

The Winter Season

December 1, 1976–February 28, 1977

NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION

/Peter D. Vickery

This Winter Season report marks a milestone for the Northeastern Maritime Region. After some nine years Davis Finch has retired as editor. His careful thought has graced these pages with concision and insight. Few people have been



so familiar with the entire region. From Newburyport to the Tantramarre Marshes to L'Anse-aux-Meadows at the northern tip of Newfoundland, Davis has traveled, studying the ecology and avifauna of each area. It will be some time before anyone else masters in such detail but with such broad understanding the region's birds, their habits and their movements.

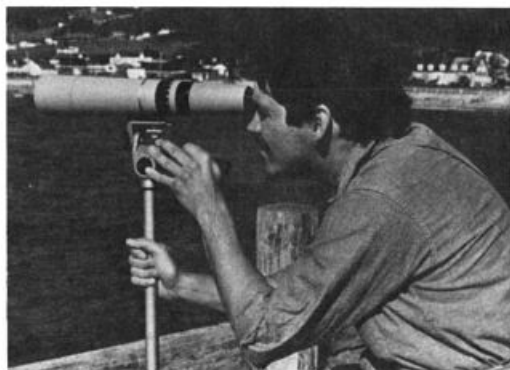
It was with some misgivings that I accepted Davis's suggestion to edit the Northeastern Maritime Region. To follow his efforts seemed at best a foolish undertaking. But I did accept and now we—you as contributors and I as editor—must work to establish a new connection. With time I expect to improve my knowledge of the region's geography and hope to meet many of you in person. I hope you will be patient with (and alert me to) my mistakes and that you will contribute information and suggestions so that these blunders and omissions become fewer as each season passes. I strongly solicit your observations and thoughts. Bear with me; Davis is a difficult editor to follow.

A cold winter followed a colder than average fall. Except for the phenomenal sparrow and Hermit Thrush numbers, it was not surprising to note fewer semi-hardy birds lingering in the region. December and January temperatures remained below freezing for extended periods; high winds and frequent snowstorms exacerbated the situation. In northern Maine some areas registered snow depths of six feet or more. How then could such extraordinary numbers of sparrows survive? February eased to normal temperatures, with sunny days and little precipitation. March produced several heavy snowstorms along the Massachusetts and Maine coastlines covering once

again previously open ground. All in all a harsh winter for birds and birders.

Despite the severe weather an impressive number of birds highlight the Winter Season report. Especially noteworthy birds include a Ross' Gull and many Ivory Gulls in Newfoundland, an Ivory Gull in Massachusetts, an unprecedented alcid fight in southern New England, a minimum of four Great Gray Owls in the region, no less than eight Gyrfalcons, a Hooded Warbler on a Nova Scotia CBC and a McCown's Longspur in Massachusetts.

Unfortunately this report is prepared with only partial reference to Christmas Bird Count material, essential for the Winter Season report. Deadline pressures (to which I shall strive to adhere) and the change in editors compounded this problem. Especially in relation to hawks, gulls, alcids and sparrows be sure to consult the 1976 Christmas Bird Counts. Despite these various handicaps coverage of the region was excellent with all states and provinces except Prince Edward Island reporting observations.



Peter D. Vickery, new Northeastern Maritime Regional Editor
Photo/Barbara Vickery.

LOONS, GREBES, TUBENOSES—Common Loon numbers appeared considerably lower than usual this winter. Perhaps associated with this phenomenon, Red-throated Loons were scarce along the Maine coast and were thought to be in smaller-than-average numbers elsewhere in the region. The season's only Eared Grebe was discovered off Cape Sable I., N.S., Jan. 7 (BS,LS, *vide* PRD). Perhaps without precedent in the region, was the enormous assemblage of 500+ Horned Grebes off Barnstable, Mass., Dec. 12 (RP, *vide* B.O.E.M.). Peaking in February, Red-necked Grebes concentrated along the New England coast in extraordinary numbers. The actual total no doubt being several times greater, a minimum of 762 was counted from 11 large flocks off the Massachusetts coast, the largest flocks including 110 at Cohasset Feb. 27 (RRV) and 80+ off Provincetown Feb. 20 (RRV *et al.*). At least 134 birds of this species, totaled from just six flocks, were found in New Hampshire. In Maine a single flock of 185 Red-necked Grebes seen off Reid S. P., Sagadahoc Co., eclipsed all known concentrations and was almost cer-

tainly a regional high (PKD). Counts of 100+ birds occurred in the Eastport–Campobello area (*vide* WCT). Rare in winter in n Newfoundland, a single Red-necked Grebe was shot off L'Anse-aux-Meadows in late December (Job Anderson, bones confirmed A.M.N.H., *vide* DWF).

A Pied-billed Grebe found in Orono, Me., Jan. 14 was apparently the latest, northernmost bird in the region (*vide* WCT, PDV).

Two N. Fulmars were seen from Nantucket Shoals Dec. 15 & 22 (JML, *vide* B.O.E.M.). At First Encounter Beach, Eastham, Mass., a flight of some 300+ fulmars occurred Jan 8 (CAG, BN). Fulmars in the North East Channel numbered 1200 Jan. 24 and off George's Bank some 3000 birds were counted Jan. 26 (K. Powers, *vide* B.O.E.M.). Five fulmars off Eastham Feb. 11 (CAG, BN) and a single bird off Cox's Ledge, R.I., Feb. 19 were the only other birds reported from the New England coast. Late lingering Cory's Shearwaters off Cape Cod included six at Barnstable Dec. 5 (WRP, *vide* B O E M.) and a single bird from the same location Dec. 16 (R Pease, *vide* B.O.E.M.). A single Greater Shearwater was seen off George's Bank Feb. 8 (M.B.O. staff, *vide* B.O.E.M.).

GANNETS, CORMORANTS, HERONS—Of special note was a single misdirected Gannet, some 2 mi. inland near Boston Dec 28 (D. Horn, *vide* B.O.E.M.). Thought to be a first record for the Connecticut River Valley, a Great Cormorant was observed at Sunderland, Mass., Jan. 9 (AR, *vide* SK). Late Double-crested Cormorants, possibly wintering birds, occurred as far n. as New Hampshire, one found at Webster Jan 20 and two in Concord Jan. 22 (DJH, *vide* HWP). Clearly a result of the cold weather, fewer herons remained in the region. Especially unusual was the Green Heron at East Orleans, Mass., Dec. 19 (CAG, DJH, WWH).

WATERFOWL—The cold fall and winter did not appear to have a dramatic effect on the CBC totals available for study. But the unremitting subfreezing weather in January closed any freshwater areas that remained open and covered many salt-water inlets and bays. Not surprisingly the waterfowl population decreased significantly.

Twenty Whistling Swans in Plymouth, N.H., Feb. 9–10 were unusually early migrants farther n. than usual (v.o., *vide* SG) Especially noteworthy was a "Richardson's" Canada Goose discovered in Orleans, Mass., Jan. 26 through February (M Holland, WRP *et al.*). Distributed widely from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Brant wintered in larger-than-average numbers along the coast. Large concentrations included an impressive 7487 (not necessarily all wintering birds) on the Cape Cod CBC, 320 at Squantum, Mass., Jan. 1 and 700 there Feb. 26–27 (*vide* B O E M.), 1000 in Boune, Mass., Feb. 12 (*vide* B.O.E.M.) and 82 in Narragansett, R.I., Jan. 24 (*vide* CW). Farther n. 150+ Brant were seen off Portland, Me., in late December (*vide* WGi), while David Christie reported "small numbers" from New Brunswick and, in Nova Scotia, 13 Brant were found on the Wolfville CBC. Two Snow Geese in Saco, Me., Feb. 12–13 were apparently record early arrivals for that state (Les Eastman, *vide* WGi). In Concord, N.H., a "Blue" Goose found Jan 16 remained in the area for a month (HE, *vide* HWP). The region's only "Common" Teal was located in Matunuck, R I., Feb. 25–27 (JC, DW, *vide* CW). In New England a total of eight Eur. Wigeon were present during the winter with six in Massachusetts and two in Rhode Island. In Nova Scotia a single Eur. Wigeon was found in Louisbourg Dec. 9–12 (RTB).

Rare for the Maritimes, a single Redhead was seen at Argyle Sound, N.S., Feb. 22 (CRKA, *vide* PRD). For the second consecutive year Canvasbacks wintered along the Connecticut R near Agawam, Mass., a maximum of 33 counted in February (SK) Especially unusual for Maine were the three drakes that wintered on the Sheepscot R near Wiscasset (BT) Three

Canvasbacks from Warren, N.H., Feb. 22, and a single bird in Laconia Feb. 24 were likely early migrants (SG). The species being rare in the Maritimes, of note were seven Canvasbacks seen in Cole Harbor, N.S., Dec. 5, a single bird wintering in the area (EC, *vide* PRD). The region's only reported Barrow's Goldeneye concentration included 30+ birds at Dalhousie, N.B., in late November (DSC). Fifteen Barrow's in Nova Scotia were more than usual. In the same province small numbers are now regular through the winter at Pugwash (SIT) The regional total of 91 Harlequin Ducks included the regular concentration, peaking at 11, at Magnolia, Mass. (*vide* RPE) In Nova Scotia 17 Harlequins occurred on the Port Hebert CBC, with eight on the Broad Cove CBC, and eight found at Cherry Hill Feb. 27 (PRH, ELM, *vide* PRD). Poor weather conditions prevented the census of the region's highest concentration of Harlequins around Isle au Haut, Me. A low figure of only 22 King Eiders was reported from New England during the winter season. A single Ruddy Duck in Louisbourg, N S., Dec. 11 was noteworthy for the Maritimes (DP, *vide* PRD)

HAWKS, EAGLES—CBC information being only randomly available, no accurate, comparative figures of winter hawk populations can be tabulated. Goshawks, Rough-legged Hawks and Merlins were widely reported and appeared present in at least average numbers. Troubling to this observer is the persistently high number of wintering Cooper's Hawks reported, a minimum of eight or nine from Massachusetts, at least five from New Hampshire, "many at feeders" in s Maine, and three from Rhode Island. Aside from an imm Cooper's at Eastham and an ad. male at Louisbourg, N S., none of the birds were aged or described and most should be viewed with some degree of suspicion. Full details accompanying winter Cooper's sightings would be *gratefully* appreciated. There is no doubt the deep snows and generally harsh winter conditions brought greater Accipiter numbers to feeding stations—but whether so many of these birds are Cooper's remains open to question.

Twenty-two Red-tailed Hawks on the Wolfville CBC was a remarkable concentration for the area (RDL). The only Golden Eagle in the region was a bird shot on Cape Breton, N S (*vide* RDL). In Maine a Bald Eagle survey conducted by the University of Maine tallied some 150 eagles wintering in the state with at least 29 (24 adults, 5 immatures) on the Penobscot R. Bob Lambertson estimated 82 (53 adult, 28 immature, 1 unspecified) wintering in Nova Scotia. Elsewhere in the region up to seven birds, including three immatures, wintered in Essex, Conn. (*vide* PJD) and a maximum of only five eagles at Quabbin, Mass. was fewer than in previous winters. Wintering Osprey reports quite rightly draw suspicious attention. A bird identified as an Osprey at St. John, N.B., Jan. 25, seen in a rainstorm, appears questionable. A legitimate, early Osprey appeared at Old Saybrook, Conn., mid-February (v.o., *vide* PJD).

Perhaps the severe winter had an impact on Gyrfalcons because no less than eight birds were reported. A white-phase bird appeared at Salisbury Beach Dec. 15 and was seen periodically through February (Dr. Bryant *et mult. al*, *vide* RRV). Elsewhere, a dark-phase bird was observed at Orleans Beach Dec. 19 (CG), a single Gyrfalcon was seen in Nackawic, N.B., in late December (*vide* DSC), and a white Gyr was seen in Rye, N.H., Feb. 5 (RB, *vide* HWP). Rare in Connecticut, a white-phase Gyrfalcon frequented New Haven harbor Jan 30–Feb. 11 (m.ob.). A single Gyrfalcon at Crescent Beach, N.S., Feb. 18 was the only bird reported from that province (CJC, LAC, *vide* PRD). Finally, only two Gyrfalcons were observed near L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Newfoundland (BMact) Considering the area's abundant Willow Ptarmigan numbers this figure appeared inexplicably low. Well north of the bird's normal range, an ad Peregrine Falcon was seen at

point blank range in Orono, Me., Jan. 4 & 13 (ED), the "moustache" being clearly visible. Reliable winter sightings of Peregrines in Maine are very rare and perhaps without precedent. Some 30 mi. n. of Orono a second ad. Peregrine (perhaps the same bird) was seen along the Penobscot R., Feb. 18, feeding, apparently, on a flock of Com. Goldeneyes (PDV). An early Peregrine was observed at Port Williams, N.S., Feb. 26 (GB, *vide* RDL).

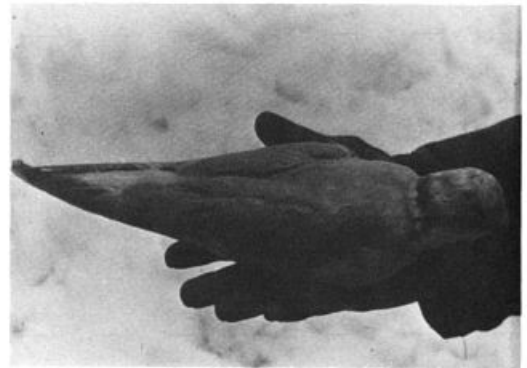
GALLIFORMES, CRANES, RAILS—The severe ice storm that paralyzed s. Maine and parts of Massachusetts in January apparently had a very serious impact on the Ruffed Grouse population. Frank Gramlich, U.S. F. & W.S. estimated a possible 80% mortality linked directly to ice conditions (*vide* PAC). The same factors were probably responsible for the low numbers of Ruffed Grouse seen in Massachusetts (B.O.E.M.). Willow Ptarmigan were unusually common along the n. peninsula of Newfoundland, flocks up to 25 being frequently seen (BMact). Indicative of ptarmigan abundance, the St. Anthony CBC recorded an unprecedented 26, and the Gros Morne CBC 15. New to the CBCs in the region and e. North America, five **Rock Ptarmigans** were found on the Gros Morne CBC Dec. 29 (PRH *et al.*). Chukars are apparently doing well in the Greenwich, Conn. area, 26 being found on the CBC there. Further investigation by John Souther revealed at least six broods, some with as many as 16 chicks, successfully reared last summer. Although the reason for their spontaneous appearance in 1975 remains unknown, it is clear that Chukars benefit from the winter feeding provided by local residents. A single Chukar, origin unknown, was seen on the State House steps on the Boston CBC.

In Nova Scotia, the Gray Partridge population seemed in good condition with some 100+ individuals found in the Grand Pré-Canning area. A previously unrecorded population of 30+ birds was located near Great Village, N.S. (FH, FS, *vide* RDL). The season's four Sandhill Cranes occurred in Concord, N.H., Dec. 12 (KD, *vide* HWP), at Northampton, Conn., Dec. 19 (Ed Morrier, *vide* SK), on the Halifax (east) CBC, and a subadult was found in Bridgewater, Mass., Jan. 20–22 (*vide* B.O.E.M.). Quite possibly the New Hampshire and Massachusetts cranes are the same individual as the Saco, Me., bird reported in the Autumn Season. Pictures of any of these birds that could confirm or refute this possibility would be appreciated. Constituting only the second Canadian CBC record, a Clapper Rail was found on the Broad Cove, N.S. CBC, first found at the same locality on last year's CBC (RDL). Six Virginia Rails on the Halifax (east) CBC was an unusually high total for the Maritimes. A single Com. Gallinule on Nantucket Feb. 18–21 was notably early (EFA). Two Am. Coots at Laconia, N.H., Jan. 12 were apparent winterers, a single bird being seen there Feb. 27 (SG, *vide* HWP). A single coot at Sebago, Me., in mid-February was one of only a very few February records for that state (RA).

SHOREBIRDS—Late-lingering shorebirds included single Semipalmated Plovers at Louisbourg Dec. 9 (RTB), Halifax (east) CBC Dec. 18, and Narragansett Dec. 24 (DLK, ST, *vide* CW). Two Greater Yellowlegs were seen on the Nauset CBC and extraordinarily late were two Lesser Yellowlegs at Eastham, Mass., Dec. 25–31 (D. McNair, *vide* B.O.E.M.). A Least Sandpiper was apparently critically identified on the Port Hebert CBC Dec. 26. A single White-rumped Sandpiper occurred at Nauset Dec. 4 (CG, BN). Extremely late was an *Ereunetes* sandpiper on the Eastham CBC Dec. 19 and a reputed Semipalmated Sandpiper in Chatham, Mass., Jan. 30 seemed nearly inconceivable (*vide* RPE). Impressively high Sanderling counts totaled 1153 on the Cape Cod CBC and 575 on the Revere CBC. On Cape Breton three Sanderlings at Louisbourg Jan. 16–20 were apparently wintering birds and as such were quite extraordinary (RTB). Noteworthy were the 45

Dunlin at Seabrook, N.H., Feb. 5 (RB, *vide* HWP) and the single Red Phalarope at Eastham Dec. 19 (WB *et al.*, *vide* B.O.E.M.).

SKUAS, GULLS—Two skuas, thought to be Great Skuas were seen off the South Nantucket Shoals Jan. 30 (*vide* RPE). A new CBC record of 290 Glaucous Gulls was reported from the St. Anthony CBC Dec. 31. Elsewhere white-winged gulls appeared in good numbers with a high of 90 Iceland Gulls in the Salisbury—Plum I. area Feb. 19 and 75 at Cape Ann (*vide* RPE). In Lincoln, Me., a Glaucous × Herring Gull hybrid was identified and photographed Jan. 8 (PDV). Noted features were the bird's large size (equal to Glaucous), conspicuously long bill, light mantle, pale blue irides and dark, but not black, primaries. The bird also showed a poorly defined tail band. A second gull, well described and thought to have been a Glaucous × Herring hybrid, was closely observed at Revere Mass., Feb. 19 (SZ). The Lesser Black-backed Gull of Digby, N.S. wintered for it's eighth consecutive year at it's favorite sewer outlet. A second Lesser Black-backed Gull was found in Orleans Feb. 25 (*vide* RPE). There was some confusion about a possible Thayer's Gull at Eastern Pt., Gloucester. The bird, described as being "slightly smaller and with a smaller bill than Herring Gull—a mantle exactly the same color (as Herring)—wingtips strongly patterned gray and white (NC)," was first identified as Thayer's on the basis of brown speckled iris and mantle color, but was later *correctly* identified as a dark Kumlien's Gull. Note that Kumlien's can sometimes show *black* wingtips and brown speckled irides. Thayer's shows a *perceptibly* darker mantle (see Gosselin, M and David, N. 1975. *Am. Birds* 29:1059–1066). Black-headed Gulls were reported from at least seven Massachusetts locations with a high count of 11 at their traditional location at Watchemoket Cove, R.I., Mar. 19 (RAC, VL). A late Laughing Gull was seen in Chatham, Mass., Dec. 19 (VL *vide* B.O.E.M.). Little Gulls were reported from Cox's Ledge R.I., and Gloucester, Newburyport, Nantucket and Long I., Mass.



Ross' Gull (winter plumaged ad.), first eastern North American specimen. Fogo I., Nfld., Dec. 18, 1976. Photo/Peter D Vickery.

The season's only Ivory Gull in New England was an immature found by L. Crowfoot *et al.* at Rockport, Mass., Dec 10–Jan. 10. Ten Ivory Gulls on the L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Nfld., CBC is most certainly a count high for the species. At that same location Bruce Mctavish reported 60 Ivory Gulls Jan. 20. That night the barometer dropped to 27.76 (a Newfoundland low), 20 in. of snow fell and NE winds gusted to 76 mph. The following day Bruce counted 153 Ivory Gulls and estimated 350–400 (ratio: 2 adult to 1 immature) in the area

From Black Tickle, Labr., 200+ "ice partridge" were reported during the same period, no doubt a result of the same massive weather system (GJJ). On Feb. 7 some 133 Ivory Gulls passed L'Anse-aux-Meadows heading into a 50 mph NE wind. These figures represent a regional high for *Am. Birds*, and according to local residents this was the largest number seen in more than 20 years.

S.A.

Undoubtedly the rarest gull of the season is the winter-plumaged, adult Ross' Gull shot by local gunners off Fogo I., Nfld., Dec. 18 (JEM). This represents the second regional occurrence and only the second North American record of this species out of Arctic waters. It is the first specimen for e. North America (spec. to N.M.C.), the bird being in a healthy condition (manducatus; DWF, JEM, BMact, JP, SIT, PDV). It is especially interesting to note this Ross' Gull having appeared within just two years of the renowned Newburyport gull. Might we reasonably expect others in the near future? Equally significant, the bird's presence off the coast of Newfoundland lends added support to the belief that the Newburyport gull was a northern European stray and not a transcontinental wanderer.



Davis Finch (foreground) and Stu Tingley consuming morsels of Ross' Gull with appropriate solemnities, Dec. 28, 1976. Photo/Peter D. Vickery.

ALCIDS—Beginning in late December the Massachusetts coast experienced an unprecedented Alcoid flight. Razorbills and Thick-billed Murres occurred by the thousands. The number of Razorbills counted is figured roughly at 2800 birds, the actual number probably several times that figure. The major movement was first noted Dec. 16 when 185+ Razorbills were counted at Rockport (RRV *et al.*). Other major counts included 400+ at Eastham Jan. 8 (CAG, BN), 500+ passed Orleans Jan. 15 (WRP), 800+ flying past Provincetown Jan. 16 (RRV) and 500+ noted from North Beach on the same day (WRP). Finally, 250+ were seen at North Beach Feb. 12 (WRP). Apparently associated with the weather conditions that produced the large flight in December were the large Razorbill counts from points along the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. The Brier I. CBC recorded 368 Razorbills Dec. 20 and the Kingston CBC counted 34, Dec. 19.

Incredibly, Thick-billed Murres registered even larger numbers. A rough figure, to be considered a strict minimum, totaled 13,990 Thick-billeds. No doubt, the actual total was

many times that figure. These totals bring to mind the 1974 Brier I. CBC when 20,000+ gale-swept Thick-billeds were seen flying from the Bay of Fundy (*Am. Birds* 28:613). High counts off the Massachusetts coast included 450+ Thick-billeds off Rockport Dec. 16, 2300 off Rockport Dec. 17, 3000+ off Eastham Dec. 18, 1560 on the Cape Cod CBC Dec. 19, 1500 from Eastham Jan. 8 and finally 4000+ off Provincetown Jan. 16. In Connecticut, a single Thick-billed Murre easily studied at Niantic Dec. 24 would in any other winter be a very rare occurrence. But this winter it was not surprising to learn of a Thick-billed picked up on the Connecticut Turnpike near Darien Dec. 31 (*vide* TB)!

There is little doubt that the four major Alcoid flights were weather-related. A large NE storm struck the s. New England coast Dec. 17 and the Jan. 8 peak resulted from 60+ mph NE winds. The Jan. 16 and Feb. 12 peaks were registered in brisk N or NE winds. It should be noted that during these flights both species were usually observed together. But what is equally clear is the fact that the very large number of Razorbills and Thick-billed Murres wintering along the Cape were not simply storm-driven birds. Apparently their presence was associated with the large squid population that had attracted so many shearwaters and jaegers in the fall. Blair Nikula noted that quite possibly another food item, as yet undetermined was partially responsible for attracting and sustaining the large Alcoid population. Without such an abundant food supply the weather-related flights undoubtedly would not have lingered.

By contrast few Com. Murres were noted from coastal areas. The *Argo Merchant* oil spill apparently had a devastating effect on Com. Murres offshore, large numbers being washed up "hopelessly oiled on the outer cape and island beaches (RRV). Few Thick-billeds were reported oiled. Veit pointed out that this disparity indicated the exclusively coastal distribution of the Thick-billed Murres. Of special note was the single, oiled Com. Murre rescued in Narragansett, R.I. Jan. 9 (RAC, DLK, D. Rusillo, *vide* CW).

Compared with recent years Dovekies appeared in good numbers. Although on the Cape they were termed "practically non-existent" (BN), with only a few scattered birds present, in Rhode Island 23 were counted off Pt. Judith Dec. 23 (ST, *vide* CW). Farther n., there were 19 on the Portland and 57 on the Eastport CBCs and a combined total of 95 on the Halifax CBCs. Hundreds were reported flying through the Grand and Petite Passages, N.S., Dec. 22, severe weather conditions precluding a more accurate estimate (EM). Black Guillemots unusually far s. included a single bird off Cox s Ledge Feb. 26 and Mar. 12 (CW *et al.*), while ten guillemots wintered near Provincetown (BN). Eight Puffins were seen at Eastham Jan. 8 (CG, BN).

OWLS, WOODPECKERS—Barn Owls were well represented in the region, predictably in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. At least five Barn Owls were located in Connecticut with two each in Bridgeport and Darien and a single bird in Lordship. Rhode Island totaled six owls including four on the Block I. CBC and two wintering in Middletown. The three Massachusetts Barn Owls came from the Quincy CBC, the Milton CBC and from Boston Dec. 12 (BM, *vide* B.O.E.M.). From all accounts the Snowy Owl flight this winter was one of the poorest in recent years. The New England total was a slim 28–30 birds with no more than eight Snowies in Massachusetts, perhaps four in New Hampshire, seven or eight in Maine and two or three in Connecticut. Surprisingly, no Snowy Owls were reported from the Nova Scotia—New Brunswick border area, Stu Tingley noting the complete absence of these owls as being a real surprise. The region's only Hawk Owls occurred in Maine, one present near Ashland Dec. 28–Mar. 26 (R. Coffin *et al.*), the second, ap-

parently migrating N, was found in Brewer for one day only Mar. 25 (MLu).

S.A.

A small flight of Great Gray Owls, including four positively identified individuals, and at least two unsubstantiated possibilities, was noted. All were seen between early December and late January. Of the three in Maine, the earliest, farthest north, was present three weeks to late December near Ashland (R. Coffin *et al.*), the second in a wooded area near Orono in late December (*vide* RO), the last along the coast at Bass Harbor Jan. 19–23 (S. Grierson *et al.*, ph.). A single Great Gray Owl appeared in Andover, Mass., Jan. 5–6 (EC, WD, JK *et al.*, photographed). Unless openly visible in a field, these handsome birds are generally difficult to locate. It might be noted that this is not usually a diurnal owl, the bird frequenting open areas and hunting during the day only when "food stressed" (pers. comm. Michael Collins, Univ. of Manitoba). Gray Owls, apparently having disappeared, may often be located in adjacent wood lots. Perhaps if one tried locating these owls by looking in wooded sections, employing a tape recorder at night, the likelihood of finding them would increase. The Ashland owl, present three weeks, was only occasionally visible in an open field, for the most part remaining well secluded in a wood.



Great Gray Owl, Bass Harbor, Me., Jan. 23, 1977. Photo/ Stanley O. Grierson.

A roost of 12 Long-eared Owls was found in Darien, Conn., Jan. 22 (FWM *et al.*); six birds were located in New Haven (*vide* FWM). Short-eared Owls were considered well below normal throughout the s. part of the region. Despite the cold weather three Com. Flickers wintered successfully in Maine, two on Mount Desert I. (v.o., *vide* WCT), one bird observed periodically in Gardiner (FB, *vide* PAC). At least ten Red-bellied Woodpeckers occurred from Massachusetts north. Eight were located in Massachusetts and two frequented feeders in Maine (see Autumn Season), the northernmost in Winterport until Dec. 6 (PDV). Only nine Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported in the region. Well south of the bird's usual range, a N. Three-toed Woodpecker was seen on the Greenfield, Mass. CBC.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS—At least eight E. Phoebes were found in Massachusetts in late December but

the only one seen in January occurred in Bridgewater Jan. 10 (*vide* RPE). The only other phoebe was seen at Sharon, Conn. Jan. 26 (AG). An early migrant was found in Bantam, Conn. Feb. 19 (*vide* AG). In Massachusetts, Gray Jays s. of their breeding range included two in Littleton Jan. 19, one in Byfield Dec. 23–24 and a single bird at W. Quabbin Dec. 16. The northernmost Tufted Titmouse in the region wintered in New Castle, Me. (*vide* BC). The 502 Tufted Titmice on the Concord, Massachusetts CBC, was certainly an impressive number. Equally impressive was the single House Wren identified on the Boston CBC, being the only bird of this species recorded for the period. Only two Carolina Wrens were reported n. of Massachusetts, both occurred in Bangor, Me. One frequented a feeder Dec. 3–Feb. 7, representing one of a very few winter records for c. Maine (BC *et al.*). The second bird, thought to be a different individual, was identified on the Bangor CBC.

THRUSHES, WAXWINGS—A single Varied Thrush was found in Warren, Me., Jan. 1–Feb. 14 (JKi), while a male of this species remained at Pound Ridge, Conn., Jan. 16 through the period (MBM *et mult.* *al.*). In Nova Scotia two and possibly three Varied Thrushes were discovered at feeders. A male present Jan. 12–Feb. 19 was photographed at South Maitland, Hants Co., for a first confirmed provincial record (EM *et al.*, *vide* PRD). A second male was present at North Range Feb. 5 through the period (LD *et al.*, *vide* PRD). A third bird, unconfirmed, was reputedly seen in Halifax. Remarkable, considering the cold fall were the number of Hermit Thrushes lingering in the region.

Compared to last year's flight the Bohemian Waxwing in cursion was smaller and, except for a handful of birds, was limited to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Maine. In New Brunswick, David Christie mentioned "moderate numbers, with flocks up to 50 birds, occurring in eight or nine locations, mostly in January. At least seven small flocks occurred in Maine, the largest numbering 13 birds in Portland Feb. 12 (PMcG, *vide* WGi) and 15 at their traditional location in Oakland Feb. 1 (PDV). In Nova Scotia, scattered numbers, the largest being 21 birds at Pictou Dec. 8, were found at seven different locations (*vide* PRD). Farther south two Bohemian Waxwings were seen on the Concord, Massachusetts CBC with single birds at Williamburg and Leverett (*vide* SK). A solitary individual was found on Nantucket in mid-February. This latter bird was observed "drinking from a puddle in the road and a few seconds later was hit by a passing truck. This is the first definite record for the island" (EFA). If still identifiable! A single imm. Cedar Waxwing was seen far n. of its usual winter range in Pembroke, Maine in the second week of January (SBa).

LATE WARBLERS—Late warblers included a Blackpoll in Lockeport, N.S., Dec. 3 (EF, *vide* PRD), single Ovenbirds on the Worcester and Cape Cod CBCs, two Com. Yellowthroats at Agawam, Mass., Dec. 18 (SK), four on the Cape Cod CBC and a single bird on Block I., Dec. 19 (SRD). Only eight Yellow-breasted Chats were reported in the region. Certainly the most extraordinary CBC bird was the Hooded Warbler on the Halifax (west) CBC Dec. 27 (Ben Doane *et al.*). This constitutes the first Canadian CBC record and most certainly the first regional CBC occurrence. A ♂ Wilson's Warbler was easily identified in Green Hills, R.I., Dec. 2 (DW, *vide* CW).

ICTERIDS, FRINGILLIDS—The only Yellow-headed Blackbirds were two birds from Maine (21 in region in Fall Season). One was seen count period on Vinalhaven I., and the second bird was shot in Readfield Jan. 24 (*vide* PAC). Three "Bullock's" Orioles occurred, a male in West Hartford Conn., Dec. 25–Feb. 6 (FWM *et mult.* *al.*, ph.), a single bird

was seen in Portsmouth, N.H., Dec. 2 (*vide* HWP), and in New Brunswick a ♂ “**Bullock’s**” **Oriole** was recognizably photographed in Martinon Nov. 20–21, providing a first confirmed provincial record for this subspecies (CJ, ES, *vide* DSC). In Nova Scotia, two **Brewer’s Blackbirds**, one identifiably photographed, provided the first confirmed record for that province and only the second documented sighting for the region, the first having been photographed in Truro, Mass. this past fall. The first Nova Scotia bird was discovered in Lockeport Jan. 3–23 by George Perry, ph. confirmed by Eric Mills and Ian McLaren (*vide* PRD). A second Brewer’s Blackbird, a male, was seen in Economy Feb. 13 (F. Spalding, *vide* PRD).

Cardinals continue to do well in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and appear to be strongly expanding their numbers in s and c. Maine. A late ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was discovered in Hudson, Mass., Dec. 19; the bird apparently succumbing to the cold weather, was found dead Jan. 4 (SF, *vide* B O.E.M.). A ♂ **Black-headed Grosbeak** was seen for one day by one person in Windsor, Conn., Jan. 22 and could not be relocated (*vide* PJD). The season’s total of 13 Dickcissels, excluding CBC information, was unusually low. One Green-tailed Towhee occurred this winter on the Wenham, Massachusetts CBC.

WINTER FINCHES—Aside from the very large number of Purple Finches and the good population of Am. Goldfinches present the winter flight was not impressive for the s part of New England. In Newfoundland, in late December and early January, Pine Grosbeaks, Com. Redpolls and White-winged Crossbills (not a single Red Crossbill) were abundant, the St. Anthony CBC recording new count highs for all three species. No doubt these birds responded to the enormous cone, seed and Mountain Ash berry crop that existed on the n. peninsula. Near L’Anse-aux-Meadows, Bruce Mactavish reported millions of redpolls, the skies sometimes darkened by the numbers. Nova Scotia reported more Pine Grosbeaks (ca 300) than usual, few redpolls and fair numbers of both species of crossbill (*vide* PRD). New Brunswick recorded very few redpolls and many White-winged Crossbills in the Tobique Valley (*vide* DSC). In n. Maine, Pine Grosbeaks, White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins occurred in good numbers (PDV) and in New Hampshire some 20 Red Crossbills were seen in Plymouth Dec. 1–16 (*vide* HWP).

SPARROWS, LONGSPURS, BUNTINGS—The fall and early winter were remarkable for the number and variety of sparrows that lingered in the region. From St. Anthony, Nfld, south, extraordinary numbers of White-throated Sparrows were noted. Considering the weather, such large numbers were something of a surprise. Evidently the successful 1976 breeding season and the abundant, generally snow-free food supply were more important factors than the cold. By late January the extended sub-freezing temperatures and the snow cover combined to reduce the sparrow population to normal levels.

An “Ipswich” Sparrow, some 4½ mi. from the coast, near Middle Porter’s Lake, N.S., Jan. 9 was noteworthy as a winter bird, but the real surprise was the bird’s inland location (IMcL, *vide* PRD). Only two Grasshopper Sparrows were seen in January, the first at N. Wellfleet, Mass., Jan. 2 & 5 (D McNair, *vide* B.O.E.M.) and the second, even more unusual, at Southport, Me., Dec. 18–Jan. 9 (BT). Ten Seaside Sparrows on the Nauset CBC was an especially high total. Two “Oregon” Juncos visited feeding stations in Rhode Island and a single junco of this subspecies frequented a feeder in Nova Scotia. Also in Nova Scotia a single Field Sparrow was noted in Petite Riviere Dec. 31 (FWD *et al.*, *vide* PRD). An unusually high number of White-crowned Sparrows wintered in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

S.A.

Certainly The bird of the season was the McCown’s **Longspur** discovered by Wayne Peterson near Bridgewater, Mass., Jan. 9. Found among a flock of some 50 Lapland Longspurs, studied, photographed, admired by many and finally banded, the bird remained in the area until Feb. 3. The most conspicuous feature noted was the bird’s small size and the short tail with white outer edges, giving the tail the appearance of the “characteristic inverted black T” (WRP). This is thought to be the first modern record e. of Illinois and is most certainly the first confirmed regional record. There is a previous record of a McCown’s Longspur purchased in the Boston Market in 1877, but there are legitimate doubts that the specimen could possibly have come from anywhere in New England (WRP). About *this* McCown’s Longspur, let it be said, there is no doubt. Fascinating, though not really surprising, is the frequent discovery of such rarities in areas that offer an unusually large food supply. In the same field were large numbers of crows, Mourning Doves, Horned Larks, meadowlarks, juncos, Tree Sparrows, Lapland Longspurs and later, a Sandhill Crane.

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QUÉBEC REGION

/Normand David and Michel Gosselin

December and January were rather cold; snowfalls were below average in southwestern areas but very high in the eastern parts of the Province. These were not extreme conditions and certainly cannot alone explain the generally low numbers of winter visitors, but they were severe enough to prevent wintering attempts of many half-hardy birds. February was warmer than average but did not trigger any early waterfowl movement.



GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL — A Red-necked Grebe caught alive at Ste-Anne de Beaupré Feb. 2, and brought to the Québec Zoological Garden (*vide* DL) was only a second February occurrence in the Province, the previous bird also sent to the Zoological Garden, from L. St-Jean, Feb. 16, 1948. A lingering Great Blue Heron was found at Bromont Dec. 5 (*vide* JL), two Redheads at Lachine, Feb. 15 (MM) were probably very early migrants, but the only previous successful wintering was also from L. St-Louis. New for the Montréal CBC was a Ring-necked Duck at Laval, Dec. 18 (ND); another at St-Hyacinthe, Jan. 3 (DC), was the latest provincial record. Approximately 165 Common and six Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported Feb. 5, from Dégelis, a Gaspé inland locale (JPL), curiously paralleled by one Barrow's and 150 Common Goldeneyes at Côte Ste-Catherine Feb. 11 (MJ). Little is known of wintering eiders in the Gulf of St. Lawrence; scanty figures came from Ste-Anne des Monts, 600 Common and two King Dec. 7 (JMC); and Percé, 56 Common Jan. 12 and four King Jan. 21 (LL). The outstanding bird of the season was a ♀-plumaged **Smew** observed by B. Barnhurst and M. McIntosh at Côte Ste-Catherine, Dec. 11; their description stressed the rust-colored head with large white cheek patches extending on the throat, white wing patches, small size and small bill. Unfortunately the bird was not located afterwards, despite an intensive search. A 1967 Montréal sighting was published in *AFN* 21:400, but H. Ouellet later learned that a captive bird had escaped locally shortly before this sighting.

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — Lingering hawks included a Sharp-shinned at Sherbrooke Jan. 23-30 (PB); a Red-shouldered Hawk near Caughnawaga Feb. 20 (MA) was probably an early migrant, but the only successful wintering in the province was at nearby Candiac in 1961-62. A white Gyrfalcon was seen at close range, and heard calling (!), at Lantier Feb. 4 (LD); a similar bird was reported from Montréal the following day (PB). Peregrine Falcons at Ste-Anne de Bellevue, Dec. 12, (where released) and Nuns' I., Jan. 9 & 23 (FHi) were winter occurrences in Montréal, where none have wintered since 1952. Similarly, a Merlin was seen at St-Hyacinthe Dec. 16 (DC); despite the doubts expressed in *AB* 27:164, this species

sometimes winters in s. Québec (as at St-Hyacinthe in 1974-75) Spruce Grouse are common residents in Laurentides Park but are almost never reported in winter, so six seen there Dec. 30 (MG) are noteworthy. A wounded Ruddy Turnstone was found at Rigaud Dec. 1 (GH), providing the latest record in the Province. Three Com. Snipe were found near an unfrozen creek at Charlesbourg Feb. 12-27 (PL *et al.*). These birds reportedly spent the winter there, as they probably did in 1964 when they were also noted at Québec City in February.

GULLS THROUGH OWLS — A large influx of gulls was noted at Côte Ste-Catherine Dec. 11-16; although most had left by Dec. 18. The Montréal CBC recorded its highest figures ever on that day: 69 Glaucous, 64 Iceland, 691 Great Black-backed, 4509 Herring and two Thayer's Gulls. The Beauharnois' **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was last seen Dec. 18 (CL) and Black-legged Kittiwake Dec. 4 (BB). First suspected Dec. 11 (YC), the presence of an Ivory Gull at Côte Ste-Catherine was confirmed Dec. 16 (BB,MM); three birds were present Feb. 7 (YC), and one last seen Feb. 12 (BB, m.ob.). Since eight out of the 20 Mourning Doves ever reported from s.w. Québec in January and February were in 1977, the recent increase of corn acreage (as already noted for Ontario in *AB* 30:713) is certainly partly responsible, many of the birds being observed at corn cribs. Snowy Owls were scarce but all three "northern owls" were noted in s. Québec: two Hawk Owls were in the Hull area this season (*vide* RMP), and one in Laurentides Park Dec. 12 (PL), a Great Gray Owl was at St-Augustin Jan. 4 (FHa), and Boreal Owls were at Laterrière Nov. 25 - Dec. 12 (NB), Lévis Dec. 12 (JFR), Sherbrooke Dec. 23 (PB), Orsainville Dec. 31 (*vide* DL) and St-Joseph de la Rive Jan. 6 (*vide* HM).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WRENS — A Com. Flicker at Melocheville, Feb. 12 (BB), was not totally unexpected. Good numbers of N. Three-toed Woodpeckers contrasted with the virtual absence of Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers. An E. Phoebe intermittently visited a Candiac feeder, near Montréal, Dec. 24 - Jan. 7 (*vide* MA); to our knowledge it was a first provincial winter occurrence. The populations of Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches were high but they did not show any sign of southward movement. In St. Lambert, a House Wren found its way into a living room through the chimney Dec. 20; it was released but not seen subsequently (SJH); it is by far our latest record. Two Winter Wrens were discovered in a mature hemlock stand at Mirabel Feb. 19 (ND). Despite its name this wren is only casual here in winter, and as a matter of fact we know of only six previous records for January and February. Carolina Wrens showed up again this winter: one at Hudson until Jan. 17 (*vide* JW), and another at Montréal-Nord, Feb. 28 (MJ).

MIMIDS THROUGH ICTERIDS — A Mockingbird was at Châteauguay, Dec. 18 (MM); another bird in Charlesbourg did not survive the severe weather conditions of January. These records are indicative of the species' winter status: over the years many birds lingered into the first week of January but very few wintered successfully. A Brown Thrasher appeared at a Pierrefonds feeder at the beginning of the season and was not seen after Feb. 1 (*vide* MM). There is only one previous similar record, a bird found dead at a Montréal feeder Feb. 4, 1937. A well-described singing **Townsend's Solitaire** was turned up at Sherbrooke, Jan. 23 - Feb. 9 (PB); this is the fourth provincial occurrence, all since 1968 (we are still without any specimen or photographic evidence). Both waxwings were uncommon, but there was a flock of 200 Bohemians in Laurentides Park Dec. 29 (MG). The only warbler of the season was, of course, Yellow-rumped, seen at Hull Dec. 13 (MB). The most notable icterids included single Rusty Blackbirds at Granby Dec. 18 (JL), Charlesbourg Dec. 27 (MD), Neufchâtel Jan. 1 (SL), three at St-Louis de Gonzague Feb. 12 (MG), and single Com

Grackles at Pointe-au-Père Feb. 8-19, and Rimouski Feb. 26 (J. Larivée), apparently first winter records in that region.

FRINGILLIDS — Only 12 Cardinals were reported in the greater Montréal area, including seven in Hudson (*vide* JW) and a pair at Hemmingford (*vide* RC). Evening Grosbeaks appeared in average numbers, but Purple Finches increased as the season progressed. In the Hull area however, they were seen in huge numbers throughout the season; the Hull-Ottawa CBC recorded an all-time high, with 99% of the birds in Québec (*vide* RMP). On the other hand, Com. Redpolls were extremely scarce. Figures of the *Club des Ornithologues du Québec* recorded them on only 6.2% of the outings, which is about one-third as frequently as in the past three winters, and almost half as frequently as in 1972-73, a generally "very poor" redpoll winter on this side of the continent (see AB 27:580). Feeders in Hudson attracted a Rufous-sided Towhee until early February, and a Field Sparrow through the end of the season (*vide* JW); there are six previous February occurrences of the towhee, but only one of the sparrow. A Swamp Sparrow at Caughnawaga Dec. 18 (JC), is a rather uncommon. Godfrey (1966, *The Birds of Canada*) stated it is occasional in winter in s.w. Québec; however we do not know of any record between Jan. 3 and

Apr. 1. Although quite uncommon, many Lapland Longspur reports were received including a flock of 13 in Senneville, Jan 14 (P. Bannon), and 20 near St-Louis de Gonzague, Feb. 12 (ND).

NOTE — Since the publication of a Ruffed Grouse record from Fort Chimo, doubts have been expressed regarding its validity; this record is thus better disregarded until substantiation is available (see AB 30:816).

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HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

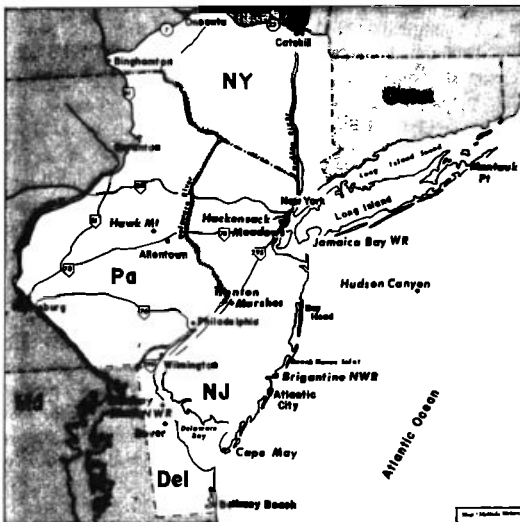
/ P. A. Buckley, Robert O. Paxton and David A. Cutler

This was the winter to end all winters, certainly the worst in recent memory, and, according to the U.S. Weather Bureau, the worst since records have been kept—almost 200 years. In New York City, the day's high during the month of January only twice exceeded the normal average daily temperature; February was hardly any better, with the mean temperature only 22.1°F, some 10.1°F lower than normal. A very warm spell in late February ameliorated conditions somewhat. Philadelphia, the other end of the region's axis, hardly fared better. It was the coldest winter in the 177 years of record-keeping there, with the mercury bottoming out at -4°F Jan. 17. This was the nadir of what has come to be called the Three Bad Days in January, when for the first time in 78 years

the city had zero or below weather three days in a row. The rest of the month was hardly better: on 24 days the temperature never topped 32°F. While snow was not excessive in either New York or Philadelphia, the extreme cold precluded the usual melting. At Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, for example, the frost depth was 40 inches vs. a normal 12 inches. In both New York and Philadelphia the "January thaw" just barely caught the tail end of February. Literally the icing on the cake was a series of ice storms atop the snow which effectively removed the marshes, fields and woods from use by ground foraging birds. Coupled with the freezing of virtually all freshwater, and for the first time in living memory of vast reaches of salt water, practically all groups of birds save pelagics were demonstrably affected. On Long Island, Great South Bay froze so thoroughly that the only hard clam production north of the Outer Banks of North Carolina was that provided by clambers who drove onto the ice in their cars, cut holes with power saws and then tonged from the surface. Ice solidly filled Gardiner's Bay such that it might have been possible to walk the five miles to Gardiner's Island. Farther south, Barnegat Bay froze for the first time in 30 years. At normally maritime-mild Cape May, Choate reported that 85.6% of January's hours were below freezing, being so continuously from January 14 to 23. At Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge (N.W.R.), the shallow, freshwater pools (each about one mile square) were frozen over by January 1, and the ice reached a thickness of 16 inches by the end of the month. Most of the marshes, leads and sounds in southern New Jersey were so thoroughly iced over as to preclude avian use except possibly by scavenging gulls. And at Bivalve, on Delaware Bay, Kunkle reported that gulls, starving by virtue of shutdown of the clam and oyster shucking houses, were constantly on hand wherever there was open water in order to steal food from the diving ducks.

Comments on weather-induced mortality were ubiquitous but especial thanks must go to observers in southern New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania, who provided the bulk of the material summarized below.

Most of the weather-related bird mortality making the news papers concerned Brant, to some extent on Long Island but especially in southern New Jersey. It will be some time before



fact is sorted out from impression, error from misinterpretation, and short-term from long-term impacts, so what is reported here must be considered tentative. It is clear, though, that Brant were exceptionally impacted by frozen bays, and that almost to the end, they resisted artificial feed, preferring to root for *Zostera*, *Ulva* or lawn grass where available. Many dead Brant were found, and many others were seen in moribund condition. Barnhill reported birds along the median strip of Route 14 in Delaware "so weak that they appeared unable even to stand, but were lying on their bellies eating what grass they could reach. We also saw Brant in a yard in Rehoboth eating food thrown out for them (corn?)." Dorothy Foy reported an estimated 2500 Brant, 400 Black Ducks and 300 miscellaneous waterfowl dead in the 20 miles between Beach Haven and Barnegat Inlets. Similar accounts, although generally lacking figures, were received of conditions on Great South Bay, Shinnecock Bay and other areas of Long Island. Widely publicized attempts were made to supply the birds with supposedly irresistible cracked corn. With very, very few exceptions, the Brant refused the corn while pigeons, various ducks, crows, etc., prospered.

Eventually, in late January, the Long Island and southern New Jersey Brant disappeared. Jeremiads were written about the death of thousands, but the data are simply not there. Two pieces of information are contradictory, but each is obviously correct in its own right. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation autopsied a number of emaciated Brant from Long Island, and determined their cause of death to have been starvation; 21 examined by the American Museum of Natural History had totally empty crops and stomachs. *Per contra*, an unknown number picked up dead or moribund and examined by the State of Delaware were found in most cases to have been poisoned by lead shot—thereby stressing them to the point where they were unable to cope with the winter pressures. The impact of these findings has been to cause Delaware to reverse its negative position on steel shot for hunting within its borders. Finally, too many Brant disappeared too rapidly with no trace to have died in the Brigantine N.W.R. area the counted dropped from some 20,000 to 15 in about a month. Clearly, the birds moved out, southward, to points as yet unknown. Careful counts over the next few winters, as well as Arctic breeding ground surveys this summer, should tell the true tale.

Other waterfowl beside Brant were hit, inland as well as coastally. Ray Blicharz reported the death by freezing of waterfowl on the large pond maintained by the Squibb company in Lawrenceville, N.J., and this scene was repeated many times over throughout the region. And on western Long Island, as well as along the Delaware River and Delaware Bay, as if the weather were not enough, birds had to contend with a series of massive oil spills. Any birds not already stressed beyond endurance succumbed when oiled, and many of the dead waterfowl in southern New Jersey were, in addition to starving, badly oiled. It was a grim winter for waterfowl: the Blue-winged Teal were the smart ones.

For the first time in the short history of this region, many contributors commented on the incidence of road-killed owls—attributed to the birds having been struck by cars while attempting to catch or scavenge prey from roads when all fields and woods were snow- and ice-covered. Screech Owls, Barn Owls and American Kestrels were most frequently mentioned. Others reported abnormal behavior by raptors, such as: two incidents of Am. Kestrels attempting to kill pheasants; a Red-shouldered Hawk coming to a feeder for a month and a half (early January through late February) to eat suet; two others reported kestrels doing the same. At Hawk Mountain, Nagy remarked on the increased incidence of trap-caught raptors (especially Red-taileds) this winter, relating it

to the unfortunate juxtaposition of a severe winter and the currently high prices being paid for fox pelts. He also commented on the numbers of Sharp-shinned and kestrels coming to feeders when songbirds were scarce in the fields and woods, many others made the same observation. In one bizarre incident "a frightened family called the borough police when a Red-tail (?) came into their yard, frightened her and [her] children, also the dog, and the policeman shot the bird. It was on top of a rat and eating it!"

Landbird mortality was also widely commented on, and some was inferred from the disappearance at feeders of especially monitored goodies (e.g. the New Jersey Painted Bunting). In the Princeton, N.J., area, Blicharz reported feeder maintainers' comments of birds "missing toes, legs, tail or wing feathers, etc. and [which] hobbled around their feeders in an attempt at survival." In northern New Jersey Starlings were reported dropping dead from under bridge roosts (R.N.J.B.). From the Philadelphia area, Grantham noted that "over-wintering water and marsh dependent species obviously took a heavy beating this year. Yellowthroats were all wiped out. Weak and starving kingfishers and Great Blue Herons were reported (and recovered when possible) in early January. I have several reports of Great Blues found dead around small frozen farm ponds in mid-January." He also noted that "a friend who takes in injured birds had a good 'species list' this year, for raptors brought in injured or starving. Great Horned and Screech Owls, and Red-taileds, Red-shouldered and kestrels were his common species." Grantham also noted the behavior of Eastern Bluebirds in an area he monitors closely, where one cold night some 16 attempted to pack into one nestbox for roosting. He commented that most were locally banded, indicating they had not yet made southbound hardship movements.

It should be noted that massive feeding efforts aimed not only at waterfowl and feeding stations but also open field species kept alive many birds that would have otherwise perished. The value of these efforts to the gene pools of the affected species we will leave to the reader to ponder. We will conclude by pointing out the need to monitor closely over the next few seasons the breeding populations of several species likely to have been impacted by the winter's weather. Chief among them would be: Brant, Black Duck, Am. Kestrel, Am Woodcock, Barn Owl, Screech Owl, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush and Eastern Bluebird.

Weather aside, it was a mixed winter. Winter finches were all but absent, there were no especial irruptions of boreal species, and feeder rarities were about average, despite the weather. The woods and marshes, late in the winter, were virtually devoid of birds, and daily species lists at that time were sparse indeed unless one wandered onto one of the few active patches of open water or a well-stocked feeder. Outstanding rarities this season were: Brown Pelican, Black Brant, Broad-winged Hawk, Sandhill Crane, a white-rumped curlew (sp.?), "Great" Skuas, Sabine's Gull, Burrowing Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Blue Grosbeak, Painted Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee and Golden-crowned Sparrow.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS—Coastal observers uniformly commented on the virtual absence of Red-throated Loons. But near Allentown, Pa., one landed on a stretch of I-95 and was unable to take off (Jim Harden). In nearby Orange County, N.Y. at about the same time, at least two Horned Grebes performed similar aeronautical maneuvers (*vide JT*). The causative agent in these cases is suspected to be the freezeup of Great Lakes and other inland waters. The only Eared Grebe was at Sea Girt, N.J., Dec. 3 (R Conn *et al.*). Red-necked Grebe, a disaster species in this region since at least the 1950s, staged a remarkable spring invasion, presaged (?) by above-normal numbers this winter, with

maxima of five at Montauk Feb. 19 (m.ob.), similar numbers along the Delaware R. (GH), and widely scattered singles and pairs along the entire coast (m.ob.).

