

The Changing Seasons

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*Wintering birds north of their ranges . . .
unusual pelagics on the West Coast . . . an invasion
of Ivory Gulls . . . neotropical species
in the south . . . something for everyone.*

The winter season is not to be underestimated as an important time for bird populations. In fact, many ornithologists believe that major regulation of bird populations occurs during the winter months rather than the breeding season, primarily through starvation and predation. While this is, true to some extent, field ornithologists must bear in mind that the number of birds in any given season or location may reflect the environmental conditions of the preceding season or at some distant area more accurately than the immediate conditions. Perhaps the best way to assess the effect of a given season would be to compare two identical censuses (or Christmas Bird Counts, hereafter CBCs) conducted at the beginning and end of the winter period. For many species, the winter season is also a time of range expansion. The following pages are filled with documentation of the amazingly rapid ability of birds to take advantage of (or be damaged by) changing environmental conditions. No wonder that they serve as one of our most important ecological indicators.

As has been mentioned in previous years, range expansions, extra-limital records and vagrant occurrences continue to be noted in increasing numbers and with increasing frequencies. This fact may have profound evolutionary significance if

there actually are more birds *involved* in this process, and not simply more birds *seen*. Not only are the number of birders and the time they spend in the field greatly increasing, but more of them are looking for unusual birds and are also becoming more knowledgeable of locations where unusual birds are likely to occur. This makes interpretation of the increased records very difficult.

The winter season generally began with a continuation in most areas of the mild fall extending well into December. About mid-December, however, the weather turned cold and became bitter cold by mid-January with record lows being set all across the eastern half of the continent. The western half, however, remained rather warm. Early February was cold, but a warming trend developed about February 10 and brought record high temperatures across the entire continent. Winter returned briefly in early March when a severe ice storm struck much of the Northeast and several storms and high winds were recorded along the West Coast. However, mild weather soon returned and mid and late March were generally mild across much of the

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East. Precipitation was generally low across the continent and California and Texas experienced true droughts. Although March brought welcome rains to the southern U.S., these only brought temporary relief and did not serve to forestall possible water shortages this summer.

LATE FALL MIGRANTS AND NORTHERLY WINTERING INDIVIDUALS

Because of the prolonged mild fall (the fifth or sixth consecutive season to show this effect in many areas), unprecedented numbers of birds lingered into December or attempted to winter at locations far to the north of their normal winter grounds. Possibly 15% of the pages of this issue are devoted to this phenomenon and a list of species involved reads like the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds. As a result, only the briefest of summaries can be presented here.

The majority of these records occurred in December and most editors agreed that they very likely represented tardy fall migrants. However, a great number of records were associated with the CBCs and it is probable that many of these individuals were not looked for again after the New Year. Thus, conclusive evidence of their survival is lacking.

Virtually all loons, grebes, cormorants, herons and waterfowl were recorded in record (sometimes unbelievable) numbers in the north during December and a mass exodus with the onslaught of the sub-freezing weather in late December and January is well-documented across the continent. Many individuals, however, still managed to overwinter as far north as they could find open water. A few samples of noteworthy records include a Common Loon wintering in Minnesota, a Western Grebe on Wabamun Lake, central Alberta, Dec. 27-Jan 17, three Little Blue Herons and one Yellow-crowned Night Heron in New England in December, a Blue-winged Teal in Homer, Alas., and ten Northern Shovelers on Amchitka Island in early December.

Late fall migrant or northerly wintering individuals were also recorded for nearly all rails and fully thirty species of shorebirds as well as for several terns. A small sample of noteworthy records includes wintering Virginia Rails in both Minnesota and South Dakota, 21 Least Sandpipers in eastern Washington Feb. 21, two Dunlin at Niagara Falls into February, a White-rumped Sandpiper on Lake Ontario Dec. 5, another in Nova Scotia Dec. 31 and a Caspian Tern in Grays Harbor, Wash., Dec. 19. A flock of nine Pectoral Sandpipers in Alabama Dec. 18, is outstanding but a report of a flock of 100 Pectoral Sandpipers collected on Jan 9 at Ft.

Mohave, Nev. is outrageous and urgently needs clarification.

The number of late-lingering or northerly wintering landbirds this winter certainly smashed all previous records. Just a hint of the amazing records to be found in the pages of this issue include a freshly dead Whip-poor-will on Long Island Dec. 24, a wood pewee (sp.) in Midland, Tex., Feb. 22, several verified Swanson's Thrushes in December and a sickly Veery in Geneva, N.Y., Dec. 28. No fewer than 32 species of warblers were late or north of their normal winter ranges including Northern Waterthrush and Ovenbird in Ontario, American Redstart in Nova Scotia and Worm-eating in Massachusetts all in December, and at least twelve Cape Mays in eastern U.S. during the period.

IRRUPTIVE SPECIES

One of the most fascinating ornithological events to regularly be recorded in the winter issues of *American Birds* is the periodic occurrence of large numbers of various boreal and arctic landbird species south of (or at lower elevations than) their normal breeding ranges. Despite the well-documented nature of these irruptions, the phenomenon remains as one of the major mysteries of bird dispersal. It is generally believed that these irruptions result from a shortage of food on the breeding grounds and, indeed, some data to support that conclusion are available (Bock and Lepthien, 1972, *AB* 26:558-561). Nevertheless, several important questions remain. First, many irruptive species often arrive after nocturnal flights and with some accumulation of subcutaneous fat — both are characteristic of true migration. If it is the lack of food that triggers such flights, how is the necessary fat accumulated? Second, what determines the actual directions followed by individual birds (or flocks) during these irruptions? Do they follow regular inherited directions or do they wander widely without preferred directions? Third, why are these irruptions characterized by such great variation in species composition from year to year and from area to area within any given year? If environmental considerations alone dictate these movements, they must be very complicated indeed. Recent work with microtine rodent (vole and lemming) populations indicates that the regular population cycles and associated dispersals so characteristic of them may be entirely governed by factors intrinsic to the population dynamics of the species themselves rather than by factors extrinsic to the species such as food, weather or predation (Myers and Krebs, 1974, *Sci. Am.*, 230 (June): 38-46). It does not seem entirely unreasonable that similar

factors could operate among bird species. Clearly there is much room for investigation here.

Raptors — Despite somewhat mixed reports from area to area, it appears that all potentially irrupting species enjoyed near “normal” numbers; certainly, no major invasions were recorded. Goshawks were widely distributed but were recorded as up in numbers only in the Northern Great Plains and in the Niagara-Champlain, Appalachian and Delaware-Hudson Regions where they seem to be replacing Cooper’s Hawks as backyard feeder birds. If resources (food or nesting locations) become limited, we might expect niche overlap and subsequent competition to remove the intermediate of three closely related ecological counterparts; among Accipiters this is, of course, the Cooper’s. Rough-legged Hawks were also widespread, with the best relative numbers being in mid-continent. Some two dozen Gyrfalcons across southern Canada and the northernmost states, plus five in Newfoundland and three in Alaska, are probably normal numbers.

