 43 Glaucous Gulls on the Niagara R., Jan. 10, and 11 Iceland Gulls there over the period (HHA). In Georgian Bay in December there were two Glaucous at Collingwood (CJM *et al.*), to 18 at Parry Sound (CAC), both with smaller numbers of Iceland, and five Glaucous in Sudbury Dec. 7 (JN). In the southwest there were respectively two and 16 records of the two species, and there were the usual sightings elsewhere on the lower lakes. Inland a Glaucous was at Kitchener Dec. 11 (WHS, CAC). The Cornwall observations are intriguing, particularly in comparison with Kingston and the Niagara River: there were six Glaucous, 150 Great Black-backed, and 500 Herring Dec. 7; on Jan. 4 Glaucous had increased to 13, all but one first-year birds, with Herring down to 360 which declined to 20 by Feb. 1. On that date an amazing 450 Great Black-backed were counted, the only Iceland of the period — three — and a single Ring-billed Gull. Birds had virtually departed by Feb. 22, although ice conditions had not changed notably, with migration starting Mar. 13. Over 500 Ring-billed Gulls moved upstream at U.C.M.B.S. in one hour's observation on both Mar. 23 and 28 (RH, AB). These migration data compare with a Prince Edward Point (below, P.E.Pt.) Herring Gull movement of 4700 in one hour on Mar. 1 (RDW), a traditional Long Pt. concentration of Ring-billed Gulls of over 10,000 on Mar. 29 (DFI, RD), and a number of observations of heavy arrivals of this species on Mar. 23 (AD, CEG *et al.*). On this date there was a "tremendous" movement up the St. Clair R. into L. Huron with some 2000 Herring and 1000 Ring-billeds in one hour (DR). Movement out of L. Huron occurred on Dec. 25, with 200 gulls hourly through most of the day, and again on Jan. 26 with over 7000 birds involved in 1½ hours; the first 50-50 Herring and Ring-billed, the second mostly Herring (AR, DR). So much for the complex gull winter movements, which are often associated with storms on the Great Lakes. On the lower lakes Ring-billed Gulls wintered in exceptional numbers and Great Black-backed Gulls were also abnormally common with as many as 234 along the Niagara R. — although not all in Ontario (HHA) — and 31 in the southwest. A well described Thayer's Gull was at Eriean Dec. 8 (PDP, CAC). Bonaparte's Gulls were another species in exceptional numbers, with a peak of 247 at Pelee, Dec. 24 (*vide* AHK), and some 12,000 on both sides of the Niagara R. which also had a Black-headed Gull, and Little Gull sightings (m.ob.). All the southwest records of this species were in December, with one at Pelee and three at Eriean (JPK, BM, KJB).

DOVES, OWLS — Mourning Doves are becoming progressively more and more widespread in the winter in s. Ontario: this year there were many flocks, with numbers up to 200, and birds north to Collingwood (TL, CH, CJM) and east to Ottawa (*vide* RAF). A Barn Owl was at Welland Jan. 2-9 (HL). It was a bonanza year for Great Horned Owls — for example, John Kelley remarked that around Toronto every woodlot seemed to have a pair, and Ottawa had an invasion with six *sub-arcticus* (= *wapacuhu* of the A O U Check-List), the

Hudson Bay and n. Ontario race, and four *heterocnemis*, the Labrador race (*vide* RAF). The Snowy Owl flight proved to be a rather poor one, although birds were widespread: they ranged from scattered reports in the southwest to at least eight at Thunder Bay (*vide* KD), and three in the Cornwall area, including one visiting a feeder and eating raisins (*vide* RH)! The spring peak at Wolfe I. was 28 on Mar. 16 (RDW). The Pittaway - Hince trip to Moosonee on Dec. 28 yielded three Hawk Owls between 112 and 174 miles north of Cochrane, and there were birds on Manitoulin I., Dec. 15 & Mar. 22 and Lorne Twp., Sudbury, Feb. 9 - Mar. 16 (CB, JL). The only Great Gray Owl was from Meaford, Feb. 23 - Mar. 11 (MG), and although reports of Barred and both Long and Short-eared Owls were widespread, numbers were small. Maybe it was coincidence, but an exceptional number of reporters mentioned Screech Owls — just how this should be interpreted is anyone's guess, as the species is more neglected than the other owls as a rule, and owls are always difficult to assess. The single Boreal Owl report was of a dead bird at Manotick Feb. 1 (MGr). The small owls seem to find survival in our latitudes difficult: a Saw-whet Owl was killed on the road at Young's Point, Peterborough area, Feb. 15 (DM) and there were four sightings of this species, in addition to at least six heard calling in Algonquin P.P., Mar 17 (DFB, RR).

**KINGFISHERS, WOODPECKERS** — Belted Kingfishers were seen north to Parry Sound (CAC), the many open streams in the south offering abundant habitat. Woodpeckers were also in very good numbers, with some record counts of Com. Flickers, enthusiastic accounts of Pileated Woodpeckers and some six reports of Red-bellied Woodpeckers in addition to the astonishing 13 on the London CBC. Many of these were visiting feeders, with records north and south to Staffa (MD), Young's Pt. (Mrs. Ledingham), and Bowmanville (BJ *et al.*). By contrast Red-headed Woodpeckers seemed relatively fewer than in other winters (16 reports) and only three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen, including one at Peterborough, Jan. 23 (MS). The good numbers of Hairy Woodpeckers seemed to thin out sharply as the winter wore on.

**FLYCATCHERS, LARKS, SWALLOWS** — An E. Phoebe was at Toronto Zoo, Dec. 22 (JtB) and there was another at Pelee from Dec. 24 to February (*vide* AHK). Horned Lark migration was sparse and protracted. Perhaps Ontario's first-ever swallows in winter were two **Rough-winged Swallows** at London, at least one remaining to Dec. 9 (WRJ, TNH) and two Tree Swallows at Pelee, Dec. 18 (JAG *et al.*). A bird of this species at Long Pt. Mar. 23 (MJ) was early.

**CROWS THROUGH WRENS** — The east had a small Gray Jay movement: there were five Ottawa reports (*vide* RAF), a bird in Oro Twp. Jan. 30 (FAW, *vide* CJM), and others at Bedford Mills Dec. 28 (MJE, EF, AEH) and Morrisburg Feb. 20 (*vide* RH). Black-billed Magpies were confined to the northwest, with four at Crozier throughout (IP) and one at Ignace Feb. 13 (ND). Common Ravens continue to press south in winter, and there was a bird at Peterborough Dec. 8 (IS) with six —

— S. A. —

Was the three-toed woodpecker invasion the heaviest ever? Certainly the movement was the greatest since the peak flight years of 1963-6, and statistically the past winter yielded more birds. Against this must be weighed the enormously increased coverage of recent years, and the fact that some localities reporting the highest counts in 1974-5 were not reporting at all, or very sporadically, in earlier years. Birds were relatively few in the populous Toronto-Hamilton region, prompting speculation that the northward movement of Dutch elm disease was a factor. The patterns were traditional, however, in that heaviest concentrations always were in the east, and the correlation with the spread of the disease is not very good. One of the most intriguing elements in the present movement was the high proportion of Northern Three-toeds, with numbers often comparable to the normally far more common Black-backed. Numbers were highest in Ottawa, with Black-backed south and west to Port Dover, London and Rondeau, and a Northern as far as Pelee. Records extended north to Algonquin, Parry Sound and Manitoulin I., overlapping areas where the Black-backed species is a scarce breeder. It yielded some 90 reports, including an estimated 60 over the period at Ottawa, and there were 78 Northerns, again including 50 at Ottawa (*vide* RAF).

likely three pairs — along the river at Ottawa (RAF) A Tufted Titmouse was at Melbourne from Mar 16 (WGG). Algonquin Park was *he* place for birds this winter: Black-capped Chickadees and Brown Creepers, both unusually scarce in the south and west, abounded in the vicinity of the Park, with finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Never have there been such numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches: 647 on the Algonquin CBC, 433 on the Minden CBC, several hundred north of L. Abitibi Dec. 29 (RP), and the birds still unusually common west to Toronto (CEG) but apparently rather unevenly spread. Winter Wrens occurred north to Parry Sound, Dec. 31 (CAC) and there were a high of 28 reports in the southwest. The fall numbers of Carolina Wrens continued over the winter, as the species seems to have recovered from the series of severe winters which virtually eliminated the species from most of Ontario: some 80 birds were reported in all, with sightings north to Huntsville and Port Sydney in January (H.N.C., DS, WT), three in the Barrie area (HH, CJM); and east to Ottawa with three birds plus one taken from a cat (*vide* RAF), two at Kingston and one each at Silver L. (EB) and Rockport (*vide* RDW). Other noteworthy wren sightings were a House Wren at Port Hope Jan. 23 (ERM) and a Long-billed Marsh Wren at Kingston to Dec. 15 (K.F.N.).

**MIMIDS, THRUSHES** — There were a good number of wintering records in the mimid-thrush group, especially of Hermit Thrushes. Again there is space only for the more easterly or northerly reports: four Mockingbirds wintered at Ottawa, Brown Thrashers were at Kingston Feb. 9 (NM) and West Oxford Twp., Jan. 24 (DBU), and a Hermit Thrush at Cornwall Dec

5-19 (RH, AB). Late E. Bluebirds were three at Napanee, Dec. 28 and three more at P.E. Pt. Jan. 1, Kingston's latest (RDW). Delaware also had one on Dec. 14 (GEM, WM) and there were birds throughout at Pelee (m.ob.). Ruby-crowned Kinglets were once almost unheard of in winter, but there were 10 records this past season including one at South Baymouth to Feb. 8 (KDi), and others at Ottawa to Feb. 1 (RMP) and Kingston Dec. 21 (*vide* RDW).

**WAXWINGS, SHRIKES, STARLINGS** — Cedar Waxwings were in exceptional numbers with several groups of over 100 noted. There was much moving around of these flocks, building up in one area and vanishing in another, with birds east to Ottawa (RAF) and north to Parry Sound (CAC) and Wiarton (JWJ). The Bohemian Waxwings which so often turn up in these groups seemed fewer this year. The most interesting reports were two at Claremont from Feb. 9 (HK, EK, m.ob.), ten to twelve at Sudbury (BR, JL), a westerly bird at London from Dec. 14 (RPo, FM) and in the northwest there were up to 40 at Fort Frances in March (IP). Most sightings were from February on. The N. Shrike flight was light and scattered, except for good numbers in Algonquin P.P., where they are usually rare (RP) — all those tasty finches and chickadees! Early Loggerhead Shrikes were at Mallorytown Landing Mar. 3 (GH, EMH); West Gwillimbury Twp., Mar. 23 with two seen (EW, CJM) and U.C.M.B.S., Mar. 31 (AB, *vide* RH). A pair of Starlings were lining a nest at Pickering Mar. 17 (RCL).

**WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS** — The early season yielded its now-customary crop of Yellow-rumped Warblers, and there were some early spring arrivals — for example, one at P.E. Pt., Mar. 19. There were still ten there Jan. 1 (K.F.N.) and birds may have wintered successfully as far north as Wiarton (TA) and Packenham (MR). The Com. Yellowthroats at Canton Dec. 15 (JG) and on the Peterborough CBC were the first winter records for these areas.

A sizeable Red-winged Blackbird movement occurred at U.C.M.B.S. Mar. 18, with 1000 birds in an hour (RH, AB) and one actually appeared at Algonquin P.P. that day (RT). Two N. Orioles were seen: at London Jan. 30 (TJU) and Hamilton to Jan. 6 (AE, WS, WC, *et al.*). Parry Sound had exceptional blackbird numbers for its location: Rusty Blackbird, Com. Grackle and up to ten Brown-headed Cowbirds were seen (*vide* CAC), and Cornwall also had scattered cowbirds (RH).

**FINCHES, SPARROWS** — Cardinals continue their push north and east: there were three Manitoulin I. records, a pair at Parry Sound, birds at Huntsville, Port Sydney and Wasi Falls (BP, HP) and seven wintered at Ottawa. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Port Hope, Dec. 10-16, was the first in winter there (ERM), and the status of the Mar. 9 bird at Cornwall (RH, AB) and another March sighting at Erin (JA) is anyone's guess. A Dickcissel was seen at Ottawa Dec. 27 (NAB), but the outstanding rarity of the season was a **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** at Thunder Bay, Jan. 31, photographed by H. Quackenbush and the third for the Province, all from the same area.

It was not an outstanding winter finch year, except in

Algonquin! The best movement was of Evening Grosbeaks, with good to abundant numbers in the eastern counties, but thinning out westwards to few in the southwest or at Parry Sound, Virginiatown (PWR), and Thunder Bay (KD). Purple Finches seemed widespread in small numbers in the same areas and mostly in the New Year, with an apparent influx at Ottawa in early February (RAF). Pine Grosbeaks were in characteristically small numbers, and mostly after the beginning of February: they were more scattered than the other species except in Algonquin, when up to 100 were recorded on Feb. 24 (RP). There were also 90 at Shiningtree Mar. 8 (JN), possibly a return movement. Redpolls were generally few or wholly absent until the very end of the period, although 350 Common were seen north of L. Abitibi Dec. 29 (RP); but there was a "spectacular" invasion at Ottawa in late March (RAF) with influxes around the same time at Pimisi Bay and North Bay (LdeKL, HP) and Cornwall (RH). Anticipating the next report, we might note the movement seemed to spread westwards during April. The only Hoary Redpolls were six at Ottawa Mar. 26-31 (*vide* RAF) and one at Shiningtree Mar. 8 (JN). Pine Siskins were one of the most common finches in Algonquin — some 1600 on Jan. 8 (RT, DFB) is indicative, and the species generally followed a pattern similar to the Evening Grosbeaks, with numbers mostly in the New Year. The Am. Goldfinch picture was very patchy with no particular logic to high numbers in some areas and few in others, and outside Algonquin crossbills were very few although there were 200 White-winged north of L. Abitibi Dec. 29 (RP). Reds were few even in Algonquin this year, but a belated note of interest is that the road kills from the Park for the winter of 1973-4 were of the *sitkensis* race, from the Pacific Northwest (*vide* RP).

The sparrow story is mostly one of northerly winterers: a Rufous-sided Towhee at Summerstown Dec. 27 - Feb. 1 (RH, AB) and four at Peterborough (*vide* DCS); Tree Sparrows as far north as Pimisi Bay from Jan. 16 (LdeKL) and Hornepayne from Jan. 13 (JBM), London's second winter Chipping Sparrow, Dec. 14 - Feb. 15 (AJC, WR *et al.*); a White-throated Sparrow at Nobel Feb. 20 (CAC, JLC) and a White-crowned at U.C.M.B.S., Jan. 5 (RH) and on Manitoulin I., Mar. 9 (CB). Early arrivals included a Savannah Sparrow at Ottawa Mar. 5 (AS) and a Fox Sparrow at Kingston Mar. 25 (HQ). The winter turned up two Harris' Sparrows, one at Welland from Jan. 1 (HL) and one at West Lorne in March (JRM, m.ob.). Good sized flocks of both Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings appeared. Noteworthy were 50 longspurs at Akerman Feb. 24 (AB), 46 East Whitby Twp., Dec. 28 (DCa), and 25 Sarnia Dec. 7 (DR). There were many flocks of buntings in the 500 range, with about 10 reports of flocks in the 1000-2000 range and an incredible CBC total of 11,400 at Barrie.

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## WESTERN NEW YORK AND NORTH-WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA /Douglas P. Kibbe

A generally excellent wild food crop and unseasonably mild weather through February induced many species to linger. Although feeder watchers remarked on the scarcity of some species, most (with the exception of winter finches) were probably present in normal (but well dispersed) numbers. Several groups (i.e. gulls, raptors, woodpeckers and corvids) made noteworthy incursions into the region. Record numbers of black-backed, white-winged and dark-headed gulls were reported. Raptors wintered in normal to above-normal numbers although a Snowy Owl invasion never did materialize. Some local raptor populations reached what can best be termed phenomenal concentrations in view of the light snow cover.

Unusual corvids were reported from several locations, and Pennsylvania may have acquired an addition to its state list in the form of a Northern Three-toed Woodpecker.

An early movement of swans, geese, killdeer and blackbirds on Feb. 22 and 23 was followed by a cold snap which retarded subsequent movement until late March when a second widespread wave of waterfowl and landbirds appeared. Most winter finches were present in exceptionally low numbers or unreported through the end of the season.

**LOONS, GREBES, TUBENOSES, CORMORANTS** — Loons were generally sparse through the end of the period, at which time only one Red-throated had been reported (KB,MC). The only unusual grebes reported were the Eared which continued on the Niagara R into December and a Red-necked spotted Feb. 1 (NH,RL). One of the most unusual birds seen in the region this season was a **Northern Fulmar** recorded in Oswego Harbor during the CBC period. Although there are three previous New York sight records, all from Long Island, the only specimen record also came from L. Ontario near the site of the present observation. The Niagara R immediately above the falls was the wintering grounds of the region's only Double-crested Cormorant (m.ob.).

**HERONS** — Numerous herons lingered into January and February and a few Great Blue Herons may even have overwintered. The last Black-crowned Night Herons were reported from Presque Isle in early February (DF, fide RB). A report without details of a Green Heron in the Town of Friendship Dec. 29 (WE, fide LB) is, if correct, most unusual, as was a late lingering Am. Bittern at Presque Isle Jan. 17 (DS, fide RB).

**WATERFOWL** — Whistling Swans were widely reported in small numbers throughout the region with a maximum of 60 wintering at Presque Isle (CK, fide RB). One individual seen Mar. 23 at Presque Isle sported a neck collar placed on it the previous winter at Pungo N.W.R. in North Carolina. Sixty-five thousand Canada Geese and 7000 Snow Geese were estimated at Montezuma N.W.R. by refuge personnel in late March. Many puddle ducks lingered or overwintered, including up to 300 Gadwalls on Cayuga L. (WB), and over 50 Am. Wigeon on the Niagara R. (B.O.S.). Aerial waterfowl counts taken in midwinter by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation indicate some interesting distributional differences between the Great Lakes (Erie, Ontario and the Niagara R.) and bodies of water in the interior of w New York State. Forty-one per cent of the 30,000 birds seen on the Great Lakes survey were mergansers, 29 per cent were scaup and 12 per cent were Canvasbacks. Of the 18,000 birds seen on the interior surveys, 43 per cent were Redheads, 19 per cent Canada Geese, 12 per cent Black Ducks and eight per cent Mallards, while only five per cent were Canvasbacks, four per cent scaups and less than one per cent mergansers. Cayuga Lake and Montezuma N.W.R. yielded over 65 per cent of the total interior waterfowl count. Harlequin Ducks were reported from several areas including the Niagara R. (B.O.S.) and at Braddock's Bay (NH *et al.*)

**HAWKS** — All three Accipiters were sparsely reported. Red-tailed Hawks, however, were relatively abundant, several CBCs recording more than one hundred. Single Red-shouldered Hawks appeared at several locations in mid-January but no major flights were reported until Mar. 23 when 62 were recorded at Girard (JB). This was one of the best years in recent times for Rough-legged Hawks, with numerous one-day totals of 15 or more, including a maximum of 32 on the lake plains Feb. 16 (JJ). Three Bald Eagles were seen, including an early bird at Ithaca Jan 26 (PT, fide EK). An Osprey remaining at Irondequoit Bay through the first half of

December provided a remarkable winter record m.ob.) *vide RO*). Two reports (no details) of Gyrfalcons were received from the Rochester area, one a dark phase bird seen Dec. 24 (Czech, *vide RO*), the other a light bird reported Mar.23 (RS, *vide RO*). The only Merlin found away from the usual lakeside observation points was seen near Waterloo Mar. 23 (JW).

**RAILS** — Although Virginia Rails occasionally overwinter, they are seldom seen except by muskrat trappers who accidentally catch them, so a report from Ithaca in late December is of interest. A rail census planned for the Cayuga Lake Basin this spring should yield some interesting information of distribution and abundance of this relatively unstudied group.

**SHOREBIRDS** — American Woodcock arrived throughout the region the third week of March while Com Snipe lingered into December at Geneva and Niagara Falls (HA, *vide B.O.S.*). Other hardy shore-birds included Purple Sandpipers at Niagara Falls (eight in Dec., four into Jan. — B.O.S.), and Braddock's Bay (one in Dec.), Dunlin at Ithaca, Niagara Falls and Braddock's Bay (up to 10 in Dec., *vide RO*), a single Sanderling at Irondequoit Bay Dec. 1 (*vide RO*) and a Red Phalarope through Jan 12 off Fort Niagara S.P. (*vide B.O.S.*).

**GULLS** — Highlights of a remarkable season for gull watchers included 43 Glaucous Jan. 10, eleven Iceland Jan 31 and a regional record of 234 Great Black-backed Gulls Jan. 2 on the Niagara River (B.O.S.). Dark-headed gulls were also well represented with a **Black-headed Gull** at Charlotte Dec.6 (Kemnitzer, *vide RO*), two **Franklin's** at Erie (*vide RB*) and another at Dunkirk Harbor, up to 12,000 Bonaparte's on the lower Niagara R. (HA, *vide B.O.S.*), three Little Gulls at Erie (JGS, JHS, *vide RB*) and up to five at Rochester (*vide RO*) and the Niagara River (B.O.S.). Two **Black-legged Kittiwakes** which remained near Niagara Falls during December round out the list of noteworthy.

**OWLS** — The only Barn Owl found this winter was in Welland Jan. 1 (HA *et al.*, *vide B.O.S.*). At least one of the four reported this fall is believed to have succumbed to local sportsmen. Snowy Owls were reported in numerous locations but not in sufficient numbers to warrant classifying this an invasion year for this species. Long-eared Owls were observed at only three locations, the largest concentration (at least 11) in a conifer plantation near Shadigee where one pair bred last year (DK). Low snow cover permitted Short-eared Owls to remain dispersed, so few concentrations were noted although numerous birds were reported from the lake plains and Finger Lakes regions. Two Saw-whet Owls were observed by many in Oakland Cemetery (B.O.S.), while another, one of several which wintered near Shadigee, was netted and photographed ad infinitum.

**WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — Virtually every CBC produced Com. Flickers, with 63 reported at Montezuma N.W.R. Jan. 1. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to do well. A Red-headed Woodpecker at Amity L. Dec. 23 (AH, *vide VP*) and two overwintering at Romulus (MJ) are unusual winter records, as were four scattered reports of Yellow-bellied

Sapsuckers, several of which may also have overwintered. Two three-toed woodpeckers were spotted: a Black-backed in Buffalo Jan. 24-31 (*vide B.O.S.*) and a **Northern Three-toed Woodpecker** seen Dec. 15 on Presque Isle (DS *et al.*) for the first Pennsylvania sight record. In the absence of a specimen or photographic documentation, this species' status must be considered a hypothetical addition to the state list. A very tardy E Phoebe was seen on the Elmira CBC Dec. 28 while the earliest migrant appeared at Stewart Park in Ithaca Feb 23 (JVD, *vide EK*). The first Tree Swallows noted were over Braddock's Bay Mar. 18 (TT).

**CORVIDS THROUGH THRUSHES** — The **Common Raven** appears to be expanding its range into the region from the south based on the occurrence of several birds in Schuyler County over the past several years and the appearance of two birds at Little Genesee in Allegheny County this fall (Nov. 23-Dec. 12) (FD, *vide LB*). Still another raven was seen March 28 near Ithaca (JG). The reappearance in March this year of a **Fish Crow** was made all the more incredible since its initial discoverer (LH) also first spotted it last year (*vide EK*). As expected, there were numerous reports of Winter Wrens following last fall's strong migration. Infrequently reported at this season, probably because they are seldom searched for, are Long-billed Marsh Wrens, two of which were seen on Montezuma's CBC and another on the Watkins Glen count. Two reports of Gray Catbirds, one well away from feeders, are unusual. A Brown Thrasher took advantage of the mild winter and a Scio feeder to avoid the trials of migration (VH, *vide VP*). Christmas Bird Counts yielded numerous reports of hardy Hermit Thrushes but relatively few E. Bluebirds were noted.

**SHRIKES, WARBLERS, ICTERIDS** — Many observers may be unaware that there is considerable overlap in the arrival of Loggerhead Shrikes and departure of wintering N. Shrikes. Any shrike seen in the region during March and early April must be carefully scrutinized Northern Shrikes were widely distributed this season while Loggerheads, with the exception of the Rochester area, were generally unreported. Normally, warblers constitute a minute portion of this season's report, but four species appeared this year. A Black-and white Warbler on the Rochester CBC is only the third midwinter state record. Over 50 Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers were reported in c. New York in January, but these were a far cry from the 217 reported on the Erie, Pa. CBC. A single Yellow-breasted Chat was seen in early February near Flint (HU, *vide WB*) while Com. Yellowthroats were recorded on no less than five Christmas Counts. Widespread movements of blackbirds were reported Feb.22-23 but large numbers of most species did not materialize until a month later, following an early March cold spell

**FRINGILLIDS** — A Hamburg feeder was visited by a Dickcissel Dec. 12 (Bourne, *vide B.O.S.*). With the exception of Evening Grosbeaks, winter finch numbers were very low, some species (eg., Red Crossbills) being virtually unreported. Although the vast majority of the region's CBC compilers rated the wild food crop as good or excellent, the finches apparently felt otherwise. The appearance at feeders of those few White-winged

Crossbills reported is probably a further reflection of the food scarcity for this group. Christmas Counts were filled with overwintering half-hardy sparrows, too numerous to single out. The most unusual count bird was Geneva's Grasshopper Sparrow (RF&KAB, *fide* MJ), only the sixth New York winter record for this species. Another rare winterer, a Chipping Sparrow at a Rochester feeder throughout the period (R&SO), was only one of several in the region.

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## APPALACHIAN REGION

/ George A. Hall

The early winter seemed rather mild and open, although it had started with a heavy snowfall on December 1, but in March the weather turned cold and stayed wet so that most of the month was wintry. At the Pittsburgh weather station December, January, and



February were warmer than usual with 4.5 inches in excess of rainfall. This produced a rather mild winter with only one spell of really cold weather. Similar temperatures in the south, however, resulted in a colder than average season. In the north and central parts of the Region there were many small snowfalls but after the early season storm no heavy ones. At Meadville, Pa. in the extreme north there were 37 inches of snow in March, but at Waynesboro, Va. 27 inches was the total for the season. In the north the lakes did not open until early March, but in the central part of the Region they did not close during the year.

Birding was not very good during most of this season. Except for the now regular Evening Grosbeak practically none of the "winter invaders" made any appearance. The early season snowfall seemed to have driven most of the "half-hardy" stragglers away, although as usual some of these species were present for the Christmas Bird Counts. With a few exceptions most of the normal wintering birds were in about normal numbers once the winter settled in, although in many places Christmas Counts produced record highs of some species. The cold blustery March caused the spring migration to slow down and almost stop. The early wave of migrants which are expected to arrive in late February and early March came in on time, but later in March most species were late in arrival.

**LOONS, HERONS —** Wintering Com. Loons were more numerous than usual, but the spring flight continued the trend of recent years in being rather low. Red-throated Loons at Beaver Run Res., Westmoreland Co., Pa., Dec. 15 (DF) and at Watauga L., Tenn., Feb. 15 & 22 (GE) were unusual for those locations.

Almost every local area reported wintering Great Blue Herons, and most places found them in high numbers. At Linesville, Pa. 38 (record high) were listed Dec. 22 (RFL). Two Green Herons were seen on the Kingsport, Tenn. CBC (TF) and one seen at Dalton, Ga., Jan. 28 & Feb. 4 was the first local winter record (HD, SP, *fide* AH). The Great Egret, often not found in this Region in spring, was reported from L. Arthur, Pa., Mar. 22 (AF, *fide* DF) and from Canfield, O., Mar. 31 (WB).

**WATERFOWL —** Waterfowl numbers, which are never really good in this Region, continue to show a decline. There were a modest number of wintering birds where open water permitted, but even the Com. Goldeneye, normally the principal winterer, was in short supply. The spring flight came a little early, since there was much open water, but no great concentrations were reported and some places saw very few. In recent years L. Arthur at Moraine S.P., Pa. and Bald Eagle S.P., Pa. have been producing the best waterfowl counts, but neither of these had as good a spring flight as in the past several years. Whether this is due solely to the low populations generally or to the "aging effect" that has occurred on other impoundments in this Region is not clear. It might be mentioned that L. Arthur is threatened by a nearby strip mine.

There were December records for Whistling Swans at Irvine, Pa. (WH), a January record at Indiana, Pa. (CW) and two wintered near North Canton, O. (PW). Migrants at Moraine S.P., Feb. 27 were a little early (FP), but elsewhere in w. Pennsylvania arrival was about on time in mid-March. Well out of the normal range were swans at Kingsport, Tenn., Jan. 9 - Feb. 9 (TF); Kingsport, Tenn., Jan. 16 (LH & RL, *fide* GE), and Dalton, Ga. (first local record), Feb. 13 (HD, *fide* AH). Four Mute Swans were present at Logan, O. from early December to mid-March (AN, BS). At Pymatuning L., Pa. the winter population of Canada Geese was about 8000 (RFL). The spring flight of geese was concluded by the end of the period, and was generally unimpressive. Snow Geese were reported on the Linesville, Pa. Christmas Count (2 blue and 2 white — RFL) and on the



Charlestown, W. Va. Christmas Count (CM). The only other reports were from Pymatuning, Pa., (2 whites and 7 blues) Mar. 13 (RFL), State College, Pa., Mar. 16 (MW), and Dalton, Ga., Mar. 3 (MJ, *fide* AH).

The duck flights started in late February and were almost over by the end of the period. All the common species were present, with Mallards and Ring-necked Ducks probably being most numerous. It was a good year for all three mergansers, especially the Com. Merganser which has not been common here recently. Wood Ducks were on the Linesville Christmas Count, and also at Charleston, W. Va., the first local Count record (NG). Surf Scoters were reported from Lock Haven Dec. 2 (PS) and Watauga L., Mar. 11 (LH, *fide* GE), and White-winged Scoters at L. Arthur, Pa., Mar. 23 (CF, *fide* DF). The duck of the season was a **Fulvous Tree Duck** picked up dead on the Skyline Drive Mar. 5, the first record for Shenandoah N.P. (DC), although there is a recent record from nearby Waynesboro.

**RAPTORS** — At the places where they occur at all in the Region Black Vultures have always been considered to be much less numerous than Turkey Vultures. This winter two pieces of information would seem to contradict this, at least locally: at Lewisburg, W. Va. 40 Blacks and 15 Turkeys were attracted to a carrion bait placed for ready observation (COH) and at Blacksburg, Va the Christmas Counts were 609 Blacks and 438 Turkeys (JM).

Goshawks were reported from Powdermill Nature Reserve (hereafter P.N.R.), near Rector, Pa. all winter (RCL); four records from the Pittsburgh area (DF), Titusville, Pa., Jan. 15 (DG, *fide* WH); Sheffield, Pa., Feb. 15 (RSa, *fide* WH); and State College Feb. 7 (DP, *fide* MW). The Cooper's Hawk picture was much brighter than it has been with satisfactory numbers being reported, but the most surprising news was the reporting of Sharp-shinned Hawks wintering in moderate numbers almost everywhere in the Region. Even in the distant past when populations of this species were much higher than today we did not expect to have many wintering birds.

Red-tailed Hawks wintered in good numbers in the northern part of the Region, except at Linesville where they were considered low (RFL), but were not mentioned by most of the southern reporters. At Linesville, the Rough-legged Hawk was considered to be in lower-than-normal numbers (RFL), but this may have been because more of them went farther south. They were reported from Lock Haven (PS), Youngstown (WB), North Canton, O. (PW), and Logan, O. (BS), all on Christmas Counts, as well as from Ligonier, Pa. (RCL), Seneca L., O., Mar. 25 (JS); near Point Pleasant, W. Va., Mar. 22 (GH, *fide* NG), and Jackson, Ky. (PA). Bald Eagles were reported from Pymatuning L., Dec. 22 (RFL) & Mar. 7 (WB); Erwin, Tenn., Feb. 8 (JSI, *fide* GE), North Canton, Feb. 14 (PW); McElhattan, Pa., Feb. 26 (PS); Conneaut, Pa., Mar. 5 (RFL); and Bald Eagle S.P., Mar. 7 (MW). This last bird was shot Mar. 15, but its broken wing was treated and it is currently recovering in the hands of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The only Peregrine Falcon sighting was Feb. 24 near Millvale, Pa. (PH, *fide* DF) but Merlins were reported

from n. Allegheny Co., Pa., one through December (RM, *fide* DF); State College, Feb. 7 (PL, *fide* MW), Pittsburgh, two on Mar. 23 (PH, *fide* DF). Am. Kestrels were in good numbers throughout the winter as illustrated by two record Christmas Counts, Lock Haven, 24 (PS) and Clarksville, Pa., 21 (RB).

**RAILS, SHOREBIRDS, AND GULLS** — A Virginia Rail was seen on the lawn of a residence at Lewisburg, W. Va., Mar. 23 (COH), and both Virginia and King Rails were at the Leetown Federal Fish Hatchery, W. Va. on Mar. 22 (CM).

Killdeer wintered in good numbers at most places, but none were seen at Lewisburg, W. Va. (COH) A count of 97 on the Clarksville, Pa. Christmas Count was the highest ever (RB). Arrival dates ranged from Feb. 22 at North Canton, O. (PW) and Meadville, Pa. (RFL) to March 16 at Warren, Pa. (WH). American Woodcock arrived at Ligonier Feb. 21 (RCL) and Raccoon Creek, S.P., Pa., Feb. 22 (NK), both rather early dates Elsewhere arrival was more normal in mid-March Twenty-one Com. Snipe were found on the Clarksville Christmas Count (RB). Dunlin at Boone L., Tenn. Dec 4 were quite late (GE).

All three local gull species did well at L. Arthur, Pa (DF), but were not common elsewhere.

**DOVES AND OWLS** — The number of wintering Mourning Doves was unprecedentedly high, and they occurred even in the extreme north at Irvine, Pa. (WH) The spring migration was about on time around Mar. 5

The Snowy Owl invasion reported earlier in the Northeast produced more records in this Region than is usual. The bird occurred as far south as Waynesboro, Va., Jan. 24 - Mar. 5 (RS). Other reports were: Bethany, W. Va., Nov. 19 (KC, *fide* AB); Washingtonville, O., Dec. 27-29 (WB); Jamestown, Pa., Jan. 22 (MSt, *fide* RFL); Akeley, Pa., Jan. 24 (DS, *fide* WH); Irwin, Pa., Dec. 12 (DF) and Plum Borough, Pa., Dec. 17 (killed by a car) (BF, *fide* DF); Eighty-four, Pa., Feb. 14 (*fide* RB), Pymatuning L., Mar. 13 (ML & SF, *fide* RFL), and two records at Indiana, Pa. (CW). Great Horned Owls were reported more commonly than usual and 15 nests had been located in the Youngstown, O., area by the end of the period (WR, *fide* WB). A Barn Owl nesting was reported at Waynesboro Mar. 29 (RS) Long-eared Owls were reported from State College (WC), and a pair at Greenville, Tenn. was unusual enough to attract observers from throughout e. Tennessee (GE). Short-eared Owls at Lewisburg, W. Va. Mar. 15 provided the first local spring records (COH). As an example of what using the "playback" technique with recorded calls will do consider the 14 Screech Owls listed on the Raccoon Creek S.P. Christmas Count (NK).

**SWIFTS, KINGFISHERS, AND WOODPECKERS** — Two sightings of Chimney Swifts at Dalton, Ga., Mar. 23 (SP, HD, *fide* AH) were early, and the only ones reported. The open water and the relatively mild winter produced many more than the usual number of wintering Belted Kingfishers.

Common Flickers wintered in above normal numbers but Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were generally down in numbers. The Red-bellied Woodpecker continues to increase in the north and one was seen, Dec. 28 at

Warren, Pa. (TG, *fide* WH). The Red-headed Woodpecker continues to decline, although it was thought to be increasing in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia (CM). A **Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker** was seen near Fredericktown, O. on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border Dec. 14 (JL & EC, *fide* NL).

**FLYCATCHERS AND SWALLOWS** — What was probably a record number of E. Phoebes lingered into December long enough to be counted on Christmas Counts throughout the Region. Many of these remained through the winter in the south, and at Fancy Gap, Va. they were said to have wintered in numbers (RK). The spring arrival dates ranged from Feb. 23 at Charleston (NG) and Wise, Va. (RP) to Mar. 28 near Butler, Pa. (TB). There was an unusually heavy flight at Morgantown in late March (GAH).

A few Purple Martins had arrived at Knoxville in February but general arrival there was not until a fairly late Mar. 14 (JBO). Other arrival dates ranged from Mar. 2 at Dalton (AH) to Mar. 31 at Beverly, O. (JS). Rough-winged Swallows arrived Mar. 25 at Dalton (SP, *fide* AH) and Mar. 29 at Inwood, W. Va. (CM), the only reports. Barn Swallows were reported at Elizabethton, Tenn., Mar. 15 (GE) and Charleston, Mar. 30 (NG) but had not arrived generally by the end of the period. The earliest report of Tree Swallows was from L. Arthur, Pa., Mar. 23 (DF).

**CROWS, TITMICE, AND NUTHATCHES** — Crows were generally abundant throughout the period. A record Christmas Count at Lock Haven, Pa. listed 633 (PS) but at Clarksville, Pa. a count of 327 was the lowest since 1967 (RB). Well-feathered young crows were found at Dalton, Ga. on Feb. 16, the earliest nesting recorded in the state (HD, *fide* AH). Black-capped Chickadees were moderately common south of the normal range but it was not an invasion year, and indeed numbers were somewhat low in the normal range. Two Carolina Chickadees were banded at Allison Park, Pa. (TB) usually considered slightly north of the normal range. Tufted Titmice were scarce at Morgantown (GAH) and Indiana, Pa. (CW). The White-breasted Nuthatch continues to be a scarce bird over much of the northern part of the Region. Except at Roan Mt., Tenn. (FB, *fide* GE) which is in the breeding range and where they were common, the Red-breasted Nuthatch was almost completely absent from the Region. On the other hand Brown Creepers were in normal or slightly above numbers at most places.

**WRENS, MIMIDS, AND THRUSHES** — The Carolina Wren "explosion" continues and in the north two were listed on the Linesville Christmas Count (RFL) and one was seen at Warren, Dec. 9 (TG, *fide* WH), and at Irvine, Pa., Mar. 15 (RR, *fide* WH). At most places the snows were not prolonged enough to affect the populations. The only report of Bewick's Wren was one present at a feeder at Dalton, Ga. throughout the period (MC, *fide* AH). Winter Wren populations were above normal at most places following the very fine fall flight.

Northern Mockingbirds are still increasing at Lock Haven, Pa. (PS) and two sightings were made at Warren, Pa., Dec. 8 (TG) and Dec. 30 (CP). They continue

to increase farther south. Gray Catbirds wintered, or at least started to winter, in unusual numbers. There were five birds at four different locations in the Pittsburgh area (DF) and one at Dalton, Ga. (AH). Two Brown Thrashers wintered in Allegheny County, Pa. (DF) and one at Irvine, Pa., Jan. 22 (RR). A very early migrant appeared in Butler Co., Pa., Mar. 30 (MG, *fide* DF).

Almost everybody had at least a few wintering robins, and the general arrival came in late February, about the normal time. A Wood Thrush at Dalton, Ga., Mar. 29 was the earliest on record there (AH). Hermit Thrushes were more common than usual with nine sightings during the season along the Blue Ridge Parkway in s. Virginia (RK), two on the Raccoon Creek S.P., Christmas Count (NK), one at Logan, O., Dec. 27; one at State College, Jan. 10 (MW). There were more E. Bluebirds wintering in the Region than is normal.

**KINGLETS, WAXWINGS, AND SHRIKES** — The only report of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers came from Charleston, Mar. 30 (NG). As a follow up of the unusually heavy fall migration Golden-crowned Kinglets were in good numbers throughout the Region. At Oteen, N.C. they were reported to be the most common bird in the area, along the Blue Ridge Parkway (DC). Ruby-crowned Kinglets seldom winter in any numbers but this year reports came from Indiana, Pa. (CW), Charleston (NG), Morgantown (GAH), Marietta, O. (JS), East Liverpool, O. (NL), Linesville Dec. 22 (RFL), and Warren, Pa., Jan. 1 - Jan. 10 (TG, *fide* WH). Cedar Waxwings were in very large numbers in e. Tennessee, w. North Carolina, and sw. Virginia. Farther north they exhibited the usual erratic pattern of being abundant at places and missing at others. A **Bohemian Waxwing** was seen with some Cedars at Blacksburg, Va. in late February or early March (DN, *fide* JM).

A N. Shrike was seen in Allegheny County, Pa., Dec. 4 (DF), the only report. What appeared to be a mated pair of Loggerhead Shrikes was seen near Wise, Va., Feb. 22 (RP). There is only one other breeding record for the area.

**PIPITS, VIREOS, AND WARBLERS** — Pipits were unusually common during the winter in e. Tennessee (60 near Johnson City, Jan. 5-15 and 40 at Elizabethton, Mar. 14-23) (GE) and in w. Virginia (40 near Wise, Dec. 14 - Feb. 22, third County record) (RP). In mid-March the migrating numbers were unusually high throughout the Region.

The only vireo report was of the Solitary seen on Roan Mt., Tenn., Mar. 23 (TS & MS, *fide* GE). Yellow-rumped Warblers wintered as far north as Lock Haven (PS) and Allison Park, Pa. (TB) but oddly none were seen at Morgantown (GAH). Palm Warblers were reported from Dalton Dec. 14 (HD, *fide* AH), Westmoreland Co., Pa. Dec. 12 (DK, *fide* DF), and Bristol, Tenn., Feb. 16 & 17, 2 (DW, *fide* GE). Early Pine Warblers were reported from Charleston Mar. 17 (NG), Jackson Co., O., Mar. 25 and Waynesboro, Va., Mar. 31 (RS). Louisiana Waterthrushes arrived at Kingsport, Tenn., Mar. 21 (TF), Charleston Mar. 22 (NG), Clarksville, Pa., Mar. 29 (early — RB), and Capon Lake, W. Va., Mar. 30 (CM).

ICTERIDS — Eastern Meadowlarks wintered in fair numbers as far north as Warren, Pa. (RR, *fide* WH). Despite the bad weather in the first few days of March Red-winged Blackbirds and Com. Grackles arrived at the normal time, and rapidly built up to full numbers. The only three major winter blackbird roosts reported were a very large one near Bristol, Tenn. (*fide* TF), one at Canton, N.C. (RRu), and one near Waynesboro, Va. (RS) Brewer's Blackbirds were seen at Elizabethton, Tenn., Mar. 11 & 14 (LH). An unusual number of N. Orioles was present this winter: Waynesboro, Va., Dec 17 to end of period (RS), Murrys ville, Pa., Dec. 29 - Jan 2 (AW, *fide* DF), Ligonier, Pa., mid-January to mid-March (RCL), and four separate reports in the West Virginia E. Panhandle (CM). An oriole of undetermined species was at Dalton, Ga. through December and January (AH).