Northern Fulmar reports are keeping pace with, or exceeding, increased offshore winter work. Maxima this season included 30 in Mar. 5 in the Hudson Canyon area (D.V.O.C. trip), 27 on shelf water between Baltimore and Hudson Canyons Feb. 5 (RAR), and 100 with the Polish fishing fleet 75 miles e. of Sea Isle City, N.J., Jan. 16–18 (TK). Except for the fishing fleet count, these are pale ghosts indeed of the Georges Banks counts this winter (see p. 305), but only ten years ago even one or two would have been astounding and possibly disbelieved.

Certainly astonishing in view of January's weather was an imm **Brown Pelican** at Lily L., Cape May Jan. 26–28 (at least; Dick Bew) and subsequently found dead in mid-March by Keith Seagers, who tracked down the occurrence. More Great Cormorants than usual were reported, with maxima of 40 at Rye, N.Y., Feb. 5 (M.F.N.) and "2–3 dozen" at Barnegat Inlet Feb. 26 (MH). Unsurprisingly, only one Double-crested was reported overwintering this year (at Barnegat), reversing a recent trend. One thousand Gannets were estimated with the Polish fishing fleet 75 mi. off Sea Isle City, N.J., Jan. 16–18 (TK). Observers were also uniform in commenting on the few attempted heron overwinterings. Even expected Great Blues and Black-crowned Nights were all but absent. Single Green Herons were at Bombay Hook N.W.R. in mid-December (J. Citron), and on the Glenolden, Pa. CBC; one Snowy was on the Captree CBC, a Little Blue was a surprise on the Boonton, N.J. CBC (Wade Wander, Ted Proctor), as was a Yellow-crowned Night on the Barnegat CBC Jan. 2.

WATERFOWL—Freshwater waterfowl were driven to the bays by extreme icing, and in turn bay fowl were forced to the ocean, or simply moved away when things got especially bad in January. However, reports of the demise of the mid-Atlantic Brant population, may have been greatly exaggerated. The small flock of Whistling Swans recently overwintering on e. Long Island remained this year, but no counts of the increasing Brigantine N.W.R. flock were available. Late October Snow Goose flocks peaked there at 50,000 birds, many if not most remaining for at least some of the winter; the Heislerville G.M.A. flock on Delaware Bay was estimated at 20,000 birds in late October, but no figures were found for the Dennis Creek G.M.A. flock (if separate from those at Heislerville). A **Black Brant** was at Brigantine I. through most of December, but exact dates were not available (Fred Hamer, JAK *et al.*). In keeping with the weather, few Eur. Wigeon or Blue-winged Teal were seen. Large numbers of Redheads were reported from s. of Long Island, doubtless frozen out inland; 500+ were in Barnegat Bay Feb. 19, with RK estimating "thousands instead of hundreds" in New Jersey this winter, and 34 wintered on a partially open lake near Allentown, Pa. (R. Wiltraut). The Barrow's Goldeneye at Shark River, N.J., has become so routine (this is its eighth season there) that its arrival (Dec. 8) and departure (to end of period) were barely noted. But a male at almost-frozen Shinnecock Bay, L.I., Feb. 4–12 was well-documented (JA, THD *et mult.* *al.*). In like manner the Triboro Bridge (East River) Tufted Duck was also around this winter, its sixth at least, but the only dates we have are Dec. 6–Feb. 6 (Jose Machado *et al.*). What appeared to be a mated pair was seen only on Feb. 9 on Jerome Res., Bronx (W. Sedwitz). Eiders were scarce this winter, and virtually the only Harlequins, totalling some 8–13, were along the New Jersey shore. A major scoter concentration, 60,000+, was at Montauk Pt., Feb. 12 (ROP), 90% White-winged, 10% Surf's and a few Blacks. A Delaware R. Ruddy Duck maximum this winter was

17,280 Nov. 16 (R.N.J.B.); any effects of the "Olympic Games" oil spill on Ruddies were masked (or mitigated) by severe icing of the river, forcing birds away from the area.

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES—Despite the severity of the winter, Turkey Vultures overwintered in almost unprecedented numbers, even as far north as Dutchess County N.Y. (R.T.W.B.C.) and 120 at a roost near Princeton, N.J. was amazing (RB). In addition, observers reported adults returning in late January and early February, to the very n end of the region. Black Vultures behaved similarly, with a truly astonishing 94 at three s. Lancaster County, Pa. roosts (per J. Meritt). Bald Eagles were thinly scattered, with two sub-adults from early January to mid-February in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx (J. Capodilupo). Single Golden Eagles remained for all or part of the winter at Brigantine N.W.R., Hawk Mt., C.R.S.P. and four New Jersey locales. Goshawks were widely reported even to the outer reaches of the coast, and continue to be a backyard/bird feeder predator—a role formerly filled by Cooper's Hawk, a species unreported this winter in this region. By contrast, Sharp-shinned were widely reported, especially at feeders. Supposedly unknown in winter (the writers have never seen one at that season), a **Broad-winged Hawk** from Indian L., Dutchess Co., N.Y., Jan. 30 (A. Gingert *et al.*) was exceptionally well-described*, the observers honestly noting they "were not aware of any russet on the breast" during "full ventral views [that] were quick but clear." We believe it to have been properly identified nonetheless. At least eight Merlins were reported from Long Island, and a surprising two in December from Orange County, N.Y. (JT), but not otherwise noted. The season's only Peregrine Falcons were singles at Freeport, L.I., Feb. 4 (C. Ward) and Bayside, N.J., Feb. 16 (R.N.J.B.).

Wild Turkeys were reported as increasing in n.e. Pennsylvania (WR), near Stissing Mt., Dutchess Co., NY (R.T.W.B.C.), reached a new high of 53 on Gardiner's I (Montauk CBC), but are barely holding their own (five) at C.R.S.P. Exceedingly rare in winter. Soras were nonetheless reported on the N. Nassau CBC Dec. 26 (2) and from Stissing, Dutchess Co., Dec. 27–29 (Thelma Haight). Virginias are more normal in winter, thus six at Lawrenceville, N.J. in December (RB). Fourteen Com. Gallinules in the H.M. on the Lower Hudson CBC probably wintered as did some 13 in the Trenton Marshes (RB); only a few other singles were noted in New Jersey. A late (-lingering ?) Black Rail at Sandy Hook Nov 27 (R.N.J.B.) was yet another in the growing list of winter reports for this obscure bird. One of the better winter finds was the **Sandhill Crane** first heard by Quickmire at Fairton, Cumberland Co., N.J., Dec. 18 and subsequently seen by many observers and photographed** until about Jan. 11.

SHOREBIRDS—American Oystercatchers apparently returned with warm weather about Feb. 26, having been seen that day at Barnegat Inlet (MH) and at Stone Harbor (three) by Seagers. On the other end of the season, 22 Am. Golden Plovers were still at J.F.K. Airport on Long Island Dec. 7 (Richards). Unusual numbers of Ruddy Turnstones for a difficult winter were 17 on the N. Nassau CBC, 32 at Orient Pt., L.I., Jan. 16 (R. Kelly *et al.*) and 150 on the Longport, N.J. sod banks Feb. 5 (JDD). American Woodcock were widely reported, especially on CBCs, but no counts topped the 100+ found by S. R. Lawrence along the sides of the Garden State Parkway in Cape May Dec. 31. He estimated that several times that number may have been present between Great Egg Harbor and Cape May, some 25 miles. Sixty Com. Snipe at the Trenton Marshes the same day (RB) were at a traditional winter site. High Purple Sandpiper counts on inlet jetties were 175 Dec. 14 at Ocean City, N.J. (JAK) and 200 Jan. 1 at Indian River Inlet (M. Barnhill). The normal few Marbled Godwit singles in Delaware were topped by four on the Lakehurst CBC

A Lesser Yellowlegs Feb. 28 at Port Mercer, N.J. (Mary Doscher) might have wintered not far to the south.

In a class by itself, unfortunately, was a **white-rumped curlew** seen Dec. 27 at Brookhaven, L.I. by P. Puleston *et al.* and again on Dec. 31 at Moriches Inlet by Raynor. While clearly one of the European curlews, just which one is uncertain, since the observers did not especially record either presence/absence of head striping, or overall body size. In view of the presence of a Eurasian Curlew on Cape Cod last fall, and the now almost annual occurrence of individuals of the white-rumped, European races of Whimbrel, the species must remain unresolved.

SKUAS, GULLS, TERNS, ALCIDS—"Great" Skuas of indeterminate species were seen from ships as follows: four on Feb. 4 between 38°37'N and 38°52'N in shelf waters (RAR), five on Mar. 5 at Hudson Canyon (D.V.O.C.) and 20 Jan. 16-18 with the Polish fishing fleet 75 miles e. of Sea Isle City, N J (TK). In view of earlier comments in this column on H-D Region skuas (AB 30:936, 1976), readers are referred to a paper by Finn Salomonsen comparing *Stercorarius* (= *Catharacta*) skua and *S. macormicki*, and reporting the first Greenland occurrence of the latter form (*Dansk. orn. Foren. Tidsskr.* 70 81-89, 1976). We predict that most, but possibly not all, winter skuas will be the nominate skua, and most, possibly all, late spring, summer and early fall skuas will be *macormicki*.

Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were widely distributed coastally, with even a few up along the Hudson R., a maximum for the latter species was 25-30 on the H.M., Feb. 6 (D Roche). For the first time in recent memory, no Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen on the H.M., but an obliging adult remained in Sea Cliff harbor, L.I. from November to at least Jan. 6 (BS *et al.*), a sub-adult was at Sagaponack, L I., Feb. 27 (JA) and an immature was seen offshore by RAR Feb. 5 at ca. 38°26'N, 73°30'W in shelf waters. Some 15,000+ Black-legged Kittiwakes were with the Polish fleet Jan 16-18 off s.e. New Jersey (TK). Little and Black-headed Gulls were thinly scattered, mostly on Long Island and in n New Jersey. Totally unexpected in a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls at Fire Island Inlet Dec. 4 was an imm. **Sabine's Gull**, studied at length by AJL, B. Dieterich and R. Kelly. One is drawn to the conclusion that this bird has increased markedly in our region in the last 10 years. The Sandy Hook CBC reported a Forster's Tern, Dec. 18, one of few recent winter records in the New York City region, and a Royal Tern Jan 2 at Barnegat Inlet was one of the latest for New Jersey. The massive, unprecedented large-alcid invasion in Massachusetts this winter (see p. 307) was barely registered south of Rhode Island. A few small groups of Razorbills were seen from shore at Montauk Pt., with one surge to 38 on Jan. 23 (THD *et al.*). Only two were seen in New Jersey, one dead at Cape May Pt., Jan. 19 (Choate) and another near Avon on and off during January (P. William Smith). Aside from a single Common captured exhausted at inland Brookhaven Nat'l Labs, L.I. on Jan. 8 (Richardson and Rackett), the only murre were in New Jersey: two Commons at Holgate Feb. 5 (Hiatt) and a Thick-billed at Cape May Pt., Dec. 26 (JAK, JDD) A single Black Guillemot was at Cox's Ledge Feb. 26 (CW), and Common Puffins were also seen only offshore: five on Feb. 4 in shelf waters at ca. 38°51'N, 73°07'W (RAR), and one Mar. 5 at Hudson Canyon (D.V.O.C.). The only Dovekies were six from the Cape May ferry Feb. 26 (JDD).

OWLS, WOODPECKERS—With the fervor of zealots, nocturnal CBC-ers in Pennsylvania recorded extraordinary numbers of Screech Owls again this year: Bucks County topped the list at 145, followed by West Chester with 113 and Glenolden with 95. These are doubtless more indicative

of this species' true abundance than the single numbers gleaned by most CBCs. Few Snowy Owls were reported just three on Long Island, one on Staten I., and one from s New Jersey. A pair of Barn Owls in Pittston, N.J had eggs in February (Dave Buchholz).

S.A.

Clearly the season's most exciting rarity was the **Burrowing Owl** found by T. Rodney Gardner Dec. 27 at Cedar Beach on the Jones Beach strip, L.I. Photographed and examined closely by PAB, THD *et parv al.*), it appeared weak and chilled. The next morning it was easily captured alive by the Richards. Although emaciated, it took proffered mealworms and crickets, and soon regained its vitality. It was compared with the A.M.N.H. series by John Farrand who determined it to be *Athene cucularia floridana*, the supposedly sedentary Florida race, as several of us had suspected. It was returned to Florida by air a short time later and released at Hypoluxo I. colony. Subsequent investigation showed that a Burrowing Owl had been found at that same location Oct. 27, 1976 by Steve Kriss but failing to relocate it, he did not report it. The adjacent Cedar Beach golf course provides excellent habitat where the one could have easily remained undetected for two months.

Startling as the occurrence of the Florida race in N.Y. might seem, this form has occurred extralimitally before, as close as the Outer Banks of North Carolina (Sykes, *Auk* 91: 636-37, 1974). The species has even occurred previously on Long Island, an individual of *hypugaea*, the migratory western U.S. race, having been taken at Westhampton Oct. 27, 1950 by Cooley. Several earlier writers, unaware of the species' proclivity to wander, and ignoring the high migratory nature of (at least!) *hypugaea*, erroneously considered extralimital birds to be merely escaped captives. But a quick survey of selected references indicates Burrowing Owl has occurred as far from its normal range as Missouri, Minnesota (twice), Wisconsin (twice), Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ontario (thrice), Québec, New Hampshire, Massachusetts (twice), Rhode Island, New York (thrice), Virginia, North Carolina (twice), South Carolina (twice), and Georgia. Moreover, while most specimens have been *hypugaea*, *floridana* has been taken in New York, North Carolina, Alabama and Cuba (where breeding is now suspected) and is believed to have occurred in Georgia and South Carolina.

Thus, (1) Burrowing Owl is clearly a vagrant species, and unless strong evidence to the contrary is adduced, extralimital individuals should be presumed wild; (2) the subspecies cannot be taken for granted, so additional specimens are in order; and (3) despite Sykes' allegations (*op. cit.*) for assisted passage, based on two at sea captures plus many coastal occurrences, these data merely support the usual pattern of extralimital vagrants on the U.S. East Coast: they are frequently blown offshore and they are more likely to occur and to be detected coastally than inland.

Again despite the harsh winter, there were more reports than usual of Red-headed Woodpeckers, and frequently of birds overwintering; this was true even as far north as Dutchess County, N.Y. Red-bellied also was widely reported this winter. WR enumerated three from n.e. Pennsylvania, where he previously had observed only one, and two on remote Gardiner's I. were the first in the 55-year history of the

Montauk CBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers also defied the weather, and a total of 19 was seen on the five Delaware CBCs

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS—Eastern Phoebe was the surprise of regional CBCs: counts that never before had them did this year, and on some, numbers were phenomenal. For example, the Captree CBC on L I counted nine, a number that would have been unbelievable had it not been eclipsed by 14 on the N. Nassau CBC! Later survival was dubious at best this winter. A Com. Raven spent the winter following I-287 between Boonton and Somerville, N.J., and it was subsequently determined this has been going on for the last two winters. Coupled with some recent birds seemingly investigating likely habitat near the Delaware Water Gap, we would not be surprised to find raven once again breeding in New Jersey; it already does so in nearby Pennsylvania Major Com. Crow roosts containing 8000 and 7000, respectively were located at New Hyde Park, N.Y. by Don and Beth Nickerson, and at Ramsey, N.J. (R.N.J.B.). Also of note is the increasing and overwintering population of Fish Crows in the same areas, and 44 on the Montauk CBC was unheard of the bird had been seen previously only six times with a maximum of five. A ♀ Varied Thrush was at a feeder in Pound Ridge, N.Y., Jan. 16—late February (Mary Beth Murphy *et al.*), and a male photographed during its stay at a Millersburg, Pa., feeder Jan. 8–18 by Ned Smith provided the fourth Pennsylvania record. Spectacular numbers of Hermit Thrushes appeared on regional CBCs, with some sample 1975/1976 counts by states being: New Jersey, 119 vs. 266 and Pennsylvania: 33 vs. 165. Three on the Orange County, N.Y., CBC were a first, and a shadow of the 41 on the N. Nassau CBC

Surely one of the fanciest passerines in the region this winter was New Jersey's fourth **Bohemian Waxwing** at Ringwood. Found by Tom Halliwell Feb. 6, it remained there, eating berries, until at least Mar. 5 (m.ob.), and was photographed in color. Shrikes of both species were widely reported for the first time in many years, although Loggerhead survival after January is unreported. Three were present at Bombay Hook N.W.R. through December (DAC). A Solitary Vireo in a mixed chickadee-kinglet flock at Princeton, N.J., Dec. 1 (M. & P. Taylor) was unusual but not unprecedented; neither were a Black-and-white Warbler photographed at Essex Fells, N.J., Dec. 27 (J. and G. Toffic*) one at a Princeton feeder to Dec. 24, nor a few Pines, two Orange-crowns and a chat in coastal New Jersey. But a Nashville Jan. 2 at Bridgeport, N J (J. Miller and G. Hitchner) was eyebrow-raising, although also not unprecedented in winter. A N. Waterthrush on the N Nassau CBC Dec. 26 (J. Doran) was amazingly not that count's first. Normal coastal populations of Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warblers were reported severely depressed by late February, following the harsh winter, although bayberries were not especially scarce.

Despite being at or near the n. end of their range, Boat-tailed Grackles were found in exceptional numbers at two locations this winter: 300 were on the Marmora N.J., CBC, and an astonishing 3000 were counted at Little Creek N.W.R., Del., by J. C. Miller. The normal area population at this time of year is about 50 individuals. The Bombay Hook N.W.R. flock of Brewer's Blackbirds peaked at about 24 on Dec. 19 (J. Lehmann), but of especial note were three seen Feb. 14–15 at Cape May (Chris and Mike Danzenbaker, JAK), and a male seen repeatedly but never photographed, Nov. 30–Jan. 6 at Allentown, Pa. (Mark Collie). One described in detail and photographed at Montauk in November proved on careful inspection of the photos to have been a Rusty (THD *et mult. dolor al.*). Late Bobolinks were at Port Washington, L.I., Nov. 2 (BS) and Assunpink G.M.A., N.J., Nov. 16 (Wade

Wander). Very few orioles were reported at feeders, with only one surviving to January and another to Feb. 2 (R.N.J.B.)

J. T. Linehan, an experienced U.S.F.&W.S. blackbird biologist, reports that the early February buildup of icterid flocks in the lower Delaware Valley in Delaware far exceeded anything in his 23 years' experience. He figures that "at least two-thirds of the peak numbers were present during the four weeks from Feb. 7 to Mar. 7." His estimate of the peak figure was "somewhere between 100 and 400 million," a truly staggering number. Linehan attributes this concentration to birds escaping the especially severe weather inland, possibly coupled with an abnormal buildup of coastal birds normally returning northward at this time of year. We present his figures and comments for the record, without passing judgment on their accuracy. It seems safe to say there were more blackbirds than usual in Delaware in February 1977

FRINGILLIDS—An ad. ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a Babylon, L.I., feeder Dec. 14–21 (F. File *et al.*), and New Jersey's tenth (or so) Black-headed Grosbeak was also an ad. male that overwintered at a Bernardsville feeder (Galbraith, RK, Art Panzer**). This was presumably the same bird that overwintered at that feeder in 1975–76, unknown until now. The New York area's first mid-winter **Blue Grosbeak** was at a Freeport, L.I., feeder Jan. 7–13 (A. Dignan) Two species of bunting were at regional feeders this winter as well: an Indigo Dec. 8–Jan. 14 in Drumore, Pa., (R. M. Schutsky) and an ad. ♂ **Painted Bunting** in Lebanon, N.J. from ? until Jan. 17, at which time it was presumed "done in" by the extreme cold or a cat (V. Abraitys, GH *et al.*). This represents only the second New Jersey record and one of few in the region. Dickcissels were widely but thinly spread, possibly more than in recent winters; one overwintered in the field in Unionville, Pa., where it was suspected of breeding (C.A. Conway). Long Island's first **Green-tailed Towhee** was at a Wading River feeder Dec. 8–Feb. 21 (R. Adamo *et al.*) and recognizable photos were taken by THD Both crossbills, Pine Grosbeak and Pine Siskin were all but absent, with only occasional singles or small flocks. Evening Grosbeaks follow their own piper, so were present in normal but certainly not overwhelming numbers. Over 200 Purple Finches were reported in February from Dutchess County, N.Y. (R.T.W.B.C.); Kane notes that it is increasing as a breeder in New Jersey in recent years, and although still scarce along the coast, it is the common winter finch inland. Counts of 40–50 at his Bernardsville feeder are typical, and its preference is for both feeders and woods with tulip trees predominating.

If N.J. counts are indicative, Ipswich Sparrow bears watching. Possibly owing to severe weather, it was drastically reduced in three of its favored coastal locations, where more normal counts of 10–15 were replaced by 3–4 (JAK) The only Grasshopper Sparrow was Jan. 10 at Great Kills, Staten I. (J. Stoneck), and the only Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco was one at Lawrenceville, N.J., where it is to say the least regular ("this was the 20th Princeton area record since 1945" RB). White-crowned Sparrows were also paradoxically numerous this terrible winter, with many birds overwintering successfully, usually at feeders. A count of 33 on the Middletown, Del. CBC suggests that last year was not a fluke White-crowns wintered as far north as Dutchess County, Orange County (JT), and even five at Forty Fort, Pa. (WR) No Harris' were found, but the **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, now adult, returned to the Reeves' feeder in Boonton, N J., in November 1976 and was still present at the close of the period, despite repeated attacks by a Loggerhead Shrike and a Sharp-shinned Hawk (m.ob.). White-throated Sparrows were reported "well above average" in Dutchess and Orange Cos., but down in n.e. Pennsylvania (WR). Three Lincoln's Sparrows

were found, one at a Blairstown, N.J. feeder Dec. 8–9 (F. Wolfarth), one on the Montauk CBC at Springs Dec. 18 (A.J.L., Brook Lauro, F. File), and one at Hamburg, Pa., the last few days of December (M. Broun *et al.*). The largest aggregation of Snow Buntings was again reported inland, some 2000 from mid-January to mid-February at Harveys L., Pa., (Johnson). Lapland Longspurs were down from previous years, with no noteworthy aggregations.

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS—We have received a number of reports of birds we believe might have been correctly identified. However, the reports could not be accepted at present inasmuch as we either have not seen full descriptions eliminating all other species, or, the report, complete in other respects, lacked a recognizable photograph in the case of certain species we have already discussed in this column. Each of these reports will be fully re-evaluated if we are provided the missing data by the observers. In this category this winter are: Arctic Loon: Dec., Del.; Franklin's Gull: Jan., N.J.; Thayer's Gull: Jan., N.J.; Mew Gull: Dec., N.J.; Wood Thrush: Dec., Dutchess Co., N.Y., Dec., Pa.; Swainson's Thrush: two in Jan., Pa., one in Jan., N.J.; Gray-cheeked Thrush: Jan., Dutchess Co., N.Y., Dec., N.J.; and Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Jan., N.J.

EXOTICS—Two Rose-ringed Parakeets were found in Purchase, N.Y., Dec. 19, possibly offshoots from the (present status unknown) colony near the N.Y. Botanical Gardens in the Bronx.

OBSERVERS—(subregional compilers in boldface): James Akers, Jim Ash, Raymond Blicharz, **David A. Cutler** (s N.J., s.e. Penna., Del.; see below), John D. Danzenbaker, **Thomas H. Davis** (s.e. N.Y., Long Island: 94-46 85th Road, Woodhaven, Queens, N.Y. 10421), Greg Hanisek, Mike Hanisian, **Richard Kane** (n. N.J.: New Jersey Audubon Society, Scherman Wildlife Sanctuary, P.O. Box 693, Bernardsville, N.J. 07924), Anthony J. Lauro, Tim Koebel, **William Reid** (n.e. Pennsylvania: 73 West Ross Street, Wilkes Barre, Penna. 18702), Richard A. Rowlett, Don Smith Barbara Spencer, **John Tramontano** (Orange Co., N.Y. Biology Dept., Orange Co. Community College, Middletown N.Y. 19940), and Charles Wood; C.R.S.P. (Connetquot River State Park), D.V.O.C. (Delaware Valley Ornithological Club) G.M.A. (Game Management Area), H.M. (Hackensack Meadows), M.F.N. (Mianus Field Notes: Rye, N.Y.-Greenwich, Conn. area), N.W.R. (National Wildlife Refuge), R.N.J.B (*Records of New Jersey Birds*), R.T.W.B.C. (Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club: Dutchess Co., N.Y.);* detailed description examined and accepted;** identification verified by photos examined by writers.—**P.A. BUCKLEY**, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, 15 State St., Boston, Mass. 02109, **ROBERT O. PAXTON**, 560 Riverside Drive, Apt. 12K, New York, N.Y. 10027, and **DAVID A. CUTLER**, 1110 Rock Creek Drive, Wyncote, Penna. 19095.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

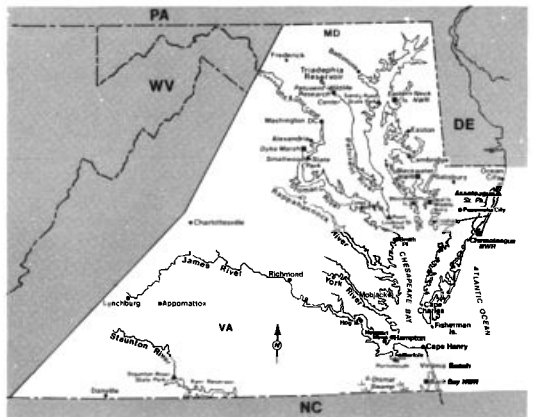
/F. R. Scott

After a series of six winters of above-normal temperatures in this region, it has only been natural that many active field observers have wondered what would happen if a really cold winter came along. This year they found out. Preceded by a cold fall, both December and January recorded below-normal temperatures, with January experiencing record or near-record low mean temperatures at most stations. At Richmond, Virginia, for example, January averaged 12.2°F, below the long-term average. The exceptional cold spell actually lasted from December 21 to February 9 with very few above-normal days in between.

After a brief respite in mid-February, the freeze finally broke for good the last week in February, bringing February's temperature mean to near normal. At Richmond, in fact, it was the first month since the previous June that temperatures had averaged above the mean.

Precipitation in the region was well below normal, keeping snowfall below what it might otherwise have been. What did fall, however, remained a long time, except in extreme southeastern Virginia, and inland and northern areas had a snow cover, topped with an ice layer, that lasted from three to five weeks.

The effects of all of this on birds were monumental. Although the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBCs) came before the full effects of the midwinter freeze were felt, the below-normal fall and early winter had left few fall-migration stragglers behind, and most CBCs had species totals well below their best



of recent years. But it was the January freeze that really hit hard and many birds either moved out or disappeared, presumably dead, particularly ground-feeding species. Reports of observed mortality were many, particularly waterfowl, but there were many reports of passerines found dead, an unusual situation since most small dead birds are quickly discovered and removed by scavengers. Field trips taken from mid-January to mid-February were far different from the CBCs. The last few days of February were witness to the first obvious northward movement of birds, especially geese and swans.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Loons and Horned Grebes were in good numbers along the coast during December but were virtually nonexistent in late January and February although apparent transient loons began to show up toward the end of the latter month. Five Red-necked Grebes at Back Bay

N W R., Va., Dec. 29 (EL & HL) were an excellent winter count here, and an unusual early flight of these birds appeared inland in February, first showing up Feb. 18 at both Baltimore (JAS) and near Washington (PJB). There were many reports of one to six birds in the Baltimore area, and peak counts here were 17 on Feb. 19 and 12 on Feb. 26 (RFR *et al.*). There were also many observations on the Potomac R. below Washington with a maximum of five Feb. 26 (LT). Even more unusual were three at Kerr Res., Va., Feb. 18 & 26 (PEM, RMC, CE), one of the few Piedmont records of this species. An **Eared Grebe** was found at Ocean City, Md., Dec. 29 (WR *et al.*). The only early winter pelagic trip reported, off Ocean City Dec. 5, produced one Fulmar and ten Greater Shearwaters, among others (LKM *et al.*) The two imm. Great Cormorants previously reported at Craney I., Portsmouth, Va. remained at least to Jan. 10 (DLH), and one immature and one adult were noted off and on along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Va. from late December to mid-February (DLH, RHP, PWS *et al.*). Another immature was seen at Chincoteague N.W.R., Va., Dec. 28 (DFA). A Double-crested Cormorant at Ft. Belvoir, Va., Jan. 2 (CPW) was unusual so far inland in midwinter.

HERONS — Herons and egrets were a mixed bag on the CBCs. On the whole, they were in moderate numbers with a few record high counts. Great Blue Herons were highly variable, some counts having unusually low numbers and others having large concentrations. Among the latter were 280 at Little Creek, Virginia Beach, Va., Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*) and 165 inland at Ft. Belvoir, Va., Jan. 2 (JMA *et al.*). Green Herons were reported on only two coastal CBCs, and the only Cattle Egret report was of 13 near Back Bay N.W.R., Dec. 29 (*vide* PWS). No Yellow-crowned Night Herons were reported, and an Am. Bittern at Sandy Point S.P., Md. (below S.P.S.P.) Jan. 8 (HLW) was considered abnormal for this upper Chesapeake Bay locality. During the January freeze most herons and egrets left the Chincoteague area, leaving only a few Great Blues (LKM).

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS — Early freezes to the north sent waterfowl south somewhat earlier than in recent years, giving many CBCs excellent counts of many species in late December, although at St. Michaels, Md., Reese thought waterfowl were "alarmingly low" Dec. 19. With the January freeze, there was a heavy movement of waterfowl south along the coast and away from frozen inland rivers and lakes. One result of this was an increase in some diving ducks in the rivers and bays in the s. part of the region, especially Redheads and Canvasbacks. Redheads, in fact, appeared in the Richmond-Hopewell area in record numbers during February, with several counts of over 50 birds in two different places (FRS, MLW). At Craney I., the peak Redhead count was 250 Feb. 12 (DLH). Waterfowl that remained in frozen areas faced starvation, and mortality was high, although dabbling ducks and geese seemed to survive better than diving ducks. Reese personally collected 18 dead Whistling Swans in the St. Michaels area from mid-January to mid-February, and there was a particularly high die-off of diving ducks at S.P.S.P. (HLW). In most areas the dead waterfowl were frozen into the ice and remained quite visible for a long time.

The effect of the cold weather on Brant was very noticeable. On n Assateague I., Md. large flocks (100-500) were noted moving S Jan. 8-19 (SHD), and at Wallops I., Va., Vaughn estimated 10,000, mostly moving S Jan. 17. Finding their usual food supplies frozen over, Brant moved to dry land in January, feeding on roadsides, median strips, and even front yards in Ocean City and Chincoteague (SHD, LKM *et al.*), and Vaughn even found a flock in a cornfield in W. Ocean City, a quarter mile inland. On Wallops I., they fed on the grassy areas around the rocket launching pads and roads, barely moving for oncoming cars (CRV). Mortality at Chincoteague was very heavy (DLH, BWK & LKM), presumably due to starvation, but at Ocean City the greatest mortality seemed to be from cars (SHD).

Mute Swans continued their increase in the region with 70 at St. Michaels Dec. 19 (*vide* JR) and 41 at Chincoteague Ref., Dec. 28 (PWS *et al.*). Canada Geese wintered successfully in numbers on the upper Piedmont of Virginia with peak counts of 2889 near Gordonsville, Orange Co., Dec. 27 (HLG *et al.*) and 1000 at Green Spring, Louisa Co., Feb. 2 (JBB). The wintering "Blue" Goose population at Presquile N.W.R., near Hopewell, Va. was about 375; they were accompanied by 26 white Snow Geese (HCO *et al.*). The previously reported White-fronted Goose wintered successfully at Green Spring, Va. (JBB). With this bird were three possible hybrids, apparently the same birds that appeared here the previous winter and which were thought at that time to be imm. White-fronteds. Another apparent White-fronted X Canada hybrid also wintered here, but this bird associated with a flock of Canada Geese. A ♂ Eurasian Green-winged Teal was noted at Warren, Albemarle Co., Va., Dec. 19 (RSM), and two different White-winged Scoters were found near Richmond Jan. 29 - Feb. 6 (CRB, WCF & FRS). Inland at Kerr Res., Carter found two Oldsquaws Feb. 26. Two Harlequin Ducks appeared at Ocean City first on Jan. 22 (RFR *et al.*), and up to seven, a record Virginia count, wintered along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (MH, VH *et al.*), most of them appearing in mid-January. Both Com. and King Eiders wintered again at Ocean City (MLH, SJM *et al.*), and the maximum count of Kings along the Bridge-Tunnel was eight on Dec. 28 (JHD & TD).

The warm spell of late February triggered some northward movement of waterfowl. The first migrant Whistling Swans, a flock of 165, were noted at S.P.S.P., Feb. 27, and the first migrant Canada Geese were seen here Feb. 24 (HLW). Many flocks of Canada Geese were seen or heard moving N over the Lynchburg, Va. area Feb. 26-27 (RMC *et al.*), an unusual occurrence here.

HAWKS THROUGH RAILS — Goshawks were reported in five localities during the winter, and Cooper's Hawks were clearly more evident this year than in any recent winter. But it was the Sharp-shinned Hawk that really took the spotlight, with several CBCs reporting record counts, the best of which was 56 at Cape Charles, Va., Dec. 27 (HTA *et al.*). Many of these hawks took up winter residence at feeding stations, thus assuring themselves of a plentiful food supply. Reports of increased numbers of this species came from all parts of the region, and Reese found five dead on highways in the St. Michaels area during January and February. On the Chincoteague CBC Dec. 28, where 31 were recorded, ten were found in an otherwise fairly desolate stretch of Assateague I., giving some indication that migration was possibly still in progress (FRS). Unusual inland Rough-legged Hawks included one in Amherst County, Va., Dec. 31 (TD) and another near Hopewell Jan. 23 - Feb. 5 (CRB & FRS), and the peak coastal count seemed to be 13 in s. Dorchester County, Md., Dec. 31 (*vide* CSR). An imm. Golden Eagle wintered again at Blackwater N.W.R., Md. (HLW *et al.*), and an adult was seen near Easton, Md., Feb. 5 in a funnel with both Black and Turkey Vultures and three Red-tailed Hawks (JR) A Merlin at Warren, Va., Dec. 19 (KL) was an unusual inland find.

Vaughn was astonished to see a **Sandhill Crane** flying S on Wallops I. at 2:30 p.m., Jan. 17. This was quite possibly the same bird last seen the previous day at about 5:15 p.m. near Bridgeton, N.J. (AEC), about 100 mi. north. The crane took up residence on the mainland near Wallops and remained at least to Feb. 18 (*vide* LKM). Soras were found in several areas during the early part of the winter, including one near Hopewell Dec. 18 (DLH) and three at S.P.S.P., Dec. 26 (*vide* HLW), but both these and Virginia Rails seemed to disappear from S.P.S.P. during the cold snap (HLW). A **Black Rail** was carefully studied at Little Creek, Va., Dec. 31 (WFR).

SHOREBIRDS — Wintering shorebirds were in reasonably good numbers along the coast, although in nowhere near the excellent numbers of the previous winter. What evidence is available seems to indicate that they survived the January freeze well. Good counts of Am. Woodcock included 103 in the Cape Charles area Dec. 27 (PAD *et al.*) and 38 at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*). Four Whimbrel were found near Wachapreague, Va., Dec. 19 (CRV *et al.*), and one was observed at Ocean City Dec. 29 (RAR *et al.*), the first Maryland winter record. In the Chincoteague area, two were present during much of February (JBB, SHT & CRV). A **Spotted Sandpiper** was seen near Mathews, Va., Jan. 4 (MP), and apparently migrant Lesser Yellowlegs appeared very early, one at Laurel, Md., Feb. 26 (DB) and two near Hopewell Feb. 27 (FRS). Least Sandpipers occurred inland again near Hopewell with a count of 25 on Dec. 18 (WCF *et al.*), and Dunlin appeared inland with two at S.P.S.P., Jan. 4-6 (HLW) and one at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax Co., Va., Jan. 23 (OEF). At Gloucester Point, Va., where Dunlin are not usual in winter, a few appeared Jan. 12 and peaked at 86 on Jan. 20, after which they disappeared (MLW). The only wintering Marbled Godwits reported were at Chincoteague, where the high count was 23 on Dec. 28 (PAD *et al.*). The record fall numbers of Am. Avocets at Craney I., Va. had decreased to 350 by Dec. 5 (WWF), and about 250 wintered here. They disappeared only during the hard freeze in mid-January but returned afterward (DLH). Elsewhere there was only one report, a single bird at Chincoteague Ref., Dec. 28 (JHD & TD).

PHALAROPES THROUGH ALCIDS — The pelagic trip off Ocean City Dec. 5 yielded a host of interesting birds, including 110 Red Phalaropes, two Skuas, ten Pomarine, six Parasitic, and 11 unidentified jaegers (RAR, LKM *et al.*). The only other jaeger reports were from Back Bay N.W.R., Dec. 29, where three Pomarine and two Parasitic Jaegers were found (RLA, HL & PWS). As ice began to form over the upper Chesapeake Bay in early January, immense numbers of gulls began to concentrate off S.P.S.P. Wierenga estimated 10,000 Jan. 4 and 20,000 Jan. 8-9. Most were Herrings and Ring-billed, of course, but there were at least 300 Great Black-backed and 82 Bonaparte's, among others, Jan. 8. Record numbers of white-winged gulls were reported in the region, with Glaucous Gulls in four localities and Iceland Gulls in at least seven. Among these were

at least five different Icelanders in the Baltimore area (RFR *et al.*) and three off Ocean City Feb. 5 (MLH *et al.*). The highlight of this last trip was a first-year juvenile **Thayer's Gull**, which was well photographed (AB and others). Details of this observation are expected to be published later. Needless to say, this is a first record for this region and undoubtedly the farthest south observation on the East Coast. Two different Lesser Black-backed Gulls were noted off and one in the Little Creek area (WWF DLH, PWS *et al.*), and two different ones were also present in Baltimore after mid-January (RFR, JAS *et al.*). Another was reported at Dyke Marsh, Va., Feb. 26 (JMA & RJA). Sykes and others estimated a record 32,000 Ring-billed Gulls at Little Creek Dec. 31, whereas on the same day only 20 could be found in s. Dorchester Co., Md., the lowest CBC total here since 1948 (*vide* CSR). Bonaparte's Gulls were in surprisingly good numbers during the early part of the winter; CBC totals included 1010 at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (HTA *et al.*), 202 at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*), and 1500 at Little Creek Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*). Common Terns were reported twice, three at Back Bay N.W.R., Dec. 29 (PWS *et al.*) and two at Lynnhaven Inlet, Va., Dec. 31 (MRB). Seven Black Skimmers at Fisherman I., Va., Dec. 31 (MRB) was the only report of this species; they were missed here on the CBC four days earlier. Razorbills were found twice, one at Back Bay N.W.R., Dec. 29 (RLA *et al.*) and 18 off Ocean City Feb. 5 (MLH *et al.*). Outstanding was a **Com. Murre** at Ocean City Dec. 29, a first record for Maryland. The bird was well seen by many observers and photographed by Rowlett.

OWLS THROUGH WARBLERS — Five owling parties on the Lynchburg CBC managed to total 220 Screech Owls Dec. 18 (JHD, PEM *et al.*), and a **Snowy Owl** was found in n. Amherst County, Va., Jan. 13 (RC). M. A. Byrd located a number of previously unknown colonies of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in s.e. Virginia, and at one of these, near Wakefield, an amazing concentration of 23 birds was found Dec. 31 (LB, LRB & MRB) by far a record count for the state. Eastern Phoebe's virtually disappeared from most of the region during the January freeze but Horned Larks seemed to come through surprisingly well, at least in c. Virginia, often frequenting barnyards where there was some bare ground (JBB *et al.*). The Black-capped Chickadee previously reported near Lynchburg wintered up to Feb. 18 and was joined by a second bird Jan. 9 (MRB). It was the virtually



Juvenile (1st yr.) Thayer's Gull 20 mil. E. of Ocean City, Md., Feb. 5, 1977. Note light underwing lining. Photo/Alan Brady.



Same gull showing dark upperwing and tail band—characteristic primary markings. Photo/Alan Brady.

unanimous agreement by observers that the species hit hardest by the January freeze was the Carolina Wren, with mortality estimates ranging to above 80% in the n. and w. parts of the region. Apparently birds around feeding stations survived rather well, but in many woodland areas they were thought to be wiped out. Unusual was a **Varied Thrush** photographed near Charlottesville Jan. 16 (MS, ABD & PD), the latter the second record for Virginia. There were several record or near-record Hermit Thrush counts on the CBCs. Among these were 54 at Ft. Belvoir, Va., Jan. 2 (JMA *et al.*), 60 at Lynchburg Dec. 18 (KMF *et al.*), and 102 at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*). Reports on E. Bluebirds were mixed. They seemed to survive the winter satisfactorily in some areas, but several observers found dead birds in nest boxes used for roosting (RC *et al.*). McKnight, in fact, found 15 dead birds in four nest boxes in Stafford County, Va., March 3. As compared to the last two winters, kinglets were in low numbers at the onset of winter and virtually disappeared during the cold snap (CRB, DB *et al.*). Among the few unusual birds that lingered into early winter were single Solitary Vireos near Lynchburg Dec. 18 (PEM) and at Little Creek Dec. 31 (WFR), a Black-and-white Warbler at Back Bay Dec. 29 (FCB *et al.*), and a **Bay-breasted Warbler**, complete with a chestnut streak on its right side, at Suffolk, Va., Dec. 11-12 (DLH). Pine Warblers had arrived and were in song in many parts of Virginia by Feb. 27 (OEF *et al.*).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH LONGSPURS — A Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen near Vienna, Va., Dec. 29 (BAL), and another was found near Ocean City the same day (TA). The survival rate of wintering N. Orioles is unknown for most of the region, but up to five were still present in Newport News, Va. in late winter (JB). Evening Grosbeaks were generally uncommon until early January, when large numbers moved into many parts of the region, and Purple Finches were quite common in parts of Virginia. Otherwise, northern finches were in poor numbers with both Pine Siskins and Red Crossbills quite scarce. A flock of 30 Red Crossbills near Wakefield, Va., Dec. 26 (JHD & TD) was by far the best report of the winter, and Sykes reported a bird of this species *singing* its full song at Chincoteague Ref., Dec. 28. Four Dickcissels with a flock of House Sparrows were found at Easton, Md., Jan. 15 (FF), and House Finches continued their increase in the region with numerous record CBC counts including 231 at St. Michaels, Md., Dec. 19 (JR *et al.*). The Ocean City CBC totaled 35 "ipswich" Sparrows Dec. 29 (*fide* CSR), and a late Lark Sparrow was at Back Bay N.W.R., Dec. 4 (WWF *et al.*). Nichols watched a "**White-winged**" Junco at Gloucester, Va. at length Dec. 25, possibly the same bird he had found here exactly two years before. One to two Snow Buntings were found inland near Hopewell in January (CRB & MLW), and up to three Lapland Longspurs at Green Spring Jan. 16-18 (SHT, JBB *et al.*) were an almost unique record for Piedmont Virginia. A second **Smith's Longspur** was found in late December with the one previously reported on n. Assateague I., Md. (RAR *et al.*), and both were still present Jan. 16 when several photographs were taken (MLH, PP & PS). As in November, these birds were associating with about 55 Lapland Longspurs.

ADDENDUM — The Swainson's Warbler reported last May and early June at Great Falls, Va. apparently was last seen and heard singing July 3 (MB & CK), lending some credence to the idea that the bird may have been nesting, although the presence of a second bird was never confirmed.

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SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION /Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

The winter of 1976-77 in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region was the coldest on record at many, if not most, weather stations December was colder than normal, January was much colder than normal, and the first half of February also registered below normal temperatures. Only after mid-February did the weather moderate. For a week in mid-January, temperatures remained below or at the freezing point over much of North Carolina and Piedmont of South Carolina and Georgia. January averaged 10-15°F below normal at most places, and later in the month Pamlico Sound, North Carolina, completely froze over! Many ponds and small lakes froze over during this period; others were kept open by waterfowl. Precipitation during the winter was normal to below normal, and only one moderate snowfall occurred.

The subfreezing temperatures were responsible for making this winter one of the poorest for birding in many years. Land birding was especially dreary, and this "dullness" was compounded by the near absence of winter finches. There were two noticeable periods of avian decline in the region. Some species particularly marsh birds, were in low numbers on the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter CBCs). American Bitterns, both marsh wrens, and Seaside Sparrows seemed to be difficult to find on the CBCs, but whether the scarcity was due to mortality or emigration is not known. The second and most critical decline began with the severe cold of mid-January and continued through February. Herons and egrets were in low numbers along the coast after mid-January, as were certain species of shorebirds and larids. Throughout the region small insect-feeding birds were hit hard, and warblers and kinglets were especially affected.



THE KINGLET DISASTER — Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets are usually two of the most abundant winter species in the region. However, the severe cold in mid-January essentially wiped out both species (perhaps 90-95% vanished), particularly in the Piedmont section. A number of observers mentioned that both species were very scarce from mid-January to the end of the period, and census data collected by LeGrand over the past three years dramatically documents this disaster. He averaged 21 Golden-crowns and 31 Ruby-crowns on four mid-winter censuses in 1975, 13 Golden-crowns and 27 Ruby-crowns in 1976, and *one* Golden-crowned and *two* Ruby-crowns in 1977! There is no doubt that this disaster is a case of mortality and not emigration, as the spring migration of kinglets (at least at Clemson, South Carolina) has been negligible through late March, as this report is being written. Observers throughout eastern North America should pay close attention to populations of these species to learn the extent of the mortality and the ability of the species to recover following the breeding season.

SPECIES IN ABOVE-NORMAL NUMBERS — Generally, waterfowl were in somewhat above-normal numbers in coastal North Carolina, but mixed reports came from other parts of the region. The freezing over of Pamlico Sound caused a local increase in waterfowl in nearby fresh and brackish water refuges — Mattamuskeet and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges. Other species in conspicuously high numbers this winter were Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Horned Larks, American Robins, Hermit Thrushes, and House Finches. Blackbirds also seemed to be in excessively high numbers this winter.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — A count of 21 Com. Loons at L. Murray in c. South Carolina Jan. 8 (BL) was excellent for an inland location, and the *five* Red-throated Loons at Roanoke Rapids, N.C., on the same date may be an inland record count for the region (JML). Single Red-necked Grebes were found inland at L. Greenwood, S.C., Feb. 21-27 (B & LL), and on the coast at Buxton, N.C., Jan. 27 (PS, BH) and Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., Feb. 5 (PP, PL, PN). Truly remarkable was a count of 1457 Horned Grebes at L. Murray, including a flock of 1400 birds, Jan. 8 (BL). Two W. Grebes were seen at Wrightsville Beach, N.C., Dec. 18 on the Wilmington CBC (BD, LD, PR, DE). A Brown Pelican was unusually far "inland" at tidewater New Bern, N.C., where it was seen in flight Dec. 31 (JF). Another at Oregon Inlet, N.C., Jan. 26 (PS, BH) was n. of its winter range. A Green Heron was late at Sumter County, Ga., Dec. 21 (GM), whereas a Cattle Egret was unusual for midwinter at Morehead City, N.C., Feb. 14 (JF). Notable numbers of Cattle Egrets were seen in s. Georgia this winter; 102 in Lowndes County, Dec. 25 (JB), and as many as nine during January and February in the Folkston area (RK). An Am. Bittern found dead at Raleigh, N.C., in early February (JC), provided a rare winter record for the Piedmont section of the region. Even though nearly all species of waders were in reduced numbers at Morehead City, Fussell noted that White Ibises remained in normal numbers, even though the species is at the n. border of its winter range.

WATERFOWL — Whistling Swans were reported from several widely scattered locations away from their normal range in n.e. North Carolina. One was at Okefenokee N.W.R., Ga., Dec. 6 (RB, *fide* EC), five were at L. Greenwood Dec. 10 (B & LL), two at Beaufort, N.C., Dec. 21 (JF, BM, RD), and singles were at Huntington Beach S.P., Jan. 21 (PP) and Santee N.W.R., S.C., Feb. 15-19 (DF). A major highlight of the severe winter was the remarkable midseason movement of **Brant** into coastal North Carolina, where the species is usually uncommon. As many as 100 were seen both at Oregon Inlet Jan. 27 (PS, BH) and Morehead City mid-January through February (m.ob.), 125 were at Pamlico County Feb. 3-5 (JF, JMa), and a peak of 1650 noted at Pea I., Feb. 15 (NFW). The freezing up of coastal bays from New

Jersey to Virginia after mid-January was undoubtedly the reason for these unusual numbers here, probably the highest since the eelgrass blight several decades ago. *Three* ad. White-fronted Geese at Santee N.W.R. near L. Marion, S.C., Jan. 24 were most unusual (B & LL). Lynch found four ad. Snow Geese (two of each color phase) on a pond near Garysburg, N.C., Jan. 8, and Ricky Davis also had four (all white) on Masonboro I., N.C., Jan. 31.

Fulvous Whistling Ducks "invaded" e. North Carolina 35 were at Pea I., Dec. 18 (TS), and seven at Cape Hatteras Jan. 13 (JH). The cold weather was apparently responsible for a surprising number of ducks visiting the Ft. Fisher area of the s. North Carolina coast after mid-January. Most unusual there were 850 Gadwalls and 3500 Am. Wigeons Jan. 27 (RD). Three Pintails were found at Seaforth, N.C., Dec. 6 (JOP, ET), and three Blue-winged Teals were late in n. Wake County, N.C., Dec. 4 (RJH, TH). Georgia's first **Cinnamon Teal** was a male at Augusta Jan. 22 (V & AW). The brilliant cinnamon color of the head and breast and the very dark tail were noted. The later appearance of a hybrid teal (thought to be a Cinnamon X Blue-winged) at the same pond confuses matters, but two non-Blue-wingeds in early March may have been the Cinnamon and the hybrid. A Eur Wigeon was at Huntington Beach S.P., Feb. 5 (PN). Counts of 3000 Redheads and 3475 Canvasbacks at Pea I. N.W.R., Dec. 9, were excellent (TS). Greater Scaups are rare inland during the winter; thus of interest were a male at L. Greenwood Dec. 3 (B & LL) and three (one male) near Townville, S.C., Jan. 5-8 (HL, SG). Common Goldeneyes seemed to be more numerous on inland lakes and ponds this winter than previously. Besides singles seen during the period near Folkston (RK), Pendleton, S.C. (HL, SG), and L. Greenwood (B & LL), notable counts were five at Winston-Salem, N.C., Jan. 13 (RS *et al.*), seven at Toccoa, Ga., Dec. 1-3 (JR, *fide* RSt), and 12 at Roanoke Rapids L., Jan. 2 & 8 (JML). Three Oldsquaws near Clemson Dec. 13 provided the second record for the locality (HL).

A ♂ **Harlequin Duck** was observed at Radio I., near Morehead City Dec. 11 (HH), and presumably the same bird was seen nearby Dec. 26-27 (BHe). A second Harlequin was seen at Bull I., S.C., Dec. 27 (HM); less than one-half dozen records exist for each state. On Dec. 4 a Com. Eider was found at Pea I. (TS), and another (same bird?) was at nearby Oregon Inlet, Dec. 30 (Bodie-Pea Is. CBC). Very unusual was a Surf Scoter collected at L. Wheeler near Raleigh by David Lee in mid-December. This is the rarest scoter on inland lakes in the region, and the winter season nature of this record is also noteworthy. Another species of waterfowl in above-normal numbers was the Com. Merganser: one appeared at Clemson Feb. 4-5 (SG, HL), two were at Ft. Fisher, Jan. 27 (RD), seven were at Huntington Beach S.P., Feb. 5-10 (PP), 11 were at Roanoke Rapids, Jan. 8 (JML), and a remarkable 22 were at L. Greenwood Feb. 3 (B & LL). Over 90% of the birds reported were females. Noteworthy inland reports of Red-breasted Mergansers were seven at Rocky Mount, N.C., Dec. 2 (LF), and 33 at L. Murray, Jan. 8 (B & LL).

RAPTORS — Vultures are very rarely seen on the North Carolina Outer Banks, so single Turkey Vultures at Cape Hatteras, Dec. 3 & 17 were of interest (JH). Impressive roosts of Black Vultures were found at two Piedmont localities: 69 on electric power poles Dec. 18 near L. Greenwood (B & LL), and 50 (with 30 Turkey Vultures) in n. Orange County, N.C., Dec. 19 (JHC). Fussell observed a Swallow-tailed Kite on the amazingly early date of Feb. 27 at Ft. Macon, N.C. This location is well n.e. of the breeding range (extending n. to the Santee R. in South Carolina) and approximately three weeks early even for the Santee. More unusual was a **Mississippi Kite** in February (no date supplied), seen briefly in flight at Oconeechee Neck in n. North Carolina, where the species has been seen on several previous occasions in spring and summer (LF). The kite had a swallow-like flight, triangular black patch at the end of the

wings, unbarred tail from beneath, and especially a light-colored trailing edge of the wing. Winter sightings of Sharp-shinned Hawks have increased noticeably in the region over the past several years, and a handful of birders mentioned that this winter saw the highest number in many years. Whether this increase was due to the cold weather, increase in hawk populations, or simply observer increase is not known, though the situation bears monitoring in upcoming years.