Snowy Owls were in fair numbers across the northern part of the continent with a very minor mid-continent invasion indicated. Ten Hawk Owls, ten Great Gray Owls and five Boreal Owls, most of which were in southern Canada, are, similarly, probably normal numbers. Short-eared Owls were in near normal numbers across the continent with the largest push also being in mid-continent. A Saw-whet Owl in Big Bend and another in Louisiana were very far south.

Bark Gleaners and Generalists — A very light flight of both species of Three-toed Woodpeckers was recorded in Ontario and large numbers of the Northern species were recorded in the Mountain West in response to the continued outbreak of bark beetles. Elsewhere they were virtually unreported. A light flight of Gray Jays in the East carried three individuals south to unusual locations in New York. In the west, however, they, along with Clark’s Nutcrackers, remained in the mountains.

The major movement of both Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees, first documented last fall, continued into the winter to produce an invasion of major proportions. The flight, which was primarily confined to the East, did produce greater than usual numbers of Black-capped west across the northern states to the Rocky Mountains. However, the true invasion extended eastward from Ontario and Ohio and carried exceptional numbers of Black-capped south into Carolina country. Boreal Chickadees were also exceedingly numerous, as ten in the Appalachians and forty in northern New Jersey will

testify. Mountain Chickadees moved somewhat in the west with small numbers in many lowland locations and up to six in southeastern Alaska. They were down 40% in their normal haunts in the Mountain West, an interesting correlation.

The fall flight of Red-breasted Nuthatches carried most individuals southeastward to the middle Atlantic Coast Region where record winter numbers were recorded. They were also widespread and abundant (although somewhat less so than expected after their excellent fall flight) all across the southern part of their winter range from the Atlantic to the Southern Great Plains. No movement at all was recorded in the West. Golden-crowned Kinglets, where they were mentioned at all, were generally reported as quite scarce. Only the Middle Atlantic Coast had good numbers, perhaps indicating that they moved with the nuthatches.

Frugivores — American Robins went almost unmentioned on both coasts but very large number characterized the mid-continent from the Rockies to the Southern Great Plains. Clearly, the invader of the winter had to be the Bohemian Waxwing which extended almost entirely across the northern tier of states in what most Regional Editors felt to be either the largest or second largest flight of the century! A flock of 7000 in Spokane was possibly the largest aggregation ever recorded. The invasion showed two centers of abundance, one in the Great Basin and Rocky mountains and the other extending from Ontario east to New England. Despite the magnitude of the flight, few southern occurrences were noted, the farthest south being one in Midland, Tex. Cedar Waxwings, in direct contrast, were apparently scarce throughout the entire continent.

Finches — Although observers along the North Atlantic Coast and in the southern tier of states may have considered it a poor winter for finches, observers across the rest of the continent were treated to a much better winter than last year. Every northern finch except White-winged Crossbill was recorded at invasion levels somewhere in the continent but, with the exception of Common and Hoary Redpolls most species were considerably localized. The conflicting nature of occurrences from area to area and from species to species in any given area adds to the puzzle of this phenomenon.

The pattern of Evening Grosbeaks this winter is especially clear. Generally only small to moderate numbers were recorded in eastern Canada and northeastern U.S. and these primarily during the early winter; a notable exodus occurred in mid-winter. The resulting influx was not felt, however, along the Atlantic coastal

plain, numbers there varied from moderate to fairly abundant but were certainly not record-breaking. Rather, the influx occurred along the Appalachians, particularly the west slope, which recorded its biggest year ever (!) and across the mid-continent. Excellent numbers were recorded from the Western Great Lakes, Midwestern Prairie Region and Northern Great Plains with the Western Great Lakes population declining in January, possibly having moved on to the Appalachians. Fair to moderate numbers pushed as far south as the Southern Great Plains and Central Southern states. In the west, large numbers were found in the Northern Pacific Coast Region but only moderate numbers occurred elsewhere. Pine Grosbeaks, in contrast to Evening Grosbeaks, were most abundant in the Ontario-Niagara area with lesser numbers in Wisconsin and Michigan but a major mid-continent flight did not occur. A scattering of records in the North Pacific Coast and Northern Rockies may indicate a minor flight there.

Purple Finches were recorded as down in numbers virtually throughout the East with a real absence in Ontario, New York and around the Great Lakes. Moderate to good numbers were recorded in the Midwestern Prairie Region and Northern Great Plains, perhaps part of a westward movement that may have carried individuals to various Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico localities where they are very rare. In the West, most appeared to remain in the Northern Pacific Coast Region. Pine Siskins, like Purple Finches, were down in numbers throughout the East although their distribution was more spotty. However, it is no mystery where the birds wintered. An excellent flight was reported through the Midwestern Prairie Region and Central Southern states and the biggest invasion ever (!) was reported from the Southern Great Plains. They were in rather low to fair numbers throughout the West except for large numbers in southeastern Alaska, and in both the Northern and Southern Pacific Coast Regions. American Goldfinches were seldom mentioned except in the Southern Great Plains where they wintered with the siskins.

Common Redpolls staged a major invasion across the entire northern tier of states. The most impressive flights seemed to fall in three areas: the Northern Rockies and Mountain West where they were the only truly invading finch, the Great Plains area which coincided with the general mid-continent movement of Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins, and the Ontario and New York areas which coincided with the only major movement of Pine Grosbeaks. It is likely

that totally different populations were involved in each of these areas. The southern limit of the flight extended on the Pacific slope to Medford, Ore in the mid-continent to Norman and Tulsa, Okla and on the Atlantic slope to Winston-Salem, N.C With the Commons came the Hoaries, in numbers perhaps somewhat less than the 1971-72 and 1973-74 flights but with equally widespread distribution. Scattered individuals were found south to Sheridan, Wyo., Kansas City, Mo. and Dalles, Pa

A major movement of Red Crossbills did not occur but a seemingly isolated invasion was recorded in the Middle Atlantic Coast and to a lesser extent in the Southern Atlantic Coast Regions. Widespread occurrences, but generally small numbers of individuals, were also noted in the Midwestern Prairie Region and in the Southwest and Southern Pacific Coast Regions again illustrating the localized nature of these movements. As usual, several late winter breeding records were obtained in extreme southern locations such as Phoenix, Ariz., and Noxubee N.W.R., Miss. Although no major movement of White-winged Crossbills was noted (except perhaps in the Midwestern Prairie Region), scattered individuals occurred in such far-flung localities as Annapolis, Md., Raleigh, N.C., St Louis, Mo., Cedar Breaks, Utah and Lubbock Tex., for the first Texas record! Hundreds in southeastern Alaska and in the forested areas of the Canadian prairie provinces supplied evidence that most White-winged stayed put this winter.