FRINGILLIDS — Cardinals were in very good numbers at Lock Haven (PS), P.N.R.) (RCL), and Morgantown (GAH), but were thought to be low at Raccoon Creek, S.P., Pa. (NK). There were two reports of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks; State College, Pa. early January (SFr, *fide* MW), and Waynesboro, Va., Feb. 5 (CH, *fide* RS).

Evening Grosbeaks were present throughout the Region, but no place had very large numbers, and they were missing or rare at others. At P.N.R. only about 200 were banded (RCL) and at Meadville, Pa. about 85 (RFL). A partial albino Evening Grosbeak was seen near Pittsburgh (AO, *fide* DF). The only report of a Pine Grosbeak came from State College, Pa. on the Christmas Count (SG, *fide* MW). In w. Pennsylvania and n. West Virginia Purple Finches were uncommon, but farther south they were in good numbers and represented the only "northern finch" of the winter. The House Finch continues to expand its range. New winter flocks of up to a dozen were reported from Pittsburgh, Butler, Pa., Greensburg, Pa., Finleyville, Pa., and Uniontown, Pa. (DF). They have now appeared at Morgantown (GAH) and Radford, Va. (JM). At Indiana, Pa. (CW), State College, Pa. (MW, WC), Lock Haven, Pa. (PS), and Charlestown, W. Va. (CM), where they have been established for several years, they are increasing and spreading.

Am. Goldfinches were in good numbers at Warren, Pa (WH), Youngstown (WB) and Indiana, Pa. (CW) but were much less numerous elsewhere. Pine Siskins were reported in numbers on Roan Mt., Tenn. (GE) but elsewhere the only reports came from P.N.R. (one bird — RCL), Waynesboro, Va., several, Feb. 9 (TC, *fide* RS), Youngstown, O., 8 on the Christmas Count (WB), and Dalton, two in late December (AH). There was only one report each for the Com. Redpoll: Avis, Pa., 2, on Dec 22 (CSc, *fide* PS); Red Crossbill, near Roan Mt., Tenn., Mar. 15 (TS & MS, *fide* GE); and White-winged Crossbill, from near Waynesboro, Va. (RS).

Vesper Sparrows at Charleston, Mar. 24, (NG) and Washingtonville, O., Mar. 27 (WB) were early as was a Savannah Sparrow at the latter place on the same day. There were a few Field Sparrows through the winter, but not as many as usual. The spring arrival of both Field and Chipping Sparrows had not occurred by the end of the period, although a few stragglers had been

reported, as for example a Chippy in Allegheny Co., Pa., Mar. 9 (DF). Tree Sparrows were generally well below normal numbers. In w. Pennsylvania populations were thought to be 50 per cent of normal (DF), but oddly at Allison Park, near Pittsburgh a fine total of 177 was banded (TB). Dark-eyed Juncos were in normal, or slightly below normal numbers at most places. As usual in recent years juncos of one of the western races were reported in several places.

White-throated Sparrows continue to increase as wintering birds in the north, and are now perhaps the most common winter sparrow. White-crowned Sparrows may also be going to begin wintering in the north in numbers. One was seen at a feeder in Irvine, Pa., Feb 3 (RR) and 14 were listed on the North Canton, O Christmas Count (PW). A Harris' Sparrow wintered at North Canton (JE, *fide* PW). Fox Sparrows wintered at Blacksburg, Va. (JM), but the spring flight was generally poor. Several Swamp Sparrows at Warren, Pa., Dec. 28 (TG, *fide* WH) were unusual. There were only two reports of Lapland Longspurs; Allegheny Co., Pa., Feb. 22 (DF) and State College, Pa. (DP, *fide* MW) Snow Buntings were in small numbers in n.e. Ohio, and n.w. Pennsylvania as far south as Jersey Shore and State College, but did not reach Allegheny County or farther south.

CORRIGENDUM — *Am. Birds*, 29:58, 1975. The sentence in the second paragraph under "LOONS, GREBES, AND HERONS" concerning heron migration should read, "Besides these unusual records the most interesting heron report came from Blackwater Falls S.P., W. Va. where an intensive migration of Green Herons, with a few Black-crowned Night Herons, was observed on the night of Sept. 14-15. The birds were heard calling throughout the night and several thousand probably passed over (WW)."

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## WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

/Robert B. Janssen

What a winter this has been! In many cases the weather overshadowed birds in importance. It seemed that the weather had a major effect on the numbers of birds reported throughout the region.



To begin the period, on December 1 and 2 the Detroit area had its worst snowstorm of the century with over 19 inches of snow, with more in some southern areas of Michigan. Generally, however, December was mild throughout most of the area, especially in Minnesota. No snow cover of consequence was recorded during the month and temperatures were fairly mild. On December 12, for example, "shirt-sleeve" birding was conducted along the north shore of Lake Superior. This lulled most into thinking that the bad winter forecast by the experts was not going to become a reality. The mildness even continued into the first week of January, but then on January 10 the "blizzard of the century" hit Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Upper Michigan. It was especially bad in southern Minnesota. The temperature dropped a record 30 degrees in about six hours, the barometer in the Twin Cities dropped to a record low of 28.62 inches, winds hit near record levels, and heavy snow fell all across the region. The weather didn't improve much after the big storm. Snow continued into February and March, with many sub-zero readings. In Wisconsin most of the winter weather occurred in late February and March. There were sub-zero readings all across Minnesota in the first two weeks of March. Blizzard conditions prevailed all across the state during the last ten days of March.

Most reporters stated that winter conditions prevailed until the end of the period with only sporadic periods of migration in March. Everything was behind schedule.

How did these weather conditions affect bird populations? Most observers used terms such as "unimpressive," "very quiet," "few birds," "no winter finches", etc. It was reported by some that 30% to 50% of the pheasant population and up to a 100% of the small bird population was wiped out in southwest Minnesota because of the big storm. People reported common winter visitants to their feeders almost non-existent after the early January storm. A few birds began to trickle back by February and March.

It was not a year for winter finches, redpolls, siskins, crossbills, and grosbeaks, with the exception of Evening Grosbeaks, were reported as being scarce to absent.

On the positive side Snowy Owls and several species of gulls were well represented.

In spite of, or because of the weather the unusual abounded in the area. Many Christmas Bird Counts listed record numbers of individuals and species. A number of "firsts" were recorded as the following summary indicates.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS** — Common Loons were recorded on the Madison, Wisc. CBC and 11 were recorded on four Michigan counts. The first official winter record for Minnesota was established for this species when one showed up at Fergus Falls Jan. 27 and remained until Mar. 20. Two Red-necked Grebes were on L. Superior near Duluth (JG) Dec. 21. Horned Grebes were recorded in unusual numbers: 11 on the Madison, CBC and six on three counts in Michigan. A Great Blue Heron was seen Feb. 13 in Goodhue Co., Minn. Most individuals do not survive the winter in this area. A Green Heron was observed on the Oconomowoc, Wisc., CBC and another arrived early in Juneau Co., Mar. 31.

**WATERFOWL** — Three Mute Swans wintered in the Ashland, Wisc., area and three (same birds?) appeared at Grand Marais, Cook Co., Minn., Jan. 26, and remained through mid-February. Whistling Swans were recorded on nine Wisconsin counts with a high of 63 at LaCrosse. On the Weaver Marshes, Wabasha Co., Minn., 1000 were still present Dec. 19. Canada Geese were migrating Mar. 16&17 in s. Wisconsin. Over 24,000 again wintered on Silver L., Rochester, Minn. Three White-fronted Geese were in Racine Co., Wisc. Mar. 30. Many puddle ducks wintered throughout the region wherever open water was available. Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal successfully wintered in Wisconsin and most unusual, 21 N. Shovelers were on the Madison CBC and most successfully wintered. Over 1000 Canvasbacks wintered on the Detroit R. and this species was recorded on 11 Wisconsin CBCs with a high of 27 at Madison. Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported only from Minnesota with one female at Grand Marais, Cook Co., Dec. 12, a male at Hovland, Cook Co., Jan. 25, and another near Duluth Feb. 4. There were 600 Ruddy Ducks on the lower Detroit R. in late January. Harlequin Ducks were reported from Michigan, with two at St. Joseph Dec. 12-24 and Minnesota with one seen at Grand Marais Dec. 12. **King Eiders** are rare in this region: two were at St. Ignace, Mich., Dec. 12-24 (BG) and the fifth record for Minnesota was of a single bird at Grand Marais Dec. 12 (JG&RBJ).

**HAWKS** — Turkey Vultures are seldom seen beyond October in this area, but, one was present in Sauk Co., Wisc., Jan. 1 (*vide* DT), and another was seen near Winona, Minn., Jan. 12-29. Red-tailed Hawks were a little more numerous in Michigan, but, scarce to absent in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Rough-legged Hawks were present in normal numbers across the region, with good numbers migrating in Minnesota by late March. Golden Eagles were seen in December in Pepin and Buffalo Cos. and in February in Juneau Co. and all winter in Burnett Co. Wisc. Individuals were present in Winona, Chippewa and Marshall Cos. in Minnesota. Bald Eagles wintered in their usual localities; up to 30 were present at Reads Landing, Wabasha Co., Minn., they were recorded from 21 Wisconsin counties, most of

the records were from December. From 20 to 25 wintered along the Wisconsin R. in Adams and Juneau counties. There were three reports of gyrfalcons in Wisconsin: one white phase bird through the winter in Douglas County, another white phase bird Feb. 19 in Columbia County and another individual in Wood County in late January. There were two all winter at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. Curiously none were reported from Minnesota, where the only Merlins were recorded — single birds seen in Cook County Dec. 12 and Feb. 15..

**GROUSE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS** — Pheasants were literally wiped out in s.w. Minnesota by the severity of the storms. Of interest, however, were the numerous reports of Gray Partridge across s. Minnesota: observers reported many more than usual. Two King Rails were seen on the Dane Co., Wisc. CBC, only the second Dec. record for Wisconsin. Virginia Rails were recorded in Michigan Dec. 15, 20 & Jan. 9 in different localities near Detroit. A Sora was caught in a muskrat trap in late December in Waukesha Co., Wisc. The bird was shipped to Alabama for release. One Sora was present in Brown Co., Wisc. until early February. Three arrived in Kenosha County Mar. 29, for a record early arrival date. An Am. Woodcock was giving its flight song in Berrien Co., Mich. Feb. 21. A Com. Snipe was seen near Duluth Dec. 21, a first winter record for n. Minnesota (JG). A Pectoral Sandpiper was seen in Lyon Co., Minn., Dec. 14 and Dunlins were present in Michigan Dec. 12 near St. Joseph, and Dec. 22 near New Buffalo. As if that wasn't enough a N. Phalarope was seen in Racine Co., Wisc. Dec. 5.

**GULLS** — Glaucous Gulls were well represented on the Great Lakes with observers reporting one to three birds from many localities in the region. Two Iceland Gulls were present in the Kenosha, Wisc., harbor from December to early February, one was in Milwaukee Jan 5, two were at Superior, in February, this number increased to five in March. One was off Stony Point, St. Louis Co., Minn., Feb. 15. Up to 110 Great Black-backed Gulls spent the winter in Monroe Co., Mich. The second January record for Minnesota of the Ring-billed Gull was obtained when one was seen at Black Dog L., Dakota Co. Jan. 2-3.. The bird was not seen in Feb. but, what was probably the same bird, in rather poor condition, was seen in early March. About 150 Ring-billed Gulls were still present at Escanaba, Mich. Jan. 9. A **Black-Legged Kittiwake** was carefully identified and observed Dec. 13-15 at Madison, Wisc. (*vide* DT). A Franklin's Gull returned to Milwaukee Mar 31 providing the second earliest Wisconsin arrival date

**OWLS** — It was definitely a Snowy Owl year across the region. The species was reported from 15 counties in Wisconsin in groups up to six. Birds were present all across Minnesota and the same was true in Michigan. There were only two Hawk Owl reports, one at Sault Ste Marie, Mich., all winter (JJ) and one in Cook Co., Minn., Dec. 31 (TP). Great Gray Owls were reported from Cook, St. Louis and Roseau Cos. in Minnesota, and there was one late December report from Superior. Short-eared Owls were reported from 13 counties in Wisconsin and from two localities in Michigan. None were reported in Minnesota Long-eared Owls followed

the same pattern, reported from six counties in Wisconsin, but none in Michigan or Minnesota. Saw-whet Owls were very scarce, only single reports coming from Michigan and Wisconsin. Minnesota reported the only Boreal Owl, a single bird Jan. 1 in Cook County

**WOODPECKERS** — The Golden-fronted Woodpecker at Cheboygan, Mich., remained in the area until Dec. 22. The big news in Minnesota this winter was the appearance of a **Lewis' Woodpecker** Dec. 28 in Sherburne County (OJ). The bird remained in the same area, accompanied by two Red-headed Woodpeckers, all winter and was still present at the end of March. This represents a first state record. Few reports of three-toed woodpeckers were received, which is disappointing after the record fall numbers. There were two reports of Black-backed in Wisconsin, one in Detroit Feb. 9, and scattered reports from n. Minnesota, with several present all winter in Crow Wing Co. Northerns were reported only once in Wisconsin (Polk Co.) and one in Crow Wing County, the latter present all winter Downy Woodpeckers were common all season along the n. shore of L. Superior in Minnesota, but, numbers were down in the s. part of the State after the big January storm.

**LARKS THROUGH SHRIKES** — Horned Larks were in full migration across Minnesota in large numbers by early March, but the snow cover will retard their nesting. Gray Jays were recorded Dec. 6-7 in Dakota Co., Minn., south of the Twin Cities. This species very rarely gets that far south. This species was common in March in the n.e. part of the state. Carolina Wrens are making a strong comeback in Michigan and Wisconsin. There was a surprising number wintering, six in different localities in Wisconsin; there were 11 birds on four CBCs in Berrien Co., Michigan and 18 birds were recorded in the Detroit area. None were reported in Minnesota. Winter Wrens lived up to their name and wintered in numbers across the region 37 were counted on four CBCs in Berrien Co., Mich., 18 were in Monroe Co., Mich., and they were recorded on ten CBCs in Wisconsin, and in several areas in Minnesota. A Long-billed Marsh Wren was seen Dec. 14 at the Erie Marshes, Mich. Mockingbirds were present in good numbers, six on counts in Wisconsin, and 22 on three counts in Berrien Co., Mich. There were two winter records for Gray Catbirds in Wisconsin. The Varied Thrush continues to visit the region. There were at least four individuals reported in Minnesota and six in Wisconsin. There were two winter records for Hermit Thrushes in Wisconsin and seven were seen in late December in the Detroit area. A Mountain Bluebird was seen Dec. 21 in Door Co., Wisc. (RL). There were 42 E. Bluebirds present at nine locations all winter in the Detroit area. An E. Bluebird was on the Whitewater Game Refuge, Minn., Feb. 22. Ruby-crowned Kinglets remained in unprecedented numbers. There were 15 December records for Wisconsin, and seven on four CBCs in Berrien Co., Mich. Two were seen at Rochester, Minn., in February, providing only the third winter record. A second winter record for the Water Pipit for the Detroit area was obtained when one was seen Jan 5. A record early arrival date for this species occurred when one was seen Mar. 20 in Racine Co., Wisc. Bohemian Waxwings were generally scarce across the

whole region. Only scattered reports of small flocks were reported from n. Minnesota, and n. Wisconsin. Northern Shrikes were generally scarce and less common than in previous years in Minnesota and Wisconsin. I am convinced that the Loggerhead Shrike occurs occasionally in the winter in Minnesota, but observers generally call all winter shrikes Northern. One Loggerhead was seen and carefully identified Jan. 10, at Carver Nature Center. Carver Co. Minn. (RG).

**WARBLERS THROUGH ICTERIDS** — One can only look at the records for this group and say "unprecedented", and "what in the world is going on?" Here are the records. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was seen in Duluth from Feb. 15 through March. (*fide* JG). **Black-throated Blue Warbler** visited a feeder in Berrien Co., Mich., Dec. 15-24 (RS). Yellow-rumped Warblers were common in Michigan, with four Dec. 14 at the Erie Marsh, the Ann Arbor CBC recorded 31 and the Oakland Co. CBC had 14. There were two December records for the species in Wisconsin. The second winter record of the Pine Warbler for Wisconsin was a single individual Dec. 14 in Pepin Co. (SR). A Palm Warbler was at Alabaster, Mich., from mid-December to early January. The first winter record for the **Ovenbird** in Minnesota was of a single bird in s. Minneapolis Dec. 27-Jan. 9 (VL). A **Louisiana Water-thrush** (details?) was at Ann Arbor, Mich., Dec. 22 (RH). A Com. Yellowthroat was seen at Erie Marsh Dec. 24. Northern Orioles were recorded on three Wisconsin CBCs and one was seen at Sartell, Stearns Co., Minn., Dec. 12.

**FRINGILLIDS** — A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen with Evening Grosbeaks in Cook Co., Minn. Jan. 24 (*fide* RBJ). A **Black-headed Grosbeak** was seen Mar. 3 and the rest of the month in Iowa Co., Wisc. (SR). This was definitely not an invasion year for winter finches. Most observers reported all species except the Evening Grosbeak as scarce to absent. The one exception to this was n. Minnesota, in December. There were 332 Com. Redpolls and 91 Pine Siskins on the Duluth CBC. Scattered flocks remained in the area till late December, but then disappeared. Flocks of Evening Grosbeaks were present throughout the period in most n. areas of the region. Redpolls were scarce to absent all across Wisconsin and Michigan, as were Pine Siskins, Pine Grosbeaks, and Purple Finches. Both crossbills were very scarce across the whole region. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was seen on the Allegan State Game area CBC in Michigan. Many species of sparrows were recorded on Wisconsin CBCs: Vesper (2), Chipping(2), with another carefully studied on Feb. 8 in Kenosha County, Field(16), Harris'(1), White-crowned (8), Fox(8), Swamp(40) and Song(32). In Minnesota White-throated Sparrows were reported as far north as Crosby and up to seven wintered in downtown Minneapolis. Snow Buntings were present in about normal numbers across the region, with flocks of up to 200 in Minnesota, 1000 in Wisconsin and 120 in Michigan.

**CORRIGENDA** — Change location of 90 Great Egrets from Agassiz N.W.R. to Black Dog L., Dakota Co. Minn. (*Am. Birds* 29:62). The record of the Townsend's Warbler (*Am. Birds* 29:63) from Sheboygan, Wisc. should be deleted.

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## MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION / Vernon M. Kleen

The winter season was notably dull throughout most of the Region compared to most years and the month of March should have been reported as part of the Spring



Migration, not winter season. Of greatest interest was the mild winter which allowed half-hardy and unlikely species such as warblers to linger well into the season; the mildness also helped maintain healthy populations of permanent residents.

This was the season for Snowy Owls (see Iowa especially), Rough-legged Hawks and ducks (also, shorebirds in the Cleveland area), but was not the season for winter finches since all species were conspicuously absent

One big problem was afforded national attention when the U.S. Army unsuccessfully tried to kill millions of blackbirds with Tergitol. The spraying was less than 25% effective, yet everyone thereafter, who had a few blackbirds, wanted to begin a massive spraying campaign because they heard that the chemical killed blackbirds. Few people would listen to the biological phenomenon of migration which would solve most of their problems; the farmers were sure that these were the very birds eating their fall crops before harvesting occurred. Most of the spraying occurred during late February and early March — precisely when the birds were in the process of migrating or getting ready to migrate. The nightly turnover from one roost to the next could drastically change, but local citizens could not be convinced. This problem will surely be encountered again next winter.

Weatherwise, December, January and February all averaged warmer and wetter than normal. The Cleveland and Louisville areas both reported January temperatures 5° F above normal. March was also found to be rather wet, but somewhat cooler than the expected average. In northwestern Iowa a heavy blizzard with 80 mph winds on Jan. 10-11 caused severe losses of livestock as well as wildlife; total bird populations at some feeding stations were wiped out and in one farmyard, hundreds of Snow Buntings came to feed on the ground corn spread out for the cattle (*vide* GB).

The U.S. Corps of Engineers were "thanked" by one group of Iowans; the floodgate on Coralville Dam was apparently opened temporarily for repairs but froze in position allowing the reservoir to drain. The dead fish attracted many eagles and gulls.

Since this season included the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter CBC) most records from those counts have been omitted from this report because they have already been published. However, a few of the exceptional observations have been included because the readership may otherwise miss them.

In order to better verify observations, observers are now required to complete documentation forms for extraordinary sight records at the time of observation; such documentations have been denoted by a dagger (†) before the observer's initials. Where positive identification is available it has been denoted by an asterisk (\*).

LOONS, GREBES — As usual, a few Com. Loons stayed long enough to be included on some CBCs; the latest record was Jan. 2 in Kentucky; spring migrants returned on schedule. A migrant Red-throated Loon appeared near Champaign, Ill. Mar. 30 and was last observed Apr. 6 (RB, RG, m.ob.). An imm. Red-necked Grebe was first discovered at Springfield, Ill. Dec. 19 (†H) and remained through Dec. 26 (m ob — photo-

graphed). Pied-billed Grebes found the winter mildness to their liking and remained in fair to good numbers Regionwide; a high of 96 was tallied Dec. 17 at L. Pewee in w. Kentucky (JHa).

CORMORANTS, HERONS — An imm. Double-crested Cormorant remained at Davenport, Ia. until Jan. 15 (P); other reports were of spring migrants returning to Desoto Bend N.W.R., Ia. (6) Mar. 21 (MWg), Gibson Co., Ind. (1) Mar. 27 (CM), and Fulton Co., Ill (2) Mar. 29 (VH); although normally expected at their Illinois breeding colony in mid-March, none had returned by Mar. 29 (BSh). Great Blue Herons were considered very common at Ottawa N.W.R., Ohio, this winter — quite unusual (LV); 1-3 overwintered at Bloomington, Ind. (SG); a few others were reported The Dec. 14 occurrence of a Black-crowned Night Heron at Louisville was considered noteworthy there (S, FS). The first Yellow-crowned Night Heron of the season returned to Jackson Co., Ill. by Mar. 29 (RP)

SWANS — A few Mute Swans were reported — mostly in the Chicago and Peoria areas. Several Whistling Swans lingered late or wintered: three, Brown Co., Ind. Dec. 14 (SG); three, Brookville, Ind. Dec. 28 (BW, JCN); one, Larue Co., Ky. late December - Jan 16 (†JR); one, Bloomington, Ind. through Jan. 2 (SG); one, Douglas Co., Ill. Jan. 6-9 (LH, RC); one, Lawrence Co., Ill. Jan 25 (DJ, JJ); four, Hueston Woods S P, Ohio, early February (m.ob., *vide* DO); one, Peoria, Ill Feb. 15 (VH) - Mar. 15 (m.ob.); the first spring migrants were detected at Ft. Wayne, Ind. (5) Mar. 21 (GN) and in Whiteside Co., Ill. (20) Mar. 28-29 (BSh); a single was found at Squaw Creek N.W.R., Mo. Mar. 23 (L).

BRANT, DUCKS — A Brant was found at the Pony Express Wildlife Area, Mo. (about 30 mi. e. of St Joseph) Jan. 4 (L) and stayed there nearly a month (m.ob.); excellent photos were obtained. Observers reported only good things about wintering dabblers and most were pleased with the numbers of divers — especially Redheads and Canvasbacks. A total of 2147 Redheads were counted at Land-between-the-Lakes, Ky Mar. 18 (PS) — this is a migratory stopover. An all-time high of 162 Canvasbacks was tallied on the Louisville CBC; up to 150 wintered at L. Pewee, Ky.; up to 200 could be found around Bloomington, Ind. during the season (SG). A well-described ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye (including flight description) was reported from Chicago, Dec. 16 (GR); a male was found there Feb 22 (†CS). Inland records of Oldsquaws included: two, Allen Co., Ind. Dec. 5 (HAW, JW); one, Independence, Mo. through Jan. 2 (KH); one, Decatur, Ill. Jan 18 (RSa, RP) which may have been the same one at Springfield, Ill. (less than 40 mi. away) Feb. 16 - Apr. 1 (H, m.ob.) because there seems to be much interchange between the lakes at those cities; and one, Gibson Co., Ind. Mar 22 (†MSm). One Harlequin Duck remained in the Wilmette-Evanston area from Dec. 14 thru Mar 11 (†m.ob.). The only Com. Eider reported was at Loraine, Ohio, (an ad. male) Jan. 28 (CD). The only King Eider reported was at Wilmette, Ill. Dec. 14-23 (†B, m.ob.). Inland records of White-winged Scoters included singles at: Champaign, Ill. Dec. 8-10 (†DF), Schell-Osage, Mo. (w. Mo.) in January (NF); Danville, Ky Feb 8 (FL); and Peoria, Ill Mar 3-28 (†VH, ZW,

m ob). One Black Scoter occurred at Peoria Mar. 24-25 (RSc, SS). Many observers reported large numbers of migrant Red-breasted Mergansers; the best totals included 200+ males at Council Bluffs, Ia. (and more elsewhere) Mar. 29 (MWg *et al.*); 200+ in Allen Co., Ind Mar. 27 (HAW *et al.*) and 192 at Hueston Woods S P., Ohio in early February (m.ob., *fide* DO).

VULTURES, ACCIPITERS, BUTEOS — Unexpected records of Turkey Vultures included the first St. Louis area winter observation, Jan. 11 (Jcf); two at Marshall, Ill. Jan. 6 (HAW); and 15 at Red Rock Refuge, Ia. Jan. 27 (GB). For the third consecutive winter Goshawks appeared in fair numbers; a total of 11 were reported, one penetrating as far south as Sullivan, Mo. Dec. 25 (LBo) and another a TV-tower casualty at Springfield, Ill. Dec. 18 (H); the last ones observed were near Chicago, Feb. 9 (*fide* C). Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were reported but they continued to be scarce. Red-tailed Hawks were considered quite common with no suggested declines. Red-shouldered Hawks remained in good standing in the southern part of the Region and definite winter records in the north were more common than usual: four in n. Illinois, two in c. Indiana, and from one to three in n. Ohio; spring migrants were first noted by late February and were reported from several areas during March. Rough-legged Hawks were markedly conspicuous this winter, in highest numbers ever in some places.

EAGLES, OSPREYS, FALCONS — Wintering Bald Eagle censuses along the Mississippi River indicate that the adult to immature ratio is approaching 2:1; 10 to 20 years ago it was closer to 4:1. Golden Eagles continue to be regular in the Region and are reported more confidently and more often; up to three (one was mysteriously killed) at Bloomington, Ind. from December - Apr. 6 (SG, TA); two in w. Kentucky, Feb. 8 (RN, CF, JF); and singles in Mason Co., Ill. Dec. 14 and Feb. 2 (H) and N. Liberty, Ia. Mar. 19 (†NH). The Feb. 15 sighting of an Osprey near St. Louis was quite unusual (Jcf *et al.*). Two Peregrine Falcons were found at Owensville, Mo. Jan. 11 (JI); winter reports of individuals seen in Illinois only one time were received from Sangamon, McLean and Mason counties; another bird was regularly seen feeding on pigeons in downtown Chicago; another was found in the Chicago area in mid-February. An excellent description of a gray phase Gyrfalcon came from Magee Marsh, Ohio, Dec. 26-27 (LV).

GROUSE, CRANES — It seemed unusual (for SG) to hear a drumming Ruffed Grouse at Bloomington, Ind. Dec. 30. Reporters continue to be enthralled with the migrating Sandhill Cranes which pass through c. Indiana and e. Illinois during March.

SHOREBIRDS — The mild winter kept many species later than usual. For Louisville, it was previously unheard of to report 164 Killdeers on a CBC. The Cleveland lakefront was the place to be to find oddities: a Ruddy Turnstone (photos) Dec. 25 - Feb. 2 (M); a Purple Sandpiper (photos) Dec. 22 - Feb. 2 (M); a Red Phalarope, Dec. 7 - Feb. 9 (M, m.ob.) and a N. Phalarope, Dec. 25 - Jan. 26 (M). Another unexpected find was a Least Sandpiper at L. Chautauqua, Ill. Jan. 1 (H, RSA) and 17 at Land-between-the-Lakes, Ky. Dec. 9 (MM, *fide* S)

GULLS — Nine Glaucous Gulls were reported from Illinois Dec. 7 (DF) - Mar. 22 (H) — both records from L. Chautauqua; these gulls were found along the Mississippi R. as far south as Alton (H, RSA); other individuals were found in the Cleveland area Dec. 15 (CW, CD) - Jan. 26 (M). The only Iceland Gull reported was from Alton, Ill. Jan. 16 & 24 (KA, m.ob.). One ad. Great Black-backed Gull was found at L. Calumet, (Chicago) Dec. 8 (C); a maximum of seven (Dec. 14) was tallied at Cleveland with singles remaining until Mar. 3 (M) Detailed sketches, lengthy descriptions and thorough correspondence with the experts were completed before the record of an imm. Thayer's Gull was reported as a confirmed identification; the bird was present at L. Chautauqua, Ill. Dec. 17 thru Jan. 1 (†H, RSA). The only "winter" Franklin's Gull was reported from Cleveland, Dec. 14-30 (†M); however, spring migrants had returned by Mar. 15 (Whiteside Co., Ill — BSh) and have been reported in greater numbers than usual. Two ad Little Gulls were present at Loraine, Ohio, Dec. 28 - Feb. 2 (m.ob.). Three imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes appeared as singles at Calumet, Ill. Dec. 8 (C), Alton, Ill. Feb. 8 (H, RSA), and Cleveland, Mar. 29-30 (†RH)

OWLS THROUGH KINGFISHERS — Five Barn Owls were reported; one at Evansville, Ind. Feb. 16 (AW); one at Hamburg, Ia. (no date given, IG); a nest with two young at Grandview, Ind. Mar. 20 and an adult several miles from the nest, Apr. 2 (RM); and one at Blue Island, Ill. Apr. 2-3 (KBa). Snowy Owls invaded, up to 80 reported in Iowa alone (inclusive dates not available, GB); six from Missouri, early December to mid-January; at least 12 in Illinois (including two known road casualties) from late November through Mar. 16 — five of these reached c. Illinois; five from Indiana as early as Dec. 4 (last date unknown) — two from Indianapolis; small numbers in n. Ohio as late as Mar. 18, none were reported from Kentucky. A Whip-poor-will was heard in Pope Co., Ill. as early as Mar. 23 (RG) Belted Kingfishers should be monitored throughout the Region; observers around Kansas City go months at a time before learning of one in their area.

WOODPECKERS, PHOEBE, SWALLOWS — Most observers felt that Red-headed Woodpeckers staged a great comeback from last year and wintered in fair to excellent numbers; however, they were reported as "absent" in n.w. Missouri (L). The Feb. 4 record of an E. Phoebe near Springfield, Mo. causes one to wonder if this was truly a winter record or a very early migrant; migrants did generally arrive early — but still, not until March. The warm water cooling lakes of the new power generators may be changing some of our winter bird faunas other than waterfowl; at a plant along the Ohio R. in Gibson Co., Ind. a Tree Swallow was still present Jan. 25 (CM); another Tree Swallow (an early migrant?) was found in Calloway Co., Mo. Feb. 16 (LF). Early Barn Swallows were reported from Pope Co., Ill. Mar. 23 (RG) and Danville, Ky. Mar. 26 (FL) The Mar. 20 arrival of a Purple Martin at Chicago was nearly three weeks ahead of the expected arrival date

MAGPIES, WRENS — A Black-billed Magpie was present with several blackbirds at St. Louis, Jan. 17 (KBo) Two wintering House Wrens were reported,



one singing at Keokuk, Ia. Jan. 4 (H, RSa) and the other at McCutchenville, Ohio, Mar. 23 (TB). Winter Wrens were reported in good numbers and Carolina Wrens survived in many areas. A Bewick's Wren appeared at Squaw Creek Refuge, Mo. Mar. 22 (E). December 5 was the last day the Long-billed Marsh Wren was observed in Gibson Co., Ind. (†MSm). A **Rock Wren** was discovered near Olive Branch (Alexander Co.), Ill. Dec. 30 (†K) and was still present Jan. 28 (m.ob.)

**THRUSHES, KINGLETS, WAXWINGS, SHRIKES** — A Varied Thrush was present in Springfield, Ill. Jan 5 - Feb. 12 (m.ob.); another was identified at the Morton Arboretum near Chicago, Feb. 1. Early Wood Thrushes were found at Westville, Ill. (photo) Mar. 29 (DW) and Louisville, Mar. 30 (WJ). Ruby-crowned Kinglets appear to be increasing as winter residents. Cedar Waxwings remained erratic throughout the season but were found all winter at Iowa City, Ia (NH). No Bohemian Waxwings were reported. Iowa observers reported four wintering Loggerhead Shrikes and there were also two in c. Indiana. The only N. Shrike reported after the CBCs was one identified in Tippecanoe Co., Ind. Feb. 2-14 (DA).

**VIREOS, WARBLERS** — Mar. 28 was exceptionally early for the Yellow-throated Vireo to be returning to Springfield, Ill. (†H). An easily-observed Black-and-white Warbler was discovered on Horseshoe Island of the Horseshoe Lake Wildlife Ref. (Alexander Co.), Ill. Dec. 30 (†H, †RSa). A Tennessee Warbler was observed on five different days at Charleston, Ill. between Jan. 27 and Mar. 6 (†LH); it survived temperatures as low as 8° F. A Nashville Warbler was present at W Lafayette, Ind. Dec. 24 - Jan. 12 (PR) and another at Charleston, Ill. Jan. 6 (†LH). An early Black-throated Green Warbler arrived at Evansville, Ind. Mar. 25 (NS). Pine Warblers must regularly winter in the large pine expanses of Crab Orchard N.W.R., Ill.; one was found there Dec. 28 (†H), another (or more than one) was observed several miles from the first Jan. 18 - Feb. 2 (†BP). Four Palm Warblers lingered: singles at Danville, Ky. — all winter (FL); Charleston, Ill. Dec. 27 (BJ), St. Louis, Dec. 5-9 (JCF); and Akron, Ohio, Dec. 3 (†FF). An early Kentucky Warbler appeared at Charleston, Mo. Mar. 30 (HAW) and a Louisiana Waterthrush in Pope Co., Ill. Mar. 23 (RG). Wintering Com. Yellowthroats were present at Decatur, Ill. Jan. 11 (†RP) and Jackson Co., Ill. Mar. 8 (BP). A Wilson's Warbler was present at Louisville from Dec. 8 - Jan. 5 (†BPB, m.ob.).

**GROSBEAKS, BUNTINGS, TOWHEES** — A feeder at Carlyle, Ky. hosted a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Mar. 10 (WK, VK) and another was present at Westville, Ill. (photo) Jan. 2-19 (MC). Two Indigo Buntings were found at Liberty (Adams Co.), Ill. Dec. 21 (†H) and another appeared at Corydon, Ky. feeder Mar. 7-15 (RM, *et al.*). Reports of Evening Grosbeaks were scarce; Pine Grosbeaks, redpolls and crossbills were non-existent; a few Pine Siskins were reported early but otherwise, very scarce; only the Purple Finch was reported in good numbers. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was discovered at Bennett Springs S.P., (Dallas Co.), Mo. Mar. 1 (†JG)

**SPARROWS, LONGSPURS, BUNTINGS** — Le Conte's Sparrows regularly winter in s. Illinois, however the one at Dundee, Jan. 5 (TDi, RMo) was noteworthy. Lincoln's Sparrows were documented at all three Illinois locations: Barrington, Dec. 23 (†RMO), Union County Refuge, Dec. 29 (†K) and in Pulaski Co. Dec. 30 (†RSa, H). It was quite a feat to find all four longspurs within a two week's period at Maryville, Mo.; the **McCown's** occurred on Mar. 16 (R, †E); the **Chestnut-collared** (2 males), Mar. 27 (R, †E). Over 150 Smith's Longspurs were observed there Mar. 20 (R) and in Christian Co., Ill. (250) Mar. 22 (H *et al.*). Snow Buntings were regularly reported and last seen in mid-February.

**CORRIGENDUM** — The following changes should be made in *Am. Birds*: 29, 65, the 103 egrets should be Great Egrets (not Cattle Egrets); p. 67, of the four Connecticut Warblers at Springfield, Ill., only two were TV-tower casualties, the other two were sight records

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## CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

/ Robert B. Hamilton

This was the second consecutive relatively mild winter in our region; consequently the number of reports of boreal species was less than usual. An exception was the Rough-legged Hawk which was reported frequently throughout the region. On the other hand there were more than the usual number of reports of lingering migrants. Some of the rarities found were Great Cormorant and King Eider in Florida, House Finch in Tennessee, Great Black-backed Gull in Alabama, Vaux's Swift in Louisiana, and Crested Flycatcher in Arkansas.



**LOONS, GREBES, PELECANIFORMES, HERONS**—The maximum number of Com. Loons reported was the 10-20 at Black L. Natchitoches Par. (CV). Both Horned and Eared Grebes were reported as scarce at the same lake. On the other hand there were 80 Horned Grebes at Sardis L., Miss., Jan. 15-16 (MD, BC, LC *et al.*). There were also 2-3 Eared Grebes at this location Nov. 18 - Jan. 15 (MD *et al.*). The maximum number of Brown Pelicans reported in n.w. Florida during the period was 50 at St. Joe Feb. 17 (SS). There was only one record for the Alabama coast where two were reported at Dauphin I. in December (RiH). The only Gannet reports were from the e. section of our region where they were seen regularly; the maximum number was 20 Mar. 26 near Pensacola Beach (RD & LD). The **Great Cormorant** reported at Gulf Breeze was only the second record for n.w. Florida (RD). There were more than the usual number of rarely wintering Anhingas reported. One was seen at Bear L., Santa Rosa Co., Fla., Feb. 8 (BJ & SR). There were numerous reports in Louisiana: At Durango I., Tensas Par., a small flock was present all winter (RNo); on Natchitoches CBC one was reported (CV) with 12 on the Atchafalaya Basin CBC; at Pecan I., Vermilion Par., one was seen on a

small canal in the coastal marsh Jan. 17 (RN & RH). Also observed were one at L. Vernon, Vernon Par., Jan. 26 (RN, RoC & BCr) and one at Cocadrie L., Rapides Par., Feb. 19 (CGu & HG). There were three reported on Arkansas CBCs (*vide* EdH).

Each year the number of Cattle Egrets lingering in the region seems to increase. This year there was one reported on an Arkansas CBC (*vide* EdH). It was reported on 9 of 12 Louisiana CBCs; it was missed on the Monroe count, but three were seen Jan. 21 in Morehouse Par., n. of Monroe (DTK). It was also reported at several other scattered locations in the state. The two Snowy Egrets seen at Spanish L. on the Baton Rouge, La. CBC were the first local winter records; the second record was the two reported at Ben Hur Farm, L.S.U., Jan. 4 (RN & RH). In Alabama, 400 were reported migrating N at Cochane Causeway, Mobile Bay, Feb. 26 (TI, HHK *et al.*). Reddish Egrets were reported at Tyndall A.F.B., Fla., Dec. 18 & Jan. 2 (SS) for the first n.w. Florida December and January records. Three (one white-phased) were reported at Dauphin I., Ala., through Jan. 1 and one remained through Mar. 15; previous winter records in Alabama are scattered (TI). This species was seen at Grande Terre, Barataria Bay, Feb. 9 (RH) and 23 (TS) and off e. end of Grande Isle Feb. 11 (RN, MN & BCr). There is only one previous Louisiana February record. The 150 Great Egrets reported at Eufaula, Ala., Feb. 8 (JMI) is an encouraging number for an inland location in winter. The Least Bittern which struck utility wires in Arkansas on Bayou Bartholomew, Jefferson Co., Mar. 11 is almost a month earlier than any previous arrival date and may have been wintering (RKi & ArS); the earliest reported arrival for Louisiana was one reported at Miller's L., Evangeline Par., Mar. 15 (JBO).

**IBIS, WATERFOWL** — The **Glossy Ibis** was observed for the first winter time in Louisiana this year, both times in Cameron Par.: Dec. 27 at "Magnolia Rd." (RN, GL & PB) and Jan. 26 at the Sabine N.W.R. nature trail (HD & GBr). Twelve Whistling Swans were observed s. of Valley View, Craighead Co., Ark., Mar. 2-3 among a large flock of Snow Geese (OW, *vide* EH). This is the second recent record from n.e. Ark. From 1-8 were at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala., this winter. An injured immature died and is now a specimen at Auburn Univ. (TZA *et al.*). Some also spent the winter 5 mi. w. of Tunica, Miss., with five recorded Dec. 12 - Jan. 13 and three Jan. 26 - Mar. 9 (RW, BC & LC). Further evidence of White-fronted Geese wintering in Alabama occurred when six were seen at Wheeler N.W.R. Jan. 11 (SS, *vide* TZA). A count of more than 80 was obtained at Holla Bend N.W.R., Ark., Mar. 16 (EdH & HH). Redheads were more abundant than usual: on Feb. 17 more than 450 were seen at Ft. Pickens, Fla. and on Feb. 20 more than 150 were at Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. (LD & RD); on Mar. 5, 72 were seen at the Turrell, Ark., sewerage lagoon (BC & LC). The four Greater Scaup observed at Wheeler N.W.R., Feb. 26 provided the eighth local winter record (DCH). Common Goldeneye was more abundant than usual in Louisiana, where it was reported on 4 of 12 CBCs. The one seen near Stonewall, DeSoto Par., Mar. 17-20 was only the second Shreveport area spring record (HcH & HJ).

Two Oldsquaws were reported on the Gulf of Mexico near Holly Beach, La., Jan. 26 (HDP, DAT, GL & GBr) **Black Scoters** were observed in Florida, where four females and one male were observed at Pensacola Bay Dec. 16 - Mar. 11 (RD, m.ob.) and Louisiana where a female was observed near Peveto Beach Dec. 8 (RN, RH & SaG) and possibly the same individual observed 4 mi. w. of Holly Beach Dec. 29 (RN & GL). There were no previous December records in Louisiana. A Surf Scoter was found near Gulf Breeze, Fla., Jan. 5 and in Pensacola Bay Feb. 19 (RD); five were at Peveto Beach, La., Dec. 8 (HJ, JRS, PL & CM) and at least 14 were there Dec. 9 (RH, RN & SaG), two on Jan. 26 (HDP, TT *et al.*), and two on Feb. 16 (BCr & RN). One was seen inland at Sardis L. Dam, Miss., Jan. 15 (MD) & Jan. 16 (LC, BC *et al.*).