Despite the very cold weather, only two reports of Rough-legged Hawks were received — individuals at Beaverdam Res. in Wake Co., N.C., Feb. 5-15 (BLA, TH) and at Oconeechee Neck near Halifax, N.C., Feb. 3 (LF). An imm. Golden Eagle at Pungo N.W.R. in e. North Carolina Jan. 21, was an excellent find (RK *et al.*, *fide* JCF). Inland reports of Bald Eagles in winter are fairly rare; thus noteworthy were one at Pinehurst, N.C., Jan. 21 (*fide* JHC) and an immature near Raleigh Jan. 21-25, feeding on carcasses of ducks frozen to the ice of L. Wheeler (TLQ *et al.*) Merlins are also very rare at inland localities in winter. Single birds were observed at Columbus, Ga., Jan. 6 (JM), Augusta, Ga., Feb. 12 (V & AW), and Pendleton, S.C., Feb. 11 (SG, HL).

CRANES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — An ad. Sandhill Crane was seen at Eufaula N.W.R., Ga., along the Alabama border, on the surprising date of Jan. 29 (SP). A King Rail seen near Raleigh Feb. 11 (JC, RBe, BW) and a Virginia Rail near Atlanta Dec. 26 (J & PC, BG) were notable; rails are rarely found in the Piedmont at this season. Baker *et al.* saw a Purple Gallinule in Thomas County, Ga., Dec. 19, a rare winter species anywhere in the region. Hudick was fortunate to find both a Long-billed Curlew and a Whimbrel together at Hatteras Village, N.C., Dec. 11-17, and another Whimbrel was at Morehead City Feb. 11 (MS). An unusual inland record was an individual Spotted Sandpiper at DeSoto, Ga., Jan. 16 (SP, JM), and an impressive count of 325 Red Knots was made at Cape Hatteras, Dec. 2 (JH). At least 40 Purple Sandpipers were seen at Ft. Moultrie, Sullivan's I., S.C., Jan. 23 (B & LL), a very high count for the region.

The most remarkable shorebird sighting of the winter was that of a **Pectoral Sandpiper** that spent the frigid winter near Townville in n.w. South Carolina. LeGrand found the bird in December and it was observed on six other dates in January and February. This is only the second winter record for the state, and it probably represents one of the few documented instances of this species spending the entire winter in the United States. A Least Sandpiper also wintered with the Pectoral, affording excellent size comparisons. American Avocets winter in the region essentially only at Bodie-Pea Is., N.C., and South I., S.C.; therefore, a group of 18 at Ft. Johnson near Charleston, Mar. 1-5 (DF *et al.*) was an exciting find.

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS — What must surely represent a record count of gulls for the region was the 150,000 estimated at Cape Hatteras Feb. 16 (JH). Hudick was able to pick out four Glaucous Gulls and one Iceland Gull from the flock that date. He also found a Glaucous there Jan. 15, and one of each species on Jan. 19. All the white-winged gulls were immature, as was a Glaucous on Pawleys I., S.C., Jan. 23 (B & LL). There has been considerable controversy over the separation of Glaucous and Iceland Gulls in the field in this region. There are a number of sight records of Icelands for both Carolinas, including several photographs, but as yet there are no specimens (there is a specimen for Georgia). Last winter a white-winged gull of uncertain identity was found dead at Morehead City (see AB 30:707) and later was confirmed as a Glaucous, while another gull seen near Aurora, N.C. (*ibid.*) was originally identified as an Iceland. However, LeGrand and Gauthreaux, who are familiar with both species, have examined slides of the gull taken by Paul Faulk and have concluded without doubt that the bird was a Glaucous, as

Robert Teulings suggested in his *Am. Birds* report. A pelagic trip off North Carolina this winter (no specific details received) produced a small group of white-winged gulls, and birders collected a "large" and a "small" gull, believing they had a Glaucous and an Iceland. Even in the hand, the gulls' identities were uncertain, and they were sent to Washington for positive identification. Both gulls were Glaucous! Apparently, birders are placing too much emphasis on overall size and wing length, and not enough emphasis on bill color and shape. In the writer's opinion, the short and dark bill of the imm. Iceland should separate that species from the Glaucous, which has a long and thick, flesh-colored bill with a black tip in the immature stages.

Herring Gulls showed a great increase in numbers at Clemson this season, with a peak of 75, Feb. 12 (HL). Laughing Gulls formerly quite rare in mid-winter on the North Carolina coast, have been increasing steadily as winter residents over the past few years. It is significant that small numbers remained all winter at Morehead City despite the severe weather (JF), and Fussell also had 16 at tidewater Pamlico County, N.C., Feb. 3. A Laughing Gull with a black head Jan. 16 in inland Georgia at DeSoto (SP, JM) was astounding. Bob and Lisa Lewis, who spent considerable time scanning L. Greenwood this winter, had a peak Bonaparte's Gull count of 250 Dec. 3; other good inland totals were 22 at L. Surf near Vass, N.C., Dec. 14 (JHC) and 21 at Roanoke Rapids L., Jan. 1 (JML). A Forster's Tern was an unusual inland visitor at a pond in Seminole County, Ga., Dec. 28 (SP). The only alcid reported was the Razorbill; individuals were found dead Jan. 16 at Huntington Beach S.P. (JEC) and Jan. 18 on Bogue I., N.C. (KL, *fide* FPB). It is unfortunate that birders did not take advantage of the extremely cold weather to make pelagic trips in search of alcids and other oceanic species, however, offshore fishing in winter in this region is apparently poor and available boats at this season seem difficult to find and schedule for trips.

OWLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — Wendell Smith heard a Long-eared Owl at North Wilkesboro, N.C., Jan. 27, presumably the same bird he has heard there over the past several winters. Short-eared Owls are quite rare away from the coast in the region; noteworthy were at least two all winter at the weed-covered bed of the new Beaverdam Res. n. of Raleigh (m.ob.). One was found shot Feb. 19 and was given to the N C Museum of Natural History (JML). Saw-whet Owls were seen on two occasions at Atlanta: one Dec. 19, 26, and Jan. 5 (JG *et al.*), and another at Wally Dreyfoos' home Jan. 21. A growing body of evidence over the past decade indicates that Whip-poor-wills may winter regularly along North Carolina's s. coast. This winter two birds were seen on a road at Gloucester, Carteret Co., Dec. 1 (A & JP). There were three reports of unidentified hummingbirds: one at Core Creek, N.C., in early December (JE), one on Bogue Bank, N.C., Dec. 22 (*fide* JF), and a ♀ *Archilochus* seen alive Jan. 2-7 and found dead Jan. 14 in Mt. Pleasant, S C (GH). The latter bird was sent to the U.S. Nat'l Museum for identification. Presumably the South Carolina bird was a Ruby-throated, but no such assumption should be made about the two in North Carolina, which had its first sight record of a *Selasphorus* hummingbird (♀ sp?) this fall.

LARKS THROUGH WRENS — The severe weather was the probable cause of bringing record numbers of Horned Larks into the n. part of the region. Approximately 80 were seen near Anderson, S.C., Feb. 5 (PAW, CW, KW), 100 at nearby Pendleton Feb. 19 (HL), 150 at also nearby Townville Jan. 8 (SG, HL), 200 Dec. 31 near Windsor, N.C. (JML), 250 near Palmyra, N.C., Mar. 9 (JML), and an astounding 1162 on the Roanoke Rapids, N.C., CBC Jan. 2! Two Tree Swallows were very late at Augusta Dec. 11 (V & AW), and the species spent Dec. 19 - at least Feb 10 at a pond in Thomas County, Ga., peaking at 100 on Feb 9 (LN, *fide* RLC). Over three weeks early was a Barn Swallow Feb

25 at Clemson (HL, PF). Purple Martins usually arrive in the region in February, but remarkable were birds arriving at Georgetown, S.C., Jan. 20 (SC), and at Waycross, Ga., Jan. 24 (EC). Five observers saw a Bewick's Wren at Pendergrass, Ga., Jan. 9; the species is becoming more and more scarce at all seasons with each passing year.

MIMIDS THROUGH WARBLERS — A Gray Catbird was a good find at Columbus Feb. 10 (BMA). The species is seen fairly frequently on Piedmont CBCs in the region, but it seems that most are just late lingerers and not winter residents, since January through March records for that section are quite rare. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was netted at Clemson Dec. 14 (VN), perhaps the same individual that spent the entire 1975-76 winter there. Hudick found a White-eyed Vireo n. of its winter range at Cape Hatteras Jan. 20. Single Solitary Vireos were noteworthy at Durham, N.C., Jan. 13 (JHo) and at Clemson Jan. 21 (HL, PF). The species has been increasing on CBCs in c. North Carolina over the past few winters, and Raleigh reported five on its CBC Dec. 19. Two Black-and-white Warblers were late in Greenwood S.P., S.C., Dec. 12 (B & LL), as was an Orange-crowned Warbler, Dec. 24, at Roanoke Rapids (JML). A Blackburnian Warbler was well seen Jan. 29, at Hunting I., S.C. (AT, VS, CaW); this appears to represent the first winter record for the state. Clemson's first winter record for Yellow-breasted Chat was for one at LeGrand's home Dec. 1 and again Jan. 8 (SG, HL).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES — A flock of 25 Brewer's Blackbirds Feb. 17 just n.e. of Folkston (RK) was noteworthy; other reports were three females in Thomas County (no date — RLC, SJ), three Dec. 18 at Magnolia Gardens near Charleston (EF, CC), and one female at Raleigh Feb. 19 (GW). Single Summer Tanagers were most unusual for the winter season — a male on the Charleston CBC, Jan. 2 (PN), and a ♀-plumaged bird two mi. s. of Folkston, Feb. 1 (RK). Even more exciting was a Black-headed Grosbeak at Florence Slifer's feeder at Summerville, S.C., for several weeks in January and February. An ad. ♂ Painted Bunting was present at a feeder just w. of Morehead City Dec. 25 to the end of the period (*vide* JF). This marks the third consecutive winter that the species has been seen in this area. A ♂ Dickcissel was a good find at Columbus Feb. 14 (BMA). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce nearly everywhere in the region during the CBC period, but in January and February a small influx was noted in the n. half of North Carolina. Nonetheless, it was clearly an off-year for the species. House Finches, as might be expected, wintered in record numbers in the Carolinas, but just how much of the increase was due to the cold weather, as compared with its range expansion, is not known at present. Approximately 300 roosted this winter at Raleigh's Rose Garden (TLQ), a record regional count, and a South Carolina record 55 birds were found in a weedy field with Am. Goldfinches near Pendleton Jan. 16 (SG, HL). The species penetrated as far s. and s.w. as Morehead City; Aiken, S.C.; East Point, Ga; and Columbus. There were unconfirmed reports of single Com. Redpolls at feeders at Durham and Charleston. Pine Siskins were practically non-existent throughout the region, although there were a few widely scattered reports. The only Red Crossbill sighting other than on CBCs was a group of four birds at Winston-Salem Dec. 26 (RH). A Lark Sparrow was at a feeder at Hilton Head I., S.C., Jan. 12 - Mar. 14 (LLa), as was one at Morehead City all winter (CL, *vide* JF). Only one report of Tree Sparrows was received (other than on CBCs) — two birds near Duluth, Ga., Feb. 4 (JPe). This species winters in moderate numbers over much of Virginia, and it seems unusual that the species did not penetrate into the region as a result of the severely cold weather. White-crowned Sparrow numbers were up in several Coastal Plain localities, and one was unusual at Folkston Jan. 27 (RK). Gauthreaux and LeGrand carefully examined Horned Lark flocks in n.w. South Carolina for Lap-

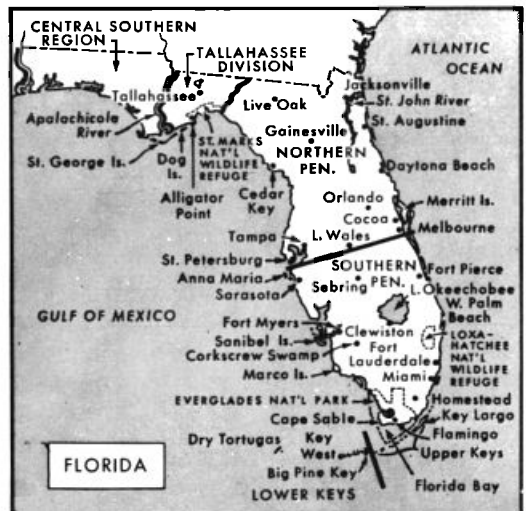
land Longspurs and were rewarded for their efforts: peak counts were three near Pendleton Feb. 26, and 10 near Townville Jan. 8. Snow Buntings were in very small numbers along the coast however, one seen on three dates during the winter at the Yerkes Primate Field Station in Lawrenceville, Ga., was noteworthy (JV, DC).

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PLEASE NOTE — Contributors should continue to send their seasonal reports to Robert P. Teulings, Route 2, Box 154 Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

FLORIDA REGION /Henry M. Stevenson

The obvious danger of attempting to characterize the winter of 1976-77 is that more space might be devoted to weather than to



birds Yet some facts are necessary to explain the effects of the severe winter on bird life. The "cold" statistics show that temperature deficiencies were recorded in every month from October through January (and probably February also) at all eight sample weather stations scattered throughout the region. These deficiencies were small in south Florida until January, when freezes reached the Miami area and snow fell there *and in the Bahamas!* The period of October-January was the coldest in the history of the National Weather Service in parts of north Florida, with accumulated temperature deficits of 24.5°F at Apalachicola and 23.2° at Tallahassee; the month of January was the second-coldest on record and the coldest since 1940.

Although comparative data are not at hand, the week of January 17-23 may have been the coldest on record in this part of the state, with daily minima in the teens or low 20's for the first six days. Also most unusual for Florida was its *two* snowfalls. Oddly, much of central Florida got more snow the first time (Jan 19) than north Florida, some remaining on the ground for two days at Lakeland (JBE). A few of the unusual responses of some birds to the severe cold included: arboreal species such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets (m.ob.) and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (JBE) feeding *constantly on the ground* (Edscom suggested they were looking for frozen insects that had fallen from the trees); gulls (JBE) and White Pelicans (HWK) feeding on fish killed by the extreme cold; an Eastern Phoebe eating a small anole (JJC); and Pine Warblers *eating small seeds* from my feeder.

In examining my field data for quantitative evidence of avian decreases around Tallahassee, it was necessary to compare this winter's frequencies (birds per hour) with *two* other sets of data: (1) the average frequencies for the same months (December - February) during 1946-74, and (2) the averages for these months in 1975-76, since the coverage had been extensively revised in September 1975. The necessity for this *double* evidence of decreases probably reduced the number of species included in the lists that follow. Whenever the evidence was limited to either of the subdivisions of the Tallahassee Division, this fact was indicated by the letter "L" (Leon Co.) or "C" (coastal counties).

Although subnormal temperatures began in the fall, only two species showed statistical evidence of unusually low frequencies *throughout* the period—the Cattle Egret and House Wren (C). The more common pattern was that of normal or, more often, increased frequencies in early winter, followed by sharp decreases by late January or February. Since most of these species have winter ranges extending well north of Florida, it seems likely that the early cold sent increased numbers into this state, but the more severe cold of January decimated them, although some may have migrated still farther south. Species showing this pattern of abundance were: *Ground Dove*, Belted Kingfisher, Tree Swallow (C), *House Wren* (L), *Blue-gray Gnatcatcher* (L), *Ruby-crowned Kinglet*, *Water Pipit* (L), *Loggerhead Shrike* (L), *Black-and-white Warbler*, *Orange-crowned Warbler*, and *Common Yellowthroat*. Gail Menk, who participated in the coverage of the Leon County areas, also censused 11 other areas there each month. To the extent that these species were well represented on his areas, his data agreed with mine for all species (those underscored) except the Yellow-rumped Warbler, for which he also recorded a decrease. It should be added that the wintering populations of several other species have been relatively low in north Florida for several years, but there was no evidence of *further* decreases this winter; this group includes most species of dabbling ducks, Turkey Vulture (L), Black Vulture, Eastern Bluebird (L), Palm Warbler, and Red-winged Blackbird. Finally, it must be admitted that the severity of the winter brought some gains, since the following species occurred in excessive numbers in the Tallahassee Division, and some ranged farther south in the state than usual: Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler (except as noted above), Purple Finch (L), Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, and Fox Spar-

row. The presence on this list of the Hermit Thrush and Yellow-rumped Warbler, both of which have suffered in some previous winters, may be related to a heavier crop of wild fruit this winter — a resource probably not extensively used by those species that decreased sharply.

LOONS, GREBES AND SHEARWATERS — Illustrative of a marked die-off of Com. Loons on Florida's East Coast were counts of 18 dead and 17 "sick or injured" birds in Palm Beach County Dec. 12-30 (HPL), and 13 dead at New Smyrna Beach Feb. 11 (RDB); Edscom considered the numbers low in the Tampa area. Rare in the Gulf, a Red-throated Loon was seen at Alligator Pt., Dec. 5 (JHH). A Red-necked Grebe 10 mi off Melbourne Jan. 5 (JJ & DH), extends the number of Florida records without a specimen or photograph to about 30. Single Eared Grebes were at the St. Petersburg Bayway December - Feb. 21 (Karl Thompson, LH), and the Merritt Island N.W.R., Dec. 28 (RDB & DH). Two shearwater species were found dead on the East Coast: a Cory's at Vero Beach Dec. 9 (AB; *U S F), and single Audubon's near Ft. Pierce Dec. 11 (AB, *U.S.F.), and in Palm Beach County Dec. 13 (GH & HPL). A live Audubon's Shearwater was seen off Ft. Pierce Dec. 27 (JL & BI) and one photographed off Canaveral Jan. 23 (RDB, PWS *et al.*, rarely seen after December). A *Manx Shearwater* 10 mi. off Cocoa Beach Jan. 9 (RDB, HD, PWS *et al.*), was one of the few ever identified in Florida waters.

PELECANIFORMS — Unusual inland records were those of 11 White Pelicans near Lake Placid Nov. 27, and one near Palm-dale Jan. 3, and a Brown Pelican near Sebring Dec. 11 (all by Fred Lohrer). Brown Pelicans were nesting on Marco I., by Feb 3 — about a month early (TB). A Blue-faced Booby was encountered off Ft. Pierce Dec. 27 (JL & BI), and about 80 Gannets off Canaveral Feb. 19 (RDB, AL *et al.*). Three East Coast localities had **Great Cormorants**: two at New Smyrna Beach Feb. 20-22 (one photographed; MCB, RDB *et al.*), two at Port Everglades Dec. 19 - Feb. 28 (WG, Brian Hope, photographed WJB), and one at Old Rhoads Key, Biscayne Bay Feb. 27 (Jim & Marlyn Kushlan). Anhingas are rare on the Florida Keys, but singles were at Boca Chica Dec. 1 & 16 (MB), and Stock I., Feb 16 (TW); a colony in Conservation Area 3A (Broward Co.?) had young in the nest by Feb. 3, despite the cold (JCO).

WADING BIRDS — Northerly winter records were made for Least Bittern at Gainesville Jan. 23 (RR), and Roseate Spoonbill at McKay Bay (Tampa) in late December (Lambeths). After building nests and laying eggs at Corkscrew Sanctuary, Wood Storks abandoned their efforts, partially owing to high water levels in s. Florida — a result of a very rainy "dry" season, with rains in November, December, January and also partially presumably owing to cold; others in s. Florida did not even begin (JCO, TB); two were somewhat out of place at Big Pine Key about Jan. 17-18 (the Nathaniel Lawrences). Also unusual on the Keys were single Glossy Ibises (same bird?) at Key West Jan 10 (FTH) and Feb. 14 (TW). Six Am. Flamingoes were seen on mud flats adjacent to Chapman Field, s. Dade Co., Feb. 26 (JK).

WATERFOWL — Possibly for the first time on record, single Whistling Swans appeared at four localities in the Florida Region: near St. Marks Light Dec. 3 (Hal Beecher), McKay Bay Dec. 14 (Glen Woolfenden) - 25 (m.ob.), Tarpon Springs Jan 29 - Feb. 28 (F. H. Park, Ted Curtis); and Jacksonville Jan 11 (Peggy Powell, VMM); obviously, the St. Marks bird may have moved to one of the other localities. Eleven Snow Geese (blue phase) were unusually far south at Ft. Lauderdale Jan. 18 (WJB), as was a Fulvous Whistling-Duck at Stock I., Dec. 6 (TW), and three there Dec. 11 (FTH). Mottled Ducks are not yet known to winter in the Tallahassee Division, but four were on St. George I., as late as Dec. 4 (JMS *et al.*). Single Green-winged Teal reached the Keys at Stock I., Feb. 11 (TW), and Summerland

Key Feb. 24 & Mar. 2 (MB); a male on Paynes Prairie near Gainesville Feb. 26 - Mar. 2 had the field marks of *A. c. crecca* (JHH) A ♂ **Cinnamon Teal** again appeared in Everglades National Park (below E.N.P.) Feb. 2 (Robt. McKeon). Large numbers for the species and locality were 400 Canvasbacks near Auburndale Feb. 5 (JBE, CG, JRS *et al.*), and 250 Greater Scaup in Old Tampa Bay Jan. 22 (JMS & Bonnie Carter). At least five Oldsquaws were reported: St. Marks Light Dec. 24 - Jan. 26 (m ob.), St. Petersburg November - Jan 14 (LH), Tampa Dec. 28 - Jan 1 (Lambeths), Merritt Island N.W.R., Dec. 5-22 (Karl and Betty Eichhorn *et al.*); and Melbourne Feb. 10 (Don Devitt *et al.*) A ♀ **Harlequin Duck** was at Sebastian Inlet Dec. 31 (John De Marco), and at Port Canaveral Jan. 2-8 (Leo and Ruth Galloway, m.ob.); photos showed both to be "the same bird" (*vide* RDB) Extremely rare on the Gulf Coast was a female at Captiva I., Feb. 15-18 (J.O.L. Roberts, photo, V. Gray). The surprising total of 9 **Masked Ducks** at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Feb. 12-20 (Fred Heath, PWS *et al.*), led to speculation that they may be preparing to nest there.

DIURNAL BIRDS OF PREY — A Black Vulture near Rock Harbor Dec. 9 (Nancy Paul), added to the small number of records on the Keys. A Swallow-tailed Kite appeared at Flamingo on the early date of Feb. 21 (PWS). A northerly winter record of Broad-winged Hawk, thought to be accurate, was of an adult seen near Port Tampa Feb. 20 (Lambeths). Other unusual records for the Lower Keys were single Red-tailed Hawks Dec. 20 and Feb. 9 (MB) and Swainson's Hawks Dec. 30 and Feb. 4 (MB) Single **Rough-legged Hawks** (same bird?) were at Cocoa Dec. 27 (DH), and Merritt Island N.W.R., Dec. 28 (Helen Cruickshank); one was on Paynes Prairie Feb. 26 (JJC & JEH). Two imm. Bald Eagles were in the nest on Cudjoe Key Feb. 28 (MB), an unknown number of young in a nest at Jacksonville Feb. 27 (MCD); and pairs of adults at nests near Orange Park Feb. 17 (MCD), and St. Marks Light throughout the period (m ob.). A most encouraging aspect of this species' population dynamics was the unprecedented presence of at least five immatures, December to early February near St. Marks Light (m ob.). A Golden Eagle was photographed near Myakka River S P., Dec. 4 (ST *et al.*).

RAILS AND GALLINULES — A Yellow Rail was examined at close range, both at rest and in flight, near St. Augustine Jan. 28 (Caroline Coleman), and a Sora at Stock I., Feb. 23 (TW), may have been an early migrant. At least one Purple Gallinule remained throughout the winter at Wakulla Springs (m.ob.) — a rather rare event — as did one in Gainesville (Jennet Burr). A downy young Com. Gallinule was on Conservation Area 2 (Broward Co.) on the very late date of Dec. 13 (PWS).

SHOREBIRDS — An Am. Golden Plover was late at Mullet Key Dec. 3 (ST *et al.*), and one wintered (to Feb. 14) on the Wakulla County coast (RLC & Steve Jones). Although rare in winter, at least four Solitary Sandpipers were reported at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Dec. 31 - Feb. 28 (WG, HPL, PWS). Perhaps also attempting to winter was a Pectoral Sandpiper at Gainesville Dec. 7 (Barbara Muschlitz) and 12 (JEH). Other local rarities were a Purple Sandpiper at Venice Nov. 23 - Dec. 24 (m ob.), and a Long-billed Dowitcher at L. Jackson, Leon Co., Dec. 9 (HMS). A concentration of 3000 Willets at Flamingo Feb. 26 (AL, PWS), may have included some driven S by the cold. Other high numbers were 200 Stilt Sandpipers, and up to ten wintering Black-necked Stilts near McKay Bay in late December (Lambeths, m.ob.). Unusual were three Am. Avocets at Key West Dec. 6-11 (FTH, TW *et al.*). Unprecedented numbers of phalaropes were seen 10-15 mi. off Canaveral Jan. 23; of the total 850-900, about 400 were Reds, 36 Northern, and the rest unidentified (RDB, JJ *et al.*).

JAEGERS AND SKUAS — The increasing frequency of offshore searches in recent years has shown jaegers to be more com-

mon than formerly supposed, and they were reported off both coasts again this winter. In addition, two Pomarines were found dead on beaches in Palm Beach County Dec. 12-15 (HPL), and an unidentified jaeger was seen far up Tampa Bay Jan. 20 (Chuck Turner). Although few Florida records have been documented for Long-tailed Jaeger, two were reported 22 mi. off Canaveral Dec. 24 (JJ). Florida's third record of skua was established 5 mi. s.e. of St. Augustine Feb. 23 (Grier Ralston), after numerous jaegers had been seen. His description was convincing, but gave no clue as to whether it may have been *C. maccormicki* (see AB 30:936).

GULLS — Glaucous Gulls were reported from at least three localities on the East Coast, where they are becoming regular (off Melbourne and Canaveral, and at New Smyrna Beach), but a record presumed to be from the West Coast (Colony Cove Dec. 1-31, Mr. and Mrs. Tourtelotte) was not accompanied by sufficient details. The Iceland Gull, somewhat more unusual, was seen at New Smyrna Beach Feb. 8-10 (RDB *et al.*), Port Canaveral Feb. 19 (PWS), and Ft. Pierce Feb. 10 (John Treadway, MCB). But the season's prize was a tentatively identified **Thayer's Gull** at Ponce de Leon Inlet (New Smyrna Beach) Feb. 8-13 (RDB, JBE, Simon Perkins *et al.*); Barber's photograph (copy T.T.R.S.) has been examined by Neal Smith and Davis Finch, who do not *absolutely* concur, and will be sent to Earl Godfrey. Barber also photographed a Franklin's Gull at Cocoa Dec. 1. Adult **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were at New Smyrna Beach Feb. 8-10 (RDB *et al.*), Port Canaveral Dec. 15-27 (JJ, DH), and Key West Jan. 18 (FTH). Two imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen off Canaveral Feb. 19 (RDB, PWS *et al.*)

TERNs AND ALCIDS — A **Roseate Tern** found dead on Key West Dec. 6, became Florida's first winter specimen (J. P. May, FTH, TW; *E.N.P.). Also unusual in winter was a Bridled Tern found dead, beyond salvaging, in Palm Beach County Dec. 13 (GH & HPL). Florida's third **Razorbill** record was of a bird approached very closely 8 mi. off Canaveral Jan. 4 (JJ), and a Dovekie seen 16 mi. off that coastline Jan. 15 (JJ) was one of very few ever reported in Florida later than December.

PIGEONS, DOVES AND PARAKEETS — An extralimital White-crowned Pigeon was found dead near Homestead Feb. 13 (JF; *E.N.P.?). The astounding estimate of 1140 White-winged Doves near Davie Jan. 23 (Boltes, Ted Hendrickson), not to mention a mere 18 at nearby Boynton Beach Jan. 25 (PWS *et al.*), must surely represent years of successful breeding somewhere in s. Florida; four were at Key West Dec. 6 (FTH). Another range expansion with increase was shown by an estimated 150 Budge-rigars at Venice Dec. 6 (MMS), and a Canary-winged Parakeet at Port Charlotte Jan. 7 (MMS) is believed to be the first ever recorded in s.w. Florida.

ANIS AND OWLS — A Groove-billed Ani was farther s than usual at an unspecified locality in Pinellas County Dec. 23 - Jan. 26 (Lambeths *et al.*, photo RDB). From one to three remained at St. Marks until Dec. 31 (m.ob.), and two were just e. of Carabelle Dec. 3 (HMS). Northerly records of Smooth-billed Ani came from Pinellas County and New Smyrna Beach Feb. 12 (AL, HPL, PWS *et al.*). Short-eared Owl records were one dead at St Marks Light Jan. 15 (Noel Wamer; *T.T.R.S.); one near East Point Dec. 4 (REM, PMR); one on Paynes Prairie (first for Alachua County) Feb. 1 (Steve Nesbitt); and one to two at Tampa Dec. 15 - Jan. 8 (LA, Lambeths *et al.*).

NIGHTJARS AND FLYCATCHERS — A singing Chuck-will's-widow at Lakeland Feb. 25, was considered by the observer (JBE) to be on time despite the cold. Another **Logger-head Kingbird** was seen by many at Islamorada Dec. 1-17, and a Gray Kingbird was late at Key West Dec. 12 (TW). Always rare in Leon County, a W. Kingbird was also very late e. of Tallahassee Dec. 10 (Mrs. Kellogg Hunt). A **Wied's Crested Flycatcher** was carefully studied at Mahogany Hammock (E N P.),

Feb. 16 (Helen Kittinger), and a Vermilion Flycatcher was seen Jan. 19 as far s. as Stuart (Louise Sherward). An E. Wood Pewee was seen regularly in Miami from Feb. 9 (JK).

LARKS AND SWALLOWS — An estimate of 500,000 Tree Swallows 15 mi. w. of Vero Beach was made Dec. 3 (PWS), but by late winter the numbers in the Tampa area were said to be low (JBE *et al.*). Apparently the species fared much better this winter than in the disastrous winter of 1939-40. Sykes reported a late Barn Swallow 15 mi. w. of Vero Beach Dec. 2, and three at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Dec. 4. A Purple Martin at Summerland Key Feb. 4 (MB), proved the earliest record for the Lower Keys. Three Horned Larks at New Smyrna Beach Feb. 9 (Mrs. John Payne *et al.*), may be the remnant of a flock of five photographed by Barber last fall, who states that his pictures show the birds belonged to the race *alpestris*.

NUTHATCHES THROUGH PIPITS — Red-breasted Nuthatches were occasionally seen in inland n. Florida, but oddly there were no reports for the islands; one at Jacksonville in January (Sam Grimes) was unusual. A Swainson's Thrush at Horseshoe Beach Dec. 12 (JBE, PJF), provided the latest record for the Tallahassee Div. Golden-crowned Kinglets were more numerous than in recent years in n. Florida, and a few reached c. Florida, but the latter were not seen after the extreme cold (JBE). One of the features of the winter was the penetration of the Florida Keys by numbers of Water Pipits, where the species had previously been accidental. Five were on Plantation Key Feb. 2 (O.M. Dunning), two on Sugarloaf Key Feb. 26 (observer?), two on Stock I., Jan. 22 (TW), and 18 at Key West Feb. 2 (TW). The Sprague's Pipit on St. George causeway remained to Dec. 11 (JMS, m.ob.); three on Loxahatchee N.W.R., Jan. 30 (Boltes), constituted only the second record so far s. in Florida.

WARBLERS — Northerly records of Magnolia Warblers came from Pinellas County, two Jan. 13 (MH), and one Lakeland, in December (PIF). The occurrence of single Yellow-rumped Warblers 10-20 mi. off Canaveral Jan. 8 & 23 (RDB, JJ *et al.*), supplement the evidence of mid-winter migration obtained over the years from the WCTV tower in Leon County. A Black-throated Gray Warbler was on Mahogany Hammock in mid-February (WG *et al.*), and a Black-throated Green was as far n. as Mullet Key Jan. 15-26 (Marie Hughes, m.ob.). An early Louisiana Waterthrush was at Paynes Prairie Feb. 27 (Per Kaijser). A Yellow-breasted Chat felled by WCTV tower Dec. 17 (RLC) was of the e. race, *I. v. virens* (M. Ralph Browning). A Hooded Warbler at St. George I., Dec. 4 (JMS), was the latest known to the Tallahassee Div. (*T.T.R.S.). Wilson's Warblers also fell victim to the severe winter; one near East Pt., Dec. 4 (REM & PMR), was not seen again, and one near Tallahassee until Jan. 11 (Tom Morrill) fed on the ground with its wings dangling on that cold day and was not seen again; two seen through December near Lakeland (PIF, JBE, Woolfenden *et al.*) and one at Goulds Nov. 16 - Jan. 12 (JF), may have suffered similar fates.

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS AND BUNTINGS — Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen in Pinellas County late December - Feb. 10 (m.ob.), and one at Ochopee Feb. 20-21 (MT). From six to 18 Brewer's Blackbirds were in Pinellas County Jan. 7 - Feb. 28 (LH, m.ob.), Tampa had ± 100 Rusty Blackbirds Jan. 1 (DL). Another large concentration was 5000 Brown-headed Cowbirds near Gretna (Gadsden Co.) Feb. 4 (HMS). A **Stripe-headed Tanager** was at Miami Feb. 13 & 20 (MT); single Summer Tanagers at Ft. Lauderdale Jan. 4 (WG), and Gainesville Dec. 27 (Jean Dooney) and Jan. 22 (Winifred & Philip Gaddis). Single Indigo (Jan. 4-16) and Painted (Jan. 17 & 18) Buntings visited a feeder as far n. as Jacksonville (Julia Cocke).

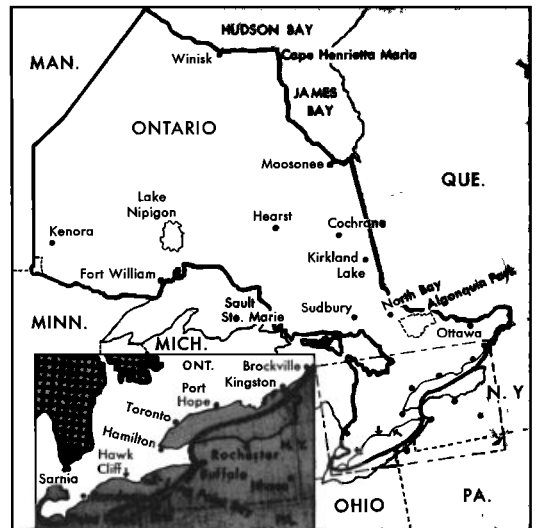
CARDUELINE FINCHES AND SPARROWS — A congregation of 80 Purple Finches at Tallahassee Jan. 2 (GEM), was impressive, and the species was present "in record numbers" in

the Cocoa area (*vide* RDB). However, the only Pine Siskins reported were three at a Jacksonville feeder Jan. 22 - Feb. 28 (VMM). There were no unequivocal records of Evening Grosbeaks. The Tampa area had the unusual experience of hosting four or five wintering Le Conte's Sparrows (m.ob.); Boynton Beach had three Clay-colored Sparrows Jan. 8 (GH, HPL, PWS). A Field Sparrow was trapped and banded as far s. as Ft. Pierce Dec. 4 (HWK). Numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos reached c. Florida this winter (m.ob.), and one exceeded the species' previously known limits by appearing at Noname Key *ca.* Feb. 1-26 (Deborah Hess, MB). White-crowned Sparrows again wintered at several sites near Tallahassee (GEM, HMS, JMS), and four were in three Alachua County areas (JJ, JHH, RR). Some ranged much farther s., at least four wintering in the Tampa area (DL, m.ob.), two near Auburndale Feb. 5 (JBE, CG, JRS) and one was trapped and banded at Vero Beach Feb. 10 (Harold Wilson). Even the Fox Sparrow reached c. Florida this year, with single birds reported from Titusville Jan. 18 (RDB), Cocoa Dec 27 (DH, Bob Brown), and near Tampa Jan. 30 (LA, m.ob.).

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ONTARIO REGION /Clive E. Goodwin

The cold, cheerless fall was succeeded in southern Ontario by the worst winter in a century. December and January had week



after week when the temperature never rose above the freezing point. Lake Erie froze completely and Lake Ontario was 60 percent frozen before the long cold spell ended in early February.

The season organized itself neatly around the new reporting schedule in the south, although northerners pointed out that the end of February still means another month of winter for them. Scattered early arrivals appeared in February, even though there was no exceptionally warm spell to move migrants in large numbers. By February 27 movement had even reached Virginiatown, where a Red-winged Blackbird appeared (PWR).

The early fall had moved out many of the half-hardy winterers, although a few remained around to provide interest to the early winter scene. As usual, the Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) tell this story well, and their data will not be noted further here unless they have particular significance. By mid-January many of these birds had vanished, but a surprising number survived throughout the period if adequate food and shelter were available. Their numbers were smaller than usual, however, and the cold weather did nothing to bring more northern species south. It was not only the coldest, but one of the duller winters in many years.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — The last Com. Loon reports were from Vaughan Twp., Dec. 18 (GB) and a bird shot at Presqu'île Dec. 12 (DM, GC). Two Pied-billed Grebes were still at Port Severn Dec. 31 (TL *et al.*) and a Red-necked Grebe at Nanticoke to Jan. 9 on perhaps the only stretch of open water on L. Erie (RC, JH). Individuals of this species were picked up in a parking lot in Glen Williams Jan. 16 (HA), a gas station in Ottawa Feb. 2, and another there the next day in a woodlot. Their final winter grebe was a Horned, this time in a schoolyard Feb. 10 (RAF). Grebes seem subject to these fatal aberrations in late winter. Great Blue Herons lingered until mid-January; e.g., there were 19 reports in the area n.w. of Toronto (GB).

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS — Mute Swans continue to increase along L. Ontario: a total of at least 18 was recorded between Oshawa and Burlington over the period (m.ob.). Four Whistling Swans were seen in Kingston Dec. 16, and the same area had 2000 Canada Geese on Wolfe I. until late December (RDW). The resident goose flocks further east, along the Greater Toronto waterfront, continued their steady increase and Canada was one of the few waterfowl species to record higher numbers on this year's January inventory (T.O.C.). There was even a pair at Coboconk Jan. 9 - Feb. 6 (BP, DB); and a flock of 47 at Blair Feb. 20, may have been very early migrants (CAC, JC). Peterborough had a Blue Goose, unusual there in any season, during February (DCS). Mallard is another species that seemed to survive the winter in the south with support from "handouts", and this year birds were north to Sault Ste. Marie, where there were 24 in mid-January (EE); 62 at Barrie were the most ever there in winter (CH, CJM). Early migrants at Turkey Pt., Feb. 27 included 12 Pintail and a pair of Wood Ducks (RC, GBr). Ingersoll had a wintering Wood Duck Jan. 17 - Feb. 1 (DBu).

Redhead numbers continued high in the region: 120 at Kingston Feb. 12 were considered migrants (RDW) but there were 1500 the same day on the St. Clair R. The heavy ice on the lakes may have concentrated ducks on this waterway, as there were also 3500 Canvasbacks there in late December, and up to 2500 Com. Goldeneyes (DR *et al.*). Goldeneyes will winter as far north as there is open water, and this year there were 18 at Atkoka Jan. 18 (SP), and 53 off Manitoulin I., Feb. 19 (DF, CB), the latter flock seen from the air, with eight Com. Mergansers and 50 Oldsquaw — among the few signs of birdlife in the Sudbury-Manitoulin region over the period! Among the assortment of stragglers in the early winter was an unusual number of Ring-necked Ducks. Birds at London (WRJ), Port Carling (GW), and Coboconk (DB, BP) were probably present throughout. Early Peterborough arrivals included two Lesser

Scaup Feb. 22 and a Bufflehead Feb. 27 (DCS). A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye at Courtright, Jan. 1 & 8, was well described (DR *et al.*). In addition to two Harlequin Ducks in the Toronto area (m.ob.), there were birds at Presqu'île Dec. 5 (GC *et al.*), and Hamilton from Dec. 2 (RF, AW *et al.*).

King Eider is the usual eider on the Great Lakes, and a few usually appear in late fall and early winter: this year was no exception with birds at Hamilton Dec. 12 (GWN, WS), Presqu'île in early December (DCS *et al.*) and one picked up dead on Wolfe I., Dec. 19 (FC). Another eider at Presqu'île Dec. 12 was in a transitional plumage and was probably a Common (GC, DM). Another bird of this species caused excitement at Guelph: however, it was wing-tagged and probably originated from a nearby waterfowl collection. Two White-winged Scoters at Tobermore Dec. 30 (JWJ) and a Ruddy Duck at Ingersoll Dec. 10 (LM) were noteworthy, as was Algonquin Park's first winter Com. Merganser Jan. 1 (RS *et al.*). The two Hooded Merganser X Com. Goldeneye hybrids reappeared on the St. Clair R. for the 10th and 6th successive years respectively. Both were identified on the basis of plumages intermediate between males of these two species, and a female there this year was thought to be a hybrid as well (DR *et al.*). [For a future article on hybrid waterfowl, photographs of all such specimens are earnestly solicited.—Ed.]

HAWKS, EAGLES — Goshawks were widespread, particularly in the early winter: typical numbers were at least six in December at Kingston (RDW) and three records at Atkoka (SP). At Ottawa there were up to seven seen in a day (*vide* RAF). As usual, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported in small numbers, and exactly one-half of the sightings (28) were Cooper's. Either relatively more Cooper's tend to winter in our region, or people are misidentifying Goshawks and Sharp-shinned. It was a bonanza Red-tailed year, with excellent numbers in the s. and w.: in King and Vaughan Twps. counts of 50-60/day were usual (AD, GB), but there were only two sightings at Ottawa (RAF). The pure white bird in Vaughan reappeared for yet another year (RA) and a semi-albino was at Alvinston Feb. 22; it had a few brown flecks and a very pale red tail (JRC). At Cedar Springs 46 Red-taileds were counted migrating Dec. 7 (PDP). The southwest also had the highest numbers of wintering Red-shouldered Hawks; approximately 13 in all were seen there, with scattered birds e. to Kingston. Rough-legged Hawks concentrated in traditional areas n. of Toronto and near Kingston. The Toronto high was Jan. 14 with 42 birds around Malton Airport (JAM), and there was a similar number on Amherst I. in December. The usual Kingston coverage of Amherst became impossible later due to heavy ice and snow-clogged roads (*vide* RDW).

Two Golden Eagles were in Algonquin P.P., Feb. 21 (TR) feeding on wolf kills and six Bald Eagles were reported over the period, plus those on the CBCs. One of very few winter Osprey records was a bird at Melbourne Dec. 5 (WGG). This was not a Gyrfalcon year. The only one reported was at Palgrave in the first week of February (DS). A Prairie Falcon on the Long Pt. CBC would be the first Ontario confirmed sight record (there have been a number of reported sightings by local observers), but a bird had escaped from captivity some time earlier and so this record is also questionable. There were at least three Merlins in the Thunder Bay area (*vide* KD) and three reported elsewhere, plus CBC sightings. The only Peregrines were seen on CBCs.

GROUSE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — Bobwhite continues to be reported from the n. Toronto ravines, where some were released five years ago (CEG), and a Chukar was seen Dec. 25 at Newmarket adjacent to a Conservation area where releases also occurred a few years ago (*vide* GB). There were many early winter reports of Killdeer and Com. Snipe the

northernmost Killdeer was at Warton Dec. 25 (JWJ) but snipe were n. to Gore Bay Dec. 1 (RR) and Tehkummah Feb. 27 (GG). Woodstock had four snipe Dec. 28 (WDK) and Munster three Feb. 6 (DCS). Six Purple Sandpipers at Hamilton Dec. 12 (GWN, WS) was a good number, and at Niagara Falls Jan. 15 two were seen disappearing down into a hole under an ice shelf and did not reemerge (AW, BW).

GULLS — Winter gull movements tend to be difficult to interpret. This year it seemed probable that many gulls would move out, just as many waterfowl moved out during the heavy freeze in January. However, although gulls did disappear at Marathon in early January (NGE) the birds that forage n. from L. Ontario into King and Vaughan Twps. vanished by Dec. 18, but reappeared between Jan. 22 & 29 (GB). At Niagara some of the late fall rarities lingered well into December, but the huge numbers of birds there reduced rapidly (m.ob.). Gull numbers were low throughout, with Ring-billed exceptionally scarce. In the southwest, where ± 3000 Herring Gulls were on the St. Clair R., with six Great Black-backed, Ring-billed were "virtually absent" (*vide* AHK). White-winged gulls were in generally low-to-average numbers on L. Ontario, but in good numbers in Hamilton (CBC) and farther west and north. The Marathon Glaucous Gull high was 20 on Dec. 19 (NGE), there were five at Owen Sound Dec. 27 (JWJ), and up to 13 on the St. Clair R. (m.ob.). However, e. of Hamilton, Kingston's five Feb. 6 (K.F.N.) was the most recorded, and there was one in Ottawa Feb. 6 (BD). Iceland Gulls followed a similar pattern, with an Ottawa bird Feb. 2 (RMP), two Kingston reports, and a provincial high of four on the St. Clair R. A Black-legged Kittiwake was at Hamilton Jan. 2 (KMCL, PW).

DOVES THROUGH OWLS — A Rock Dove at Marathon Feb. 6 was inexplicable: none have been there in any season over the past few years (NGE). An exception to the general scarcity of birds was Mourning Dove, the commonest bird at many feeders in the south. Twenty years ago winter Mourning Doves in Ontario were something to get excited about, but this year they wintered n. to Meaford and Owen Sound (m.ob.). Snowy Owls were scarce but widespread, and Long-eareds and Short-eareds were present in small numbers in most of their usual winter roosts. It did not seem to be an exceptional owl year. In retrospect, however, it was an unusually good year for some owl species. Screech and Great Horned Owls were thought to be in above-average numbers in many localities; the southwest, better organized for statistics than the rest of the province, had 70 and 30 reports respectively of these two species, excluding the CBC total (*vide* AHK). The young from the November Barn Owl nest at Kingston starved to death in December, but at least one young from a second nesting was still alive at the end of the period (RDW).

Four Hawk Owl reports represent the best movement of this species in s. Ontario since the winter of 1970-71: there were birds at Petawawa Jan. 12 to mid-February (JB), Honey Harbour Dec. 19 - Feb. 27 (DAS *et al.*), Selby Dec. 16 - Jan. 21 (JP, *vide* AEB), and Oshawa from the CBC on (m.ob.). The only Great Gray Owl was a bird at Long Lac Feb. 9 (SP); but Boreal Owls were down in good numbers, although nothing approaching the invasion of 1968-69. There were three n. Toronto reports from early January to Feb. 19 (HT, AG), the weirdest, a bird sitting on the windowsill of an apartment building (*vide* MDK). One Boreal was at Ottawa, Dec. 1 & 19 (BB) and a bird from Midland was treated by the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation Dec. 20 (KMCK). In the north one was found dead at French L., Dec. 27 (SP) and another in MacGregor Twp., Feb. 20; a bird had been seen ¼ mi. away the previous day (JHe). Ten Saw-whet Owls were recorded, in addition to six at Ottawa, the last week of January and up to eight at Claireville Feb. 19

(JW, m.ob.). The latter were presumably migrating, since they were not in the area previously and left shortly afterwards

WOODPECKERS THROUGH LARKS — Red-bellied Woodpeckers reached a new high for the province, at least for the period for which figures have been available. There were 17 in the southwest (*vide* AHK), and 28 in the London area (WRJ), including six at Alvinston Feb. 22 (JRC). Two to five birds are established in the area between Cayuga and Caledonia (RC, AW *et al.*) and further e. there were two on Wolfe I in December (K.F.N.), and one at Hart L., Dec. 23 - Jan. 17 (RD). Two Red-headed Woodpeckers at Honey Harbour from Jan. 10 (DAS), and one at Ottawa Dec. 20 (RAF) were also noteworthy. Three-toed Woodpeckers were scarce; even at Ottawa most of the birds on the CBC were in Québec. Horned Larks were widespread in small flocks, with ± 4000 in Kent County, Dec. 27, and movements from Feb. 13 when 44 were seen at Barrie (CJM).

CROWS THROUGH WRENS — A Gray Jay was at Napanee Jan. 27-30 (JHs). Both Blue Jays and Com. Crows were in exceptional numbers, even for recent years. Again, the CBCs should tell this story better, but the birds were n.e. to Algonquin P.P., and unlike the pattern usually followed by Blue Jays in many areas, did not move out in January. A count of 20 Com. Ravens at Cyprus L., Dec. 30 (JWJ) reflects the expansion of this species on the Bruce Peninsula. The only Black-billed Magpie was at Crozier Jan. 25 (GP). Most of s. Ontario found Black-capped Chickadees scarce or wholly absent, although there was some movement in January; Boreals were in good numbers in Algonquin P.P. and at Marathon (RT, NGE) and apparently moved no farther. There were at least four Tufted Titmice in Kent and Lambton Cos., but a bird at Clinton Feb. 25 was quite unexpected (G & SC). Other species in good numbers in the n. parts of their winter ranges included both Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. Noteworthy were two creepers in Pukaskwa N.P., Dec. 8 (SB-N) and Red-breasted Nuthatches at Swastika (L.C, *vide* WG) and Thunder Bay (EK). The winter did not help the diminished Carolina Wren population much: a bird at a Havelock feeder vanished in late January (GC) and one at Tillsonburg was found dead Jan. 26, 100 yds from the point of its original sighting a year earlier (WM). Only eight were reported from the southwest, their main stronghold in the province.

MIMIDS, THRUSHES — Mockingbirds provided their usual scattering of reports from across the south province. American Robins were in exceptional numbers in Hamilton and Toronto, but birds were more scattered outside these urban areas. They were seen n. to Marathon Dec. 19 (NGE). Just one Varied Thrush is noteworthy but this year there were two at Dundas from Dec. 11 (BR, HM, m.ob.) and Vaughan Twp from Jan. 22 (DT *et al.*). Hermit Thrush is another species that has been wintering in increasing numbers: this year there were birds e. and n. to Ottawa and Barrie, and one even spent the winter unnoticed but in daily view of hundreds of people, in the central courtyard of the Ontario Government offices in downtown Toronto (CEG)! The record numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets in Algonquin P.P., reflected in the CBC, continued throughout the period. Late Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in Bowmanville Dec. 8 (PB) and two in Tillsonburg Dec 10 (WM).

For the second successive year Bohemian Waxwings moved into the province, although the flight was much smaller than last winter's. Small flocks occurred at Thunder Bay and Fort Frances (KD, GP) and in the south reports ranged from scattered flocks at Ottawa w. to 60 at Oxenden Dec. 23 (JWJ), with 16 at Prince Edward Pt., Jan. 2 (HQ, RBS, RDW), 13 at Sudbury Dec. 2-3 (WRL) and several scattered sightings in between. The major area of abundance was Marathon with

100+ Dec. 4 and flocks of ± 20 birds throughout (NGE): we can only speculate whether this concentration coincided with the only observer in hundreds of square miles, but it seems unlikely. The N. Shrike flight was one of, if not the heaviest ever recorded. The birds peaked in December, when G. Bennett estimated one shrike per every two hours afield in the Toronto area, and tapered off in January with most of the birds moving out in late February. The CBCs should provide a picture of the peak movement.

WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS — Surprisingly large numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported along the lower Great Lakes, but most vanished by early January. Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported from Cambridge at the end of December and at least one was present to Jan. 23 (RPg, PE, m.ob.). There were two Red-winged Blackbirds and two Com. Grackles throughout at Atikokan (SP), with grackles also at Sault Ste. Marie Jan. 12 (EE), Marathon Dec. 19 (NGE) and one at Algonquin was the first in winter there (JS, RP *et al.*) In the south blackbirds were fewer than usual but there were still peaks of 300 grackles at Pt. Pelee and 1200 Red-wings at Rondeau (*vide* AHK). In some areas Brown-headed Cowbirds outnumbered these two species, and in Port Hope they were commoner than Starlings at some feeders (ERM).

FINCHES, SPARROWS — Cardinals in Ottawa were reduced to one-half their 1975-76 numbers (*vide* RAF) but there were as many as nine at some feeders in Peterborough (DCS), where a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed Dec. 4-21 (DM) It was the duller winter finch year in at least a decade, although the revised season end eliminates consideration of late winter movements. Some did develop but at the time of writing they have only been quite light. Evening Grosbeaks were unusually scarce for recent years, although there were moderate numbers from mid-January in the e. of the region, and by the end of February Ottawa and Swastika were using words like "abundant" and "invasion". Typically such movements progress westwards. Only Algonquin found Pine Grosbeaks common, the birds were scattered in small numbers or wholly absent over the rest of the region. Redpolls, siskins and both crossbills were scarce everywhere. Only Purple Finches and Am. Goldfinches provided much relief, the latter with their typically uneven pattern of abundance in some areas and virtual absence elsewhere. Purple Finches were again most common in the east: Ottawa found them very abundant after the turn of the year, and Kingston had a large influx in late January. The birds thinned out westwards to moderate numbers at Peterborough and there was only one report from the southwest.