In the West, Cassin's Finches and all three species of rosy finches generally produced good flights away from their high mountain homes. Cassin's Finches reached southern California and good numbers of rosy finches occurred across the Northern Great Plains and south into New Mexico where a single Black Rosy Finch was found

Several non-Cardueline finches may also be best treated here. Tree Sparrows were very common across the Great Basin from northeastern California to the Rockies and were exceptionally abundant in both the Northern and Southern Great Plains and in the Western Great Lakes Region. Low or normal numbers seemed to characterize their eastern occurrences. Several reached the Pacific Coast (where they are very rare) between Southern British Columbia and San Diego which is extremely far south. Lapland Longspurs were also more prevalent than usual along the Pacific Coast (where they are also rare) but received mixed reports from the rest of the continent. Snow Buntings, however, were in exceptional numbers from the Atlantic Coast west to the Great Plains with flocks of over 1000 occurring in many areas.

WINTER POPULATION TRENDS AND RANGE EXPANSIONS

Range expansions are generally thought to result from the pressures of increased population size continually forcing individuals outward from their centers of abundance and allowing them to colonize more marginal geographical areas and habitats. As such, they are indicative of growing, healthy populations. Two other factors, however, may also be important in this process. First, many species, particularly generalists, are preadapted (or are rapidly becoming adapted) to thrive in the generalized but quite diverse habitat of man's residential areas, parks, gardens and agricultural fields. As more and more specialized habitat is converted into such a generalized (and lower successional state) fabric and, as happens often in the West, net primary production is increased as a result of artificial water supplies and irrigation systems, certain birds are greatly favored and increase phenomenally. Particularly noteworthy in this respect are most gulls, Corvids, starlings and Icterids along with many doves and finches and certain individual species such as robins, Mockingbirds, Cardinals, flickers and, perhaps, even coots, kestrels and White-tailed Kites. Of course, populations of more specialized species typical of more mature habitats must suffer as these habitats are destroyed but these effects are rarely documented by the average birder. We record only a slowly dwindling of forest and plain. There are exceptions of course: everyone is (or should be) aware of the extreme danger that riparian (streamside growth) and marshland habitats face today, particularly in the West.

A second factor responsible for winter population increases and range expansions is the tremendous quantity of artificial food available for birds during the winter months. Anyone who has witnessed a 50,000-gull garbage dump in January, a feeding tray packed with birds including a few Mockingbirds, Cardinals and perhaps even a Rose-breasted Grosbeak or oriole in a sub-freezing Christmas blizzard, or a battery of fighting, chattering, sugar-powered hummingbirds in a naturally flowerless time and place, cannot doubt the importance of artificial food in increasing the survival of extralimital winter individuals thereby allowing, but not necessarily causing significant range extensions.

Continued southward expansion of Yellow-billed Loons on the Pacific Coast was documented with nine individuals between Vancouver I. and central California while Great Cormorants continued a southern expansion along the Atlantic Coast with individuals south to South Carolina and Florida. Red-necked Grebes were found in higher than average numbers along the Pacific

Coast with three individuals as far south as southern California. They continued to be scarce however on the Atlantic Coast although southern individuals reached South Carolina and Louisiana. Wintering Cattle Egrets continue to expand northward throughout their range with record winter counts in Virginia and in both Middle and Northern Pacific Coast Regions and good numbers throughout the southeastern states.

Whistling Swans continue their excellent population increase and range expansion throughout the United States with significant increases on the Atlantic Coast and unusual numbers and occurrences in the Southern Great Plains, Mountain West, Southwest, Southwest and Southern Pacific Coast Regions. Trumpeter Swans also seemed more widely distributed and in good numbers in the northwest part of the continent. Perhaps we are happily witnessing a slow return to the pre-hunting levels of a century ago. Most geese and ducks (except, perhaps, Black Ducks) were in satisfactory or better numbers and encouraging reports were received from many areas for both Canvasbacks and Redheads although south Texas reports remain low. Populations of Ross' Geese were estimated at 100,000 in California's Central Valley, about twice what they were thought to be; 600-700 at the Salton Sea were high numbers. Wide-ranging probable Ross' were found in the South Atlantic Coast Region, Texas, southwest New Mexico, coastal southern California and western Oregon. See also Stallcup and Winter's comments on small "blue" geese. What!?!

Fulvous Tree Ducks are again pushing north in the East with greater-than-usual numbers in Florida and the South Atlantic Coast Regions, northerly interior records in Alabama and Texas and noteworthy sightings all the way up the Atlantic Coast to Nova Scotia! A respectable invasion of Harlequin Ducks occurred in the Northeast with impressive numbers in the Northeastern Maritimes and with individuals south to Florida. Inland, at least 15 occurred around the Great Lakes, an impressive number. Two in southern California were also unusual.

Population levels of raptors continue to be monitored with good but sometimes erratic reporting. Both vultures appear to be expanding their winter ranges in the Northeast while the population boom of White-tailed Kites continues unabated in California. Concomitant range extensions took a single kite to the Imperial Valley of southeast California and two more to Oregon during the winter. We should look forward to breeding records for this species from several new states in the near future. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were reported up in three northerly Regions but were low or average

elsewhere, perhaps indicating a northerly shift in wintering birds this year.

The Golden Eagle received encouraging news from the East this winter with up to 40 reports of from one to five individuals from all Regions except two. Five reports from the Central Southern Region, one from the Southern Atlantic Coast and three from Florida indicate a good southerly movement this winter. Still our hearts are saddened to learn of one caught in a wolf trap in Québec and another caught in a muskrat trap in the Appalachians. Encouraging reports were also received from the West where locally good numbers were attributed to a ban on predator poisoning and a decline in illegal shooting. There is also room for cautious optimism with Bald Eagles, as probable nesting successes were recorded in the Southern Atlantic, Florida and Central Southern Regions. While numbers remained very low (as is normal) over much of the East, an excellent winter was reported in both the Northern and Southern Great Plains, the Mountain West and both the Middle and Southern Pacific Coast Regions. The Pacific Northwest, however, remains as the Bald Eagle's only stronghold in the conterminous U.S.

A total of about 105 Peregrine Falcons seen across the continent this winter is roughly similar to last year but, in view of the constantly increasing number of birders reporting, a steady number of falcons is not good news. Truly encouraging are 37 in the Middle Pacific Coast Region but only seven in the North Pacific Coast (a supposed stronghold for this species) is most discouraging. Merlins appear to be doing well all along the Atlantic Coast north to New England as well as in the interior north to Ontario and the Northern Great Plains. In fact, numbers were, in general, better in northern than in southern areas. For example, 14+ not including CBCs in the Northern Pacific Coast Region and 30 in the Middle Pacific Coast Region compare to only 10 in the Southern Pacific Coast Region. The true winter distribution of this beautiful, elusive little falcon has yet to be worked out. Anyone who has watched the ease with which this species captures its swift-winged prey must wonder why it is so rare. Perhaps, for unknown reasons, it has always been an uncommon species.