Few birds have caused the discussion which resulted from the presence of an eider in Pensacola Bay at Gulf Breeze, Fla., Dec. 14 - Mar. 14. This bird was seen by many experts who have variously identified as a King Eider, a Com. Eider, or an unidentifiable eider. Excellent slides were submitted to the American Museum of Natural History, New York, for identification, but no positive one could be made. Either species in n.w. Florida is noteworthy.

**FALCONIFORMES, GRUIFORMES** — Sharp-shinned Hawks were observed at seven locations in Tennessee during the winter (T.O.S.). In addition two were seen in St. Martin Parish in the Atchafalaya Basin Jan. 14 (ES), and two were seen near Trout, in La Salle Par., Dec. 3 (ES). Cooper's Hawks were observed on five CBCs and nine individuals were reported at eight locations in Tennessee this winter (T.O.S.). The relatively rare Harlan's form of the Red-tailed Hawk was observed in Baton Rouge Mar. 8 (DAT). The Broad-winged Hawk was reported on three of 12 Louisiana CBCs. In addition the one seen at the E. Jetty Woods, Cameron Par., Feb. 23 (RN & RoC) was somewhat early to be a migrant. In Tennessee, where it is only occasionally seen, ten widely scattered observers reported at least 11 different Rough-legged Hawks. Another was seen in Lee Co., Ark., Jan. 5 (EdH & HH). One was seen at St. Andrew's Bay near Ft. Morgan, Ala., Dec. 18 (FC, MLM & ShG) and one was seen 20 mi. e., at Gulf Shores Feb. 27 (*vide* TI). In Louisiana two were found on the Reserve CBC (PB, SaG & GL) and single individuals were found in s. Red River Par., Dec. 23 and s. Bossier Par. Feb. 3 (ES). The rare Ferruginous Hawk was observed in a small flock of Black Vultures at Fort Jackson, Plaquemines Par., Dec. 7 (LS). Six Golden Eagles (3 imm. & 3 ad.) wintered in Cannon Co., Tenn., (FBr) and seven others were found during a statewide count Feb. 8 (T.O.S.). An adult was observed Dec. 10 at Wheeler N.W.R. (WCD & JHB), and was observed occasionally until Jan. 16 (WCD, JHB *et al.*). From Jan. 25 - Feb. 21, one immature and one adult were observed at Eufaula N.W.R., Ala., (WM, SP, TMo *et al.*). In Louisiana Golden Eagles were present at the traditional places in Madison Par.; this year one adult and two immatures were seen Feb. 8 (RN, HDP, DTK & BCr). On Feb. 8 a Bald Eagle count was conducted in Tennessee. A total of 169 individuals were found (82 ad., 65 imm., 22 undet.). Not all eagles known to be in the area were counted. Of those located 129

were at Reelfoot L. (T.O.S.). Eight were seen at Talladega Nat'l Forest, Ala., Mar. 16 (EM). The approximately 28 Bald Eagles reported below Toledo Bend reservoir in Vernon Par., Jan. 21 is probably a Louisiana record (ES). Besides these reports, eagles were found on 3 of 12 La. CBCs plus one at Alexandria about Jan. 1 (GAB) and one in Madison Par. near Tallulah Feb. 8 (RN, DTK, HDP & WJL). The six known Bald Eagle nests in Louisiana produced 7 young this winter (RAy).

Peregrine Falcons were reported at two locations in Louisiana: Jan. 18 (RN & RH) in Cameron Par. near Hackberry and at Grand Terre I., Jefferson Par., Feb. 11 (RN, MN & BCr). One was observed in Arkansas Jan. 1 at Calion L., Union Co. (JB, CA & FG). At Tyndall A.F.B., Fla., one was seen Feb. 8 (SS, m.ob.) It is very difficult to explain the presence of a **Prairie Falcon** at Birmingham, Ala., Feb. 6, but one was reported (HE & EM). Perhaps it represents an escapee Sandhill Cranes wintered n. of Cheneyville, Rapides Par., for the eighth or ninth consecutive year (RN, ES *et al.*); at least 17 were present. The rarely observed Yellow Rail was reported three times in Louisiana this winter: at Grand Cheniere, Cameron Par., one was heard calling on Jan. 17 (RN & RH) — this was only the second aural record for Bob Newman in the state; one was flushed at Rabbit I., Cameron Par., Mar. 20 (KP, WL, RNo & JBO) and one at Ben Hur Farm, L.S.U., Mar. 29 (RRu & MS). The Purple Gallinule observed at Panama City, Fla., Dec. 28 (SS) was probably wintering. One was present at Miller's L., Evangeline Par., La., Dec. 29 (JBO).

**SHOREBIRDS, GULLS, TERNS** — The Wilson's Plover, which is seldom seen in our region in winter, was observed at Grand Isle S.P., Jefferson Par., Feb. 11 (RN, MN & BCr). The **Long-billed Curlew** photographed at Ala. Pt. Jan. 18, 19 & 21 (MLM) was the first Alabama winter record. At the Cameron, La., dump Jan. 26 a Whimbrel was seen (GBr, GL, HDP & DAT) and one at the nearby E. Jetty Feb. 22 (RN & RoC). The Solitary Sandpiper found at Monkey I., Cameron, Feb. 23 (RN & RoC) may have been wintering or may have been an early migrant. The eight Pectoral Sandpipers observed at the Duck River Unit, Tenn. N.W.R., Feb. 19 (JLe) were unexpected in the winter. A recent trend of finding Stilt Sandpipers in the winter in Louisiana continues with approximately eight seen 2 mi. w. of Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Par., Jan. 26 (HDP, DAT & GL) for the second January record and four observed at Grand Isle S.P., Feb. 11 (RN & BCr). Marbled Godwits were seen in Cameron Par.; three on Dec. 8 at Broussard's Beach (RH & SaG); four on Jan. 18 at Monkey I. ferry slip (RH & RN); and approximately 30 at E. Jetty Jan. 26 (HDP, DAT & GL). Two Black-necked Stilts were seen at Blakely I., Mobile, at their recently discovered breeding grounds Feb. 26 (TI, HHK, HHT, HW & AM); three were observed later by other parties. Also at Blakely I. Feb. 26 the same observers saw a Wilson's Phalarope for the first Alabama winter record, there is a record for Mar. 11-12, 1967, which may also have represented wintering.

The **Great Black-backed Gull** was present in at least two of the coastal states of our region this winter. One was observed at Destin, Fla., Dec. 27 (RD, LD & SS)

and two adults were seen at Pensacola Bay Feb. 15 (AF & EEF). These were the third and fourth records for n w. Florida. An immature was observed at Wheeler N W.R., Dec. 11 (JW & DCH); this was the first inland Alabama record. There are seven previous records for Alabama coast including one Nov. 5 (*fide* TI). At Sardis L., Miss., 450 Bonaparte's Gulls were seen Jan. 4 (LC, BC & AS). A large number were also seen at this inland location Nov. 18 (MD, *fide* BC). A Forster's Tern was observed at Cross L., near Shreveport, La., Jan. 19 (HJ) for the first winter record in that area. On Jan. 4, five were seen at University L., Baton Rouge (RN & RH); this is the first recent record for a formerly regular local winter resident. A bird which was apparently a Roseate Tern was observed at the Monkey I. ferry slip, Cameron, Dec. 27-28 (RN, GL, PB & JL) and Jan. 18 (RN & RH). The two Sandwich Terns observed at St. Andrew's S.P., Fla., Jan. 11 (SS) represent the fourth consecutive winter this scarce species was observed there. One was also observed near Broussard's Beach, Cameron Par., Jan. 18 (RN & RH).

**DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS** — The four<sup>A</sup>White-winged Doves observed from an oil platform off of Louisiana Nov. 14 (AWC) were unexpected since the species is not known to be a trans-Gulf migrant. One was also seen Dec. 7 at Reserve, La., where it is rarely seen (RS). A Mourning Dove nested at Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 28 - Jan. 9 (MB & PS); this is the first record of winter nesting of this species in the Nashville area. A **Ground Dove** was observed at Duck River Unit Dec. 3 (JLe); it was also seen Dec. 6 (PC) & 7 (MB *et al.*). This was the second Tennessee record. One was observed Mar. 16 (CG) at Texarkana, where it is unusual. A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was observed by Ron Stein in his yard at Reserve, La., Mar. 12. It was very early to be a migrating bird and may have been wintering. Groove-billed Anis wintered at Ft. Pickens, Fla. (KC & DT). The **Snowy Owl** first noted on the TV aerial of a store in downtown Opelika, Lee Co., Ala., Dec. 24, stayed in the vicinity until at least Jan. 19 (EH *et al.*). The bird was photographed and observed by birders from Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, as was befitting a species which scarcely ever visits our Region; this was the second Alabama record. The Long-eared Owl, only occasionally observed in Louisiana, was found on Mar. 8 at Miller's L., Evangeline Par. (JBO); it stayed till the end of the month. Three were also seen at Cheatham L. Dam, Cheatham Co., Tenn., Dec. 22 - Jan. 4 (MB); this is the sixth record for the Nashville area. Short-eared Owls again wintered at the Smyrna Airport in Tennessee, where seven were seen; they were first found there in the winter of 1971-72. It was a good year for this species in Alabama (*fide* TI); maximum count was at Eufaula where 23 were seen Jan. 13 - Feb. 21 (SP, WM, MF *et al.*). A wintering Chuck-will's-widow was captured in a mist net at Gulfport, Miss., Jan. 18 (EF) and was banded. The individual calling at Gulf Shores, Ala., Feb. 26 (TI & HW) was presumed to be migrant. A Com. Nighthawk was heard on the L.S.U. campus, Baton Rouge, Jan. 27 (JBO). This is the second recent wintering record. The one observed at Nashville Mar. 20 was probably a migrant although it was 7 days earlier than any previous record locally. The Vaux's Swift was again recorded in Louisiana this winter after being

missed for several years. At least three and possibly four were found at LaPlace, St. John the Baptist Par., Dec. 23 and were found numerous times until Mar. 10 (RS, MW, CRA *et al.*).

Winter hummingbirds are rare anywhere in our Region, but this year many were found. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was observed at Pensacola, Fla., Dec. 14 (CK, DR, SR & JR), and an *Arthilodus* sp. hummingbird was observed in Cameron Dec. 8 (RN, RH & SaG) and at Reserve Feb. 4-7 (RS *et al.*). A ♂ Black-chinned Hummingbird stayed at Gonzales, Ascension Par., Nov. 28 - Jan. 13 (FB); it died Jan. 13 or 14, presumably from fighting a Rufous Hummingbird. A **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** was seen for the second consecutive year in Louisiana — this time on the New Orleans CBC. Rufous Hummingbirds were found in two locations in Alabama for the sixth and seventh state records: at Magnolia Springs Jan. 5 (FC), and at Mobile, Jan. 18 - Feb. 21 (MG); this was the fourth consecutive year at this location. Rufous Hummingbirds were found at four locations in Louisiana. There were single individuals at: Gonzales (RN *et al.*) from December to Jan. 16; Baton Rouge Nov. 24 to at least Feb. 10 (BB & RN), and Cameron Dec. 8 & 28 (RN *et al.*). Ron Stein has attempted to attract hummingbirds to his yard at Reserve and had Rufous Hummingbirds present Nov. 20 - Mar. 31. The maximum number present was 12. An unidentified hummingbird was found at Magnolia, Ark., Dec. 14 (EK). This is much further north than usual for hummingbird winter sightings.

**WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — The Com. Flicker (Red-shafted) was observed for the first time this winter in Lonoke Co., Ark., one was seen Jan. 25 (EdH, HH, MP & HP). One was also seen in Louisiana at Cocodrie L., Rapides Par., Feb. 19 (CGu & HG). A possible **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** was reported in Louisiana during the period. The bird was observed flying across Interstate 10 approximately 20 mi. w. of Baton Rouge (near where I thought I saw one 2 years ago) Nov. 11 (RBe, *fide* BM), the characteristic color pattern on the wings was noted. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was observed in Plaquemines Par. near Naomi Jan. 29 (RF). One was observed in Alabama, at Phenix City, Mar. 14 (MF); this is the earliest inland record for Alabama. An almost unprecedented **Great Crested Flycatcher** was reported in Pulaski Co., Ark., Jan. 14 - Feb. 26. It was seen and heard occasionally as it left its roost in a large shop (BS, CSp, CIS & VS). The **Wied's Crested Flycatcher** was observed for the third consecutive CBC at Venice, Plaquemines Par. Dec. 31 (RN, RH & SiG). A **Least Flycatcher** was observed at Reserve, St. John the Baptist Par., Dec. 12 (RS) and at Willow I., Cameron Par., Dec. 8 (GLo) & Jan. 17 (RN & RH). A Western Flycatcher (?) was observed Dec. 7 at Willow I., Cameron Par. (RN, RH & SaG). There are no previous records for this species in Louisiana and because of the difficulty of identification it will not be included in Louisiana's list. In our Region, the Vermilion Flycatcher was only reported from Louisiana this winter. There were two at Mansura, Avoyelles Par., Jan. 5 (PSt); one at Miller's L., Evangeline Par., Jan. 6, and two there on Feb. 17 (JBO); and one at Grand Chenier Jan. 17 (RN & RH). Two Tree Swallows were seen in

Tennessee, where it is rare in the winter, at Duck River Unit, Feb. 10 (JLe). An unprecedented flock of five **Barn Swallows** was seen at Grand Chenier, Feb. 23 (RoC & RN). Purple Martins arrived in Louisiana especially early this year. The three reported at Bruley, West Baton Rouge Par., Jan. 21 (VPR) was the earliest ever by 2 days. They were also reported at Reserve Jan. 26 (MW), at Baton Rouge Jan. 26 (RC), and at Natchitoches Jan. 30 (CV & KS). The Purple Martin at Marianna, Fla., Jan. 24 (MGr) was the earliest ever there by 6 days.

**NUTHATCHES THROUGH VIREOS** — Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen at five locations in Nashville but this species was not reported and was apparently missing in the rest of Tennessee (T.O.S.). It was reported in 4 of 12 Louisiana CBCs but there were no further reports. A Bewick's Wren was seen in n.w. Florida for the first time in seven years this winter: Jan. 19 (JE), Jan. 30 (MLM), and Feb. 1 (PSy). A **Sage Thrasher** was observed at Willow I., Cameron Par., Dec. 8 (GE, KE & ME). This was the sixth record for Louisiana. The T.O.S. reports that a good hackberry crop held many Am. Robins in middle Tennessee; the Nashville roost peaked at approximately 400,000 birds. Bell's Vireo, which is extremely rare in Louisiana in winter was found at Willow I., Cameron Par., Jan. 17 (RH) near the same location at which one was seen last year. A Yellow-throated Vireo was seen near Hot Springs, Ark., Jan. 22 (JT, JWC, JHC & JFT). Solitary Vireos were found in the n. part of our Region this winter. One was observed at Dyersburg, Tenn., Nov. 4 (VL), one was seen at Malvern, Hot Springs Co., Ark., Dec. 9 (MP & HP), and eight were seen on the Arkansas CBCs

**WARBLERS** — Seven Black-and-white Warblers were found on Venice, La., CBC and four on the New Orleans CBC. A **Prothonotary Warbler** was seen along the bank of the Mississippi R. at Baton Rouge Jan. 23 (PSt). An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen at Dyersburg, Tenn., Dec. 20 - Jan. 7 (CH) and a **Cape May Warbler** was observed at Duck River Unit Jan. 9 (JLe). The **Black-throated Gray Warbler** was present in both Florida and Louisiana this winter. On Nov. 28 one was seen at Tyndall A.F.B., Fla., (SS) for the first record in over seven years. A male was observed on the Venice, La. CBC (SiG & DN) and a female was observed at the same place Jan. 25 (BCr, RN & SaG). The **Black-throated Green Warbler** observed at Panama City, Fla., Dec. 28 (SS, RD & LD) was only the third winter record there. A **Prairie Warbler** was found by RH at Willow I., Cameron Par., La., Jan. 17; this species is only occasionally observed in Louisiana during the winter. Palm Warblers were found more than usual; this species was present on 5 of 12 Louisiana CBCs — with 37 on the Venice CBC. It was present for the Lonoke, Ark. CBC for only the second time in 15 years (EdH & HH). It was reported at five locations in Tennessee, although normally considered rare: Old Hickory, Dec. 2 - Jan. 2 (LE & AH); Cheatham L. Dam, Dec. 23 - Jan. 5 (BiJ, SF & WFt), Duck River Unit, Jan. 9 - Feb. 19 (JLe); and Trousdale Co., Feb. 1 (BiJ). Common Yellowthroats may have been more prevalent than usual this winter. They were found in all but the three most northern

Louisiana CBCs. Three were seen on Arkansas CBCs and the first winter Faulkner Co., Ark., record occurred Jan. 25 (DJ). In Tennessee, one was found at Duck River Unit Feb. 19 (JLe). The **Yellow-breasted Chat** was also present throughout our area, where it was found in four different states: Louisiana, two were reported on the Mansura CBC and on Jan. 14 one was seen in Baton Rouge (BB); Arkansas, on the Fort Smith CBC Dec. 28 (RA); Tennessee, at Nashville Dec. 28, for the second Nashville area winter record (LF & WF), Florida, at Panama City Jan. 4 & Feb. 30 (SS) for the fourth winter record. The Hooded Warbler at Gum Cove, Cameron Par., Feb. 22 (BO) was only the first February Louisiana record; it was again seen Mar. 8 (BO, RN *et al.*). Wilson's Warbler was observed in Louisiana at LaPlace Dec. 21 (DN), at Peveto Beach Feb. 15-16 (DTK & MC) & Feb. 22 (RBC & RN). An Am. Redstart was seen at Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Par. Dec. 7 (GE, ME & RE).

**BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS** — A Yellow-headed Blackbird was observed at Gulf Breeze, Dec. 14 (AF & EEF); this western species is rarely observed that far east. One has been present at Memphis, Tenn., since Mar. 10 (BC, HD & HLD); this is the first verified Tennessee record. An **Orchard Oriole** wintered at Baton Rouge where it has been present since Jan. 13 (BB, RN *et al.*). Although usually scarce, N. Orioles were present throughout the area all winter. Two overwintered at Gulfport, Miss. (EFl & ESu). The one wintering at Pensacola was only the second record of overwintering there (JM, m.ob.). A female was seen near Memphis Jan. 27 (EC & CS); the male observed at Dyersburg Dec. 6 was the second winter record there. In Arkansas, one was seen at L. Hamilton, Garland Co., Jan. 25 - Mar. 31 (JT). In Louisiana, one wintered at Baton Rouge (ArS), and one was observed at Mansura Dec. 24 (TSt & PSt).

#### S. A.

Blackbird concentrations seem to have been increasing in recent years; the attention that they have caused certainly has increased and the controversy caused by approximately 2 million birds at Fort Campbell, Ky., was thoroughly covered on national TV. A blackbird survey taken by U.S.F. & W.S. indicates that in Arkansas this winter there were at least 33 roosts comprising about 51.5 million birds. A similar survey in 1969 revealed 30 roosts and 46 million birds. In Louisiana this winter there were 71 roosts reported, but only 30 were checked; the 30 comprised approximately 77 million birds. The one in W. Carrol Par. may be the largest roost in the U.S. with 21 million birds. The 23 roosts in our section of Tennessee held approximately 43 million birds. There were 17 roosts reported in Mississippi and eight in Alabama. There were at least 37 roosts in our region which comprised as many birds as the Ft. Campbell roost.

A **Western Tanager** was seen and photographed in Shreveport, La., this winter (PL, HJ *et al.*). It was present from February until the end of the period; this

was the first record for n.w. Louisiana. **Summer Tanagers** were observed in four states of the region: A MALE WINTERED at Marianna, Fla., being seen from Dec. 9 - Mar. 28 (MGr, EW *et al.*), and is the first wintering record there; one was seen at Mobile, Ala., Feb. 10 & Feb. 16 (JRu & LMc); one wintered in n. Little Rock Jan. 18 - March (LM & TM); one was observed the day before the Baton Rouge CBC (RH); one was seen at Natchitoches on Jan. 11 (CV); and a male was seen at Monroe Feb. 27 (DTK & MC).

**FINCHES** — A Rose-breasted Grosbeak stayed from Feb. 12 until the end of the period (FM) at Nashville and is the fifth area winter record. A Black-headed Grosbeak wintered in Little Rock (DO & PO). During the winter Memphis had one record, Jan. 13-18 (HB & ABr); Nashville had three Jan. 16 - Mar. 30 (MH), mid-March (RMc, *vide* KGo), and Mar. 26 (KGo) representing at least two birds. There were only four previous Tennessee records. A male was seen at Willow I., near Cameron Dec. 7 (RN, RH & SaG). Two Blue Grosbeaks were observed on the Baton Rouge CBC and one was seen at Willow I. Dec. 7 (RN, RH & SaG). Three Indigo Buntings wintered in the Nashville area: at Gallatin Jan. 16 - Mar. 31, where two were present (MH), and at Nashville Feb. 22 one was present (LJ). A ♀ Painted Bunting was observed at Verdunville Landing, St. Mary's Par., Dec. 14 (RK & CL). This is the seventh consecutive winter that a ♂ Painted Bunting has wintered in the same neighborhood of Baton Rouge (*vide* RN). Since the occurrence is so rare, these observations serve as evidence for the fidelity of a bird to a wintering area and also indicate longevity. There were three records of Dickcissels in Tennessee: at Murfreesboro, Nov. 1 - Mar. 6 (ASp); in the second week of Jan. (ASt & CST); and Dec. 21 near Hartsville (BiJ). An imm. male was observed near New Iberia, La., Dec. 3 (MM).

The Evening Grosbeaks were virtually absent in our area. The only records were in Alabama, where a flock of approximately 40 wintered in Birmingham (RR, HW *et al.*), and one was seen at Magnolia Springs Feb. 3 (FC). Most observers in the Nashville area thought it was a good year for Purple Finches (*vide* MB). No one else commented on their abundance. A ♂ **House Finch** was observed at Old Hickory, Tenn., Feb. 17 - Mar. 16 (SF & Wft) for the first Nashville area record. Pine Siskins were virtually absent throughout the area as were Red Crossbills; only one crossbill was reported, at Conway Co., Ark., Jan. 18 (EdH). Le Conte's Sparrow was reported throughout the region. This bird is difficult to find when present and there must have been many wintering in our area. Henslow's Sparrow was reported on the Lonoke, Ark. CBC and s. of its usual range in Louisiana, in Cameron Par., Jan. 26 (DAT *et al.*). Two Tree Sparrows were found at Mallard L., Mississippi Co., Ark., Jan. 4 (EdH & HH); seven were observed at Duck River Unit Feb. 19 (JLe) for the first local record. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was observed at Willow I., near Cameron Dec. 7 (RN, RH & SaG). An ad. Harris' Sparrow was observed at Malvern, Hot Springs Co., Ark., Dec. 9 (MP & HP). Two were found further e. than usual in Morehouse Par., La., Jan. 21 & 28 (DTK & WJL). The Lincoln's Sparrow, rare in winter, was found at Marianna, Fla., Dec. 14 (MGr) and at

Clarksville, Tenn., Dec. 22 (DS). The Lapland Longspur was scarce in La. this winter (*vide* RN). However, 150 were seen at Courtland Airfield, Lawrence Co., Ala., Mar. 6 (RR, HE & JP). The 4096 on the Slovak, Prairie Co., Ark. CBC was the high for the state.

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## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS

/ Esther Serr

December was a pleasant winter month over the region, and light snowfall was favorable to hiking in central Canada. Then came the blizzard of Jan. 11, originating from the southwest and sweeping up into Canada where it was named a "savage" by A. Binnie, of Regina. Broadcast networks told of the loss of human



beings and livestock — anyone could guess what happened to the smaller birds. As R. Randall, Bismarck, watched birds at his feeder, he could see that their feathers were full of finely-driven snow. The lows continued to move up from the southwest at the rate of about two a week through March. The paths varied enough so that no one locality always bore the brunt. Fargo had snow depth of 42 inches and O'Neil Pass, Black Hills, had a near record snow pack of about four feet. The continuous swirling of these storms blocked early migrants, wiped out many feeder populations, and brought some unusual birds after each blow. Alberta did not experience any really warm chinooks this winter (FS). From North Dakota and Saskatchewan birders felt that this winter would have to rate as the most "birdless" winter they have experienced.

**WATERFOWL** — A **Red-throated Loon** was noted at Banff, Alta. Dec. 31 (BG). In December four Whistling Swans were on the Missouri R., Charles Mix Co., and one in Roberts Co., both in S.D. (WH, BH) and one at Medicine Lake N.W.R., Mont. (JMa). Single Eared and

Pied-billed Grebes remained at Waterfowl Park, Regina, through December (TB). Forty **Wood Ducks** wintered at Clark Fork of Yellowstone R., Silesia, Mont. (KHi). An unusual 18 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** wintered at Ft. Peck (CC), and two in January at Calgary, Alta. (RBu).

There are always a few winter stragglers in the small, open spots until the main ice starts breaking the forepart of March. Then came the geese and ducks. By Mar. 31 there were 6000 Canada Geese at Ft. Peck, 1000 at Bowdoin N.W.R., 1500 at Medicine L., all in Montana, 2000 at Capitol L., Pierre, S.D. and 13 on open water, Whiteshell P.P., s.e. Manitoba (GN, KG). Snow Geese numbered 10,000 in Turner Co. (CB), 7000 in Lake Co. (RB) and 10,000 at Gavins Pt., S.D. (WH). Mallards totaled 50,000 on Mar. 31 as they rested on Lewis and Clark L., Bon Homme Co., S.D. (WH). A **Hooded Merganser** was noted Dec. 1 - Jan. 1 at Regina. Two **White-winged Scoters** were on Oahe Res., Pierre, throughout December (B. J. Rose).

**HAWKS, EAGLES** — The recording of 16 Goshawk sightings in the region during the period were all of individual birds. Cooper's Hawk observations totaled two each for South Dakota and Alberta. Only Rapid City and Stettler, Alta. had Sharp-shinned, with a total of 11 sightings. They bothered five feeders daily in Rapid City including a drive-in bank where the tellers were horrified at what they saw. Rough-leggeds were low in numbers for the third year with only 66 sightings in the region. Ten Ferruginous Hawks were sighted only in c. South Dakota and e. Montana. Only South Dakota had Red-taileds and 41 of the 50 sightings were at Yankton (WH). Golden Eagles wintered throughout the region with 78 sightings recorded. Montana had the best migration in March with 13 at Benton Lake N.W.R. (LS). South Dakota noted over 100 Bald Eagles, excluding refuge counts. Marsh Hawk numbers over the region looked somewhat better with migration figures added, but were still on the scarce side. A single bird was seen Mar. 21, Lyleton, Man. (JMu).

**Gyrfalcons** had a heavy flight into Montana and South Dakota with at least 12 individuals noted plus one each for Alberta and Saskatchewan. A guess would be that they followed the waterfowl down the Missouri River. Prairie Falcon sightings totaled 12 with Saskatchewan having 8 and Alberta 7 of the number. Two Peregrines preyed on ducks feeding in fields at Ft. Peck, and three were seen at Spring Valley (FB) and Indian Head, Sask. (MS). Merlins were again present throughout the winter in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and banding showed that the birds remaining at Saskatoon comprised the nesting population (SH). Alberta had six Merlins and Manitoba had three during the winter. Eastern S.D. reporters observed 44 Am. Kestrels up to Mar. 1 and 13 during March.

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS** — These species have not made a comeback in Canada from the severe winter of 1973-1974. William Niven believes that because of the scarcity of bush rabbits, predators were hard on the grouse at Sheho, Sask. Only Manitoba had Spruce Grouse, ten were observed in two groups, 30 mi. south

of The Pas (HWRC). Bobwhite showed an increase in s.c. South Dakota (GS). Gray Partridge were low at all points with numbers dwindling as the winter progressed. Sharp-tailed Grouse looked best in South Dakota.

**GULLS** — There were at least three **Glaucous Gulls** on Oahe Res. Pierre, in December. Herring Gulls at Gavins Pt., Dec. 2 - Dec. 24, totaled 100 with a peak of 41 on Dec. 4. Migrating California Gulls came to Ft. Peck, Mar. 15 and Ring-billed on Mar. 4 (CC).

**OWLS** — Saskatchewan had 22 sightings of Great Horned Owls but reporters felt that was less than usual. There were 20 in South Dakota and that was also fewer. **Snowy Owls** came through Canada in late fall where some stayed, but many went on south. There were so many Snowy Owls below the border that it was next to impossible to estimate numbers. South Dakota had at least 50. Willis Hall saw six on Dec. 13, and 12 on Dec. 14 at Gavins Pt. Dam. The birds were sitting in a group along a low bank near the dam those two cold, snowy days. Probably this is another Arctic bird finding easy food along the Missouri. A few Screech, Long-eared and Short-eared Owls appeared in the region as usual. A **Barred Owl** was sighted at Spring Valley, Feb. 27 as it flew across the road just as a semi-trailer came along (FB). There was another at Fargo Mar. 5, which was backed up by five previous sightings (EA). Two **Hawk Owls**, a prairie rarity but not firsts, were at Kindersley, Sask. Feb. 18. In Manitoba during January and February, two Hawk Owls were in the Lac du Bonnet area (RN, SSe), three in the Winnipeg area (DRMH, KG). Coming from n.c. Manitoba, on Highway 391, H. Copland saw one Hawk Owl south of Snow L., one near Cranberry Portage, and another at Overflowing River. Another good count on the **Great Gray Owl** was taken in the s.e. corner of Manitoba this winter. R. W. Nero recorded observations by about 40 persons. In December there were nine, in January, fifteen, two of which were in Winnipeg, which was unusual, and one was banded. During February there were 29 sightings and two dead birds. Three birds were the most seen at one time. A Saw-whet Owl was seen Jan. 4 & Feb. 15 at Indian Head (MS).

**WOODPECKERS** — Lewis' Woodpeckers were seen at Joliet, Mont. (KH) and near Rapid City. Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers seemed in normal numbers over the region. Single Northern Three-toeds were noted at Banff (SM), Calgary (RC, HP), Cochrane, Alta. (SJ), at Saskatoon (JG) and a pair at Duck Mt. P.P., Dauphin, Man. Dec. 4 (KG). Pileated Woodpeckers appeared at Spirit Lake, Sask. Dec. 1 (WA), on Jan. 1, Water Valley, Alta. (JP), Jan. 4 at Galesburg, N.D., one wintered at Fargo, and one at Winnipeg (DY). A Red-bellied Woodpecker was at the same feeder for a second winter south of Bismarck (RRa) with single birds at Burke (GS), Clay Co., Yankton, and a pair at rural Vermillion, S.D. (KH). A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was sighted Mar. 5 in Custer Co., Black Hills, S.D. (EE).

**LARKS AND JAYS** — Horned Larks were scarce and in some places none remained after the January blizzard. Then migration started in mid-February and

by early March birds were on territory at Audubon N.W.R., Coleharbor, N.D. (DMc) and appeared to be nesting at Moose Jaw, Sask. by Mar. 23 (EK). Simply hundreds of Horned Larks, with a few Lapland Longspurs, were more obvious when they became grounded by the spring storms. Nine Blue Jays wintered at Ft. Peck for the first time in ten years (CC), and two were also at Bowdoin, Malta, Mont. (JF). Folks at Saskatoon, Sask. saw an albino — pure white — Black-billed Magpie (JG). There were 61 Com. Ravens on 14 days in March at Cochrane, Alta. (SJ) and they are again becoming an occasional winter visitor into Saskatchewan (SH).

**CHICKADEES THROUGH WRENS** — Black-capped Chickadee numbers were down averaging five to none at feeders after the blizzard except at Spirit L. where the average number was 25 instead of the usual 40 (WA). Two **Boreal Chickadees** each at Maidstone (WH) and Indian Head (MS) were rarities for the Saskatchewan prairie (SH). One was at Balmoral, Man. all winter (CT). Both White-breasted and Red-breasted Nuthatches seemed normal until the January blizzard hit. Brown Creepers showed an increase in South Dakota with one roosting above a doorway at Yankton (WH). A single Winter Wren was in Roberts Co., S.D. (BH) and two wintered at Calgary (FNS). A Carolina Wren remained until Dec. 18 at Bruce, S.D. (EE). Cañon Wrens were seen and heard frequently only at Rapid City (DMc, NW).

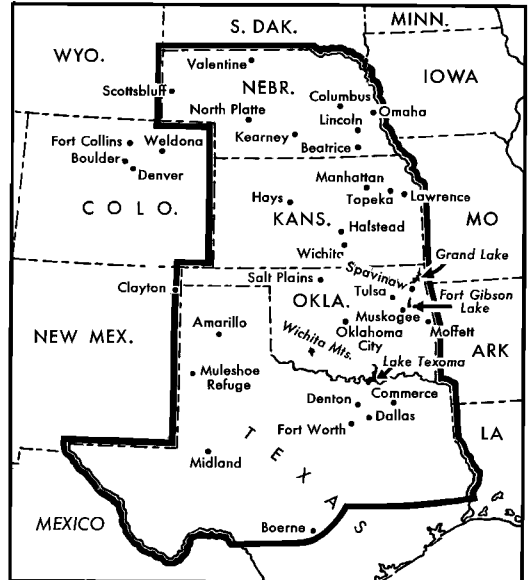
**THRUSHES, WAXWINGS** — A **Varied Thrush** appeared at Calgary, Feb. 1 for a second winter sighting (Hattie Boothman). Townsend's Solitaires were very common in the Black Hills and have expanded out on the prairie eastward toward the Missouri River. There was one Dec. 13 & 20 at Burke L., Gregory Co., (GS) and a daily average of two at Interior, S.D. (RW). Eight Mountain Bluebirds wintered at Badlands, N.M., Interior, during December and January (RW). One was seen west of Rapid City, Feb. 23 (NE), eight at Fairburn, Mar. 5 (BN) and 18 on Mar. 6 in Rapid City (LW). Nine were at Reston, Man. Mar. 12 and one was following Highway #10 toward Cowan, Mar. 15 (WW). Two Mountain Bluebirds had reached J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., Upham, N.D. Mar. 17 and 28 were at Ft. Peck by Mar. 24. Golden-crowned Kinglets were common in late fall and continued in good numbers into the winter in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings again were very scarce in the entire region with only occasional small flocks.

**SHRIKES, BLACKBIRDS** — There were about 25 sightings of the N. Shrike over the area. Hundreds, and some reported thousands, of House Sparrows were found dead by farmers and elevator operators in North Dakota after the January storm (DMc). Rusty Blackbirds were observed at Sioux Falls, S.D. (GB) and at Ft. Peck and Billings, Mont. (CC, KH).

**GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS** — Cardinals went "west" to winter at Bismarck and Rapid City and survived the weather (RRa, JMo). The species increased in numbers where they are regular in eastern North and South Dakota. Evening and Pine Grosbeaks,



Purple, Cassin's and Gray-crowned Rosy Finches, Hoary and Com. Redpolls and Red and White-winged Crossbills were so scarce that all reporters were very disappointed. Three ♂ **House Finches** were present and studied at a few feet distance at a Yankton feeder Feb. 5 - Mar 13 (WH). Then at a Rapid City feeder three females were present Mar. 28 - Apr. 2 (ESo), out of their usual range. After hearing the weather service describe the swirling winds that howl around the winter lows, one could expect anything. The Rapid City finches appeared the day after the Mar. 27 blizzard. It seems as though the Tree Sparrows will never stop migrating through w. South Dakota as the period ends. Tom Hays, Spearfish, S.D. banded 220 in March and at Brookings, S.D., Nelda Holden found 50 dead that had been banded after the blizzard. First migrants appeared at White Bear, Sask. Mar. 14 (SJ). A few Harris' Sparrows continued to winter, including one unusually far north at Sheho, Sask. (WN), with two at Bismarck and at most South Dakota points. Snow Buntings appeared in thousands from Alberta to North Dakota in the fall yet the winter reports showed only small flocks or none at all. Where did they go? The first spring migration figure was 3000 Mar. 4, at Milbank, S.D. which is fairly close to the South Dakota-Minnesota border (RJ).



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## SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS / Frances Williams

Snowy Owls in the north, wintering hummingbirds in the south, emphasized again the great variation in this extensive Region. Forty inches of snow at Lincoln contrasted with the warm, dry winter in Texas. This varia-

tion in weather probably was responsible for winter sparrows being absent in the northern half and abundant in the southern half of the Region. Rough-legged Hawks were abundant throughout the Region, and even out-numbered Red-tailed Hawks along the Rio Grande. Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a minor incursion, but northern finches and Bohemian Waxwings were almost entirely absent. Several southwestern species were again sighted far northeast of their normal range, but few wanderers from the east reached the western plains.

**LOONS, GREBES** — Common Loons were not as abundant this winter as they have been the past few years. High count was 39 on Dec. 15 on Lake-o'-the-Pines, Marion Co., Tex. Horned Grebes invaded the southern part of the Region in early fall and numbers kept increasing through late January. High totals were 514 at Lake-o'-the-Pines and 350 at Hagerman N.W.R., Tex. The species was recorded from Dodge City, Kans and Osage Co., Okla. south to Val Verde Co., Tex. and west to Amarillo and Lubbock, Tex. Eared Grebes were present in record high numbers in Kansas.

**PELICANS THROUGH ANHINGAS** — A flock of 40 White Pelicans was noted north of Dexter, Tex. on the extremely early date Feb. 22 (CW). Double-crested Cormorants continue to winter on larger lakes in Oklahoma and Texas in normal numbers. Observers at Hagerman N.W.R. speculated that an Olivaceous Cormorant sighted Mar. 18, 22 & 25 may have been the same one which was present during the CBC. Anhingas wintered on L. Conroe, Walker Co., Tex.

**HERONS** — A **Green Heron** in Jackson Co., Okla., Jan. 4 provided a first winter record for the State (JWA, JDT). Little Blue Herons were noted in Walker Co., Jan. 23 & Feb. 25, and at Ft. Worth and Dallas by the first week in March, all very early dates. Cattle Egrets

are increasing in winter in e. Texas and they are recorded more frequently each winter across the n. half of the state. A Reddish Egret in Washington Co., Tex., Feb. 22 provided a first record (ALB, TCM). A Great Egret lingered in Howard Co., Tex. until mid-December (PMA). Seven Black-crowned Night Herons were reported Feb. 1 at Lubbock, and one was seen Mar. 24 at that locality. Others were noted at El Paso, Jan. 25 (AG) and Walker Co., Dec. 8 & Feb. 1. American Bitterns were recorded at five Texas localities and one was captured on a residential street in Stillwater, Okla., Mar. 30.

**SWANS, GEESE** — Thirteen Whistling Swans were sighted on a farm pond in Tillman Co., Okla., Jan. 21 (WEE). Peak numbers of Canada Geese included 86,000 at Muleshoe N.W.R., Tex., 3500 at Hulah Reservoir, Okla. and 5000 at Hagerman N.W.R. A flock of 50 Black Brant was seen with a mixed flock of other geese at Hulah Mar. 14 (AMM, SM). There is no specimen of this species from Oklahoma. Flocks of 300 or more White-fronted Geese were present during February at Oklahoma City, Hulah Reservoir and L. Carl Blackwell, Okla. A Barnacle Goose was sighted at Tishomingo N.W.R., Okla., Nov. 7 (BH). Two Ross' Geese were present at Hagerman Dec. 7 - Jan. 19 (m.ob.) and seven were at Muleshoe throughout December (m.ob.).

**DUCKS** — Ten Mexican Ducks were seen on the Rio Grande in Presidio Co., Dec. 30. Black Ducks were collected in Cherokee Co., Tex., Dec. 10 and Walker Co., Dec. 9. There were sight records at Waco, Tex., Mar. 14 (KBB) and Topeka Mar. 16 (KHo). Cinnamon Teal were farther east than normal in Kerr Co., Tex., Mar. 7 (B & JM) and Walker Co., Jan. 31 & Feb. 15. They were present in Burlison Co., Tex. during January (TMO) and arrived on the early date Mar. 8 at Amarillo and Comanche Co., Okla. Wood Ducks were present at Bellevue, Neb., Amarillo and Waco during January and arrived in Lyon Co., Kans. on the early date Feb. 21 (JaM). Wood Ducks in Comanche Co., Mar. 18 and Enid, Okla., Mar. 25 represent unusual locality records. Redheads and Canvasbacks were present throughout the Region in much higher numbers than any recent year. As birders gain expertise, it becomes evident that Greater Scaup winter on many of the large reservoirs in the Region. Common Goldeneyes, never "common" in this Region, were present in Bellevue Feb. 1, Johnson Co., Kans., Dec. 2, Rogers Co., Okla. Dec. 19 - Mar. 1 and at four Texas localities most of the period. High count was 250 at L. Lexington, Neb. Oldsquaws were noted at Nacogdoches, Tex., Dec. 29 - Jan. 12. A Black Scoter was sighted at Dallas Feb. 2 (SR). Hooded Mergansers were unusually common, being reported at 12 localities.

**RAPTORS** — Turkey Vultures were present near Comanche, Tex., Jan. 6 (KHo) & Feb. 27 (CMS), Rogers Co., Feb. 19 and Garland, Tex., Feb. 25 (MF). Black Vultures were present in Presidio Co. in late December and in McClain Co., Okla., Apr. 5. A Mississippi Kite at Ft. Worth Mar. 1 was early (JK). White-tailed Kites were sighted in Freestone Co., Tex., Dec. 24 (KVW), Brazos Co., Dec. 29 (OG) and one was

found dead at the latter locality Mar. 8. All Accipiters were present in Lancaster Co., Neb. in fair numbers (DG). Goshawks were also observed in Lyon Co., Payne Co., Okla., Comanche Co. and Johnson Co., Kans. Sharp-shinned Hawks outnumbered Cooper's Hawks two to one. Red-tailed Hawks were abundant in n. Texas and throughout Oklahoma. A Red-shouldered Hawk at Oklahoma City Dec. 28 was noteworthy. The species was reported at only six other localities. A Swainson's Hawk in Crosby Co., Tex., Mar. 3 was early. At least five **White-tailed Hawks** wintered in the vicinity of El Paso. Three Ferruginous Hawks remained in the vicinity of a small prairie dog colony in Canadian Co., Okla., Nov. 16 - Mar. 2.

The s.w. Texas population of wood rats crashed after last winter's 30-year high, and the hawk population crashed also. Harris' Hawks were especially scarce, but evidently moved to other areas, as they were recorded in Crosby Co., Mar. 20 (KHi), Irion Co., Tex., Feb. 11 (CCW) and Brazos Co., Jan. 24-31 (m.ob.) The population of wintering Bald Eagles in the Region has doubled in the past two years, but Golden Eagles were somewhat lower in numbers this year. Marsh Hawks were common in Kansas, Oklahoma and the n. half of Texas. By the end of the period migrating Ospreys were observed at four localities. There were unusual mid-winter sightings in Walker, McClennan (BA), Midland (GP) and Polk (*fide* CDF) Cos. Caracaras were present all winter in Limestone Co., Tex. (KBB) and were recorded in Williamson Co., Dec. 21 (TCM) and McClennan Co. in March. Merlins were noted at 13 localities. A Prairie Falcon was present in Lancaster Co., mid-February - March. Peregrines appeared at Dallas Mar. 8 (GC) and El Dorado, Tex., Jan. 7 (KHo).