A Rufous-sided Towhee at Fort Erie was identified as the *montanus* race of the spotted towhee (HHA *et al.*), one of the very few Ontario records of the western races. A Harris' Sparrow was at Melbourne Jan. 28 - Feb. 28 (DMu, m.ob.). A few of the many wintering sparrow reports are worth listing either because of the numbers of birds involved or their distance north. Either way they indicate the extent of this phenomenon. Noteworthy numbers included three Savannah Sparrows at Rondeau Dec. 27 (*vide* AHK) and 20 Swamp Sparrows around Hamilton Jan. 1 (RC *et al.*). Northerly records included a White-crowned Sparrow at Thunder Bay to Jan. 5 (KD), a Song Sparrow in Algonquin P.P. throughout (E. Kuiuack, RP *et al.*) and two at Marathon Dec. 19 with a White-throated Sparrow (NGE). Two White-throateds and a Dark-eyed Junco also spent the period at Pimisi Bay (LdeKL).

Lapland Longspurs were unusually common: instead of odd birds in Snow Bunting flocks there were groups of 10-20 longspurs alone, and at Ottawa there were up to 28 at one feeder (*vide* RAF). Snow Bunting is another species not associated with feeders in our region but this year they were visiting feeders from Englehart (JWa) to Bolton (DC), and in the coun-

tryside the flocks were enormous. Over a dozen reports exceeded 1000 birds, and reports of flocks into the hundreds were received from across the south, although the species was absent from Thunder Bay. The fitting climax to this invasion came just outside the period, Mar. 5, when an enormous NE movement of at least 10,000 birds was seen at Thornton between 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (AD).

CORRIGENDUM — The section on wrens in Algonquin Park in the summer issue (*AB* 30: 950) should read: There was a House Wren in Algonquin P.P., and a dummy nest June 13 represented the first suggestion of breeding there since the 1940s Short-billed Marsh Wrens were singing in four Park locations (RT, DSt).

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NIAGARA-CHAMPLAIN REGION /Douglas P. Kibbe

Considering the national attention the Northeast's winter weather received, a synopsis may hardly be necessary here. Last fall's record cold was merely a precursor to one of the coldest and snowiest winters on record, as an unrelenting jet stream continued to channel frigid weather throughout the region. Consider the stress imposed upon wintering birds by the following weather conditions: sixty-six straight days of snow (Rochester); fifty consecutive days of below freezing temperatures (Adirondack Mountains); and a cumulative total of 180+ inches of snow by the close of the period (Buffalo) Lake Champlain was frozen over by January 14, the earliest date in over eighty years.

With snow drifts blocking most roads, birders were forced to watch feeders; but with natural food abundant in many areas, feeder watching was less than outstanding. Mortality among southern colonists (e.g., Carolina Wren, Mockingbird) was suspected but confirmed deaths were limited to northern winter residents (i.e., Black-capped Chickadee, Tree Sparrow) and it will be some time before the true impact of the most severe winter of this century can be ascertained.

The jet stream's failure to revert to its usual position over the

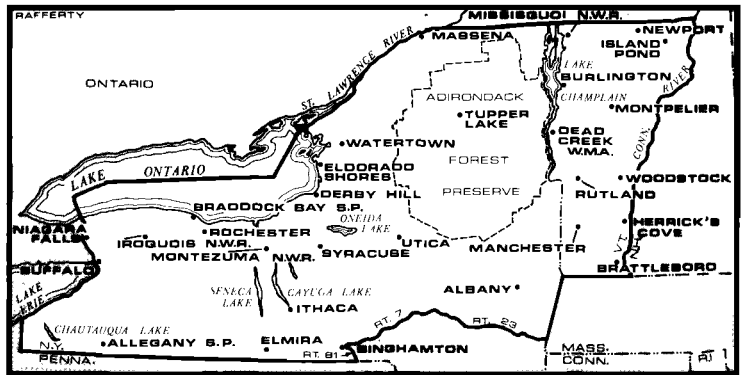
Great Lakes caused displacement of more than a series of western storms. Nearly a dozen western species appeared in the region this winter, clearly a reflection of aberrant weather patterns.

LOONS THROUGH WATER-FOWL—The incredible cold froze nearly all bodies of water and made waterbird-watching a sport for fanatics. As open water disappeared the number of reports of grounded grebes increased and Red-neckeds, Horneds, and Pied-billed were found ashore. Several birds found late in the period probably represent early northbound migrants unable to find open water. A single Eared Grebe found on L. Champlain's North West Bay in mid-December prior to freeze-up (*vide* H P A S.) was just one of a host of western stragglers sighted in the region this winter. Perhaps the most incredible record was that of a Fulmar reportedly (no details) found in weakened condition in a Bennington, Vt. parking lot Dec. 4 (*vide* HT). Although the first record for Vermont, it was the second regional winter record in the past three years for this highly pelagic species.

Numerous reports of Great Blue Herons unsuccessfully attempting to winter came as no surprise. It seems remarkable however, that the one successful attempt occurred in Arlington, Vt. (*vide* NS). It's often been said that birds are good indicators of environmental quality but can fishing along the Battenkill really be that good?

Despite winter's severity, geese started north *en masse* the third week of February after a break appeared in winter's hold on the region. Exceptional mid-winter waterfowl sightings included: three Brant at Irondequoit Bay Jan. 11 (J & TM); and over 1800 Mallards at Brighton, N.Y., Jan. 9 (BP), the latter equaling the previous mid-winter high count. Harlequin Ducks were in two locations near Rochester; a female at Pt. Breeze Dec. 13 (CP, AS), and a male which permitted close approach, at Greece throughout February (m.ob.). A single Barrow's Goldeneye was seen on L. Ontario at Oswego in mid-January (*vide* JG). Two eider species were also found by Rochester observers; Common Eiders at Braddock Bay Dec. 18, and Sodus Bay Feb. 12-19, and a sub-adult ♂ King Dec. 19 at Greece (*vide* R.B.A.).

HAWKS THROUGH GALLIFORMES — The appearance of two Turkey Vultures on the Ferrisburg, Vt. CBC Dec. 18 marked the first winter occurrence for the state. The question that immediately poses itself is: "Why this winter?" Goshawks with over 20, led all accipiter sightings followed by about 15 reports each of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned. This is a considerable decline in reported sightings for the latter two species, a fact perhaps related to a scarcity of feeder birds, especially finches, this winter. The albino Red-tailed Hawk at Lima, N.Y. was sighted again (*vide* R.B.A.). A Jan. 1 report of a Red-shouldered Hawk in Ithaca (*vide* JG, WB) tops two Osprey sightings, in Ithaca Dec. 5 (JG) and Westport Dec. 2 & 24 (*vide* H P A S.). Both species are extremely rare in the region during the winter. Although 72 Rough-legged Hawks were tallied on the Watertown CBC, there were no other reports of concentrations, not even from the lake plains. Five ad. and one imm. Bald Eagles were reported. Unconfirmed rumors of a Golden Eagle in the Arlington, Vt. area persisted throughout the period and another bird was reportedly seen in Westminster West (*vide* DC). A southbound gray-phase Gyrfalcon which passed low over Winhall Jan. 31 (WN) and a Merlin identified on the Fer-



risburg CBC were the only noteworthy falcons reported this winter.

Diligent searching at Island Pond produced two Spruce Grouse (LNM), the first ever found on a Vermont CBC. The Turkey continues to expand its range in Vermont following its re-establishment less than ten years ago. The birds appeared to be thriving on a bumper acorn crop early this winter and there were few reports until in January deep snows forced them into fields to forage. There were numerous sightings in e.c. Vermont and the species has already been recorded north of the border in Québec, indicating that dispersal has already occurred considerably north of its historic natural range. Another introduction, Gray Partridge, was reported from Hamilton County, N.Y. (TC) and Grand Isle, Vt. (B & GG), the latter is the first winter report from Vermont in several years.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS — It seems incredible that any marsh or shorebirds would have attempted to winter in the region; however, two Virginia Rails were watched foraging along the ice at Mendon Ponds Jan. 8 (G.O.S.), Killdeer were reported every month (although probably none survived the winter within the region), and two Com. Snipe lingered into December. Four Purple Sandpipers and a Dunlin again frequented Niagara Falls in January, at least one Purple being present the third week of February (*vide* B.O.S.); a Red Phalarope loitered in Braddock Bay Dec. 4-9 (WL *et al.*).

Prolonged cold and extensive ice buildup on the Great Lakes are frequently cited as prerequisites to fine 'white-winged' gull watching. Gull enthusiasts couldn't have asked for 'better' weather but the gulls failed to recognize their cue, a dozen Glaucous and six Icelanders in the vicinity of the Robert Moses Power Dam on the St. Lawrence R. (*vide* TC) being the best regional tally. Other notable larids included: an imm. Lesser Black-backed Gull at Buffalo Dec. 10 - Jan. 1 (*vide* B.O.S.), two Franklin's Gulls at Buffalo Dec. 10 (DF); another Jan. 2 on the St. Lawrence R. (TC), an extraordinary location for the second New York January record; an ad. Black-legged Kittiwake at Olcott Dec. 12 (DF); and, on Jan. 9, Little Gulls at Sodus Bay (R.B.A. & G.O.S.) and Lewiston (B.O.S.). Received too late for inclusion in the fall report was a record of a Laughing Gull at El Dorado Shores Sept. 11 (TC, *vide* LC).

OWLS THROUGH CORVIDS — Vermont Screech Owl reports hit a new high, with birds at Burlington (BG *et al.*), Grand Isle and Benson (*vide* AG). In w. New York, where the Screech Owl is the most abundant (though certainly not the most frequently reported) raptor, 53 were recorded on a single CBC, 25 of them by a single pair of observers. Snowy Owl reports were few and far between, less than ten being noted. Two lone Long-eared Owl reports undoubtedly reflect the inaccessibility of winter roost habitat rather than owl scarcity. Weather hampered a program to erect artificial nests for this species in pine plantations on the L. Ontario plains; however, over 25 structures have

been placed in known Long-eared winter roosts. Most observers found Short-eared Owls in short supply, perhaps because the birds had all converged along Nations Road in Avon where an immense congregation of ± 52 birds must have presented an awe-inspiring sight. Reports of seven wintering Saw-whet Owls, including five from Vermont, point up the deplorable dearth of information on the residential status of the region's smallest owl. Whether the breeding population remains with us year 'round is just one of a host of questions.

Why Nations Road should be so attractive to both owls and Red-headed Woodpeckers is a bit obscure, but eight of the latter were present there Jan. 3 (J & AF). Red-heads frequently go unrecorded during this season; however, this year six other localities also yielded birds. A single σ Black-backed in Bear Swamp, in Wolcott, Vt., Feb. 7 (LNM), and a Northern on the Island Pond CBC were the only Three-toed Woodpeckers reported. The number of Red-bellied Woodpecker reports was down slightly although the species continued its increase in the Ithaca area (*vide* JG). Just received is a record of a W. Kingbird at Ghent, N.Y., Oct. 4-9 (*vide* GS). An E. Phoebe on the Ferrisburg CBC was only the third Vermont winter record. Another was in Ithaca Dec. 19 (*vide* WB). In addition to the Island Pond CBC, where they are regular, Gray Jays appeared at Norwich and Bethel, Vt. Common Ravens were sighted on over one-half of Vermont's CBCs, a phenomenal increase for a species first tallied on a Vermont count only ten years ago. The largest concentration noted this winter, 26, at the Londonderry dump Dec. 21 (AG, DPK), set a local high count.

CHICKADEES THROUGH WARBLERS — Although Black-capped Chickadees, through their scarcity at feeders, gave evidence of having moved south in numbers, Boreals remained close to their breeding grounds this year. Red-breasted Nuthatches were present in the Green and Adirondack Mts. in unprecedented numbers. Saranac Lake observers tallied 311 on their CBC. In areas lacking good cone crops the species was difficult to find and even in concentration areas, feeder-watchers noted no appreciable increase, a fact which clearly demonstrates the Red-breasted's reliance on natural food supplies. A small marsh near Bellows Falls yielded Vermont's second wintering Long-billed Marsh Wren Dec. 20. Although several contributors expressed concern that our southern colonists (i.e., Carolina Wren, Mockingbird, Cardinal) may have been dealt a serious setback by the weather, preliminary indications are that all three survived in surprising numbers. The latter two species are now well established in Québec, although still absent in some of our mountainous areas.

Six or possibly seven species of thrushes were reported, an astonishing total for the most severe winter in memory. Presumably owing to an excellent berry crop, Hermit Thrushes were found in exceptional numbers, and reported from over 24 locations. Vermont's first wintering Veery was closely observed by two sharp-eyed observers in Woodstock Dec. 3 (MH, SL). This is the region's second adequately documented winter report. A σ Varied Thrush frequented a St. Johnsville, N.Y. feeder Jan. 7-16 (DA). This Pacific northwest species has a history of 30+ winter appearances in New York, nearly all of them at feeders. Just received is a report of a Wheatear at Ravena, N.Y., Sept. 22 (RG, AVZ, *vide* GS), two days prior to this fall's previously recorded Cayuga County bird. A possible Mountain Bluebird in Newark Jan. 15 (*vide* WB) would be New York's second, if correct. In view of the occurrence of numerous other western strays, the report of only one small flock of Bohemian Waxwings, on the 1000 Island CBC, is surprising.

Northern Shrikes staged a strong invasion with over a hundred reports, nearly 70% of them from the Rochester area. Although the weather certainly seemed ill-suited for wood warblers, five species were recorded including: 14 "Myrtles",

Ferrisburg CBC (at least one is thought to have overwintered successfully — AP); single "Myrtles", Essex County, N.Y., Jan. 3 (*vide* H.P.A.S.) and Putney, Vt., Jan. 27 (HP, *vide* LM), an Orange-crowned Warbler closely observed in a pine plantation Jan. 8 at Mendon Ponds along with 25-30 "Myrtles" (CP, RC), both previous upstate New York winter records were associated with feeders; a very late Nashville Warbler, Dec. 15 outside an Elmira kitchen window (WH); two late December Palm Warblers, w. New York; and a Com. Yellowthroat which dined at a Brighton, N.Y. feeder in early December (J & ND, *vide* G O S).

ICTERIDS AND FRINGILLIDS — Western blackbirds and sparrows were unusually well represented in the region this winter. A pair of **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** photographed at a Chili feeder (GL) provided the fourth regional winter record, while a **Brewer's Blackbird** was reported at a Clifton Springs feeder through mid-January (JW). The latter is still very rare in the region although it has been recorded with increasing frequency in the East in recent years. Rusty Blackbirds attempted to overwinter at numerous locations in both states although only a few in extreme w. New York are known to have been successful. A "Baltimore" Oriole visited a Livonia, N.Y. feeder Dec. 21-24 (HM, *vide* G.O.S.) before disappearing, while a Rose-breasted Grosbeak attended one in Brighton Dec. 5-12 (J & ND, *vide* G.O.S.). A σ Black-headed Grosbeak reportedly [no details] appeared at a South Barre, Vt. feeder Feb. 1 (JNP, *vide* MM). If correct this would constitute the second sight record for the state. The Cuba L. Dickcissel reported this fall continued through most of the winter (Asc).

Purple Finches were the only finch to invade the region this winter. They were particularly abundant in the vicinity of L. Champlain, 1000+ tallied on the Saranac L. CBC and 800+ banded in Elizabethtown (H.P.A.S.). With the exception of a flock of about 200 at the Underhill dump Feb. 1 (PL), Pine Siskins deserted Vermont where they abounded during the fall. American Goldfinches were very scarce regionally. Crossbills were even more scarce, with only a handful of sightings, all in either Vermont or the Adirondacks. Two very late Savannah Sparrows were reported; Dec. 5 at Pt. Peninsular (TC) and Jan. 1 in Brattleboro, constituting the second winter record for Vermont, the first being recorded in 1963. A feeder in Winhall surrounded by boreal forest seems an unlikely site for Vermont's first winter **Henslow's Sparrow** but one appeared there Dec. 7 (WN). The bird, obviously in weakened condition, probably succumbed shortly thereafter.

Although Chipping Sparrows are among the least likely of our regionally breeding sparrows to overwinter, a trio at a Saranac L. feeder throughout the period (*vide* H.P.A.S.) was at just one of three locations reporting them this winter. Western fringillids vacationing in New York this winter included two "Oregon" Juncos, a **Lark Sparrow** Dec. 3-12 at a Clifton Springs feeder (JW), and an imm. **Harris' Sparrow** at a Camillus feeder Feb. 28 (m.ob., *vide* JG). Despite huge snow drifts which made viewing difficult, excellent numbers of Snow Buntings were reported. Central New York had the largest flocks (2-5000 birds) but even mountainous areas of Vermont yielded numerous sightings. Only moderate numbers of Lapland Longspurs (up to 75) were found accompanying the buntings, although 20+ near Addison (WS, *vide* AP) was one of the highest tallies ever reported from Vermont.

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APPALACHIAN REGION

/George A. Hall

We had winter. Oh, yes we had winter. After several very mild winters the 1976-77 season produced a long, bitterly cold winter. Most stations reported the coldest winter since the start of record-keeping by the Weather Bureau. Places in the north



experienced six consecutive weeks of sub-freezing temperatures during which time the ground was heavily snow-covered and almost all bodies of water including the Ohio and Susquehanna rivers were solidly frozen. To the south temperatures were also subnormal, but not for so long, and there was little snow. At the Pittsburgh Weather Station the three months showed an accumulated total of 757 day-degrees deficiency in temperature. Precipitation was generally deficient also. At Edinboro, Pa., there was an official total snowfall of 146 inches. The cold weather started in the autumn, and while December was slightly colder than normal, January was very cold. Temperatures began to moderate in February which was mild in the south and by the end of the period even the north had thawed out.

EFFECT OF THE WEATHER ON THE BIRDLIFE — The effects of this rigorous weather may well be evident in the birdlife for a long time, and indeed all of them may not be evident this spring. Despite the cold of November and early December, many places had very successful Christmas Bird Counts. Both Clarksville, Pa., and Charleston, W.Va. (NG) reported many species at record numbers but at Pittsburgh the total count of individuals was down from 23,000 in 1975 to 15,000 (PH). Once the ground became snow covered the situation changed drastically. As in no recent winter, birds tended to be concentrated at feeding stations. In part, this observation may have been made because bad road conditions prevented bird trips farther afield. Many observers felt that the number of

birds present at their feeders was lower than in previous years. This was partly but not entirely because more people were feeding birds. As winter went on populations did decrease, but whether from emigration or mortality is difficult to assess. There were, however, many reports of dead birds found and the disappearance of such non-migratory birds as the Carolina Wren must be largely due to mortality.

Raptors had a hard time feeding in the fields and forests and there were many reports of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks feeding on the congregations of birds at feeders. There was also some mortality of these raptors from striking windows during their attacks. In some cases it was evident that the dwindling numbers of small birds at feeders was directly related to predation. One of the hardest-hit species was the Screech Owl. At Pittsburgh there were many reports of Screech Owls going down chimneys (after Starlings?) and at Carnegie Museum of Natural History a number of dead owls were brought in. Some may have been road-kills but all were emaciated (KP). There was even a report of a Screech Owl attacking Guinea Hens. At Knoxville a dead owl was found frozen to an iron gate (JBO). The Eastern Bluebird suffered some mortality and numbers declined also from emigration. The full effect on this species will not be evident until the nesting population is measured. The hardest hit of all was the Carolina Wren. Normally there is a rather tenuous line across southwestern Pennsylvania, south of Pittsburgh north of which the Carolina Wren populations are periodically eliminated in a cold winter and south of which they survive every year. As a result of the past few mild winters there were large populations north of this line. This year populations were more than decimated well south of this line. At Morgantown I have heard no Carolina Wrens since early January. At Charleston a record total of 183 was listed on the Christmas Bird Count but by late February one observer could find none (NG). Even as far south as Knoxville the populations declined drastically (JBO). At Presque Isle, Pa., there are normally from 100-400 Yellow-rumped Warblers present on the peninsula during the winter. This year the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) December 18 listed 106, but that number had dropped to 20 by mid-January and none could be found by the end of January (DSn). Other species that were adversely affected were Eastern Meadowlarks and Belted Kingfishers.

Despite the cold winter there was essentially no influx of "northern" species this year, and by the end of February the early migrants were appearing approximately on time.

LOONS, GREBES, CORMORANTS — Red-throated Loons were seen at Presque Isle, Pa., Dec. 11 & 12 (DSn, JGS, SS), but Com. Loons continued to be scarce. One of the more interesting features of the winter was the appearance of Red-necked Grebes. There were three reports from c. Pennsylvania: Mackeyville Feb 6 (JV), State College Feb. 19 (MW) and one frozen into a pond at Mifflinburg Feb. 19 (PS). At Erie Pa., they were present Feb 12-28, with as many as six seen at once (DSn). There were a number of reports (Pittsburgh — PH, Ligonier, Pa. — RCL, and Lewisburg, W.Va. — COH) of Horned Grebes stranded by forced landings far from water. Double-crested Cormorants were reported from the Ohio R. near E. Liverpool, O. (NL) and Watauga L., Tenn. (ESc, GS).

HERONS AND WATERFOWL — Great Blue Herons were reported throughout the region in December in unprecedented numbers. At Charleston 11, a new record, were listed on the CBC. Most of these probably departed with the advent of the cold weather, but there was a report of three found dead at Harrisonburg, Va. (MP). Black-crowned Night Herons were found at Knoxville Jan. 2 (JT), McKees Rocks, Pa., Feb. 8 (DWO), and downtown Waynesboro, Va. in late February (RS).

In December before the final freeze-up there had been good numbers of waterfowl in the region and most CBCs showed rep

representative lists, but most of these birds later departed. However, in a few places where patches of open water remained there were some fine concentrations, of both numbers and species. Of special interest were the small flocks of Canada Geese wintering at Chester, W.Va. (NL) and Marietta, O. (JS). The Linesville, Pa., CBC reported 9000 Canadas at Pymatuning L. Refuge (RFL) Geese were seen flying S at Leeper, Pa., Jan. 19 (LC), and by the end of February northbound flocks were widely reported. Snow Geese were reported from Pymatuning L., Pa., Jan. 18 (RFL) and Marlinton, W.Va., Jan. 19 (NG). A few Whistling Swans were present in the region in late December and migrants were moving N at Pymatuning Feb. 27 (RFL). A Mute Swan was seen near Irvine, Pa., Dec. 3-6 (WH). All three species of scoter were reported from Presque Isle and Erie, Pa. (DSn) and White-winged Scoters were seen at Marietta, O., Feb. 2-23 (JS), at Carvins Cove Res., Va., Jan. 29 (JP) and one was found dead at Wheeling, W.Va., Feb. 16 (GP). The duck of the season was an ad ♂ **King Eider** at Erie Feb. 2 (DSn, SS). In late February there was an unusually heavy flight of Com. Mergansers throughout the region, with reports from as far s. as Boone L., Tenn., where they are uncommon (DL).

RAPTORS — Both species of vulture (perhaps 4:1 Blacks) wintered near Lewisburg, W.Va. (COH), but a Turkey Vulture roost in Shenandoah N.P. was abandoned this year (DC). Reports of Goshawks came from Erie County, Pa. (DSn), Clarks-ville, Pa. (RB), six reports from the Pittsburgh region (PH), Leeper, Pa. (LC), Irvine, Pa. (RR), Harrisonburg, Va. (found dead – KF), and Boone L., Tenn. (PR). Red-tailed Hawks were normally numerous at most places and did not seem to suffer from the weather. The Am. Kestrel appeared to decline somewhat but emigration may have been responsible. Rough-legged Hawks were more common in the n. than they had been in recent years and were reported as far s. as Botetourt County, Va. (BO) and Lunville, N.C. (JW). Bald Eagles were reported from Presque Isle, Pa. (DSn), Pymatuning, Pa., the nesting site at Conneaut Marsh, Pa. (RFL), Selingrove, Pa. (SSt), Seneca L., O. (JS), Berkeley County, W.Va. (CM), Carvers Cove Res., Va. (BK), and one was found dead in Garrett County, Md. (FP). A Golden Eagle was seen at State College, Pa., Dec. 26 (MW) and one was shot at Renovo, Pa., in early February (PS).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS AND SHOREBIRDS — At New-comerstown, O., dead Bobwhite were found (ES), but the Ruffed Grouse, which had been in low numbers in much of the region apparently made it through the winter without excessive mortality. All those reporters who mentioned Turkeys felt that this species had suffered little loss.

As was to be expected there were few wintering Killdeer in the region but once the snow melted in late February they were present in normal numbers at the normal times. Common Snipe wintered at Toccoa, Ga., with a high count of 15 (RSt) and were found at Butler, Pa. (CB) the first Pittsburgh-record on the CBC (PH) and were found on the Lewisburg, W.Va. CBC (COH). American Woodcock arrived in late February in normal numbers. A **Purple Sandpiper** was at Presque Isle, Pa., Dec. 6 (SS).

GULLS, DOVES AND PARROTS — Bonaparte's Gulls were found at Dalton, Ga., Dec. 3 (HD), only the third record for that region. As usual the Erie County, Pa., location reported the fancier gulls; Great Black-backed: up to 99 present all season (DSn), Glaucous: six sightings with as many as three birds (DSn), and Iceland: two records, Dec. 18 (DSn) and Jan. 18 (SS). A Glaucous Gull was also reported from Selingrove, Pa., Feb. 15 (SSt).

The Charleston CBC listed 183 Mourning Doves (NG), a record high, and other stations also reported good numbers of doves early in the season. This species was known to have suffered some predation loss at feeders. A **Budgerigar** which had

been living in the wild at Waynesboro, Va., since the autumn of 1975 was seen as late as Jan. 15, but not after that (RS).

OWLS AND WOODPECKERS — Besides the mortality of Screech Owls noted above there were several reports of road-killed Barn and Barred Owls. These too were probably weakened by starvation and may have been more desperate in their attempts to feed than usual. Snowy Owls are seldom seen south of n. Ohio and n. Pennsylvania but this year there were reports from Bald Eagle Mt., Pa., Jan. 16 (MW), Westmoreland County, Pa., Feb. 5 (PH), and Ronceverte, W.Va., Feb. 5 (*vide* COH). Saw-whet Owls were reported on the Linesville, Pa. CBC (RFL) and at Burning Spring, W.Va., Feb. 9 (DW).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were more abundant than normal in e. Kentucky (PA) and a number of single sightings came from various places. The small colony of Red-bellied Woodpeckers at Warren, Pa., well n. of the usual range apparently survived the winter (WH). The Hairy Woodpecker continues to decline and perhaps should rate inclusion on the "Blue List". At Pittsburgh the number of Hairies and Downies recorded on the CBC was the lowest in seven years (PH).

SWALLOWS AND CORVIDS — Purple Martins arrived at Knoxville Feb. 25, rather early (JBO), but were unreported elsewhere. We have been noting the modest range expansion and increased numbers of Com. Ravens n. of the stronghold in the West Virginia mountains and indicative of this were the 12 listed on the Garrett Co., Md. CBC (FP). Blue Jays were generally in good numbers, e.g., 276 on the Lock Haven, Pa. CBC (PS) but were considered to be in low numbers at Pittsburgh (PH) and at Powdermill Nature Reserve, Pa. (RCL). A Black-billed Magpie was reported twice near Roanoke, Va., Dec. 16 & 18 and has been present there for several years (BK). Are these birds related to the somewhat nebulous reports that have come in recent years from n. West Virginia and w. Maryland?

CHICKADEES AND NUTHATCHES — There had been no great fall flight of Black-capped Chickadees this year and so wintering numbers were not unusually large. However the Black-capped continues to encroach on the n. limit of the range of the Carolina Chickadee, e.g., only Black-capped came to my feeder at Morgantown this winter where a few years ago only Carolinas occurred, and at E. Liverpool, O., Black-capped out-numbered Carolinas 2:1 (NL) a relatively new situation. White-breasted Nuthatches have made a modest recovery from their low numbers of the past few years. Red-breasted Nuthatches were rather scarce at most places but 46 on the Charleston CBC was a record high (NG). Brown-headed Nuthatches have been found at a new location (the fourth) near Asheville, N.C. (RRu) and 12 were listed on the Dalton, Ga. CBC (AH).

WRENS, MIMIDS AND THRUSHES — Winter Wrens were somewhat more common to the s. than is usual, e.g., Toccoa, Ga. (RSt), and a House Wren on the Roanoke, Va. CBC, Dec. 18 was most unusual (GSt & CMa). Mockingbirds generally survived the winter in good shape in the more northern parts of their range, and they were reported from Warren, Pa. (BH) and Garrett County, Md. (FP), the former n. of the usual limit and the latter at a higher elevation than usual. More than the usual number of Brown Thrashers were reported in December and one, at least, at Keyser, W.Va. made it through the winter (HS). There were flocks of robins throughout the southern part of the region, even at high elevations. This year these flocks, some quite large, which occur somewhere every year, were more evident than usual as they congregated in places where there was bare ground. A Wood Thrush at Radford, Va., Dec. 17-25 was most unusual (JM). Hermit Thrushes were more common than usual this winter.

KINGLETS, WAXWINGS AND SHRIKES — Golden-crowned Kinglets were unusually abundant during the season in the north with a record 70 on the Charleston CBC (NG) and 120

(third highest) on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH). On the other hand they were in subnormal numbers at Knoxville (JBO). There were more Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the region than is usual for winter. There did not seem to be any great concentrations of Cedar Waxwings such as have occurred in some winters in the past at many places. There were a few sizable numbers, e.g., 58 on the Clarksville, Pa. CBC (RB), but most places reported very few or none. Northern Shrikes were reported from Erie County, Pa.; eight sightings before Jan. 20 (DSn), Irvine, Pa., Jan. 1 (RR), and on the Pendleton County, W.Va. CBC (GP).

PIPITS, VIREOS AND WARBLERS — The only report of Water Pipit came from Waynesboro, Va., Feb. 23 (RS). At least four Solitary Vireos were found near Roanoke, Va., in early December, and one bird was seen there Feb. 12. This species wintered there in the winter of 1975-76 also (BK).

In December Yellow-rumped Warblers were widespread in the region but were not particularly numerous. Numbers dwindled as the winter progressed. A few Pine Warblers wintered near Toccoa, Ga. (RSt) and a Palm Warbler was found at Avis, Pa., Dec. 25 (JV). More unusual were Com. Yellowthroat, at Knoxville, Feb. 21 (KD) and Ovenbird, at Watauga L., Tenn., Dec. 15 (LH).

ICTERIDS AND TANAGERS — At Charleston the suburban feeders were inundated with Com. Grackles during January (GH). The heavy snow cover forced the birds from some large rural roosts to abandon feeding in the fields and seek food in town. There was mortality of E. Meadowlarks noted in some places, and in early March the populations seemed low. Was there fairly heavy mortality farther south? This species would be particularly vulnerable to long periods of snow-ice covered fields. By the end of February Com. Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds had arrived at most places on time and in near normal numbers. Brewer's Blackbirds were reported from Edinboro, Pa., Dec. 5 (DSn) and near the Tri-Cities Airport, Bristol-Kingsport, Tenn., Jan. 8-28 (GE). The Summer Tanager reported from State College, Pa. in late fall was present to at least Dec. 13 (MW).

FRINGILLIDS — Rose-breasted Grosbeaks (both females) were found at Washington, Pa., Dec. 5 and thereafter (RMH) and at Fairview, N.C., Dec. 18 (SH). Dickcissels were reported from Staunton, Va., (YL) and near Marietta, O., Feb. 13 (PM).

There was essentially no invasion this year of the "northern finches". Even the now usual Evening Grosbeak was essentially missing from the area until late January. A few places managed to list some small numbers on the CBCs but generally the species was absent. In late January and early February small flocks began to appear at most places and by the end of the period they were widespread in the north and present at a few places in the south, but the numbers were much lower than customary. Purple Finches were quite spotty in distribution with some places reporting many fewer than normal. On the other hand the House Finch continues to boom where it has been known for several years. At Inwood, W.Va. 96 had been banded before late January (CM). At Morgantown they were first noted singing on the day in mid-January when the lowest temperatures were registered (GAH). Eighty-three were listed on the Pendleton County, W.Va., CBC (GP). They continue to be found in new locations: Dalton, Ga., Jan. 25 (first local record, fourth Georgia record); Johnson City, Tenn., Jan. 14 (first local record) and Elizabethton, Tenn., Feb. 19 (GE). There were three reports of Com. Redpolls: Allegheny County, Pa., Jan. 1 (CB), Linesville, Pa., Jan. 2 (BL), and Asheville, N.C., Dec. 17 (TE). There were only a few scattered reports of Pine Siskins, all in very small numbers, but Am. Goldfinches were abundant throughout the northern part of the region. Many people have started to put out thistle seed at feeders and this has served to attract large numbers of goldfinches. The only reports of Red Crossbills came

from the Tennessee Mts., where they are permanent residents and from Botetourt County, Va. (BK).

Tree Sparrows were common in most places and were found as far s. as Knoxville, Elizabethton (third local record), and Sullivan County, Tenn. (JBo, GE, TF), and Dalton, Ga. (HW photographed). The species is only on the hypothetical list for Georgia. Song Sparrows were thought to be three times as numerous as normal in winter at Lewisburg, W.Va. (COH) and White-throated Sparrows remained abundant throughout the north. Snow Buntings were normally abundant in the n. and were found as far s. as Ligonier, Pa. (RCL) and Charleston W.Va. (AS). The only reports of Lapland Longspurs came from near Lock Haven, Pa. where there were two different sightings Jan. 2 & 9 (PS).

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WESTERN GREAT LAKES

/Robert B. Janssen

If you are like I am and read *American Birds* from cover to cover, you will no doubt be tired of hearing about the terrible winter weather when you reach this region. In spite of this, I must repeat — the winter of 1976-1977 was the worst on record.



All across the region, December and January were extremely cold. The cold started in early December, especially in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A record low of -13°F was recorded in

Minneapolis on December 2. As the season progressed, one cold spell followed another, and the cold became more intense. From mid-January, continuing to the end of the month, low temperature records were set across the region. Temperatures were in the -30° to -50° range, especially in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. With these low temperatures, high winds were experienced. In Minneapolis on January 27, shortly after sunset, the temperature was -17° with a 40 mile-per-hour wind. This equalled a -71° wind chill reading. At the same time, in the northern part of the state, wind chill factors were in the -80° to -90° range!

In early February, the cold began to abate, and by February 10 it started to warm across the whole region. This welcome warming trend lasted until the end of the period.

After experiencing the worst drought in history during the previous summer and fall, normal to above normal (which isn't much in the winter) precipitation fell in Minnesota. Most of Wisconsin experienced below normal moisture. Of course, our precipitation during this period is snow, and Michigan was deluged. In some areas, a season's total of over 150 inches was recorded. As a final note on the weather, to show the contrast from beginning to end of the period, on February 21 the temperature was 51° in Minneapolis for the warmest temperature in three months. Two days later, over one-half inch of rain fell, for the wettest day since last August. In Madison, Wisconsin, it was the wettest day since May 15, 1976!

What effect these weather conditions had on birds will probably never be known. However, the majority of observers reported it as one of the poorest seasons on record. There were more reports of "no birds", "nothing interesting", "where are the birds?" and "most birds disappeared after the intense cold" than this writer has ever received. By late January, a number of unusual wintering species (Chipping Sparrow, Carolina Wren, Townsend's Solitaire, for example) had disappeared, probably as a result of the cold. It was not a year for winter finches, as most observers reported an almost total lack of these species. This made for a very drab winter for feeder watchers.

In spite of all the negative aspects of the season, when the total list was put together, it wasn't too bad. A number of very unusual species were able to over-winter. It was generally a good year for Snowy Owls in Minnesota and Wisconsin and one of the best years for Northern Shrikes in the same two states.

The highlights of the season were most certainly, for Minnesota, the Ivory Gull, the southward movement of Gray Jays, excellent numbers of Northern Shrikes, the first wintering Lark Bunting, and, on the negative side, the lack of winter finches. In Wisconsin a first wintering Pectoral Sandpiper, the surprising numbers of Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers and Northern Shrikes, and again, a finchless winter. Michigan reported two King Eiders, encouraging numbers of Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, eight Virginia Rails, a Townsend's Solitaire and a first winter Orange-crowned Warbler.

An interesting environmental study is being conducted in northeastern Minnesota (St. Louis and Lake Counties) on a 500 square mile tract where future copper-nickel mining is being proposed. This study includes bird surveys, a breeding census in summer and this winter, a complete survey of the winter birds. These surveys have done a great deal to increase our knowledge of birds in the area and hopefully will be of value in reducing the negative effects of mining activities on bird life.

States in which the county names appearing in this report are located **Michigan** — Benzie, Macomb, Monroe, Muskegon, Oakland, Ottawa, Wayne; **Minnesota** — Aitkin, Anoka, Beltrami, Cook, Crow Wing, Houston, Lac Qui Parle, Lake, Lyon, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Roseau, St. Louis, Wabasha, Wilkin, Winona; **Wisconsin** — Barron, Bayfield, Chippewa, Door, Grant, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Richland, Sawyer, Walworth

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — A Com. Loon lingered on L. Superior near Duluth until Dec. 19 and one was on the Detroit R., Wayne Co., Jan. 20-22, only the second January record for the area. Two Red-throated Loons were found on the Milwaukee CBC Dec. 18. The only Red-necked Grebe records came from Muskegon Dec. 24, Wayne Feb. 19, and Ottawa Feb. 27, Cos. Horned Grebes were reported from three stations along the Detroit R. and upper L. Erie, Oakland Co., through late February. One was also seen Jan. 22 in Ottawa County. A White Pelican attempted to winter at Big Stone N.W.R., Minn (hereafter, B.S.R.), but was found dead Dec. 11. Up to 160 Great Blue Herons were counted in Monroe County Dec. 18 and 30 were still present at the end of January. A Black-crowned Night Heron stayed for several days in mid-January in Ottawa County and 18-22 were reported at various times during the period at the mouth of the Detroit R., Wayne Co.

WATERFOWL — Mute Swans were recorded in Milwaukee and Bayfield Cos., and several areas in Michigan. Whistling Swans were present at B.S.R., Dec. 12-26 and one spent the winter at the power plant in Brainerd, Crow Wing Co. Single birds successfully wintered in Green Bay and LaCrosse, Wisc. The peak population of Canada Geese at Silver L., Rochester, Minn. was 20,000 Dec. 18, this number was down to 10,000 Feb. 9. Wisconsin reported fewer wintering ducks. However, in southern regions of all three states, small numbers of Gadwall, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Am. Wigeon, Wood Duck, Redhead and Canvasback were found where open water persisted. Most observers reported a scarcity of Oldsquaws; few were reported on the Great Lakes and numbers were exceptionally low. One bird was seen far out of range Jan. 3., on the Mississippi R., in St. Paul. Two Harlequin Ducks were seen on L. Superior near Duluth Dec. 6, and another was seen near Milwaukee Jan. 25. Two **King Eiders** were carefully identified at the mouth of a stream, Macomb County Dec. 18 (BP). White-winged and Black Scoters were recorded in small numbers near Milwaukee and in Benzie County, during early December. The White-winged Scoter was reported as scarce in Monroe County. Up to 250 Ruddy Ducks were seen at Grosse Ile, Mich. during February.

RAPTORS — A Turkey Vulture was in Macomb County Dec. 12, only the third winter record for the species. Goshawks were scarce across the whole region with only three reports from Minnesota, six on Wisconsin CBCs, three in Benzie County and four other scattered reports from Michigan. Encouraging were the numerous reports of Red-tailed Hawks. Red-shouldered Hawks were also reported in good numbers in Michigan; they were recorded on nine Wisconsin CBCs and there was a definite increase in sightings toward the end of the period in Minnesota. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were down as compared with other winters all across the region with only scattered individuals reported.

Golden Eagles were reported from five localities in Minnesota with up to three at Whitewater S.P., Winona Co. One was reported at Crex Meadow N.W.R., Wisc. Bald Eagles were recorded on 21 Wisconsin CBCs with high counts of 25, 50 and 71. This species was reported from ten localities in Minnesota with a high count of 15 in Wabasha County. Marsh Hawk numbers were encouraging with ten Michigan birds and records from seven Wisconsin CBCs. The species was absent from Minnesota until late February when a few early migrants began to appear. A Merlin was present in Benzie County Feb. 1. Excellent numbers of Am. Kestrels were seen in Minnesota and Michigan with 212 on five Michigan CBCs.

GROUSE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — After going unreported for a number of months, Spruce Grouse finally put in an appearance in Minnesota, with reports from four counties

with up to five birds in Roseau and Lake Cos. Ruffed Grouse were reported in good numbers across their range in Minnesota. Up to 25 Greater Prairie Chickens were seen frequently throughout the period on the Rothsay Wildlife Area, Wilkin Co. Several wintering Bobwhite coveys were located in Houston County. It was thought prior to these observations that the species had all but disappeared from the state. Ring-necked Pheasant numbers continued to decline in Minnesota, and the extreme cold probably helped to reduce the population even further. A single Chukar was seen Jan. 23 at Ely, St. Louis Co. Can this be the last remaining bird from the introductions that took place in the '30s and '40s? In contrast to the pheasant, the Gray Partridge is thriving across its range in Minnesota. The introduced Turkey is also expanding and increasing in Winona and Houston Cos. Eight Virginia Rails were recorded on the Oakland Co. CBC. Killdeers were recorded on six Wisconsin CBCs but none were found in Minnesota or Michigan. Common Snipe were on 14 Wisconsin CBCs, seven in Minnesota and in at least two areas in Michigan. Most unusual was a Pectoral Sandpiper in company with Com. Snipe and Killdeers at LaCrosse, Wisc., Dec. 18 (FL).

GULLS — Up to five Glaucous Gulls were at Grand Marais, Cook Co., Dec. 19. This species was recorded on three Wisconsin CBCs, one in Racine county, Feb. 13, and two in Milwaukee in late February. Five immatures and two adults were on the lower Detroit R. and L. Erie throughout the period. The only Iceland Gulls were in Wisconsin, one in Door County during December (RL), one in Milwaukee harbor Dec. 27 (JF) and another there Feb. 25 (EE). About 15 Great Black-backed Gulls spent the winter on L. Erie, Monroe Co., and three on L. St. Clair, Macomb Co. Herring Gulls were at their lowest numbers ever along the North Shore of L. Superior, early January - mid-February (JCG). A few Bonaparte's Gulls remained in Milwaukee and Kenosha during December. The best bird of the season for Minnesota was an **Ivory Gull** that appeared in Grand Marais Dec. 1 at the beginning of the herring fishing season and remained until Dec. 21 (DGW). This provided the sixth state record and the first documented by photograph.

OWLS — The only Barn Owl record came from the Oakland Co. CBC. Snowy Owls did not invade the region in as large numbers as some expected, but they were present in good numbers across the whole region. Minnesota recorded individuals from Duluth to the s.w. corner of the state. They were recorded on ten Wisconsin CBCs and were found throughout January and February in 12 counties. Michigan reported very low numbers of Snowy Owls. No Hawk Owls were reported in the region. Individual Great Gray Owls were reported in Aitkin and Roseau Cos. Long-eared Owls were on six Wisconsin CBCs, three Minnesota localities and in two Michigan counties. Short-eared Owls were more common than usual, with 16-28 in Macomb County and up to 16 during January and February in four Wisconsin counties. In five Minnesota counties, the species was recorded with a high of seven Jan. 1 in Wilkin County. During February there were at least three Boreal Owls in Minnesota. One was seen in Silver Bay, Lake Co., another was found dead in Duluth and another was found dead along the Sawbill Trail, Cook Co. Saw-whet Owls were scarce, with only two reports from Wisconsin and one from Crow Wing County.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH SHRIKES — Pileated Woodpeckers seemed much more common in Minnesota; many observers felt that this was owing to increased dead trees resulting from Dutch Elm disease ravages. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to increase in Michigan, with a total of 64 observations during the period. Red-headed Woodpeckers were unusually common across southern parts of the region, with 42 on Wisconsin CBCs, 38 observations in Michigan plus 62 on the Detroit CBC. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, unusual regionally in winter, tallied — one, in Minneapolis Dec. 1 - Jan. 19, up to

eight in Michigan and on nine Wisconsin CBCs. A surprising minimum of six Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers was recorded in Wisconsin and the species was well represented in Minnesota. Northern Three-toeds were reported from four localities in Lake and St. Louis Cos., early January - late February.

Of special interest in Minnesota was the southward and westward movement of Gray Jays into the prairie and s. woodlands of the state. For the first time ever, birds were recorded in the Twin Cities area. Observers speculated that the extreme drought and fires in the boreal forest in the fall drove the birds south. Black-billed Magpies were reported only from Minnesota and numbers were considerably smaller than in previous winters. No explanation is immediately available. Boreal Chickadees were obvious in n. Minnesota and recorded a high of 18 in Sawyer County Feb. 19. The Tufted Titmouse appears to be in trouble in the region, there were only two reports from Minnesota, none from Wisconsin, and very low numbers reported from Michigan. Carolina Wren reports came from three Michigan localities. Two were reported from Racine and one each from Grant, Milwaukee and Olmsted Cos., and another Minnesota bird stayed at the feeder of Dr. W. J. Breckenridge mid-October - late January. The latter bird was fed hamburger scraps daily and was provided with a heating pad under its feeding tray to keep its feet from freezing. These efforts seemed to no avail, as the bird disappeared Jan. 28 when the temperature reached -32° . A Long-billed Marsh Wren was in the Monroe County marshes Dec. 18.

MOCKINGBIRDS THROUGH WARBLERS — There were no Minnesota Mockingbird reports, but there were six reports from Michigan, and three from Wisconsin. Brown Thrashers were recorded on seven Wisconsin CBCs. The Varied Thrush again was well represented in Minnesota early in the season. There were single birds at two localities in Duluth in December and single birds were in three localities near St. Paul in December and January. Two birds were at a feeder in suburban Minneapolis Dec. 3. There were single birds in Chippewa and Door Cos., throughout January and February. Hermit Thrushes were recorded in early December in Michigan and one at the same time in Wisconsin. Nineteen E. Bluebirds were at four stations in Michigan and there were two reports during December from Wisconsin. The **Townsend's Solitaire**, always unusual in this region, was in Fergus Falls, Minn., mid-December - late January (GO) and suburban Minneapolis Dec. 18 (PF), one even got as far e. as Frankfort, Mich., and remained Jan. 24 - Feb. 1 (AM).

Three Ruby-crowned Kinglets, rare in winter, were in s e Michigan and single birds were in Milwaukee and Walworth Cos. Bohemian Waxwings were well represented in Wisconsin and Minnesota with a maximum count of 200 in Duluth in early December. It was a great season regionally for N. Shrikes and was our only "invasion" species this winter. Many observers reported individuals harassing birds at feeders. They were recorded on 48 Wisconsin CBCs and over 25 county localities in Minnesota. Loggerhead Shrikes were carefully identified in Lyon County Dec. 18 and Macomb County Dec. 5. The first winter record for Orange-crowned Warbler for Michigan and probably the region, was one at Grosse Ile Dec. 5 (AK). Yellow-rumped Warblers were present in unheard of numbers in Michigan with 20 at Grosse Ile Dec. 26 and 27 other birds in smaller groups. There were single birds in Wisconsin; Richland County Dec. 19, Barron County Dec. 24 and Grant County Dec. 31. One bird remained at a Duluth feeder Dec. 11-25.

BLACKBIRDS — Wisconsin reported unusual numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds and Com. Grackles and lesser numbers of Rusty Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds. On the other hand, observers in Michigan reported these species in much smaller numbers than usual, and Minnesota observers reported

scattered sightings of these species with one large concentration of 450 Red-wings at Carlos Avery Refuge, Anoka Co., throughout the period.

FRINGILLIDS — It was the general opinion of almost every observer that this was one of the poorest winter finch years on record. Feeder watchers were disappointed that there were few, if any, Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, Com. Redpolls, Pine Siskins or crossbills to brighten a drab, tough winter. The highest count of Evening Grosbeaks was 165 Dec. 18 in Crow Wing County. During January and February the few that were seen dwindled even further. Purple Finches followed about the same pattern. Pine Grosbeaks were found in fair numbers across n. Minnesota and Wisconsin but not nearly as common as usual. It was definitely not a redpoll year. Only scattered small flocks were reported across Minnesota and Wisconsin. The largest flock reported was 100+ in Otter Tail County Feb. 19. This flock contained two Hoary Redpolls. A Hoary Redpoll was seen in Barron County Dec. 26. A most interesting sighting was a **House Finch** in Madison, Wis., Feb. 19 (RK). Red Crossbills were reported on only three Wisconsin CBCs and White-wings on only two. These two species were almost entirely absent from Minnesota; however, in Benzie County both species were well represented and up in numbers from last year.

Rufous-sided Towhee was reported on four Wisconsin CBCs and 16 were counted on Michigan CBCs. Of interest was a towhee of the spotted western race that spent the entire period in a northern suburb of Minneapolis. One of the highlights of the winter in Minnesota was a **Lark Bunting** at a Winona feeder mid-November through the period. This provided a first winter record for the state, and possibly the region. The bird roosted with a flock of 250 House Sparrows and survived -30° readings in January (RJ). It seems that every winter numbers of wintering sparrows increase: a Savannah Sparrow was in Monroe County Dec. 26, two Vesper Sparrows were on the Madison CBC, Dec. 18. Tree Sparrows were less common regionally than previously, and a **Chipping Sparrow**, the first verified winter record for Minnesota, attempted to winter at a feeder n. of St. Paul, but was last seen Jan 4. Field Sparrows were on two Wisconsin CBCs and one in Ozaukee County remained until late February. This species has been reported much more frequently in winter in the past few years in Michigan. Harris' Sparrows successfully wintered in Ottawa County and were recorded (one each) on two Minnesota CBCs, from Lac Qui Parle County Dec. 1 - Feb. 3, in Minneapolis and Rochester. There were 12 White-crowned Sparrows on the Monroe County CBC. White-throated Sparrows wintered farther n. than usual in Minnesota with single birds in Cook, Beltrami, and Otter Tail Cos. Again this winter a flock of 20 White-throateds wintered in downtown Minneapolis. They were recorded on 20 Wisconsin CBCs and 45 individuals were recorded on the Monroe County CBC. Fox Sparrows were on seven Wisconsin CBCs and were recorded in five localities in Minnesota during December and January. Swamp Sparrows appeared on 14 Wisconsin CBCs and large numbers were in the L. Erie marshes, Monroe Co. One CBC in the area recorded 31 birds. Snow Buntings were in good numbers in Minnesota and many large flocks of up to 1000 birds were seen in Wisconsin. The species was scarce across most of Michigan.

CONTRIBUTORS — A total of 180 observers contributed to this report: 75 from Minnesota, 57 from Wisconsin and 48 from Michigan. Listed below are the Regional Editors, plus those individuals whose initials are used in the text: Eric Epstein, Jim Frank, Pepper Fuller, Janet C. Green, Robert Janssen (Minn.), Alice Kelley (s.e. Mich.), Randy Korotov, Fred Leshner, Roy Lukes, Alan Marble (Benzie Co., Mich.), Gary Otnes, B. Pinawski, James Ponshair (w.c. Mich.), Daryl Tessen (Wis.), Dick and Gloria Wachtler. **ROBERT B. JANSSEN, 14321 Prince Place, Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343.**

Abbreviations frequently used: ad.: adult, Am.: American, C: Celsius, Cr.: Creek, Com.: Common, Co.: County, Cos.: Counties, *et al.*: and others, E.: Eastern (bird name), Eur.: European, Eurasian, F: Fahrenheit, *vide*: reported by, F. & W.S.: Fish & Wildlife Service, Ft.: Fort, imm.: immature, I.: Island, Is.: Islands, Isles, Jct.: Junction, L.: Lake, m.ob.: many observers, Mt.: Mountain, Mts.: Mountains, N.: Northern (bird name), Par.: Parish, Pen.: Peninsula, P.P.: Provincial Park, Pt.: Point, not Port, N.W.R.: Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Ref.: Refuge, Res.: Reservoir, not Reservation, R.: River, S.P.: State Park, sp.: species, spp.: species plural, ssp.: subspecies, Twp.: Township, W.: Western (bird name), W.M.A.: Wildlife Management Area, v.o.: various observers, N,S,W,E,: direction of motion, n., s., w., e.,: direction of location, ♂: male, ♀: female, ♂: imm. or female, *: specimen, ph.: photographed, †: documented, ft: feet, mi: miles, m: meters, km: kilometers. Authors may also abbreviate often-cited locations.

MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Vernon M. Kleen

Cold and wintry definitely sums up this winter; in fact, it was the coldest winter ever recorded. Late December through mid February was so cold that much of the region never experienced above freezing temperatures at all. The average February temperature ranged as low as 26°F below normal (Cleveland) and there was continuous snow cover throughout.



Bird populations suffered, but those most affected were ground-feeding species — especially gallinaceous birds and sparrows, and those dependent on marshes and open water — herons, ducks, kingfishers, etc. Many birds were able to move farther south, but more, and many unsuccessfully, attempted to cope with the elements. Many correspondents found and reported dead and dying birds, not only along roadsides (which in many areas were the only open areas) but at or near bird feeders. Had the northern finches come south (and we hope and assume that the northern food supply was adequate) bird feeders would have been highly successful; however, as it was, only the normal winter species were encountered and without the benefit of feeders many of them would have succumbed. Such was the case for the Carolina Wren — the one species most obviously affected by this harsh season.

Iowa birders had more to cheer about than those in any other state because of Snowy Owl and Northern Shrike invasions and the addition of three or four other top-notch hot-line birds. Gulls were the best birds around the major lakes and rivers. Power plants with cooling lakes were found attractive by large concen

trations of ducks as those lakes provided the only open water in the region. However, most of the region experienced one of the dullest winters, birdwise, in many years.