Fifty-seven Whooping Cranes including eight young at Aransas were a notable increase over last year. Four young Whooping Cranes wintered successfully in New Mexico's Rio Grande Valley and left for the north with their Sandhill Crane foster parents February 15-22. All four were reported passing through Colorado and Wyoming in February and March. Sandhill Crane numbers were also reported as up in many areas across the continent. A mild early winter coupled with increasing persistence on the part of CBC birders and the widespread use of tape recorders resulted in

astonishingly high counts for many rail species, particularly in northern areas. Individual Black Rails were recorded from three locations along the Atlantic Coast and from Alabama and several were recorded in the San Francisco Bay area. An out-of-place Yellow Rail occurred in Big Bend.

A word about the use of tape recorders, especially during the breeding season, is perhaps apropos. Anyone who has watched the intense excitement and energy expenditure of a territorial male bird dashing from one tape recorder to another as a swarm of birders attempt to lure it out of hiding for observational or photographic purposes, cannot help but wonder how much the individual's reproductive effort and *success* may be diminished by this practice. Much sought-after specialties, such as trogons, may be particularly susceptible to such disturbance. It will be a sad day when the bird on the list becomes more important than the bird in the wild. We, as responsible birders, must keep the well-being of the bird foremost in our hearts, even to the sacrifice of our own listing pleasures. [See also Glinski, p. 655]

It would be most interesting to know why Am Golden Plovers winter so regularly in California, particularly in northern California. Twenty-six found there, while very impressive, is considered only half the number that can occur in a good year, thirteen more were in southern California. Both races are usually represented among these birds although the more eastern *P.d. dominica* greatly outnumbers *P.d. fulva*. Both Am. Woodcocks and Common Snipe seem to be expanding their winter ranges to the north while woodcock were reported south to Santa Ana N.W.R. Purple Sandpipers were present in excellent numbers on the Atlantic Coast and at several locations around the Great Lakes and individuals occurred south to Florida, Freeport, Tex., and, amazingly, to the Falcon Dam spillway on the Rio Grande! Rock Sandpipers also seemed to be present in good numbers along the Pacific Coast. Both Marbled Godwits and Am Avocets were in good numbers in the middle and south Atlantic Coast, perhaps indicating a return toward pre-hunting day levels.

Gulls, particularly the large *Larus* species, continue to cause excitement all over the continent. My own experience, however, indicates that individual birder's feelings on this group fall into one or the other of two extremes. For some, sitting in a car in a major garbage dump playing "What gull is that?" is the ultimate in intellectual, visual (and sometimes olfactory) excitement! For others, true happiness will only be achieved when all large, pink-legged gulls are lumped into a single species, *Larus vulgaris*, the Seagull!

Well, we knew it was coming but this winter it finally happened: Glaucous Gulls were reported from all 22 reporting regions (they are assumed to

have been in Alaska)!! The most exceptional records included one in Louisiana, up to nine in the Northern Great Plains, two in Kansas, six in Oklahoma, two in Texas, two in the Northern Rocky Mountains, three in Colorado and singles in New Mexico and at the Salton Sea. Exceptional numbers were around the Great Lakes as well. Iceland Gulls also fared well with good numbers around the Great Lakes, four individuals in St. Louis and a probable one in south Texas. In the East, a probable Thayer's Gull at Ocean City, Md., one at Toronto, two in Minnesota and singles in Illinois, Missouri and Dallas, Tex., indicate a preponderance of western records. In the interior West, two in Denver, three or four in New Mexico, up to six at Davis Dam on the Nevada-Arizona border and one in interior northern and four in interior southern California may speak of a flight to the southwest this winter. Other noteworthy gull occurrences this winter include a Glaucous-winged at Davis Dam, two yellow-legged Western Gulls and a Laughing Gull at the Salton Sea (these usually occur there only in summer and fall), a confirmed California Gull at St. Louis and a probable in Illinois, a Mew Gull in Spokane, four Franklin's Gulls around the Great Lakes and single Heermann's Gulls in Nogales, and at Big Lake, Reagan Co., Texas! The latter was clearly a first state record. The Band-tailed Gull (or gulls - there may have been two) was back in Naples, Fl., again for a second winter (did it ever leave?). It would be most interesting to know the origin of this individual.

The most outstanding gull news, however, was the virtual invasion of Ivory Gulls to southern Canada and the U.S., a species many editors termed *The Bird* of the winter. Some 22 individuals at the north tip of Newfoundland set a record there but were not considered truly exceptional. However, eleven others were found south of their usual range with three immatures at Beauharnois, Qué., and single immatures at Cape Tormentine, N B., Salisbury, Mass. (they did it again!), Southold, L.I., Appanoose Co., Ia. and Ocean Shores, Wash. This last record may be a first for the eastern Pacific Ocean. Single adults were recorded at Hartford, Conn. and Cleveland and another (age not given) was at Duluth. Interestingly, six of these eleven birds were first found Dec. 17-22, indicating a single major southward flight.

Ground Doves appear to be spreading north. Two in Forsyth, Ga., and numbers in the pinewoods of eastern Texas document the movement this winter but one or two in the San Francisco Bay area may have been vagrants. An Inca Dove in Wichita, Kans., was also very far north. Both species of anis continue to spread northward in the Southeast with Smooth-billeds expanding north in Florida, Groove-billeds

reported from northwest Florida (three birds) and Louisiana (eight reports of multiple birds) and two ani sp. reported from Alabama.

With great diligence and lack of sleep, CBC observers continue to tally record numbers of owls of virtually all species. More distressing, however, are increasing numbers of reports of road-killed owls, particularly open country species such as Barn, Burrowing and Short-eared. These kills, however, are very likely dwarfed by the annual slaughter of amphibians, reptiles and mammals, many of which are probably lured to the highways by supposedly unharmed, biodegradable food litter tossed out of moving cars. I wonder how many of us would continue to drive our cars if forced to kill all of their animal victims with our bare hands!

Barred Owls were reported in better-than-average numbers all across the northern tier of states and their apparent increase in the Northern Rockies and North Pacific Coast is phenomenal. Five were reported this winter in the Intermountain area and two in coastal British Columbia and there have been reports from several Washington and one Oregon locality in the recent past. In direct contrast, reports of Spotted Owls from the Pacific Northwest have all but ceased in recent years, a result directly attributable to the virtual extermination of old growth timber by the burgeoning lumber industry. Despite nearly a decade of awakened environmental concern, the outcome of economic - environmental conflicts remains nearly the same: our plant and animal brethren pay the price. When will we truly learn, as Edward Abbey so elegantly stated, "... that all living things on earth are kindred." (Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*, Ballantine, 1968).