**PRAIRIE CHICKENS THROUGH RAILS** — Two flocks of Greater Prairie Chickens, comprising about 15 birds each, survive in Miami Co., Kans., within 25 mi of Kansas City. About 60 ♂ Greater Prairie Chickens used a booming ground in Rogers Co., Okla. This species is also reported occasionally from the Tulsa area. High count of Sandhill Cranes at Muleshoe N.W.R. was 78,000 Dec. 25. This species had left most w. Texas wintering grounds by the first weekend in March. A **King Rail** was present in Presidio Co., Feb. 12 and another was sighted in Walker Co., Dec. 10 & Feb. 15. Virginia Rails wintered at Arnett, Okla., Hutchinson, Walker & Lubbock Cos., Tex. A Yellow Rail in Walker Co., Mar. 1 provided a first County record. A Com. Gallinule on a stock tank in Culberson Co., Tex. provided a first record there, and others in Rogers Co., Nov. 30 (BF) and Walker Co., Feb. 1 were unusual for the season.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH DOVES** — The only Snowy Plover reported was in Wichita Co., Tex., Mar. 17. American Golden Plovers arrived in Walker Co., Mar. 7. American Woodcocks in Lancaster Co., Mar. 20 (DG), Lyon Co., Mar. 2-23 (MS, JaM), Morris Co., Kans., Mar. 27 (DFP, ER) and Blaine Co., Okla., Nov. 2 (MFC) were noteworthy sightings. A nest of this species was found at Stillwater, Okla., Mar. 8 (BB). Dunlins were present in Wichita Co., Tex., Dec. 12 - Jan. 7 (NM, KZ). Wilson's Phalaropes arrived in

Brazos Co., Mar. 19 (MTH). A Glaucous Gull which was discovered at Oklahoma City Dec. 21 (JR) was later found dead and taken to the University of Oklahoma for a museum specimen. A second bird was sighted at the same locality Jan. 11. Bonaparte's Gulls were abundant in the Region and were reported from 12 localities. Peak numbers included 400 on L. Livingston in e. Texas Jan. 11, 300 at Dallas Dec. 28 and 141 on Grand L. in n.e. Oklahoma Jan. 1. Forster's Terns in Dallas Jan. 25, Ft. Worth Nov. 22 - Jan. 28 and Walker Co. throughout the period were unusual at this season. A flock of 10 Black Terns at Lubbock Mar. 9 was six weeks ahead of schedule. Ground Doves were noted in Jeff Davis Co., Tex., Feb. 5 and Tom Green Co., Tex., Dec. 28-30. Inca Doves, continuing to move north, were observed in Wichita Co., Tex., Mar. 10 (TH) and in Palo Pinto Co., Tex., Jan. 14.

S.A.

**SNOWY OWLS** — The number of Snowy Owls reaching the southern plains are unprecedented. Probably not all the great white owls sighted were reported to this editor, so the story is not complete. Because of the lack of contributors in Nebraska, little information on the invasion in that state is available. Mrs. Wigg reported that there were six sightings in the Omaha Region the first two weeks of December, but none were reported after a heavy snowstorm Dec. 14. Dr. Bennett stated that the first Snowy Owl appeared in Nebraska City at Thanksgiving and that at least four were seen in the vicinity of Lincoln. In Kansas the first one was sighted at Emporia Nov. 1 and the last one in Coffey Co., Mar. 2. About 30 were reported. Other sightings were at Coffeyville, Bucklin, Mullinville, Cheyenne Bottoms N.W.R. (nine individuals), Wichita, Miller, Allen, Elkhart, Quivira N.W.R. (five individuals), Junction City (four individuals), Colby. In Oklahoma the first one was sighted at Tulsa Dec. 3 and the last one at Oklahoma City Feb. 14. At least a dozen were reported. Other localities were Kingfisher, Norman, Guymon, Skedee, Geary, Great Salt Plains N.W.R. and Tahlequah. In Texas a Snowy Owl was found dying of gunshot wounds at Waco Dec. 31. It has been mounted and will be on display at the Strecker Museum (RC, *fide* LMB). There was also an unconfirmed sighting at Ft. Worth.

**OTHER OWLS, GOATSUCKERS** — Birders are making greater efforts to locate Barn Owls and are often succeeding. At Sherman, Tex., Charles Brown wrote a story for the newspaper asking farmers to report any owls in their barns. Two farms where Barn Owls bred successfully in 1974 were located. In Rogers Co., Okla., eight Great Horned Owls were counted Dec. 18 as they perched on power line poles along a three-mile length of four-lane highway. Barred Owls were unusually common at Lincoln. At least six Long-eared Owls wintered in Lyon Co. Others were reported at Amarillo and San Angelo, and a pair were nesting at Muleshoe N.W.R. in late February. There was a major invasion year for

Short-eared Owls in Texas, with reports from ten localities. In Oklahoma they were noted only at Stillwater, and in Kansas in Lyon and Osage Cos. A Poor-will was caught as it fluttered on the ground at a traffic circle in Ft. Worth Mar. 6 (GS, LP). A Com. Nighthawk at Wichita Mts. N.W.R., Okla., Mar. 26 was early.

**HUMMINGBIRDS** — A ♂ Black-chinned Hummingbird was seen in Amarillo Jan. 5. There were snow drifts all around the honeysuckle vine where he was trying to find nourishment (RR, VD). A Rufous Hummingbird which wintered in Kerrville survived a 9°F temperature, a severe ice storm and one day of light snowfall. A Rufous hummer remained at a feeder in Bartlesville, Okla., Oct. 25 - Jan. 26. Electric resistance wire wrapped around the feeder kept the mixture from freezing. Two Rufous hummers wintered in Midland, where heat lamps were left on all night to keep the syrup ready for hummers when they came each morning. The Rufous Hummingbird banded in Walker Co. in November was still present at the end of the period. At El Paso a group of six wintering hummingbirds included a male Rufous, an Anna's and a Broad-tailed. A **Costa's Hummingbird** was discovered in the Franklin Mts. north of El Paso Mar. 8 and was still there Mar. 23 (KEZ, m.ob.).

**WOODPECKERS** — A **Pileated Woodpecker** visited a feeder in Omaha Feb. 8 & 10. There are no positive records of this species in Nebraska since 1895. Pileated Woodpeckers continue to reside along the Neosho R., Lyon Co. Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered at Lincoln. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were west of their usual range at Dodge City, Lubbock and Robert Lee, Tex. Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, which are rarely seen west of the Pecos R. in Texas, were sighted near Redford, Presidio Co., Feb. 12 (PE *et al.*) and just north of the entrance to Big Bend N.P., Brewster Co., Feb. 13 (FW). A **Lewis' Woodpecker** was discovered Feb. 11 in the Davis Mts., 38 mi. n.w. of Ft. Davis and was still present at the end of the period (PE m.ob.). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported at Omaha frequently. A **Ladder-backed Woodpecker** was seen at Oklahoma City Jan. 30 & Mar. 16 (JR). This species is increasing in n.c. Texas. A Red-cockaded Woodpecker was located 13 mi. north of Cleveland, San Jacinto Co., Tex., Mar. 28 (CCW).

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — Both E. & W. Kingbirds arrived at Ft. Worth on the early date of Mar. 17. A Wied's Crested Flycatcher was present in Big Bend N.P., Feb. 13. A Say's Phoebe was recorded near Matador, Tex., Jan. 26 (MD *et al.*) and one was collected in Lubbock Co., Mar. 10 (DD). Good details were submitted of an observation of a Coues' Flycatcher in Big Bend N.P., Jan. 6 (WGR). An Olive-sided Flycatcher at Dallas Mar. 8 was extremely early (PJ, AM). A Vermilion Flycatcher remained at Lubbock Dec. 2 - Jan. 1, and one was sighted in Reagan Co., Tex., Jan. 22. Most Texas contributors listed one or more very early swallows. Earliest records were Tree, Walker Co., Feb. 15; Bank, Walker Co., Feb. 7, Rough-winged, Dallas, Mar. 8; Cliff, Bracketville, Feb. 20; Barn, Tarrant Co., Mar. 2. Four pairs of Rough-

winged Swallows were seen in burrows in Washington Co., Tex., Mar. 25 (JCN, ALB).

**MAGPIES THROUGH CREEPERS** — A Black-billed Magpie was seen near Happy in the Texas Panhandle Jan. 5 (RB). Verdins were located in Clay, Wichita, Archer and Hardeman Cos. in n. Texas. It is unknown whether Verdins have actually spread northward in recent years or whether the vastly increased number of bird watchers has merely revealed a previously unknown population. Although Red-breasted Nuthatches were observed throughout, the only large concentration comprised 40 birds in Richards Park, Brady, Tex. (KHo). It was a banner winter for Brown Creepers with highest counts in ten years or more at several localities.

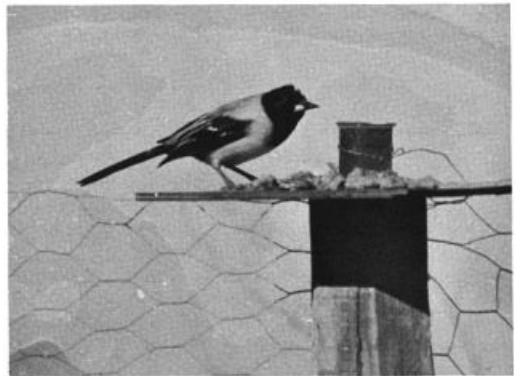
**WRENS, MIMICS** — House Wrens wintered farther north than usual. Winter Wrens appeared in record numbers in Kansas and were present as far south as Kerville. Carolina Wrens were present at Great Salt Plains N.W.R., Jan. 25 and Wichita Co., Tex., Jan. 10. Long-billed Marsh Wrens again wintered at Oklahoma City and Arnett, Okla. A Rock Wren at Dodge City Dec. 7 was noteworthy. A few Gray Catbirds lingered in Texas long enough to be counted during the CBC. **Curve-billed Thrashers** were observed in Jackson Co., Okla., Dec. 14, 15 & Jan. 25 (JWA). Sage Thrashers were east of their usual range in Comanche Co., Hood Co., Tex. (GS), Kerr Co., Tex. (JEG *et al.*) and Wichita Co., Tex. (KZ).

**THRUSHES THROUGH SHRIKES** — All through the Edwards Plateau area of Texas, Am. Robins were amazingly abundant. The **Varied Thrush** seen at Goodland, Kans., Dec. 23 was the second state record. Hermit Thrushes wintered as far north as Lincoln, Neb. and Payne Co., Okla. Eastern Bluebirds were in Presidio Co., Jan. 1-23 and in Lubbock, Jan. 3. This species was common in Waco, Tex., Dec. 14 - Feb. 28. This was a Mountain Bluebird year throughout the w. half of Texas. They were abundant not only in "cedar brakes" but also on the barren creosote bush flats of the Trans-Pecos. Others were noted at L. Lexington, Neb. and Hitchcock, Okla., Nov. 25 - Jan. 1 (MFC). As many as 30 Townsend's Solitaires could be found in a single day at Amarillo. A Solitaire was observed in Lyon Co., Kans., Mar. 5-12. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Lubbock Jan. 24 was noteworthy. Golden-crowned Kinglets were common throughout. Ruby-crowned Kinglets wintered as far north as Omaha. Sprague's Pipits were seen at Dallas Jan. 25 (HN, JHu) and one was collected in Walker Co., Mar. 16. The only Bohemian Waxwings reported were in Lyon Co., Mar. 4 (JaM) and Omaha, Feb. 18. A Phainopepla was sighted in Midland Feb. 16 (GP). The only N. Shrike in the Region was in Wichita Falls Nov. 28 - Mar. 16 (GH, m.ob.). Many contributors reported the highest number of shrikes ever counted during the CBC.

**VIREOS, WARBLERS** — White-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos returned early to Walker Co., Dallas & Ft. Worth. A Yellow-throated Vireo in Presidio Co., Feb. 12 was unusual at that date. Hutton's and Solitary Vireos were in the Chisos Mts., Big Bend N.P., Feb. 14

(FW). An Olive Warbler was sighted in the Chisos Mts., Dec. 31 (BM). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was observed near the Rio Grande, Big Bend N.P., Feb. 12 (JoM). Four Black-throated Gray Warblers were seen in the Chisos Mts., Jan. 4 (TW). Golden-cheeked Warblers were common in Meridian S.P., Tex., by Mar. 23 (m.ob.). Yellow-throated Warblers in Walker Co., Mar. 16 and Dallas Mar. 8 (C & SS) were unusually early, Palm Warblers were present in good numbers in Walker Co., Jan. 25 - Mar. 1. **Pine Warblers** provided first records in Grayson Co., Jan. 11 (CB, SW), Lubbock, Jan. 11 (PD, m.ob.) and Wichita Co., Jan. 27 (VH) and were seen in Waco Jan. 21-24 (LD). Why this species wandered so far from the piney woods of e. Texas in mid-winter is indeed puzzling. A Louisiana Waterthrush at Dallas Mar. 30 was noteworthy for both the date and the locality (BV).

**ICTERIDS** — Large numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were present in Bandera Co., Tex., Jan. 16. The Black-headed Oriole which arrived in Midland in November came to a feeder daily until Mar. 6 (ME, m.ob.). A photograph of this wanderer has been deposited in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection at Texas A&M University. Single N. Orioles were sighted at Bellevue, Neb., Dec. 1 and Hagerman N.W.R., Dec. 21-22 (KWH). Two were seen in Brazos Co., one of them remaining Dec. 21 - Jan. 18. Rusty Blackbirds were reported in Crosby Co. in late February and early March (RE). Great-tailed Grackles wintered in unusual numbers at Great Bend and Wichita, Kans.



*Black-headed Oriole, Midland, Tex., November - Mar. 6. Photo / Wood Erskine.*

**FRINGILLIDS** — Unusually large flocks of Cardinals came to feeding stations in many areas. At Omaha feeders flocks 20-30 were common during February. Black-headed Grosbeaks were observed at feeders in Walker Co., Dec. 26-28 and LaVaca Co., Tex., Jan. 7 - Feb. 2 (JHo). A Varied Bunting in the Chisos Mts., Feb. 12 provided one of the few winter records of the species in Big Bend N.P. (FW). A Dickcissel visited a feeder in McClain Co., Okla., Jan. 10 - Feb. 18. Only a few Purple Finches were reported in Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, but the species was abundant in Texas. Cassin's Finches were noted at Hueco Tanks S.P., El Paso Co., Feb. 12, Midland, Jan. 7, San Angelo, Dec. 30, Presidio Co., Jan. 4. A House Finch visited a feeder in

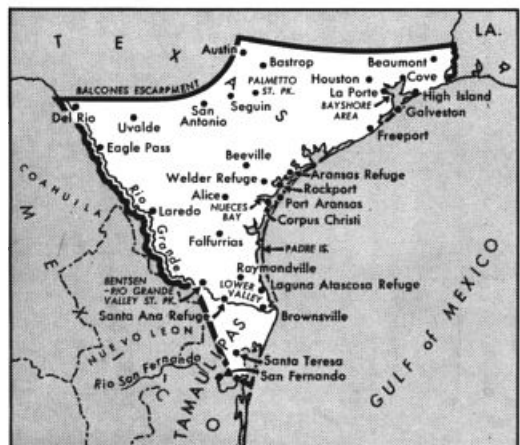
Waco Feb. 10 (BA). There were virtually no reports of Pine Siskins. A few contributors mentioned a few siskins early in the season, but the birds soon departed. In Johnson Co., Kans., Am. Goldfinches were very abundant. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was photographed in Leawood, Kans. It was first seen Jan. 1 but did not appear again until Mar. 30-31 (SL, m.ob.). Rufous-sided Towhees were again scarce throughout the Region. Two Brown Towhees were present in Morton Co., Kans., Jan. 4 and one was photographed (EMCh). Le Conte's Sparrows in Payne Co., Okla., Dec. 29 were the first at that locality in several years. This species was present in Rogers Co., Okla. in good numbers in late March. A Seaside Sparrow which was discovered during the Waco CBC was still present Mar. 14 (KBB). Rufous-crowned Sparrows were found in Morton Co., Jan. 4. Cassin's Sparrows were singing in Val Verde Co., Tex., Feb. 18 (E & KM), Lubbock Mar. 2 and Huaco Tanks Feb. 13 & 20. A Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon form) remained in Johnson Co., Kans. throughout the period. Gray-headed Juncos were recorded in Lubbock Dec. 30 and in mid-March. Tree Sparrows were scarce in Nebraska and Kansas but were abundant in Payne Co., Okla. and n.c. Texas. They were also sighted west to Muleshoe N.W.R. and south to Waco. Harris' Sparrows were abundant in Kansas during the CBC but were scarce in Oklahoma and Texas until later in the winter. They were observed at many localities in the w. third of the Region where they are only sporadic winter visitors. Fox Sparrows were numerous throughout. A Swamp Sparrow in Lyon Co., Kans. was noteworthy, and this was a "Swamp Sparrow year" in n.c. Texas, where it is irregular in occurrence. McCown's Longspurs were present in Grayson, Wichita, Crosby and Bailey Cos., Tex. Lapland Longspurs were abundant in Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, but the only report from Texas was at Hagerman N.W.R., Jan. 11. Smith's Longspurs were abundant in Payne, Tulsa, Washington and Oklahoma Cos., Okla., in February. Snow Buntings were reported only at Lincoln and Omaha.

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## SOUTH TEXAS REGION / Fred S. Webster, Jr.

Most areas became progressively dry as the season wore on. Fall and December rains had filled reservoirs, but water levels declined during an exceptionally dry spell from mid-February through March. As usual, the upper coast was in best shape moisture-wise, and marshes remained wet. Upland habitat suffered for lack of rain, especially in the Rio Grande Delta. Freezing periods were of short duration as cold fronts moved through rapidly, interspersed with brief periods of above-normal temperatures. A hard freeze on January 13 killed tender vegetation all the way to the southern tip of Texas.



**LOONS, GREBES** — Common Loon counts were below normal in coastal waters. An **Arctic Loon** was identified at the Texas City Dike, Jan. 11 & 23 (MA *et al.*), and **Red-throated Loons** were seen there Jan. 23 (2) and Feb. 1 (SGW *et al.*). Least Grebes wintered at

Santa Ana N.W.R. in record numbers; as many as 60 were seen on Cattail L., but only five remained at the end of March (WAS). These grebes were common on ponds in w. Hidalgo Co. (GD). Four **Western Grebes**, reported at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R. in the fall report, were seen there as late as Jan. 7 (TG). On the upper coast, one was found at the Texas City Dike, Dec. 15 (MJ, TPJ & EM), and two wintered in the Houston area (AKM *et al.*).

**SHEARWATERS THROUGH STORKS** — A pelagic trip out of Port Aransas, conducted by Texas Ornithological Society, produced an **Audubon's Shearwater** 20 mi. at sea (*vide* VLE). End-of-pier birders found **Gannets** diving and feeding offshore from High I., one on Dec. 18 (MA, TBF, BK & ER), and nine on Jan. 19 (JBS & NMS). One was seen off the Freeport Jetty Jan. 30 (TBF, BK & ER). Peak counts of Double-crested Cormorants were 3500 at Texas City Dike, Jan. 14 (TBF, BK & ER) and 2000+ at Cove, Chambers Co., Jan. 1 (AKM). At Houston, a **Wood Stork**, rare in winter, was found at a small pond in a cow pasture Jan. 26 (RH & SHo); presumably the same bird was seen in the area as late as Mar. 22.

**WATERFOWL** — Four Whistling Swans were found at Holiday Beach, Rockport area, Mar. 14 (BR), and were seen as late as Mar. 28 (DNW). Peak White-fronted Goose concentrations included 1000 in w. Harris Co., Dec. 7 (TBF *et al.*), and 600+ at a point 10 miles s. of Laredo, Jan. 2 (BY & CY). About 50,000 Snow Geese were found in w. Harris Co., Dec. 12 (TBF *et al.*); this was by far the highest count reported. Numbers apparently dropped sharply thereafter. Texas birders have discovered that large flocks of Snow Geese should be sifted carefully for Ross' Goose. Harris County sifters made a high count of 13 Ross' Geese Nov. 27 (MA, TBF & ER). Wintering groups of Black-bellied Tree Ducks included up to 200 in the Corpus Christi area (KM). Unusually large numbers wintered in the Rio Grande Delta; at least 225 occupied a lake near Santa Ana Ref. (WAS), and 120 could be found at La Joya, w. Hidalgo Co. (GD). Pintails and Green-winged Teal were the most common ducks in w. Harris Co. in December. Nine pairs of Cinnamon Teal at La Joya Feb. 25 (GD) are noteworthy. At least 3500 N. Shovelers wintered on a sewage pond at McAllen, Hidalgo Co. (WAS). Two Wood Ducks were seen at Santa Ana Ref., Jan. 4-5 (WAS). Lesser Scaup were reported in unusually small numbers from the upper and central coasts. An **Oldsquaw** livened the fare at Corpus Christi, Jan. 20 - Feb. 10 (KM). Any scoter species is still newsworthy in S. Texas; to have three species in one winter is an accomplishment which a few Houston birders can now claim. A **White-winged Scoter** was seen off the beach at High I., Dec. 18 (MA, TBF, BK & ER); a **Surf Scoter** at Texas City Dike Dec. 10 (TBF, ER & BK), and two **Black Scoters** off High I., Dec. 18 (MA, TBF, BK & ER). The latter species is most unusual. Surf searchers may see more scoters, but sewage pond scanners fare well in late fall influxes; for example, a Surf Scoter was seen at an Austin pond, Dec. 7 (EAK), and six there on Dec. 10 (AS). A ♀ **Masked Duck** was spotted with a ♀ Ruddy Duck at Laguna Atascosa Ref., Jan. 7 (TG). The ducks were "well out in open water,"

which is not where Texas birders look for Masked Ducks, but a photograph clearly shows two facial stripes on one bird. A bird of this species was reported on the Rio Grande below Falcon Dam, Feb. 24 (AH & LM).

**VULTURES, HAWKS, EAGLES** — Arvin reported Turkey Vultures abundant and increasing as a winter resident in the Rio Grande Delta, primarily due to the recently revived sugar cane industry. They "swarm to recently cut-over cane fields to feed on rodents killed by the preharvest burnings." Red-tailed Hawks were conspicuously common in most areas. This was particularly true in the Addicks flood control area just w. of Houston on Jan. 13, following passage of a strong cold front. Within one hour's time 180+ raptors were counted, including 138 Red-taileds (TG). A pair of **Zone-tailed Hawks** wintered along the Rio Grande just north of Roma, Starr Co., and associated with a vulture roost (JCA). On eight coastal trips, from Sabine Pass to Brownsville, Galluci made 39 mid-winter sightings of White-tailed Hawks. Reports of Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks have become too numerous to report in detail, and it is safe to say that many sightings by touring birders are not reported. These birds were well distributed throughout the Region, even into the Rio Grande Delta, with the Ferruginous running about 30 per cent ahead of the Rough-legged. Three Gray Hawks were believed to have wintered at Santa Ana Ref., this is a normal count (WAS). A **Black Hawk** was spotted s. of Roma, at the now-famous Brown Jay nesting site, Jan. 14 (GC, AG & KK). A Golden Eagle was seen in w. Harris Co. on several occasions; two birds on Jan. 13 (TG). As many as 12 Bald Eagles could be seen in a single day in this area (*vide* TBF).

**CRANES, RAILS, JACANAS** — Forty-nine Whooping Cranes, including two young, wintered on Aransas N.W.R., Matagorda I., and San Jose I. (EFJ). Notable concentrations of Sandhill Cranes, about 1000 birds each, were found 10 miles s. of Laredo, Jan. 2 (BY & CY), and in Brazoria Co., Feb. 27 (TPJ). Two Virginia Rails were found in w. Hidalgo Co., Dec. 13 (GD). The Jacana population persists at Manor L., Brazoria Co.; one adult and six immatures were seen Jan. 18 (HH). A single bird was present at Welder Wildlife Refuge from Dec. 21 through March (GWB *et al.*)

**SHOREBIRDS** — Mountain Plovers were located on the north shore of Nueces Bay, Jan. 4 (TS *et al.*). A bird identified as a Bristle-thighed Curlew was studied at Laguna Atascosa Ref., Jan. 13 (GC, AG & KK), and is being reported here as a *hypothetical*, on the strength of description submitted. This Regional Editor passes along such observations as this as circumstances warrant, to be ingested at the discretion of the reader, and with thanks to observers who go to the trouble to submit sufficient authenticating details as to justify serious consideration. The sighting of a Bristle-thighed Curlew is (or would be) a serious violation of the law of probability, and the editor hopes that it will not tempt some over-zealous birder to invoke the law of expectation. Red Knots could be found in fair numbers throughout the season, particularly in the Galveston and Corpus Christi areas. American Avocets were unusually abun-

dant in the Corpus Christi area, and about 50 Black-necked Stilts, scarce in winter this far north, wintered (KM).

**JAEGERS, GULLS** — Participants on the T.O.S. pelagic trip out of Port Aransas, Mar. 15, at least those who were able to hold their heads up, counted 25 jaegers, including four Pomarine and one Parasitic identified beyond a reasonable doubt. A **Glaucous Gull** was seen on the Galveston beach, Mar. 17 (HN & NCO). The following day a second-year immature (same bird?) was seen on Bolivar Flats, several miles up-coast, standing next to a **Great Black-backed Gull** (MA, TBF, ER)! The latter bird is believed to be one which has been observed here occasionally for more than a year; its plumage is in transition between second and third year (TBF). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was seen at the Galveston jetty, Dec. 8 (JBS & NMS), and resting in a ploughed field on Bolivar Peninsula with Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, Mar. 26 (ED & TBF). Feltner thinks this is the individual which first appeared at Texas City Dike in 1968; its plumage is now fully adult. What appeared to be a Little Gull was observed flying over the beach at Laguna Atascosa Ref., Feb. 28 (AH & LM). There is one specimen record of this casual straggler for Texas, and one observation authenticated by photographs. An immature Black-legged Kittiwake wintered at Falcon L., and one was seen at the Freeport jetty Dec. 23 (TBF & ER).

**OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — A Burrowing Owl was observed for several weeks in the Key Allegro I. development at Rockport (CJ); one wintered



*Long-eared Owl, Houston, Tex., Dec. 27, 1974. Photo / Paul Jones.*

in a Corpus Christi suburb (*vide* KM). This species was observed on Anahuac N.W.R., Dec. 17 (TBF & WR). A **Long-eared Owl** was photographed in s.w. Houston, Dec. 27 (MH, TPJ *et al.*). One was photographed at High I., Apr. 2 (DTK *et al.*). Rufous Hummingbirds were well distributed and more common than usual, especially in the Houston and Corpus Christi areas where several feeding stations sustained birds until departure dates in February or March. Three individuals fed on shrimp plant, etc., at Falfurrias from October until a hard freeze on Jan. 13; two immatures left on Jan. 15, but an adult stayed until Jan. 22, subsisting on a few remaining blossoms (AWO). A **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** wintered at a feeder in Baytown (TBF *et al.*); one visited Beeville, Mar. 20-23 (AHG). A **Ringed Kingfisher**, reported at a locality in Medina Co. for the fall season, continued there (RTH & SHA). One wintered on a large lake e. of Santa Ana Ref. (WAS) and a pair was present at La Joya (GD). A Common Flicker was present at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S. P. in late January (*vide* GD), an unusual record for the Rio Grande Delta.

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH JAYS** — A Tropical Kingbird was observed at Corpus Christi Feb. 2 (KM), and two were seen at Laredo Jan. 6 (BY & CY); both sightings are in the casual category. A **Western Kingbird** was seen at Texas City Jan. 19 (PaN & PhN). Two **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** were seen at Pelican I. (Galveston?), Jan. 18 (RK). Eastern Phoeebes were in below-normal numbers at Falfurrias and Rockport. A Black Phoebe was seen downstream from Medina L., Jan. 28 (RD, SHA & RTH). Three Barn Swallows at Raymondville, Dec. 31 (CWE) were very unusual for the date. Eight Mexican Crows were seen in a field with White-necked Ravens, south of McAllen, Feb. 14, and this species was seen also in the Mission area Feb. 25 (GD). **Brown Jays** have apparently returned to the historical site near Roma, Starr Co. Five were reported Feb. 24 (AH, GBH, HM & LM), and some have been seen subsequently. Green Jays are resident and increasing at Falfurrias (AWO).

**CHICKADEES THROUGH WRENS** — A Carolina Chickadee made a rare appearance at Beeville, Dec. 15 (AHG). Red-breasted Nuthatches were more common than usual on the upper coast after a good fall migration. Five were seen in San Antonio, where even one is noteworthy, Mar. 1 (JBr & JAM). Southeast of San Antonio, near Poth, Wilson Co., one was present Feb. 26 (WS). One was seen at Brackettville, Kinney Co., Jan. 29 (PY). A Brown Creeper wintered at Santa Ana Ref. (WAS). Arvin, who has birded the Rio Grande Delta for twenty years, found Winter Wrens more common this season than ever before; as many as five per day could be found near Falcon Dam, and three per day at Santa Ana Ref.

**CATBIRDS THROUGH BLUEBIRDS** — Gray Catbirds wintered in good numbers in the Rockport area (CJ), and one was observed at San Antonio during the latter part of the season (LM). A Sage Thrasher, a species seldom seen in Austin, was found D.O.R., Dec. 22 (RWT). At Falfurrias, four or five could be seen daily at one site, with a high of 23 there on Feb. 15 (JBo, *vide* AWO). American Robins were unusually abundant

south of a line from about San Antonio to Corpus Christi. Observers reported most in years at Alice, Corpus Christi, and on into the Rio Grande Delta. A **Clay-colored Robin** was seen throughout the winter at Santa Ana Ref., and two were present on Mar. 30 (WAS). It was a good year for the Hermit Thrush on the central coast. This species was "about twice as common as in the average winter" in the Rio Grande Delta (JCA). Eastern Bluebirds were below normal on the central coast.

**KINGLETS, PIPITS, WAXWINGS** — Golden-crowned Kinglets were well above normal in many areas throughout the Region, as far s. as Santa Ana Ref. Numbers had dropped considerably by February. Water Pipits were very common in the Mission area (GD). Cedar Waxwings were reported abundant at Corpus Christi and Mission but no more than average elsewhere.

**WARBLERS** — A **Brewster's Warbler** hybrid was carefully observed in Victoria, Jan. 9 (MW). This bird was "typical" except that the lower wing bar was white, the upper yellow. Single **Tropical Parula Warblers** were reported at La Joya, Dec. 23, and Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., Feb. 21 (GD). Myrtle Warblers were more abundant than in "at least 10 years" at Corpus Christi (KM), and noticeably above normal at Rockport (DNW) and Mission (GD). For the second consecutive winter, Black-throated Gray Warblers were relatively common in deep S. Texas, and Pine Warblers reached an eight-year high (JCA). As many as seven of the latter species could be seen on a single day at Santa Ana Ref. A suspected Gray-crowned Yellowthroat (Ground-Chat) was described from the San Ygnacio area of Zapata Co., Jan. 27 (BY & CY).

**FRINGILLIDS** — Pyrrhuloxias wintered in greater numbers than usual at Santa Ana Ref. (WAS). What appeared to be a male **Crimson-collared Grosbeak** was observed for a period of five minutes as it fed on weed stalks on an island in Walker L., La Joya, Dec. 25 (GD & JD). This unexpected species was photographed and recorded at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P. in July, as previously reported, for a first U.S. record. A copy of the taped song recording is deposited at the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University. Single Black-headed Grosbeaks wintered at Austin (BR), Rockport area (DNW), and McAllen (JCA). Purple Finches were in below normal numbers at Conroe, Montgomery Co. (SES), and on the upper coast. Several were reported at Welder Ref., which is unusual, and Dr. O'Neil, at Falfurrias, recorded his first for Brooks Co. Birders needing **White-collared Seedeaters** for their life list would have done well to visit San Ygnacio in January! Six of these now hard-to-find little finches were present there Jan. 3, and 12, including a beautiful adult male, Jan. 27 (BY & CY). Pine Siskins were all but absent from the entire Region. An Olive Sparrow was found at Bayside, Refugio Co., Feb. 20 (DNW). The unusual spectacle of eight Green-tailed Towhees on rocks by the river at Pedernales Falls S. P., Apr. 2 (WS), prompted the editor to quiz the observer on this strange behavior by this shy thicket-dweller. Austin had a good population of Le Conte's Sparrows Lark Buntings, usually com-

mon at Alice, were very scarce (ROA). They were absent from a locality n.w. of Mission where they are normally to be found in winter, possibly due to destruction of brushy habitat (GD). An individual was seen in the Baytown area, by many observers, during the latter half of January. Dark-eyed Juncos were above normal at San Antonio; Chipping Sparrows below at Austin, Rockport and Falfurrias; Field Sparrows below at Rockport and Falfurrias, Harris' Sparrows above at Austin and San Antonio, and White-crowned Sparrows "very low" at Falfurrias. Arvin reported the "best winter in South Texas in my experience" for White-throated Sparrows. Shifflett commented on "the largest influx" into the Rio Grande Delta in many years. This species was reported above normal at Austin, San Antonio and Welder Ref. Fox Sparrows were far above average in Austin and San Antonio. Lincoln Sparrow numbers were good in northcentral sections.

**CORRIGENDA** — Delete Masked Ducks at Manor L., Jan. 1 (*Am. Birds* 28:661). The Bones had 26 Purple Martin nests in their two martin houses, not 26 Purple Martins (*Am. Birds* 28:924). The Crimson-collared Grosbeak at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P. was last seen on July 1 by John C. Arvin (*Am. Birds* 28 925)

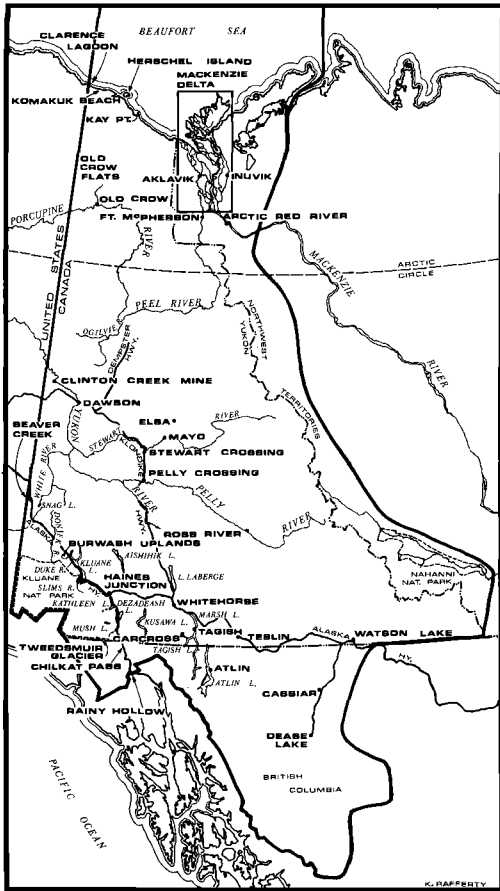
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Breeding Bird Census manuscripts are due September 10. They should be addressed to editor Willet T. Van Velzen, 4784 Quail St., N.E., Brooks, Ore. 97305. Manuscripts arriving after this date will not be accepted for publication. This year, regrettably, because of sharply increased costs, *American Birds* will require a \$25 publication fee for all Breeding Bird Censuses which exceed a single column (not counting photographs) of type. A column is 64 lines of 51 characters.



## NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION / Wayne Neily

The mean temperatures this winter were slightly less so than usual, especially in December, when the autumn warm spell continued, producing one of the warmest finishes to a year for several decades (mean +15°F. at Whitehorse). The only really cold spell was from January 6-10, when all stations except the British Columbia ones and Keno Hill went to -50°F. or lower, with Mayo hitting -71°. Most of the stragglers disappeared at this time, and the winter was normal from then on, except that snowfall was greater than usual in many areas.



Thirty-four species were reported, eight more than last winter, of which 25 were probably permanent residents, four early migrants, two (ducks) stragglers, and three (Bald Eagle, Downy Woodpecker and Snow Bunting) both late and early.

Unless otherwise noted, observers were: at Beaver Creek, Maria Ledergerber; at Teslin, Denny and Patricia Denison; in the Pelly River area, David McCargo, John Lammers, and Pauline Wilson; at Tagish, Bea and George MacLeod; in the Dawson-Dempster Highway area, Karel Sars; and in the Klouane region, the Regional Editor.

**WATERFOWL** — A very late Mallard was seen flying over the frozen Klouane L. in early December (F & KP), while four ♀ Barrow's Goldeneyes stayed until at least Dec. 2 on the Kathleen R., s. of Haines Junction. Common Goldeneye were the only definitely over-wintering ducks, with one male and two females in the Tagish R. until Mar. 19, when the first new arrivals were noted (DMo). A female of this species was also seen in the Yukon R. at Whitehorse Dec. 14 (WN, KB), and a male there Jan. 25 (WN). There is usually a stretch of open water all winter in the rivers draining deep lakes, and they may winter more widely in these than is known, as the observation of three goldeneye (sp) at the outlet of L. Laberge Mar. 18 (DMo) suggests. An early Com. Merganser was back at Tagish Mar. 19 (DMo).

**HAWKS, FALCONS** — Goshawks were much scarcer than last year, one at Whitehorse Dec. 14 (DMo) being the only report. An early Rough-legged Hawk was seen near the White R. bridge Mar. 23 (DMc, JL, PW), while a Golden Eagle returned to the Klouane L. area Mar. 20 (MH), and one to the Pelly R. mouth by Mar. 31. An ad. Bald Eagle was seen in the Klouane area as late as Jan. 4 (LT), and one returned to the Whitehorse area by Mar. 22 (WN). The Gyrfalcon's status as a rare resident here was confirmed by sightings along the Dempster Hwy. Feb. 19, and in n.w. British Columbia in early March (DMo).

**GROUSE** — Reports of nearly all members of this family were up this winter, suggesting the beginning of a recovery from low points of their cycles. The exception is the Blue Grouse, which eluded all observers, and has yet to be reported at all from the Yukon. Spruce Grouse appeared at several points along the Yukon part of the Haines Hwy. Feb. 27 (LFr, CH), and northwest of Whitehorse in early March (EN). Ruffed Grouse were reported throughout the period from the Pelly R. - Beaver Creek latitude south, but with most sightings in late February and March. Willow and White-tailed Ptarmigan appeared to be at about the same level as last year, and were still reported only from the Klouane region, the only Rock Ptarmigan, however, were from the Dempster Hwy. in February. The Sharp-tailed Grouse was confirmed as a wintering species by sightings in February and March near the Alaska border north of Beaver Creek (WS).

**DOVES, OWLS** — Rock Doves were confirmed as wintering in Whitehorse with observations in mid-January and early March of 4-6 birds (WN). Owls remained scarce except the Great Horned, which was reported for every month, from Beaver Creek south and east, establishing its status as a winter resident.

**WOODPECKERS** — Hairy Woodpeckers wintered as far north as the Pelly R., at least into January, and definitely all the season at Tagish, but Downy Woodpeckers were not seen after one in early December at Haines Junction (PB), until Mar. 30, when one reappeared just west of Whitehorse (SH). Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers, although scarcer than last winter in the Klouane area, were reported from Beaver Creek to Whitehorse (three on Mar. 12, DB), and near

the Yukon - British Columbia boundary south of Carcross (WN) — reports for all months but February.

**CORVIDS, TITMICE** — Gray Jays were common throughout the sub-arctic parts of the Region all winter, while Black-billed Magpies were confirmed as wintering with many reports for all months from the Alaska Hwy. south, including two all winter at Beaver Creek; one was seen as far north as the Pelly R. in early December. Common Ravens lived up to their names from the Dempster Hwy. south to the Chilkat Pass (WN), the highest numbers being, predictably, in the urban areas.

Black-capped Chickadees wintered in the southern part of the Region, at least at Teslin, Tagish, and Haines Junction, but might be considered a sign of spring farther north, as one appeared at Beaver Creek Mar. 16, and they "became more noticeable than the Boreals" (DMc) at the Pelly R. mouth Mar. 15-20. Reports from across the southern half of the Region established the Boreal Chickadee's status here as a common winter resident.

**DIPPER, SHRIKE** — Dippers seemed scarce this winter, with reports from only the Kluane (JC, WN) and Dempster Hwy. (!) areas. A Northern Shrike, not previously known to winter here, was observed six times from December through March at Teslin, and one straggled to Dec. 16 at Kluane (LFr, LFu, AW, JM).

**FRINGILLIDS** — Pine Grosbeaks wintered in the south of the Region in fair numbers, were at Beaver Creek as late as Jan. 14, and were back (?) to Pelly R. by Mar. 24. A Hoary Redpoll appeared at Whitehorse Mar. 23, followed by others from east of Haines Junction to Tagish before the end of the month, while the commoner Com. Redpolls stayed until Dec. 29 (three at Beaver Creek) and re-appeared Feb. 9 (one, east of Whitehorse, SH) and Feb. 10 (five at feeder, Whitehorse, DMO). Reports increased to the end of the month, when they had reached the Pelly R. area. A Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco stayed at Beaver Creek until Dec. 2, one at Kluane L. until the January cold snap, and three survived the winter at Tagish, adding a new species to the Region's list of winter residents. Two forerunners of the Lapland Longspur flocks appeared at Haines Junction Mar. 24 (LFr), just after the early waves of Snow Buntings hit the area. Two of the latter on the Dempster Hwy. Feb. 19 suggests overwintering in this species, but otherwise there were no records from Dec. 17 to Mar. 17, when the first one appeared at Dezadeash L. (LFr). The first main wave hit Mar. 21-22 along the Alaska Hwy. (ML, DMc, JL, PW, LFr), 50 were seen at Atlin Mar. 25 (HM), and they were abundant by the end of the month at most stations.

**OBSERVERS** — Diane Beisser, Karen Byrne, Paul Birckel, Jack Christiansen, Denny and Patricia Denison, Lloyd Freese, Lilo Fuhrer, Charles Hume, Manfred Hoefs, Sylvia Hackney, John Lammers, Maria Ledergerber, Bea and George MacLeod, Jim McIntyre, David McCargo, David Mossop, Hector Mackenzie, Arnold Nijssen, Erika Nowlan, Wayne Neily, Fred and Kate Postoloski, Karel Sars, William Sinclair, Larry Tremblay, Andy Williams. — **WAYNE P. NEILY, Haines Junction, Yukon, YOB ILO.**

## NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN-INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/ Thomas H. Rogers

Most of the winter in the Region waited until February to appear in earnest. December was generally mild with little snow and January continued warm but in most localities with heavy precipitation, resulting in much snow in higher areas. The real winter set in the



first week of February, particularly in that part of the Region from the Rocky Mountain foothills west. Temperatures in some areas were the lowest in many years and snowfall was high. March was one setback after another for Spring's arrival, with snow and cold persisting in force even in most lowland areas to the end of the winter period.