Since this season included the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter CBC) most records from those counts have not been repeated; however, a few exceptional observations which may otherwise be missed by the readership, have been included.

Since all extraordinary sight records must be thoroughly documented at the time of observation, the ability of our observers and the data quality for these reports has continued to improve. We have noted great improvements in Iowa now that Nicholas Halmi is serving as sub-regional editor there. A total of 51 documentations (not counting those submitted on CBCs) was received this season: Illinois, 23; Ohio, 10; Iowa, 7; Kentucky, 7; Missouri, 3; and Indiana, 1. All documented records are denoted by an asterisk (*). Specimens are denoted by a dagger (†) Records which were not satisfactorily documented appear in the UNCORROBORATED REPORTS section.

EXOTICS — A Mute Swan wintered at Tiffin, O. (JK); one or two were present at Louisville, Ky., Feb. 12-13 (*MB, *m.ob.); and one, previously unreported, has been present near Murphysboro, Ill. for four years (*m.ob.).

GREBES AND HERONS — A "flock" of five Red-necked Grebes was observed at Wilmette, Ill., Feb. 16 (B, GR). Most Great Blue Herons disappeared; however 15 were still present at the Oregon power plant in Lucas Co., O., Jan. 19 (LV, JF); and 12 near Louisville in late December (*vide* S); a migrant had returned to Springfield, Ill. by Feb. 17 (H).

SWANS, GEESE AND DUCKS — Single Whistling Swans were reported from L. Barkley, Ky., Jan. 20 & Feb. 5 (ER) and Henderson, Ky., Jan. 18 (RDo).

S.A.

Migrant Canada Geese were still moving S in late December and early January. The s. Illinois and w. Kentucky wintering population estimate was 406,000 — an increase of over 25% from past winters. "An estimated 2000 birds died of lead poisoning recently at Union County and Horseshoe L. State Refuges (Illinois). There is no previous record of lead poisoning at either refuge. Because all the dead birds were adults, it is being assumed by the Ill. Dept. of Conservation authorities that the lead was collected over a long period of time. Severe winter conditions in s. Illinois this year subjected geese to unusual stress and lowered the birds' resistance to disease. . . . During much of the winter, geese were unable to obtain green browse because of heavy snow cover, and were fed corn by refuge personnel. Tests show that a diet solely of corn aggravates lead poisoning problems, while green browse lessens the effects of eating lead shot. Biologists suspect that the birds may have picked up the lead shot on frozen ground while searching for grit. . . . Under current proposals, lead shot would be allowed at the Union and Horseshoe L. shooting areas, but biologists are now re-assessing that decision. . . . The dead geese were buried to prevent Bald Eagles from eating them and becoming contaminated." (*Outdoor Highlights*, Ill. Dept. of Conservation).

Seventeen White-fronted Geese were noted at the Ballard Co., Ky. Conservation Area in late December (JM); two were present at Henderson, Ky., Dec. 30 (RDo) and one at Union Co. Refuge, Ill. the same day (MH); two were reported from Princeton, Ia., Jan. 22 (*vide* P) and 50 from Squaw Creek Ref., Mo. (hereafter S C R), Feb. 21 (R). A peak of 10,000 Snow Geese was reached during the height of the winter cold spell at the Ballard Co., Ky.

area (JM). A few Wood Ducks wintered successfully. An excellent number of diving ducks wintered on L. Erie near three Cleveland power plant outflows; by mid-February there was a massive concentration (M, OD). Over 2000 Redheads were present there Feb. 26 (M). Regional concentrations of Canvasbacks included: 406,000 at Hamilton, Ill. in mid-December (*vide* GA), 8500 at the Oregon, O. power plant Jan. 17 (LV, JF); 2000 at Cleveland Feb. 26 (M); 1000 at Rend L., Ill., Dec. 18 (MM) and 20 at Chicago Dec. 20 (C). Nine Greater Scaup were identified at Louisville Dec. 19 (S, JCr).

Sea ducks were very scarce in the Cleveland area; only thin numbers of Oldsquaw, White-winged Scoters and Black Scoters were noted. Over 300 Oldsquaw were resting on L. Michigan near Zion, Ill., Jan. 25 (C); one wintered at Springfield (H) and another was present near Cedar Rapids, Ia., Dec. 10 - Jan. 2 (TS). The one-day total of 3000 White-winged Scoters between Evanston and Illinois Beach S.P., Ill. was noteworthy for early February (GR); at least 600 (320 of which were at Evanston) were found on L. Michigan Jan. 24 (C); four were present at Oregon, O., Jan. 19 (LV, JF). Large numbers of Com. Mergansers appeared at Cleveland after Feb. 6 (M); the highest estimate prior to that was 4500 Feb. 6 (M).

VULTURES, HAWKS, EAGLES AND FALCONS — A Turkey Vulture, too early for a migrant, was found at Magee Marsh, O., Jan. 30 and one appeared at Ottawa N.W.R., O., Feb. 6, it may have been the same individual (LV). A few Goshawks were reported; some were trapped and banded or kept for falconry purposes. Only scattered reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks were received. Only five Cooper's Hawks were reported including the fifth winter record for Chicago (*vide* C). Single Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from Ashland, Mo., Feb. 12 (JRa) and Dundee, Ill., Feb. 14 (RM). Rough-legged Hawks were sporadic and only reported in moderate numbers and uneven distribution; in some cases, the species would appear, disappear and then reappear within a locality.

S.A.

The Feb. 5 "One Day Eagle Count" coordinated by Elton Fawks showed only 820 Bald Eagles (three adults one immature) along the Mississippi R. compared to 1012 last year and 1147 in 1972; however, the eagles were less active and had moved farther inland in search of food, making them more difficult to find on count day, last year, warm weather stimulated the birds to head N early thereby producing lower-than-expected totals, therefore, since low totals were obtained for the past two years, we cannot compare these results realistically when the counts were made on more "normal" count days. Eagles counted away from the river included 106 from the three s. Illinois refuges; 41 in Kentucky and 53 in Missouri. In addition, 19 Golden Eagles (ten in Kentucky) were reported on Count Day (m.ob.).

A Gyrfalcon was trapped, photographed and retained in s. Tazewell County, Ill. for falconry purposes (RJ). The only Peregrine Falcon documented occurred in St. Charles County, Mo., Jan. 24 (*PS). Only one, Alexander County, Ill., Dec. 29 (*MM, DKm), of the five Merlins reported was documented. Evidence indicated that Am. Kestrels were more common than usual this winter.

GALLIFORMS, CRANES AND SHOREBIRDS — Both Bobwhite and Ring-necked Pheasant populations suffered heavy losses this winter. There was a notable range expansion witnessed for the Turkey in Iowa; several birds were regularly found in the morning roosting in trees next to the highway s. of Middle Amana (*vide* N). The time lapse from the last southbound to the

first northbound flight of Sandhill Cranes over Louisville was barely two months — 45 birds Dec. 18 (*vide S*) and 12 on Feb. 25 (BP-B) The occurrence of a **Spotted Sandpiper** at Dubuque, Ia., Dec. 7 - Jan. 4 (*JR, PH), was noteworthy and the first winter record for the state. Two Lesser Yellowlegs had arrived at Springfield by Feb. 25 (H). One Least Sandpiper was present on a Mississippi R. sandbar in Alexander County, Ill., Dec. 29 (*MM, DKm).

GULLS — Larids were the notable exception to the otherwise dull season. A great influx of gulls appeared at Cleveland in late January (M, OD). At least seven Glaucous Gulls, including one adult, were observed at Calumet, Ill., Feb. 9 (C, B, GR); lesser numbers were reported there regularly in January and February (*m ob.); four were noted at Peoria, Ill., Jan. 2 (DBi); from one to eight occurred in the Cleveland area from late January to late February (JHo, M, OD, m.ob.), and one was documented for Louisville Jan. 14 & 15 (*BP-B). There were *five* Chicago area records of Iceland Gulls (*vide B*, *m.ob.) one as late as Feb. 22 at Calumet (C, GR, K); from one to three were also present in the Cleveland area late January - late February (JHo, M *et al.*).

The Cleveland concentration of gulls included up to 135 Great Black-backed Gulls Jan. 25 (CW); singles were noted at Calumet, Ill., Feb. 5-22 (*m.ob.) but the *three* observed there Feb. 9 was unprecedented for Illinois (C, m.ob.). The occurrence of **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** around Cleveland was exciting; it is possible that three different individuals were observed Jan. 20 (*JHo) - Feb. 20 (*JT, m.ob.). Thayer's Gulls were also noteworthy this winter; although it is possible that other individuals of this species were around, many birds reported as Thayer's were later proved to be something else; valid records included singles at Springfield Dec. 5 (*H); Chicago Dec. 12 (*B, GR) and Feb. 19 (*B); and along the Mississippi R., Union County, Ill., Dec. 30 (*H). Two imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes were found at St. Louis Jan. 7 & 8 (*R et al.*); one or two immatures were present at Lorain, O., Jan. 9 - early February (M, m.ob.); an adult was noted at Fulton, Ill., Feb. 19 (*BSh). An ad. Little Gull spent most of December around Cleveland (M, JHo).

DOVES, OWLS AND WOODPECKERS — Mourning Doves apparently had a good winter despite the poor weather; many were noted at feeders and in areas farther n. than usual. A Barn Owl was heard at S.C.R., Jan. 2 (E, R) and another was seen at Murphysboro, Ill., Jan. 26 (*MT). The greatest invasion of Snowy Owls in 50 years was widespread across Iowa; in response to newspaper requests, 191 birds were reported from 74 of the 99 counties (unfortunately, no mention was made on how many of the birds were reported more than once or how many were possibly incorrectly identified — i.e., some birds reported as Snowy Owls elsewhere proved to be Red-tailed Hawks facing the inexperienced observer); the invasion spilled over into w. Missouri, but was not widespread region-wide as only three birds were found in Illinois, one in Ohio and two in Kentucky. Fair numbers of Short-eared and Long-eared Owls were reported. Single Saw-whet Owls were noted at S.C.R., Dec. 23 & 29 (R); at Virginia, Ill., Dec. 24 (JCa); at Tiffin, O., Jan. 9 (JK); a couple in Iowa during January (*vide N*); Magee Marsh, O., Feb. 18 (*vide LV*) and Cleveland Feb. 22-28 (M). One of the most exciting and locally significant Chicago-area winter records was that of the Pileated Woodpecker Jan. 6 & 7 (*vide C*); the species was reported at two new Iowa locations (*vide N*) and was reported for the first time on the Tiffin, Ohio, CBC (JK). Red-headed Woodpeckers experienced a good winter in Iowa compared to the past two years.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH NUTHATCHES — Three E. Phoebes attempted wintering in Kentucky and another in s. Illinois, all were reported on CBCs. The first Iowa record of a **Gray Jay** was obtained when a bird was found regularly visiting a

Decorah feeder Oct. 30 - mid-February (BW, *m.ob., photos) There was no reported invasion of Black-capped Chickadees this year. A **Boreal Chickadee** spent all winter at a Des Moines, Ia. feeder (photos, *m.ob.). There were only a few Red-breasted Nuthatches around this winter; however, the best observation was of a **Pygmy Nuthatch** at a Des Moines, Ia. feeder (first state record) from early January through the end of the period (LE, *N, *m.ob.).

WRENS, MIMIDS AND THRUSHES — As would be expected, the harsh winter was detrimental to the Carolina Wren population; most birds did not survive and those which did, lived in very sheltered areas and had the use of quality bird feeding stations; the greatest loss apparently occurred during the late-January storms. One Short-billed Marsh Wren survived at Springfield until at least Dec. 19 (*H). Small numbers of Mockingbirds were distributed around the n. parts of the region and Brown Thrashers successfully wintered in several areas, including two birds near St. Charles, Ill., which did not come to feeders (K). American Robins were also quite common, especially during the early part of the season; some survived through the worst conditions. Four Varied Thrushes were reported: Emmet County, Ia., Nov. 28 (*BM); Brussels, Ill., Dec. 19 (*A); South Bend, Ind., Dec. 26-31 (*JB, DBu); and Savanna, Ill., Jan. 20-22 (*ML). One Hermit Thrush lingered at Cleveland until at least Dec. 23 (M). Wintering E. Bluebirds seemed to survive fairly well. The only Townsend's Solitaires reported were from the west: one at Hamburg, Ia., Dec. 17 (IG) and one at Clyde, Mo., Dec. 31 - Feb. 5 (*R et al.*).

WAXWINGS, SHRIKES AND WARBLERS — Two Bohemian Waxwings were reported from Fonda, Ia., Dec. 2 (*vide GB*); singles were found at Maryville, Mo., Dec. 18 (†E) and St. Louis Jan. 30 (*TeB). Cedar Waxwings were generally found only in small but scattered flocks around the region. There was an excellent influx of N. Shrikes; individuals reached as far s. as Maryville, Mo. (two), Jan. 31 - Feb. 5 (TIB, †E) and in Vermilion County, Ill., Feb. 21 (*Mca); 47 were reported in Iowa (again, no reference to duplication), several in n.w. Illinois, three different individuals in the Chicago area; several from n.w. Ohio and one at Tiffin, O., Dec. 24 (JK). There also seemed to be a fairly good number of Loggerhead Shrikes around, farther n. than usual

The Dec. 15 occurrence of a Nashville Warbler at Campaign, Ill. (*DF) was unusual; another was reported from Louisville, Ky., Jan. 1 & 5 (*BP-B). Amazingly, a few Myrtle Warblers survived at various locations in the n. part of the region. A N. Waterthrush was teetering along a path at the Lincoln Park Zoo (Chicago) Jan. 30 (*GN, *vide C*).

BLACKBIRDS AND FRINGILLIDS — Blackbird roosts were normal again this year; however, the lack of national publicity kept public emotion down and therefore no major problems were encountered; only one roost (at Sesser, Ill.) was treated with tergitol that I know of and it was not that effective. Fairly large roosts for Iowa were reported from Cedar Rapids and Davenport — mostly Red-winged Blackbirds; however, exact roost-sizes were not mentioned. A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** appeared at Frankfort, Ky., Feb. 6 (*RB). Evening Grosbeaks and most other northern finches were practically nonexistent in the region; the only exceptions were Purple Finches in moderate numbers regionwide, Com. Redpolls in very small flocks in late January and early February — including two Louisville locations Feb. 6-16 (JPa, MR), and Pine Siskins generally in small flocks widely scattered in the n. through mid-February.

American Goldfinches were unusually numerous and readily accepted "thistle" at feeders. The only Red Crossbills reported were five in Nodaway County, Mo., Dec. 31 (R); about 30 at L. Jacomo (Kansas City), Mo., Dec. 5-19 (JG, photos); a few in Iowa; and four at the Green River Conservation Area, Ill., Feb

21 (BSh). The wintering number of Harris' Sparrows in Iowa was reported as slightly higher than other recent years. A Lincoln's Sparrow was still present at Springfield Dec. 19 (*H). Lapland Longspurs were reported as scarce in n.w. Missouri, but ranged in the thousands in Iowa and n. Illinois; fairly large flocks occurred throughout the winter over much of Illinois and four were reported from Louisville Jan. 5 - Feb. 2 (BP-B). Snow Buntings were also abundant this winter; over 5000 were found at Arlington, O., Jan. 26 (RP) and many remained there into early February; more southern reports included one at Maryville, Mo., Dec. 5 (E *et al.*); one at Louisville Dec. 19 (CR *et al.*); and seven at Springfield during mid-January (H); the species was found all over Iowa, but mostly in groups of a few birds or small flocks during December and January.

UNCORROBORATED REPORTS — Peregrine Falcon, Niagara, Ky., Jan. 26 (RDo); Broad-winged Hawk, Clifton, Ill., Jan. 16 (*MO); Black-legged Kittiwake, Princeton, Ia., Jan. 22-23 (*vide P*); Tennessee Warbler, Louisville Jan. 2 & 5 (*BP-B); and Lark Sparrow, Davenport, Ia., Feb. 5 (*vide P*).

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CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

/Robert B. Hamilton

This winter was one of the coldest on record. Contrary to what one might have expected, boreal species were not especially abundant in the region. There was apparently a Tree Sparrow invasion into the northern part of the region. On the other hand, many species which habitually overwinter in the warmer, coastal parts of the region obviously did not survive in numbers. For



instance, in late winter it was almost impossible to find a Louisiana Heron along the Louisiana coast. Some presumably cold-hardy species, i.e., Ruby-crowned Kinglet, were very difficult to find in late winter. This phenomenon may have been more widespread than detected; most comparable data are for the Christmas Bird Count period and many populations had not been affected by then. A census at the end of the winter season

would probably have revealed more about winter populations than the traditional Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter CBC).

The specific CBCs mentioned in this report were held in the following states: Tenn.; Reelfoot Lake, Miss.; Noxubee N.W.R., Jackson County Washington County (south), Grenada, Southern Hancock County, Hattiesburg, Sardis Lake, Ark.; Arkadelphia, Lake Millwood, Pine Bluff, Tex arkana, White River N.W.R., Fort Smith, Little Rock, Lake Georgia-Pacific Jonesboro, La.; Sabine N.W.R., Pine Prairie, Atcha Salaya Basin, Baton Rouge, Natchitoches, New Orleans, Reserve, Johnson's Bayou, Venice Monroe, Lafayette, Shreveport.

GREBES THROUGH IBISES — The **Red-necked Grebe** was found for the second consecutive winter and the third Louisiana record on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC (RN & HDP). One near Fin ley's I., Morgan Co., Ala., Jan. 14 was the third local and seventh state record; two were there Jan. 16 & Feb. 2 (DCH) Horned Grebes were apparently more common than usual in the n. parts of the region. In Arkansas 192 were recorded on CBCs this year; cf. 87 in 1975 and 74 in 1974. They were unusually common at Clear L., Natchitoches Par., where 20-30 wintered (CV). Three on the Noxubee CBC was an all-time high and one at Miller's Ferry, Wilcox Co., Ala., Feb. 26 (PFC) was one of a few Alabama inland coastal plain records. Bob Newman reported them lacking at L. Pontchartrain where they are usually common. Eared Grebes were also unusually common at Clear L., where 10-15 wintered (CV). Unusual location records included three at Hattiesburg, Miss. sewage ponds Dec. 31 (LG & JI); one at Sardis L., Miss., Dec. 22 (MD); one at Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., Dec. 28 (RD) and one at Portland, Fla., Jan. 22 (SSt); one was reported on the Arkadelphia CBC (MxP). A **W Grebe**, rare in Louisiana, was reported on Holly Beach, Cameron Par., Feb. 20-21 (BCr, JWE, GaG, TSS, JRS); two others were nearby Feb. 21 (JRS).

White Pelicans were reported for the first time in winter on the Reelfoot Lake CBC. One was at L. Chicot, Chicot Co., Ark., Jan 24; there are no previous Arkansas January or February records An ad. **Blue-faced Booby** was seen at an oil rig approximately 120 km. s. of Sabine R., Dec. 4, 11 & 14 (BO) for the first winter Louisiana record. No Gannet reports were submitted. Double crested Cormorants showed no particular distribution; numbers

were high at some locations; 100 at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. (CV) and low at others; one at Noxubee N.W.R., Miss. (WCW). Anhingas were reported at several scattered localities; one on the Lake Millwood CBC, one on the Jackson County CBC, seven on the Pine Prairie CBC, and at least four wintered at Durango I., Tensas Par. (RNo).

Single Green Herons were reported on the Pine Bluff and the Atchafalaya Basin CBCs; one was reported at University L., Baton Rouge Feb. 1 (JPO). The individual Little Blue Herons found in Santa Rosa County, Fla., Jan. 21 (SSt) and Feb. 19 (SSt, BSt, AS) were the third and fourth n.w. Florida winter records. Four Reddish Egrets were reported on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC; also one reported at Alabama Pt., Baldwin Co., Ala. (PFC). Great Egrets were reported in unusual numbers around Baton Rouge (KZ *et al.*). There was a total of 15 reported on Arkansas CBCs (none last year). On the other hand, numbers were exceptionally low on the Louisiana coast during late winter. Snowy Egrets and Louisiana Herons were also especially common around Baton Rouge (KZ *et al.*), but the latter was virtually absent along the coast (RN); in fact I observed more Reddish Egrets than Louisiana Herons on the Louisiana coast during several winter trips. All four dark ibises found at Venice, Plaquemines Par., Jan. 30 were Glossies (RN, MN, SH). White Ibises were reported on the Baton Rouge CBC. The six at Eufaula N.W.R., Ala., Dec. 30 (GJ) was the first inland Alabama winter record; an immature was there Feb. 17 (BO).

WATERFOWL — Whistling Swans were reported much more commonly this winter. In Louisiana an immature was at Little Chenier, Cameron Par., Dec. 14 (AWC, *fide* JRS), three were at Esther, Vermilion Par., Dec. 17 (TH), two were near Meeker, Rapides Par., Dec. 24 (GAB), one was at Baton Rouge Jan. 14 (BCr) and two were at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. in January and February (HW, PCu, BS). The seven reported (five adults and 2 immatures) near Foley, Baldwin Co., Dec. 14-17 (PFC, LA, WT, LRT) is the third Alabama coastal record. The one at St. Joe S.P., Dec. 9 (WB) was only the fifth n.w. Florida occurrence. An immature was at Noxubee N.W.R., Dec. 16 - Jan. 22 (JAJ & JS) and one was at L. Millwood, Hempstead Co., Ark., Jan. 8 (EdH, HH, HP, MxP, CM). The cold weather pushed Canada Geese farther S than usual. At the Morganza Spillway, La., 46 were seen Jan. 18 and five on Jan. 30 (DWG). Four were near LaHayes' L., Evangeline Par., Dec. 24 (HG & JT) The 25 found on the Noxubee N.W.R. CBC were considered many but 1200 were present in early February (JAJ). At Yazoo N.W.R., Miss., 600 were present Feb. 27 (EA). In Tennessee, flocks of up to 2000 each — apparently retreating from frozen northern lakes — were seen in late January and early February (BBC). White-fronted Geese were also present in more locations than usual. On the Natchitoches CBC 28 were seen (MM & SO) and were in the area in January. A flock of 100 was present at Morganza Spillway, La., Jan. 30 to the end of period (DWG). On the Washington County (south), CBC 11 were seen. Also in Mississippi was one at Noxubee N.W.R., Dec. 19. Four were present at L. Eufaula, Ala., Feb. 15 - end of the period (BO).

The eight Fulvous Whistling Ducks at LaHayes L., Evangeline Par., Feb. 19 (HG) were apparently spring migrants. Mallards were especially abundant in the s. section of the region this winter. The 118,478 reported on the Washington County (south) CBC was ten times the total of last year. Black Ducks were also more common than usual with 63 on Sardis L., Miss., Jan. 23 (MD, BBC, WCW). The two Blue-winged Teal at University L., Baton Rouge Dec. 19 (BB & KZ) were the first local December records. Canvasback, a Blue Kist species, was reported to be about as common as usual. The largest number was 1600 on the Washington County (south) CBC. The 43 Greater Scaup at L. Millwood, Ark., Feb. 27 (MxP, HP & CM) was surprising for an inland location. Common Goldeneyes were not reported as often

as in recent years but seven were found for the first time on the Grenada CBC. The 18 at Sardis L., Miss., Jan. 23 was a large number (MD, BBC, WCW). Oldsquaws were widely scattered one female at Lonoke, Ark., Dec. 17 (EdH & HH); three "so many are rarely seen" (RN), were found at n. L. Pontchartrain Jan. 1 (R & MN, EH & SH); four were seen flying offshore near Biloxi, Miss., Jan. 30 (WCW) and 50 were seen there Mar. 7, five were seen at Old Swan L., near Decatur, Limestone Co., Ala., Feb. 26 (DCH).

A pair of White-winged Scoters was seen at Holly Beach, Cameron Par., Nov. 14 (R & MN); 12 were seen Jan. 22 at the w end of Horn I. in Mississippi waters (JMW & SAW). From 2-5 were near Decatur, Limestone Co., Ala. mid-January - Feb. 26 (DCH, HK, m.ob.) — the latest inland Alabama record. Surf Scoters were also especially common this winter: one was on Sardis L. early November - Dec. 22 (MD & DS) and 20 on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC. Thirty-four were identified Feb. 21 near Holly Beach, Cameron Par.; 66 scoter sp. were seen flying offshore (JRS). One was at St. Joe S.P., Fla., Dec. 4 (RD). Two Black Scoters were seen on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC. Three were present at Sardis L., Miss. early November - at least Dec. 22 (MD, DS). A flock of five Dec. 31 (GJ) wintered at Dauphin I., Ala. A Com. Merganser was reported Nov. 6 at L. Millwood, Ark. (CM); five were seen at L. Oktibbeha, near Starkville, Miss., Jan. 21 (WCW) and six at Sardis L., Miss., Jan. 23 (WCW). A maximum of 150 was in Alabama in late January and early February (*fide* TI).

HAWKS, CRANES — An almost unprecedented **White-tailed Kite** was reported on the Texarkana CBC (L, FS, ML & RLG). A total of four Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported on Arkansas CBCs — the same number as last year for this Blue List species. One was seen Dec. 16 at Northwestern State Univ., Natural History Area, Natchitoches, (CV); one was observed at Fontainbleau S.P., St. Tammany Par., Feb. 19 (RN, MN & SH) and one was at L. Eufaula, Ala., Feb. 26 (BO & SJ). In n.w. Florida nine were seen (SSt, RD, CHK & AS) which is more than in recent winters. Most contributors did not comment on Cooper's Hawk, another Blue Listed species. In Louisiana and Mississippi approximately the same number were observed on CBCs this year as last, but in Arkansas only two were reported *cf.* six last year; the only additional record was one at Eunice, St. Landry Par., Jan. 8 (HG). There were fewer Red-shouldered Hawks (96) reported on Louisiana CBCs this winter than in 1976 (123) but there were more reported on Arkansas and Mississippi CBCs (66 in 1976, 53 in 1975).

Two Broad-winged Hawks were reported on the New Orleans CBC and one was reported on the Reserve CBC. Single Swainson's Hawks were reported at Calhoun County, Ark., Dec. 1 (HHS & KLS) and at Willow I., Cameron Par., Dec. 19 (RN & BCr). Rough-legged Hawk was more abundant than usual with one near Mobile, Ala., Dec. 15 (BWi & JW). Tom Imhof reports the species now occurs annually in Alabama. It is seldom reported in Mississippi, so one seen at Sardis L., Jan. 15 (MD) was noteworthy. One was in Miller County, Ark., Jan. 8 (EdH, HH, HP & MxP) and one was near Harrisburg, Poinsett Co., Ark., Jan. 7 (KS). Three were reported from Louisiana: one in Baton Rouge Dec. 20, one near Cameron Jan. 16, and one at Johnson's Bayou Feb. 22 (R & MN, AF, BCr). Two Golden Eagles were found at Spring Bayou, Plantation, Madison Par., Jan. 29 (RN, MN & SH). Another Louisiana bird was found near Hayes, Cameron Par., Dec. 15 (ES & TJC). One of this unusual species was at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala., Jan. 27 - Feb. 5 (WCD, DCH & DH) and one was in Clark County, Ala. (Tiv) An immature was at L. Millwood, Nov. 19 (CM). Another immature was at Noxubee N.W.R., Dec. 18 - Jan. 29 (JAJ, JS & BC) The Bald Eagle seems to be holding its own, at least wintering regionally. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission counted

128 Bald and Golden Eagles Jan. 3-7. An immature was at Wapanocca N.W.R., Turrell, Ark., Jan. 22 (RJ) & 23 (JG). It is very uncommon there but could be expected this year in view of the freezing of the lakes to the north. In Louisiana there were many more eagle reports than usual, well over 100. Eight active nests fledged at least five young (RAY). An immature was seen at Sardis L., Jan. 12 (MD) and an immature was at Noxubee, N W R , from at least Dec. 18 - Jan. 29 (JAJ, BC & MC). In Louisiana, an immature was seen at the Mandeville waterfront Jan. 1 (RN, MN, SH & EH) and three wintered at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. (CV). At Wheeler N.W.R., two were seen regularly and possibly as many as five were present — perhaps fleeing frozen Reelfoot L. (*vide* TI).

Marsh Hawk numbers were about the same this year in Arkansas as last (115 on 1976 CBCs and 108 in 1975); in Louisiana, however, there were twice as many in 1976 (98) as in 1975 (49). Single Ospreys were reported on the Jackson and Hancock Cos., L. Millwood, and White River N.W.R. CBCs. Individuals were also seen at Garcon Pt., Santa Rosa Co., Fla., Dec. 11 (EL & SL), Deer Pt., Lake, Bay Co., Fla., Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 (SSt, BS & MGr), and at L. Eufaula, Ala., Jan. 23 (BO & SJ). Two Peregrine Falcons were reported on the Johnson's Bayou CBC and one each on the Sabine N.W.R., Hancock and Hattiesburg CBCs. Other individuals were seen Dec. 21 in Vermilion Par. (PES); January in Plaquemines Par. near Ft. Jackson (RN, MN & SH); and Feb. 5 in Lee County, Ala. (BO). Merlins were observed more frequently in n.w. Florida where at least four wintered (SSt, BS, RD, CDu & DD). This species was also reported on the Fort Smith and Venice CBCs. Sandhill Cranes again wintered near Cheneyville, Rapides Par.; highest count reported was 21 on Jan. 9 (RN, MN, SH & EH). One was also at L. Eufaula, Ala., Feb. 13-26 and two were present Feb. 19 (BO & SJ).

SHOREBIRDS, JAEGER, GULLS, TERNS — The **Am. Golden Plover**, found at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala., Dec. 18 (DCr, HE, CD & ALM) was the latest ever for Alabama; one near Welsh, Jefferson Davis Par., Feb. 21 (RN, MN, BCr & AF) was apparently Louisiana's earliest spring migrant ever. A wintering bird was found on the Reserve CBC (MWe). Ruddy Turnstones at Pensacola, Fla., Dec. 11 (CK) & 18 (CK, KB & MNo) were the first December records; the Feb. 19 occurrence (MLMa & GG) was only the third February record. The Am. Woodcock was more common than usual — at least in the s. part of the region — F Chandler reported the largest winter population in more than 30 years in s. Baldwin County, Ala. There were 35 reported on the New Orleans CBC. The Long-billed Curlew, rare inland, was reported at Morganza Spillway, La., Nov. 8 (DWG); one seen at Pensacola Dec. 29 was the first n.w. Florida winter record and only fifth record ever there. Greater Yellowlegs were migrating late at Greenville, Miss.; ten were seen Dec. 1 and two on Dec. 4 (EA). Two were present on the Washington County (south) CBC. A yellowlegs sp. was found on the Pine Bluff CBC.

The **Purple Sandpiper** occurred for the first time in Arkansas when one was found on the w. bank of the Mississippi R. in Crittenden Co., Nov. 29 & 30 (*vide* EdH). One was also found at Destin, Fla., Jan. 6 (RD), 8 (SSU), 13 (RD); there is only one previous record. The Pectoral Sandpiper was reported on the Jackson County CBC; one was found at Mandeville lakefront Feb. 19 (RN, MN, SH). Four Least Sandpipers endured at least the first part of this cold winter and were found on the Pine Bluff CBC. The 150 at Greenville, Miss., Dec. 1-28 (EA) was a large number as were the 25 Dunlin that accompanied them. Five Dunlin were also at L. Eufaula, Ala., Jan. 23 and 35 were there Feb. 27 (BO & SJ). The Marbled Godwit, considered casual in n.w. Florida was found at St. Joe S.P., Dec. 4. A Red Phalarope was found at L. Millwood Oct. 10 - Nov. 3 (JL, CM, HP & MxP). A phalarope sp. was found in Sabine N.W.R. during the CBC period.

A Pomarine and two Parasitic Jaegers were identified at an oil

platform approximately 120 km s. of Sabine R., La., Dec. 12, the two Parasitics were also seen Dec. 13 & 14 (BO). A jaeger sp. was found on the L. Millwood CBC. **Glaucous Gulls** occurred at Wheeler N.W.R., Dec. 23 - Feb. 20. The maximum reported was six on Jan. 16 (GI, DCH, m.ob.). — this is the first Alabama inland record. A first year bird was seen at Sabine N.W.R., Feb. 22 (RN & BCr). The recent increase in Great Black-backed Gull records continues this winter with the second inland Alabama record near Decatur Jan. 1 where two were seen (DCH) At Destin, Fla., one was seen Dec. 19 (RD, TM & SS), Jan. 12 (RD) and Jan. 22 (RD & LD). The Herring Gull was more common than usual on the Little Rock CBC and throughout the winter at Clear L., Natchitoches Par., where 30-40 were seen together with 30-40 of the also unusually common Ring-billed Gull (CV). A Laughing Gull, rare in Arkansas, was at L. Millwood Dec. 4 (HH *et al.*). A Franklin's Gull was also at L. Millwood Oct. 3 - Nov. 28 (JL, CM & HP); one was seen on the Hattiesburg CBC. A Bonaparte's Gull was in Oktibbeha County Dec. 5 (WCW), one was also found on the Noxubee N.W.R. CBC. Black-legged Kittiwakes were found offshore, 120 km s. of Sabine R., La., Dec. 1, and 25-28 (BO) with a maximum of four Dec. 26. A **Sabine's Gull**, a species reported only once previously from Louisiana, was reported at the ferry in Cameron Dec. 8 (AWC, *vide* JRS). A Forster's Tern was seen at L. Eufaula, Ala., Feb. 12 & 15 (BO).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS — Up to six Ground Doves were found near Morganza, La., in January and February (DWG). Three were in n.w. Louisiana near Robson in Caddo Par., Jan. 15 (JRS & JK); eight were in Richland Par., Dec. 26 (GL), and three were seen on the Atchafalaya Basin CBC. Ron Stein reports them rare in Reserve, La., an area of former abundance. Usually rare in winter, two were seen on the Hattiesburg CBC (NP). Bob Newman reports that the Groove-billed Ani was apparently absent in s. Louisiana in late winter; the species was present in late fall and early winter but did not endure the severe weather. Two Burrowing Owls were reported on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC. One was seen near Mamou, Evangeline Par., Nov. 18 - Dec. 30 (HG & CGu). One was reported from c. Louisiana Jan. 27 (PW). The Long-eared Owl may be more common than reported in our area; the only two records from Arkansas were of birds found dead: one in Prairie County Dec. 13 (GGr & DRH) and one in Craighead County Nov. 2 (KS). One was found (ChW, LW & PWi) (EBR) in Birmingham Dec. 24 - Jan. 2 and one was heard calling near L. Eufaula Jan. 23 (BO); there are only three records for Alabama since 1909 (TI).

Single Short-eared Owls were found on the Monroe and Pine Prairie CBCs. Seven were flushed from undisturbed native prairie near Stuttgart, Ark., Feb. 10 & 19 (WMS *et al.*); another was found in similar habitat in Slovak, Ark., Feb. 17 (WMS). One was at L. Eufaula, Feb. 15-26 (BO). Both **Saw-whet Owls** reported this year were found in unfortunate circumstances — one, the second Mississippi occurrence ever, was found injured in Jackson, Nov. 12 (*vide* WmT); and one found dead near Harrisburg, Ark., Nov. 22 (KS) was the first record since record-keeping began in 1963 (*vide* ELH). A **Snowy Owl** apparently wintered in Shreveport, La. and was last seen Feb. 21 (HJ, JRS *et al.*).

The severe weather was apparently responsible for the paucity of hummingbird records this winter. Two Rufous Hummingbirds wintered at Pensacola, Fla. (EB); one wintered at New Orleans until at least Dec. 26 (RRa); and a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** wintered at New Orleans (ELe, RN *et al.*). The failure to find **Red-cockaded Woodpeckers** on the Lake Georgia-Pacific CBC is very disturbing; the bird was formerly reasonably abundant there. Red-headed Woodpeckers were apparently more difficult to find this year than last at most places but there was an obvious increase on the Noxubee N.W.R. CBC. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at New Hope, Ark., Nov. 3 (CM) was appar-

ently a late migrant. Three Vermilion Flycatchers spent the first part of the winter at L. Jackson, Washington Co., Miss. (EA); they were not seen after Dec. 26. Individuals were seen on the Hattiesburg and Johnson's Bayou CBCs. At least present until Jan 19 were three at Magnolia Springs, Ala., (PFC). Horned Larks got at least as far south as Evangeline Par. where 60 were seen near Mamou and 40 near Reddell Dec. 30 (HG & DHF). The two Tree Swallows at Wheeler N.W.R. (DCo) registered the earliest local spring record. Rough-winged Swallows were found on the Johnson's Bayou and Jackson County CBCs. Late were the 33 at Chicot S.P., Evangeline Par., Dec. 7 (BO); one was at Gulf Shores, Ala., Dec. 31 (GJ). Barn Swallows were found on the Reserve and Lafayette CBCs as well as the Jackson County CBC. Seven very late individuals were at Chicot S.P. Dec. 7 (BO).

NUTHATCHES THROUGH VIREOS — Tom Imhof reported fair numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches in Alabama. The numbers on Arkansas CBCs were normal. There were two fewer reports from Louisiana and Mississippi. White-breasted Nuthatches were found farther south than usual: two were on the Southern Hancock County and the Baton Rouge CBCs. There were 28 Bewick's Wrens reported on Arkansas and Mississippi CBCs this year and only 20 last; this Blue-Listed species appears to be holding its own. A Wood Thrush was found on the Sabine N W R. CBC and one was found near Mandeville, St. Tammany Par., Jan. 1 (RN & SH). Some E. Bluebirds drifted to the coast this year. On the Johnson's Bayou CBC one was found and one occurred during the Sabine N.W.R. CBC count period. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were more difficult to find than last year. In the ten Louisiana CBCs held both years 272 were reported in 1975 and 125 in 1976. In addition, Bob Newman reported that numbers were drastically reduced in s. Louisiana during the later part of winter. There were more Ruby-crowned Kinglets reported on CBCs from Louisiana this year than last but fewer from Arkansas. Sprague's Pipit was apparently more common than usual at the Natchitoches, La., airport (*vide* CV). The one near Wade's Landing, Limestone Co., Ala., was a first local record and the eighteenth Alabama winter record (DCH). One was seen in Jackson County, Miss., Dec. 18 (LG) and one was seen on the Atchafalaya Basin CBC. As usual Cedar Waxwings arrived in numbers in late winter. The numbers of White-eyed Vireos were much lower on the ten Louisiana CBCs which were held in both 1975 and 1976 — 51 in 1975 and 14 in 1976.

WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS — A Black-and-white Warbler was reported on the Reserve CBC and five on the Venice CBC. The one at Baton Rouge Feb. 27 (BCr) may have been an early migrant. A Prothonotary Warbler was found on the Jackson County CBC. Orange-crowned Warblers were noted in northern Mississippi this winter: one at LeRoy Percy S.P. all winter (EA); one on the Sardis Lake CBC; and one on the Noxubee N.W.R. CBC. A possible Nashville Warbler was reported on the Shreveport CBC. A **Yellow Warbler**, extremely rare in winter, was found on the Jackson County CBC (WG). Almost unbelievable, a **Magnolia Warbler** was reported on both the Jackson County (CW and JFr) and Southern Hancock County CBCs. For the first time ever, a **Cape May Warbler** wintered in Alabama. One was seen Dec. 1 & 3 in Birmingham and 10 mi. from there Jan. 1-9 (HHT, LM & JP). The only "Audubon's" form of Yellow-rumped Warbler reported this winter was at Gulfport, Miss., from mid-February - end of the period (JTo). In the Mississippi delta region four Pine Warblers were found on the Washington County (south) CBC. An **Ovenbird** was reported on the Atchafalaya Basin CBC. A N. Waterthrush was found on the Reserve CBC and a waterthrush sp. was found on the Venice CBC. A **Hooded Warbler** was reported near Morganza, La., Dec 24 (DWG). A **Wilson's Warbler** was banded at Ft. Morgan, Ala., Nov. 11 (TI); this is first November Alabama record. A first Alabama December record resulted from the observation of two at Mobile Dec 2 (JLD). A female found at

Cottondale, Fla., Dec. 18 (BSt, SSt) was the first n.w. Florida winter record.

A Yellow-headed Blackbird occurred at Metairie, La., Jan 30 (DPM). The largest concentration of Red-winged Blackbirds reported on CBCs was 2,300,000 at Little Rock, Ark. There were approximately the usual numbers of scattered N. Oriole records an ad. ♂ "Baltimore" at New Orleans Jan. 23 (RN, MN, DCr, SH & EL), another at Baton Rouge Jan. 30 (DV). A "Bullock's" was in Baton Rouge from Feb. 14 - end of the period (RS). A ♀ "Baltimore" was at Memphis Feb. 5 - end of the period (EC). A ♂ "Bullock's" was at a feeder in Pensacola, Fla., Dec. 1 - Jan 14 (JM). It did not survive the extremely cold winter. The Great-tailed Grackle, a species which until recently was not known to winter in the region wintered in Arkansas. A total of 32 was found on the Texarkana CBC. The high CBC report for Com Grackles was 2,100,000 at Jonesboro, Ark. and the high Brown-headed Cowbird count was 4,022,125 at Pine Prairie, La. The U. S. F. & W. S. surveyed 50 blackbird roosts in Louisiana and found an estimated 785 million birds. The largest roost was 12-15 million in w. Carroll Par. (RAy). A **Summer Tanager** was found on the Shreveport CBC. A male was at Mariana, Fla., Dec. 1 & 21 and Jan. 17 (EW, *vide* MGr). This was the third consecutive winter at the same feeder. One was also seen near Morganza, La., Jan. 11 & 19 (DWG).

FINCHES — A feeder near Morganza, La. was visited by a Rose-breasted Grosbeak Dec. 6 (DWG). A Black-headed Grosbeak was near Kosciusko, Miss. early Jan. - at least Feb 12 (JS, RW, WCW *et al.*). The **Blue Grosbeak** found at St. Joe S P., Dec. 5 (RD & LD) was the second n.w. Florida December record and the third Florida winter record. Indigo Buntings were found on several Louisiana CBCs: three on Atchafalaya Basin, two on Reserve, and two on Venice. One stayed at a feeder in Baton Rouge after Feb. 14 (RS). Evening Grosbeaks apparently did not wander extensively into the region this winter. It was seen during the CBC count period at Arkadelphia, Ark. A Dickcissel was found on the Jackson County CBC. A female wintered at New Iberia, La. after Jan. 8 (MJM) and two males and females wintered in Baton Rouge after Jan. 23 (RBH). One was present at another feeder 6 mi. from those Feb. 11 (RN & BCr). A **House Finch** wintered from Jan. 27 at a feeder in Decatur, Morgan Co., Ala. (MB, TI *et al.*). The bird was photographed, thereby removing this species from the Alabama Hypothetical List. The numbers of Purple Finches apparently were about the same this winter as last; Pine Siskins were rather rare this winter. Only about half as many were reported on Arkansas CBCs this winter; last winter was not a good siskin year. They were found on both the Natchitoches and Shreveport CBCs this year. Four at Choctaw L., near Ackerman Dec. 5 (WCW) were the only ones reported from Mississippi. There were a few scattered records near Birmingham (TI) and some were reported near Nashville Dec. 6 (SF & Wft). The **Red Crossbill** occurred for the first time in the Tennessee Valley of Alabama this winter 1-8 were near Decatur, Morgan Co., Jan. 19-24 (DCH). Five were found on the Lake Georgia-Pacific CBC. One, possibly two **Green-tailed Towhees** encountered at Belle-fontaine Pt., on the Jackson County CBC (JI & StP) is the first Mississippi record.

Grasshopper Sparrows were found this winter on the Hattiesburg CBC and in Cameron Par., Jan. 16 (RN & BCr). There was a surprising number of Le Conte's Sparrow reports this winter — perhaps more of our observers are checking its specialized habitat. Two were found on the Noxubee N.W.R. CBC; seven on the Sardis Lake CBC; and one on the Grenada CBC. There were 14 at L. Eufaula, N.W.R., Ala., approximately Dec. 30 (GJ), one was near Little Rock, Pulaski Co., Ark., Jan. 8 and three were reported Feb. 21 (WMS). At Natchitoches, La., 3-4 were seen throughout the winter (CV). Observers have obviously discovered how to find Sharp-tailed Sparrows in some coastal habitats 120

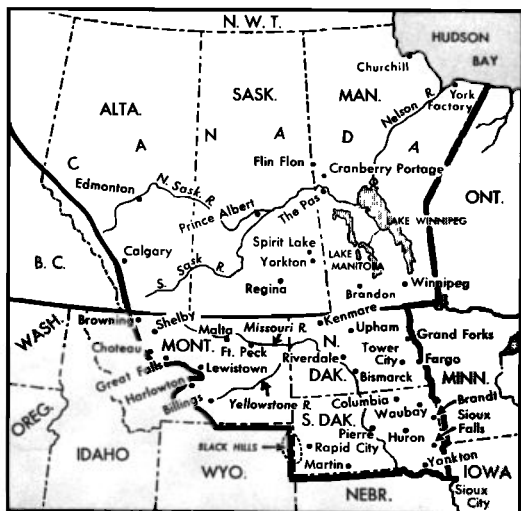
were found at Shell I., Bay Co., Fla., Dec. 1 (BSt) and 94 were reported on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC. The Pink-sided race of the Dark-eyed Junco was found Jan. 8 at Little Rock, Pulaski Co., Ark. (WMS). The cold winter obviously affected Tree Sparrows; there were records from the northern part of our region. In Arkansas, observers commented on large numbers and the southern extent of some of the records: i.e., 25 near Conway, Faulkner Co., Jan. 15 (DJM); ten were found near Holla Bend N.W.R., Yell Co., Jan. 15 (EdH, HH, HP & MxP); the previous observers found 20 in White County and 50 near Pangburn, Cleburne Co., Jan. 22; a southerly record was the one at Calion L., Union Co., Jan. 23 and there were six more in Union County Jan. 25 (HHS & KLS); one was 6 mi. s. of Lonoke, Lonoke Co., Jan. 31 (EdH & HH); the seven at Little Rock Feb. 21 (WMS) were the latest reported. In Tennessee, a flock of 20 was found at Reelfoot L., Dec. 18 (BBC & LC); up to 11 were at Penal Farm, Shelby Co., Dec. 21 - Jan. 18 (T.O.S.); ten were in Memphis Jan. 20 (LC, HID, MW & JF); and one was at Hatchie N.W.R., Feb. 12 (T.O.S.). All Mississippi records were from near Sardis L.: one on Jan. 15 (MD & LC); six on Jan. 22 (MD); and two on Jan. 23 (LC). In Alabama from 3-20 were in the vicinity of Decatur Feb. 12-28 (MB, RRR, HF, JF *et al.*) and one was at a feeder in Jasper, Jan. 20, 29, Feb. 2, 4-6, 8 (DAR). A Clay-colored Sparrow was found at Arkadelphia, Ark., Dec. 17; it is the only December record. An imm. **Harris' Sparrow** was found with a flock of White-crowned Sparrows at Sardis L. Jan. 15 (MD). Eight were found on the Noxubee CBC. The cold winter apparently forced Fox Sparrows to the Mississippi coast where they rarely occur: two were at Gulf I. Nat'l Seashore Feb 20 (WCW, RWP); 6+ were at same location and ten were at Ocean Springs Feb. 29 (WCW). A Lincoln's Sparrow accompanied White-throated Sparrows at a feeder in Gulf Breeze, Fla., Feb. 3 - end of period (BSt, SSt). The individual at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala., Feb. 28 (DCo) was the first local February record and the one at Eufaula Feb. 6 (BO) was unusual. The 70 Lapland Longspurs at Stuttgart airport, Prairie Co., Ark., Feb. 19 (WMS) was considered low. On the other hand, the 23 on the Lake Millwood CBC; the 2-35 at Penal Farm, Memphis, Jan. 4-18 (T.O.S.); the 12 at Memphis Jan. 20 (LC, HID, MW & JF); and the 30 at Turrell, Ark., Jan. 22 (RJ) were all considered unusual. Sixteen Smith's Longspurs at Stuttgart airport Feb. 19 (P.C.A.S.) were the only ones reported.

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NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS /Esther M. Serr

The winter season throughout the entire region was very dry. However chances for a normal spring are very good as moisture usually comes from heavy, wet snow in March and April. The provinces enjoyed the mildest winter since 1929-30 when farmers picked rocks in February. Some were doing just that this season. La Ronge, Saskatchewan, nearly 56°N, one February day, had temperatures warmer than those recorded in Florida the same day. The states in the region had a cold January but winter was otherwise milder than usual. Birds seemed scarce but the weather was warm enough for them to stay north.



LOONS, SWANS — A **Yellow-billed Loon**, the second occurrence in two years, found alive in a roadside ditch Nov 22, was released in the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary, Calgary, where it fed on trout. It was missed Jan. 12 and hopefully it continued its migration (RB). One Com. Loon was at Ft. Peck,

Mont., Dec. 20 (CMC). Trumpeter Swans under management at Lacreek N.W.R., Martin, S.D., were estimated at 150. Ten died of various causes during the winter.

GEESE, DUCKS — The warm weather and lack of snow allowed many waterfowl to remain north. All areas had some of the regular wintering waterfowl species; probably the most spectacular area was the Cold River, w.c. Saskatchewan, located above 54°N; 30 mi. of which remained completely open during the winter. Totals of 100 Com. Goldeneyes, 40 Mallards and one Com. Merganser survived the winter there. One Barrow's Goldeneye wintered at Ft. Peck (CMC), 12 were in the tailwaters of the Garrison Dam, N.D., Feb. 9-10 (DGD), and three were at Calgary Dec. 6 - Jan. 23 (RB). Also at Calgary was one Black Duck Jan. 24 - Feb. 7 (HP, DD).

HAWKS, EAGLES — Twelve Goshawk sightings spanned the provinces and e. Montana. Three Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported; two at Rapid City, S.D. (EMS, NW) and one Jan. 29 at Regina (TB). Single Cooper's Hawks were seen Jan. 26 at Eastend, Sask., where it roosted in a machine shed (MG, TD) and Jan. 29 at Sturgis, S.D. (NW). A fair number of Rough-legged Hawks finally returned to s. South Dakota after only occasional sightings the last five years. Field trips out of Rapid City averaged three sightings each. Nine in s. Malta, Mont., Dec. 19 (MA) and eight in s.w. Saskatchewan were counted during the period (JJW, GJW). Single Ferruginous Hawks were noted at Lacreek N.W.R., Dec. 19, and Garfield County, Mont., Feb. 20 (HC *et al.*).

South Dakota reported 65 Golden Eagles. In e. Custer County, S.D., ten were caught in a coyote trapline. The birds were released quickly apparently unharmed (*vide* BN). At Fillmore, Sask., Dec. 20 one was seen chasing a fox (FB). Food sources for Golden at Ft. Peck were primarily Mallards and secondarily rabbits. Their hunting methods were quite different from those of falcons and they were observed pirating from falcons (CMC). A total of 71 Bald Eagles was observed in areas near reservoirs in s. South Dakota. A January census of Bald Eagles in s.e. Montana showed 66 adults and 20 immatures. A February check indicated that the birds over-wintered in the same areas where they were counted in January (THi). Bald Eagles do not approach Golden in hunting ability but will also pirate kills from falcons. They do quite well scavenging dead ducks along the Missouri R., below Ft. Peck (CMC).

Gyrfalcons, Prairie and Peregrine Falcons, and Merlins were present in most states and provinces. Several reporters have suppressed dates, numbers and locations, as trappers have been seen in their vicinities.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS — Eight species of the Order Galliformes were reported this winter season. One Spruce Grouse was seen Dec. 28 at Caroline, Alta. (JM). It was unusual that none were seen in the forested area of Saskatchewan. Ruffed Grouse numbers remained high in forested areas of the provinces and probably were at the peak of their cycle (EKH, LH, WJA *et al.*). In some places in Saskatchewan there was destruction of large tracts of aspen (SL). Many Ruffed Grouse were in Manitoba's boreal forest (DAS, MC, DB). Five Willow Ptarmigan were seen near Big Sandy L., Hanson Lake Rd., Sask. Sharp-taileds were generally down in the region; however, 125 were in Gregory County, S.D., and 400 wintered at Bowdoin N.W.R., Mont. At Kindersley, Sask., parcels of Sharp-tailed Grouse habitat — the roadside ditches — are succumbing to the plow (JMH). Several groups of ten Sage Grouse wintered at Eastend, Sask. Pheasants seemed to be on the upswing in s.w. Saskatchewan and wintered in other parts of the region. Gray Partridge definitely increased but have not recovered to their highs of the early 70s. In Stutsman County, N.D., 106 were observed Jan. 13 in two hours (JL, DS). There was a flock of 51 Gray Partridge Dec. 5 at Langdon, Alta. (EB)

and another flock of 53 Dec. 21 - Jan. 18, at Calgary (MB) Twelve ♂ Turkeys were seen in Garfield County, Mont., Feb. 20 (ETH *et al.*) and 14 were at the Fish Hatchery, Rapid City, Feb. 19.

JAEGERS, GULLS — A Pomarine Jaeger was captured in Prince Albert N.P., Sask., Dec. 30 (M. Syroteuk — specimen to the National Museum of Ottawa). Dr. Earl Godfrey identified it as an imm. female. It weighed 356.9 grams and is the second specimen for Saskatchewan (*vide* WCH).

An ad. Great Black-backed Gull was the find of the winter season Jan. 6-20 at Ft. Peck. It is possibly the farthest west observation, a first for Montana, and a first for the Northern Great Plains Region (CMC). Photos show it with Glaucous and Herring Gulls. Gavin's Pt., S.D. also had Glaucous and Herring Gulls and at Gardiner Dam near Cutbank, Sask., there was one Glaucous (ARS).