The incredible feeder-assisted expansion of hummingbirds continues to make important news. At least 62 Annas in the North Pacific Coast Region north to the Campbell River B.C., six in eastern Washington and eleven in south Texas continued the pattern of past years, but one in Tulsa was unexpected. Rufous Hummingbirds continue their invasion of the South with large numbers in Texas, at least fifteen in the Central Southern Region and two in peninsular Florida. That Allen's Hummingbirds are associated with these Rufous is now fact: one was found dead in Houston and another was collected in Louisiana. Numbers of *Archilochus* hummers in Texas and the Central Southern states, late or wintering Ruby-throateds in Florida and the South Atlantic Coast, a Buff-bellied in New Orleans, a Broad-billed in Los Angeles and both Black-chinneds and Costa's wintering in northern California are all part of the general hummingbird explosion which we may expect to continue unabated as long as artificial food continues to be supplied.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, Mockingbirds and Cardinals continued the northward expansion that has characterized past winters. This winter, Red-bellieds reached Nova Scotia, central Ontario, Bismark, N.D., and even Winnipeg, Man. Carolina Wrens continue to thrive in the north, particularly west of the Atlantic slope. Mixed reports indicate some, but not catastrophic, mortality during the very cold part of the winter. Extreme northerly Mockingbirds reached Winnipeg, Pocatello, Ida., and southern British Columbia. Cardinals have all but conquered the Northeast; one in Rodeo, N.M. and another in Denver may indicate that the southwestern population may also be on the move.

It appeared to be a very good winter over most of the East for both Red-headed Woodpeckers and Eastern Bluebirds. A Gila Woodpecker at Ft. Mohave, Nev., was a first state record and may indicate a northward expansion. Two Black Phoebes in Oregon were north of their northern limit in California. Blue Jays continue to spread westward, with several reports across Montana and Washington to Vancouver I., and with singles in Big Bend and Las Cruces, N.M. Common Ravens continue to expand locally in the East extending both south from Canada and north from the Appalachians. Population decreases of Verdins as a result of continued brush clearing were noted in Texas. Great-tailed Grackles continue their northward expansion. Sixty-three on the Sabine CBC and four elsewhere in Louisiana indicate that they may be regular there in the winter. They were abundant in Amarillo all winter, ten were found in Las Vegas, Nev., and two were in the Imperial Valley of southeastern California. A Cassin's Sparrow singing at Nacogdoches, Tex., was the first one east of Dallas and may preview an eastern expansion. White-winged Juncos spread out somewhat this winter from their normal winter range. A noticeable flight extended along the foothills of the Rockies from Cheyenne to Colorado Springs, several showed up in New Mexico and one appeared at Hays, Kans. In addition, possible birds were in Pennsylvania and New Jersey; verified records from the East are still lacking.

Successful northerly winter range extensions seem now to be well documented for several eastern sparrows as well as for Mourning Doves and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Most notable among the sparrows are White-crowned, White-throated, Field, Fox and Swamp with possible extensions for Le Conte's and Vesper. See Goodwin's comments on possible physiological changes to accommodate this range extension in Mourning Doves. Smith's, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs were all present in good numbers in their normal south-central and southwestern winter ranges. Both

Chestnut-collared and McCown's were at Honey Lake (northeastern California) in early January and McCown's were near the Salton Sea in January. The regularity of these species at these two locations in winter is remarkable considering their "normal" winter ranges. Winter observers should be on the lookout for these species in southern Oregon, Nevada, Utah and western Arizona.

Finally, among the finches, we find a European Tree Sparrow in Chicago for a possible range extension and two European Goldfinches present at Long Island feeders. Spreading House Finches turned up west of the Appalachians this winter in Cleveland, Indianapolis, Elkins, W. Va., and Knoxville. Singles in Saskatoon, and Rapid City, S.D., probably came from western populations

PELAGICS

Observers braving the open ocean off the New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia coasts found substantial numbers of jaegers of two and possibly three species. Largest numbers were found in early December when single Greater and Manx Shearwaters were also found, suggesting lingering fall birds. Of even more interest, however, were unprecedented numbers of N. Fulmars, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Great Skuas, Dovekies and Common Puffins throughout the winter. Only comparable coverage in future years will ascertain whether these are regular occurrences or whether they represent a major flight from more northerly (or easterly) areas. I suspect the latter as fulmars and alcids were in very low numbers off the New England coast.

The most exciting pelagic activity, however, occurred in the Pacific theater. Following a bizarre autumn off the West Coast (recall the Streaked Shearwater, Red-footed Boobies and inland storm-petrels of last fall, DeBenedictis, *AB* 30:22) came an equally bizarre winter. No less than five Laysan Albatrosses were found off northern California during the period, but these records were eclipsed by a massive invasion of N. Fulmars and Black-legged Kittiwakes that extended at least to San Diego from January to the end of the period. Strong offshore winds in late February and early March pushed many of these birds close inshore and coastal observations were common, especially in southern California. During this same period, a substantial die-off of fulmars and kittiwakes was recorded on virtually all West Coast beaches. From late February to early March, fulmars were picked up on beaches from central Washington to northern Oregon in numbers perhaps exceeding 30 birds/km. The die-off peaked on central California beaches in late March when at least 14 birds/km were found.

But this was not all. On Feb. 25 a dead Mottled (=Scaled) Petrel, *Pterodroma inexpectata* was picked up on Pt. Reyes Beach for the first California record. Then on Feb. 28 a live Mottled Petrel swung by the Ocean Shores jetty of Grays Harbor, Washington, to the astonishment and delight of two observers. Two more Mottled Petrels were then found dead on different Washington beaches on Mar. 6. These are the first records for Washington. Meanwhile, in California, three Buller's (=New Zealand) Shearwaters, *Puffinus bulleri*, including two dead birds found in late February, provided the first winter records for North America.

Less exotic, but still noteworthy, were good numbers of Short-tailed (=Slender-billed) Shearwaters, *Puffinus tenuirostris* off both northern and southern California including ten picked up dead on central California beaches, several Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels seen from shore including the southernmost North American record, a dead Leach's Storm-Petrel on a northern Oregon beach, a massive flight of Red Phalaropes in southern California which, unlike all other years, began in January, excellent numbers of both Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers off southern and even northern California, three Xantus' Murrelets off Monterey for the first northern California winter record, very high numbers of Common Murres, Ancient Murrelets and Rhinoceros Auklets in central California with substantial numbers extending south to southernmost California, two dead Horned Puffins on northern California beaches and unexpected Tufted Puffins in southern California.