The outstanding effect of the mild first part of winter was the lingering of a great many species that normally would have moved farther south or into warmer areas. This occurred mainly in the western part of the Region and produced almost incredible records. On the other hand some species seemed scarce, apparently because the mild conditions allowed them to stay dispersed. Other species appeared in record-breaking abundance through the winter. Apparently a special situation was the roosting area in Yakima with its phenomenal numbers of several species. Early, hardy migrants appeared not to be particularly affected by the persistent winter. All in all, it was a remarkable winter for birds.

**LOONS AND GREBES** — Loons and grebes were found in good variety and often unusual numbers in the s. Okanagan of British Columbia in late December. Of the five grebe species of the Region, only the Eared was absent. A few Com. Loon wintered on the Columbia R. from Wenatchee to Pasco, Wash.

**CORMORANTS AND HERONS** — A Double-crested Cormorant lingered in the Nampa, Ida. area

until Dec. 27 and ten had returned to Minidoka N.W.R. by Mar. 4 and built up to 200 by the month's end. McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Wash., had 20-30 on Mar. 22 Two Black-crowned Night Herons hung on in the Nampa area as late as Jan. 28.

**WATERFOWL** — Mute Swans continued to be sighted at Livingston, Mont. Whistling Swans wintered in a few localities. Columbia N.W.R., Othello, Wash. had a peak of 92 in January, down from last winter. The largest number, 20,900, highest since 1945, was at Malheur N.W.R., Burns, Ore., at the end of March. Wintering Trumpeters there averaged 35 birds. A neck-banded Trumpeter at Ennis, Mont. Mar. 8 had a number indicating it had been banded in either Alberta or South Dakota.

Canada Geese peaked at 8000 at Columbia N.W.R. Breeding pairs moved into Malheur N.W.R. early in February and peaked at 1720 the first week of March. Summer L., Lake Co., Ore. had 12 White-fronted Geese Mar. 8 (JJ) and a scattered movement was noted at Malheur in early March. Snow Geese began arriving at Malheur Mar. 1 and increased to 30,000 at the month's end. A few of both white and blue color phases were in the Tri-cities (Pasco-Richland-Kennewick), Wash. area during the winter. A huge flock of snow Geese was at Summer L. Mar. 8.

Southwestern Idaho reported nearly half a million Mallards at the end of December. At Columbia N.W.R. they peaked at over 46,000 in December, down from last year. The mild winter did not concentrate ducks in the Columbia Basin as in past years, yet overall numbers there were believed down (LN). Unusual were a few wintering Gadwall at the north end of Okanagan L., B. C. Pintail made up 86% of the peak number of migrating ducks at Malheur N.W.R. Up to 170 Am. Wigeon were in the Walla Walla area in late December. A ♂ **European Wigeon** was seen in the Tri-cities area Dec. 15 - Mar. 1 (REW) and sightings of single birds were made throughout March in the Spokane-Sprague-Cheney area (JA). The Naches R. northwest of Yakima had 16 Wood Ducks Jan. 25. Canvasback showed up 300 strong the last week of March at Minidoka N.W.R. in s. Idaho and the species was described as the commonest duck during the winter on L. Entiat in Chelan Co., Wash. Summer L. Game Management Area in Oregon had 50 - 100 Mar. 24. Four Greater Scaup were picked out among many of the Lesser in the Pocatello, Ida. area Jan. 4 (MRC). An impressive 72 Barrow's Goldeneye were on S. Thompson R. at Kamloops, B.C. Dec. 29 A few Ruddy Ducks wintered on Okanagan L. at Okanagan Landing and at Penticton, B.C. Livingston, Mont. had a ♀ **Oldsquaw** Mar. 3 (HC). Southwestern Idaho reported a concentration of 280 Com. Mergansers near the end of December and Minidoka N.W.R. had 300 at the end of March.

**VULTURES AND HAWKS** — The earliest Turkey Vulture was one at Toppenish N.W.R. Mar. 9 but two were reported in the Nampa, Ida. area and at Malheur N.W.R. two days later. Goshawks appeared at no less than nine widely scattered locations. Other Accipiters, particularly the Sharp-shinned, seemed rather scarce in comparison. An early Swainson's Hawk was at Sunnyside Game Refuge near Mabton, Wash. Mar. 6 (JW,

JS & DR). Rough-legged Hawks showed in very good numbers in the Region west of the Rocky Mts. Ferruginous Hawks were returning as early as Feb. 28, when one was at Malheur N.W.R. (LDN). They were along Salmon Fork Creek in s. Idaho Mar. 9 (CHT) and along Wenas Creek near Yakima Mar. 11 (YAS). One was seen between Ellensburg and Vantage, Wash. Mar. 5 (JW, JS & DR). Two were watched through a scope Mar. 14 near Hermiston, Ore. (CC). A pair of the birds in the Heppner, Ore. area had a nest with two eggs Mar. 29 (DW). Golden and Bald Eagle numbers appeared at least up to normal. The latter showed an impressive movement along the Snake R. in Idaho between mid-February and early March with a top count of 19 adults and 23 immature birds below American Falls Dam and another 20 above the dam. A roosting area on Coeur d'Alene L., Ida. had a high count of 57 in January. Single Gyrfalcons were seen in s. British Columbia, c. Washington, s. Idaho and w. Montana for a total of five Prairie Falcon sightings looked encouraging although one area in Oregon reported only three compared with seven last winter. Single Peregrine Falcons were seen seven times in the Region. Merlin sightings appeared to be down.

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS** — Sharp-tailed Grouse were seen in only three areas, Kamloops, B.C.; the Bozeman area, and near Omak, Wash. Yakima Firing Range had 30 Sage Grouse Mar. 16 but the species was down in numbers in the Wenatchee area. Two were seen east of Summer L., Lake Co., Ore. (LNo) Chukars were recorded near Osoyoos, B.C. and in the vicinities of Touchet, Wenatchee and Yakima, Wash Turkeys were sighted only in s.w. Idaho east of Arrowrock Dam and at Bozeman Pass east of Bozeman.

**CRANES, RAILS AND COOT** — Highly unusual were four Sandhill Cranes near Lowden, Walla Walla Co., Wash. Feb. 2 and into the second week of March. One of the two immature birds seemed handicapped by an injured leg (LC, *FP et al.*). In other areas the birds were beginning their northward trek in late February and March. Malheur N.W.R. first noted them Feb. 26 and at the end of the spring period there the population totaled 500 with 235 on territory. They were first seen in s.w. Idaho Mar. 2 and near Sprague, Wash. Mar. 23. March 2 was the date of the sightings of a Virginia Rail near Pocatello (MRC), where the species was reported as wintering regularly (CHT). The species was also reported for the Wenatchee area in December and January and at Toppenish N.W.R., Toppenish, Wash. Mar. 22. Large numbers of Am. Coot stayed through the winter at the north end of Okanagan L., the farthest north locality reporting wintering.

**SHOREBIRDS** — Among the usual wintering Killdeer two were particularly notable. One was at that very far north spot, Prince George, B.C. Jan. 3 and another hardy bird, amid nine-foot snowbanks in Crater Lake N. P. took advantage of tracks of a truck. Greater Yellowlegs, frequenting a spring on Malheur N.W.R. in January, were suspected of wintering. Twelve of the Lesser were reported Jan. 18 and one Feb. 6 near Lowden, Wash. (NFM). The mild winter induced up to 14 Least Sandpipers to stay at the mouth of the Yakima R

Dec. 1 through at least Mar. 16 (REW). At the same spot up to 50 Dunlin remained Dec. 1 through at least Mar. 8 and two Long-billed Dowitchers lingered until Dec. 28 (REW). Two appeared at Malheur N.W.R. Mar. 22. Springfield, Ida. had Long-billed Dowitchers from Dec. 16 on, with eight Jan. 20. On the latter date a Least Sandpiper was there and the day before produced a Western (MRC).

**GULLS** — An ad. **Glaucous Gull** appeared at the Tri-cities Dec. 22 after a rather severe storm. Presumably the same bird was seen again Jan. 16 and Feb. 17 (REW). A second-winter **Glaucous** was along the Spokane R. near Coeur d'Alene Feb. 15 and 17 (JA) and perhaps the same bird was seen in the area Mar. 28 (SGS, ES & CM). Single **Glaucous-winged Gulls** appeared in the same area Feb. 16 (WH) and Mar. 8 (SGS). The species has become regular in winter in the Tri-cities area, where it was present Dec. 7 through at least Feb. 17 and one was on *L. Chelan*, Wash. Jan. 26 (REW). A single Herring Gull was identified on Am. Falls Res. in s. Idaho Mar. 14 (MRC). Two Ring-billed Gulls wintered in the *Helena* area (SM). At American Falls five Bonaparte's Gulls in winter plumage were sighted Mar. 1 (MRC).

**OWLS** — Barn Owls seem to be becoming less unusual in the Region. Besides Yakima's single on the CBC, they were described as regular in the Tri-cities area and five were reported n.e. of New Plymouth, Ida. Dec. 9 (SRN). Single Snowy Owls appeared at Prince George and Vernon, B.C. and in s.w. Idaho and put up a rather good display in e. Washington most of the winter, the Davenport-Reardan area having at least six different observations of one to three immature and adult birds. One was seen by many observers near Belgrade, Mont. on several dates Jan. 17 - Mar. 21 (PDS *et al.*). Hawk Owls appeared in s. British Columbia, single birds at Penticton Dec. 26 (SRC), at Kelowna Jan. 3 (SS) and near Vernon Jan. 18 to mid-February (GS). Pygmy Owl sightings were sparse. The only Barred Owl reported was one that Jan. 14 sat beneath awnings and peered into a classroom at Fulton Jr. Secondary School in Vernon (RB)! A Great Gray Owl was seen hunting regularly s. of Bozeman in late March (SC, HC, ETH RAH & PDS). The Long-eared Owl was sighted only at Vernon and at Rupert, Ida. Short-eared Owl numbers were decidedly low nearly everywhere.

**NIGHTHAWKS AND HUMMINGBIRDS** — The mild weather certainly made possible this paragraph. One Com. Nighthawk was seen over Pocatello Dec. 11 (JD) and again Dec. 16 (MRC). **Anna's Hummingbird** was at a Yakima feeder Jan. 9 & 11 and an imm. male frequented a feeder at Okanagan Falls, B.C. Nov. 11 - Jan. 13, when it was found dead, apparently from collision, not cold (SRC). This is the first record ever for interior British Columbia (JG). Two more **Anna's** wintered at feeders, one at Wenatchee and one at Cashmere, Wash., both leaving Mar. 8 (WD). One of undetermined species was reported at a Hermiston, Ore. feeder *through the winter* until Mar. 7.

**WOODPECKERS AND FLYCATCHERS** — The Yellow-shafted race of the Com. Flicker is becoming a

"regular rarity" in the vicinity of Spokane. A male there in January was eventually caught by a Great Horned Owl. Besides wintering at Wenatchee, two Lewis' Woodpeckers were along the Spokane R. below Long L. Dam Feb. 15 (FBH). The birds were numerous at Ft. Simcoe, Wash. Mar. 31. A White-headed Woodpecker was found on Moscow Mt. n.e. of Moscow, Ida Mar. 15 (JWW). A ♂ Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was seen in a recent burn along the Spokane R below Spokane Jan. 4.

**FLYCATCHERS, LARKS AND SWALLOWS** — A very early Say's Phoebe was near Yakima Jan 23 (JW & JS). A tremendous flock estimated at 100,000 birds, mostly Horned Larks and rosy finches, was observed near Helena in mid-winter in -20°F. weather after a storm (SM). The first Tree Swallow sighting was at Malheur N.W.R. Feb. 26, two weeks earlier than last year. A Barn Swallow near Pullman, Wash. Mar. 26 furnished the earliest date on record there (REJ) At Kootenai N.W.R. swallows were late, not one having arrived by the end of March.

**CROWS, CHICKADEES, NUTHATCHES AND CREEPERS** — For the first time in Hand's experience, Com. Crows wintered on the outskirts of Missoula Clark's Nutcrackers were in general very scarce. However, a flock was seen Feb. 17 at Crater Lake N.P. as it moved south from higher elevations. More than 40 were counted in about five minutes.

Chickadee and nuthatch sightings were scant in most localities. However, Wenatchee reported Black-capped Chickadees "extremely abundant" and their number on the CBC at the Tri-cities was three times normal. The Plain Titmouse was found along the Snake R. near Rupert and also near Nampa, Ida. Moscow Mt east of Moscow, Ida. had two White-breasted Nuthatches Mar. 22; they are rare there (JWW). Two Pygmy Nuthatches were observed closely at Canyon Ferry Res. near Helena Mar. 8 (LS). What was believed to be the furthest north record for British Columbia for the Brown Creeper was one at Prince George Dec 29 (AB).

**WRENS** — Winter Wrens staged a population explosion. The outburst was noted in the s. Okanagan of British Columbia, at Spokane and nearby Coeur d'Alene L. and in the Tri-cities and Wenatchee areas. One was brought in unharmed by a cat at Walla Walla Oct 22 (NFM). One in song at Bozeman Fish Hatchery Dec 21 - Jan. 1 was the first ever for that area (ETH, RAH, LM, PDS). Up to five Bewick's Wrens were seen all winter along the Yakima R. near Parker. They were present all winter at the Tri-cities and even showed up at Wenatchee. A single Rock Wren was sighted at Vantage, Wash. Feb. 2.

**MIMIC THRUSHES AND THRUSHES** — Single Mockingbirds were found near Ennis, Mont. Dec 14 (GH, SM & DWO) and at a feeder in Bozeman Feb 5 - Mar. 16 (RAH, ETH, PDS *et al.*). A **Brown Thrasher** spent the winter at Malheur N.W.R. (LDN). Richland, Wash. had an early Sage Thrasher Feb. 5 (EM). American Robins wintered in quite high numbers in the more westerly part of the Region. Particularly high numbers were at the Tri-cities Feb. 6. A multi-species roost in

Yakima was estimated to contain over 22,000 Am. Robins Jan. 23 (BL)! Spokane had much higher numbers of Varied Thrushes than any time in the last 20 years and the Yakima roost held an estimated 500 Jan. 23 (BL). At Wenatchee they were the most abundant since 1968 and Pullman sighted them more frequently. They were common in Ellensburg and numbers were above normal in s. British Columbia. A Hermit Thrush at Wenatchee in February was the first ever in winter there (PC). A Mountain Bluebird was identified at close range at Salmon Arm, B.C. Dec. 29 as it fed on berries with Townsend's Solitaires, to furnish that area's first winter record (JG). Numbers of the latter species were distinctly up in that area. A few W. Bluebirds wintered in the Spokane area.

**KINGLETS, WAGTAILS, PIPITS AND WAXWINGS** — Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers burgeoned at three localities in c. Washington. Besides Walla Walla's 300 on the CBC, "abundant" was the word for Wenatchee and "invasion" was applied at the Tri-cities at Christmas. The outstanding find of the winter was a bird believed to be an imm. **White Wagtail**, studied closely through a scope at Umatilla N.W.R., Umatilla Co., Ore. Feb. 9 (CC & MC). Two or three Water Pipits Feb. 2 near Lowden, Wash. were the only ones reported except one in the Nampa area Dec. 27. Bohemian Waxwing numbers were mostly unimpressive. In general they were late, not appearing until December and January. They penetrated as far south as Walla Walla, Pullman and s.w. Idaho. Largest numbers were at Pullman with flocks totaling around 1000 Jan. 11, and at Missoula with at least that many in mid-February.

**SHRIKES AND STARLINGS** — In addition to the widely-occurring N. Shrike, the Loggerhead was reported in December at Yakima (YAS) and twice in Nampa (BS). One was seen Dec. 9 along the little Spokane R. near Spokane. One at Vantage Feb. 15 supposedly was an early migrant. Starlings at the roosting area in Yakima were estimated at 25,000 (BL)! Prince George still had 87 Dec. 29.

**WARBLERS** — The mild weather brought some amazing warbler records. Orange-crowned Warblers remained at the Tri-cities until at least Feb. 7 when they apparently were driven out by the snow. One was seen occasionally in Walla Walla in December and January (NFM). Most surprising was the finding of a **Parula Warbler** along the Yakima R. near Richland. Present Jan. 10 - Feb. 4, it was closely observed for about four hours total (EM, TG, REW *et al.*). A "Myrtle" Warbler was in the same general locality Jan. 11 (REW). Another remarkable record was of a ♀ or imm. **Black-throated Gray Warbler**, Montana's first, studied closely in Bozeman Dec. 15 (ETH & RAH). A few Wilson's Warblers hung on in the Tri-cities area, having been seen in December, January and up to Feb. 12 (EM).

**BLACKBIRDS AND TANAGERS** — Greatest numbers of wintering W. Meadowlarks were reported from the Yakima and Walla Walla areas. East of Spokane at Saltese Marsh about 30 on Jan. 19 and 60 on Feb. 1 were unusual. A few Yellow-headed Blackbirds lingered at McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Wash. until

Dec. 28. Two were seen at Vantage, Wash. Feb. 2 and one was at Toppenish N.W.R. Mar. 22. Fifty-four Brewer's Blackbirds were still at Prince George Dec. 29 (AB). Toppenish also had a Brown-headed Cowbird Mar. 22 and one was sighted near Yakima Apr. 5 (YAS). A W. Tanager was reported at Sunriver, Ore. "lost in a snowstorm" Mar. 21 (BH) — no further details.

**FINCHES** — Evening Grosbeak numbers were generally small in the valleys, with indications that more wintered in the foothills, as in the Cascades near Yakima. Numbers increased greatly at Missoula for a brief period in March. A surge took place in ponderosa pine areas in the Spokane Valley just east of Spokane at that time and Pocatello had its first of the winter then Purple Finches were the commonest of the *Carpodacus* finches in the Wenatchee area. One was identified in Bozeman Feb. 17 (HC). House Finches were estimated at 1000 at the roost in Yakima. Cassin's Finch appeared to have wintered in more than normal numbers, mainly in e. Washington but also at Missoula and Bozeman. A few wintered at Vernon and probably at Helena. Pine Grosbeaks were virtually nonexistent in the lowlands, a few appearing at Prince George; east of Omak, Wash., on the Harrison, Ida. CBC and at Fortine, Mont. Gray-crowned Rosy Finch numbers were generally low except for large numbers in the Helena area, particularly after a mid-winter storm — see comments under Horned Lark. About 25 were found roosting in old Cliff Swallow nests high on cliffs near Little Goose Dam on the Snake R. in e. Washington Dec. 28 (CS). Two **Black Rosy Finches** were seen in a flock of Gray-crowned near Challis, Ida. about Mar. 24 (LRP). Two **Hoary Redpolls** were identified at Prince George Dec. 29 (AB). Common Redpolls scarcely showed up at all. Pine Siskin numbers were high in the n.w. part of the Region. At Fortine, Mont. they were regular and common for the first winter in 54 years' observing (WW). Red Crossbills were common to abundant at Spokane, Coeur d' Alene, Kootenai N.W.R. and Fortine but spotty or absent elsewhere. A female was seen nest-building near Helena when 16 in. of snow were on the ground. The pair was feeding young in the nest in March. White-winged Crossbills were unusually common in heavily forested mountains of s. British Columbia. They sustained numerous casualties when attracted to salted sand on mountain roads. A few appeared in Spokane Co. from the Little Spokane R. north toward Mt. Spokane and the species was seen occasionally at Kootenai N.W.R.

**SPARROWS** — Savannah Sparrows may have wintered at Umatilla N.W.R. for six were there Feb. 9 and two Mar. 15 (CC). The species was recorded at Wenatchee in February (PC). Dark-eyed Juncos continued their surge of abundance in many localities. At Baker, Ore. Ann Ward's comment was "the most we've ever had" and at Wenatchee they were "extremely abundant." The Spokane area had them in "vast numbers" and at Coeur d' Alene numbers were the greatest since the winter of 1969-70 (SGS). At Fortine they were regular and common for the first time in 54 years (WW) and some were at a feeder all winter at Saltese, Mont. where the snow lay many feet deep. The Vernon area reported a shortage, however.

Two **Harris' Sparrows** were seen several times during the winter at Walla Walla (RM) and one or two visited a feeder at Missoula Jan. 17 - Mar. 1 (PW). Umatilla N.W.R. had six Feb. 9 and two Mar. 15 (CC) and Spokane had a lone bird Feb. 4 & 7. A flock of six, some singing, were at Pocatello Mar. 4 (CHT). Belatedly reported was one found dead at Vernon Nov. 9 (JF). A Golden-crowned Sparrow, a rarity in the Okanagan in winter, was at Penticton Dec. 26 (SRC). The species was noted at Wenatchee in February (WD). At the same locality a **White-throated Sparrow** remained for two weeks in January (PC). Fox Sparrows were noted through the winter at Wenatchee (PC), one was seen at Nampa Dec. 27 and another was found along Asotin Cr., Asotin, Wash. Jan. 18 (JWW). An adult and an imm. Lincoln's Sparrow were banded and photographed Feb. 11 at Deer Flat N.W.R., Idaho (LRP) and one stayed at a feeder in Tumalo, Ore. all winter (JJ). Three Song Sparrows at Prince George Dec. 29 were unusual that far north (AB). A few Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were mixed with the huge flock of Horned Larks and rosy finches at Helena in mid-winter (SM). Flocks of 50-100 Lapland Longspurs were regular at La Grande, Ore. through the winter (EB). The only others were five at Omak Mar. 27 (BY & CY). Snow Buntings were scarcely evident in e. Washington until mid-March when flocks of 50-250 were seen moving north in the Reardan-Davenport area. They were reported as fairly common in s. Idaho near Leadore. A few showed up in n. Idaho and at Missoula and La Grande. They were unexpectedly scarce at Fortine, Mont.

**CORRIGENDUM** — In AB 29:91 replace the entire sentence referring to Parasitic Jaeger with "A Parasitic Jaeger was seen at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R. Sept. 28 (JS)."

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## MOUNTAIN WEST /Hugh E. Kingery

Mountain West observers reported a general lack of birds after Christmas with few unusual species lingering to winter, and few northern species pushing south. Southern Nevada proved the exception, with its odd assemblage of northern ducks and coastal gulls. Other highlights came with a wintering Costa's Hummingbird at Salt Lake City and winter occurrences of both Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks in Nevada and Utah.



The mild fall weather continued with generally mild temperatures and limited precipitation through most of the winter. Salt Lake City had its mildest year in many, its lowest temperature only 9° F. Typical spring storms began in late March. Evergreen, Colo., had a similarly open winter, until the blizzard of Mar. 25-27, when the temperature plummeted to -16°.

**LOONS, GREBES** — The widespread Arctic Loon records continued into December in e. Colorado, with two fall birds at Pueblo and Longmont staying a week into December, another one at Denver Dec. 5-8, and one at Las Vegas photographed on the CBC Dec. 14. A few Horned Grebes wintered at Boulder, Colo. Lake Mead is a huge reservoir, largely inaccessible; the birds congregated at the few accessible points could constitute either representative or localized populations. Peak counts there of Eared Grebes — 1500 on Dec. 2, 1000 on Jan. 18 — reached only 5-10 per cent of counts only 4 years ago. Perhaps W. Grebes have replaced them: high counts like 10,000 on Dec. 2 and 8000 Jan. 18 mounted ten times the numbers expected 5 years ago. Three wintered at Boulder, while the migrants arrived in mid-March in the rest of the Region.

**PELICANS, HERONS** — A late White Pelican flew over Pueblo, Colo., Dec. 19 (*fide* VT). The first spring migrants arrived in mid-March, with ten at Pyramid L., Nev. Mar. 15, and 50 at Bear River N.W.R., Utah, in late March. A hardy Great Blue Heron dropped into the Mud Pots near Old Faithful, Yellowstone Nat'l Park, Jan. 10 — mid a landscape covered with 5 feet of snow. Las Vegas had four rare winter records of the Green Heron. A Cattle Egret strayed to Overton W.M.A., for Nevada's fourth record Jan. 2. Reno had only 12 Black-crowned Night Herons winter, a quarter of last year's count. One strayed to Pueblo Jan. 22 (*fide* JCL) and two to Boulder Feb. 12-21 (AM).

**SWANS, GEESE** — Trumpeter Swans wintered: 36 in the Old Faithful area, 25 at Ruby Lakes N.W.R., Nev. (We lack figures for the rest of Yellowstone and Grand Teton Nat'l Park.) At Ruby Lakes, four birds had leg bands; since the leg bands date back to 1957, Papike opines that this artificial population has enjoyed a good survival rate. However, despite many cygnets fledging since 1957, the population has remained stable: where have the young gone?

**DUCKS** — Monte Vista N.W.R., Colo., had 18,500 Mallards in December; the population dropped off and then built up to 10,000 in March, plus 4400 Pintails. Hot springs in the Old Faithful Geyser Basin keep the river open, and attracted about 750 ducks to winter, mostly Mallard, scaup, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Com. Merganser. Bear River's total of 300,000 ducks in spring migration included 130,000 Pintails, 80,000 Canvasbacks, 30,000 Redheads, 20,000 Green-winged Teal, and 10,000 Ruddy Ducks. Desert Lake W.M.A., Utah froze solid, and had no waterfowl Jan. 1-15, but built up to 1700 by Mar. 31, including 1050 Pintails. Stillwater ducks increased from 165 in January to 40,000 Mar. 8-15, mainly Pintails and Green-winged Teal. Redheads seemed the most abundant migrant along the Colorado piedmont. In the myriad of prairie reservoirs, a total count is not possible, but those in w. Adams County held 6165 on Mar. 11 (RA). Twenty Greater Scaups, not often reported from our Region, arrived at Bear R. in late February. Denver had three winter records, and Fort Mohave Dam, at the extreme s. tip of Nevada, had four on Mar. 5.

Goldeneyes invaded s. Nevada. At Davis Dam, 80 mi. s. of Las Vegas, 600-1000 Commons appeared Jan. 23-26, with 100 still present Mar. 5-13. At the same place, from Dec. 5-Feb. 20, Barrow's Goldeneyes built to a peak of 57 on Dec. 17 — the first s. Nevada record (see S.W. Region report for this flock as Arizona's first record). Barrow's spread out along the Colorado R. from Glenwood Springs to Grand Junction in higher than normal numbers, and singles occurred at Bear R. Mar. 3-9 and Denver Feb. 17-Mar. 31. Typical numbers occurred in Wyoming and Estes Park, Colo.

Davis Dam also had an unusually high count of Buffleheads — 450-500 Jan. 23-Feb. 20. An Oldsquaw at Fort Mohave Dam Jan. 23-Apr. 9 was the first s. Nevada record (CL, IO, VM). Davis Dam also had a Surf Scoter Dec. 5-12. At Durango, Colo., a Hooded Merganser appeared Jan. 10, and one spent a month there beginning Feb. 19 (EF).



*Flock of Barrow's Goldeneyes which wintered at Davis Dam, first records for both Arizona and s. Nevada. Photo | C.S. Lawson.*

**HAWKS, EAGLES** — Winter Turkey Vultures surprised observers at Fort Collins, Colo., Jan. 12 & Mar. 7, at Longmont, Colo., (two) Feb. 2 (RE), and at Davis Dam, Feb. 20. They arrived Mar. 1 at Reno, two weeks early, while peaking at 20 at Desert Game Refuge, Nev., Mar. 15. Reno added to Nevada's list of sight records of White-tailed Kites with two on Dec. 8 and three in late March. CBCs counted Accipiters at an average .037 per party-hour (pph), with 38 Sharpshinneds, 25 Cooper's, and 18 Goshawks. Boulder's **Red-shouldered Hawk**, reported last fall (AB 29:94), an immature, stayed the winter to at least Mar. 1 (m.ob.) In the Region Rough-legged Hawks maintained average populations, but were scarce on a controlled count at Denver (hawk-line average 22, down from 40) and fewer wintered at Reno (last year's unusual count of 500 at Genoa dipped to 36 this year).

Golden and Bald Eagle observations both increased. Balds concentrated in the San Luis Valley, Colo., with 61 at Monte Vista N.W.R. Jan 23 and 79 (60 per cent immature) at Alamosa N.W.R. Mar. 7. Vernon, Utah lacked its eagles this year, and many locations reported small proportions of immatures — except for Alamosa, ratios ran 20-35 per cent. Marsh Hawk CBC reports increased 2½ times, to .224 birds pph, then observations dropped off in mid-winter. We had reports of three Ospreys, 23 Peregrines (twice those of 1974), and 22 Merlins (down from last year).

**TURKEYS, CRANES, RAILS** — Sheridan, Wyo., reports the Turkey population prospering, and Turkeys stayed in the Roaring Fork valley near Glenwood Springs Dec. 15 - Mar. 21. Sandhill Cranes first arrived at Monte Vista Feb. 7, and peaked at 3450 Mar. 21 (a drop of 10 per cent). Other flocks included 1500 in March near Vernal, Utah (*fide* PA), 475 at Las Vegas, and 125 at Pahrnatagat N.W.R., Nev., both Feb. 27. Virginia Rails wintered at Monte Vista, Pueblo, Denver and Fort Morgan, Colo., and at Zion and Las Vegas. Thirteen Com. Gallinules — a usual count — appeared for the Las Vegas CBC, but a rare one photographed at Bear R. apparently wintered, seen in January and again in early February.

**SHOREBIRDS** — Three times in January single stray Killdeers fed at the hot springs at Old Faithful. First shorebirds to return were Am. Avocets arriving at Stillwater at the end of February, followed by Baird's Sandpipers at Fort Mohave Mar. 13, Pueblo Mar. 15, and Grand Junction, Mar. 16, and two Least Sandpipers Mar. 13 at Fort Mohave. A Semipalmated Sandpiper at Las Vegas Mar. 15 (JO) added to the handful of Nevada sight records for that species. One phalarope of each species straggled into the Region in March: Dubois, Wyo., had a strange early Wilson's Mar. 19; Las Vegas hosted a Red Phalarope Mar. 15 (JO) — another species on the Nevada list only through sight records; and Denver had a Northern Mar. 23 (JR).

**GULLS** — Unusual gulls abounded at Las Vegas and n.e. Colorado. Observers found 5-10 wintering Glaucous Gulls at various reservoirs in the Denver-Boulder-Longmont-Loveland area (the number of birds uncertain since they traveled back and forth), plus birds at Jackson Res. Dec. 21 and Prewitt Res. Mar. 1. Davis Dam hosted two Glaucous-winged Gulls Dec. 12-18. Thayer's Gulls attracted much attention: Las Vegas observers found 1-2 at L. Mead Nov. 30-Jan. 11 and one at Davis Dam Dec. 12-Feb. 18. Northeastern Colorado had 10 birds Jan. 19-Mar. 28, all first-year immatures. Increased interest in this species has caused some of these records, but Andrews states that he never before saw a gull like these. He suggests that more than usual numbers visited n.e. Colorado this winter. Denver's CBC had a record Ring-billed Gull tally — 1020. Migrants arrived at Bear R. in late February, Seedskaadee Mar. 24, and at Glen Canyon City, Utah Mar. 29. A Mew Gull strayed Jan. 11 to L. Mead (VM). Breaking the previous early arrival date of Mar. 31, a Franklin's Gull ventured to Boulder Feb. 1; then Boulder, Denver, and Loveland had four records in March. Four Franklin's reached north to Dubois Mar. 31. Las Vegas had one Bonaparte's Gull Dec. 2-14. A Sabine's Gull visited Vernal, Utah, for two weeks in March (MP, *vide* PA). Photographs substantiate **Black-legged Kittiwakes** at Davis Dam Feb. 17-20 and at Loveland Mar. 8-11 (m. ob.). The Nevada bird, the state's first, exhibited the unique kittiwake trait of completely submerging when it plunged into the water.



*Black-legged Kittiwake, Nevada's first, Davis Dam. Photo / C.S. Lawson.*

**PIGEONS, ROADRUNNERS** — Evergreen saw an early-returning Band-tailed Pigeon Mar. 27 — the day before the temperature hit 16 below zero. A few Mourning Doves wintered at Denver and Colorado Springs, although no reports came in mid-winter from the Region's balmy climes in Utah and Nevada. Roadrunners seem to have increased at Pueblo over the past year.

**OWLS** — Perhaps the largest parliament of Barn Owls ever reported in Nevada had a membership of 10, at Pahrangat N.W.R. Feb. 15. Other records came from Boulder, Meeker, Colo. Nov. 21 (unusual), Carson City, Seedskaadee, and Bear R. Several Snowy Owls penetrated into Colorado with birds reported during the winter from Weld Co. Dec. 7 (TR), Bonny Res. Jan. 7 (RH), Prewitt Res. (date?), Elizabeth Jan. 17-24 (RGB), Meeker Jan. 22-23 (DV), plus one at Torrington, Wyo. Dec. 1 (ECT). Fewer than usual Pygmy Owls were reported, but these did include yard birds at Durango and Glenwood Springs. Reports of Short-eared Owls increased over last year, with Bear River's wintering birds up to 20 from 15 last year; two at Meeker Dec. 17, and late winter birds at Longmont, Logan, Utah, Seedskaadee, and five at Fort Collins Mar. 30. Saw-whet Owl reports at Denver increased noticeably, because of enthusiastic nocturnal scouting by the Moulton brothers, and including a probable nest (RA); dead birds turned up at Fort Collins, Durango, and Mt. Carmel, Utah.

**SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS** — White-throated Swifts wintered in numbers at Davis Dam (150 at the low point) and in fives at Las Vegas. A ♂ **Costa's Hummingbird** wintered at Mrs. C.E. Cauley's Salt Lake City feeder, from October to Mar. 16. A light bulb kept the sugar water unfrozen, and proteins and vitamins fortified the feeder stock. He began appearing less frequently in March, possibly supplementing his diet with insects, and last called on Mar. 16.

**WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS** — Common Flickers declined drastically on the Zion CBC (20 compared to 121 last year) perhaps because mild weather kept them on the plateaus; meanwhile Denver had a record count of 181 on its CBC. Overall Regional CBC's maintained last year's rate of .7 pph. Williamson's Sapsuckers wandered to Canyonlands Nat'l Park's pinyon/juniper/sagebrush plateaus the first week in December (PS). Nevada's fourth sight record for the Olivaceous Flycatcher came from Las Vegas Mar. 16, with good description and heavy reliance on the call note (VM). A ♀ Vermilion Flycatcher visited Las Vegas, providing a rare winter record.

**LARKS, SWALLOWS, JAYS** — Observers in three locations in n. Wyoming reported Horned Larks very scarce through the winter, although they began returning in late March. At Seedskaadee they wintered in average numbers, and Cheyenne counted many. Las Vegas echoed the Wyoming shortage, with 5-10 per cent of normal, attributed to a lack of weed seeds due to last summer's drought. Tree Swallows wintered at Davis Dam where counts ranged from a low of 250 to a flight of 5000 Mar. 13. Six early Bank Swallows arrived at Reno Mar. 12. Steller's Jay's CBC frequency



has dropped in half since 1972 (in 1974, 0.92 pph). Black-billed Magpie's frequency has likewise dropped, from 4.29 in 1972 to 3.0 in 1974. Flocks of Com. Crows persisted, with 873 giving Colorado Springs its highest CBC total, 70, on Jan. 24 at Parawan, Utah was unusual, and 450 at Mesquite, Nev. Feb. 14 comparable to last fall's record-sized flock (AB 25:95). Two Clark's Nutcrackers at Sheridan Feb. 23 had already begun nest-building.

**CHICKADEES THROUGH DIPPERS** — Black-capped Chickadees maintained a CBC frequency of .78 pph, close to last year but down from 1.45 in 1973. Mountain Chickadees bounced back from last year's decline, the 1.84 pph rate helped by Boulder's high count of 1001 and Evergreen's 786. Observers found Com. Bushtits in unusual numbers, particularly at Durango and Zion, but also along the e. Colorado foothills and Salt Lake City. Logan had many Brown Creepers and Salt Lake City had few, Sheridan had many while Cheyenne had one report. Zion, Kanab, and R.M.N.P. reported them as regular. Dippers, which arrived a month late in the fall, left Dubois three weeks early this spring. While at Estes Park a remarkable 19 concentrated below the dam Jan. 25, Evergreen observers found them scarce all winter. One bobbed in Oak Creek Canyon the last week in March for s. Nevada's fourth record.

**WRENS** — Winter Wrens invaded for record numbers on the CBCs — 21 in Colorado plus one at Sheridan, but almost all winter records came in December. Bewick's Wrens maintained normal winter populations. A second fall record for Short-billed Marsh Wren occurred Nov. 15 (*fide* DG) at Fruita, Colo. The normal March movement of Sage Thrashers into Las Vegas failed to materialize. Unusual numbers of Am. Robins wintered at Colorado Springs, Boulder, Cheyenne, and Salt Lake City. Fewer than usual wintered in Nevada, and none stayed at R.M.N.P. or Dubois. In March large numbers poured into the Region. Late Hermit Thrushes appeared at Zion Dec. 16-28 and Boulder City, Nev., Jan. 15 (F&PL). An early Swainson's Thrush appeared at Colorado Springs Mar. 30 (BMM). Two E. Bluebirds spent the worst of the winter at Boulder Dec. 11-Jan. 27 (BC), and two visited Loveland Jan. 4 (RHa). S. Utah had sporadic reports of W. Bluebirds all winter, but few migrants had arrived in the Region by the end of March. Mountain Bluebirds were common in January in Grand Junction and arrived in February and March in healthy numbers throughout the Region.

**KINGLETS THROUGH STARLINGS** — Reno observers seldom saw Golden-crowned Kinglets, while Sheridan observers found the most ever, present all winter, and Zion had small groups in January and February. Large flocks of Bohemian Waxwings moved into n.w. Wyoming — Cody and Mammoth Hot Springs — but were largely absent from the rest of the Region; even from hot-spot Sheridan (after a big CBC list of 895) despite ample food. Nevada had one report, on the Reno CBC, Colorado had four including 100 at Georgetown Feb. 23, and Salt Lake City and Logan had several reports including 200 which arrived in Feb-

ruary. Small flocks of Cedar Waxwings spread out through the s. portion of the Region. Wintering shrike populations apparently kept to normal levels. Snyder watched a ♂ Starling stuck in a hole; the female tugged and tugged at him by holding his foot in her beak and dangling and flapping her wings. She finally pulled the male out, and the pair left, chattering vociferously. Perhaps this determined devotion helps explain the success of the aggressive Starling.

**WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS** — Warblers, almost all Yellow-rumped, lingered after their spectacular fall showing, with several CBCs recording them — then 100 wintered at Davis Dam and a handful wintered at Boulder and Pueblo; individuals lingered to January at Denver, Salt Lake City, Ogden, Logan, and Kanab. Other CBC warblers were Orange-crowns at Truckee and Henderson, Townsend's at Boulder, and Wilson's at Zion. Two Com. Yellowthroats beat spring to Las Vegas Mar. 9. Red-winged Blackbirds massed in a roost containing 170,000 birds during January at the Denver airport (MOS *et al.*); authorities finally burned the roost trees and marsh to avert a human tragedy. Other parts of the Region reported normal numbers, although one at an Aspen, Colo., feeder Feb. 1 had wandered. Great-tailed Grackle arrived Mar. 15 at Las Vegas, one month earlier than its previous early date. Colorado had four records of Com. Grackles in February, including one Feb. 24-Mar. 2 at Grand Junction.

**FINCHES** — Few finches and sparrows wintered in s. Nevada because of poor seed crops. A Las Vegas feeder did attract the fifth Nevada Cardinal, the first photographed. The female stayed from the last week in December to Jan. 11. A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** ar-



*Female Cardinal, Las Vegas, Dec. '74 - Jan. 11, 1975. First Nevada photo / C.S. Lawson.*

rived with a storm at Reno Feb. 14, stayed two hours, and left (JA). Reno had a late **Black-headed Grosbeak** Dec. 8-15 (JA); then another spent Jan. 9-11 at a Salt Lake City feeder (ph., PAP). Few Evening Grosbeaks frequented the Region, with six Colorado cities reporting them, plus Sheridan and Reno. House Finches increased on CBCs from 2.1 pph to 3.25 — largely because of a huge count of 2295 at Salt Lake City. Rosy finches seemed diminished, and the Colorado flocks contained more Blacks and fewer Gray-crowns than usual. Dubois had a champion count of Blacks — 431 on its CBC. Relatively light high country snowfall may have enabled rosy finches to avoid dependence on feeders. Pine Siskins occurred in flocks in Colorado Springs

in early winter, were numerous all winter at Logan, and appeared in March en masse at Zion, many flocks of 5-50 attacking cottonwood catkins. Denver had only a few, and Nevada had one bird all winter, owing to a poor food supply. Only a few Red Crossbill reports came in, but one pair was found nesting on the Denver CBC (BW) and another group of 30 near Reno Junction, Wyo., showed signs of nesting: singing males, courtship feeding of males by females in suitable habitat with good cone production (JT). Winter Green-tailed Towhees appeared Feb. 15 at a Glenwood Springs feeder and Mar. 26 at Durango.

**SPARROWS, JUNCOS** — Grand Junction had a Lark Sparrow Dec. 15 & Jan. 3. Winter Sage Sparrows appeared in s. Utah, at Farmington Bay W.M.A., Utah Mar. 23 (PA), and in normal numbers in Nevada. Juncos dropped from 6.04 pph to 5.26 on CBCs; Denver and Boulder had high counts while Durango, Grand Junction, and Provo, Utah dropped. Few White-winged sparrows penetrated into Colorado this year. Only a few Harris' Sparrows appeared, the second consecutive year of scarcity. White-crowned Sparrows seemed scarce in normal wintering grounds at Zion and Las Vegas, though Kanab had good numbers. A Golden-crowned Sparrow visited Denver Dec. 28-Jan. 4, and Reno and Carson City each had one on CBCs, for the only reports of that Pacific species. Las Vegas had 50-75 Lincoln's Sparrows Mar. 15; several were found dead later, all with empty stomachs, perhaps owing to the poor food situation. Durango also had an early Lincoln's Mar. 15. Swamp Sparrows invaded Colorado, with eight wintering at Pueblo and five at Grand Junction, several at Denver in December, and singles at Weldona Jan. 5 and Boulder Feb. 1. Nevada had no longspurs this winter, but Meeker noted two McCown's Feb. 20. Lapland Longspurs appeared in large numbers, with 560 at Pawnee Nat'l Grassland, Colo., Feb. 15 (D.F.O.) and 120 at Bear R. Feb. 18 (PA). Sheridan found few, but it had no Horned Larks to lead observers to longspurs. At Meeker, Feb. 20, 32 Snow Buntings flocked.