OWLS — There are 18 owl species recorded in North America. This region recorded ten of that total this shortened winter season. If March had been included, Burrowing Owl might have been back but Hawk Owls, often seen here in winter, were absent this year. Barn Owls are seen in other seasons. Total known owl species recorded for the region then is 13. The Snowy Owl was the most common this winter but reached only average numbers — an estimated total of 175. One caught a muskrat which was forced to the surface by water over the ice Feb. 4 at Indian Head, Sask. (MS). At the w. end of the region, one was seen at Benton Lake N.W.R., Black Eagle, Mont (LS). Another was seen almost daily, Jan. 1 - Feb. 15 at Reliance S.D., where it sat on its favorite fence post and was visible from the s. edge of town (WT). Great Horned reported totaled about 50 with four nests — one Feb. 26 at Frontier, Sask. (JJW) another Feb. 13 at Calgary, and in Montana Feb. 20 in Petroleum County (RAH *et al.*) and at Bowdoin N.W.R. Short-eared numbers were probably highest since winter 1971-72 with a total of 39 reported throughout the region (RFK, WN). Six wintered in the Qu'Appelle Valley near Craven, Sask. (BL). Additionally there were three sightings plus a specimen from the Candle L. Sask., area Feb. 21-23.



Boreal Owl, Portage-la-Prairie, Man., Jan. 30, 1977. Photo/R. W. Knapton.

S.A.

Midnight, March 13, Prince Albert, Sask. . . . "We just returned from 'owling' in the north woods. Succeeded in calling up two Great Gray Owls tonight. Both birds refused to answer my calls but came to the roadside to see who the stranger was and they flew back and forth around us trying to figure out what the monstrous thing was that was calling like a Great Gray. One flew within ten feet and we couldn't even hear a sound — just total silence. So graceful and huge and not even a whisper while flying." (WCH, SL).

Assessment of the Great Grays numbers and trends is difficult but current research should soon shed more light (RWK). Four Screech Owls were seen in South Dakota. One roosted in a flicker house in Burke; another in a tree hole near the cattle feed lot at Fairburn, and one each at Hurley (CB) and in Yankton County. A Saw-whet was in J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., N.D. in December (GD); another at Calgary Jan. 11 (JT) and a fresh specimen was found in Winnipeg Feb. 1 (*vide* HWRC). A Long-eared was unusual Dec. 31 at Cypress Hills, Sask. (WER). Two Barred Owls were observed Feb. 17, at Valley City and Dec. 18 at Fargo, N.D. (RM, EA). A Pygmy Owl was at Calgary Jan. 29 (PS) A very tame Boreal Owl was at a farm near Portage-la-Prairie, Man. allowed observers to photograph it as close as one foot Jan. 30 (CC *et al.*).

WOODPECKERS — Various parts of the region reported an average of three Com. Flickers, all at feeders, but at Saskatoon Jan. 22-29 there were 29 sightings (PON). Three Pileateds were observed in the forest of n. Saskatchewan and six were observed across s. Manitoba (NM). Red-bellied Woodpeckers are becoming common in s.e. South Dakota (KJH), but unusual were three Red-headed that wintered in Missouri R. woods, Yankton, S.D. One Yellow-bellied Sapsucker remained until Dec. 2 at Saskatoon and one was at Sioux Falls, S.D. in January (KE). Hairy Woodpeckers averaged three and Downys averaged four at most feeders. A Hairy banded April 14, 1965 was re-trapped Feb. 20, 1977 in s. Brookings County (NH). Black-backed Three-toeds were seen in s. Saskatchewan (BCG, GA). A Black-backed was found in burned black spruce bog at Pinawa, Man. (PT *et al.*) and one was noted at Winnipeg Dec. 3 (PH). A pair was seen Feb. 20 in the Black Hills, S.D. (RM)

CORVIDS — Gray Jays came out of the Saskatchewan forest and were also in evidence in s. Manitoba. The Blue Jay is still establishing itself in e. Montana and two Stellar's Jays from the west were seen at Billings (KBH). Black-billed Magpies were fewer everywhere except for 200 at Bowdoin N.W.R. where they probably utilized a hole in the intake canal to catch fish (JRF). Common Ravens finally came out of hiding with 100 at Nipawin and 400 at La Ronge, Sask. Eleven were seen in the area w. of Calgary (GW, AM). Common Crows were scarce everywhere. In the Bull Mountains near Billings 150 Pifion Jays were found (BF *et al.*). Numbers were unusually low in the Black Hills.

CHICKADEES, NUTHATCHES — The Black-capped, Boreal and Mountain Chickadees were normal in numbers. A **Tufted Titmouse** was present Jan. 23 at Yankton (J. Wilcox, *vide* WH). This is probably the eighth sighting since 1924. White-breasted Nuthatches averaged two at most feeders and the Red-breasted averaged three. An exceptional 60 Red-breasted were found in Cypress Hills, Sask., Dec. 31. Four Pygmies remained at feeders throughout the period near Rapid City (AB, DAD). Photographs of a nuthatch taken at Sioux Falls at 1500 ft. during December are still being studied with no decision as to whether it was a Pygmy or Brown-headed (GWB, KE). Five Brown Creepers were at Upper Souris N.W.R., Dec. 20 (IR). A Winter Wren was seen Jan. 24 along the James R., Jamestown, N.D. (RS).

THRUSHES, WAXWINGS — A Varied Thrush was photographed at feeders Dec. 26 - Feb. 24 at Sturgis, S.D. (*vide* EM). An unusually marked concentration of Am. Robins wintered at Rapid City (NW). Mountain Bluebirds arrived as expected Feb. 19-21 in the Black Hills area (Ada Smith, NE). Flocks of Bohemian Waxwings totaling 2260, were in Rapid City after several years' absence. How many were counted more than once? A flock of 50 was present Dec. 9 - Feb. 13 at a Perkins County, S D farmyard (AH). North Dakota and Saskatchewan also had good numbers. The Dakotas had increased numbers of Cedar Waxwings (IW, JHH, RJ, RLH).

SHRIKES, BLACKBIRDS — Northern Shrikes were reported from all areas in fair numbers. South Dakota reporters averaged two in their respective areas (KFH) and the species was well represented in s. Manitoba. Six Rusty Blackbirds were observed in late December in Lyleton, Man. (RJW). One was found at Moose Jaw Feb. 12-13 and another at N. Semans, Sask., in February (PK, WCH). A few other blackbird species wintered regionwide owing to the mild weather.

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS — Evening and Pine Grosbeaks were common in their usual places. Purple Finches averaged 16 at a Bismarck, N.D. feeder (RR). A flock of 25 Red Crossbills was present throughout the period at Rapid City (HS). Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were most numerous in South Dakota and Saskatchewan where they even frequented farmyards (RAW, SJ, HM). A daily average of 30 Tree Sparrows was at a Rapid City feeder throughout the period (BLG). It is usual to have a few Harris' Sparrows remain each winter. The mild weather was probably the reason a few White-throateds were also reported (RQ). Lapland Longspurs occurred in small numbers—the biggest flock was 80, Dec. 20 near Hope, N D (DK). A few Snow Buntings were reported regionwide.

A few extra lines this time allow me to add that C. Stuart Houston, former NGP editor, became the editor of the "Journal of the Canadian Association of Radiologists" in 1976.

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78th Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Dec. 17, 1977-Jan. 2, 1978
See notice on page 386

SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

/Frances Williams

Lakes, ponds and rivers were frozen for weeks in Nebraska, Kansas and northern Oklahoma and were either dry or at a very low level in southern Oklahoma and Texas. Wintering waterfowl were scarce. Cold, drought, and an over-abundance of Starlings equaled a low wintering population of native passerines. The fall weed and berry crop was minuscule and the remains of the sum-



mer crop was soon consumed by the Starlings. F. M. Baumgartner reported the effects of extreme cold in an area of 600 acres in northeastern Oklahoma which he censused regularly. He found an unusually large number of dead birds, and Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers completely disappeared from the area. Except for Snowy Owls, Northern Shrikes and Tree Sparrows, the expected incursion of northern species did not occur.

LOONS, GREBES — Almost every lake on the plains had a few wintering Com. Loons, but only at Lake-o'-the-pines in e. Texas could as many as 100 be observed in a day. Red-throated Loons were reported at Oklahoma City Dec. 18 (JGN *et al.*) and Balmorhea L., Reeves Co., Tex., Dec. 19 (FW *et al.*). Horned Grebes wintered throughout the e. two-thirds of Texas but were abundant only at Lake-o'-the-pines, where 200 were present Feb. 5. Eared Grebes are much more widespread than Horneds, but are rarely present in large numbers. A flock comprising 200 birds in Tarrant County, Tex., Feb. 5 was unusual. The only reports of W. Grebes were at Lubbock, Tex. Pied-billed Grebes remained in Kansas during the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBCs) but did not remain through January. Grebes of any kind were scarce in Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle.

PELICANS THROUGH ANHINGAS — Single White Pelicans were found in Coffey County, Kans., Dec. 12, Junction City, Kans., Dec. 19 and Martin County, Tex., Dec. 19. Five lingered at Hagerman N.W.R., Tex., throughout December. By Feb. 3 they were moving N again. A concentration of 150 Double-crested Cormorants was present in Comal County, Tex., Dec. 9 (E & KM), and a few lingered in Montgomery and Cowley Cos., Kans. until late December. Single birds appeared in Crosby and Hudspeth Cos., Tex. in January and February. The

wintering population of Anhingas in Montgomery County comprised 19 birds.

HERONS, IBISES — An early Great Blue Heron returned to Linn County, Kans., Feb. 21. Little Blue Herons and Cattle Egrets had returned to the Ft. Worth heronry by the end of February. Several Louisiana Herons spent the winter at Steinhagen L. between Tyler and Jasper Cos., Tex. (RA), and a single individual spent December on the Trinity R. where it forms the Walker-Trinity County Line (KBB). Several Am. Bitterns located on Texas CBCs could not be found in January. A White-faced Ibis remained through December on the Trinity R.

WATERFOWL — A Whistling Swan appeared in Lancaster County, Nebr., Feb. 27, one juvenile remained in Wyandotte County, Kans., Nov. 27 - Dec. 9 and one was at Cheyenne Bottoms N.W.R., Kans. at the end of the period. Normally most Canada Geese spend the winter on various refuges, but this year small groups were scattered throughout the region. The goose most separated from his fellows was one in Mariscal Canyon on the Rio Grande, Big Bend N.P., Dec. 27. White-fronted Geese in Lubbock Jan. 22 provided a new county record. A Ross' Goose was discovered at El Paso Dec. 19 (KJZ, m.ob.). According to Lin Risner, Black Ducks winter regularly in very small numbers at Lake-o'-the-pines. Very early Blue-winged Teal were captured at Hagerman N.W.R. during Mallard banding operations in mid-February. Wood Ducks were observed at scattered localities from Lancaster County south to Waco, Tex. Several contributors noted that numbers of dabbling ducks were down, but that diving ducks were more numerous than usual. There were an estimated 150 Greater Scaup at Lake-o'-the-pines Feb. 5 (CDF) Common Goldeneyes were present in exceptional numbers at many localities, with a peak of 400 at Tulsa in early January.

The only Oldsquaw north of Texas was discovered at Milford Res. near Junction City, Kans., during February (BLS). In Texas this species was recorded at Lake-o'-the-pines and in Clay, Coke and Midland Cos. A White-winged Scoter was seen at Marais de Cygne Ref., Kans., Feb. 22 (LM). In Texas this species was noted at Waxahachie (GG), Dallas (MRO), Lake-o'-the-pines and Sam Rayburn Res. (LR, CDF). A Surf Scoter was at Lake-o'-the-pines Feb. 5 (CDF). Hooded Mergansers were reported at nine localities where they are considered rare visitors and there were exceptional numbers of Com. Mergansers throughout the region.

VULTURES THROUGH FALCONS — A Turkey Vulture was sighted at Topeka Dec. 18, a very late date (OR) and 17 in Comanche County, Okla., Feb. 22 were early. In Palo Pinto County, Tex., 100 Black Vultures were roosting at Possum Kingdom Dam in late November (KN). A White-tailed Kite was seen Feb. 15 in Brazos County, Tex. (RDS). It was not a Goshawk winter. Three were reported on Kansas CBCs, one in Lancaster County, Nebr., in January and one in Grimes County, Tex., Jan. 25. "Harlan's" Hawks and melanistic Red-tailed Hawks were unusually numerous. Red-shouldered Hawks were reported by only three contributors. Rough-legged Hawks, which had arrived early and in good numbers during the fall, were scarce. In w. Texas Ferruginous Hawks were abundant, even outnumbering Red-taileds six to one in some areas. Golden Eagles were common in s.w. Oklahoma and Texas but did not stray eastward as they did a year ago. Bald Eagles were again common at most reservoirs of the plains. In the Tulsa area two Bald Eagles with wing markers were found to have been marked in n. Minnesota and Saskatchewan. Only three Ospreys were reported. Caracaras were sighted in Falls County, Tex., Dec. 31 (MRa) and Bosque County, Tex., Feb. 12 (WP).

There were eight records of Prairie Falcons from Osage, Lyon, Chase and Coffey Cos., Kans. A Peregrine Falcon at Tulsa Feb. 24 was the first at the locality since 1972 (HE, EH). Others were reported at Waxahachie (GG) and Crosby County, Tex. (KH),

both in December. Single Merlins were seen in 15 localities, an unusually high number. Most of these were sighted repeatedly through the season.

RAILS THROUGH TERNS — Virginia Rails were present all winter at two locations in Tom Green County, Tex. The observers speculated that the birds have always wintered there but have been overlooked. A Virginia Rail was sighted at Junction City, Kans., Dec. 19 (JZ). Four Com. Gallinules were sighted in Walker County, Tex., Dec. 22 (KBB) and one was in Midland Jan. 22 (m.ob.). There were fewer records of wintering shorebirds than in many years. Mountain Plovers were seen in Tom Green County during January (TM, CCW). The only Am. Woodcock reported was in Tarrant County, Tex., Dec. 4 (R & KJ). Several observers noted that the only Com. Snipe they could find were in areas where sewage effluent kept rivers open. Dunlins wintered at Hagerman N.W.R.

A jaeger tentatively identified as a Parasitic was present in Coffey County, Kans., Dec. 23 (E & HR, JP). One to three Glaucous Gulls remained at Oklahoma City Dec. 13 to the end of the period (JS, m.ob.). An unusually large number of gulls were present at Lubbock during December and January. In addition to the usual Ring-billeds, there were about 20 Herring Gulls. This species also wintered at Waco. At least 400-500 Bonaparte's Gulls were present in early February at both Lake-o'-the-pines and Sam Rayburn Res. There were an estimated 500-600 Forster's Terns on L. Rayburn throughout January and early February. A Royal Tern found dead at L. Somerville, Burleson Co., Tex., Feb. 12 provided the first documented inland record for Texas (KA). Caspian Terns wintered on four lakes in e. Texas.

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — A pair of Ground Doves was observed near Nacogdoches, Tex., Feb. 9 (CDF). Inca Doves were present at Sweetwater, Lubbock, Wichita County and Big Bend N.P. Roadrunners were reported at Kingman and Pratt, Kans. in December and were more numerous than usual in Payne County, Okla. and Waco, Tex.

Owls were much in the news. A nest containing five young Barn Owls ready to fledge was found in Fannin County, Tex., Dec. 1 (*vide* CRB). At Lewisville, Tex. a Barn Owl nest discovered Nov. 30 held five owlets nearly ready to leave and five smaller ones (WP). Several Barn Owls were located in n.e. Oklahoma where the species is rarely seen.

The Snowy Owl which arrived in Oklahoma City Nov. 15 stayed until February 25. Wesley Isaacs kept a daily watch on the owl and was able to notify visiting birders of its whereabouts at almost any moment. Other Snowy Owls in Oklahoma included one n. of Perry during January (m.ob.) and one in Comanche County Feb. 28 (MM *et al.*). Snowies were recorded in Kansas at 12 localities, and at several of these there was more than one. The only Snowy Owls reported in Nebraska were in Saunders and Douglas Cos., but surely there were more.

The large flight of Long-eared Owls was also newsworthy. Approximately 40 occupied a roost in Irion County, Tex., Jan. 3, the number gradually dwindling until there were only 15 at the end of the period (TM). Others were located from Lincoln and Omaha s. and w. to El Paso and Midland. Short-eared Owls were also abundant. Dry lake bottoms are especially favored localities for these birds and the largest concentrations reported were at Oologah Res. near Claremore, Okla. and O. C. Fisher Res. near San Angelo, Tex. There were other records from Omaha and Lincoln s. to Tarrant and Wichita Cos., Tex.

Poor-wills at Big Bend N.P. during February were not as remarkable as one at Pratt, Kans., Dec. 23 (NeJ, MS). For the first time in several years hummingbirds did not winter on the plains. The only record was provided by a Black-chinned Hummingbird at Lubbock Jan. 5-16 (M & KA, KR).



*Snowy Owl at Oklahoma City, Nov. 15, 1976-Feb. 28, 1977
Photo/Wesley Isaacs.*

WOODPECKERS THROUGH SWALLOWS — The population of Red-headed Woodpeckers was low in Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, but there were more reports than ever in Concho, Tom Green and Irion Cos., Tex. A Lewis' Woodpecker at Midland Dec. 31 until the end of the period provided a second county record (TSJ, m.ob.). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported at Bellevue, Nebr., Dec. 18 & Jan. 2 (*vide* MW) Leawood, Kans., Dec. 7 - Jan. 5 (KB) and wintered at Lubbock and Odessa, Tex. Downy Woodpeckers were present in many parks and cemeteries in w. Texas. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were seen near Glendale, Trinity Co., Tex. where a pair nested last summer (TGA). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher near Nacogdoches Dec. 18 was very late (DD). An E. Phoebe in Comanche County, Okla., Feb. 17 was probably an early migrant rather than a wintering bird, as was one at El Paso Feb. 19. Vermilion Flycatchers are rare but regular winter residents throughout most of the pinewoods of e. Texas.

By the last week in February Rough-winged Swallows were present through much of w. Texas. They are normally not so common until mid-March. The annual "when did the martins arrive?" question was answered by Ray Jochetz at Huntsville Tex. who recorded one Jan. 26.

CORVIDS THROUGH NUTHATCHES — A flock of five Scrub Jays spent the winter in Dodge City, Kans. (JC). This species is becoming a regular winter resident in the Chisos Mts Big Bend N.P. (PS). A Pinyon Jay spent the winter at a feeder in Pratt, Kans. (LT, m.ob.). Bush tits were reported in Morton County, Kans., Dec. 31 (NaJ, DT). White-breasted Nuthatches wandered into w. Texas at several localities where they are normally absent. Although Red-breasted Nuthatches were not as common in the region as they were during the fall migration they were present throughout and one was photographed as far s. as Bryan, Tex.

WRENS THROUGH PIPITS — Winter Wrens were numerous in Kansas but the only other report came from Big Bend N.P. All wrens except the Carolina Wren were absent at Bartlesville, Okla. Carolina Wrens spent December in Ellis County Kans. and in Lubbock, where the species is a rare visitor. Cactus Wrens in Real and Comal Cos., Tex. were east of their usual range. Long-billed Marsh Wrens were present in Kansas and e. Texas through December, but there was no evidence that they spent the remainder of the winter in those localities. The only report of Short-billed Marsh Wrens came from Tom Green County Feb. 6 (TM). A Rock Wren was seen near Kansas City Dec. 26 (STP).

Brown Thrashers wintered at Lincoln and Lyon County. One which was wintering in Ellis County, Kans., died in late January. A Sage Thrasher was observed in Jackson County, Kans., Jan. 31 (JAU). Contributors in Nebraska and Kansas lamented the lack of Am. Robins, stating that there were the fewest in memory. If the birders could have visited c. and w. Texas they would have

seen where their robins went. A flock of 50,000 roosted near Kerrville and the birds were common even in the dry washes of w. Texas. A **Varied Thrush** came to a feeder at Shawnee, Kans., Jan 16 - Feb. 27 (JAY, m.ob.). Eastern Bluebirds wintered in good numbers from the Texas Panhandle to El Paso and were also common in the Athens - Palestine area of e. Texas. Mountain Bluebirds were reported at Goodland, Kans., Comanche County, Okla., Grayson, Medina, Kerr and Real Cos., Tex. Townsend's Solitaires wandered eastward to Bellevue, Omaha, Emporia, Norman and Real County, but were scarce in the w. portion of the region. The only Sprague's Pipits reported were in Tom Green County in January and February. They stayed in an eight-acre field of grass which was completely surrounded by plowed ground. How Mr. Wiedenfeld found them originally is a mystery, but he successfully showed the elusive birds to many visiting birders.

WAXWINGS THROUGH STARLINGS — Like Am. Robins, Cedar Waxwings gathered by the thousands in c. and w. Texas, leaving observers farther north searching in vain. But by early February small flocks of waxwings were making their way N. The only Bohemian Waxwings sighted were in Ellis County, Kans. Northern Shrikes were seen at Lincoln, Omaha, Oklahoma City, Kenton, Okla., Palo Duro Canyon and Midland, Tex. Loggerhead Shrikes wintered as far n. as Lincoln and Omaha.

Hordes of Starlings gathered in huge roosts throughout the region. Hundered of thousands of these nuisance birds voraciously depleted the countryside of seeds and berries, making a bad winter even harder on native species. If conservationist groups could devise a way to eliminate Starlings from the country they would save millions of our native birds.

VIREOS THROUGH TANAGERS — A Hutton's Vireo appearance on the Rio Grande in Big Bend N.P., Feb. 24 (AW, BW) was apparently the first time the species has been found in desert riparian vegetation at this park. Only one Gray Vireo was reported in the park during the period. A Solitary Vireo was seen in Bosque County, Tex., Feb. 12 (WP). This species is often reported on Texas CBCs, but it rarely remains through January.

The population of Yellow-rumped Warblers was much below normal in Kansas. A **Bay-breasted Warbler** was sighted in Comal County, Tex., Dec. 9 (E & KM) and one was photographed in Oklahoma City Dec. 19 (JS). The identification of the latter was confirmed by George M. Sutton. Observers wondered if a Louisiana Waterthrush* in Walker County Feb. 5 was a wintering bird or early migrant (KBB, RM). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were noted at Dallas Dec. 16 (CP) and Feb. 2 (BV). A group of five orioles was seen in the Chisos Mts., Dec. 30. They were not identified, but Scott's is the only oriole species previously recorded in Big Bend N.P., in winter. A "Baltimore" Oriole was seen in Nacogdoches Dec. 18 (R&CR). Great-tailed Grackles wintered in numbers in Palo Pinto and Tom Green Cos. This is a very recent range expansion. Rusty Blackbirds were present in Ellis County, Kans. and Arnett, Okla. and were more numerous than usual at Lincoln and Johnson County, Kans. An ad. ♂ Summer Tanager was seen at a feeder in Nacogdoches Jan. 25-26 (CDF).

FRINGILLIDS — A Pyrrhuloxia found on Oklahoma's Black Mesa Dec. 28 & Jan. 1 was photographed (STP). There were many Pyrrhuloxias n. of their usual range in w. Texas and one was seen in Kerr County a little farther east than normal. A Black-headed Grosbeak visited a feeder at Waco Feb. 7-22 (YD) and another was seen at Ingram, Tex., Dec. 21 & 22 (RF & JHM). A Varied Bunting was located in the Chisos Mts. during December. A Dickcissel came to a feeder in Sherman, Tex., Jan. 17 (*vide* KWH). The expected invasion of Evening Grosbeaks did not occur. A flock comprising 18 birds was seen irregularly through the period in Ellis County, Kans. and single birds were

seen in Payne County and Kerrville. Purple Finches were abundant in the e. two-thirds of the region and there were scattered records in the west. Cassin's Finches were sighted in Big Bend N.P., Dec. 29 & Feb. 23. A Com. Redpoll visited a feeder at Bellevue Dec. 25. No contributor reported more than one or two Pine Siskins and most said the species was absent. A few Red Crossbills were seen in Ellis County irregularly through the period and a small flock appeared in Omaha Feb. 15. A **White-winged Crossbill** which visited a feeder in Tulsa Dec. 22 - Jan 26 was photographed (J & JW, m.ob.).

Le Conte's Sparrows were recorded from Lincoln to Big Bend N.P. during the CBCs. The only Baird's Sparrow reported was in Irion County Feb. 7 (CCW). Ely's comment that Dark-eyed Juncos were "either unusually common or unusually conspicuous" applied to the whole region. A Gray-headed Junco* was noted in Nacogdoches in early February (CDF) and one remained in Odessa throughout the period (BE). Tree Sparrows were abundant in Kansas, Oklahoma, the Texas Panhandle and n. Texas. A single Tree Sparrow was found at Lake-o'-the pines Jan 16 (DW). Harris' Sparrows were common and widespread in Texas but scarce northward. The Golden-crowned Sparrow reported in Amarillo in the fall was last seen Jan. 1. White-throated and Fox Sparrows were unusually common in w. Texas even as far s. as Big Bend N.P. Lincoln's Sparrows were abundant as usual during the CBCs but almost disappeared from the region in January and February. Swamp Sparrows wintered from Lincoln to El Paso and southward.

Lapland Longspurs were unusually abundant from Lincoln s. to n. Texas. Smith's Longspurs were present as usual at Dallas and Norman, and Tulsa observers reported that flocks of Smith's Longspurs comprising 50-200 birds could frequently be found on burned fields in n. Tulsa County. McCown's Longspurs were reported only in w. Texas and at Dallas.

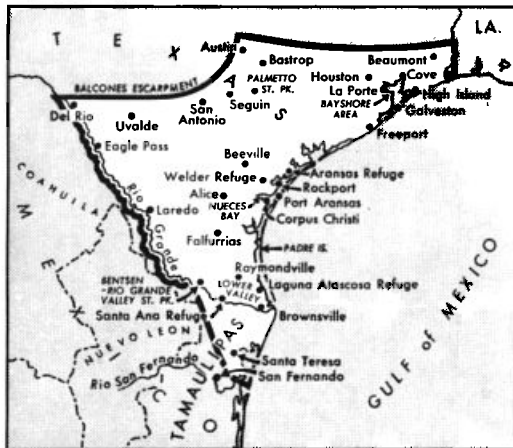
A small flock of Snow Buntings was seen in Bellevue Dec 16 (*vide* MW) and three were in Lancaster County, Nebr., Jan 30 (DG). The only Snow Buntings reported in Kansas were at Milford Res., Feb. 13 (BLS).

CONTRIBUTORS AND INITIALED OBSERVERS — **Nebraska:** Daryl Giblin, Melba Wigg, 10 additional observers. **Kansas:** John Ault, (JAu), James Ayres (JAy), Karen Beck, Joan Challans, Charles A. Ely, Nanette Johnson (NaJ), Neil Johnson (NeJ), Dorothy Laird, Bob LaShelle (BLS), Earl McHugh, Lloyd Moore, Mary Louise Myers, Sebastian T. Patti, Joe Plummer, Orville Rice, Ed & Helen Ryan, Jean H. Schulenberg, Marvin Schwillig, Dwight Tanner, Larry Tiemann, John Zimmerman, 18 additional observers. **Oklahoma:** Fred M. Baumgartner, Pat Bergey, Ella Delap, Hazel Ekholm, Elizabeth Hayes, Deloris Isted, Janet M. McGee, Mike Morgan, John G. Newell, John Shackford, June & James Wilson, 20 additional observers. **Texas:** Peggy Acord, Max & Kathleen Addison, Robert Anderson, Keith Arnold, Charles R. Brown, Lillian M. Brown, Kelly B. Bryan, Yvonne Daniel, David Deuel, Charles W. Easley, Bill Edwards, Charles D. Fisher, Tony Gallucci (TGa), Gayla Gatling, Karl W. Haller, Kelly Himmel, Bill Hunt, Ron & Kathy Johnson, T. S. Jones, Margaret Mason, R. F. & J. H. Mason, Terry Maxwell, Ralph Moldenhauer, Ernest & Kay Mueller, K. Nanney, C. Potter, Warren Pulich, Midge Randolph (MRa), Robert & Cathy Reeves, Lin Risner, Margaret Roddy (MRo), Kent Rylander, Peter Scott, R. Douglas Slack, Layfette Stanekewitz, Betty Vernon, C. C. Wiedenfeld, David Wolfe, Alan Wormington, Brian Wylie, Jim Yantis, Kevin J. Zimmer, 83 additional observers. — **FRANCES WILLIAMS, 3307 Neely, Midland, TX 79703.**

SOUTH TEXAS REGION

/Fred S. Webster, Jr.

The unusually cold and wet conditions of fall continued until mid-February when temperatures moderated quickly and rainfall ceased. This dramatic change occurred as the mid-Pacific high, which had dominated continental weather patterns abnormally late into fall and winter, finally lost its influence. Although



winter temperatures averaged well below normal, the rapid succession of cold fronts averted prolonged cold spells. The tropical Rio Grande Delta escaped major damage to vegetation. Rainfall, generally normal or above normal, was well-spaced throughout the period. Coastal areas were waterlogged much of the season. Native food crops were good, and inability of farmers to plow soggy cropland left many stubble fields available. Persistently wet conditions altered the usual distribution patterns of waterfowl, shorebirds and dryland species in many localities.

LOONS THROUGH FRIGATEBIRDS — Three **Red-throated Loons** were found off Texas City Dike Dec. 20 and were seen well into February. As many as five Horned Grebes were seen in the Cove area through the winter (DTD & JD). Brown Pelicans returned to the Rockport waterfront after a 20-year absence, being seen daily from Feb. 7 (NCO); by season's end one immature and three adult birds were observed (DNW). One was seen at Sabine jetty, Jefferson Co., Mar. 2 (AW). Belatedly, we report a **Blue-footed Booby** observed and photographed on the S. Padre I. beach Oct. 5 (TF, *vide* JCA), a first Texas record for this strictly Pacific Coast species. The regular occurrence of Gannets at the Freeport jetties led Feltner to surmise that, "It is very probable that the Gannet is in the Gulf throughout the winter every year, but strong E and N winds seem to make them hug the lee shore..." Jetty-watching, despite discomforts in winter, has captured the imaginations of Texas birders. Eleven Gannets were seen offshore between High I. and Sabine Pass Mar. 1 (AW, BW). Two imm. birds were sighted off S. Padre I. in January, and an adult, freshly deceased, was picked up from the beach Jan. 23 (JCA). Three Magnificent Frigatebirds made an unusual winter appearance at Goose Island S. P., Rockport area Jan. 15 (WLDW *et al.*).

STORKS, IBISES — A Wood Stork was a surprise winter visitor in w. Harris County, Jan. 16 (JE & TLE). White-faced Ibis numbers were good on the c. coast and southward, and one was seen inland at San Antonio Jan. 16 (JAM). An excellent count of 500 White Ibises was made in the marshes near Cove Feb. 5 (DTD, TLE). A flock of 75 near Corpus Christi in January included 90% imm. birds (KM).

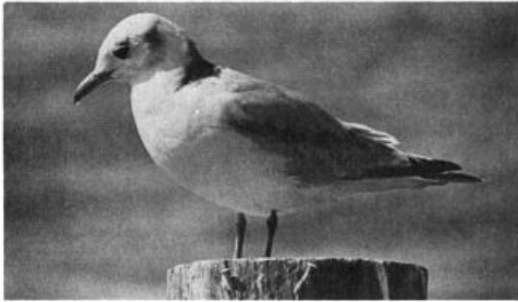
WATERFOWL — An estimated 36,000 White-fronted Geese were noted at Warren L., near Houston Dec. 16 (TBF, ER). Numbers were far above normal at Corpus Christi (KM). A flock of 11 at Austin Jan. 23 (MAM) apparently was migrating; this was a first January record for the locality. In w. Harris County 125,000 Snow Geese were reported Dec. 31 (DTD, TLE), and numbers were reported good on the c. coast. Some 25 Black bellied Whistling Ducks were reported wintering at Manor L. Brazoria Co. (*vide* MJ); this species was not known on the upper coast until recent years. The status of eight Fulvous Whistling Ducks seen in the surf off High I., Feb. 27 (AW, BW) is puzzling. This species is frequently seen offshore in migration, but when birds occur in winter they are expected in fresh water. Populations of Pintails were down along the coast as more inland watering places were available, but N. Shovelers fed in Aransas Bay all winter as the water was freshened by abundant rains. Wood Ducks were more common than usual on the c. coast. A count of 45 was made in flooded creek bottoms at San Antonio Jan. 12 (DW).

Canvasbacks were in good numbers at Cove, where 600 were seen Jan. 30 (DTD & JD), and at Rockport (DNW). The count was up at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R. with 10,000 estimated (GAU). Lesser Scaup numbers were the best in years at Rockport (DNW), and the 50,000 reported at Cove Feb. 5 (DTD & TLE) was a start toward reaching the tremendous numbers of years past. Oldsquaw, always rare, were seen more frequently than usual along the coast; five off High I., Feb. 27 (AW, BW) is noteworthy. Excellent scoter counts in the surf off the upper coast indicated either an increase in these species or in surf watchers. Surf and Black Scoters were the most common by far at least 100 of each were counted off Gilchrist, Bolivar Pen Dec. 22 (DTD, TLE). Although numbers had dropped sharply by February, 87 Surf and 31 Black Scoters were counted off the beach from High I. to Sabine Pass Mar. 1 (AW, BW). A ♂ **Masked Duck** in transition plumage was at Santa Ana N.W.R. Jan. 5 (DF).

HAWKS, EAGLES — A probable ♀ Hook-billed Kite was seen at Santa Ana N.W.R., Jan. 26 (JHM & RFM). Ferruginous Hawks were seen occasionally along the coast and were fairly regular on S. Padre I. An ad. Com. Black Hawk was seen between Falcon Dam and Roma in February (JCA *et al.*); the latter locality was the scene of a nesting attempt last summer. An imm. Bald Eagle was seen at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R. in early December (GAU), and two immatures were seen s.e. of Austin Feb. 7 (EIS). As many as seven eagles could be found at Warren L. on a single day this winter.

CRANES, SHOREBIRDS — The Whooping Crane population at Aransas N.W.R. stood at 69, of which 12 were young birds; the previous high count was 59 in 1971 (BH). Mountain Plover were found near New Braunfels, Comal Co., in a field of young oats in late November (DW) but apparently did not remain through the winter. Two Purple Sandpipers were found at the Freeport jetties early in the season. A flock of 250 Marbled Godwits wintered at Rockport (DNW), and as many as 250 Am Avocets were seen around Nueces Bay during the season (KM).

JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS — Three Parasitic Jaegers were reported off High I., Feb. 27 (AW, BW), and an adult was seen harrying terns over the surf at S. Padre I., Dec. 12 (JCA, SB). A Glaucous Gull wintered around Bolivar Flats, Galveston; and in past sightings here, this was a second-year bird (*vide* TBF). Since the widely-heralded "Iceland Gull" collected at Port Aransas in March 1976 was subsequently identified as a Thayer's Gull Texas birders are becoming more wary of strange gulls and more prone to research. What was thought to be a first winter Iceland Gull frequented the S Padre I. beach from the date of its discovery, Jan. 12 (SB). Photographs are being studied (JCA). A "white" gull first seen at the Quintana jetty, Freeport Jan. 25



Black-legged Kittiwake, Texas City Dike, Tex., Feb. 28, 1977. Photo/Alan Wormington.

(MA, MI *et al.*), also remained through the season. This was generally thought to be an imm. Iceland Gull until local birders sought the opinions of persons familiar with the species. That identification was ruled out and albino Herring Gull suggested with some reservations (*vide* TLE). Two fully ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, at locations ten mi. apart, were observed and photographed on S. Padre I., Jan. 22 (JCA). An unusually large number of Herring Gulls was on S. Padre I. beach the same day. Bonaparte's Gulls were unusually common on the lower coast (JCA). At least four Black-legged Kittiwakes appeared on the upper coast; one very approachable individual took up residence at Texas City Dike (*vide* TLE). Sandwich Terns, usually common in winter, apparently withdrew completely from the lower coast (JCA).

DOVES THROUGH NIGHTHAWKS — A small number of White-winged Doves wintered n. to San Antonio and Corpus Christi. The Groove-billed Ani population at Corpus Christi was above normal (KM). A **Long-eared Owl** was observed at Austin Feb. 12 (REC). A single **Com. Nighthawk** was seen at different locations in Austin Dec. 1 & 18 and Feb. 9 (JAT, BM *et al.*); these records are inexplicable, especially during an unusually cold fall and winter.

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — At least three Black-chinned Hummingbirds occurred regularly at Houston. In Corpus Christi, a stunned ♀ hummingbird was examined in hand and released Feb. 4; it was identified as an **Allen's Hummingbird** after careful attention was given to the tail feathers (TL, KM). Green Kingfishers continue to appear beyond their usual limits. Females were seen on the Mission R. at Refugio Jan. 22 (DTD & JD), on the San Marcos R. at San Marcos Feb. 22 (ML, BV), and on the Nueces R. near Corpus Christi Jan. 7 (KM). Several sightings were made in various parts of Travis County (CWE, EIS *et al.*). Red-headed Woodpeckers were in above-normal numbers from Wilson County to the c. coast. An ad. ♂ **Williamson's Sapsucker** was seen in Austin's Oakwood Cemetery Feb. 9-22 (MAM *et al.*). The only previous observation for Travis County — also a male — was made at the same site Oct. 5, 1963.

FLYCATCHERS, JAYS, CROWS — Tropical Kingbirds deserted the Rio Grande Delta this season (JCA). This was definitely a Blue Jay winter, following a heavy fall invasion. They were most conspicuous on the c. coast, but apparently ventured little farther south than Corpus Christi. Mexican Crows were present in flocks up to 500 in the Brownsville area (JCA).

VERDINS THROUGH STARLINGS — Verdin numbers seemed low at San Antonio and no winter nests were found (JAM). This and other brush country species are steadily losing ground as land clearing continues. House Wrens were down generally except on the upper coast. Bewick's Wrens were "quite low" at Falfurrias (AWO). One was seen at Cove Dec. 23 (DTD & JD), an unusual record for the upper coast. Gray Catbirds,

Brown and Long-billed Thrashers were absent from O'Neil's territory at Falfurrias. American Robins were in above-normal numbers almost everywhere. A roost w. of Austin was thought to contain hundreds of thousands. Near record numbers were reported at San Antonio and Corpus Christi. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and both kinglet species were recorded in below-normal numbers generally. Cedar Waxwing numbers were good in the w. half of the region. Starlings were plentiful on the c. coast and in record numbers at Falfurrias but apparently down from normal on the upper coast.

VIREOS, WARBLERS — Solitary Vireos, usually fairly common, and all warblers except the Yellow-rumped, were below normal in the Rio Grande Delta (JCA). Orange-crowned Warblers were down throughout the Region. A ♂ Tropical Parula was observed at Santa Ana N.W.R., Jan. 2 (LK, JW), and a singing male discovered at Brownsville Feb. 6 lingered through the season (JCA, SB). Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers were in good supply throughout the region but especially abundant on the c. coast. Black-throated Gray Warblers were conspicuously absent from the Rio Grande Delta. At San Antonio a Pine Warbler Feb. 13 (JAM), and an Ovenbird Jan. 21 (SH) were unusual. Apparently several Louisiana Waterthrushes wintered in mangrove swamps near the mouth of the Rio Grande (JCA, SB).

BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS — A roost at Corpus Christi accommodated more than one and one-half million blackbirds, mostly Red-wingeds (KM). Common Grackles, usually confined to the e. half of Texas, spread SW to San Antonio (JAM) and Alice (ROA) in considerable numbers. This species was abundant at San Antonio at the turn of the century but the steady northward march of the Great-tailed Grackle provided too much competition. A W. Tanager was seen at San Antonio Dec. 29 (HD *et al.*), and a Summer Tanager at High I., Jan. 15 (JGM).

FRINGILLIDS — A ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak frequented a feeder at Mission, Hidalgo Co. (HR). One was seen in the Rockport area Feb. 4 (CJ *et al.*), and several reports came from the upper coast. This was a good winter for Purple Finches on the upper coast and westward to San Antonio. The invasion spilled S into Bee County where this species is unusual (AHG). A ♂ Cassin's Finch was carefully identified in company with Purple Finches at Austin Feb. 17 (EIS). Very few Pine Siskins were reported in the region, and Am. Goldfinch numbers were below normal in most areas, Karnes County being an exception (WS). Rufous-sided Towhees were notably high at San Antonio (DW). Lark Buntings were scarce in deep S. Texas after a good season last year (JCA); possibly owing to too much moisture. Savannah, Lark, Clay-colored, and Lincoln's Sparrows were generally in fewer than normal numbers, while Vesper, Harris', and White-throated Sparrows were generally in good numbers. For most sparrow species, shortages were particularly acute on the c. coast and in deep S. Texas. An excellent population of Longspurs was found in the New Braunfels area. On Nov. 27 an estimated 375+ McCown's, 25+ Lapland, and 100 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were seen in a field of young oats (MH, DW). On Jan. 10 the count in grain stubble fields was 200+ McCown's, 85+ Lapland, and 245+ Chestnut-collared (MB, MH, DW). Lapland Longspurs were again plentiful in w. Harris County rice fields; a high count of 700 was made Dec. 31 (DTD, JE & TLE).

CORRIGENDA: Identification of the *Anous* species tern found on Padre I. (AB 29:1004 and 30:97) as a Black Noddy on the basis of photographic evidence was challenged (AB 30:26). We thank Gerald J. Oreel and Henry M. Stevenson for constructive comments in favor of Noddy Tern, *Anous stolidus*. The supposed Allen's Hummingbird photographed in Houston (AB 30:741) cannot be positively identified, according to Keith A. Arnold, Chairman, Bird Records Committee, Texas Ornithological Society.

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NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION /Helmut Grünberg

As most of the birds encountered in the Yukon leave the area during the grim winter season, so also do the birders who might otherwise be keeping track of them. Despite little participation and few observers, we submit this report because it has been an unusual winter, which is partly reflected in the birds that were observed during this season.

The winter 1976–77 was the warmest winter on record in

the Whitehorse area and the Yukon at large. The average December temperatures were -11.5°C ($+11.3^{\circ}\text{F}$) [the long-term average is -15.8°C ($+3.6^{\circ}\text{F}$)]. In January the difference became more drastic. Average temperatures were -7.7°C ($+18.1^{\circ}\text{F}$) [-18.9°C (-2.0°F)]. Relatively high temperatures prevailed in February, with an average of -2.8°C ($+27.0^{\circ}\text{F}$) [-13.2°C ($+8.2^{\circ}\text{F}$)], while March temperatures were close to normal, averaging -6.7°C ($+19.9^{\circ}\text{F}$) [-7.7°C ($+18.1^{\circ}\text{F}$)].

To most it seemed to be a dry winter while the amount of precipitation was actually slightly higher than normal. However, as there were frequent warm periods and the temperatures rose to above freezing every month, no heavy snow cover could develop. The temperature rose to $+5.7^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($+42.3^{\circ}\text{F}$) in December, $+9.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($+46.2^{\circ}\text{F}$) in January, $+6.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($+43.2^{\circ}\text{F}$) in February, and $+4.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($+40.1^{\circ}\text{F}$) in March. The coldest temperature in Whitehorse during the entire winter was only -27.6°C (-17.7°F), which was recorded one day in December. No major cold spells occurred.

Precipitation in northern parts of the Yukon (north of Dawson City) was significantly above normal, while in some areas of southwestern Yukon, the precipitation was clearly below normal. Most reports received are from observers in the Whitehorse area, with a few isolated notes from other parts of the region.

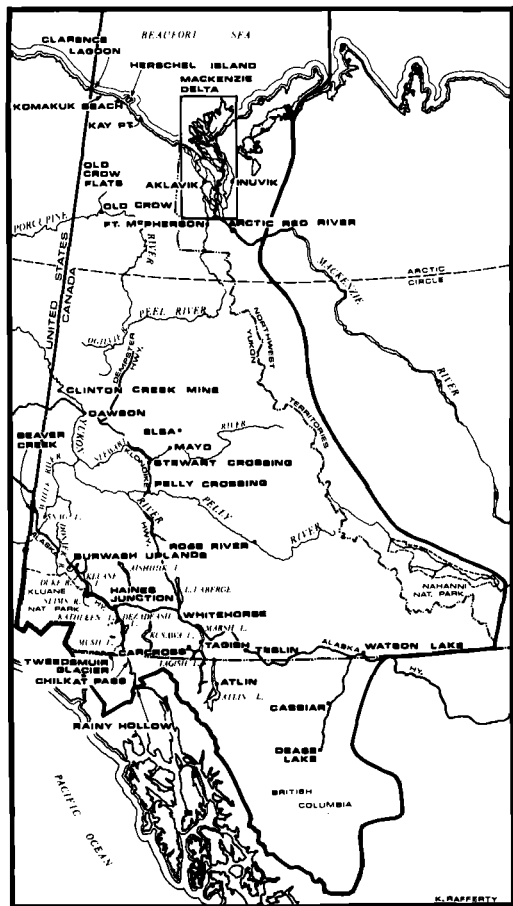
WATERFOWL—Sixteen swans were observed flying S over Johnson's Crossing Dec. 4 (PD). It is assumed that these were Whistling Swans. Large portions of the Yukon R remained open this winter; therefore it is not surprising that Mallards were seen near Carcross all winter, although infrequently (DM). Common Goldeneyes stayed for the winter. Five were reported Jan. 29 (D&GM) and a few Feb 26 (HG). One ♀ Com. Merganser was observed Jan. 24 & 29 (HG), and two others were on the Yukon R. in Whitehorse Jan. 29 (D&GM).

HAWKS, FALCONS—Several reports of diurnal birds of prey were received. A Goshawk was at the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 1 (DM) and a Gyrfalcon was at Milepost 50 on the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 3 (DM). Golden Eagles were observed infrequently this winter in the s. Yukon (DM). Several were seen apparently migrating Mar. 30 (DM). A Marsh Hawk was seen near Whitehorse Nov. 30 (DN).

GROUSE AND PTARMIGAN—Spruce Grouse seems to be the most common woodland species around Whitehorse. There were five reports from Whitehorse throughout the whole winter (HG) and one from the Haines Rd., s of Dezedeah (HG). At least four Ruffed Grouse overwintered in one specific area near Whitehorse. They were seen prior to Dec. 1 (HG), Jan. 28–29 (HG), and again after Mar. 31, in the same location (HG, PM). Ruffed Grouse were also reported from the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 3 (DM). Ptarmigan reports were scarce this year, as no reports were received from Kluane Park. Both Rock and Willow Ptarmigans were observed on the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 1–3 (DM).

PIGEONS, OWLS—About 100 Rock Doves were observed in Whitehorse throughout the winter, eventually decreasing to ± 50 (DM). Great Horned Owls apparently overwinter in the Yukon, but are not easily observed and are usually overlooked until they start to call. The first reported was near Whitehorse Feb. 10 (HG). Nine more observations were noted in February and March (HG). An unusual observation of a Short-eared Owl was reported from Haines Jct., Dec. 21 (HG), and one was seen near Whitehorse Nov 30 (DN).

WOODPECKERS—The most common woodpecker in the region is the N. Three-toed. It was observed several times in each of the winter months, 26 times by one observer (HG)



and an unstated number of times by another (KB). The Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker is apparently present in certain locations during the winter (KB), although no definite dates of observations were reported. The status of the Hairy Woodpecker is still unclear. Does it overwinter? Do some individuals migrate? There is only one report available: one male was seen near Whitehorse Mar. 12 in an area where it had not been present in previous months (HG).

LARKS, SWALLOWS—While Horned Larks migrate through the Whitehorse area in normal years, a few seemed to have stayed and survived last winter. Two were reported Nov. 30 (DN), and migrating larks were observed until Dec. 17 (DM). One female was seen in that same location Jan. 29 (DM). A dead Violet-green Swallow was found in Whitehorse near the NCPCE power dam Feb. 25 (HM). Although game branch biologists determined that it died several months earlier, it is interesting to note that it apparently missed the southward migration.

CORVIDS—Three species in this family were seen every month during the winter. The Gray Jay was as common as usual. The Black-billed Magpie was found in specific locations throughout the winter (KB, HG, DM), numbering up to three birds in a given area. In one of these areas a Black billed Magpie was singing Mar. 30 (HG). Common Ravens were concentrated in Whitehorse, particularly at the dump, where up to 460 individuals were seen Jan. 31 (D&GM). But ravens were also observed in areas a few miles away from town, perhaps in greater numbers than in colder winters (HG, KB), and as far away as the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 2-3 (DM).

CHICKADEES, DIPPER—The most common chickadee in the city in winter is the Black-capped. It was common at feeders until the end of January (DM). But it was also found away from the city more frequently than usual. In one area 4 mi. n.e. of Whitehorse, up to three Black-cappeds were observed on 35 different days Jan. 27-Mar. 31 (HG). Also, 10 mi. s. of Whitehorse, they were seen regularly (KB). The Boreal Chickadee is sometimes found at feeders in the city, but mainly in forested areas. It is probably the species most commonly encountered in the woods. It was noted on 57 different days throughout the winter by one observer alone (HG). Dippers were more common than in colder winters, probably owing to many open rivers and creeks. There are reports of observations for every month of the winter (HG, D&GM).

WAXWINGS, STARLINGS—Bohemian Waxwings stayed throughout the winter in Whitehorse, in flocks of up to 50 birds. The first was reported Jan. 9 (PL). From March 10 onwards, waxwings were seen 2 mi. from Whitehorse in flocks of ± 120 individuals (HG). For the first time, Starlings overwintered in Whitehorse. Two were seen Dec. 6 (GL), and they were observed in Whitehorse every month of the winter (DM) with a maximum of 12 birds (HG). Maybe this hardy Old World species is beginning to spread into yet another area.

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, BUNTINGS—Pine Grosbeaks were observed in small numbers in many areas throughout the winter (KB, HG, DM), with large numbers in loose flocks migrating N near Whitehorse from mid-March on (HG). Redpolls were seen in small flocks throughout the winter (HG, DM), increasing numbers migrating N near Whitehorse during the last half of March (HG, DM). Most of the redpolls were not positively identified as to species. It is assumed, however, that the great majority were Commons. A report of a Hoary Redpoll came from the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 3 (DM). Crossbills were scarce this winter with only three reports of a few White-wingeds Jan. 29, Feb. 4-5

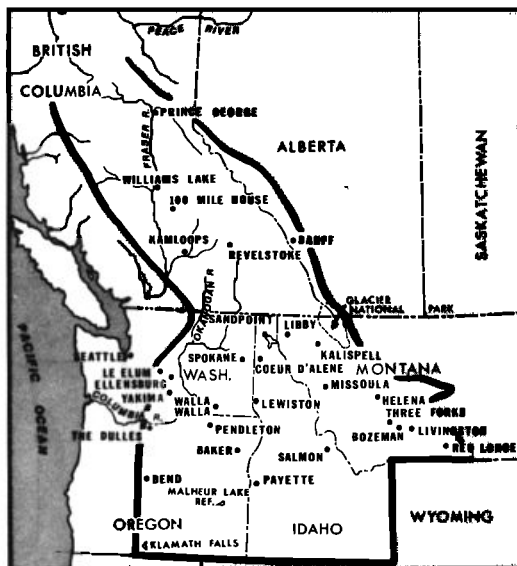
(HG). Snow Buntings were observed in Whitehorse through out the winter, with a large influx beginning approximately Mar. 20 (DM). Flocks of ± 200 birds were seen in White horse Mar. 24 (HG).

INITIALED OBSERVERS—Kate Bennett, Phil Davignon Helmut Grünberg, Pat Lister, Grant Lortie, Hector MacKen zie, Paul Mantle, Dave Mossop, Grace Mossop, Dan Now lan.—**HELMUT GRÜNBERG, General Delivery, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S7 Canada.** Please send spring migration in formation and any comments about this report to the above address.

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN - INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/Thomas H. Rogers

The region's winter was almost uniformly mild and close to the driest on record. The valleys and slopes well up into the mountains, were snow free practically all winter. However, most reporters described a dearth of bird life and speculated that lack



of snow made food easy to get, keeping birds widely dispersed and allowing northern birds, particularly the finches, to remain at higher latitudes and in the mountains. Dozens of semi-hardy species lingered late or wintered, and early spring arrivals were many. Lakes and reservoirs were low and numerous ponds and marshes completely dry.

LOONS, GREBES—On Swan L., in Lake Co., Mont. single Com. Loons lingered until Dec. 6 and were on Flathead L., Jan 29 & Feb. 1 (F.A.S.). They wintered in small numbers on Okanagan L., B.C. A Red-necked Grebe was at Yellow Bay, Flathead L., Dec. 16 & Jan. 3 (DS). Single Horned Grebes apparently wintered on Flathead L. and possibly on Swan and Bitterroot Lakes in n.w. Montana (F.A.S.) and on Coeur d' Alene L., Ida. (SGS). An Eared Grebe stayed as late as Dec. 18 near Somers Mont. (F.A.S.), and Hayden L., Ida. had two Dec. 12 (SGS).

PELICANS THROUGH HERONS—A White Pelican, probably sick, and a Double-crested Cormorant were at Minidoka N.W.R., Rupert, Ida., Jan. 5 (WHS). A Great Egret wintered in the farmlands near Lowden, Wash. (DL). The Nampa, Ida. area

had Black-crowned Night Herons up to Dec. 27 (G.E.A.S.) and one was at Rupert Jan. 18 (WHS). An Am. Bittern at Toppenish N W R , Yakima Co., Wash., Feb. 21 was extremely early (EH).