The only common thread that may link most of the occurrences of this diverse assortment of birds is that they are normally found much farther west in the North Pacific. What unusual combination of weather and/or ocean currents could have caused them to reach the continental shelf is unknown but when they did they apparently found food supplies on the shelf inadequate to support them. Little or no trace of oil was found on any of the dead birds but all had one factor in common—empty stomachs. Once again birds, even pelagic birds, may show their invaluable ability to serve as rapid indicators of important ecological changes. In this respect, the Beached Bird Surveys, begun several years ago by the Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory and more recently on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts (see *AB* 30:144), may prove to be a most valuable undertaking and similar efforts should be initiated at other coastal locations throughout the country.

COASTAL BIRDS ON INLAND WATERS

While we must continue to decry the increasing number of rivers and canyons being converted to

large reservoirs by the activities of the dam-builders, it must be admitted that such reservoirs offer attractive stopping or wintering spots for many water birds normally found along our coasts and bays. (All in all, however, a negligible return for the ecological damage done by the dams) My personal observations indicate that several years must pass before the aquatic community of newly-created reservoirs matures to the point where it can support large numbers of birds; others have indicated that the aquatic community of older reservoirs may become senescent and experience markedly lowered productivity. A long-term census of a newly established reservoir would, no doubt, yield much worthwhile information. For the present, we must be satisfied with the knowledge that increasing numbers of coastal birds seem to be utilizing our inland reservoirs.

The vast majority of the massive number of scoters found inland last fall seemed to move on to coastal waters somewhere. Excluding the Great Lakes, some 28 White-winged Scoters and 30 Oldsquaws inland during the winter are good, but not exceptional, numbers. However, only five Surf Scoters were noted, including one at Evans Lake, southwestern New Mexico, Dec. 2, which was probably a remnant of the November invasion. Similarly, only two Black Scoter were found and both were in Illinois in early December. On the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, Oldsquaws and all three scoters reached all the way to Florida and south Texas in unusually good numbers but on the Pacific coast all but Surf Scoters were unusually scarce in southern California. Five King and one Common Eiders were recorded from the Great Lakes area. Fair numbers of Greater Scaup were recorded at many inland locations. Only four Barrow's Goldeneyes were found inland in eastern North America, but for the second consecutive year a substantial flock wintered at Davis Dam on the Nevada-Arizona border; this year's high count was 43. Another Barrow's was in northwest New Mexico.

The Arctic Loon is well known as the major wintering loon in the Gulf of California. This winter, for example, I counted 300 off San Felipe, Baja, near the head of the Gulf, in early January. The exact route followed by these birds to get there remains a mystery. Do they go around the tip of Baja and then proceed north up the Gulf or do they cross the peninsula from the Pacific? Or do some arrive via a direct flight across the interior of western North America? This last possibility, for at least some individuals, is indicated by the occurrence of eighteen last fall in interior western North America and ten more this winter, of which eight were in the Colorado and Imperial valleys just north of the gulf. Elsewhere, single Arctic Loons were found coastwise in Nova Scotia,

Massachusetts and at Rockport, Tex., and inland in Ontario and Alabama (first state record)! In contrast to the Arctic Loons, most inland Red-throateds were found around the Great Lakes and in northeastern U.S., probably lingering birds from a regular southeastward flight to the Atlantic coast.

Exceptional numbers of inland wintering Horned Grebes were noted in the lake region of southern British Columbia, throughout the lower Great Lakes and all across the southern half of the U.S., but most commonly in the South Atlantic Coast states and in California. The importance of the Colorado River impoundments for wintering Eared and Western Grebes can be determined from the peak counts recorded there: 5000 Eared on Lake Mohave and 50,000 Western on Lake Mead. Away from the Great Lakes, only four inland Red-necked Grebes were noted. Finally, a dozen Black-legged Kittiwakes were found well inland at nine locations across the continent including four at Davis Dam during the winter.

DISPLACEMENTS: EAST, WEST, NORTH AND SOUTH

After extensively reviewing the phenomenon of geographical displacements during the past four winter months, I have been forced to the conclusion that birds of nearly all species were recorded as vagrants in nearly all directions away from their normal winter ranges. This seemingly simple and, perhaps, obvious result may not, upon retrospect, be a trivial conclusion. Rather, it may be an important characteristic of geographical displacements.

Most displacements were of eastern birds in the West and of western birds in the East, possibly because climatic conditions allow for the better survival of birds after longitudinal, rather than latitudinal, displacement. Of course one could argue that vastly different ecological conditions between the comparatively arid West and comparatively humid East should affect the survival ability of displaced birds, but this general ecological trend is greatly offset by the fact that most vagrants turn up in man-modified environments such as residential areas, landscaped parks and irrigated oases. Upon close inspection, one may find very little ecological difference between such areas in eastern and western parts of the continent with the result that the survivorship of displaced birds is little affected.

I have often pondered over the relative abundance of eastern birds in the West versus western birds in the East. Considering that the source area for eastern birds encompasses roughly 2/3 of the continent, one should expect, all else being equal, that the ratio of eastern birds in the West to western birds in the East should be roughly 2:1. But all else

is not equal. General directions of the continental prevailing winds are roughly west to east which should produce a high bias in the East. On the other hand, however, the well known ability of western coastal promontories and desert oases to concentrate birds may add an observational bias to the West. But we must also remember that parks in large eastern cities also provide an oasis effect. And then there is the fact that birders (along with feeders) are probably more abundant in the East than in the West. In the end, if the winter of 1975-76 can be considered typical, the balance sheet for Passerines comes out roughly 1:1 individual eastern birds in the West to western birds in the East. This is in strong contrast to the migration periods when very large numbers of eastern warblers occur in the West but very few western warblers occur in the East.

Some seventeen Eared and five Western Grebes in the eastern U.S. are probably normal for a winter as are about fifteen Cinnamon Teal in the central and southeastern states. Wide-ranging individual Brant were found in Birmingham, Ala Aransas, Tex., and Humboldt and San Diego Bays, Calif. Among raptors, single Swainson's Hawks in Florida and Alabama and a Prairie Falcon in Atlanta were balanced by two Broad-winged in southern California and a Red-shouldered in Arizona. White-winged Doves occurred eastward (and northward) with at least eight in the Central Southern Region and one in Ontario. Westward (and northward) displacements were also noted with one each in southern and northern California. A Whip-poor-will of unknown race wintered in southern California while at least three Vaux's Swifts wintered in Louisiana. At least four eastern race Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*S.v. varius*) in Arizona and two more in southern California indicate a major movement from the east. However, four red-breasted type sapsuckers (probably *S.v. daggetti*) from the Pacific Coast were also found in Arizona, indicating that movement went in both directions. A Lewis' Woodpecker in Grayson County, Tex., was east of its range.