**CORRIGENDA:** Correct *Am. Birds* 28:669 et. seq. to read 6600 Pintails at the North Platte Refuges; discussing the Alcids, to read, "Colorado has had two records of the Ancient Murrelet (previous to 1974)"; and referring to Brown Creepers, "only at Salt Lake City were the numerous."

Correct *AB* 29:97 to note that Steve Larson found Boulder's Golden-winged Warbler; O'Connell's Palm Warbler occurred Oct. 6; Line 11, second column, should read, "Evening Grosbeaks were present, but *not* in great numbers." Andrew's Smith's Longspur occurred at Denver Sept. 5.

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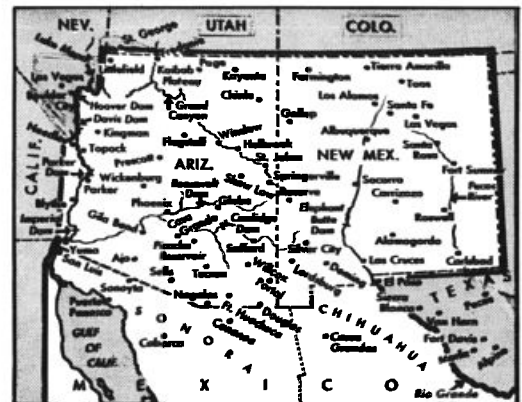
Vince Mowbray, John O'Connell. *Utah:* Bear River Migr. Bird Ref. — David L. Beall; Desert Lake W.M.A. — Larry Dalton; Glenn Canyon City — Jim & Julie Clark; Kanab — Steven P. Hedges; Logan (8) — **Ann Schimpf** and **K. L. Dixon**; Salt Lake City — Gleb Kashin; Zion Nat'l Park (15) — **Ken Kertell**. Also, Paul Adamus, Mark Collie, Merlin Killpack, Paul A. Pemberton, Mike Perry, Peter Scott. *Wyoming:* Cheyenne: (8) — **May Hanesworth**; Cody — Ursula Kepler; Dubois — Mary Back; Seedskaadee N.W.R. — R. E. Harding; Sheridan (6) — **Platt Hall**; Yellowstone Nat'l Park — Joanna Booser. Also, James Tate Jr., Edna Claire Thomas. *Colorado:* Alamosa N.W.R. — R. L. Darnell; Boulder (28) — **Louise Hering**; Colorado Springs (6) — Mahlon Speers and Elinor Wills; Denver (20) — **Robert Andrews**; Durango (3) — **R.W. Stransky**; Fort Collins (28) — **Fort Collins Audubon Society**; Glenwood Springs (5) — **Bev Hutchins**; Grand Junction (11) — **David Galinat**; Hotchkiss — Theo Colburn; longmont (43) — **Allegra Collister**; McCoy — Margaret Ewing; Meeker — Dennis Van Horn; Monte Vista N.W.R. — C. R. Bryant; Pueblo (6) — **Van Truan** and **J. C. Ligon**; Rocky Mtn. Nat'l Park (5) — **Warner Reeser**. Also R. G. Beidleman, Bayard Cobb, Richard Esposito, Elva Fox, Ron Harden (RHa), R. Hopper, B.M. Marshman, Arch McCallum, Mike & Pete Moulton, T. Ray, Jack Redell, M.O. Snyder, Bruce Webb.

**ABBREVIATIONS** — D.F.O. — Denver Field Ornithologists; ph. — Photograph; pph — per party hour; R.M.N.P. — Rocky Mtn. Nat'l Park. — **HUGH E. KINGERY**, 869 Milwaukee Street, Denver, Colo. 80206.

## SOUTHWEST REGION

/ Janet Witzeman and Kenn Kaufman, Scott Burge and John P. Hubbard

The season averaged colder and wetter than normal; but as usual "winter" held off until January, allowing half-hardy species to linger for the Christmas Bird Counts. The Region saw widespread movements of bluebirds, longspurs and Lawrence's Goldfinches.



Mountain birds were noticeably absent in the lowlands (unusual numbers of Goshawks, Brown Creepers and both kinglets notwithstanding: specimen records from the past indicate that a major percentage of these birds come from the north, rather than from the local mountains).

The season raised interesting questions concerning ravens, towhees and marsh wrens. On the local level, Bitter Lake had blackbirds, Nogales had Fringillids, Phoenix had warblers; and Davis Dam on the Arizona-Nevada border had birders from two Regions excited over rare ducks and gulls. Read on for details.

**LOONS THROUGH IBIS** — Single Com. Loons, rare in New Mexico, were at Conchas L., Dec. 10 (JPH) and L. McMillan Feb. 14 (MW). A Horned Grebe was studied at Empalme, Sonora Mar. 1 (DZ); the species is a casual visitor to n.w. Mexico. Somewhat less unusual were two at Conchas L., Dec. 10 (JPH) and one near Cliff, N. Mex., Jan. 3 (DZ *et al.*). Adding another episode to the Olivaceous Cormorant's recent spread into s. New Mexico, an adult was seen at Bill Evans L., Grant Co., from late Dec. to early Mar. (JPH, DZ *et al.*) White-faced Ibis are rare in the Region in winter. Eight at Painted Rock Dam near Gila Bend (SB *et al.*) spent the entire winter; the one on the Roswell CBC apparently did not.

**WATERFOWL** — Whistling Swans are scarce winter visitors to the Region; two were at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., N. Mex., Dec. 5 (R. Teuber *et al.*). A **Black Brant**, one of very few records for Arizona, was shot by a hunter 40 mi. w. of Phoenix Jan. 6 (*fide* Tom Stejskal). A pair of ducks wintering at Bitter Lake N.W.R., N. Mex., were apparently Mallard x Mexican Duck hybrids (DB). There was a "major trickle" of Greater Scaup, with a female s.w. of Phoenix Dec. 21 (SB), a male at Tucson Jan. 14 - Feb. 3 (DSz, m.ob.), and a female n.e. of Phoenix Mar. 25 (ST). These records were almost certainly valid; the status of this bird in the Southwest is still poorly known. The biggest duck news came from Davis Dam, on the Colorado R., where the season saw an invasion of **Barrow's Goldeneye**. Two were found there Nov. 30 (JO), and by Dec. 17 the number had grown to 57, including 12 males (CL, GM). Four were still present Feb. 20. Photos by CL made this the first documented record for Arizona. It's difficult to guess which direction the birds came from; normally they winter on the n. Pacific coast, inland in the Northwest, and the n. and c. Rockies, all some distance away. Of more likely oceanic origin was a **Surf Scoter** at Davis Dam Nov. 30 - Dec. 12 (JO, VM; photos by CL). Downriver from Davis Dam was a ♂ **Oldsquaw** Jan. 23 to end of the period (photos, CL).

**RAPTORS** — A Turkey Vulture, rare in New Mexico in winter, was at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Jan. 19 (J Durrie); one at Mesilla Feb. 23 (*fide* BP) was probably an early migrant. Reports of Goshawks in the lowlands numbered four in New Mexico and five in Arizona, slightly more than usual. A **Broad-winged Hawk** was seen n.e. of Phoenix Mar. 16 (ST *et al.*). The bird may have overwintered; two of the four previous Arizona occurrences were Feb. records, and migrant Broad-wingeds generally don't move into Texas until late March. Rough-legged Hawks are peripheral at the n

edge of Mexico, so of interest was one near El Sueco, Chih., Mar. 8 (DZ). Several observers commented on numbers of Bald Eagles. Wintering populations of the northern race vary considerably in the Region, so the real significance of fluctuations here is hard to judge. Also difficult to interpret was the number of Merlin reports, six in New Mexico and ten in Arizona, far more than normal.

**GALLINULES, SHOREBIRDS** — Up to four Com Gallinules again wintered at Kirtland, extreme n.w. New Mexico (APN); this is exceptionally far north.

Because of its low elevation (and resulting warm temperatures), coupled with much artificial habitat, Phoenix generally reports the most diverse wintering shorebird population in the Region. Notable there this season were two to four Pectoral Sandpipers for most of Jan., plus 20+ Am. Avocets and a lone Long-billed Curlew throughout the period; all three species are quite rare in winter. A Semipalmated Plover, Arizona's first winter record, lingered at Phoenix through Feb. 5. The Region's first Ruff, first reported Nov. 10, remained at Phoenix through Feb. 17. Though Lesser Yellowlegs normally desert the Southwest from November to March, a few overwinter regularly at Phoenix. Eight were present through this December, but evidently no more than three remained past mid-Jan.; this pattern of decline generally occurs, the excess birds probably moving s.w. to the Gulf of California. Another hot spot this season was the vicinity of Salt Lake, e. of Loving, N. Mex., where Snowy Plovers — one on Jan. 9, two on Jan. 27 — were the first winter records for the state (JPH, CGS). Up to 30 Dunlin, usually rare in New Mexico at any season, were recorded e. of Loving during Jan. (JPH, CGS).

**JAEGERS, GULLS, ANIS** — An ad. Parasitic Jaeger was observed at Puerto Peñasco, Sonora Dec. 28 (DSj). Jaeger records for the Gulf of California have been few, but this is probably due in part to lack of coverage. Since the Parasitic is now a regular fall stray to the Salton Sea (McCaskie, 1974. *Am. Birds* 28:108), it would seem the logical species to turn up in the northern Gulf.

Davis Dam produced gull records for Arizona and Nevada, with two first-year **Thayer's** (second and third Arizona records) Dec. 12 - Feb. 18, a first-year **Glaucous-winged** (fourth Arizona record) for the same period, and an imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** (third Arizona record) Feb. 17-20 (all by CL, VM, JO *et al.*) These followed the expected pattern for vagrant gulls from the Pacific, being immatures and occurring in mid-winter. In a different category was an ad. **Laughing Gull** (fourth Arizona record) downriver at Havasu L., Mar. 15 (JO), an early-spring stray that must have arrived via the Gulf of California. Scarcity of records for coastal gulls on the Colorado R. reservoirs correlates to a paucity of recent coverage; during Monson's intensive fieldwork along the river in the 1940s-50s, he had records of Glaucous-winged, Western, Laughing, and Heermann's Gulls as well as other salt-water species.

An ani was reported n. of Las Cruces Dec. 7 (W Iselin, *fide* BP). Grooves were not seen on the bill; but reference to a two-noted call, as well as geographic logic, suggest the Groove-billed Ani which is a rare straggler to the Region.

**HUMMINGBIRDS** — Allen's Hummingbird is extremely difficult to identify in the field, so sight records are open to question and the range of this bird in the Region is still poorly known. Of interest, therefore, is a reliable record from Somerton, Yuma Co., extreme s.w. Arizona: an adult male that arrived at a feeder Feb. 17, was later found injured and studied in hand by Susan & Steve Liston *et al.* Though the winter range of Allen's is not fully established, it could be vaguely defined as western Mexico. Since migrant Allen's move north into California during Jan. and Feb., and some should pass through s.w. Arizona on the way, this record fits the expected pattern of time and place. The only 'spring' specimen for Arizona was also in Yuma Co.: one in the Sierra Pinta, Feb. 18, 1955. Observers hoping to identify Allen's are referred to Stiles, 1972 (*Condor* 74:25-32).

**TROGONS THROUGH SWALLOWS** — A **Coppery-tailed Trogon** below L. Patagonia, Ariz., Dec. 14 - Jan. 6 (JM, R. Glinski) was only the third winter record for the U.S. Rare but regular in winter, a Green Kingfisher straggled north to Nogales Feb. 9 (BH). Possibly only the fourth record of **Red-bellied Woodpecker** in New Mexico was one near Roswell Dec. 21 (MW *et al.*). A Purple Martin near Tucson until Dec. 22 was by 1½ months the latest record for Arizona (GM).

**CORVIDS THROUGH THRASHERS** — The only Blue Jay reported was one at Las Vegas Dec. 5 - Mar. 3 (WH). Although many CBC compliers blithely report all ravens as identified to species, the identification and ranges of the two forms are not yet well understood. Observers should beware that both ravens wander to untypical habitats; calls vary; size is a poor field-mark; and the white neck of the White-necked is rarely visible. Complicating the picture in New Mexico were careful reports of Commons on the prairies near Clayton and Tucumcari (JPH), and White-neckeds at relatively high elevation near Glenwood (JPH, CGS). There were very few reports of Clark's Nutcrackers or the montane jays. Because of the excellent piñon pine cone crop in n. Arizona, Pinyon Jays were nesting by Feb. 23 (a month earlier than usual) despite below-normal temperature (RPB).

A Dipper was in the Organ Mts., e. of Las Cruces, Jan. 19 (C. Dimeff, BP); there are few records so far south in New Mexico. Winter Wren (rare anywhere in the Region) showed up in numbers this winter. In Arizona were three in the Tucson area (GG, GM), two near Phoenix (RRJ, RN), and one near Flagstaff (RPB, JH); New Mexico had two at Las Vegas (WH), one at Elephant Butte L. (CAH), and one near Cliff (WB). Bitter Lake N.W.R. produced sightings of Short-billed Marsh Wrens during the winters of 1970-'71 and '71-'72, and did the same this year (DB) — but by late winter, it was believed that 20 or more might be present, which would be remarkable for a species marginal to this Region. The situation should be investigated next year. In addition to the two Brown Thrashers on CBCs, one was below Patagonia L., Feb. 6 (GM).

**THRUSHES THROUGH VIREOS** — Arizona recorded the usual scattering of Rufous-backed Robins, with two near Patagonia (JM), two at Phoenix (ST, S

Hedges), one at Tucson (S & SB) and one at Ramsey Canyon (C. Peabody). A Varied Thrush, now considered a rare winter visitor to n. Arizona, was at Flagstaff Feb. 1 (RPB). Western and Mountain Bluebirds were scarce in n. Arizona, but ranged widely over the rest of the Region. Mountain Bluebirds in particular were abundant both in s. Arizona and across New Mexico. The Carlsbad area reported E. Bluebirds for the third consecutive winter; up to 25 there at Rattlesnake Springs in January (JPH, CGS) was an exceptional number. Townsend's Solitaires were scarce in n. Arizona and continued to be abundant in the Upper Sonoran Zones of s. Arizona as they were in the fall. Last autumn's small numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets continued to be found in the lowlands of s.w. New Mexico and s. Arizona; this was the first such invasion since the winter of 1969-'70.

Sprague's Pipits were found in all four states in the Region: up to seven at Phoenix throughout the period (K.K., m.ob.); two at Rattlesnake Springs, Carlsbad N.P., during Jan. (JPH, CGS); three at Cananea, Son., Feb. 28 (DZ); and one at El Sueco, Chih., Mar. 8 (DZ). All were solitary, the Phoenix birds avoiding Water Pipit flocks in the same fields. Perhaps the species is consistently overlooked throughout the Southwest. An imm. N. Shrike near Elgin, s.e. Ariz., Dec. 15 - Mar. 22 (S. Mills *et al.*) and an adult near Phoenix Jan. 1 (ST) were the first convincing sight records for s. Arizona. The only definite report in New Mexico was one near Springer Feb. 15 (JPH). The Gray Vireo winters regularly in extreme s.w. Arizona, but one near Tucson Dec. 31 (GM) was only the third winter record for the s.e. part of the state.

**WARBLERS** — As usual, the "winter warbler" situation involved several distinct elements.

*Late fall movement:* In this Region, the CBCs come too early to sample the true winter populations of insectivores. Striking evidence this season came from the Salt River migrant trap s.w. of Phoenix. There an incredible 14 species of warblers remained through the first week of January, with all the regularly wintering species seen in unprecedented numbers and several rarities found. The number of species and individuals present had declined drastically by mid-January, indicating that this must have been an unusually late movement of fall migrants. Possibly as a residue from this final flight, numbers of Audubon's (Yellow-rumped) Warblers remained higher than usual throughout the winter in s.w. New Mexico and near Gila Bend. Probably to be classed as exceptionally late migrants were a Hermit Warbler near Phoenix Jan. 3 (ST) and two Nashvilles there in December (PN, RN), one Nashville Warbler in Phoenix Feb. 17 (BB) was among the few genuine winter records.

*Eastern strays:* Last fall, some parts of the West had their greatest season ever for eastern warblers. (See *Am. Birds*, Feb. 1975.) Many birders in s.c. Arizona knew of this at the time, but despite much fieldwork they somehow failed to cash in on the general abundance. Obviously something happened; we don't know what, but some good clues come from the discussion by DeSante *et al.* (*Am. Birds* 29:118, Feb. 1975), which shows how weather patterns could have brought a stream of vagrants at a southwestward diagonal across

the Rockies and Great Basin to c. California. This pattern would have merely grazed the n.w. corner of Arizona, and in fact several vagrants were found there at Kaibab and Pipe Springs, not to mention the enviable assortment at nearby Las Vegas, Nevada. Southern Arizona was outside the mainstream. This consideration puts a different light on records of three eastern warblers which had been recorded less than ten times previously in Arizona: **Palm Warbler** Dec. 6 near Phoenix (ST), **Chestnut-sided Warbler** Dec. 21 - Jan. 6 near Phoenix (ST, m.ob.), and **Prairie Warbler** Dec. 31 - Jan. 5 at Tucson (P. Burr, RN, PN). While we hesitate to assert that these eastern species arrived *from the west*, it seems quite possible that they were stragglers from a vagrancy pattern which passed, in general, to the north and west of Arizona.

*Sparse visitors:* Several species occurred which, though fairly regular, still merit some mention. Black-and-white Warblers were in three locations near Phoenix between December and March (BB, ST *et al.*). The N. Parula was once considered "casual" in Arizona but increased coverage shows it to be regular. There were four this season: two near Phoenix Dec. 21 - Jan. 7 (KA, SB, SM, RW); one near Florence, Ariz., Mar. 29 (SB, RW); and one at Arivaca Jct., Ariz., Mar. 29-30 (J. Vernon, H. Richard). Probably all were migrants rather than wintering birds. Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler records came from s. Arizona and s.e. New Mexico; this form should occur in small numbers throughout the Region. Two Am. Redstarts were near Phoenix Dec. 21 - Jan. 15 (GB, RB, ST *et al.*).

*Mystery bird:* Past observers wondered why the Ovenbird, with breeding populations directly north (B C., Alberta) and wintering areas directly south (Sinaloa, Nyarit), should be accidental in Arizona. But it can be thought accidental no longer: the species was recorded at Phoenix for the third winter in a row, and this time *three* were found in separate locations (RN, SM, KA, A. Higgins). Most sightings have been in the cottonwood-willow-saltcedar jungle along the Salt R.; possibly this area has the habitat, and the climate, to qualify as an Ovenbird wintering ground.

*Early spring movement:* Returning Painted Redstarts appeared in the lowlands more than usual; DZ suggested that the birds might have been displaced by heavy snow in the mountains in March. One at Elephant Butte L., Mar. 23 (CAH), was somewhat east of its normal range in New Mexico.

**ICTERIDS** — The general proliferation of blackbirds, which seems to be a continent-wide phenomenon, made news in New Mexico this season. A concentration of *over a million each* of Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds roosted in phragmites on the Bitter Lake N.W.R. (DB, J.C. Corrie). JPH commented on increased wintering populations of Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds in various parts of the state, and noted that Great-tailed Grackles wintered in several areas which they have invaded only recently. A Com. Grackle at Farmington Mar. 15 (J. Parker, *vide* APN) was the second local record. Scott's Onoles, always rare in winter, included one at a Silver City feeder Jan. 13 to end of period (M. O'Byrne, *vide* DZ) and an aged male, a banded bird, that returned to BH's feeder in Nogales for its eighth winter

**FRINGILLIDS: THE NOGALES INTERPRETATION** — In the Southwest, where conditions for plant growth are subject to wild extremes of weather, wintering populations of seed-eaters are mobile — they go where the seeds are in any given year. The CBCs are starting to reveal how widely numbers fluctuate on the local level. As an example, Nogales "had it all" this winter — their CBC recorded better-than-average numbers of nearly all Fringillids; six of them established new local highs. The immediate explanation was that the Nogales area had an excellent seed crop as a result of late summer and early fall rains. This must have accounted for record totals of Blue Grosbeaks, Lark Sparrows and White-crowned Sparrows. To show how drastically certain species respond to local conditions last year, when the seed crop there bombed out, the Nogales CBC had no Lark Buntings, nine Brewer's Sparrows, and 77 Chipping Sparrows; this year, totals for each exceeded 3000.

But the seed crop couldn't explain everything. Two of the Fringillids found in record numbers at Nogales were Lawrence's Goldfinch and Chestnut-collared Longspur; during another good 'sparrow winter,' 1969-'70, both were absent there. This season the goldfinches were superabundant in just three counties of s.c. Arizona, while the longspur invasion covered much of the Southwest. Doubtless both enjoyed the Nogales seed supply; but the abnormal numbers of both species in the Region must have been due at least partly to conditions elsewhere — and of course the two arrive here from opposite directions. A confusing note on the Nogales CBC: in marked contrast to the abundance of migrant Fringillids, the resident Brown Towhees were in low numbers. They were also scarce during the good 'sparrow winter' of 1969-'70; among their better scores have been last year and 1965-'66, both of which were poor for most Fringillids. Perhaps the same weather patterns that produce good seed crops have an adverse effect on nesting Brown Towhees.

**GENERAL FINCHES** — Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, always a surprise, were in Tucson mid-December to mid-January (M. Paulsen, DSz). Evening Grosbeaks, which usually winter in small numbers in n. Arizona, went unrecorded there until March (RPB, JH, RRJ). The only New Mexico reports were a few at Farmington and Santa Fe; the only lowland report was one at a Tucson feeder in March. In a winter when mountain birds are mostly absent in the lowlands, it is unusual to find Purple or Cassin's Finches there; so 12 Purples and 6 Cassin's at scattered points in s. Arizona were considered good finds (SD, BH, ST *et al.*). Four Purples at 7100 ft. in the Santa Catalina Mts., Feb. 20 constituted the first highland record for s. Arizona (GM). Cassin's in small numbers were more widely reported in New Mexico, s. to Las Vegas, Cedar Crest, and Silver City. A few Pine Grosbeaks appeared in the Sandia Mts. near Albuquerque, as they have the last two winters; there is a small resident population of this species in the higher mountains of New Mexico. Pine Siskins were notably fewer and less widespread than usual in the Region. Red Crossbills, which were scarce in n. Arizona last winter, were found to be locally abundant this season on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and near Payson, Ariz (RRJ, SM) Three wan-

dered to Phoenix in Feb. (DSj); in New Mexico the only reports were of a few near Silver City and in the Santa Fe - Española area.

After being virtually absent last winter, Lawrence's Goldfinches swarmed in s.c. Arizona, staging their largest invasion since the winter of 1961-'62. Strangely, New Mexico reported none, although a few trickled east to within miles of the state line at Portal (SS). New Mexico has had a dearth of Lawrence's in recent years; during the 1940s and 50s, there were several invasions that spread across southern New Mexico and into Texas. The erratic wanderings of this bird seem to rival those of the traditional "winter finches" of the Northeastern states, but the goldfinch has received less study.

**SPARROWS** — Lark Sparrows may winter regularly in s.e. New Mexico, but 40 at Carlsbad N.P., Dec. 14 (K. Elers *et al.*), was a notable concentration. Single Cassin's Sparrows, irregular in winter, were singing in two locations n. of Tucson in early March (S & SB, GM). Tree Sparrows occurred w. to Albuquerque (CAH) and s. to Bitter Lake N.W.R. (MW); the species winters commonly in extreme n.e. New Mexico. This winter there was the usual sprinkling of Harris's Sparrows in the Region; four Golden-crowned Sparrow reports in Arizona were only slightly more than normal; but White-throated Sparrows were far more numerous than usual, records including a remarkable 25 at Rattlesnake Springs, Carlsbad N.P., in January (CGS) and at least 26 at scattered points in Arizona. Fox Sparrows are generally scarce in the Region, but there were three near Glenwood, N. Mex., during the period (*vide* JPH); the ten recorded in Arizona included five in the Mazatzal Mts. the last week in March (GB, RN).

Previously, Swamp Sparrows have been considered uncommon in New Mexico and rare in Arizona, but this winter we were swamped with them. A score or more were seen at scattered localities in New Mexico (JPH, WB); seven were banded in two days n.w. of Tucson (S.M. Russell *et al.*); at least six were found along the effluent channel in s.w. Phoenix (SB, SD *et al.*); and singles were at Patagonia (*vide* BH), Portal (*vide* SS), and Scottsdale, Ariz. (RN). It is interesting to note that this species also appeared in unusual numbers "next door" in Inyo Co., California, last fall. Whether this season's Swamp Sparrows represented an unusual winter, or a general increase in their Southwestern wintering population, remains to be ascertained.

**LONGSPURS** — As noted last fall, Chestnut-collared Longspurs continued to be abundant on the high-elevation grasslands of s. New Mexico and s.e. Arizona, with flocks numbering in the hundreds in many areas. This general abundance extended at least 150 miles s. into Chihuahua (DZ), and in Sonora a few flocks got as far west as the Gulf of California near Puerto Peñasco (DSj). The less common McCown's Longspur was detected among the flocks at several points in s.w. New Mexico and s.e. Arizona. In an area n.e. of Deming where there were thousands of longspurs in December, the ratio of McCown's was possibly as high as one in six (V. & W. Howe, *vide* DZ). That sounds like a lot of McCown's — but sample

counts from other points are lacking, and the Regional status of the bird is not really known. Careful examination of all longspur flocks would be a most worthwhile winter pastime for Southwestern birders.

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## ALASKA REGION

/ Daniel D. Gibson and G. Vernon Byrd

The winter of 1974-75 was another relatively mild one throughout most of the Region. At Adak Island, in the central Aleutians, however, it was a hard winter with record snowfall and below average temperatures throughout the period. All freshwater areas remained frozen there all winter. Typically, it was a long quiet winter in areas removed from Alaska's south coast.



**HERONS** — A Great Blue Heron observed at the Buskin R. mouth, Kodiak I., Mar. 8 (RAM, NT, & WED), is probably only the second record for the island. There is no Alaska Gulf coast record west of Kodiak.

**SWANS, GEESE** — Up to four Whooper Swans were present throughout the winter season at Adak (JLT *et al.*); other areas in this species' Aleutian winter range were not covered during the period. Emperor Geese occurred in about the same numbers as last winter at Kodiak, where some 300-500 birds were estimated wintering at Chiniak Bay. Numbers appeared to be down at Adak, however, where the largest count this winter was 71 birds on Mar. 29 (JLT & AW).

**DUCKS** — Green-winged Teal were newsworthy at two locations: a ♂ "Common" Teal at Kodiak, Dec. 15 (CBC) was the second record there, and two male *A. c. carolinensis* at Adak all winter (JLT & AW) were rare that far west. Single Am. Wigeon at Adak on Feb. 13 and from Mar. 21 on (JLT & AW) were of interest, since the species is rare in the Aleutians. European Wigeon were not recorded this winter at Adak, which is unusual, but a small flock was present briefly at Shemya I. in early January (DL). Two pairs of Ring-necked Ducks were seen all winter at Sitka (CHJ), the only Alaska location where the species has been found in winter. Also apparently isolated as wintering birds are Adak's annual Canvasbacks. Up to eight birds were recorded there between Jan. 8 and Feb. 15 (EDA, GWE, JLT, & AW). Following the discovery of Lesser Scaup wintering at Kodiak last year, two males were seen there this winter on Feb. 23 (RAM). The only Tufted Duck reported was a single male at Adak Dec. 26 (JLT). Steller's Eiders were abundant again this winter at Kodiak, the e. end of the winter range: ca. 10,000 birds were estimated on Chiniak Bay (RAM). King Eiders, on the other hand, were down in numbers at Kodiak, maximum group size 40 birds. Interestingly, the proportion of adult males there this winter was up, with a ratio of 10 adult males: 80 females: 1 immature male. Continuing to prove to be regular visitors at Adak, Smews were recorded there during the winter of 1974-75: one ♀-plumaged individual seen on Feb. 17 (JLT & AW) and three ♀-plumaged birds at the end of the period (m ob.).

**HAWKS, FALCONS** — Compared to the last several winters, Goshawks were not numerous in the Interior this season. There were reports at both Kodiak (RAM) and Gustavus (BBP) of Peregrine Falcons described as light birds. These sightings probably refer to one of the endangered races rather than to resident *pealei*. Two Merlins were seen at Kodiak on Feb. 16 (RAM & NT) and one bird on Mar. 1 (RAM, NT, & WED). One was observed at Kasilof during the period (MAM).

**RAILS, SANDPIPERS** — Following the occurrence of twelve Am. Coots at Sitka at the beginning of the period, at least one bird was seen there occasionally all winter (CHJ, MAS). An unparalleled late record was a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper observed (color slide on file - U A.) at Kodiak Dec. 3 (RAM & NT). The previous late record for Alaska was Nov. 21, at Adak, over 400 miles farther south.

**GULLS, ALCIDS** — An ad. **Ring-billed Gull** observed closely at the Ketchikan ferry terminal in early December (PI) was the only report this winter from s e

Alaska, where the species may occur with some regularity. The late Rhinoceros Auklet at Sitka (see fall migration) was present at least through mid-January (CHJ).

**OWLS** — Snowy Owls are rare winter visitants in interior Alaska, so the fact that at least 3-4 were present in the Fairbanks area throughout the period (m.ob.) is of interest. A single Snowy Owl was seen at Gustavus between Dec. 16 and Jan. 3 (BBP). Great Gray Owls were reported near Anchorage in December (GEH) and near Livengood, n. of Fairbanks, in early March (ROB). A Short-eared Owl at Adak on Dec. 28 (DFS, JLT & AW) is the second winter record there.

**HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS** — **Anna's Hummingbirds** were recorded at two Auke Bay feeders through Jan. 3 (WPD, RBW) on which date the temperature fell near zero, and none was reported subsequently. Rare in Alaska, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen twice in the College area, single females on Jan. 20 (RSH) and Jan. 28 (CML).

**CORVIDS, PARIDS** — A **Clark's Nutcracker** was closely observed at Douglas I., Juneau area Jan 4 (STO), and perhaps another individual was seen at Tee Harbor, n. of Juneau, during the winter (*vide* RBW). The Gray-headed Chickadee banded at College in October (see fall migration) stayed in that area the winter and was last seen on Mar. 21 (LJP). There were no other reports of this species during the winter.

**NUTHATCHES, THRUSHES** — Red-breasted Nuthatches were not seen on a regular basis this winter at Kodiak, and numbers were down considerably from winter 1973-74 (RAM). Varied Thrushes, which regularly winter at Kodiak, were much less numerous than last winter and were seen only once or twice during the period (WED). Three Mountain Bluebirds observed foraging on the Gustavus beach, Dec. 16 (REH, *vide*BBP), provided an unprecedented Alaska winter record.

**PIPITS, SHRIKES, STARLINGS** — One Water Pipit was observed at Adak Dec. 28 (LAE, DFS, JLT, & AW). The species is a rare winter visitant in the Aleutians. A single N. Shrike was observed at Adak on Feb. 11, two were seen Mar. 19, and singles were noted Mar. 20 & 26 (DSF, JLT, & AW). This species is a rare and irregular winter visitant in the c. Aleutians. Several Shrikes were reported at Dutch Harbor, e. Aleutians, in December and January (RN). A Starling at Gustavus Dec. 16 (BBP) is one of few winter records for the area.

**ICTERIDS** — A **meadowlark (sp.)** was observed briefly but well in a pasture at Auke Bay, Jan. 10 (PI). The two previous Alaska records of birds of this genus are both fall specimens of *W. Meadowlark*, to which species this record is probably referable.

**FRINGILLIDS** — Pine Grosbeaks were scarce or absent in the Interior all winter (m.ob.), they were absent from the Anchorage area, at least in late winter (AS), and they were not seen after December in the

Cohoe-Kasilof area of the Kenai Peninsula (MAM). But they were noted regularly if in smaller numbers than last winter at Kodiak (RAM), and they were seen regularly in s.e. Alaska, at Glacier Bay (BBP) and in the Auke Bay-Juneau area (RBW).

Redpoll numbers were "normal" in the Interior during the winter, and there was an influx into the Anchorage (AS) and Kenai (HF) areas in February. Redpolls were not numerous in the Cohoe-Kasilof area during the period (MAM). Common Redpolls were numerous during December at Adak, with flocks of up to seven birds seen regularly. The largest flock seen there was of about 50 birds (DFS, EDA, JLT, & AW). In s.e. Alaska, Com. Redpolls were described as the commonest Fringillids at Glacier Bay, with flocks of up to 150 (BBP). Small groups were seen irregularly in the Juneau area during the period (RBW, WPD).

Crossbills were reported absent everywhere. Dark-eyed Juncos wintered in small numbers at Kodiak (LF, RAM), where the species probably does so regularly. But a junco present at a *Dutch Harbor* feeder from November to early February, and joined by a second individual in late January, was far west of the normal range (RN). One of these birds was photographed (on file - U.A.), substantiating this second record for the Aleutian Islands. One **Harris' Sparrow** observed with many juncos at Auke Bay banding traps, Feb. 28 (RBW), was wearing a band but was not re-trapped. It was the only record this winter and may have been the same one seen last fall. Wintering White-crowned Sparrows were reported only from Kodiak, where the species is rare at any season: one immature Dec. 1 (RAM & NT) and another Dec. 15 (NT). Three or four Golden-crowned Sparrows and at least two Fox Sparrows also wintered at Kodiak (RAM, NT, LF), where they are all suspected of being regular.

Snow Buntings prompted comment from several points on the mainland coast (Homer — MAM, Glacier Bay — BBP, and Juneau — RBW) because they were absent from areas normally occupied at that season. Eleven McKay's Buntings were banded at the Cold Bay banding station between Jan. 6 and Mar. 4 (CR & JS). A single ad. ♂ McKay's was observed feeding with Snow Buntings at *Adak*, Mar. 17-18 (JLT & AW). The bird was trapped and handled briefly, but it escaped before it was banded or photographed. This is the first certain record of McKay's in the Aleutians and it extends the winter range some 600 miles southwest of Cold Bay, where the species has been known to winter for years.

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## NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION /John B. Crowell, Jr. and Harry B. Nehls

The winter of 1974-75 was relatively mild with little snowfall in the lowlands for the second consecutive year. Total precipitation through much of the Region was in excess of normal, however. February and March did have slightly below normal temperatures and March brought unusually strong northwest winds to the Region on quite a number of days. The result was a much delayed spring, although the warm fall and mild winter, particularly early in the season, doubtless accounted for many of the unique winter records which are reported in the following pages.



[In the pages that follow, certain references to Christmas Bird Count records already published in *Am. Birds*, April, 1975, have been deleted for lack of space. The notation (CBC) will advise the reader to seek the original and noteworthy record therein. — Ed.]

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS** — Individual Yellow-billed Loons were seen on a number of occasions during the winter at the mouth of the Nicomekl R., near White Rock, B.C.; at Pt. Roberts; and at Eld Inlet near Olympia, Wash. On Mar. 14 there were 120 Arctic Loons at Active Pass in the Gulf Is., (MS, *vide* WW). On Feb. 22 at Deception Pass 150 Red-throated Loons were counted (WW), and on Mar. 20, near Ladner, B.C., 65 individuals were observed (BM, *vide* WW). An estimated 1500 W. Grebes were found at March Pt., Wash., Feb. 22 and at Pt. Roberts Mar. 31 (WW *et al.*) A long-dead imm. Black-footed Albatross was found on the beach at Westport, Wash., Jan. 15 (BT). A decomposed Short-tailed Shearwater was found on the beach at Tokeland, Wash., Dec. 29 (DH, DHa). A Brandt's Cormorant at the s. end of Puget Sound Jan. 22 (DH, BT) was out-of-place; 7000 birds of this species at Active Pass Dec. 23 (MS, *vide* WW) is a noteworthy concentration.



Two Green Herons were at Pitt Meadows, e. of Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 15 (*vide* WW); further south, single birds were seen in at least five locations at various times during the winter. Individual Cattle Egrets were seen at Bellingham, Wash., Dec. 19 and then 10 mi. away at Ferndale Dec. 25-Jan. 8 (TW); other single Cattle Egrets were at Boundary Bay Dec. 21, at White Rock Dec. 22, and at Pitt Meadows from Dec. 16 into early January (WW *et al.*). An imm. Cattle Egret appeared at Sauvie I., w. of Portland, Ore., Mar. 1 (TC, HN) Also see (CBC). The northernmost winter record this year for a Great Egret was a bird at Bainbridge I., Wash., Mar. 21 (RL); there were numerous sightings of Great Egrets in w. Oregon with up to five birds at a time seen at Sauvie I., Tillamook, Salem, Newport, Waldport, Fern Ridge Res., Grants Pass and Medford, a roost containing 12 birds was discovered Feb. 22 between Coquille and Myrtle Pt. in the Coquille R. valley, where the species was characterized as being abundant on that date (WHO). A Black-crowned Night Heron was discovered at Seattle, Dec. 1 (FK, *vide* PM), and another was seen at Newberg, Ore., Mar. 27 (JG *et al.*) Three Am. Bitterns wintered on the Nisqually N.W.R. near Olympia (BT). Also see (CBC).

**WATERFOWL** — Whistling Swans wintered from s. of Vancouver through the Puget Sound and Willamette Valley lowlands in total numbers of as many as 1500 this year, judging by reports. Up to five Whistling Swans appeared on s. Vancouver I. (VG), and as many as 40 were seen from time to time at favored places on the Oregon coast. Up to 100 Trumpeter Swans wintered in Skagit Co., Wash. (TW); seven individuals spent the season at Cowichan Bay, Vancouver I., (JCo), while a dozen were at Pitt L. all winter (RR, WR, *vide* WW); one bird was at Ocean Shores, Wash., for ten days in mid-December (G&WH). Black Brant were comparatively little noted until late March when they showed up fairly well at a number of places; Tsawwassen, B.C., furnished the peak number of 1000 on Mar. 26 (BM, *vide* WW). Except for occasional stragglers earlier in the winter, White-fronted Geese moved into the Region in March, 150 at Ridgefield N.W.R. w. of Vancouver, Wash., being the largest number sighted (BT). The Skagit Flats hosted 12,000 Snow Geese much of the winter, although for the second consecutive year there were few immatures in the flocks (TW). In February 300 Snow Geese were at Sauvie I., (TC, HN) and in mid-March 8000 were estimated to be present on Sea I., s of Vancouver, B. C. (BM, *vide* WW). Also see (CBC). Numbers of Pintail in the s. Willamette Valley in late December and early January were unusually high, with 30,000 at Finley N.W.R. the first half of January (FR). The Eur. Green-winged Teal was reported eight times during the winter from the Vancouver, B.C. area; two were at Iona I., Mar. 9 (JT, *vide* W); other individuals were seen at Saanich, B.C., in late January and again in late March (VG, RS *et al.*), and at Kent Valley, King Co., Wash., in mid-January (EH). Lone Blue-winged Teals were seen at Nisqually, near Olympia, Mar. 8 (G&WH) and at Bellevue, Wash., Dec. 29 (BB *et al.*, *vide* PM). A ♂ Cinnamon Teal was found at Ocean Shores, Dec. 8 & 18 (G&WH), another was at Nisqually N.W.R. in January (K&KL, *vide* BT), and a group of eight was at McNeil I., Wash.,

Feb. 16 (*vide* PM). Occasional Eur. Wigeon were, as usual, scattered throughout the Region from Vancouver s. to Eugene and at places on the Oregon coast. A presumed hybrid European X Am. Wigeon was seen by four observers in Vancouver's Stanley Park Dec. 29, and then again in early April (WW).

Concentrations of up to 250 N. Shovelers at Ladner in late December and at Iona I., near Vancouver, in mid-February (WW *et al.*) were noteworthy, though not unprecedented. Wood Ducks were present at Grants Pass, Ore., in several groups up to ten through much of the winter (PR, *vide* SS); by the end of March they had moved in numbers into the w. Willamette Valley (JG) Redheads were seen at Pitt Meadows, Duncan, White Rock, Sooke River, B.C., at Mt. Vernon and Ocean Shores, Wash., and near Ashland, Ore., mostly in December, but up until mid-February; the maximum was sixteen individuals. The peak count for Canvasbacks was 1000 off Samish I., Wash., in December (NL, *vide* TW); there were 500 on Alsea Bay on the c. Oregon coast, Dec. 30 (LN), while Yaquina Bay a bit to the north supported up to 600 through most of the winter (FR). More than 400 Canvasbacks were counted near Hillsboro, Ore., away from the coast, in mid-February (TL). An unprecedented number of Tufted Duck sightings occurred this winter, all from the vicinity of Vancouver: an adult male was at the Ladner sewage ponds Dec. 15 (WW), another was at Iona I. Dec. 22-Feb. 16 (KB, BM, *vide* WW), a third was on the Fraser R., n of Lulu I., Jan. 11 (TR, *vide* BK, WW), and one was at N. Vancouver, Mar. 16 (KB, *vide* WW). It is, of course, possible that fewer than four individuals were involved in these sightings. A ♀ Oldsquaw was discovered at Sauvie I., Dec. 31 (JG, HN *et al.*), and four were at Eld Inlet on the s. end of Puget Sound throughout the winter (G&WH). The 75-100 Black Scoters on the ocean n. of Newport, Ore., Jan. 24 (LN) is an unusual concentration for Oregon. Also see (CBC) A ♂ **Smew** was discovered at Reifel Refuge, Jan. 18 (TW *et al.*) and remained until the end of March; this is the third record for this species in the Vancouver area since late 1970 (WW).