WATERFOWL — The mid-winter tri-state Trumpeter Swan survey around Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., Mont., Feb. 9 revealed 839 adults and 178 cygnets, up 40% over last winter. In s.e. Idaho 26 Trumpeters appeared wearing orange neck collars that had been attached in 1976 at Grande Prairie, Alta. Two Trumpeters were on Vaseux L., s. of Penticton, B.C., Jan. 29 (SRC). At Turnbull N.W.R., Cheney, Wash. the birds peaked at 30 in early December. Freezing of lakes at Malheur N.W.R., Burns, Ore., in January caused Trumpeter numbers to drop to 17 and Canada Goose numbers to 546. However, McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Wash. had nearly 800 Canadas in late January, increasing to over 40,000 in February. Approximately 500 were on Sprague L. near Sprague, Wash., Feb. 27 and Toppenish N.W.R., Wash. had a similar number Feb. 15. The Nampa area had 6700 Dec. 5 and Columbia N.W.R., Othello, Wash., peaked at 4200 in February. A White-fronted Goose was believed to have wintered at Richland, Wash. (REW).

The Idaho Fish and Game Dept. counted 48,000 ducks and 14,000 Canada Geese on Am. Fall Res., s. Ida., Jan. 10-11. Peak duck numbers at Columbia N.W.R. were 53,000 in December, down from 94,000 a year ago but Mallards reached 57,000 on the Columbia R. in McNary N.W.R., Jan. 25 and Deer Flat N.W.R., Nampa, had over 402,000 of this species. At Malheur N.W.R. the January freeze drove most ducks out. Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, Ida. had 18-24,000 Mallards compared to the normal winter population of 50! A Black Duck appeared at Livingston, Mont. in January (HC, BFi). A Eur. Wigeon was observed on several dates at Kennewick, Wash., Dec. 19 - Feb. 12 (CCo, REW). A few N. Shovelers lingered in the Nampa area until Dec. 27 and Lewiston, Ida. had five Jan. 8. Toppenish Creek had two in late December. Wood Duck numbers at Deer Flat N W R., Nampa reached 200 in January, and about eight wintered near Vernon, B.C. Okanagan Landing near Vernon, B C had an Oldsquaw Jan. 15 and a ♂ Harlequin Duck was on the Okanagan R., s. of Vaseux L., Dec. 31 (SRC). A ♂ Surf Scoter on Swan L. near Vernon Dec. 26 was most unusual (JG). A few Ruddy Ducks appeared on the Clearwater R., near Lewiston and small numbers lingered on Okanagan L. up to mid-January. Rupert reported one Jan. 21. Two Red-breasted Mergansers appeared at Salmon, Ida., Dec. 31 (HBR).

VULTURES, HAWKS — Two Turkey Vultures near Madras, Ore., Jan. 19 were remarkably early (CS) and the Ellensburg, Wash. area had two Feb. 23 and four the next day (Y.A.S.). At least 14 widely scattered reports of Goshawk sightings were received. A few localities recorded Cooper's Hawk. In s.e. Washington, mostly around Toppenish N.W.R., 42 days' observing yielded 14 sightings (EH) and the birds regularly picked off songbirds at feeders in Missoula, Mont. (SF). A dark-phase Swainson's Hawk was carefully observed Dec. 18 near Wenatchee, Wash. (N.C.A.S.), and one was reported at Wenas L., Feb. 26 (Y.A.S.). Rough-legged Hawk numbers were low in most localities but appeared normal at Salmon, Ida. and "hundreds" were reported in the Rupert, Ida. area (WHS). Ferruginous Hawks made remarkable winter appearances in five localities: one w of Blackfoot, Ida., Dec. 16 (CHT); in the Rupert, Ida. area (WHS); at Tumalo, Ore., Jan. 30 (JJ); one near Sheridan, Mont., Jan. 28 (TSB, CSu), and one in Helena (Christmas Bird Count)

Bureau of Land Management Bald Eagle counts for Wolf Lodge Bay, Coeur d' Alene L. showed a rise in numbers from seven Dec. 3 to a peak of 73 (67 ad., six imm.) Dec. 29, then a drop to seven Feb. 23 (JLi). The mid-winter U.S. F. & W.S. census from Columbia Falls to Polson and Ninepine N.W.R., Pablo and w to Thompson Falls in n.w. Montana found only 16,

"down significantly" (GH). High count in the Pocatello, Ida area Feb. 5 was 38, about one-half of which were immature. This is about one-half the normal number (CHT). Single Gyrfalcons were sighted in two localities in e. Washington. Southern Idaho seemed to have good numbers of Prairie Falcons but reports elsewhere were rather sparse. Only four Peregrine Falcon sightings came in, all (but one in Oregon), from British Columbia. Single Merlins were sighted at 16 localities scattered over the region. American Kestrels wintered in large numbers in s Idaho and sparingly at several other localities.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS — The mild, almost snowless winter apparently made it easy for this group. Two Sharp-tailed Grouse were seen in the Flathead Valley near Somers, Mont., Feb. 2, where the species apparently is scarce (F.A.S.). The only other report was from Idaho: 12 at Nampa. Sage Grouse were reported at Rupert, Ida. and s. of Creston, Wash. Up to 30 Mountain Quail appeared in the Nampa area (G.E.A.S.) The Turkey population on Bozeman Pass, e. of Bozeman, Mont was persisting. The only other record was of a male heard 5 mi n e of Lyle, Wash. (EH).

CRANES THROUGH COOTS — Two Sandhill Cranes spent February in a field n.e. of Corvallis, Mont. (RS), and the species returned to Malheur N.W.R. by Feb. 13, eight days earlier than last year. The Nampa area had a Virginia Rail Dec 30 (G.E.A.S.), one was heard at Toppenish N.W.R., Dec. 21 (EH), and one was at a pond near Toppenish, Wash., Feb. 15 (ZB). Several Soras were seen during late December and early January at Salmon, Ida. (HBR). Wintering Am. Coot numbers at Columbia N.W.R., Othello, Wash. were less than one-third of what they were last winter.

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS — In Idaho three Spotted Sandpipers persisted until Dec. 18 at Nampa (G.E.A.S.) and one was still at Salmon Jan. 16 (HBR)! A Greater Yellowlegs lingered at Nampa until Jan. 18 (G.E.A.S.) and one was found Dec. 25 near Springfield, Ida. (CHT). A Least Sandpiper stayed at the Yakima R. delta near Richland Dec. 4 - Feb. 23 and about 30 Dunlin also wintered there (REW). A second-year **Glaucous Gull** was at the Coeur d' Alene city dump from at least Jan 29 - Feb. 5 (BW, JA *et al.*) and an adult and two immatures were found on Banks L., Grant Co., Wash., Feb. 20 (SH, DP, MP). An adult was flushed from a Columbia R. island at Richland Dec. 11 (EH & REW). A gull believed to be a second-year Iceland Gull was observed at length and photographed Jan 29-30 and Feb. 5 at the Coeur d' Alene dump (BW, WH, ER, JR, THR & RW). An ad. Glaucous-winged Gull was along the Columbia R., at Alderdale, Wash., Dec. 30 (EH) and one was carefully identified Dec. 28 at Summerland, B.C. The species is very rare at any season in interior British Columbia (DC & RC & SC). Two ad. Tayer's Gulls were identified at Coeur d' Alene dump Feb. 19-21 (DP, JA, BW).

DOVES THROUGH OWLS — Two Mourning Doves were seen near Ennis, Mont., Dec. 20 (CVD, LM, SMA & RAH) and one was e. of Bozeman Jan. 29 (JK). Twelve were found along the Flathead R. near Kalispell, Mont., Jan. 17 (BR) and Libby, Mont. had up to 27 (EE & RE). Twenty-five were still at Rupert at Christmas (WHS) and Nampa also had large numbers then (G.E.A.S.). Barn Owls were sighted at Lewiston, Rupert and Nampa, Ida., at Asotin, Walla Walla and Toppenish N W R , Wash., and at Umatilla, Ore. A Screech Owl at Sheridan, Mont in mid-January was noteworthy (JVB & TSB). A few Snowy Owls appeared in e. Washington from Spokane to Davenport. The Okanagan Valley of British Columbia had only two records, one at Vernon Dec. 30 (JTF) and one at Tranquille Jan. 2 (Jan) One at Bozeman Dec. 22 - Jan. 4 was more unusual (HH, SCO, JF), Feb. 6 one appeared 25 mi. s.e. of Fortine, Mont. (WW); and one spent December and January in Pleasant Valley, 35 mi w of

Kalispell, Mont. (BF). Only Canada reported the Hawk Owl; one at Edgewater n. ofadium Hot Springs, B.C., Feb. 21 (FK), one e of Skookumchuck, B.C. (*vide* MVW), and one in Turner Valley in the mountains w. of Calgary. Alta. (MRL). The mild winter found several Burrowing Owls at Toppenish N.W.R. where they stayed in holes in the banks of Marian Drain, the main irrigation drain there, or lived in small pipes emptying into it (EH, Y.A.S.). Two were at Rupert until Christmas (WHS) and one stayed at Pocatello until at least Dec. 18 (CHT). Besides four reports of Barred Owls from s. British Columbia one was noted four mi. e. of Pullman, Wash., Nov. 26 - Dec. 17 (JWW) and one was sighted in Glacier N.P., Mont. (JDe, CM, NP, RT). The only Great Gray Owl reported was one perched on a telephone pole along the highway w. of Kalispell, Mont., Dec. 2 (BF). Short-eared Owls appeared scarce or rare in most localities. However, Toppenish N.W.R. had perhaps six (EH), and a small grassland near Vernon, B.C. had about eight wintering (JG). A single of the rarely observed **Boreal Owl** was photographed near Ross L., Yoho N.P., B.C., Dec. 8 (DHo) and another was observed from 15 ft in daylight in the Chumstick Valley n. of Leavenworth, Wash., Jan. 6 (LG *et al.*). The only Saw-whet Owls were one at Orondo, Wash., Jan. 4 (PC & HO) and one freshly dead in a barn in West Richland, Wash., Jan. 26 or 27 (JD).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH SWALLOWS — One ♂ and one ♀ Anna's Hummingbirds were at a Yakima feeder Dec. 4 (CSL) and the species was reported again there Feb. 13 (Y.A.S.). One in West Wenatchee Jan. 5 was probably of this species (LG). More surprising was an imm. male at a Spokane feeder from Jan. 10 (JA, JR *et al.*) for that city's second record — the first in winter. An ad. female **Anna's Hummingbird** at a Lewiston feeder Nov. 20 - Dec. 17 was Idaho's first (EMc, JWW, JWo). In British Columbia an adult and an immature were at Kelowna at least to December's end (RY) and two immatures were at Penticton Jan. 21 (SRC). A **Red-headed Woodpecker** was seen in the Nampa area Dec. 30 (SRu). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker stayed in Rupert until Feb. 4 (WHS). Belatedly reported were two White-headed Woodpeckers near Lakeside, Mont., Oct. 26 (EGR). A N. Three-toed Woodpecker was observed at Bitterroot L., Mont., Dec. 15 (BF) and four sightings were made in the Yoho N.P.-Nicholson area (RRH). About 100 Lewis' Woodpeckers wintered at Ft. Simcoe S.P., Yakima Co., Wash. (EH). Say's Phoebe apparently wintered for the first time on record at Penticton; two were there Dec. 27-28 and Feb. 18 & 23 (SRC). One was found near Wenatchee Jan. 24. (PC) and Toppenish N.W.R. had one Dec. 18 & Jan. 3 (EH). The species had returned to Malheur N.W.R., Feb. 15 (*cf* Mar. 9, 1976) and one was near Genesee, Ida., Feb. 17 (DLH) and one or two were in the Lewiston-Clarkston area Feb. 26-27 (EMc). Ten Violet-green Swallows over the Spokane R. below Spokane (WH) and along the Columbia R., w. of Quincy, Wash. (N.C.A.S.) both Feb. 26 were the earliest ever. Two of this species and one Tree Swallow along the Columbia R. at Beverly Feb. 20 were the earliest ever for e Washington by eight days (SH, DP, MP). Richland had four or five over the Yakima R. on the unusually early date of Feb. 26 (EM).

JAYS THROUGH WRENS — The Blue Jay invasion was impressive. The species was noted in the Bozeman area Dec. 26 (BRu, JRu, SR), at nearby Belgrade Feb. 12-13, and five regularly October through February in Sheridan, Mont. (JVB, TSB). Another sizable group was reported to have wintered in Twin Bridges, Mont. One stayed through the winter in Hamilton, Mont., and others in the same valley at Lick Creek Campground (*vide* RS). The Nampa, Ida. area reported a counted high of 18 on Feb. 21 but at least twice that number were believed present (JH) and the birds appeared consistently at Lewiston (DK). Six were seen 7 mi. e. of Moscow, Ida., Dec. 15 and one at the same location Dec. 20 & Jan. 3 (DLH). The Pullman-Moscow

CBC had 24. In British Columbia one was at Nicholson Feb. 20 (RRH), singles were at two feeders regularly in Kimberley (PM, MVW), three wintered at Revelstoke (JW), and Nelson had three Dec. 26 (AH, DH, VR). Blue Jays also appeared at Walla Walla and remained to the end of February (SM) and one was seen in Richland periodically Nov. 27 - Jan. 22 (LL, REW). At Spokane up to ten frequented a feeder quite regularly at the w. base of Browne Mt. from fall through the winter period (JR, THR *et al.*). One in Helena overwintered and was frequently seen at a feeder (AS). A Com. Crow in Golden, B.C., Feb. 13, one in Field, B.C., Feb. 22 and a few at Brisco, B.C., Feb. 15, if overwintering, would have been the first recorded (RRH). Mountain areas reported moderate numbers of Clark's Nutcrackers, 25 was the largest group, at Browne Mt., Feb. 12. A Mountain Chickadee at Richland Jan. 23 was very unusual (EH). Twelve Com. Bushtits were positively identified in the Blue Mts. just e. of Walla Walla Dec. 18 (MC, KK, JWo). The only others were ten at Alderdale, Wash., Dec. 1 (EH). A Pygmy Nuthatch at Sheridan, Mont., Jan. 4 was the first ever for that area (JVB, TSB). A Winter Wren at Nicholson, B.C., Feb. 26 was extremely early. It is believed that the species has never wintered there (RRH). A Bewick's Wren wintered one mi. n. of Asotin, Wash. and made the second record for that area (JWW). The species wintered at Walla Walla in numbers somewhat lower than seen in summer (KK). A Rock Wren was heard along Alder Creek in e. Klickitat Co., Wash., Dec. 30 & Mar. 4 (EH) and one wintered at Naramata, B.C. where winter records are few (JL). One was at Asotin, Wash., Jan. 25 (JWW).

THRUSHES THROUGH SHRIKES — American Robins wintered sparingly, in contrast to last winter's hordes. A Varied Thrush appeared near Arrow Rock Res., e. of Boise Feb. 18 (EC). The only Hermit Thrush sightings were in February, one in Richland, Wash. (REW) and one in Hermiston, Ore. (CCo). Three Mountain Bluebirds at Minidoka N.W.R., Feb. 16 were the earliest on record there (WHS) and also were the earliest regionally. Golden-crowned Kinglets, normally rare in winter in the Yoho-Nicholson area, were seen a number of times during the period (RRH), presumably held by mild conditions. Water Pipts were feeding along the edge of the ice on the Yakima R. at Richland Jan. 10-14 (EM). Five at Sunriver, Ore. were also unusual (JB). The Nampa area had rather large numbers in December (G.E.A.S.). The Bozeman and Gardiner, Mont. areas seemed to have the biggest concentration of Bohemian Waxwings; some other areas had average or lower numbers, likely related to rather large numbers in the Yoho-Golden-upper Columbia R. Valley. Ten Cedar Waxwings were still at Nicholson, B.C., Dec. 24 (*vide* FK). In addition to the usual N. Shrikes, several reports of wintering Loggerhead Shrikes came in. One was at Asotin, Wash., Dec. 18 - Jan. 25 for that area's first winter record (JWW). Toppenish N.W.R. had one Dec. 9 & 21 and Alderdale, Wash. had two Jan. 4 (EH). Columbia N.W.R. reported one Jan. 18 (DB). In Idaho two were reported at Salmon Dec. 31 (HBR) and at Nampa there were two Dec. 18 and one Feb. 21 (G.E.A.S.).

WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — Orange-crowned Warblers overwintered at Richland in small numbers (EM, EMi) and Hermiston, Ore. had one Jan. 10 (CCo). One or two were at Nampa on three dates Dec. 17 - Jan. 1, and one found dead was preserved as a specimen (BS). Most surprising was a Nashville Warbler at a Pullman feeder Dec. 23 on, for e Washington's first winter record (IOB & JWW). A Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler at Vernon Dec. 23 was the first in winter there (PS). Two N. Waterthrushes on the Pocatello CBC were remarkable.

Western Meadowlarks were two weeks early at Kimberley, B.C. (MVW) and Feb. 19 was a very early date for Coeur d'Alene (SGS). Bozeman had one January record (PDS) and four were

near Kalispell in mid-January (F.A.S.). Only Toppenish N.W.R. reported wintering Yellow-headed Blackbirds, two Dec. 7 and one Jan. 22 & 27 (EH). A late Rusty Blackbird was at Nicholson, B.C., Dec. 5-13 (FK), the only locality reporting the species. A Brewer's Blackbird was at Colton, Wash., Jan. 22 (JWW). Small numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds were regular with large flocks of Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds all winter at Toppenish N.W.R. (EH).

FINCHES — Evening Grosbeaks were unreported from e. Oregon, were very sparse or absent in e. Washington and the Okanagan of British Columbia but seemed more nearly normal elsewhere. However, moderate numbers were in the Golden, B.C. area and up to 60 frequented a feeder at Invermere, B.C. Supposedly most of the birds stayed at higher altitudes or in the northerly parts of the region. One ♀ Purple Finch was reported at Wiley City near Yakima Dec. 12 (EH). Wintering Cassin's Finches were practically nonexistent. Bozeman had its first winter record for the House Finch, with seven at a feeder in December and January (EHa, CH). Pine Grosbeaks went virtually unseen in the valleys. A few wintered in Bozeman and at Bigfork, a few were seen in the Yoho-Nicholson area and a few wintered at approximately 6000 ft. in Mt. Revelstoke N.P., B.C. (JW). Jim Grant strongly suspected an actual scarcity of the birds for he found none in the mountains at 4000-6000 ft. near Vernon. The only other locality reporting them was Bumping L. in the mountains w. of Yakima: one bird Dec. 14 (IL). Gray-crowned Rosy Finches seemed concentrated mostly in the Revelstoke-Glacier-Yoho N.P. area and in the Gardiner-Bozeman area. At Gardiner ±2000 were in one flock Jan. 18 (JQ). The same locality had 24 Black Rosy Finches Dec. 19 (JQ) and Pocatello had two Dec. 18 (CHT). Two Hoary Redpolls were with Com. Redpolls at Nicholson Jan. 16-21 (FK, RRH). Practically all the Com. Redpolls appeared to have stayed in Canada; good numbers appeared around Mt. Revelstoke (JW) and Yoho N.P. (RRH). Pine Siskin reports were sparse; the birds may have wintered in northern and mountain areas for they appeared in Yoho N.P., Feb. 17 for that area's first winter record and increased in numbers all month (RRH). Twenty Am. Goldfinches at Revelstoke Jan. 1 supplied the first winter record in that area (JW). Red Crossbills apparently stayed in the mountains for the most part. Around Revelstoke they were abundant all winter at 3000 - 4000 ft. (JW). In the mountains around Wenatchee, Wash. the population was still high (PC). White-winged Crossbills were found mostly in the Yoho-Nicholson area and were singing and carrying nest material in Mt. Revelstoke N.P. at 4000 ft., Feb. 23 (JW). Otherwise the species was seen only at Pocatello, a single bird Dec. 18 (CHT).

SPARROWS — Wintering Rufous-sided Towhees were exceedingly scarce or absent from most localities. The Yakima area seemed to have the most; a feeder near Moxee had six at a feeder all winter. Spokane recorded a very early one Feb. 23 (JR). A few Savannah Sparrows wintered at Walla Walla (KK) and one was found on Sunnyside Game Range near Yakima Jan. 16 (EH). Sage Sparrows were sighted on Yakima Indian Reservation and at Hanford Atomic Energy Res. in late February (ZB & EH). At least two Dark-eyed Juncos were at Golden through January and were not using feeders and two were at Invermere Feb. 8 (RRH). Four Tree Sparrows on Yakima Indian Reservation, Feb. 27 were considered noteworthy (Y.A.S.). Nampa had Chipping Sparrows as late as Dec. 27 (G.E.A.S.) and one was with White-crowned Sparrows at Toppenish N.W.R., Dec. 21 (EH). A few Harris' Sparrows wintered. Of special note were two near Kalispell Feb. 15 (BR) and one at a feeder in that city (LB). A White-crowned Sparrow was found along the Flathead R. near Kalispell Dec. 23 (BR). A few Golden-crowned Sparrows were wintering in the brushy foothills of Yakima and Klickitat Cos., Wash. and one showed up at Umatilla N.W.R., Ore., Feb.

27 (CCo). White-throated Sparrows were reported along Rattle snake Creek at Missoula (AB). A few Fox Sparrows apparently wintered in the Yakima area; the Ahtanum area had three Dec 9 (ZB), and Toppenish N.W.R. had singles Jan. 15 & 29 (EH) Single Lincoln's Sparrows were found at Toppenish N.W.R Dec. 14 and Sunnyside Game Range Jan. 16 (EH). Only Rupert reported Lapland Longspurs, a few in late December (WHS) Apparently very few Snow Buntings made it below the Canadian border. Most of the sightings, involving very moderate numbers were in the Glacier-Yoho N.P. area, with an additional sighting at Kelowna.

OBSERVERS CITED — (JA) James Acton, (JAN) Jerry Ansell, Arnold Bolle, Ladd Bjerneby, Jay Bowerman, Dave Brown, J.V. & T.S. Burns, I. O. Buss, Zelfia Butler, Dick & Rob Cannings, (SC) Sid Cannings, (SRC) Steve R. Cannings, Helen Carlson, Erwin Carson, Phil Cheney, Mark Conwell, (CCo) Craig Corder, (SCo) Sharon Cotterell, C. V. Davis, (JD) Jeff Dawson (JDe) Jerry DeSanto, Esther & Ray Enders, (BF) Barbara Fenner, John Fisher, (BFi) Bebe Fitzgerald, Flathead Audubon Society, Jack T. Fowle, Sidney Frissell, Golden Eagle Audubon Society, Larry Goodhew, James Grant, Gary Hagedorn, Warren Hall, Camille Harper, (EHa) Ed Harper, Harry Hausser, R. A Hays, James Heckathorn, Sue Hills, David L. Holick, (DHo) Dennis Horwood, Ann Howe, (DH) Dick Howe, R. R. Howie (EH) Eugene Hunn, Julie Johnson, Jim Kamp, Dwight Kilgore Frances King, Ken Knittle, C. S. Ladley, Don Lee, Lillian Leggett, M. R. Lein, (JL) Jay Lewis, (JLi) Joe Lint, Isabelle Lynn Peggy MacPherson, (EMc) Ed McVicker, (SMA) Sid Martin (EMi) Ed Miller, Cindy Mish, (EM) Elisabeth Moore, Louis Moos, (SM) Shirley Muse, North Central Audubon Society Howard Oswood, Nancy Paul, Dennis Paulson, Mike Perrone Joyce Queckborner, Ed Reynolds, (JR) Jan Reynolds, Hadley B Roberts, Vera Robinson, (SR) Sam Rogers, T. H. Rogers, (BR) Betty Rose, E. Gail Royer, (SRU) Sybil Rudisell, (BRu) Bob Rumely, (JRU) John Rumely, Ann Scofield, Belle Shaw, W. H Shillington, P. D. Skaar, (CS) Christy Steck, Shirley G. Sturts Dan Sullivan, (CSU) Charles Sundstrom, Ruby Sutherland, Pat Swift, Rick Trembath, C. H. Trost, John W. Weber, Winton Weydemeyer, Bart Whelton, Mildred V. White, Robert Wilson (JWo) Jim Wolcott, Robert E. Woodley, (JW) John Woods Yakima Audubon Society, Robin Yellowlees. — **THOMAS H ROGERS, E. 10820 Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206.**

MOUNTAIN WEST /Hugh E. Kingery

Drought headlined this year's Mountain West winter, skewing its bird distribution somewhat. The region suffered from



snowpacks and snowfalls running only 20-75 per cent of normal. Poor food crops, both in the grasslands and the conifer forests, further disrupted normal patterns. An occasional dust storm presaged spring on the plains. Sheridan, Wyoming, was a happy exception with record January snows and normal mountain snowpacks.

Some birds responded to the drought by wintering north of their usual limits: shorebirds in Nevada, Eastern Bluebirds in eastern Colorado, Mountain Bluebirds in eastern Utah, Common Grackles in northern Colorado, and White-crowned Sparrows in Sheridan. A cormorant wintered at Boulder, Colorado, a Brown Thrasher at Ogden, Utah, a Yellow-rumped Warbler in Lander, Wyoming and a Green-tailed Towhee in Ridgway, Colorado. Rounding out the pattern were a few late fall records, especially in Utah. Early migrants like hummingbirds, swallows, and warblers arrived in southern Nevada, and bitterns, a Gray Catbird, and Sage Thrashers in Colorado. Yet, from the north came dozens of Glaucous Gulls, thousands of Bohemian Waxwings, and three dozen Barrow's Goldeneyes to one of Nevada's desert reservoirs; and autumn's Mountain Chickadee dispersal from the mountains continued.

LOONS TO HERONS — As with last year, Nevada had five Arctic Loon records: three at L. Mohave Dec. 2 (SP) and two there Feb. 14 (VM). Similarly, a Horned Grebe wintered at Boulder, Colo. Also as with last year, about 5000 Eared Grebes and a similar number of W. Grebes wintered at L. Mohave. Unlike last year, grebe numbers dropped at L. Mead: the high count of 150 Eareds Dec. 30 (VM) was only one-sixth of last year's high, and the 3000 Westerns counted in January halved last year's peak. A few Eareds moved N early, with two at Logan, Utah, in early January and two at Kanab, Utah, Feb. 21. At Vernal, Utah, 200 W. Grebes stayed until mid-December (MP); Barr L., near Denver, had three Dec. 7 (BA), and at Longmont one stayed until Dec. 18 (F.A.C.). One to four wintered at Boulder (DBB). Dubois, Wyo., even had a lingering Pied-billed Grebe until Dec. 20 (MB). One Double-crested Cormorant wintered at Boulder, and 15-20 wintered on L. Mead. Nevada had more egrets than in a usual winter: one Cattle Egret Dec. 5-13 at L. Mohave (CL); a Great Egret at Logandale and a Snowy Egret at Overton Jan. 20 (VM). At Farmington Bay, Utah, 3-5 Black-crowned Night Herons wintered (TP). American Bitterns stayed into December at Pahranaagat and to Dec. 2 at Vernal (TRS). On Feb. 6 early bitterns showed up at Boulder and Bear River Ref. (FH, RK). Nevada had its first winter record of White-faced Ibis, with three at Fallon Jan. 4 (NS).

SWANS, DUCKS — Trumpeter Swans in n.w. Wyoming totaled 138, an apparent increase (SS). Canada Geese thrived in n.e. Colorado with a January population of 55,503 (C.D.W.). More than usual Snow Geese spread through the region in mid-winter, with 13 wintering in Grand Jct., Colo. (DG), and one at Las Vegas (VM); January records at Boulder and Ft. Collins, Overton (VM) and Logandale, Nev. (PLU), and February records at Reno, Davis Dam, and Cody, Wyo. (UK). With 200 Snow Geese at Schurz, Nev., Jan. 2, were four Ross' Geese, all photographed (BPr). Many ducks arrived 2-4 weeks earlier than usual, i.e., Cinnamon Teals — at Logan in early January and Longmont Feb. 5; yet at Farmington Bay they arrived late, with only 20 by Feb. 28, compared with 1000 last year by the same date. Barrow's Goldeneyes again moved 5 to Davis Dam in numbers, with 16-39 counted there Dec. 14 - Feb. 27 (CL, VM). Nevada had more Oldsquaws winter than ever before, with 3-5 present at both Davis Dam and L. Mohave all winter (SP, VM). Colorado reported only one Oldsquaw, at Longmont Dec. 4-6 (PM, MM). Only White-wingeds stretched the fall scoter influx into December, with one at Longmont Dec. 4-7 (PM, BA) and one at Boulder Dec. 23 (RB). Many more Hooded Mergansers wintered than previously. Boulder, Grand Jct., s. Nevada,

Jackson, Wyo., and Flaming Gorge Res., Utah, all had 1-2 winter, and 12 appeared at Verdi, Nev., Feb. 27 (JA).

WATERFOWL — In n.e. Colorado wintering ducks declined, with about 80 per cent of last year's numbers (C.D.W.). Alamosa Ref. froze solid, and Monte Vista's population dropped to 8-10,000 ducks, mostly Mallards, about half of last year's population (MN). The Utah refuges supported even lower numbers, with the population at Farmington Bay 15 per cent of last year (TP). Bear River wintered less than 500 ducks and geese (RK) Migration began in early February with a few ducks at Kanab and Cedar City, 1500 at Vernal Feb. 1, and on Feb. 13, 3000 Pintails and 1000 Mallards arrived at Bear River. Humboldt W.M.A., near Ely, Nev., recorded the largest overwintering population, with 4500 Mallards and 4200 Pintails Jan. 4 (NS) Pahranaagat had 3000-3200 ducks through the winter (RV) Stillwater Ref., Nev., continues its slow death, with the waterfowl population down drastically as water acreage plummets to 20 per cent of maximum (LCH).

GROUSE, CRANES, RAILS — A Blue Grouse wandered into Cody, Wyo., Dec. 4, perhaps because it could find no water in the mountains (UK). Sage Grouse had begun dancing by early February at Toponas, Colo. Sheridan's observations increased substantially for Turkeys, pheasants, and Gray Partridges, perhaps assisted by the heavy snows in n.e. Wyoming moving them to more convenient observation sites. Five Whooping Cranes had arrived in the San Luis Valley, Colo., by Feb. 28, four at Monte Vista Ref. and one s. of Alamosa (MN). At Lund, Nev., 650 Sandhills had arrived by Feb. 24 and about 120 passed through Pahranaagat in February. Virginia Rails were discovered wintering in two marshes at Kanab, which had only one previous winter record (SH); a Sora stayed there Dec. 11 - Jan. 13 (SH), for the first winter record. Colorado had a late Sora at Pueblo Dec. 20 (A & EB) and an early one Feb. 6 at Boulder (FH).

SHOREBIRDS — Shorebirds (except Killdeer and snipe) rarely winter anywhere in the Mountain West, but some did this year. A few Killdeer even spent the season far north at Yellowstone and Jackson. Davis Dam had 4-6 Spotted Sandpipers Jan. 4-12 (VM) and Reno had one Jan. 26 (FR). Davis also had a late Pectoral Sandpiper Dec. 14, and 35-79 wintering Least Sandpipers (VM). At Ft. Mohave were 90 Least Jan. 20, and 2-4 apparently wintered at Las Vegas. Other Nevada shorebirds included: one Dunlin at Las Vegas Dec. 4 (VM), five Long-billed Dowitchers at Davis Dam Jan. 5 (VM), and five W Sandpipers at Ft. Mohave Jan. 20 (CL). Most remarkable though, were two Am. Avocets Dec. 15 and one Jan. 31 at Farmington Bay Ref., Utah (TP).

JAEGERS, GULLS — A Parasitic Jaeger, found Dec. 12 on the pre-CBC-count at Denver, had left by the following week (TG). Colorado enjoyed a record influx of Glaucous Gulls, with 40-50 observations Dec. 5 - Mar. 5 by various observers in n.e. Colorado (PM *et al.*). Colorado has no records of black-backed gulls — except for a mysterious adult which stayed with Ring-billeds and Herring Gulls at Denver Dec. 13-27 (m.ob.). Sized like a Lesser Black-backed, it lacked several diagnostic features, it may have been an intergrade, a dark-backed Herring Gull, or a Lesser Black-backed. Boulder County, Colo., had 66 January observations of Herring Gulls, compared with 20 in January, 1976 (DBB), and at Denver, Herring Gulls sometimes outnumbered Ring-billeds in February (CK). Kanab had its first Herring Gull record, Feb. 10 (SH).

OWLS, SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS — Four Barn Owl records — Bear R. in December, Bonny Res., Colo., Dec. 31, Logan Jan. 29, and Fallon, Nev., Feb. 1 — were more than usual. Despite the 1-3 Snowy Owls at Bonny all winter (MM, CBC), only two others were reported: one near Denver Dec. 12 - Jan. 26 (m.ob.) and one at Logan Dec. 1 (DF). More Pygmy Owls were seen this year: 12 in Colorado (plus CBCs), one at Logan Dec. 14,

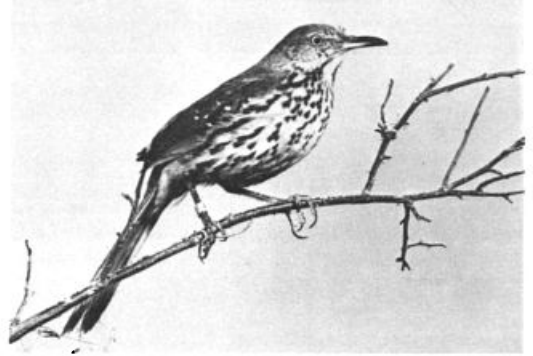
and one at Moose, Wyo. (date?). Burrowing Owls emerged in December at L. Mohave Dec. 1 (SP) and Bear R., Dec. 23 (RK). Southern Nevada had numbers of White-throated Swifts all winter, from Logandale to the Colorado R. below L. Mead, the latter flocks having up to 250 in January. Nevada reported three kinds of hummingbirds — even one would be noteworthy. Mowbray had a Black-chinned at Davis Dam Jan. 4, and several moved through L. Mohave in late February (SP). A Costa's arrived at L. Mohave Feb. 14 and stayed, feeding on creosote brush and ocotillo nectar (SP). Finally a large one, possibly Rvoli's, zoomed by Red Rock Canyon Feb. 2 (CL).

WOODPECKERS, PHOEBES — Although two observers in the Colorado mountains complained of fewer Com. Flickers, the CBC averages indicated .79/party hour, the same as in 1976 and as high as any in five years. Red-bellied Woodpeckers wintered at Bonny as usual (MM), and one wintered at Boulder (FH), a most unusual event. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers did not winter at Kanab, which they usually do, although one did winter at Salt Lake City. As with flickers, two observers noted a scarcity of Hairy Woodpeckers, but the CBC totals did not reflect this. CBCs also recorded Downy Woodpeckers in average numbers. Boulder again found N. Three-toed Woodpeckers — five on the CBC and five Feb. 26-30; the pine beetle attacks on ponderosa pines receive credit for this influx. A few Say's Phoebes wintered at Davis (usual) and at Kanab (not usual, SH). The first migrants reached Reno Feb. 15.

LARKS, SWALLOWS — In n. Wyoming Horned Larks seemed scarce; e.g., Sheridan observed only 39, one-tenth of last year's number. Yet in Eureka, Nev., the flocks close to the Eyres' house were five times larger than usual. Nevada had a poor wild food crop, while n.e. Wyoming had heavy snows this year. Nevada recorded three swallow species this winter: six Violet-greens at Davis Dam Feb. 27 (VM); 2-3000 Trees wintered at Davis Dam, none of which were seen Feb. 9, but which built up to 50,000 by Feb. 27 (VM), one arrived at Reno Feb. 4 (FR); ten Rough-wingeds were at Hoover Dam Dec. 2 (CL, SP) and four at Davis Dec. 14 (VM), plus 100+ northbound at Davis Feb. 27 (VM).

JAYS — Blue Jays continue their colonization westward, with wintering birds at Cody, Logan, and Salt Lake City, and one at Flaming Gorge Res., Utah, in mid-November. CBC numbers of Steller's Jays dropped for the fifth year, mostly because of declines in several Colorado foothills counts. A few visited Cheyenne. In Ogden, Utah, though, they were abundant; the 38 banded represented a fraction of those present, the most seen there in 15 years (MK). Scrub Jays apparently moved out of the mesas into the valleys in w. Colorado and the Black-billed Magpies which moved into Kanab in the fall remained there into January. A White-necked Raven strayed W to Ridgway, Colo., Dec. 21-22 (JRG). Common Crows flocked more commonly than usual, with flocks of 50-300 throughout the region, from Sheridan (HD, MW) s. to the c. Colorado mountains and w. to Logan.

CHICKADEES, WRENS — Black-capped Chickadees increased their party-hour totals on CBCs (1.34) while Mountains were average (1.54), but the numbers do not reflect the unusual distribution of the Mountains. Their fall invasion of valleys and plains continued into the winter throughout Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. CBC totals suggest that the foothills populations scattered out into the low country. White-breasted Nuthatches also moved onto the plains and valleys in Colorado and Wyoming. Among the usual scattered Red-breasted Nuthatch reports was one in Boulder City, Nev., Feb. 26 (PL). Several Colorado observers reported more Brown Creepers than usual, from Baca County Feb. 20 (LW) to Alamosa (JAR) to Colorado Springs. F.A.C. surveyed Dippers on the St. Vrain River and found a population about half that of several years ago, a reduction also reflected on recent Longmont



*Brown Thrasher, Ogden, Utah, Nov. 7, 1976–Mar. 28, 1977
Photographed and banded by Merlin L. Killpack.*

CBCs. House Wrens had begun singing in the Reno area by Feb 10 (JA). Rock Wrens wintered at Pueblo, Colo., perhaps for the first time, perhaps discovered for the first time (JL).

THRASHERS, THRUSHES — A remarkable Gray Catbird appeared in Ft. Collins, Colo., Feb. 27 (LR). Ogden's Brown Thrasher wintered (MK; see *Am. Birds* 31:204), and a Curve billed Thrasher wintered at Florence, Colo. (JL), w. of Pueblo where it has previously occurred. Sage Thrashers began migrating early, with mid-February records in Nevada, Baca County (LW), and Ft. Morgan, Colo. (JCR). American Robins wintered in unusual numbers in the Colorado piedmont and plains, also in s.e. Wyoming, n.e. Utah, and Salt Lake City. At Kanab, where they were common last winter, they were seldom seen. They began migratory movements in February, with a few in Rawlins, Wyo., and a noticeable movement in Sheridan beginning Feb. 20. Single Varied Thrushes occurred in Cheyenne (HHS), Denver (JC), and Colorado Springs (MS). An out-of-season Hermit Thrush was banded in Ogden Dec. 31 (MK). Eastern Bluebirds wintered at Bonny (MM) and Pueblo (JL), and one visited Boulder Dec. 10 (MJ). By February migrating W Bluebirds had reached Hotchkiss, Colo., and Reno, a month or so early. Mountain Bluebirds even wintered in n.e. Utah — Daggett and Duchesne Cos. (MP). They began an early migration with mid-January birds at Ft. Collins and Hotchkiss, and early high altitude records at Evergreen, Tolland, and Aspen, Colo in mid-February.

GNATCATCHERS TO BLACKBIRDS — Perry found a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at Flaming Gorge Jan. 27. Bohemian Waxwings invaded in force; every reporting location in Wyoming and Colorado from the piedmont w. to Ridgway and Grant Jct., reported several hundred to thousands, as did the Wasatch Front from Salt Lake City north. Few occurred out on the Colorado plains, s. Utah, or Nevada, except for 15 at Boulder City in February (RG). A few Cedar Waxwings accompanied the abundant Bohemians. The region's usual scattered winter Yellow-rumped Warblers were joined by s. Nevada reports of two other species. Two dozen Orange-crowns occurred there in December and January. A Black-throated Blue visited Las Vegas Dec. 26 - Jan. 15 (VM, GS, CH). Yellow-rumped wintered at Lander, Wyo. (HC), Boulder (PW), Bonny (PM, MM) and Reno (JA). Mowbray described a major wintering ground at Davis Dam, "every bush alive with them in January." Lawson counted at least 200 there Jan. 20. A Yellow-headed Blackbird wintered at Longmont (DA), and they arrived early at Fallon Feb. 20 and Grand Jct., Feb. 27. Three Com. Grackles wintered

in Longmont (DA) and one wintered in Ft. Collins (RAR). Sheridan had 28 December records — after none last year.

FINCHES — A Cardinal apparently wintered at Bonny (PM, MM). Ryder has confirmed the recent Purple Finch records of e. Colorado by collecting the third specimen in three years (the fourth state specimen) in Ft. Collins; he also banded four Jan. 8 - Feb. 27. Other reports included three at Baca County Feb. 20 (LW); two Jan. 21 (MM) and one Jan. 29 (PM) at Bonny; two wintering at Sheridan; one Jan. 20 at Lander (HC); and three Feb. 14 at Cody (UK). After Christmas, good numbers of Cassin's Finches appeared in some Colorado piedmont cities, as well as at Sheridan and Logan. Rosy finches apparently found good bare-ground feeding areas high in the mountains, for few patronized feeders until the storms of late February. The only Com. Redpolls seen were December records in n. Wyoming and Logan, Utah (Dec. 27, LR), and four Feb. 10 at Ft. Collins (WK). Pine Siskins became common where snow did not cover their food sources, in a strip from Cheyenne to Boulder and w. to Grand Jct., and Logan. At Ft. Collins a banding index calculation indicated 3000 in one section of town (RAR). Red Crossbills continue scarce, except for frequency in Logan. The only others — groups of three — appeared in Ft. Collins Jan. 6 (F.C.A.S.) and a Denver street puddle Feb. 9 (UKi). The small band of White-winged Crossbills from last fall wintered in Cheyenne (CC, LC, AG). Single Green-tailed and Rufous-sided Towhees spent the winter at a snowy Ridgway feeder (JRG). Rufous-sideds were quite scarce throughout the region.

SPARROWS — Flocks of Black-throated Sparrows began migrating in February in s. Nevada (VM, CL). Sage Sparrows seemed scarce all winter in s. Nevada (VM) although two had reached Lovelock Feb. 5 (JA) and 30 were in Reno Feb. 25 (JA). Junco counts on the CBCs declined significantly, with 4.8/party junco compared with an average over the previous three years of 5.8. Reeser suggested that they dispersed from the feeders because of the open winter and lack of snow on the ground. Tree Sparrow numbers seemed normal according to CBC averages; however the open winter also scattered them, judging by the dozen which wintered in normally snow-covered Silverthorne, Colo. (HEK), and one far south at Kanab Dec. 11. Snowy Sheridan had one-half its usual counts. Harris' Sparrows may be retracted a little, with only one Nevada record and one Nov. 11 at Arches N.P., Utah (MWy), a first record for that isolated desert splendor. White-crowned Sparrows scattered in Nevada so that fewer were seen; only in s. Utah — Kanab and Cedar City — and c. Nevada — Reno and Winnemucca — were they plentiful. Colorado had its usual complement of White-throated Sparrows, and singles were reported from Lander Jan. 20 (HC), Logan Dec. 18 - Jan. 4 (KS), and Las Vegas all winter (VM). An early Chestnut-collared Longspur reached Baca County Feb. 19 (LW). Wyoming lacked its usual Snow Buntings, but one drifted S to Castle Rock, Colo., Jan. 24 (CK).

CORRIGENDA — Colorado did *not* produce 949 White-faced Ibis last summer; rather 23 young fledged in the San Luis Valley, about one-fourth of the eggs laid (30:983). Correct these dates: Am. Golden Plover at Ordway to May 2 (30:870) and Yellow-crowned Night Heron at Barr L. to July 24-25 (30:983). On the 1975 Fort Collins CBC, 4 Great Blue Herons came out as Green Herons (30:540).

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SOUTHWEST REGION

/Janet Witzeman, John P. Hubbard and
Kenn Kaufman

The divergence in temperature abnormalities noted in late fall continued into the winter season. In general, temperatures averaged below normal in New Mexico and above normal in Arizona, more or less in keeping with this winter's continental pattern of East vs. West. The effects of this on the avian populations were less obvious than might have been supposed. The warm weather in Arizona was thought to have figured in the



lingering of several shorebird species; but the most notable of these, a very late Snowy Plover, was rivaled by an equally tardy individual in New Mexico. Perhaps more clearly temperature related were the Lesser Nighthawks that remained until late December at scattered points in southern Arizona.

Several northern species staged movements into the region notably Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing and Winter Wren. No blanket explanation, certainly no meteorological one was available to account for these diverse incursions.

In contemplating the fact that New Mexico had the majority of the Northern Shrike reports and the vast majority of the Bohemian Waxwings, it is well to remember the elevational differences between the states: on average, New Mexico is higher (and thus colder) than Arizona. North central New Mexico is a high and mountainous area continuous with the high massif of

the Rockies, and moreover there are birders living in this section of the state. By contrast, a large percentage of Arizona (including the centers of birding activity at Phoenix and Tucson) lies at lower elevations than the lowest point in New Mexico. Because of these differences, the winter status (both perceived and actual) of many species differs substantially between the two states. The effect of this far outweighs any additional differences imposed by this winter's temperature pattern.

LOONS, GREBES — Two Com. Loons apparently were present through the winter on Parker Canyon L., s.e. Ariz. (m.ob.); the species is very rare in mid-winter away from the Colorado River Valley. A Least Grebe was found n. of Nogales Dec. 16-23 (#RND, D. Brotz *et al.*); and another was at Quitobaquito Pond, Organ Pipe Cactus Nat'l Mon., from at least Nov. 11 - Apr. 3 (Terry Peters *et al.*). We later heard rumors that there had been

CORMORANTS THROUGH IBISES — There are few winter records for Olivaceous Cormorant in New Mexico. An individual was at Bosque del Apache N.W.R. during the period (RLT, GZ); and an adult and two immatures were at Las Cruces Mar. 5-8 (WHB, W. Piltz). It appears that both Olivaceous and Double-crested Cormorants have been present at Patagonia L., more or less continuously since February 1976 (*vide* DSz). Although numbers fluctuated throughout the winter, both species were present in notable numbers at times; five Olivaceous Jan. 22 (DD, BY, JBI) and 20 Double-crested (with four Olivaceous) Feb. 4 (DSz, GG) may be the largest concentrations of either species ever recorded in s.e. Arizona. Up to four Double-crested also remained through the period at Phoenix, where the species is very rare in winter.

A Great Egret was at Nogales Nov. 30 - Jan. 12 (PW *et al.*), and five were present in the Phoenix area during January and February; the species has generally been quite rare in winter away from the Colorado Valley and Picacho Res. Two White-faced Ibises, rare in winter in Arizona, were present through the period at Cibola N.W.R. (KVR, GC).

WATERFOWL — A swan was reportedly present on Bear Canyon Res., e. of Silver City, for about a month before being illegally shot about Feb. 23. When the salvaged specimen was brought to DAZ, it proved to be an ad. **Trumpeter Swan** — the first definite record for New Mexico. (One was supposedly collected near Las Cruces November 1931, but the specimen cannot be located for confirmation.) More Whistling Swans than usual reached the region, with reports in New Mexico from near Columbus, Las Cruces, and Alamogordo, and singles in Arizona near Yuma, Parker, Many Farms, and Phoenix; 11 were at Roosevelt L., Dec. 11-13 (*vide* SRD) and four were at Topock Marsh Dec. 16 (KVR).

An apparent imm. "Blue" Goose was with Canadas near Espanola, N. Mex., Dec. 30 (EE); there are very few records of this form in the Southwest away from the Bosque and Bitter Lake Refuge areas. Three Wood Ducks were at B.W. Delta in January and February (KVR), and one was near Nogales Feb. 18-23 (D. Hatch, DSC *et al.*).

Birds of the Mexican Duck type are now rare n. of the Bosque area in New Mexico, so it is worth noting the capture and banding of three (among 1109 typical Mallards) during January and February at Belen (TZ). The only solid record of Greater Scaup in Arizona during the period was one collected s. of Parker Jan. 5 (BA)

Two ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were reported shot near Bloomfield, n.w. N. Mex., Dec. 27. Belatedly, we have word of a male and probable female taken in that area Jan. 4, 1975, and preserved as mounted specimens (Stan Boyer, *vide* JPH); the latter represent the first verified record for New Mexico. Meanwhile, the flock of Barrow's at Davis Dam, Ariz.-Nev., returned for its third winter. Numbers there seemed to build up as the season

progressed, with high counts of 16 on Dec. 14, 33 on Jan. 12, and 45 on Feb. 6; however, the earlier counts may have been incomplete owing to the extensive daily movements of the flock. This was also the third winter for Oldsquaw at Davis Dam: a pair was present in December, three were noted Jan. 5 (VM) and one was still there Jan. 12. One of the two Surf Scoters found in November at Evans L., s.w. N. Mex., remained until Dec. 19 (DAZ, MZ).

RAPTORS — No large winter concentrations of Bald Eagles were reported from the reservoirs of n. New Mexico where such have been frequent during the last two winters; instead, the birds seemed to be more widely distributed than usual, including s. to the Gila Valley, Caballo L., and the s. end of the Guadalupe Mts.; and in Arizona, to Tucson and Parker Canyon L. A stray was in the Peloncillo Mts., s.w. N. Mex., Dec. 4 (D. Hunt, *vide* RAF). At least five were in the Prescott area, and eleven were reported in the Lower Colorado Valley (hereafter LCV) between Topock and Yuma.

Ospreys are rare in winter in New Mexico, so one n. of Truth or Consequences Dec. 28 (RLT) and another near Las Cruces Jan. 14 (C. & L. Wahl) were notable. Reports of Merlins were fairly widespread, and numbered about ten in New Mexico, 12 in Arizona, and two in Sonora. These totals are comparable to those of most recent years.

CRANES — Six Whooping Cranes, the progeny of two years of the Gray's Lake foster-parent experiment, wintered successfully in the c. Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Their N migration began in mid-February, with the last bird moving out before the end of the month; at last word, at least five of them had been accounted for as migrants in Colorado.

Numbers of Sandhill Cranes wintering in the Willcox Playa area of s.e. Arizona seem to have been gradually building up during the last few years. Less than one thousand were counted there in winter 1970; this season, surveys by the Arizona Game & Fish Dept. and others counted 3800-4000 birds in the area in February, and there was an unconfirmed report of even greater numbers in December (BH, BR *et al.*). In the LCV, 1500 Sandhills wintered in a relatively small area s. of Parker (KVR *et al.*), and up to 350 were on the Cibola N.W.R. in December, decreasing to 50 in February (GC). During a nine day aerial survey in January, by Rod Drewien of the U.S. F. & W.S., 30,000 Sandhills were counted in Chihuahua, Mex.; some were found as far s. as Durango (*vide* BR).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS — Two **Piping Plovers** were found n. of Puerto Peñasco, Senora Feb. 2-3 and again Mar. 26 (KK *et al.*); photos, RAW); this is the third winter in which the species has been found here, the only locality of record in w. Mexico. Single Snowy Plovers lingered to Dec. 28 at Laguna Grande, s.e. N. Mex. (SW), and to Dec. 31 at Willcos (GM, EW), exceptionally late dates. Although small flocks of Mountain Plovers regularly winter in w. Arizona, the few localities in which they are found vary from year to year. This winter, flocks were reported during February and March from s. of Parker (KVR, AH), w. of Tonopah (AH), and w. of Gila Bend (DSz, *et al.*).

A first-year Glaucous-winged Gull was at Puerto Peñasco, Son., Feb. 2-3 (KK, JW, RAW); the species has been found to be regular in small numbers in the n. Gulf of California as far s. as Guaymas. Arizona's third winter record of Heermann's Gull was one found Jan. 29 (CM) at Nogales, where one had occurred last February. There are now more than a dozen records of this species in Arizona, all but one within the last decade.

PIGEONS THROUGH NIGHTJARS — Remarkable, and without any precedent known to us, was the wintering of up to 400 Band-tailed Pigeons in the Prescott region (CST *et al.*) Previous Arizona winter records had been few, and confined to

the southeast. This amazing concentration possibly reflects the mildness of the season; it also provides unexpected support for the *A. O. U. Check-list's* mysterious claim that the species winters at Prescott! Nineteen near Luna, w. N. Mex., Jan. 12 (TJ) were also unusual; the species is rare and only occasional in winter in New Mexico.

Continuing its advance up the Colorado River Valley, the Inca Dove has reached Bullhead City, Ariz., where it was found to be common in February (KK, T&SP, DSz); a Nevada nesting would appear to be imminent. Pygmy Owls occasionally move downslope in winter, and singles were found at relatively low elevations this season at Santa Fe Dec. 19 and Feb. 10 (JE) and near Cliff Dec. 18 (AZ).

There was a remarkable lingering of Lesser Nighthawks in Arizona, with the species appearing on CBCs at Phoenix, Parker, and Tucson. Another was seen s. of Phoenix in late December (SB); a nighthawk probably of this species was in Tucson Jan. 12-18 (MN, AL); and one to three were near the Arizona border of Blythe, Calif., Jan. 31 - Feb. 1 (KVR, JD, AH). Unlike our Com. Nighthawks which migrate to South America, the Lessers only withdraw into Mexico in winter, and a few may overwinter in Arizona in mild years such as this one.

HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS — Anna's Hummingbird is the common wintering hummer of Phoenix and Tucson, but it is still uncommon farther east; one arrived in Hereford, s.e. Ariz., Jan. 30 (JBI), and one in Ramsey Canyon in early February (C&JP). A very early ♂ Broad-tailed Hummingbird returned to Ramsey Canyon Feb. 9 (C&JP, B&CY). A ♂ Rufous Hummingbird at the same place Feb. 26 (C&JP, B&CY) was also early, and notable since spring migration of this species is mainly up the w. deserts of Arizona. For the first time in several years no hummingbirds remained past mid-November, at feeders in Portal; however, a single Rivoli's seen at feeders in Madera Canyon, Ariz. in mid-January, was apparently wintering there (*vide* SSpf).