Several species of western flycatchers are turning up regularly in southeastern U.S. during the winter. This year was no exception. Records included two late-lingering Western Kingbirds in the Delaware-Hudson Region and at least nine in Louisiana, single Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in South Carolina and Alabama and nine more in Louisiana, a Wied's Crested Flycatcher in Louisiana and two in Florida, and one or two Say's Phoebes in Florida and another in Louisiana. In addition, five Vermilion Flycatchers were north of their usual range in Texas and eleven more were in the Central Southern Region. In the reverse direction, five eastern Phoebes in the Southwest

and at least six more in California represent a virtual invasion. A Scissor-tailed, two Olivaceous and four Coues' Flycatchers in California show that flycatchers are also likely to wander north and west

Black-billed Magpies appeared in the East with singles in Ontario, Indiana and Virginia and several in Minnesota. At least eleven were reported west of their normal range in the Pacific Northwest. A Curve-billed Thrasher in Kansas and two in southeastern California could be vanguards of potential range expansion but a Bendire's Thrasher in northern California clearly migrated the wrong way. The East donated a Gray Catbird to New Mexico and five Brown Thrashers to the Southwest plus another to California but in return received only a single Sage Thrasher in northwestern Florida (which, however, was only the second state record).

Despite the fact that Varied Thrushes stayed put in their Pacific Northwest stronghold this year and did not move into California in any numbers, ten individuals were found in the East including four all the way to the Atlantic Coast. Perhaps they originated from the same area that served as the source for the most spectacular invasion of Townsend's Solitaires ever to reach the East. These birds presumably come from Canada as the Mountain West population was recorded as staying put and not invading the plains. Far flung solitary solitaires appeared in Nova Scotia, Québec, Wisconsin, Missouri and Oklahoma; three were in Nebraska, three or four in Ontario and at least 52 were in the Northern Great Plains. Nine individuals along the Pacific Coast may have been part of the same flight. Perhaps the same origin can be assumed for single Mountain Bluebirds in Minnesota, Oklahoma and eastern Texas but a Western Bluebird in Wichita was probably on a different trip. Unusual numbers of Eastern Bluebirds in the southwest were suspected of being part of a general movement from the east.

Sprague's Pipits have not been reading the bird books lately. Singles were found east of their range in South Carolina and Florida, north of their range in Oklahoma and west of their range in Phoenix and San Diego. A Phainopepla photographed at Wallacetown, Ont. Dec. 27-Jan. 17 for the first Canada record, was followed by the same or another individual at London Ont. Feb. 29-Mar. 1. These along with last fall's Rhode Island bird seriously tax the imagination.

A single Audubon's (Yellow-rumped) Warbler in New York was the only western Parulid found in the East. In contrast, good numbers of eastern species were found in the West. At least twelve Black-and-whites along the Pacific Coast and an amazing 19+ Palms, including no less than ten in the Northern Pacific Coast Region, continued the

pattern of these being the two most common eastern warblers in the West during the winter. Other late migrant or wintering eastern Parulids on the Pacific Coast included a Tennessee, three Northern Waterthrushes, three or four American Redstarts, an amazing three Cape Mays including one that successfully wintered in northern California and a Hooded that successfully wintered in, of all places, Seattle! A late Bay-breasted in Tucson was the only other eastern warbler found in the West.

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were widespread on the Atlantic Coast with fourteen between Nova Scotia and Florida. Two others in interior New York, seven in the Mid-west, 20-30 in Louisiana, two in Colorado, three in the Southern Great Plains and two on the North Pacific Coast made for an exceptional winter for this species. Two Brewer's Blackbirds on Martha's Vineyard, twenty in the Delaware-Hudson Region and another twenty in Florida were unusual Atlantic Coast records and eight Rusty Blackbirds in California were exceptional for the Pacific Coast. The East fared better than the West with four Bullock's (Northern) Orioles, four Western Tanagers and twelve Black-headed Grosbeaks in the East outclassing single Baltimore (Northern) and Orchard Orioles, three Summer Tanagers, two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and three Indigo Buntings in the West. Dickcissels occurred widely in the East but were absent this year in the West.

The West fared better on the sparrow trade although a Spotted (Rufous-sided) Towhee in New York, single Green-tailed Towhees in Maine, New Jersey and Alabama, an amazing Black-throated Sparrow in Wisconsin and another in Florida and an equally amazing Golden-crowned Sparrow in New Jersey were eastern highlights unmatched in the West. The West, however, had exceptional numbers of several now-regular eastern species. Three Lark Buntings and three Sharp-tailed Sparrows in California were noteworthy. An excellent flight of Swamp Sparrows, including two in the Pacific Northwest, reached the West and flocks (!) of White-throated Sparrows were in the Southwest along with the usual good numbers on the Pacific Coast. Again the Southwest proved that birds in a single flock can come from various directions, since unusual numbers of Golden-crowns associated with the White-throateds in Arizona and both eastern and western races of Fox Sparrows associated in the same flocks. Among mid-continent sparrows, two Clay-colored on the Atlantic Coast were matched by three in California and some thirteen Harris' in the East were beaten by some 30+ in the West. Gray-headed Juncos also were both east and west of their normal range with individuals at feeders in Texas and nine birds in southern California.

PALEARCTIC OUTLANDERS

Except for gulls and certain ducks, Palearctic visitors were not widespread this winter. Up to 14 Whooper Swans were on the Aleutians. Three phenotypically pure Bewick's Swans were found in California's Central Valley within large flocks of Whistling Swans but, perhaps, more interesting were at least ten intermediate birds associated with them. Many waterfowl authorities consider Bewick's and Whistling Swans to be conspecific. Four Eurasian Green-winged Teal on the Atlantic Coast were matched by four or five on the Pacific Coast, one possible individual was inland at Columbus, Ohio. Eurasian Wigeon are really quite common in the North Pacific Coast Region; most sizeable flocks of wigeon contains at least one. Three were in Alaska and 27 were found in California. They are less common on the Atlantic Coast but at least eighteen were found there. Inland, a possible one at Columbus, Ohio, and two in eastern Washington were the only ones reported. About a dozen Tufted Ducks were recorded in Alaska and two, plus a Ring-necked X Tufted Duck hybrid, were on the Pacific Coast; four were found along the Atlantic Coast. Two Smews were noteworthy in Alaska but an adult male in Middletown, R.I., provided the first Atlantic Coast record and made national news. See Finch's fine summary of the occurrence of this species in North America.

Among Palearctic gulls some thirteen Lesser Black-backed along the Atlantic Coast included five at four Florida localities. A Mew Gull of the nominate race *canus* was in Nova Scotia and one or two more were at the now-famous Newburyport-Salisbury, Mass., location. The now-usual large numbers of Black-headed Gulls were present along the North Atlantic coast south to Long Island; high counts this winter reached 45, 24 and 22 individuals. Elsewhere singles at the Pamlico River, N C., and Michigan's Lake Erie shore were the only ones reported. Little Gulls were also in good numbers along the Atlantic Coast south to Ocean City, Md., but ranged more widely elsewhere. Three to five were around the Great Lakes, and singles were found in Illinois, Florida, Mississippi and Victoria, B.C.