**HAWKS** — A Turkey Vulture was present at White Rock, B.C., Dec. 22 (ML, MW, *vide* WW), an astoundingly late date! Early migrant Vultures were one at Corvallis, Ore., Feb. 24 (BP, *vide* FR), and two at Saanich Mar. 22 (VG *et al.*). There were about ten sightings of Goshawks this winter in the Vancouver area (*vide* WW), but Goshawks were reported elsewhere only from Sauvie I., Jan. 17 (TC, HN), and from Victoria Dec. 14 (RF, *vide* VG) & Jan. 2 (V&MG) Sharp-shinned Hawks were noted repeatedly at Grays Harbor, at Olympia, at Finley N.W.R., and at Grants Pass during the winter. Also see (CBC). Cooper's Hawks were noted in smaller numbers, apparently, from most of the same places through the winter; several Cooper's Hawks seem to have wintered in residential areas of Portland. A better view of the status of these two Blue List species in the Region will have been available with publication of the 1974 CBCs. A Swainson's Hawk is said to have been present at Lopez I., Wash., on the surprising date of Feb. 1; it was seen in direct comparison with several Red-tailed and a good

in-flight description was furnished (J&A, *vide* NL). Rough-legged Hawks were present in the Vancouver-Ladner area in greater numbers than in the preceding winter (WW), but further south, where record numbers occurred last year, the reverse was true. The Skagit, Samish and Lummi Flats nonetheless experienced good numbers (TW). Also see (CBC). Only four records for Rough-legged came this winter from the Washington and Oregon coasts, from Tillamook northward. Golden Eagles were present in the Region this winter in unprecedented numbers. Several were seen repeatedly in the Medford, Ore., area (OS); one was in the s. Willamette Valley foothills Mar. 21 (LN); one was at Tillamook Dec. 14; and one was at Sauvie I., Dec. 22. In the Vancouver-Victoria-Bellingham triangle there were approximately fifteen sightings of Golden Eagles involving possibly a dozen individual birds. Ten individuals — three adults, seven immatures — were counted in the San Juan Is., Mar. 28 (B&CY); two were present Dec. 15-Feb. 5 at Duncan, B.C. (JCo). Cooperative counts along the lower Fraser R. for Bald Eagles which gather to feed on spawned out salmon carcasses resulted in totals of 130 (89 ad., 41 imm.) Nov. 30 and of 438 (211 ad., 214 imm., 13?) on Feb. 1; the proportion of immatures to adult birds was less in February, 1975, than it was on a similar count a year earlier (WW). Forty Bald Eagles were present between Duncan and Cowichan Bay, Jan. 20, with 35 per cent of them being immature birds. Also see (CBC). Along the Skagit R. in n. Washington from Fir I. to Rockport there were 105 Bald Eagles Jan. 5 (GO, *vide* PM). Bald Eagles were present in more than usual numbers throughout w. Washington; in w. Oregon only the usual few scattered individuals were evident, although Sauvie I. and nearby Ridgefield N.W.R. seem to have supported at least six to eight birds this winter. Early-returning Ospreys had appeared at Medford, Fern Ridge Res. w. of Eugene, and the Victoria area by Mar. 22-31. There were fewer reports of Gyrfalcons from the Vancouver and Bellingham areas than there have been in each of the last four years. One was seen at Victoria, Feb. 12 & Mar. 17 (V&MG, RS). A Prairie Falcon was noted there Feb. 25 (RF, *vide* VG). Single Prairie Falcons also were seen in the Medford area on several occasions (MM, *vide* JH; OS); one was at Ankeny N.W.R. s. of Salem, Ore., in early January (*vide* FR) and one was seen on the Lummi Flats Jan. 11, where it was found shot in March (TW). About a dozen Peregrines were sighted in the s. half of the Region this winter. Merlins were more common than that, showing up consistently on CBCs in s. British Columbia, and n. Washington, with a few individuals noted later in the winter at points farther south.

**CRANES, RAILS, SHOREBIRDS** — An imm. Sandhill Crane spent the winter at Saanich, n. of Victoria (*vide* VG). Cranes moving northward were in the Region again by early March, with 100 n. of Medford, in the middle of the month (MM, *vide* JH) and up to 300 at Sauvie I. after Mar. 3 (TC, HN). Virginia Rails were found repeatedly through December and into early January, then again in March in the Vancouver area (WW *et al.*). At Victoria, up to six spent the winter (VG *et al.*), For Sora records see (CBC)

**SHOREBIRDS** — For Semipalmated and Snowy Plover records, see (CBC). Killdeer again seem to have been scarcer than they were in winter before the severe freeze of two years ago, but the conclusion is tentative. A good count of wintering Black-bellied Plover was the 250-300 observed at Victoria, Jan. 13 (ARD, *vide* VG). The 80 Surfbirds seen at Tillamook Dec. 27 (TLo, HN) was also a good total. A Black Turnstone was seen in a field near Eugene Dec. 19 "bathing with Killdeer" (RF, *vide* LM). There were several large concentrations of Com. Snipe at Vancouver in December, including eighty at Burnaby L. Dec. 28 (BK), but the birds largely disappeared in January; by March numbers were being augmented by returning migrants (WW). Four Whimbrel and five Willets were at Yaquina Bay Jan. 18 (CW); it is the third consecutive year in which Whimbrel have been found there during the winter season. Twelve Willets were discovered at Willapa Bay Mar. 27, where 15 Greater Yellowlegs were seen the same day (CW); the latter species was seen also during the winter in numbers up to eight at Tokeland, Raymond and Grays Harbor and in the vicinity of Vancouver. A Lesser Yellowlegs spent the period Dec. 22-Mar. 2 at Iona I. (WW *et al.*); six birds of this species were found at Finley N.W.R., Mar. 3 (JG *et al.*). A lone Red Knot was at Crescent Beach, B.C., Feb. 8-Feb. 15 (AG, DB *et al.*), the first winter record for the Vancouver area (WW). Ten Rock Sandpipers were at the jetty to Tillamook Bay Dec. 27 (TLo, HN); three birds were at Seal Rocks, s. of Newport, Ore., Jan. 18 (CW). For Dunlin, see (CBC). A Short-billed Dowitcher was seen at Burnaby L., Vancouver, Jan. 1-2 (SM, *vide* WW, BK). Long-billed Dowitchers were present at Vancouver in December and January in numbers up to 40 or more (BK), and were present there in smaller numbers the remainder of the winter (*vide* WW). Elsewhere, Long-billed Dowitchers showed up on a number of the Region's CBCs. The unprecedented numbers of Marbled Godwits in the Region last fall led to the same phenomenon this winter; see (CBC); only one bird was found at Ocean Shores, Jan. 4 (G&WH).

**JAEGERS, GULLS, ALCIDS** — A dark-phase Pomarine Jaeger was seen at Grays Harbor Dec. 15 (DP *et al.*); the bird was first observed at rest on a dune and was observed at close range before it flew. Glaucous Gulls were observed at Sauvie I., Dec. 22 & Jan. 29, at Yaquina Bay Feb. 9 & 15; at Bellingham Jan. 4, at Everett, Wash., Jan. 12; at the Thurston Co. (Olympia) dump much of the winter; and at Victoria Dec. 7, and three times in March. An ad. W. Gull was the inland location of Castle Rock, Wash., Mar. 5 (DH, BT), see also (CBC). The only California Gulls reported after December were two at Castle Rock Mar. 5 in company with large numbers of other gulls following a run of smelt (BT), two at Kitsilano Beach, Feb. 28 (BK, *vide* WW), one on Mar. 3 and two on Mar. 25 at s. Vancouver I. (VG). More than 2000 Ring-billed Gulls were at Fern Ridge Res., Feb. 21 (HN). Single imm. Franklin's Gulls are said to have been at Vancouver's Stanley Park, Feb. 13 (BK) and, for w. Oregon's first winter record, at Yaquina Bay, Feb. 15 (RO *et al.*, *vide* FR). The Victoria CBC recorded a new high of over 1800 Bonaparte's Gulls; by mid-January the birds had entirely disappeared (VG). Single, late Heermann's

Gulls were at Speiden Channel in the San Juans Dec. 14 (TW), and at Pt. Roberts Dec. 1 (DP, *fide* PM). On Feb 26 there were 35 ad. Black-legged Kittiwakes on the beach at Grays Harbor (BT); one or two individuals were observed at Cowichan Bay, Vancouver I., Feb. 1 (JCo *et al.*), at Tacoma Mar. 25, and at Port Angeles, Wash., Mar. 26 (CW).

There were 240 Marbled Murrelets concentrated at Tsawwassen, B.C., Jan. 27 (MS, *fide* WW). Ancient Murrelets in number up to 18 were seen in waters around the s.e. end of Vancouver I., from the beginning of the report to the first week in March (VG); one or two birds were seen during the winter at the s. end of Puget Sound (G&WH, BT); twelve were at Pt. Roberts Dec. 1 (DP, *fide* PM), and 80 were at Irvine's Landing, 45 mi. n.w. of Vancouver, Jan. 4 (MS, *fide* WW). Rhinoceros Auklets were less reported from the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound than is usual for the winter season; no more than five in a day were recorded on five different dates in the waters around Victoria this winter (VG); three were seen at Whidbey I., Mar. 24 and at Port Angeles Mar. 26 (CW); good counts of 65 Rhinoceros Auklets were made Jan. 22 & Feb. 23 at Nisqually Beach in s. Puget Sound (BT). Tufted Puffins were recorded at Cape Flattery, Wash., Feb. 14 (R&MB, *fide* PM).

**PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — Flocks of Band-tailed Pigeons totaling 70+ birds were on the Saanich Peninsula n. of Victoria in January, but the number dropped to about 25 in February, with the birds being absent in March (VG). Also see (CBC). Up to 40 Mourning Doves spent the winter at Ladner (WW); there were approximately 450 on Sauvie I. at the end of January (HN), which is an extraordinary wintertime concentration for this Region. Two and four Barn Owls spent the winter at, respectively, Medford (OS) and Corvallis (FR). Barn Owls said to be of regular occurrence around Puget Sound in open habitat (EH). Also see (CBC). In the Vancouver area, the Snowy Owl invasion this winter brought forth approximately one-third the numbers of last year's memorable incursion; raptor counts generated 16 Snowy Owls in December, 20 in January, and 15 in February. See also (CBC). Ten of these great owls seem to have been present much of the winter on the Samish Flats (NL, *fide* TW). Further south, two Snowy Owls were at Kent valley and at Ocean Shores in mid-December; one spent the winter in the vicinity of Eugene (LM *et al.*). Single birds appeared at one time or another at Victoria, at Dungeness Spit, at Leadbetter Pt., at Seattle and at Olympia. A Hawk Owl was found at N. Saanich Jan. 18 (RF, *fide* VG). A Burrowing Owl spent the winter on the s. side of Yaquina Bay (FR). The two Barred Owls at Bacus Hill, Skagit Co., Wash., were recorded again Mar. 6 (TRe, *fide* PM). A Great Gray Owl was discovered and photographed at Bradner, 40 mi. e. of Vancouver Jan. 26, but could not subsequently be found again (GR, *fide* WW). A pair of Long-eared Owls was on the Samish Flats for much of the winter (TW); one was observed at Medford Jan. 18-Feb. 9 (*fide* OS). Short-eared Owls were down considerably from their usual numbers at Vancouver and Ladner; one wonders whether they are displaced by Snowy Owls. However, 21 were at Iona I., Feb. 8 (WRa, *fide* WW), and 18 more

were at Duncan, oddly enough, on the same day (JCo). From other points in the Region to the south up to three Short-eared Owls at a time were reported at various dates through the season from a dozen different localities all the way to Medford. Saw-whet Owls were noted at five different places in Washington and in s. British Columbia at various dates from the end of December to the end of March.

Two Black Swifts were seen at Corvallis on the very surprising date of Mar. 31; the sightings were made by four different observers, (GB, Who, BL, PRo). Anna's Hummingbirds continue to appear in winter in ever larger numbers. Also see (CBC). In Portland Anna's Hummers appeared regularly at a number of feeders; one section of the city supported at least a half dozen individuals within a few square blocks; by March, several females were showing signs of nesting (HN). In Seattle, at least eight birds spent the winter. In Vancouver, there were seven parts of the city where Anna's Hummingbirds were present in numbers between one and three (WW). A male at Bellingham and one or two individuals at Pt. Roberts all wintered (TW). At Saanich, n. of Victoria, there were at least four birds patronizing feeders (VG). Anna's Hummers appeared at feeders near Medford the second week of March (JH), a single bird was seen a few miles s. of Pistol R., Curry Co., Ore., Jan. 2 (Who). Large numbers of Lewis' Woodpeckers spent the winter in the Rogue R. valley (OS *et al.*); up to 25 of these birds were at Finley N.W.R. much of the winter (FR), but otherwise the species was not reported. A remarkable ten Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers of the red-breasted race were at Egmont, B.C., Mar. 26-28 (MS, *fide* WW); the species is decidedly uncommon in this Region. A White-headed Woodpecker was recorded Mar. 28 2 mi. w. of Hayden Summit between Ashland and Klamath Falls, Ore. (OS).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH TITMICE** — A Black Phoebe was discovered at Philomath, Ore., w. of Corvallis, Dec. 26; it was present until the end of the period (LN, FR *et al.*). A Say's Phoebe was at Ridgefield N.W.R. on the Columbia R. from Feb. 8 to at least Mar. 5 (FJ, G&WH, BT *et al.*); another was seen on San Juan I., Mar. 22 (DH, MGo). The alarm created last year by recording only two Skylarks on the Victoria CBC was alleviated this year when an encouraging count of 39 was taken on Dec. 21 (VG). On San Juan I., 20 Skylarks were singing Mar. 28 (B&CY). The first "mainland" record for the Skylark was made Feb. 11 when a bird was found in the Fraser R. delta (WW). A Tree Swallow was present at Finley N.W.R., Jan. 16 (*fide* FR), one was at Raymond, Wash., Jan. 26 (DH), and nine were at Philomath Feb. 9 (DM *et al.*). Also see (CBC). A Barn Swallow was at Burnaby L., B.C., Dec. 1, two were at Reifel Refuge Dec. 14, one was at Ladner the next day and again Dec. 21 (*fide* WW). Two Barn Swallows were seen at Seattle, Dec. 30, while single birds were noted in the same spot Jan. 21, and at other localities in Seattle Dec. 6 & 11 (*fide* PM). The **Blue Jay** reported at Des Moines, King Co., Wash., last November remained until mid-January (PM); one re-appeared the last few days of March on the campus of U.B.C. in Vancouver, where a bird had been seen last October (*fide* WW), it is possible that all these sightings

were of the same individual. A Black-billed Magpie was found at Seattle Feb. 17 (B&PE, *vide* PM); three were seen at Pinehurst, Ore., e. of Ashland, Feb. 1 (OS). A count of 35 Com. Ravens at N. Vancouver Jan. 20 (JR, *vide* WW) is remarkable. Also see (CBC). Northwestern Crows were said to be in very high numbers at Vancouver, Ladner, Pitt Meadows and Bellingham, as evidenced by the CBCs; all recorded between 2400 and 3500 individuals. A flock of more than 100 Clark's Nutcrackers was at North Bend, Ore., most of the winter (HR), a highly unusual occurrence. On Jan. 12 in W. Vancouver, ten Mountain Chickadees were observed (AG, DBc, *vide* WW). Bushtits have been found to be present in increasing numbers on the CBCs for Bellingham, Ladner, Pitt Meadows and Vancouver the last few years; 340 were found on this year's Pitt Meadows count (WW).

**MIMIDS THROUGH WARBLERS** — The season produced five records of Mockingbirds for the Region — one each at Victoria, Harrison Hot Springs, Vancouver, Samish I., Wash., and Junction City, Ore.; each bird spent most of the winter at the named locality except the Harrison Hot Springs bird which is known to have been present only Dec. 31-Jan. 4. Again Hermit Thrushes were very scarce. Although W. Bluebirds are decidedly uncommon in this Region in winter, some interesting concentrations were observed; 21 were at Salem Jan. 19 (FS), 25 were at Olympia Jan. 28 ((G&WH) and 12 were at Newport Mar. 4 (*vide* LN). Wintering birds were also present at Wolf Creek, Ore. (EP) and in the Rogue R. Valley (OS). Two ♂ W. Bluebirds were seen on Mar. 29 at Sumas Mt. between Abbotsford and Chilliwack, B.C. (PW, KH, *vide* WW). On Feb. 16 two young ♂ Mountain Bluebirds were noted on Sauvie I. (HN); a male was seen on San Juan I., Mar. 23 (MGo, DH) & Mar. 26 (TW). Townsend's Solitaires were found throughout the winter on the Green Springs Highway, e. of Ashland (OS) and at Wolf Creek (EP); lone solitaires occurred at six localities from Medford n. to Vancouver Jan. 26-Mar. 18. A count of up to 200 Water Pipits at Salem Jan. 28 (FS) is an unusual mid-winter concentration for the Region. Bohemian Waxwings occurred sporadically and in small numbers s. of Vancouver to Corvallis in the Puget Sound-Willamette Valley trough after Feb. 1. At Vancouver, they were scarce until mid-February, but then appeared in considerable numbers, remaining until the end of the report period; several flocks of 100-200 birds were seen (WW *et al.*). Cedar Waxwings were, for the most part, quite uncommon. N. Shrikes were reported from nine localities between Victoria and Medford; the only coastal occurrence was a bird at Tillamook Mar. 15 (JBC *et al.*). A Solitary Vireo was seen at Victoria Mar. 23 (MMu, *vide* JW), a very early date. A carefully observed and fully-described **Black-and-white Warbler** was found at Tokeland, Wash., Mar. 21 (HF). At least a dozen Orange-crowned Warblers at ten different localities were in the Region during the report period from Vancouver s. to Eugene. Three **Nashville Warblers** occurred during the report period: one was seen at Vashon I., Nov. 28 and again Dec. 6 (AR); another was found at Seattle Dec. 7 (EH); the third was also at Seattle Jan. 24 (DJ, *vide* PM). A very late Yellow Warbler was discovered at Hoquiam, Wash., Dec. 15

(EH *et al.*), it was seen again Dec. 18 (DH, G&WH, BT), and both times the bird was with a flock of juncos right in town. Townsend's Warblers were seen at nine different localities from Burnaby and s. Vancouver I south to Corvallis. From one to three Palm Warblers were seen repeatedly at Ocean Shores Dec. 15-Jan. 11 (KB, G&WH, DP *et al.*). Again a N. **Waterthrush** was found in the Region in winter — this one at Reifel Sanctuary Dec. 7 & 14, observed from 20 feet (MS, MW, ND, *vide* WW); it is the first British Columbia winter record (WW). A **Com. Yellowthroat** was at Vancouver from Jan. 3 (BK) until at least Mar. 9, in which period it was seen by a number of other observers, also see (CBC) these records are said to be the first in winter for British Columbia (WW). On Mar. 3 a Com Yellowthroat was seen at Finley N.W.R. (JG *et al.*) A Wilson's Warbler was found at S. Burnaby Dec. 29 (AG, ES, *vide* WW); another was seen in the Victoria district Jan. 18 (C&SWo, RS, VG); there are at least two earlier winter records for s. British Columbia (WW)

**BLACKBIRDS, FINCHES, SPARROWS** — An imm. ♂ N. Oriole spent the winter near a feeder at Florence, Ore. (*vide* LM); another bird of this species was recorded at Westport Dec. 15 (DH, DHa, *vide* EH) A Rusty Blackbird was discovered at Bellingham Dec. 28 (LB, EH). A **Com. Grackle** showing an iridescent purple hood and bronze back and described in minute detail, was seen at Olympia on Dec. 4,7,9,10 and Jan. 18 (DH, DHa, G&WH, BT). Flocks of Brown-headed Cowbirds numbering up to 75 individuals were apparently coming into the Region in March, being noted particularly at Sauvie I., Bellingham and Lynden, Wash. A ♀ **W. Tanager** was observed Feb. 26, Mar. 14 & 20 at Grants Pass (PR, SS) for one of the Region's very few winter records of this species. A ♀ or imm **Blue Grosbeak** was at a feeder near Corvallis from Jan. 4-Jan.17 in which period it was seen and photographed by many observers (HN, FR *et al.*); it is the only record for Oregon known to us. From Dec. 1 to early January an imm. ♀ or a ♂ **Lazuli Bunting** came regularly to a feeder in Leaburg, near Eugene, Ore. (LM *et al.*); it is the only Regional winter record of which we are aware Evening Grosbeaks were much less in evidence in the s portion of the Region than is usually the case in winter, a few were to be found in Victoria (VG) and in N Vancouver (WW), but not until March did any groups appear, and then only at Bellingham (TW), at Medford (MM, *vide* JH), at Corvallis (LN), and at Olympia (BT). There were three or four Cassin's Finches to be seen around Corvallis this winter (FR), a most unusual occurrence. Two Pine Grosbeaks were seen in Saanich Jan. 11 (RMG), and another was noted at Vancouver Dec. 27 (BBr, *vide* WW). At White Rock, B.C. Dec. 22 six Com. Redpolls were discovered; five of these birds were seen at Pitt Meadows Mar. 15 (TR). Both Red and White-winged Crossbills seem to have occurred during the season only at Vancouver; Red Crossbills were additionally seen only at Bellingham and in very small numbers in the vicinity of Victoria. Single Lark Sparrows appeared at separate feeders in Corvallis, Jan. 30 and in March (*vide* FR); a few Lark Sparrows wintered in the Medford area (OS, PR, SS). Wintering Tree Sparrows got as far south as Seattle and Nisqually in

number up to three; further north, the maximum was six at Boundary Bay Mar. 8 (MS *et al.*, *vide* WW). A **Chipping Sparrow** seen in Vancouver, Dec. 1 (BK) constituted the first winter record for British Columbia (WW); one was in Corvallis Jan. 7 where two were seen Feb. 4 (LN). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found in Oregon for the second consecutive year; this one turned up at Tillamook Dec. 14 (WT, DM). Harris' Sparrows were present up to three at a time at Eugene, Philomath, Ridgefield N.W.R., Nisqually N.W.R., Iona I., and Boundary Bay at various times through the winter. White-throated Sparrows were more widespread than in any previous winter, with reports from a dozen localities in the southern half of the Region. Lincoln's Sparrows were almost as widely reported, being noted at ten different locales. Individually Swamp Sparrows were noted at Saanich, Dec. 22-28 (JTa, V&MG, RS), at Anacortes, Wash., Dec. 22 (TW), at Wiser L. in n. Washington, Dec. 28 (LB, EH), and at Lummi Flats, Skagit Co., Wash. (DHe, *vide* TW). Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were repeatedly recorded in the area between Vancouver and Bellingham, the 130 Longspurs at Ladner Feb. 8 (GAP) and the 26 Snow Buntings at Blacky Spit Jan. 13 (DB, *vide* WW) being the top counts; single Longspurs were found at Ocean Shores Dec. 15 (G&WH), at Glover Pt., Victoria, Jan. 19 (RS, *vide* VG) and in the dunes s. of the Columbia R. mouth, Mar. 28 (CW). Snow Buntings were found additionally at Ocean Shores Dec. 8, when 21 were present (EH), and Feb. 16, when one was present (G&WH).

**OBSERVERS** — Jim & Jan Ashleman, Dan Bastaja, Desi Belton (DBe), Kevin Bell, Blair Bernson, Richard & Margaret Bertram, Laurie Binford, Betty Brown (BBr), Ken Brunner, Gene Burrison, John Comer (JCo), Tom Crabtree, John B. Crowell, Jr., A.R. Davidson, Neil Dawe, Bob & Pat Evans, Randy Floyd (RFI), Harold Fray, Jr., Ralph Fryer, Jeff Gilligan, Margaret Goodin (MGo), Vic Goodwill, Margaret Goodwill, Al Grass, Ken Hall, D. Hames (DHa), David Hayward, Dennis Heinemann (DHe), Joseph Hicks, Wayne Hoffman (WHo), Glen & Wanda Hoge, Eugene Hunn, John Ireland, Frank Jacox, Doris Jelliffe, Brian Kautesk, Fay Krause, Katie & Kirk LaGory, Norman Lavers, Richard Lindstrom, Brad Livesy, Tom Love (TL), Tom Lund, Michael Luz, Bruce MacDonald, Don MacDonald, R. Mackenzie-Grieve, Phil Mattocks, Merle McGraw, Larry McQueen, Margaret Muirhead (MMu), Steve Mooney, Harry Nehls, Lars Norgren, Robert Olson, Gordon Orians, Dennis Paulson, G.A. Poynter, Bill Peterson, Eleanor Pugh, William Rae (WRa), Fred Ramsey, Tim Reichard (TR), Hilda Reiher, Alan Richards, Tony Roach, Robin Robinson, Wilma Robinson, John Rodgers, Priscilla Rollow, Peter Rothlisberg (PRo), Glenn Ryder, Ron Satterfield, Floyd Shrock, Michael Shepard, Edward Sing, Steve Summers, Otis Swisher, Jeremy Tatum (JTa), William Thackaberry, John Toochin, Bill Tweit, Terry Wahl, Peter Ward, Clarice Watson, Wayne Weber, Jack Williams, Martin Witttrin, Chauncey & Sarah Wood (C&SWo), Bob & Carol Yutzky. — **JOHN B. CROWELL, JR.**, 1185 Hallinan Circle, Lake Oswego, OR 97034 and **HARRY B. NEHLS**, 2736 S.E. 20th Avenue, Portland, OR 97202.

## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION /Rich Stallcup, Jon Winter

We've had a different kind of winter this period in Northern California. Through the end of January there had been only eight drier winters on record and several contributors remarked on general concern for a drought to follow. February and March, however, were months of heavy rain and snow which brought the seasonal precipitation totals equal to and in many places, especially the Sierras, to points above normal. Unusually strong winds in late March knocked out nests of many Great Horned Owls, White-tailed Kites and Red-tailed Hawks in the Central Valleys (below C.V.) but follow-up observations revealed promising reconstruction efforts by those species (RS, BED, DG). Probably owing to the dry and rather warm December and January, once again, many of our typical "summer only" species remained late but most had departed or died by mid-February. Several observers noted birds still migrating through mid-December.



The annual winter waterfowl survey conducted by the California Department of Fish and Game (below C.F.G.) in mid-January tallied 5,195,000 ducks, seven per cent less than last year but 25 per cent above the 21-year average. Geese were down about 10 per cent from last year with 595,000, probably owing to available water remaining to the north and a record kill by hunters. On public hunting areas alone the largest number of hunters ever took 278,428 birds which is 68 per cent higher than last year. Hunter success is near totally dependent upon the weather, a dry year which concentrates birds to shooting areas is better than a wet year which spreads birds to inaccessible areas (BED). Last winter ('73-'74) was really wet throughout the shooting season, yielding a very low kill. Fowl cholera struck again this winter and by the end of February over 1100 swans, 4000 coots and lesser numbers of ducks and geese had perished. As mentioned in the fall report, montane and northern invasion species were scarce and the late, stormy periods

did not bring them into the region. Some species of early spring migrants were notably late, possibly owing to the bad weather and those which did appear were concentrated in the lowlands. Three species were new to the Region and five other species supplied the first winter records.

A dagger (†) means that the observer has submitted an acceptable description.

**LOONS, GREBES AND TUBENOSES** — A Yellow-billed Loon near Monterey Jan. 24-Feb. 16 (m.ob.) and one at King Salmon Feb. 23 (m.ob.) were the only ones reported. Common Loons were in good numbers both coastally and at the usual inland lakes and one at Lewiston L., Jan. 15-23 (DE, DA *et al.*) was the first Trinity Co. record. Red-throated Loons were lightly reported and 46 on the Oakland CBC was far below the 140 last year with equal coverage. All species of grebes were reported in good numbers. Horned Grebes were especially numerous with 29 reported inland and higher-than-usual numbers on the coast. On the Oakland CBC, 656 individuals were 287 more than last year with equal coverage. Many fewer pelagic bird trips were made than last year and thus, many fewer pelagic birds were reported. The only Black-footed Albatrosses reported were five, 22 mi. off Humboldt Bay Feb. 22 (TS, DE) and the high count of a one week cruise was nine on Mar. 1, 36°10.5'N, 125°2.4'W. With these latter Black-footeds, two Laysan Albatrosses were reported (SMP). Northern Fulmars were very scarce this winter with only three reported. Pink-footed Shearwaters, which normally do not winter, but arrive in late March, were reported as two in Monterey Bay Feb. 1 (J&SL, GMC) and 20 there Feb. 22 (JM *et al.*). Usual small numbers of Sooty Shearwaters were reported including 15 from Pt. Pinos Dec. 27 (RS, BW), and two or three Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen on Monterey Bay Feb. 1 & 22 (JM, JL *et al.*) which complement last winter's observations. One or two Manx Shearwaters also on Feb. 22 (JM, RD *et al.*) are additional to our very few records for winter or spring. No Storm-Petrels were noted.

**PELICANS THROUGH HERONS** — White Pelicans were down in numbers both on the coast and in the C. V., the most being 150 five mi. n.w. of Winters Jan. 18 (DG). A few Brown Pelicans lingered through December which is normal, and the last reported were five adults and one immature off Pt. Pinos Jan. 12 (SFB). All were gone from Monterey Bay Feb. 15 (JM). On Mar. 3, 100 Double-crested Cormorants were at Gray Lodge but numbers rapidly decreased after that date (BED). One Brandt's Cormorant Feb. 8 at Crescent City was the only one found on the north coast (TS, DE). Green Herons were found in normal numbers but a total of five during the period on the north coast was considered "very high" (DE, TS). Cattle Egrets are only slowly increasing in this region and 41 reported is just slightly higher than the previous best period (fall 1972). A Black-crowned Night Heron roost in the Loleta Bottoms was destroyed by road builders and left 250 birds standing in the open on Jan. 11 (DE, TS *et al.*). Other known roosts were healthy. A Least Bittern was seen at Sacramento N.W.R. Dec. 16 and there were sporadic reports at Gray Lodge in December and

January (BED). American Bitterns are most common in this region in the Los Banos area where 11 were counted along a four mi. stretch of roadway Feb 9 (BM, RS). Two or three were at Lower Klamath L. in December and January (ODS).

**WATERFOWL** — See the introductory paragraphs for comment on total populations, the hunting season and a cholera outbreak. Whistling Swans were in good numbers after the February rains and several thousand wintered at flooded rice fields between Oroville and Knight's Landing. Swans were the species hardest hit by the cholera and by the end of February 1100 had died. An ad. **Bewick's Swan** and three imm. swans either Bewick's or Bewick's X Whistling hybrids were on Hog L., 7 mi. n.e. of Red Bluff with about 200 Whistling Found Jan. 13 by Laymon, they were seen by many, photographed and well described through Jan. 24. An adult (GSK) and an immature (SAL) thought to be different birds from those at Hog L. were seen west of Oroville Feb. 4. These are the first reported from California. Details and speculations should appear elsewhere in the literature. Black Brant peaked at Humboldt Bay with 40,000 on Apr. 1 (Henry, *vide* DE). More Ross' Geese (33) were shot at Mendota than any other species (*vide* RH) and 3000 were grazing in fields near Merced Refuge Feb. 9 (DDeS, JF). These areas are the main wintering grounds for the entire species. Four Fulvous Tree ducks at Mendota Jan. 5 (RLH) were unusual and 16 at Woodland Mar. 2 (RS, DW) were early and were an exceptional number. A ♂ Mallard X Gadwall was banded at Gray Lodge Jan. 28 (BED). Five Eur. Green-winged Teal reported is just average. West of Los Banos Ref., 900 Am. Green-winged Teal early and were an exceptional number. A ♂ Mallard X **Two ♂ Baikal Teal** were taken by hunters, one at Honey L., Dec. 1 (*vide* C.F.G.) and an immature at Gray Lodge Jan. 4 (*vide* BED). The latter bird is to be deposited in the collection of Cal. State University, Humboldt. These are the first records for our region, but recent records from s. California, the Northwest and Alaska seem to be revealing a pattern suggesting that the birds may be getting here on their own. A ♂ Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal was at Los Banos Feb 20 (BED)-Mar. 29 (PM). A ♂ Cinnamon Teal was near L. Shastina Dec. 29 (AC *et al.*), which is unusual. Five near Loleta Jan. 18 (KT) were ten days earlier than ever in Humboldt Co. and 200 there Feb. 11 (KT, DA) was an exceptional number. European Wigeon were well represented with at least 25 different males and two definite hybrids with Am. Wigeon. Redheads were scarce as were Ring-necked Ducks. A male bird, thought to be a **Ring-necked X Tufted Duck** was at Rodeo Lagoon Mar. 26 through the end of the period (RS †LCB *et al.*) Contrasting with other divers, Canvasbacks were definitely up from the last few winters, doubtless the result of a hunting ban. Four Greater Scaup were noted inland. Common and Barrow's Goldeneye were more common than ever both on foothill rivers and coastal lagoons. On the American R. below Nimbus Dam 300 Commons and 30 Barrow's were eating dead salmon through mid-February but were gone shortly after that probably because of high and rushing dirty water (RS, DW). On the Oakland CBC, 1134 Commons (265 in 1974) and 24 Barrow's (11 in 1974) (SFB) were

exceptional increases near the coast. Eighty-one Barrow's reported were by far the most ever. The imm. ♂ White-winged Scoter at Avocado L. was still present Feb. 20 (RH, KH *et al.*). Black Scoters were up noticeably from the norm. Hooded Mergansers were high with 41 total, the most together being 15 at Foster City Feb. 21 (PM). Common Mergansers were also up and 110 at Redding Dec. 30 (RS, DW), 120 near Friant Jan. 19 (RH *et al.*) and 166 at Fremont Jan. 13 (EM) were exceptional flocks. A ♂ Red-breasted Merganser at Redding Dec. 26-Jan. 15 (m.ob.) was the only one reported inland.

**RAPTORS** — See the opening remarks for information on nest destruction by wind. White-tailed Kites were thought by several observers to be very high in the S F Bay region and the C. V. but far down at the Pajaro R mouth (J&RW) and S. Humboldt Bay (DA). Cooper's Hawks were slightly up and Sharp-shinned Hawks slightly down from the winter average. Six "Harlan's" Hawks were reported. Two Broad-winged Hawks were seen. One was "flying south" in Golden Gate Park Dec. 13 (LCB, VR) and an extremely pale individual was at Monterey from Dec. 26 (Chappel) through the end of the period (m. ob.). Swainson's Hawks returned to the C. V. in mid-March, as usual. Rough-legged Hawks were in good but not great numbers but 35 Ferruginous Hawks reported is more than the normal winter average. Golden Eagles are doing well in the region and 59 were reported. Bald Eagles also were reported in very high numbers and were at more localities and farther south in the region than is usual. Of 109 reported only 60 were in the Great Basin areas. Over 30 Prairie Falcons and 19 Merlins reported were encouraging numbers but only nine Peregrines follow the downhill slide of the species. American Kestrels were up on the Oakland CBC to 136 from 91 in 1974 (SFB).

**CHICKENS TO COOTS** — A single Ruffed Grouse was again booming at Tish-tang Campground near Willow Creek Mar. 31 (S&JL). No Mountain Quail were found in Butte Canyon (700 ft.) this winter where they were nearly common last year (AC). Three were at Rockwell Gap, Yolo Co. Mar. 28&29 for a first county record (DG). A Sandhill Crane at Mallard Res., Contra Costa Co., Dec. 29 was the first county record (JR *et al.*) Migrant cranes were seen over Balls Ferry Rd., Shasta Co., 250 on Feb. 24 (BED) and over Folsom L., seven on Mar. 9 (RS, DW) and 30 on Mar. 22 (RS *et al.*). A Black Rail was at Benecia S.P. Dec. 22 (JR *et al.*) and one was heard at Kehoe Marsh, Marin Co. Feb. 27 (RS).

**SHOREBIRDS** — On the Oakland CBC Snowy Plovers made their saddest showing since 1956 and only nine could be found (SFB). Over 200 Mountain Plovers were in the Panoche Valley in February and March. Of 19 Am. Golden Plovers reported 16 wintered on Pt. Reyes, a very low number. Long-billed Curlews winter in large numbers in the C. V. and 3000 in the Thornton area Feb. 9 (BM, RS) are representative. A few Spotted Sandpipers were on the American R. until Feb. 15 when rains swelled the water level (RS, DW). Lesser Yellowlegs were in better numbers than average by about 25 per cent in the C. V. and along the coast. A single Rock Sandpiper was on Ducksbury Reef Feb. 27

(RS). Those at Bodega and Humboldt remained at least through February. Twice as many Dunlins as wintered on Bolinas Lagoon in '73-'74 were present there this winter (P.R.B.O.). Of over 5000 dowitchers at Palo Alto Jan. 11, most were identified as Short-billed (DDeS) This is the predominant species in S.F. Bay in winter Marbled Godwits unrecorded in the north C. V. in winter seem to be regular in small numbers near Los Banos Six were seen separately there Dec. 19 (RS, BM). The Martinez Ruff (AB: 29: 115), was seen until Feb. 23 (m.ob.). Another bird, thought to be a Reeve was seen 3 mi. e. of Benecia Feb. 16-18 (RDeC, RS<sup>+</sup> *et al.*) and another Ruff was at Los Banos W.S. Mar. 23 (LPM<sup>+</sup>) and again Mar. 29 (PM). It seems certain that at least four different birds were seen in the region since last fall Black-necked Stilts are moving northward in the C. V. and into east S.F. Bay. On the Oakland CBC, 22 were counted versus only one in 1974. Red Phalaropes did not come onshore and one at Monterey Feb. 15 & 22 (m.ob.) was the only phalarope reported.

**JAEGERS, GULLS, ALCIDS** — At least four Pomarine and two Parasitic Jaegers were seen along the Pacific Grove shore Dec. 27 (BW, RS) and a single unidentified jaeger 8 mi. w. of Humboldt Feb. 22 was the first winter county record (DE, TS *et al.*). Seven Glaucous Gulls on the coast was a normal number but two, one second-year Jan. 20 (*fide* BK) and one first-year Feb. 9 (*fide* BK) and Feb. 10 (RS<sup>+</sup>) were our first inland records. A first-year Glaucous-winged Gull at Tahoe Keys Jan. 17 (WS) and at least four on the American R. near Sacramento Jan. 4-Feb. 15 (DW, RS *et al.*) were good inland records, as were at least five Herring Gulls at Tahoe Keys in January and February. (WS). Herrings are regular and even common in the Sacramento-Davis area in those months. Western Gulls are still increasing at Palo Alto where other gull species are declining (DDeS, JF). Birders' awareness of the Thayer's Gull is producing ever-increasing records and 43 were reported. This is no doubt only a small fraction of the numbers truly present. Heavy rains in early February brought large numbers of Ring-billed Gulls into the C.V. and 2500 were estimated near Thornton Feb. 9 (RS, BM) Mew Gulls were more common inland than is usual and 112 were found there (AE, PM, RS). On the south coast numbers were low possibly owing to lack of early rain (DDeS). The imm. Franklin's Gull near Moss Landing was seen through Dec. 21 (JiM, RM) and an adult was there Jan. 14 (PM, BS). The first regional Little Gull was found at Zumdotski S.P. Jan. 19 (BJM<sup>+</sup>) was seen by many, photographed and well described through Mar 1 (m.ob.<sup>+</sup>). It was in the first winter plumage. Following the fall invasion of Heermann's Gulls, many remained later than ever in Monterey Bay until at least Jan. 4 (J&RW, m.ob.). Large numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes wintered on the coast (m.ob.) but one adult in Butte Canyon near Chico Jan. 11 (AC *et al.*) was a real surprise. An imm. Sabine's Gull at Bodega Head Mar. 8 (JH<sup>+</sup>) was one of our very few winter records.

A Thick-billed Murre was present at Monterey harbor from Jan. 19 to at least Feb. 22 (m.ob.). The presence of these birds year after year is undeniable. Their origin, however, remains a mystery. As usual, about 15 Pigeon Guillemots wintered at Monterey (m.ob.), but one at

King Salmon Feb. 23-Mar. 1 (TS, DE *et al.*) was the first Humboldt County winter record. Marbled and Ancient Murrelets were reported in normal small numbers as were Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets. In Monterey Bay, however, both these latter species roost and huge numbers may be seen leaving at dawn. On Dec. 27 1500 Cassin's and 12,000 Rhinos were carefully estimated passing Pt. Pinos. (RS, GM, BW). Another Horned Puffin was found dead at the Pajaro R. mouth (J&RW).

PIGEONS THROUGH OWLS — Band-tailed Pigeons were "virtually non-existent" in the Palo Alto area this winter (DDeS). A single bird at 6800 ft. at Pincrest Camp, El Dorado Co., Feb. 2 was noteworthy (WS). Single Roadrunners were reported at Hog L. near Red Bluff (B&CY *et al.*), near Willits (OJK), calling south of Rockwell Gap, Yolo Co. (DG), and Del Puerto Canyon, Mar. 24 (WMP). Barn Owls were "common over the Oroville residential areas" where up to 75 were noted during the period (GN). A single bird near Fickle Hill, Humboldt Co. Feb. 18 was reported as part of an owl survey conducted there (DE). Ten Screech Owls were found on the same survey over a ten mile stretch of road Feb. 18. (DE). A record 146 Great Horned Owls were reported near Fickle Hill Feb. 18 (DE), two birds were on nests at Los Banos Ref., Mar. 13 (J&SL) and an adult and two young were found at Coyote Hills Park Mar. 24 (J&SL). Single Pygmy Owls were reported from Pincrest Camp on Feb. 26 (WS) and at Janesville, Lassen Co., Dec. 31 (RS, DW) where their status is unclear. Six birds at each of two locations; Robinson Canyon, Monterey Co., Feb. 15 ((RS, VR, LCB) and Pescadero Jan. 14 (PM) suggest that this species is more common in the coast ranges of the region than in the Sierra Nevada.

Spotted Owls appeared in two locations in Butte Co. A single bird was in the Chico Cemetery Jan. 31-Feb 2 and was seen by many observers. Another was seen in Butte Creek Canyon Mar. 8 (AC). Burrowing Owls were reported as holding their own along the coast (if they can stay ahead of the bulldozer) at Palo Alto (DDeS, BY) and at the Oakland Airport, where 19 birds were seen Dec. 15 on the Oakland CBC (*fide* SFB). Since this owl is rare along the coast north of Marin Co., three reports from Humboldt Co., of one bird on the south spit, Jan. 30, (DA), two birds in the Arcata River Bottoms January - March (DE), and two birds at L. Talawa, Del Norte Co., Feb. 26 (DE) are particularly noteworthy. Winter reports of Long-eared Owls were conspicuously low. Single birds were reported at Merced N.W.R., Jan. 15 (TC, B&CY), and the Berkeley City Dump Dec. 15 (LCB) while two individuals were found at Gray Lodge Ref., Jan. 19 (LCB). Up to 18 Short-eared Owls wintered on the Palo Alto shore despite the nuisance of dogs and off-road vehicles (B&CY). This species was "very scarce" along the north coast at Humboldt Bay (DE) as well as in the Lower Klamath Basin (ODS) throughout the period. Saw-whet Owls were reported in usual numbers along the coast with the exception of a remarkable 16 birds on the 10 mi. road survey near Fickle Hill, Feb. 18 (DE).

GOATSUCKERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A Poor-will was reported from the Lake Ranch, Pt. Reyes N.S. Dec.8 (BM). With the exception of some 400 birds at Putah Creek Feb. 6 (DD, WP), White-throated Swifts were reported in normal numbers along the coast and in one Sierran foothill location. A ♂ Costa's Hummingbird appeared again at a feeder in Hidden Valley Jan. 23 (*fide* BK). The first report of Rufous Hummingbird arrival was Feb. 10 at Arcata (DE). A single male was at Calaveras S.P. in the Sierra foothills, where it is scarce in spring, Mar. 2. Allen's Hummingbirds were first noted near the coast Jan 25 (Marie Mans) at Lafayette. Three pure "Yellow-shafted" Flickers (2 females & 1 male) were seen in Humboldt Co. at Loleta Jan. 30 & Mar. 22 and the Arcata River Bottoms Feb. 16 (TS, DA). Others were two females all winter at Sacramento (RS, GM *et al.*), one at Bodega Head Dec. 12 (WMP) and one on the Oakland CBC (*fide* SB). This race is only a winter visitant to our region. An encouraging number of Pileated Woodpecker reports were submitted with one Feb. 17 near Boggs Mtn., Lake Co., one 5 mi. w of Ukiah (OJK), two at the U.C.C. Camp near Cazadero Mar. 2 (m.ob.) and single birds at Calaveras S.P. Jan 19 (MK), Mirror L., Yosemite N.P. Dec. 27 (GB), and Bothe-Napa S.P. Mar. 30 (JW). Up to 25 Lewis' Woodpeckers were reported Dec. 4-Mar.30 in the Red Bluff area (SAL) and a "large concentration" was noted at the n. end of L. Berryessa Jan. 11 (BP). An out-of-range Williamson's Sapsucker was seen at Los Altos Hills Dec. 25 (*fide* DR). Hairy Woodpeckers have been observed to decline in the past 12-15 years in Contra Costa Co. Nuttall's Woodpeckers appear to be continuing their range extension north on the S F Peninsula. During the winter period they were found in two locations on Jasper Ridge and on the Stanford Univ. campus (DDeS, JF). A single Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was seen Dec. 30 at Pincrest Camp (WS).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CHICKADEES — The well-documented Thick-billed Kingbird that appeared last fall at McLaren Park in San Francisco was last reported Dec. 8 (LCB). A Tropical Kingbird remained in San Francisco until Dec. 19 (*fide* DR). A Cassin's Kingbird was seen and photographed near Little Table Mtn., Madera Co., Mar. 7-9 (KH†, BW *et al.*). The status of this species in the region is still unclear but the number of records for the San Joaquin Valley is increasing and it may prove to be regular there. Two very cold Black Phoebees were well described on the Mt Shasta CBC Dec. 29 (AC, RS). Say's Phoebees were noticeably scarce in the S.F. Bay Region during the period (DDeS, JF, WMP). An early W. Flycatcher was noted north of Upper L., Lake Co. Mar. 16 (OJK). Early (or late?) reports of Violet-green Swallows at Sunol Jan 1 (AE) and at Solano L. Jan. 26 (TL) were noteworthy, with single birds at each location. Tree Swallows were inspecting nest holes at the Oroville Borrow Jan 25 (GN). A very early or wintering Rough-winged Swallow was at Merced Ref., Feb. 2 (TC, B&CY). A wintering Barn Swallow at Kesterson W.A. Dec. 19-23 was lacking several primaries (RS, BM). Cliff Swallows were beginning to nest Feb. 8 at San Luis Ref. (DDeS)



They arrive in the C. V. a full three weeks before they do on the coast. The only report of Gray Jays was of ten birds at Van Damme S.P. Dec. 26 (OJK). A Yellow-billed Magpie flying over the corner of Columbus and Montgomery streets in S.F. (BE) was certainly out of place. Since no recent records for Plain Titmouse are known from the Honey L. Basin a report of a single bird at Janesville Dec. 31 is of interest (RS, DW).

**NUTHATCHES THROUGH WAXWINGS** — Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce throughout the region. Normal numbers of Dippers were reported in the coast ranges. Unusual was the presence of two or three Winter Wrens at Pinecrest until Jan. 1 reflecting mild early winter conditions at high elevations (WS). Mockingbirds continue to increase in Humboldt Co., with at least six birds reported there (*vide* DE). Single Sage Thrashers were reported from Sacramento Dec. 1 (*vide* BK) from Lost Lake CBC Dec. 27 (*vide* RH) and from near Talmage, Mendocino Co. Dec. 24-Jan. 1 (OJK). Robins were generally low compared to most winters and several observers noted very low numbers of Varied Thrushes. The Oakland CBC data indicated that this species was down by 80 per cent from their numbers last winter (*vide* SFB). Mountain Bluebirds staged a significant down slope movement late in the period possibly due the heavy snows in the mountains. At least 250 were noted in C.V. and near the coast (m.ob.). Four Townsend's Solitaires wintered along the coast at Humboldt Co., (*vide* TS) and seven birds were reported from scattered locations in the C.V. (m.ob.). Bluegray Gnatcatchers were seen in coastal locations wintering from Marin Co. to Monterey Co. Only two reports of Bohemian Waxwings were received, both of which were from the Sacramento area, Jan. 22 & Feb. 4 (*vide* BK).

**SHRIKES THROUGH WARBLERS** — More-than-normal numbers of N. Shrikes reached the region, with a total of 17 birds reported, all from interior locations. A single Solitary Vireo that most likely wintered was singing at Sweetwater Creek, Folsom Lake Mar. 9 (RS, BM, DW). Last fall's influx of "eastern" warblers and the mild early winter conditions contributed to a large number of wintering warbler reports throughout the region. Black-and-white Warblers were found at Tilden Park, Berkeley Dec. 15-16, (*vide* DR) at Pilarcitos Creek, Half Moon Bay (PM, BS), near Fortuna and in S. Eureka Dec. 29 & Jan. 15 respectively (*vide* TS). The second, third and fourth winter records of Tennessee Warbler were noted on the Farallon Is. Dec. 4. (P.R.B.O.) in Golden Gate Park Jan. 18 (WMP) and at Ferndale Dec. 12-Jan. 19 (DA *et al.*) A total of 11 Nashville Warblers was reported along the coast from Arcata to Monterey which is about eight times the normal number for winter. The Lucy's Warbler reported for the fall period Farallon Is. Dec. 4. (P.R.B.O.) in Golden Gate Park Jan. 18 (WMP) and at Ferndale Dec. 12-Jan. 19 (DA *et al.*) A total of 11 Nashville Warblers was reported along the coast from Arcata to Monterey which is about eight times the normal number for winter. The Lucy's Warbler reported for the fall period (AB: 29,117) is probably the same bird seen Jan. 25 at the Carmel R. mouth (BP, GLB). Another Lucy's Warbler was seen at Pacific Grove Dec. 27 and constitutes the

third winter record for the Region (RS†, BW, GM) A Black-throated Blue Warbler found wintering in Portola Valley, Jan. 1-Mar. 3, represents the first winter record for the Region (m.ob.).

Yellow-rumped Warblers of both races were found on both the Honey Lake and Mount Shasta CBCs, all of which are first count records. Black-throated Gray Warblers were found at two interior and two coastal locations for a total of four birds which is about twice the normal number in winter. A startling 38 Townsend's Warblers were recorded on the Centerville CBC (*vide* TS). A single Hermit Warbler found at Coyote Hills Dec. 14 was the only one reported (J&SL, RS, GM). An unusually high number of Palm Warblers totaling nine birds was found in five coastal locations from San Francisco to Monterey Co. and an additional three birds were present in Humboldt Co. (*vide* TS, DE). A N. Waterthrush seen Jan 19 at Neary's Lagoon appears to be the first winter record for the Region (BE). Five Wilson's Warblers were reported from the coast, about three times the normal number. A single Am. Redstart found at Pebble Beach Dec. 27 was the third winter record for the Region (TC).

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH SPARROWS** — A ♂ Tricolored Blackbird considered "very rare" in the Arcata Bottoms was present Feb. 12-13 (*vide* DE, TS) Four Hooded Orioles reported from the C.V. and one from the Pacific Grove area were about normal for winter. "Bullock's" N. Oriole also appeared in normal numbers along the coast with four birds reported. A well-documented first Regional winter occurrence of a Rusty Blackbird was recorded at the Carmel Sewage Ponds Dec. 27-Feb. 16 (VY†, RB, m.ob.). Seventeen Brown-headed Cowbirds, rare in the Great Basin in winter, were found at Buntingville, Lassen Co. Dec. 31 (RS, DW, GM). Seven W. Tanagers were reported this winter, slightly more than normal. An ad. ♂ Summer Tanager appeared at a feeder in Santa Rosa Jan. 23 (m.ob.). Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found at the following locations; an imm. male at Eureka, Dec 12 (*vide* TS), an ad. male at Valencia Lagoon, Santa Cruz Co., Mar. 24 (TS *et al.*), and an imm. male Jan 4-Mar. 2 in Santa Rosa (JW, GLB *et al.*). Four Black-headed Grosbeaks were seen during the period (m.ob.). The only Evening Grosbeaks reported were two birds at Fremont Dec. 16 (RS, GM).

Purple Finches were apparently scarce all winter along the north coast (*vide* TS, DE). Lawrence's Goldfinches, rare in winter, were found at two locations; one female was near Vacaville Feb. 16 (RS), and five Feb. 24 in Auburn (MA). Contrary to the general lack of invasion species Red Crossbills were reported from the coast in normal numbers. A single Lark Bunting was noted Feb 9 near Sutter Buttes (JH, SAL). Two out-of-range Black-throated Sparrows were found near Sacramento in January (*vide* BK). Because of mild conditions during the early part of the period an unprecedented number of Spizella sparrows were seen through January. Five species were reported, two of which were first winter records for the region. Single Tree Sparrows were found at Loleta, one Dec. 29 (*vide* DE) and at Standish Dec 31 (RS *et al.*) and four were at Honey Lake Hq. Jan 1 (BW, AC *et al.*). Chipping Sparrows, always rare along the coast, were found at three locations and at two

locations inland. Most amazing was the report of 100 at Solano Diversion Dam Jan. 3 (DG). A well documented first winter record for the Region was of a Clay-colored Sparrow at Hayward Dec. 14-19 (DR, BS, JL, *et al.*). A single Brewer's Sparrow was present at a feeder Jan. 13-29 in Sacramento and represents one of the few winter records for the region (RS, GM *et al.*) A photographed and well-described Black-chinned Sparrow remained at a feeder in Ukiah Jan. 21-Mar. 25 (OJK). This occurrence is the ninth winter record for California and the first for our Region.

Ten Harris' Sparrows were found in the Region at Berkeley, Davis, Milford, Lassen Co., Ferndale and Janesville, spanning dates of Dec. 11 through Mar. 1 (m.ob.) Twenty-six White-throated Sparrows were found Dec. 1-Mar. 8 in widely scattered localities over the region. Three Fox Sparrows of the eastern race were seen in two localities; Oakland December-January (J&SL), another there in February and a third individual at Munger L., Sacramento all winter (RS, GM). At least 30 Swamp Sparrows were present at Olema Marsh on the Pt. Reyes CBC (RS *et al.*). Other reports of this species were from Honey L., Alameda, and one bird at Lewiston L., Trinity Co. where it appears to be the first county record (*vide* TS, DA). A total of 150 Lapland Longspurs were noted from the following localities; Foster City, Pt. Reyes, Honey L., Bodega Head, Ferndale and the Arcata Bottoms, Dec. 1-Mar. 9 (m.ob.). A total of 180 Chestnut-collared Longspurs was found at Honey L. Dec. 27-Mar. 8 (AC, BW *et al.*). At least four and perhaps nine Snow Buntings were present at L. Talawa, Del Norte Co. Dec. 13-Feb. 14 (PS, *vide* DE, TS).

**CORRIGENDA** — In *AB*: 28, 946 the Lark Bunting was at Mercy not Merced Hot Springs. In *AB*: 29, 113-115 all sightings credited to RLH should read RH, KH except on p. 113 regarding White-faced Ibis. On p. 114 the photograph of the Curlew Sandpiper should be credited to Mike Wihler not P.R.B.O. On p. 118 the Jelly's Ferry Bobolinks are from SAL not SA and the Black-throated Sparrow at Belmont was PM not RM. In *AB*: 29, 115 read 6000 not 60,000 Heermann's Gulls. On p.115 the Short-billed Dowitchers were identified by plumage and call, not plumage and all.

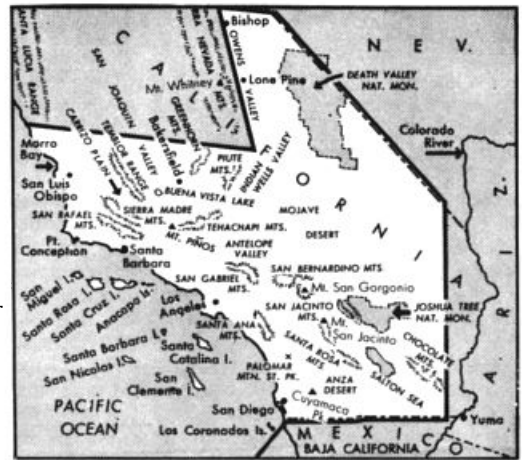
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## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION / Guy McCaskie

The winter season was rather uneventful, with no major influxes of more northerly species into the Region, or mountain species into the lowlands. Red-breasted Nuthatches were unreported, and many other regular wintering species for the Region were in smaller-than-normal numbers.

A fair number and variety of species, normally considered summer visitors, were present including more than the normal number of flycatchers and warblers. Unexpected finds included a Trumpeter Swan and Ruff in Los Angeles, a Magnolia Warbler on the Colorado R., two Black-throated Blue Warblers on the coast, and a Sharp-tailed Sparrow inland.



**LOONS, GREBES** — Common Loons are rarely found inland during the winter in s. California, hence one on L. Hodges, San Diego Co., Jan. 5 (AF) is of interest. A Red-necked Grebe, rare anywhere in s. California, was in Santa Barbara Jan. 5 (BB) and another was at nearby Goleta Jan. 13 (PL). The only Horned Grebes found away from the coast was one on L. Perris, Riverside Co. Feb. 2 (EAC, SC), and another on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co. Feb. 14 (AH).

FULMARS, SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS — A Fulmar near Catalina I. Dec. 22 (SS) and another off Huntington Beach, Orange Co. Feb. 1 (*vide* GSS) were the only two reported, indicating that the species was scarce in s. California waters this winter. A flock of over 1000 Manx Shearwaters off La Jolla, San Diego Co. Dec. 19 contained a partial albino individual with a white head (JD). An Ashy Storm-Petrel near Santa Barbara I. Dec. 20 (JA) is interesting, since winter records are virtually non-existent.

HERONS, IBISES — The ad. Little Blue Heron found at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co. Nov. 17 was still present Mar. 27 (DRo), and another adult was seen off and on at the south end of the Salton Sea (hereafter S E S.S.) Dec. 7 - Feb. 8 (KEM, DVT); there are only three previous records for the Salton Sea. Over 60 Cattle Egrets were reported from along the coast between Santa Barbara and the Mexican border including four on San Clemente I. Mar. 28 (LT); twelve near Blythe on the Colorado R. Dec. 10 (JHS) were the only ones found elsewhere away from the Salton Sea. A Louisiana Heron found at Bolsa Chica in late November was still present Feb. 18 (J & SL) and appears to be the only one in s. California this winter. As usual a few Least Bitterns were present around the Salton Sea all winter, but one near San Diego Dec. 30 (DRa) was the only one reported from along the coast. One or two White-faced Ibis around Oceanside, San Diego Co. throughout the period (AF) appear to be the only ones wintering along the coast; this species used to be more common, occurring regularly in Orange and San Diego counties.

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS — Three Whistling Swans on Morro Bay Feb. 22 (RBH), one in nearby San Luis Obispo Jan. 26 - Feb. 4 (FRT), and another near Santa Barbara Dec. 21 (S.B.A.S.) were the only ones reported away from the Owens Valley, where they occur regularly each winter. An ad. Trumpeter Swan on Legg L. in San Gabriel Jan. 1 - Feb. 17 (GSS *et al.*), and what was probably the same bird was present in nearby Covina, Los Angeles Co. Mar. 13-15 (EAC, SC); four together in Ventura Co. late last fall (*Am. Birds*, 29:120, 1975) represented the second modern day sighting in s. California. A Canada Goose on Santa Barbara I. Jan. 18 (LJ) was an unusual locality. An ad. Brant was associating with Black Brant on San Diego Bay Feb. 15 - Mar. 2 (GMCC, JD *et al.*); one or two are found almost every year in coastal s. California and must be considered regular in limited numbers. Snow Geese were scarcer than usual at S.E.S.S. reaching a maximum of only 9000 of which but 1 per cent was imm. birds; interesting was the presence of seven birds marked in Wrangel I. last summer. Up to 30 Ross' Geese at S.E.S.S. during the winter was normal, but one near Big Pine in the Owens Valley Jan. 11 (TH) and another near Oceanside Jan. 12 (JD) were both at unusual localities for the species.

A flock of 15 Eulachin Tree Ducks at S.E.S.S. Feb 10 (JHS) was unexpected since the species is rare anywhere in California during the winter. A ♂ Eurasian Green-winged Teal was well seen in San Luis Obispo Feb 2 (FRT) and another was at Legg L. in San Gabriel Mar 23 - Apr. 2 (DWF *et al.*); only a few records exist

for this form in s. California. As usual a few Blue-winged Teal were present along the coast throughout the period with up to five males at Goleta, Santa Barbara Co. all winter; numbers increased in February, and more than 30 males were reported in the Region during March. An unmistakable ♂ Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal was found in San Diego Feb. 22 (GMCC, JD); this hybrid is found somewhat frequently so cannot be considered rare. A ♂ Garganey in Long Beach Mar 19 (GSS *et al.*) is undoubtedly the same individual seen here a year ago and also on Mar. 15, 1972 (*Am. Birds* 28:851). This may be the most migratory of all the northern hemisphere ducks, moving well into the tropics of Asia and Africa each winter, even straggling to Australia on at least one occasion. In recent years it has been found in the west Aleutians (*Aud. Field Notes* 24:634, *Am. Birds* 25:785, 28:838 and 935) so natural wandering south along the west coast of North America is plausible. The only Eur. Wigeon reported was a male near Oceanside Jan. 12-16 (JD, PU) and another male near Chino, Riverside Co. Feb. 28 (DWF). A handful of Wood Ducks was found scattered throughout the Region with one in Puma Valley, San Diego Co. Feb 19 (AF) being the farthest south. The ♂ Tufted Duck on L. Sherwood, Ventura Co. was last seen Jan. 12 (FH). An imm. ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye on San Diego Bay Feb 15-20 (GMCC, JD *et al.*) is only the third ever found in the Region. An Oldsquaw near Cambria, San Luis Obispo Co. Dec. 20 - Jan. 30 (EVJ), one at Ventura Jan 31 - Mar. 4 (S.B.A.S.), another nearby at the mouth of the Santa Clara R. Jan. 5 (GSS) and two on San Diego Bay Jan. 1 - Feb. 18 (JD, PU) gave us an average number for s. California. Two ♂ Harlequin Ducks were near San Simeon, San Luis Obispo Co. Jan 2 (S.B.A.S.) where they are undoubtedly regular in winter, and the male that has been at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles, Co. since 1972 was still there Mar. 31 (JAJ)

White-winged Scoters were exceptionally scarce this winter, and a ♂ Black Scoter off Goleta Mar. 2 (PL) was the only individual of that species reported; a poor year for all scoters in s. California. Hooded Mergansers were more numerous and widespread than normal with two in Goleta Feb. 5 - Mar. 19 (PL, S.B.A.S.), one at Malibu Jan. 8 - Feb. 28 (GSS), three on L. Casitas Dec. 26 (SF), up to six near Glendora Nov. 1 - Feb. 7 (DG *et al.*), one in Riverside Feb. 15 - Mar. 15 (RGW, EAC), and two in nearby Redlands all winter (EAC, SC); more interesting was one near Rasor, San Bernardino Co. Dec. 2 (JS), another on the Colorado R. near Earp Dec. 29 (JD, KG) and one more near Niland at S.E.S.S. Jan 25 (EAC, SC).

KITES, HAWKS, OSPREY, FALCONS — A White-tailed Kite near Thermal, Riverside Co. Dec 27 (EAC, SC), two at the north end of the Salton Sea Jan 25 (JD) and another at Brawley, Imperial Co. Jan 25 (JD) were all east of their normal range, and numbers continue to increase within the species' normal range. Most unusual was an ad. Goshawk in Pt. Mugu S P, Ventura Co. Dec. 7 - Jan. 3 (SW, GSS *et al.*). A "Harlan's Hawk" was well seen near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara Co. Jan. 12 (PL, FH); this dark form of Red-tailed Hawk has been reported on only four previous occasions in this Region. About 25 Rough-legged

Hawks were reported with most in the Owens Valley, however some did reach extreme s. California with one near Escondido, San Diego Co. Feb. 6 (AF), two at L. Henshaw, San Diego Co. Dec. 13 (JD) and one or two at S.E.S.S. Dec. 15 - Apr. 2 (DVT *et al.*). Ferruginous Hawks continue to hold their own with over 30 individuals found during the period. An ad. Bald Eagle was near Big Pine in the Owens Valley Jan. 3 (TH) and an imm. was at nearby Bishop Feb. 2 (TH); farther south two or three (2 ad. 1 imm.) were on the Colorado R. near Needles Dec. 29 - Jan. 15 (JD, JHS), and three imm. were above Imperial Dam Jan. 15 (JHS); elsewhere one to four (2 ad., 2 imm.) were on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co. Dec. 27 - Jan. 22 (S.B.A.S.), an adult was at nearby Refugio Pass Jan. 5 (S.B.A.S.), an imm. was over Newport Bay Jan. 12 (JD), five imm. were at L. Mathews, Riverside Co. Mar. 23 (EAC, SC), and up to nine (2 ad. 7 imm.) were at L. Henshaw Dec. 23 - Mar. 16 (BS, JD); these birds all probably come from the Pacific Northwest since none are known to nest in the Region. A few Ospreys were present along the entire coast as well as one at the Salton Sea and two around Imperial Dam on the Colorado R. all winter. The only Peregrine Falcon reported was an adult on Santa Rosa I Mar. 1-3 (LJ). Only eight Merlins were found, indicating a drastic decline in numbers in recent years.

**CRANES, RAILS** — A flock of 82 Sandhill Cranes was near Brawley in the Imperial Valley Dec. 4 (DVT), the only locality away from the Carrizo Plain that regularly holds cranes in s. California; one near Big Pine in the Owens Valley Jan. 12-24 (TH), and another at L. Casitas, Ventura Co. Dec. 26-27 (SF) were unusual. A Black Rail was flushed from a marsh at S.E.S.S. Feb. 9 (DVT) giving us another record for that area.

**OYSTERCATCHERS, PLOVERS, SANDPIPERS** — Up to four Black Oystercatchers present at Playa del Rey Jan. 6 - Mar. 8 (HF, JL *et al.*) were some distance from an area of regular occurrence. Two Snowy Plovers at Owens L. Jan. 3 (TH) were unexpected, since winter records are unknown from interior localities other than at the Salton Sea. Mountain Plovers winter regularly along the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, throughout the Imperial Valley and in suitable habitat in the coastal lowlands south of Los Angeles; this winter 25 were seen near Santa Maria Jan. 19 (PL) and about 10 near Pt. Mugu Dec. 24 - Mar. 5 (JD, HF). The only Am. Golden Plovers reported were four at Playa del Rey Feb. 12 - Mar. 13 (HF *et al.*) and three on Upper Newport Bay Jan. 28 (GSS). As usual a few Lesser Yellowlegs were present on the coast and at the Salton Sea. Some 35 Stilt Sandpipers were around S.E.S.S. all winter (GMcC *et al.*). This species regularly winters in w. Mexico and the Salton Sea appears to be the northern limit of normal occurrence. A Ruff found at Playa del Rey Jan. 6 (HF) was picked up dead Jan. 15 (\*L.A.C.M.). Two Wilson's Phalaropes were present at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co. during much of December (GMcC), one was there Mar. 8 (GMcC) and four were seen at S.E.S.S. Feb. 16-17 (J & SL); this species is rare anywhere in California during the winter. As usual a flock of about 50 N. Phalarope spent the period at Imperial Beach (GMcC) the only locality in California where phalaropes regularly winter. A Red

Phalarope at Goleta Dec. 12 (PL) was likely a fall migrant.

**JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS** — The presence of six Pomarine Jaegers off Long Beach Dec. 20 (JA), four off Oxnard Jan. 18 (DG, LJ), and at least twelve others at various points off the coast during the period documents the species' presence in s. California waters during the winter. About ten Parasitic Jaegers were reported from coastal localities between Santa Barbara and San Diego during the period; this species is invariably found close to shore whereas the Pomarine Jaeger dominates the offshore waters.

The only Glaucous Gulls in the Region were a first year bird at Goleta, Santa Barbara Co. Dec. 9 (PL), another at Playa del Rey Jan. 10 (LJ, KG) and a third on Newport Bay, Orange Co. Mar. 15 (EAC, SC). An imm. Glaucous-winged Gull was at S.E.S.S. Dec. 14 (EAC, SC) and another was seen on the e. shore of the Salton Sea Jan. 25 (JD); this species is rare inland. Single imm. Thayer's Gulls were seen inland on the Salton Sea Dec. 14 (EAC, SC) and Jan. 25 (JD); this species is probably regular in limited numbers on the Salton Sea and should be looked for on other large inland bodies of water attractive to gulls. Black-legged Kittiwakes were fairly common in s. California waters this winter as indicated by counts of 50 off Oxnard Jan. 18 (DG) and 15 off San Diego Mar. 15 (GMcC); small numbers were also present along the shore with reports of up to 10 individuals together being seen at ten different localities.

Common Terns are not normally present in California during the winter so a flock of 10-15 on San Diego Bay throughout the period (JD *et al.*) was of extreme interest. A Black Tern was at Goleta Dec. 17 (LRB) and another was present on San Diego Bay Dec. 6 - Jan. 18 (JD, PU *et al.*); there are very few winter records of this species for California. For the second winter in a row **Black Skimmers** spent the winter on San Diego Bay with two present Dec. 14 to Mar. 27 (JD *et al.*).

**MURRES, AUKLETS** — The only Com. Murres reported was one off Oxnard, Ventura Co. Jan. 3 (JA) and six there Jan. 18 (DG); exceptionally few for s. California. Five Pigeon Guillemots at Santa Rosa I Mar. 2 (LJ) were the first noted returning to known breeding localities; this species completely moves away from the Channel Is. in winter, and is very rarely seen anywhere in s. California waters at that time of the year. Cassin's Auklets were scarcer than usual, and 100 Rhinoceros Auklets between Oxnard and Santa Barbara I. Jan. 18 (DG, LJ) was the only concentration of that species reported.

**DOVES, OWLS, SWIFTS** — Two White-winged Doves near Santa Barbara Feb. 18 (GH) one at Pt. Mugu S.P. Dec. 26 (ERA) and another near Imperial Beach Feb. 28 (JD) were all at coastal localities outside the species' normal range at any time of the year; one or two at Agua Caliente Springs in e. San Diego Co. throughout the winter (GMcC) and two at nearby Yaqui Wells Mar. 2 (GSS) support the theory that a few individuals regularly winter in s.e. California. At least six Short-eared Owls were on tiny Santa Barbara I in January (LJ) but were exceptionally scarce elsewhere in the Region. A flock of 10-15 Vaux's Swifts was near Oceanside Jan. 10-12 (AF *et al.*) and eleven were seen

over Huntington Beach, Orange Co. Feb. 21 (*fide* GSS) adding to the growing list of winter records of this species in s.w. California.

**WOODPECKERS** — Five "Yellow-shafted Flickers" were reported with two on the coast (L. Sherwood Jan. 3 and Newport Bay Mar. 15) and three in the interior (Furnace Creek Ranch Mar. 25, Niland Dec. 21 - Jan. 25 and Brock Ranch Feb. 16); its current treatment as a race of the Com. Flicker appears to have deemphasized interest in reporting sightings. Lewis' Woodpeckers were exceptionally scarce throughout the Region with a single bird at Tapia Park, Los Angeles Co. Jan. 23 (GSS), another near Capistrano, Orange Co. most of the winter (AF) and two near Santa Ysabel, San Diego Co. Dec. 15 - Jan. 22 (AF) being the only ones reported. An imm. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker near Earp, San Bernardino Co. Dec. 29 (JD, KG) showed all the characters of the eastern form *S. v. varius*; this race appears to be but a casual straggler to California.

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — A Cassin's Kingbird at S.E.S.S. Feb. 28 (EAC, SC) was unexpected since only a handful of records exist for that area of California, however, this is the time of the year when an influx of birds is evident on the coast. An Ash-throated Flycatcher in Santa Barbara Nov. 25 - Jan. 30 (NM, SBAS) was exceptional, for no valid winter records exist for coastal California, though a few fall migrants have lingered into early December. An E. Phoebe, a somewhat regular straggler to California, remained in Arcadia Dec. 11 - Mar. 2 (GSS, BB *et al.*). There were four reports of Hammond's/Dusky Flycatchers with one near Needles Dec. 30 (JD, KG), one at Pt. Mugu S.P. Feb. 23 - Mar. 17 (GSS *et al.*), one in San Diego all winter (JD *et al.*), and another in nearby National City Dec. 7 (GMcC); few records for either species exist for the winter period and it is not known which of the two is the more likely. Three Gray Flycatchers were seen with one at Pt. Mugu Jan. 4 (FH), another in Los Angeles Feb. 12 (JAJ) and the third at Yaqui Wells Mar. 3 (*fide* GSS); a few of these flycatchers occur in s. California every winter. Five sightings of W. Flycatchers is more than usual with single birds at Santa Monica Jan. 19 (H & PB), near San Diego Dec. 27 (DRa), in San Diego Dec. 3 - Jan. 9 (JD), in National City Dec. 7-14 (GMcC) and at Brock Ranch Dec. 27 (JD). The Coues' Flycatcher at the Pacific Palisades on Nov. 15 was present to the end of December (*fide* LJ). As expected two or three Vermilion Flycatchers were present around San Diego throughout the period, but one at Legg L. in San Gabriel Feb. 22 (DWF) was the only other reported on the coast.

Two Bank Swallows, rarely reported in winter, were seen at S.E.S.S. Dec. 28 (TH). Rough-winged Swallows now appear to winter regularly in s.e. California for 20 were seen near Needles Dec. 29 (JD, KG), three more were near Earp on the same day (JD, KG), and a few were seen throughout the period at S.E.S.S. (GMcC); on the coast one was seen near San Diego Jan. 29 and two more were there Feb. 2 (DRa).

**CROWS THROUGH WAXWINGS** — Up to 37 Com. Crows were present around S.E.S.S. throughout the period (DVT); this species has only recently started

to use this area as a wintering locality, formerly occurring only as a casual wanderer. A Verdin at San Elji Lagoon, San Diego Co. Jan. 9 - Feb. 17 (ABA *et al.*) was most unusual since it is known to occur at but one locality on the coast of California (on the Mexican border near Imperial Beach), and is unrecorded elsewhere. Six Bushtits near Parker Dam Feb. 25 (JHS) represent the third record for the Colorado R. valley. A few Brown Creepers were evidently along the coast as indicated by the presence of one in Santa Barbara Jan. 13 (S.B.A.S.), two or three on Santa Cruz I. Jan. 3 - Mar. 26 (JA), and two near San Diego Sept. 26 - Feb. 7 (DRa). At least ten Winter Wrens were noted in densely vegetated canyons of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mts. where they are probably regular winter visitors; one at Pt. Mugu S.P., Jan. 4 (FH) was unexpected. A Sage Thrasher on Santa Barbara I. Jan. 19 (LJ) was at an unusual locality. Varied Thrushes were exceptionally scarce throughout the Region, thus one at Brock Ranch Feb. 16 (S & SL) was totally unexpected since it is virtually unknown in s.e. California. Two Golden-crowned Kinglets near Needles Dec. 30 (JD, KG) represent one of the very few records for the Colorado R. Valley, and up to seven near San Diego Nov. 23 - Mar. 23 (DRa) were far south. Totally unexpected was a Bohemian Waxwing in San Diego Dec. 3-4 (JD), and another near San Luis Obispo Mar. 21 (FRT).



*Winter Wren, Santa Paula Canyon, Dec. 14, 1974.  
Photo / Keith Axelson.*

**VIREOS, WARBLERS** — As usual a few Solitary Vireos lingered into December with single individuals in San Pedro Dec. 11 (J & DM), Arcadia Dec. 11 - Jan. 1 (GSS), Riverside Dec. 22 (EAC, SC), San Diego Dec. 7-14 (GMcC), and near Needles Dec. 30 (JD); the last two were clearly *V.s. plumbeus*, scarce in s.e. California and casual along the coast. A Solitary Vireo, *V.s. cassinii*, present in San Diego Dec. 1 - Mar. 31 (JD *et al.*) is the only one that can be treated as a wintering bird. Most unusual was a Warbling Vireo in Arcadia Jan. 4 (H & PB).

A ♂ Black-and-white Warbler near San Diego Sept. 26 - Mar. 19 (DRa *et al.*) clearly wintered successfully. Whether a Tennessee Warbler near San Diego Dec. 29 - Jan. 5 (JWD *et al.*), and another in San Diego Jan. 1-16

(JD, PU), were attempting to winter locally or were just very late fall stragglers is anyone's guess. Three or four Nashville Warblers were found along the coast during December and another was in San Diego Jan. 25 (PU); this species is fairly rare in California during winter. Unexpected was a Virginia's Warbler in Riverside all winter (EAC, SC) for very few valid winter records exist for California. Three Yellow Warblers near Imperial Dam on the Colorado R. Dec. 28 (JD) were the only ones reported. Exceptional was a ♂ **Magnolia Warbler** in Earp on the Colorado R. Mar. 26-27 (DE, TS); the bird is believed to have wintered locally and there is no previous winter record for California. Also unprecedented was a ♂ **Black-throated Blue Warbler** near Morro Bay Dec. 16-20 (EVJ) and another near San Diego Dec. 25 - Jan. 5 (DRa *et al.*), however both may have been exceptionally late fall migrants. The only Black-throated Gray Warblers reported were one in Riverside Dec. 22 (EAC, SC) and another on Santa Cruz I. Feb. 1 (LJ). Hermit Warblers are always scarce in s. California during the winter so one in San Diego Dec. 6-16 (JD) and another near San Diego Jan. 1-2 (JD, DRa) are of interest. Five Palm Warblers were reported with one at Morro Bay Jan. 16-20 (FRT), one on San Clemente I. Mar. 26 (LJ), one near Pt. Mugu Feb. 28 (GSS, JAJ), another in San Pedro Dec. 4 (JDM) and the fifth inland at Morongo Valley Mar. 30 (FH); one or two are now found in California every winter. A N. Waterthrush was near Pt. Mugu Feb. 28 (GSS, JAJ) and another was at San Elijo Lagoon Dec. 18 (SS) supporting the idea that a few regularly winter in s. California. A MacGillivray's Warbler, very rare in winter, was in San Diego Dec. 6-14 (JD). The only Wilson's Warbler reported was one in Redlands Jan. 18 - Mar. 27 (EAC, SC). At least eight Am. Redstarts were found around S E.S.S. during the period, and single birds were seen along the lower Colorado R. near Imperial Dam Dec. 28 (JD) & Jan. 9 (SS); this species regularly winters in these areas. An Am. Redstart in Lompoc, Santa Barbara Co. Jan. 12 (S.B.A.S.) and another in Redlands, San Bernardino Co. Feb. 7 (EAC, SC) were more unusual.

**ORIOLES, BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS** — The only Hooded Orioles reported were two at a feeder in San Diego all winter (PU) and one in Goleta Jan. 8 (S B.A.S.); this species is always much rarer than the N Oriole in winter. A ♂ Scott's Oriole near Redlands Dec. 21 (EAC, SC) was unexpected since there are few winter records for this species. At least 15 N. Orioles were found wintering along the coast between Santa Barbara and San Diego including three "Baltimore" Orioles in San Diego. A "Bullock's" Oriole in Shandon, San Luis Obispo Co. Feb. 8 (RBH, KFH) was at an unusual locality. Totally unexpected was a Rusty Blackbird at Goleta Dec. 20 - Mar. 4 (PL, BS), two at Malibu Jan. 8 - Feb. 8 (GSS, BB) and another at Morongo Valley, San Bernardino Co. Mar. 28 (BDP); there are only two previous winter records for s. California. A Great-tailed Grackle remained around S E.S.S. most of the winter (DVT) and another was at nearby Ramer L. Feb. 28 (EAC, SC); this species is now established as a permanent resident along the lower Colorado R. Valley, but continues to be rare in the Imperial Valley

At least ten W. Tanagers were found wintering around Los Angeles and San Diego, which is normal. A Hepatic Tanager found near Parker Dam on the Colorado R. Mar. 27 (DE, TS) was still present Apr 12 (JD), indicating it had wintered locally, and another was seen further south near Imperial Dam Dec. 28 (JD, KG), a few probably now winter regularly in s. California. A Summer Tanager in San Diego Dec. 14 - Feb. 18 (JD, ABA) was the only one reported.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS** — Up to four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were present in Long Beach Dec 4-7 (J & DM, FH) and single males were in San Luis Obispo Jan. 27 - Feb. 4 (FRT) and in San Diego Jan 3 (JD, PU); this species is rare in California at any time of the year. A ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak, rarer than the previous species in winter, was present in San Diego Dec. 4 - Jan. 9 (JD). A minor influx of Purple Finches was evident along the coast in late February and March, however, one near Bard on the Colorado R. Dec 28 (JD) was in an area for which few records exist. A Cassin's Finch at Brock Ranch Feb. 17 (PU) was unexpected. As is probably normal, flocks of 200-300 Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were present in Westguard Pass of the White Mts. all winter (TH), and 125 were found at 6000 ft. near Bishop Mar. 26 (PL). Some Pine Siskins were present along with the Purple Finches on the coast in the latter part of the winter.

The **Sharp-tailed Sparrow** found on Newport Bay Nov. 29 was still present Jan. 28 (GSS); one well seen near Imperial Dam Mar. 29 (FH) represents the first inland record for California. At least ten Vesper Sparrows were noted on the Channel Is. during the winter (LJ), which appears unusual. "Slate-colored" Juncos appeared more numerous than usual among flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos with up to ten individuals in one flock of juncos in San Diego. Ten Gray-headed Juncos were reported with one as far north as Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley Mar. 26-27 (DG), and single birds west to Santa Catalina I. Dec. 29 (LJ) and San Clemente I Mar. 27 (LJ). Most unusual was a Clay-colored Sparrow on Pt. Loma in San Diego Dec. 15-16 (JD, GMcC), only two winter records are known for the Region. Two or three Black-chinned Sparrows, very rare in winter, were at Pt. Mugu S.P. Dec. 26 - Jan. 11 (ERA, FH). The only Harris' Sparrows reported this winter were one on Pt. Loma Dec. 14 - Mar. 1 (JD, ABA) and another at Oasis, Mono Co. Mar. 8 (DRo). Nine White-throated Sparrows were found with seven being along the coast and the other two in the s.e. corner of the Region, probably a normal number for s. California. Swamp Sparrows were more numerous and widespread than normal with single birds present at Furnace Creek Ranch Mar. 25 (PL), Redlands Feb. 1 (EAC, SC), Goleta Jan. 23 - Feb. 8 (PL), near Malibu Jan. 23 (EM), in Long Beach Dec. 8 - Apr. 2 (HB, J & DM) at Upper Newport Bay Jan. 25 (JAJ) and near San Diego Dec 14 (GMcC), and two together near Imperial Beach Dec 14 - Feb. 15 (JD). A Song Sparrow on Santa Catalina I. Jan 1 (LJ) was at an interesting locality.

**CORRIGENDA** — In *AB:29*, the wording "Many Shearwaters . . ." on page 120 should be changed to "Manx Shearwaters . . ." and the dates for Blackbur-

nian Warblers on page 123 should be changed from ". . . Sept. 5 and Oct. 28. . ." to ". . . Sept. 5 and Nov. 2. . ."

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— BREEDING SEASON, 1974 —

**NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION**  
/ Davis W. Finch

The cold and wet weather of late May, 1974, which at the time seemed an authentic disaster for birds in New Hampshire, Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, was indeed found to have had a measurable effect on the nesting populations of certain species, but seemingly not on the scale foreseen. Swifts were found to be few and late nesting in New Hampshire and Nova Scotia, and swallows in the Maritimes were said to be much reduced, in particular Tree Swallows and Purple Martins, with many New Brunswick colonies of the

latter either empty or largely occupied by late-arriving birds of the previous year. Swainson's Thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers, thought to have been drastically reduced in New Hampshire, were found by the Breeding Bird Survey to be just detectably diminished.

The season brought a number of surprises. There were five first state/provincial records or documentations, and as many as ten additions to the various state/provincial lists of breeding species, reflecting in some cases a good deal of assiduity in searching for nests, and in others a good deal of patience in getting photographic confirmation, all very laudable.

**LOONS** — The continuing study of New Hampshire's breeding Com. Loons found that the population of heavily-developed L. Winnepesaukee fared badly this summer, about ten pairs producing only a single young bird. The situation at nearby Squam L. was somewhat more hopeful, with 12 pairs bringing off six young from four nests, but significantly thinner eggshells and a high percentage of infertile eggs seemed to indicate pesticide contamination (RSR). In New Brunswick, a summering group of 70 presumably second-year birds was noted June 22, on salt water in Baie Verte (Northumberland Strait), where comparable concentrations have occurred in previous years (ADS). An oiled Arctic Loon, the first breeding plumage bird reported in the Region in at least seven years, was seen 3 mi. s. of Pt. Judith, R.I., June 12 (RLF, RCS).

**TUBENOSES, GANNETS** — On June 26, an **albatross** was closely observed about 55 mi. from North Sydney, N.S., along the ferry route to Argentinia, Nfld. (MS, SS). The careful description and color sketches seem to indicate a near-adult Black-browed: though the underwings were apparently rather extensively white for this species, and the rump gray, lighter than back or tail but not white, and though the bird appeared to have a dim grayish V-shaped collar, the entirely dark yellow bill would nonetheless seem virtually conclusive. Northern Fulmars reportedly returned to the small colony established last year on Great Island in Witless Bay, Nfld., (*Am. Birds* 28:16); of 15 other records from Canadian waters, two (three birds) were in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, four (89 birds) in Cabot Strait, and counts averaging 55 birds were made on seven transits of the Strait of Belle Isle ferry between St. Barbe, Nfld. and Blanc Sablon, P.Q., July 18-22 (JBS). Again as in recent years a few fulmars were found off the New England coast in early summer: as many as 25 at Cox's Ledge, R.I., June 8 and one June 12 (RLF), but none on seven subsequent June and July trips, two (one dead, one captured) at Chappaquiddick I., M.V., June 11 (*vide* HD'E), and a total of four on three "Bluenose" transits of the Gulf of Maine, June 30-July 13 (v.o.). The only Cory's Shearwaters reported from New England were at Cox's Ledge: three birds there June 12 were the earliest Rhode Island record by three weeks (RLF), and subsequent counts were 25 on July 6, 60 on July 19, and 17 on July 27 (v.o.). Reports of this species north of Cape Cod, except for birds far offshore, are viewed with scepticism by experienced pelagic birders, and rightly so, since the field guide distinctions from Greater are inadequate and range descriptions posi-