Single Ruffs at Bombay Hook N.W.R., Del., and Sanibel I., Fla., and the first California winter Bar-tailed Godwit in the Los Angeles area were the only Palearctic shorebirds found this winter. Palearctic landbirds were equally scarce with only (!) a Fieldfare at Rigaud, Qué., and a Wheatear in Happy Valley, Labrador.

NEOTROPICAL OUTLANDERS

A pronounced northward movement of many neotropical species from Mexico and the Carri-

bean area highlighted the season all along our southern boundary. Whether this year represents an isolated event or is part of a general trend is unknown but in view of recent summer range extensions north to southern California, southeastern Arizona, southern Texas and Florida, I strongly suspect the latter. Olivaceous Cormorants were recorded as wintering in two southwestern locations. Five Masked Ducks were found in south Texas and singles were in Louisiana and Florida. Up to five Hook-billed Kites made national prominence at Santa Ana N.W.R., where single Gray and Common Black Hawks were also found. A Common Black Hawk in the Florida Keys, one in the Davis Mts. of Texas and several unconfirmed reports from Arizona were noteworthy. Two White-tailed Hawks north of their usual range in Texas and two Caracaras at peripheral locations in Arizona may also be indicative of this movement. Green Kingfishers were also widely reported from many Texas localities and one or two were in southeastern Arizona.

A Loggerhead Kingbird was photographed in Miami and a Great Kiskadee was found in New Orleans. Mexican Crows have become truly common at the Brownsville dump and Brown Jays continue to increase near Roma on the lower Rio Grande while sharp local increases and northern expansions were well documented for Green Jays in Texas. A Rufous-backed Robin in Arizona during the winter may now be considered normal fare but one at Roma was most out of place. Two Clay-colored Robins, also in the lower Rio Grande added to the excitement there. Tropical Parulas were present all winter in the lower Rio Grande and Black-headed Orioles regularly occurred considerably north of that famed valley. A Bananaquit in Florida is always a good bird but truly outstanding finds were a Stripe-headed Tanager there and at least two and probably four Scarlet-headed Orioles in Arizona during the winter.

EARLY SPRING MIGRATION

A major spring migratory movement began very early this year, coincident with the exceptionally warm weather of mid and late February. Unprecedented numbers of nearly all waterfowl species as well as robins, bluebirds and blackbirds had moved into (or even through) the northern states by the last of February. American Woodcocks were displaying on territory throughout the northern states in late February and young were in the nest in Cincinnati on March 8. Pine Warblers were singing on territory from Long Island to Illinois by late February. In fact nearly all typical March arrivals were recorded in February somewhere across the continent.

The early spring migration waned slightly during the cold of early March but then continued unabated throughout the rest of the month when arrivals were recorded of nearly all species that normally arrive in April. Just to titillate your imagination, consider the following spring arrivals: Lesser Yellowlegs — Farmington Bay, Utah, Feb. 24, Greater Yellowlegs — Mason, Mich., Feb. 26; Pectoral Sandpiper — Sandy Pt., Md., Mar. 7; Am. Golden Plover — Goodhue County., Minn., Mar. 29; Whip-poor-will — College Station, Tex., Feb. 29, Eastern Wood Pewee — Stockville, Miss., Mar. 6, Olive-sided Flycatcher — Seattle, Wash., Mar. 5, Rough-winged Swallow — Cold Spring Harbor, L.I., Feb. 19; Red-eyed Vireo — Little Rock, Ark., Mar. 23; Black-throated Green Warbler — Menifee County, K., Mar. 27; Blackpoll Warbler — Marianna, Fla., Mar. 21; Louisiana Waterthrush — Pt. Pelee, Ont., Mar. 28; and possible Kentucky and Canada Warblers at Oxford, Ohio, in late March.

ODDS AND END

Excellent numbers of Steller's and King Eiders at the eastern edge of their wintering grounds around Kodiak and Kenai, Alaska, probably supplied the source for the Vancouver I. Steller's Eider and Oregon's first King Eider. An Emperor Goose on Sauvie I., Ore., the only one reported this season, managed to survive the hunting season there — not a simple trick! One of a family group of six, very rare Aleutian Canada Geese did not survive the hunting season at the Salton Sea, but provided a most unusual record. A Brown Booby and a Blue-faced Booby off northwestern Florida in late March and a Roseate Tern at the Texas City Dike in mid-March supplied some good Gulf Coast finds. Two Bushtits in interior southern British

Columbia and an Ipswich (Savannah) Sparrow in inland North Carolina must be good in anybody's book.

Phalaropes in winter are always fun! A Wilson's in San Diego had considerable precedent; more unusual were several Wilson's at El Paso and one on a Mississippi CBC. However, one at Lake Sharpe near Pierre S.D., Feb. 21 is just plain amazing! "Spring arrival" Northern Phalaropes at Farmington Bay, Utah, Feb. 24, staggers my imagination at least! Red Phalaropes are renowned for appearing at unusual locations. So how about one at Nogales, Feb. 6, one at Big Lake, Reagan Co., Tex., Jan. 8 and one exhausted individual, captured and banded at St. Alban, W. V., Mar. 7? A clue to the origin of the first two birds is supplied by the fact that both of these locations had Heermann's Gulls during the winter!

An Am. Oystercatcher, probably the only individual on the west coast of the U.S., "was still present on its favorite rock" on Anacapa I. off southern California Mar. 7. It was first seen on that rock in 1964. I trust it is not a mounted specimen. Bewick's Wrens are not supposed to be highly migratory, even in the northern part of their eastern range. Then explain why Vermont's very first Bewick's Wren, banded at Woodstock, May 27, was found dead in Paragould, Ark. Dec. 31!

At least 300 dead, dying or disabled Horned Grebes along the beaches near Morehead City, N.C., were suspected of being attacked by bluefish — a bizarre turn of events! No one seems to know where Baird's Sparrows regularly winter in the U.S. Perhaps they don't. Finally, for closers, consider, if you can, 340 Pied-billed Grebes on a single pond at Los Banos, Calif., or 2.5-3 million Tree Swallows along a stretch of the Colorado River in southern Nevada! I'm sure you'll find it better than counting sheep.

77th Christmas Bird Count December 18, 1976 through January 2, 1977

Applications for the acceptance of new, relocated, or reestablished counts must be received by Oct. 15. Proposals must be submitted with map showing the count circle (15-mile diameter) and circles of any established adjacent counts. There must be no overlap. A letter indicating the number and expertise of the participants should accompany the map. It is preferred that counts have at least ten participants — a minimum for any

meaningful results. New counts added to impacted metropolitan areas are less welcome than new counts located at least 100 miles from any other counts, or in neglected habitats. All official form packets, including those for accepted new counts, will be mailed to compilers of record about November 10. Compilers who have changed addresses (or counts with new compilers) are asked to notify *American Birds* before November 1