Five to six "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were present through the period in the B.W. Delta (KVR), an area where this form has not been known to winter before. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were at Roswell Dec. 18 (MW), and one or two were in Albuquerque during January (*vide* DDL); the species is infrequent in winter. Something of a flight of Lewis' Woodpeckers occurred in New Mexico, with numbers up in the Rio Grande Valley s. to Corrales (RLT) and peripheral records in the San Juan Valley (APN) and near Silver City (BJH, DAZ). A Downy Woodpecker at Socorro Feb. 20-24 (PB) was unusual.

FLYCATCHERS — A *Myiarchus* carefully studied near Evans L., s.w. N. Mex., Dec. 18 (DAZ, MZ) may have been a Nutting's Flycatcher; detailed notes on the tail pattern and vocalizations strongly support this identification. The only previous U.S. record of this Middle American species involves one collected near Roosevelt L., Ariz., Jan. 8, 1952.

The E. Phoebe, a scarce winter visitant in Arizona, made a good showing this year. One was at Picacho Res., Dec. 9 (VM); two were on the Santa Catalina Mts. CBC and one each on the Sedona and Nogales CBCs; one was near Phoenix Dec. 19 (BB); and one found in the B.W. Delta in November remained until mid-February, at which time it was singing and actively chasing away Black Phoebes (KVR). An *Empidonax* (Dusky or Hammond's) at Glenwood, s.w. N. Mex., Dec. 30 (JPH) represented only the second local winter record. A Coues' Flycatcher was present in residential Tucson Dec. 22 to at least Mar. 1 (KK *et al.*), in recent years individuals have attempted to winter almost annually in either the Phoenix or Tucson areas. A Vermilion Flycatcher near Cliff, N. Mex., Feb. 20-22 (BJH) was definitely early for that locality.

CORVIDS, PARIDS — Remarkable was the wintering of a flock of 500-600 Com Crows on the Cibola NWR, s.w. Ariz

(KVR, GC). Except for one or two previous records, there is no history of the occurrence of this species in the LCV!

The Black-capped Chickadee previously reported at Teec Nos Pos, Ariz., was still present Feb. 5. One of the Mountain Chickadees found in the B.W. Delta in November remained through the winter (KVR); there had been no previous records for the LCV. Also a first for that area was a **Bridled Titmouse** in the B.W. Delta from Feb. 17 into March (JSB, *vide* KVR, * to A.S.U.). This bird was scarcely 10 mi. from California, for which state there is no record of the species. A flock of ten Bushtits found 10 mi. n. of Ehrenberg, Ariz., Feb. 25-27 (AH), apparently represents the southernmost record for the LCV.

WARBLERS — Lucy's Warblers are generally difficult to find in Arizona after the end of August, but last autumn they remained later than usual at several points (Sept. 21 in the LCV, KVR; Sept. 25 at Phoenix, ST; Oct. 9 at Nogales, TP, DSz) However, one at Phoenix Dec. 18 (#KK, BJO) produced the state's latest acceptable record by a considerable margin. A Townsend's Warbler at Portal Dec. 30 (#BJo) was the first winter record that far east in Arizona, and was also unusual at that elevation. Hermit Warblers are very rare in Arizona after mid-October, but individuals were reported at three locations near Phoenix Dec. 12 (RAW), Dec. 18 (AG), and Jan. 31 (W Donagho).

A Chestnut-sided Warbler was near Phoenix Dec. 17-27 (#KK, DSz, ST). Arizona has three previous "winter" records, all December to early January, all (including this one) best considered late fall occurrences. Single Am. Redstarts were noted Dec. 21 at Tucson (DSz), Dec. 29 at Phoenix (SB, ST, AG), and Jan. 2 n. of Yuma (#DT). A banded Painted Redstart returned to winter at Portal feeders for its third, possibly fourth, season (SSpF).

ICTERIDS — For the third consecutive winter, a Scott's Oriole spent the period at feeders near Silver City. Undoubtedly this was the same bird as in the two previous years, as it has progressed from immature to subadult to this year's ad. ♂ plumage (O'Byrnes, *vide* DAZ). The Rusty Blackbird is thought to be very rare in Arizona; this winter two were reported on the Nogales CBC Dec. 26 (SB, RN) and one was minutely described from a ranch s. of Wilcox Feb. 5-14 (#BJo, #MH, #DSz, #B&CY) The few previous records of this species in Arizona have been of solitary birds, but the latter bird was associated with Red-wings and Brewer's; obviously, Rusties occurring in mixed blackbird flocks could be easily overlooked. A Com. Grackle was at Socorro, N. Mex., Jan. 22 (WS). The species is considered to be casual in winter in the state.

KINGLETS THROUGH VIREOS — Fall 1976 saw a major movement of Golden-crowned Kinglets into the region's lowlands, (see *A.B.* 31:209). In the last few years these flights of northern Golden-crowns into the s.w. deserts have been phenomena of autumn, with most disappearing after December, but this winter a number of the birds lingered in Arizona — two were n. of Ehrenberg Jan. 7 (CE), three were at Cibola NWR, Jan. 12-14 (KVR, CE, JSB); and at Phoenix and Parker a few actually overwintered for the first recorded time, with some present in stands of tall tamarisks into March (ST, KVR, m ob) Also in New Mexico, at least three were still present Mar 5 in the Rio Grande Valley near Las Cruces (WHB). Two found Jan 22 along the Rio Magdalena near San Ignacio, Son. (KK, TP, DSz, R&JW) were notable, as there are very few records of the species for Sonora or elsewhere in n.w. Mexico.

Arizona's first **Bohemian Waxwings** since 1969 were found this winter at Katherine's Landing, L. Mohave (KK, ST *et al.*) The flock numbered ten on Jan. 12, increased to 14 by Jan. 30, but by Feb. 6 all of the waxwings (and all the local pyracantha berries) had disappeared. These birds were evidently part of a movement which produced a notable flight in the Santa Fe -

Espanola - Los Alamos area of n.c. New Mexico. Hundreds were present in this area from December through February (m.ob.), with 485 counted in Los Alamos County Feb. 16 (*vide* LH) and a high of 600 in Tesuque (BI). Cedar Waxwings were virtually absent from the lowlands of Arizona this winter, but there were more than usual around Flagstaff and Prescott (JH, CST).

If such a low-density visitor as the N. Shrike can stage a spectacular invasion, it happened this winter. The flight was most evident in New Mexico, where prior to this winter 52 records had accumulated since 1846; this season added at least another 25 records to the roster. Arizona had 14 reports, more than in any previous winter. In some areas they were practically common: six were found in the vicinity of Chama, N. Mex., Feb. 5 (JPH, GS), and at least four were in the Doney Park area near Flagstaff for much of the winter (RPB *et al.*). Southernmost reports, all of single birds, were at Loving Dec. 28 (SW), Reserve, N. Mex., Jan. 1 (JPH), and Portal Dec. 30 (RAW, #JW). Most unusual was a Solitary Vireo (*plumbeus* form) at Las Cruces Dec. 17 (#WHB).

WRENS THROUGH THRUSHES — The Winter Wren was formerly considered rare in Arizona, but this status may be due for revision. The winter of 1974-75 produced six records, the 1975-76 season produced eight records; and in this past fall-winter season, more than 25 individuals were reliably reported virtually statewide. Many of these appeared on CBCs, but outside the count circles the species was deemed fairly common in Oak Creek Canyon (JH) and on the San Francisco Peaks (RPB). In the B.W. Delta some 5-6 individuals were staked-out all winter, and KVR extrapolated there might be as many as 15-20 birds/100 acres in suitable habitat there. New Mexico had at least four Winter Wrens during December, including two at Santa Fe (BI, RSD), one at Roswell (MW), and one at Glenwood (JPH) A House Wren at Pleasanton, s.w. N. Mex., Jan. 7-10 (L. Sumner) represented the first winter record for that area. The species is uncommon in the state in winter, since it usually prefers to winter at lower elevations.

A report of three Gray Catbirds at Rattlesnake Springs, N. Mex., Feb. 26 (GS) was most unusual in date and in number of individuals. Single Brown Thrashers were found in two locations near Tucson Oct. 24 (PM) and Dec. 9 - Feb. 24 (banded, CC). This was reported to be a good year for Sage Thrashers throughout s.e. Arizona, particularly at Portal and in the Avra Valley, and numbers were also up in the Carlsbad area (JC) and near Silver City (DAZ). One at Glenwood, N. Mex., Dec. 30 (JPH) was the first local winter record. The species arrived suddenly in the Parker region in mid-January and remained common in mistletoe-infested areas there through March; KVR termed it locally the "second most abundant frugivore" (after Phainopepla) during that time.

American Robins were noticeably scarce in the lowlands of Arizona, but were found in good numbers around Flagstaff (RPB) and other high elevation areas of the state. "Thousands" in the Silver City area were the largest numbers DAZ could ever recall wintering there. Only four Rufous-backed Robins were reported during the period, all in the Tucson area. Eastern Bluebirds were recorded for the second consecutive winter at Las Cruces, where two were seen Dec. 18 (BP *et al.*); the species is still rare in s.c. New Mexico.

FRINGILLIDS — At Globe, Ariz., where the Pyrrhuloxia is a rare straggler, a male was present Dec. 30 - Feb. 4 (SHa), and a female remained from Jan. 7 through the end of the period (BJa). A well-described ♂ Dickcissel visited a feeder s.w. of Tucson Feb. 15 (#J. Ambrose). There is only one previous winter record for Arizona, also at Tucson. At Sandia Crest above Albuquerque, where rosy finches are irregular, a flock of 40 birds (including ♂ Blacks and Gray-crowns) was present Dec. 18-20 (RLT *et al.*) A single Brown-capped Rosy Finch at Farmington,

N. Mex., Jan. 15 (APN) was unusual, although there are several previous records at nearby Angel Peak.

Predictions for a Lawrence's Goldfinch flight to the region, based on a supposed pattern of one flight every two winters, failed to be borne out, and the species was even scarcer than last year. The very few that did arrive were mainly in the Santa Cruz Valley of s. Arizona, as appears to be usual in non-flight years. It was, however, an excellent year for Am. Goldfinches. The species was common in extreme n.e. Arizona and locally in the Chino Valley, n. of Prescott; small flocks were scattered throughout the LCV, the Phoenix region, s.e. Arizona, and the Magdalena Valley of n. Sonora.

Red Crossbills were common all winter in pines in the Prescott region, and on Mar. 12 CST observed a juvenal bird there, accompanied by adults, which must have been hatched locally during the winter. The only lowland reports of the entire season were one in the B.W. Delta Nov. 17 (AH), and two at Parker Dec. 20 (KK), and one at Tucson in mid-December (*vide* MC).

Two **Tree Sparrows** were seen s. of Parker Feb. 11 (KVR) — apparently representing the first record for the Arizona portion of the LCV; this rare winter visitor has been recorded only occasionally in n. and n.e. Arizona. In New Mexico the species appeared to be more common than usual, with records w. to the San Juan Valley (APN *et al.*) and s. to Bosque Jan. 2 (CH *et al.*), Roswell Dec. 18 (BS *et al.*), and the Carlsbad area Feb. 26-28 (GS). Chipping Sparrows seemed more numerous than usual in their areas of regular winter occurrence in s. New Mexico, unusual records farther north were eight at Farmington Dec. 18 (APN *et al.*) and one at Espanola Dec. 26 (BL).

This was a very good winter for the less common *Zonotrichias* in the Southwest: for the White-throated Sparrow it was the biggest flight on record, at least in Arizona. Our records of White-throateds are far too many to enumerate individually, but we may sum them up as follows — for New Mexico: at least 25 were reported, including 11 near Glenwood Dec. 30 (JPH *et al.*), for Arizona: no less than 62 individuals reported during the late fall and winter, virtually statewide except for the extreme northeast, for Sonora: 13 near Cibola and two near San Ignacio, Rio Magdalena Valley, Jan. 22 (TP, KK *et al.*). Harris' Sparrows were also in good numbers, more than 20 being found in the region; the focus of the flight was on extreme n.w. New Mexico - n.e. Arizona, with ten at Farmington Dec. 18 (APN *et al.*) and three at Teec Nos Pos Feb. 5 (KK, T&SP, DSz). Golden-crowned Sparrows in Arizona numbered seven (in addition to the four reported during the fall), with three in the LCV, two at Tucson, one at Phoenix, and one on the n. edge of the state at Fredonia Dec. 25-30 (BL, *vide* SHE). In New Mexico, where the species is rare, an adult was at Tesuque Jan. 10 to at least mid-February (BI).

It may be worth noting that this good White-throated season also apparently brought many Dark-eyed (Slate-col.) Juncos. A total of 33 appeared on Arizona CBCs; unfortunately, this form seems not to be noticed or reported very much except on the counts. Fox Sparrows may have been slightly more common than usual this winter. About 20 were reported in Arizona; six at Rattlesnake Springs Feb. 26 (GS) was a high concentration for New Mexico.

The regular occurrence of Swamp Sparrows in s.c. Arizona is now well-established, and this season was no exception to the pattern, with more than 20 reported during the late fall and winter. However, the extension of this plentitude to the LCV is new information, since *Birds of Ariz.* treated the species as "casual" there. Two were in the B.W. Delta Nov. 14-15, more than ten others were found in various locations during December, and by winter's end KVR rated it "fairly common in marshes along the [Colorado] and at beaver ponds along the Bill Williams River "

In recent years, reliable records of McCown's Longspurs in the Southwest have been few, and have involved few individuals, so we were astonished to find 250 of them e. of Cananea, Sonora, Jan. 23 (KK, TP, DSz, R&JW) — barely 30 mi. s. of the Arizona border. The key to the McCown's abundance seemed to be the desperately overgrazed condition of the rangeland there, and we subsequently found the species in Arizona by searching overgrazed pasture near Elgin, where up to 50 were present in early March (DSz, KK *et al.*). As previously noted by JPH in New Mexico, the tail-patterns emphasized in the field guides proved to be of little aid in distinguishing this species from the Chestnut-collared Longspur. More helpful marks were the McCown's larger size, larger bill, appearance of a broader wing-base in flight, and generally plain, pale appearance of the plumage, sometimes with some chestnut retained in the wing-coverts (although we have never seen a good illustration of this plumage). Among several calls of the McCown's, most distinctive was a ringing "pink" or "poik," similar to the Blue Grosbeak's common call-note. Prospective searchers should note also that the McCown's tended not to mix freely with the Chestnut-collareds (as they sometimes do at waterholes), being found more often in homogeneous groups or in flocks with Horned Larks.

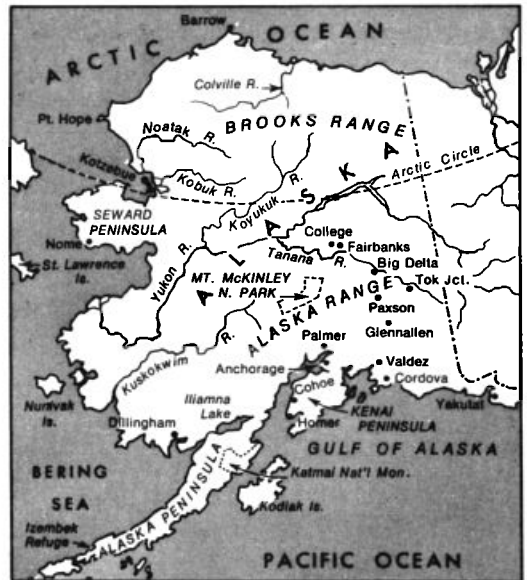
Even more of a rarity in Arizona is the **Lapland Longspur**, with only a handful of records known. One near Phoenix Dec. 17 & 18 (#KK, R&JW, BJo; calls tape-recorded) was the first record for that area. Another, a breeding-plumaged male, was found s. of Parker Mar. 12 (AH, KC), for the third record in the LCV.

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ALASKA REGION /Daniel D. Gibson

The Alaska winter was elsewhere in 1976-77. It was warm—all winter—without even brief periods of very cold weather in most parts of the state (*e.g.*, at Fairbanks the lowest temperature during the period was -24°F , December 3, and record high temperatures were recorded six times, maximum $+45^{\circ}\text{F}$, January 24; at Anchorage January extremes were $+49^{\circ}\text{F}$ and $+14^{\circ}\text{F}$). It was the only winter since records were first kept (1915) that Fairbanks did not see thirty below; and



not in the National Weather Service's 60-year history in the Region had Anchorage failed to see subzero temperatures in January. On the Pacific Coast east of the Aleutians it was very warm (*e.g.*, at Cordova temperatures did not drop below $+25^{\circ}\text{F}$), with high winds and driving rain characteristic of much of the period. In the Aleutian Islands, the winter was milder than usual, with less snow, and few storms with strong winds. Even in northern Alaska, north of the Brooks Range, it was generally warm, although temperatures below -40°F were seen in February. Precipitation was normal or near-normal in most areas; in south coastal and southeastern Alaska most of it was rain.

GREBES—Two W. Grebes at Cordova Jan. 2 (MEI & REI) were a second certain south coastal Alaska record, the first in winter; at least one bird remained through January and February.

SWANS, GEESE—The only record of Whooper Swan this winter was of one at Adak I., Jan. 26 (JLM & GWE). An imm White-fronted Goose at *Amchitka I.*, Oct. 20–Jan. 4 (GEH *et al.*), was only the second s.w. Alaska winter record of the species; the first was of a first-year bird in a family group of Emperor Geese, and the *Amchitka* bird may have arrived there in a similar manner.

DUCKS—A new state high count of Gadwall was 250 at Red L., Kodiak I., in mid-December (RNT). A flock of 20+ Eur Wigeon at *Amchitka* in early January (GEH) was a new winter high. Only two Canvasbacks wintered this year at Adak (GVB, JLM), the only regular wintering locality known in Alaska, but there were first local winter records of the species elsewhere: two males at Narrow Cape, Kodiak Jan. 8 (RAM & MMM); single males at Eyak L., Cordova from Feb. 10 on (MEI & REI), and on Farm I., at the Stikine R. mouth Feb. 26 (SOM). Three ♂ Ring-necked Ducks on Buskin L., Kodiak Dec. 26 (RAM & MMM) were the first winter record w. of s.e. Alaska. As they have been in recent winters past, Lesser Scaup were newsworthy at Cordova, where at least three spent the winter (MEI), and at Kodiak, where about ten were present all period (RAM, JLT); but a ♂ Lesser Scaup carefully studied at Constantine Harbor, *Amchitka* all winter (GEH, GVB), was a first Aleutian record of the species at any season. A few Tufted Ducks were seen at irregular intervals at *Amchitka* and Adak during the period; an ad. ♂ Tufted Duck with nine Greater Scaup at Dutch Harbor, *Unalaska I.*, Feb. 28 (DBM) was a first *eastern* Aleutian record, the first one reported between Adak and Cordova. A flock of 20 **Ruddy Ducks** at Wrangell Jan. 27 (JH, *vide* SOM) followed several reports in late fall in the same area. The species is casual in s.e. Alaska. Hooded Mergansers were more numerous than usual in Cordova, where five were seen all winter (MEI); an ad. male near Red L., Kodiak Jan. 12 & 19 (RNT & HBD) was a first for that island.

HAWKS, FALCONS—Rare winter visitants, Sharp-shinned Hawks were widely recorded in south coastal Alaska during the winter: single birds on the Anchorage (DFD *et al.*), Homer (DBM & CH), and Cordova (MEI & REI) CBCs, and one at Kodiak Feb. 26 (RAM & MMM). Most unusual were a Red-tailed Hawk at Homer Dec. 17 or 18 (DBM & CH, *vide* MAM) and at least one that overwintered at Farm I., at the Stikine R. mouth (SOM). Marsh Hawks which winter irregularly along the Pacific Coast, were recorded at intervals on Kodiak with one at Womens Bay Dec. 23 (RAM & MMM) and one at Red L., Feb. 17 (RNT & HBD), and several were present all winter at the Stikine R. mouth (SOM). One Merlin was seen at Middle Bay, Kodiak Jan. 29 (RAM & MMM), and up to two Am. Kestrels overwintered at Farm I., at the Stikine R. mouth (SOM).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS—Eleven Killdeer on the Juneau CBC Dec. 18 (DRC *et al.*) was a new winter high count for a species that does not winter in the state annually. A **Spotted Sandpiper** and four N. **Phalaropes** at Cordova Jan. 2 (MEI & REI) were, respectively, second and first mid-winter records for Alaska. At least three Com. Snipe overwintered at both Juneau (FAG) and Red L., Kodiak (RNT & HBD), where they are probably regular. A maximum count of 1500–2000 Rock Sandpipers at Homer Feb. 16 (MAM *et al.*) was another new winter high count. The Ring-billed Gull at Homer at the end of the fall period (*q.v.*) was present there at least through Feb. 16 (DBM). Never before certainly recorded in mid-winter in the Region, up to seven **Bonaparte's Gulls** were present all winter at Cordova (MEI), and at Homer, one on Dec. 2 & 3 (RAM & MMM) and Dec. 19 (MAM)

OWLS—Hawk Owls were absent from the interior all winter. Indeed the only reports during the period were of one on Jan. 8 at Kalsin Bay, Kodiak (RAM & MMM), where the species is rare any time, and one at Cordova in early January (MEI). The only Great Gray Owl report was of one in Kasilof Feb. 15 (DBM). Boreal Owls were apparently present in good numbers all winter on the Kenai Pen. (DBM, CH, MAM) and in the interior (RM, TGT, RHD *et al.*) At least four Saw-whet Owls were present at Farm I., at the Stikine R. mouth through the end of December (SOM), when the local microtine rodent population crashed and the birds dispersed.

NUTHATCHES, THRUSHES, STARLINGS—Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce at Kodiak (RAM), on the Kenai Pen. (CH, HF), and at Anchorage (DFD *et al.*), but they were not mentioned by observers farther e. in south coastal or s.e. Alaska. American Robins were more common than usual at Juneau (RBW); single birds wintered at Cordova (MEI) and Anchorage (DFD), and one wintered as far n. as Fairbanks (CDA), where the species is casual at that season. A **Townsend's Solitaire** present in a Fairbanks subdivision from Dec. 20 on (FGH, BK *et al.*) was a first Alaska winter record. Distinctly rare in south coastal Alaska, Starlings were recorded with one at Cordova from early January on (MEI), and one at Homer Dec. 19–20 (MAM, DBM & CH).

FRINGILLIDS—Redpolls were scarce all winter in interior (DDG *et al.*) and in south coastal Alaska (RAM, MEI) and absent in the Southeast (RBW, FAG). Red Crossbills were absent; White-winged Crossbills were all-but-absent. Pine Siskins were scarce at the w. end of the range, at Kodiak (RAM, JLT), and in the Southeast (RBW, FAG), but several flocks (*e.g.*, the CBC total of 106, Jan. 2) were present all winter in the Cordova area (MEI).

A **Savannah Sparrow** that stayed about a housing area at Ft. Wainwright, Fairbanks, throughout the period (CDA, DDG & GVB) was a first Alaska winter record. Dark-eyed Juncos were numerous through mid-winter in Southeast (RBW, FAG), in the North Gulf Coast-Prince William Sound area of south coastal Alaska (MEI), at Anchorage (DFD *et al.*), Homer (MAM), and Kodiak (RAM, WED, JLT); one bird as far w. as *Amchitka* from Feb. 5 on (GEH, GVB) was a third Aleutian Is. record, the second in winter (*AB*: 29, 730). Juncos are almost annual hangers-on at Fairbanks feeders, even in the most severe winters. It is peculiar then that, in this very warm winter, none was present there in 1976–77. Two Harris' Sparrows were present at Auke Bay, Juneau until Feb. 11 (RBW). Tree and White-crowned Sparrows were recorded from Juneau (RBW) to Cordova (CBC), Anchorage (CBC), Homer (MAM), and Kodiak (CBC), the former more numerous than the latter. Golden-crowned Sparrows (at least eight individuals) were reported only at Kodiak (RAM *et al.*). A **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Kodiak Dec. 23 (RAM), was the second winter record for Kodiak and the state (*AB*: 30, 755). Very rare in winter, Lapland Longspurs were recorded during the period at Homer including one with Snow Buntings during CBC week (DBM & CH) and a small flock at Hartney Bay near Cordova in late February (REI).

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CORRIGENDUM—The E. Kingbird near Delta Junction last fall was seen Sept. 29 not Sept. 21.

POSTSCRIPT—Readers will note that Vern Byrd, having just moved to eastern Washington, is no longer an Alaska Region co-editor. All of us interested in Alaska's birds hope that he returns, bringing back all of the enthusiasm and expertise that we have enjoyed and learned from in the last nine years.—**DANIEL D. GIBSON**, University Museum, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/John B. Crowell, Jr. and Harry B. Nehls

Precipitation in the Pacific Northwest from November through February was at record low levels. Mid-January brought colder-than-normal temperatures to the Region for more than a week. A number of shorebird species were found at unprecedented dates and places, while certain expected winter resident predator species did not appear in the numbers they had in recent past years. Wandering finches were comparatively unrecorded. For a more complete overview of the Northern Pacific Coast Region's winter birdlife, reference to the Region's Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) should be made, as those records are, for the most part, omitted from the season's summary which follows.



LOONS, GREBES, PELAGICS, HERONS—Six Yellow-billed Loons were found in the region during the report period; two from s.e. Vancouver I., two from Puget Sound, one from Ocean Shores, Wash., and one from Yaquina Bay, Oreg., the latter bird observed only Jan. 22. On Feb. 26 there were 1300 Arctic Loons at Active Pass in the Gulf Is., B.C. Red-throated Loons were little reported and deemed to be scarce by observers who commented. At Cordova Spit, Saanich, B.C., Feb. 5 there were 127 Red-necked Grebes (VG, RS). On Dec. 11, 60 Eared

Grebes were counted at Whidbey I., Wash. (TW). On two separate cruises off the Washington and Oregon coasts, Jan. 7–13 and 29–30, Terry Wahl saw up to seven Black footed Albatrosses on four different dates and single Laysan Albatrosses off the Washington coast Jan. 29 and off the Oregon coast Jan. 30. A few N. Fulmars were off Washington, Jan. 7–13, and large numbers were feeding off Cape Blanco, Oreg., Jan. 30 (TW); 23 birds of this species were seen on LaPerouse Bank, off Vancouver I. Feb. 13 (MS, *vide* VG). Four Sooty Shearwaters were off Grays Harbor, Wash., Jan. 11, and six were seen off the coast Jan. 29 (TW). On Jan. 11 a single Short-tailed Shearwater was observed out of Grays Harbor and another was found off s. Oregon Jan. 30 (TW). A dead Leach's Storm-Petrel was picked up on a golf course at Metchosin Vancouver I., Feb. 22 (*vide* VG).

Single Green Herons were found at various dates in January at Olympia (G&WH, BH-T), at Sunset Beach Clatsop Co., Oreg., and at Tillamook (DDS). Numbers of Cattle Egrets in the region were at record levels, with six at Coos Bay, up to a dozen in Tillamook County, Oreg. single birds at Ocosta, Grays Harbor County, at Queets in Washington, and at Port Alberni, B.C.; a lone bird reached Cape Scott Light Station on the n.w. tip of Vancouver I. Dec. 28 (D&LW, *vide* VG)! At Sauvie I., n.w. of Portland Oreg., up to 20 Great Egrets were found in January and February, while concurrently a half dozen were resident at Tillamook Bay. Single Great Egrets also were noted at Lead better Pt., Willapa Bay, Wash., Dec. 18 (EP, *vide* PM) and at Bay Center a few miles across the bay, Feb. 4 (BH-T). A Snowy Egret was at Coos Bay Dec. 12 to the end of the report period (AC, BF *et al.*). More than a dozen Black-crowned Night Herons remained in n. Portland all winter (HN); several birds also were seen in Seattle Dec. 26–Jan. 8 (*vide* PM), and one was observed at Salem, Oreg., Jan. 13 (TC). There were eight sightings of Am. Bitterns from w. Washington and n.w. Oregon Dec. 11–Feb. 15. A Least Bittern was seen repeatedly until mid-February at Medford (JH, MM).

WATERFOWL—Up to 85 Whistling Swans were noted in four localities on s. Vancouver I. at various times during the season (RWC, VE, *vide* VG, JCo); small flocks were reported wintering in the Columbia R. bottoms n.w. of Portland. Approximately 200 Whistling Swans were at the mouth of the Siuslaw R., near Florence, Oreg., Feb. 2 (CB), and twelve were at Nehalem, Oreg., Jan. 29 (JBC). Trumpeter Swans were more reported than ever before, with two reports of up to 120 individuals in January from Skagit County, Wash., being the peak concentrations; up to 60 were noted near Campbell R., B.C., Dec. 28 (*vide* HT) and 28 were recorded near Bamfield, B.C., Dec. 10 (KT, *vide* VG); other observations of up to five individuals were made from a number of localities on Vancouver I., from around Puget Sound, and from Sauvie I., on the Columbia R. Hundreds of Brant were at Dungeness, Wash., Jan. 6 (KG, *vide* DS) 350 were at Tillamook Bay, Jan. 29 (JBC). An ad. Emperor Goose was seen at Ocean Shores, Wash. in flight but at close range Dec. 18 (DHn, *vide* PM). Single White-fronted Geese wintered at Grants Pass, Oreg. (S&PS) and at a spot 10 mi. n. of Gold Beach, Oreg. (WHO); one was seen at Dungeness in mid-January (KG, *vide* DS), another was at Ridgefield N.W.R., Feb. 5 (JBC *et al.*), up to three individuals were in the vicinity of Victoria, B.C., Jan. 26–Feb. 19 (VG, RS) and three were at Somenos I., Vancouver I., Feb. 24 (JCo). Approximately 200 Snow Geese spent the winter at Sauvie I and the nearby Ridgefield N.W.R.; two individuals were on Greater Chain I., n.e. of Victoria, Dec. 18 (RWC, *vide* VG)

Gadwall were reported (aside from CBCs) at five different localities in w. Washington, s. Vancouver I., and n.w. Oregon in numbers of up to thirteen. Two ♂ Eurasian Green-winged Teals were observed at Somenos L. and at Cowichan Bay, Jan. 7–Feb. 10 (JCo *et al.*); one was found at Sauvie I., Dec. 16 (TC). The 180 Green-winged Teal at Duncan, B.C., Jan. 15 (RS, *fide* VG) was a high concentration for that locality and date. A ♂ Blue-winged Teal was noted at Ridgefield N.W.R., Dec. 16 (TC, JG), and a ♂ Cinnamon Teal was found at Sauvie I., Dec. 11 & 19 (JG *et al.*). European Wigeon were found in small numbers as far s. as Delake, Lincoln Co., Oreg., with an estimated 15 individuals wintering in the vicinity of Victoria. Northern Shovelers were found in numbers of up to 100 at several places in w. Oregon during January and February (HN *et al.*). A flock of 220 Wood Ducks at Grants Pass, Feb. 5 (SS) was noteworthy; 14 were found at Duncan, B.C., Feb. 15 (VG). Up to four Redheads were on a pond near Cape Meares, Tillamook Co., Oreg., after mid-January (JBC *et al.*), and up to five were found through the winter at Saanich, B.C. (VG *et al.*). Ring-necked Ducks were in good numbers at many favored localities on s. Vancouver I., in w. Washington, and in n.w. Oregon during the winter. In late December 1500 Barrow's Goldeneye were at Nanaimo, B.C. (JCo); 500 were at Olympia, Wash., Jan. 3 (*fide* G&WH). Up to 200 Oldsquaw spent the winter at Victoria (VG); there were 36 at Dungeness Bay, Jan. 6 (KG, *fide* DS), but otherwise a few were reported for Eld Inlet, in s. Puget Sound (BE, *fide* G&WH), and single birds were noted at Seattle Jan. 22 (DP, *fide* PM) and at Westport, Wash., Feb. 4 (TW). There were 170 Hooded Mergansers at Saanich Feb. 28, where 400 Com. Mergansers had been concentrated Jan. 16 (VG).

RAPTORS, CRANES, RAILS—A lone Turkey Vulture was spotted at Medford, Oreg., Jan. 20 (MM, *fide* JH), another was at Seattle Jan. 22 (SP, *fide* PM), and two were seen the same day at Aurora, Oreg. (TC, JG). Nine White-tailed Kites wintered at Finley N.W.R., s. of Corvallis, Oreg.; an adult of this species was found 9 mi. e. of Bandon, Oreg., Jan. 22 (JCs). Goshawks were reported sighted four times at three localities, Sharp-shinned Hawks were noted at a score of places with an estimated 30 individuals involved, and Cooper's Hawks were found at about 15 places with up to 20 individuals involved, all exclusive of CBCs. Rough-legged Hawks were very locally common at times during the season, with seven on each date at Portland Int'l Airport, Dec. 1 (DF), at Willapa Bay, and Ilwaco, Wash., Feb. 4 (BH-T), and at Ridgefield N.W.R., Feb. 5 (JBC *et al.*).

One or two Golden Eagles were seen on s. Vancouver I. on several dates, near Rockport, Skagit Co., Wash., in the Cascades, and at Medford, at one time or another during the report period. A Golden Eagle was picked up near dead, apparently from starvation, at L. Cowichan, Vancouver I., Jan. 2 weighing just three pounds; by Feb. 28 the bird was up to nine pounds and ready to be released (JCo). Up to 700 Bald Eagles were present at Seymour I., B.C., in mid-February (GP, *fide* HT), and 352 were reported at the mouth of the Harrison R., mainland British Columbia, Jan. 19 (RWC *et al.*, *fide* VG); the species was seen often on s. Vancouver I., in Skagit and Whatcom Cos., Wash., around Puget Sound, along the Columbia R. below Portland, and on the n.w. Oregon coast, adding up to the largest wintering numbers in a long time. A Marsh Hawk at Oyster R., Vancouver I., Jan. 3, is said to be the "first confirmed winter record for the Campbell R. area" (HT). Four Ospreys were seen in Washington and Oregon—one in December, the others in February. Reports of three Gyrfalcons were received, two from Washington and one from Oregon. Single

Prairie Falcons spent much of the winter at Sauvie I., near Corvallis, and n. of Medford. Surprisingly, one was seen on the coast at the mouth of the Pistol R., Curry Co., Oreg., Jan. 31 (WHO). About 20 Peregrines were recorded from a dozen different localities during the report period; the same statement summarizes the season's status for Merlins. On Dec. 16 there were still two Sandhill Cranes at Ridgefield N.W.R., and 21 were observed at Sauvie I. nearby Dec. 19 (JG *et al.*) Virginia Rails were recorded up to six at a time in December, the most favored localities being Bellevue, Seattle, Vashon I., and Ocean Shores (*fide* PM), while on Cortes I., B.C., 14 birds were counted Dec. 13 (AD, *fide* VG). Single Soras were reported from four different w. Washington locations up to mid-January.

SHOREBIRDS—The 29 Semipalmated Plovers at Aberdeen, Wash., Feb. 19 (G&WH) were decidedly out of the ordinary. An Am. Golden Plover in full breeding plumage, seen initially at Tillamook Bay on the CBC, was still there Dec. 23 (DDS). Concentrations of 232 Black-bellied Plovers at Tillamook Bay, Jan. 23 (DF), and 275 at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., Jan. 29 (DF, HN) were unusual, as were 56 at Saanich, Jan. 5 (LR, *fide* VG). Up to five Whimbrels were seen one or more times during the winter season from Saanich, Victoria, Ocean Shores, Tillamook, and Yaquina Bay. A Wandering Tattler was well seen at Ocean Shores on the surprising date of Feb. 26 (DH, AR). Willets were present at favored places in the region in record numbers for any season; up to 24 were at North R., Willapa Bay, during mid-February (RE, BW, G&WH), 25 were at Yaquina Bay Jan. 23 (TC), and ten were at Coos Bay for the CBC. Greater Yellowlegs, too, were present in surprising winter numbers, centered primarily in the s. Straits of Georgia and Puget Sound, the 34 at Victoria for the CBC being the top count, but 20 s. of Courtenay, B.C., Dec. 19 (*fide* HT) and the 15 at Sidney, B.C., Feb. 19 (RS, *fide* VG) also being noteworthy. There were five reports of Lesser Yellowlegs, involving single birds except for four at Ocean Shores, Dec. 19 on the Grays Harbor CBC. *Twenty-two* Red Knots were present at Coos Bay from late December–Jan. 13 (AC, SG).

On Jan. 17 there were 66 Rock Sandpipers at Race Rocks near Victoria (MS *et al.*, *fide* VG). From Dec. 9–25 five Short-billed Dowitchers were present at Cowichan Bay, Vancouver I. (JCo *et al.*); a dozen birds of this species were found at Turner, near Salem, Oreg., Feb. 25 (TC). There were 45 Long-billed Dowitchers at Westport, Wash., Dec. 18 (LB, BH-T); up to 17 individuals were seen at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., and at five other locations on Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia, mostly in February. Marbled Godwits also were present at some localities in surprising numbers, the 22 at Ocoosa, near Westport, Wash., Dec. 30 being the largest concentration (DP, *fide* PM); a dozen were at Willapa Bay, Feb. 13 (RE, BW) while other places where the species was noted were Tillamook and Coos Bay.

GULLS, ALCIDS, OWLS—Nine Glaucous Gulls were seen at as many different localities from Campbell R., s. to Portland and Otter Rock, Lincoln Co., Oreg. at various times during the winter. Terry Wahl reports the Herring Gull to have been the predominant gull well offshore from Washington and Oregon during January. More than the usual scattered few wintering California and Ring-billed Gulls were present this winter in w. Oregon. On Dec. 4, 600 Bonaparte's Gulls were at Active Pass in the Gulf Is. (MS, *fide* VG) with 73 in Hart Strait Dec. 23 (RWC *et al.*, *fide* VG). Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed to be fairly well distributed off the coast in January, with particular concentrations off s. Oregon at the end of the month (TW); 200 were at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., Feb. 24 (MSm), while small

numbers were recorded at six other localities, including two at Scoggins Valley Park, near Forest Grove, Oreg., Feb. 28 (*vide* HN).

Large numbers of Com. Murres were noted well offshore in January, particularly opposite Grays Harbor and Gold Beach, Oreg. (TW). Small numbers of Marbled Murrelets were in the Victoria area all winter (VG). Up to 375 Ancient Murrelets were in the vicinity of Victoria in the latter half of December (VG); 40 were observed at Saanich Feb. 5 (*vide* VG). Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets were found in scattered places over the edge of the continental shelf off Washington in January, and a few Cassin's Auklets were noted off s. Oregon at the end of the month (TW). On Jan. 9 a single Horned Puffin was identified 70 mi. off the Washington coast (TW). Small numbers of Tufted Puffins were observed there Jan. 7–13, and one was seen off s. Oregon Jan. 30 (TW).

A few Snowy Owls were to be found in the region's most favored localities for this species—the flats from the Fraser R delta s. to Seattle—after mid-December; individuals were also recorded at Leadbetter Pt., Jan. 29, and at Coos Bay Dec 18 (AM, *vide* AC). There were eight records of Pygmy Owls from w. Whatcom and Skagit Cos., Wash., during the winter (TW). Single Burrowing Owls were found at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., Feb. 24 & 26 (MSm, HN *et al.*) and at Ocean Shores Dec. 19 & 30 and Jan. 9 (DP, D&RWO, *vide* PM); the same individual could have been involved in all the sightings. Short-eared Owls were reported in small numbers from w. Washington during the winter, but several observers characterized those numbers as better than the last two years. One or two Saw-whet Owls were noted at Victoria and at Seattle on several dates in December and in early February.

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH THRUSHES—Anna's Hummingbirds were again recorded in surprising winter-season numbers; six wintered at Campbell River, B.C. feeders (HT *et al.*), three were at Maple Bay near Duncan (JCo), up to a half dozen or more were noted at one time or another in Victoria and in Saanich (VG *et al.*), and there were "good numbers" at Bellingham (TW); one was at Bellevue, Wash., for a month starting in mid-December, and single birds were recorded at Garibaldi, Oreg., Jan. 23 (DF) and at Portland Feb 8 (ES).

The only report for Lewis' Woodpecker was of five individuals at Ashland, Oreg., Feb. 13 (DDS). Two Black Phoebes were found along the Applegate R., near Ruch, Jackson Co., Oreg., Feb. 13 & 19 (DDS, TC, JG, MSm). Sixty Skylarks were found at American Camp on San Juan I., Wash, Jan. 1–2 (LA, *vide* PM) and 50 were observed at Saanich Dec. 28 (VG *et al.*). There were 25 Horned Larks at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., Feb. 24 (HN *et al.*); one was at Victoria Dec. 18–27 (VG *et al.*). Violet-green Swallows were seen at Sauvie I. and at Saanich, Feb. 19, while Tree Swallows were noted back in the region Jan. 29 when one was seen near Grants Pass (PS), with observations being made as far n. as Vancouver I. and n. Washington by mid-February. A Blue Jay appeared at Victoria Jan. 21–22 and Feb 5 (VG *et al.*); one was at Duncan through the winter, and one was seen at Finley N.W.R., in Oregon Feb. 26 (SJ). Two Blue Jays were seen repeatedly at L. Vancouver, w. of Vancouver, Wash., and two others came regularly to feeders in Washougal, 25 mi. farther e. through much of the winter (AA, JG *et al.*). A Scrub Jay frequented a feeder at Chehalis, Wash., from late December through January (KB, S&ER, *vide* PM). Single Black-billed Magpies were seen at Seattle, Dec. 13, Feb. 8 & 21 (EG, GK, B&PEV, *vide* PM) and at Des Moines, Wash., Jan. 14 (KS, *vide* PM).

Two Plain Titmice were found at Medford Feb 19 (JG

et al.). Red-breasted Nuthatches were little remarked upon, and seem to have been present in relatively low numbers this winter. Twelve Long-billed Marsh Wrens at Sauvie I., Feb 19 (DF, DI) and 30–40 at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., Feb. 24 (MSm *et al.*) were evidently newly arrived, since such numbers had not been recorded earlier in the winter from these locations. A Mockingbird was at Sea I., s. of Vancouver, through December (WJ *vide* BK); one appeared in Portland in mid-January and remained for the rest of the winter (MK, HN *et al.*). Observers were generally agreed that Am Robins were virtually absent from w. Oregon in January and the first half of February, while Varied Thrushes were little noted anywhere in the region, with frequent comment upon their absence. Between 25–100 W. Bluebirds were present Feb. 15–17 at Metchosin, Vancouver I. (JR, *vide* VG); the total of 49 on the Dallas, Oregon CBC was noteworthy. A Townsend's Solitaire at Tillamook Jan. 23 was the only one recorded for the report period (DF, DI).

WAXWINGS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS—Cedar Waxwing flocks were noted in Olympia until mid-January, but thereafter were sporadic (BH-T); they were absent from Portland until February. In Port Angeles, Wash., 50 Cedar Waxwings were seen Jan. 19 (KG, *vide* DS). Northern Shrikes were present only in small numbers, being seen at Campbell R., Victoria, and Dungeness on repeated occasions, at Ridgefield N.W.R. and at Vancouver, Wash., twice, and once at Westham I., s. of Vancouver, B.C., and at Tillamook. Up to a half million Starlings were roosting at Gresham, Oreg., Feb. 24 (DDS *et al.*). Single Orange-crowned Warblers were noted at Saanich Dec. 14, at Esquimalt Jan. 6, and at Victoria Feb. 13 (*vide* VG). A Black-throated Gray Warbler was seen at Hoquiam, Wash., Dec. 19 (EH, *vide* PM). On the same date, a ♂ Townsend's Warbler was on Hornby I., s. of Courtenay, B.C. (WF, JL, *vide* HT); other individuals of this species were recorded in the Seattle area until Jan 4, and on a number of CBCs. A Palm Warbler, first found on the CBC, was subsequently seen Dec. 30, Jan. 6 & Feb 26 at Ocean Shores (*vide* PM); another was seen repeatedly at Scoggins Valley Park, near Forest Grove, Oreg., after being first found Jan. 15 (HN *et al.*). Two Wilson's Warblers were seen at Bellevue, Wash., Dec. 11 (TWe, *vide* PM) and two were also recorded on the Coos Bay CBC.

Two W. Meadowlarks were observed at Campbell R., Dec 12, one was there Jan. 3 and again Feb. 24 for the "first confirmed winter records for the area" (HT); Feb. 12 there were 22 W. Meadowlarks at Saanich, where almost that many had been seen Feb. 9 (VG *et al.*). A ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Saanich, Dec. 4–5 (RS *et al.*, *vide* VG). A ♂ Hooded Oriole came to hummingbird feeders at Depoe Bay, Oreg., Dec. 1–29 and was photographed repeatedly (RB, TC *et al.*). An adult ♂ N. Oriole was seen at Central Pt., Oreg., Dec. 11; presumably the same bird re-appeared there, Feb. 2–20 (Lois Smith, *vide* SS). A ♂ Rusty Blackbird was discovered at Duncan, B.C., Dec. 30 (VG). There were six sightings of one or two Brown-headed Cowbirds at Vancouver, Saanich, Seattle and Olympia; ten individuals were at Ridgefield N.W.R., Jan. 30 (DDS).

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS—Evening Grosbeaks and Red Crossbills were totally absent from much of the region this winter except for low numbers on s. Vancouver I., and from Bellingham s. to Olympia. Purple Finches were scarce everywhere. February 1 at Paradise in Mt Rainier N.P., 18 Pine Grosbeaks were found (BH-T). Large numbers of Pine Siskins were reported only from Dungeness where they were present all winter (DS). A Lesser Goldfinch was recorded at Ridgefield N.W.R., Dec 16 (TC, DF, JG). Six Brown Towhees were counted at Medford Feb 19 (JG *et al.*) Up to four Savannah Sparrows

were found at Ocean Shores Jan. 3 & 17 (G&WH) and at Seattle Feb. 11 (GUV *et al.*, *fide* PM). Lone Tree Sparrows were at Saanich Nov. 28–Jan. 22 (VG *et al.*) and at Coos Bay in late December (AC). Several Chipping Sparrows wintered at or near Medford (SS, JG *et al.*). The only report for Harris' Sparrow was one at Coos Bay in late December (AC). Single White-throated Sparrows turned up at Saanich Dec. 14–15 (RMG, V&MG *et al.*), at Ocean Shores Dec. 18 (LB, BH-T, *fide* PM), and at Fife near Tacoma Jan. 16 (DE, *fide* PM). Lincoln's Sparrows were recorded at five different localities at one time or another during the season. Up to 22 Lapland Longspurs were found on Greater Chain I, near Victoria Dec. 18–31 (RWC *et al.*, *fide* VG); eight were at Ocean Shores Feb. 26 (DH, AR, *fide* PM). Snow Buntings were said to be "very scarce" at Bellingham this winter; single birds were seen at the s. jetty of the Columbia R., Feb. 14 & 26 (MSm, HN *et al.*), and at Ocean Shores Feb. 26, but 21 were at Leadbetter Pt., Feb. 8 (DH).

OBSERVERS—Linda Anchondo, Art Arp, Range Bayer, Laurence Binford, Charles Bruce, Ken Brunner, R. Wayne

Campbell, Jim Collins (JCs), John Cromer (JCo), Alan Contreras, Tom Crabtree, John B. Crowell, Jr., Dave DeSante, Adrian Dorst, Ruby Egbert, Doris Erickson, Val Eshleman, Betty Estes, Bob & Pat Evans (B&PEv), Ben Fawver, W Fitzpatrick, David Fix, Eugene Gerzenstein, Jeff Gilligan, Vic & Margaret Goodwill, Sayre Greenfield, Karl Greubel, Dudley P. Harrington (DHn), Bill Harrington-Tweit, Dave Hayward, Joseph Hicks, Wayne Hoffman (WHo), Glen & Wanda Hoge, Eugene Hunn, David Irons, Stewart Janes, Winnie Johnson, Brian Kautesk, Grace Kent, Mark Koninendyke, J. Lunum, R. Mackenzie-Grieve, Phil Mattocks, Alan McGie, Merle McGraw, Harry Nehls, G. Palmer, Dennis Paulson, Evelyn Peaslee, Stella Porubov, Sam & Erma Rich, Alan Richards, Leila Roberts, John Royle, Ron Satterfield, Emile Schoffelen, Kathleen Seekins, Michael Shepard, Doris Smith, Mark Smith (MSm), Steve & Priscilla Summers, Keith Taylor, Howard Telosky, Gus Van Vliet, Terry Wahl, Don & Linda Weedon, Tom Weir (TWe), Burr Williams, Doug & Robin Wood (D&RWo).—JOHN B. CROWELL, JR., 1185 Hallinan Circle, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034 and HARRY B. NEHLS, 2736 S.E. 20th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97202.

MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION /Jon Winter and Dick Erickson

The drought was again blamed for a number of abnormal events. Reduced water in the Central Valley (below, C.V.) concentrated water birds along rivers in many areas and may have resulted in the exceptional number of geese found along the coast. Lack of suitable habitat restricted the number of American Bitterns at Los Banos where they were far below normal. Similarly a lack of fresh water around San Francisco Bay (below, S.F. Bay) apparently resulted in a local displacement of Long-billed Dowitchers to the bay shore at Alameda. Further evidence of salt water intrusion in upper San Francisco Bay comes from numerous reports of Marbled Godwits there and a Semipalmated Plover at Benicia December 9. At Calaveras State Park Mountain Quail were able to remain at higher elevations because of reduced snow cover.



Mild conditions resulted in a number of late records, especially in areas normally subject to freezing (see Table 1). An especially impressive array of warblers was present. Many species began reproductive activity early and were well under way by the end of the period.

All records from the Farallon Islands (below, F.I.) should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory (below P.R.B.O.).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES—A Yellow-billed Loon at Grant L., Mono Co., Dec. 8–26 (DAG*,TH*) was photographed and well described for California's first inland record. One on the Nevada side of L. Tahoe is the only other inland U.S. record (*West. Birds* 6: 7–20). More expected was one at Princeton Harbor Feb. 19–Mar. 19 (M. Ozaki, J. Dunn, m.o.b.). About 2000 Arctic Loons counted flying N past Bolinas Jan. 6 (P.R.B.O.) was unusual. One was at June L., Mono Co., Nov. 21–Dec. 8 (DAG *et al.*), and a Red-throated Loon was also there on the former date (*fide* DAG). At least 30 oiled W. Grebes were found along Marin County beaches following an oil spill on S.F. Bay Feb. 10 (P.R.B.O.).

Black-footed Albatrosses were reported in normally low numbers but more birders saw the Laysan Albatross this winter than ever before. Singles were at the Cordelle Banks (off Pt. Reyes) in February (*fide* CP) and on Monterey Bay Jan. 8 (F.A.S.), Jan. 9 (P.S.G.) and Feb. 13 (G.G.A.S.) Northern Fulmars were seen in moderate numbers to about mid-January with few seen thereafter.

The Sooty Shearwater is our only regular winter shearwater, yet this year six species were seen. Pink-footed Shearwaters were reported as follows: 1–2 at the Cordelle Banks Jan. 15 (C.F.O.), one at the F.I., Feb. 28 (BL), numerous sightings on Monterey Bay including 12 there Feb. 13, when they outnumbered all other species (G.G.A.S.). Exceptional were single Flesh-footed Shearwaters seen on Monterey Bay Jan. 8 (RH*, KH, F.A.S.) and Jan. 23 (JM, TC, G.G.A.S.). The only previous winter record is of one collected on Monterey Bay Feb. 27, 1907 by the legendary Rollo H. Beck. Another rarity, New Zealand Shearwater (unrecorded in winter prior to 1976), was on Monterey Bay Jan. 9 (JL, P.S.G.) Short-tailed Shearwaters were identified twice: 2–3 on Monterey Bay Jan. 9 (P.S.G.) and 1–3 at the Cordelle Banks

Jan 15 (C.F.O.). As many as three Manx Shearwaters were seen off Monterey throughout the period, which is unusual. An Ashy Storm-Petrel on Bolinas Lagoon Feb. 21 (P.R.B.O., DS*) was certainly unexpected. Several more in heavy seas off Monterey Feb. 28 (G. Moffat) were the only other storm-petrels reported.

Table 1. Late Records from the Great Basin and Mountains

Species	Date	Number	Place	Observers
White Pelican	12-5	1	Fall River Mills	SAL
	12-8	1	Grant Res., Mono Co.	DAG
Double-crested Cormorant	12-5	3	Fall River Mills	SAL
	1-19	2	Iron Gate Res. Siskiyou Co.	<i>vide</i> MT
Gadwall	12-19	1	S. Lake Tahoe	WS
	12-28	198	L. Almanor	<i>vide</i> SAL
Cinnamon Teal	12-18	7	Shasta Valley	<i>vide</i> MT
Sandhill Crane	12-19	5	Gazelle	<i>vide</i> MT
Virginia Rail	12-19	1	S. Lake Tahoe	WS
Greater Yellowlegs	12-19	4	near Gazelle	<i>vide</i> MT
Common Snipe	12-19	1	S. Lake Tahoe	WS
Long-billed Dowitcher	12-19	2	near Grenada	<i>vide</i> MT
Western Sandpiper	12-18	2	L. Almanor	<i>vide</i> SAL
Dunlin	12-19	4	L. Shastina	<i>vide</i> MT
	12-28	6	L. Almanor	<i>vide</i> SAL

Brown Pelicans remained in numbers in our area later than usual evidenced in CBC data. They were seen as late as Jan. 2 at Humboldt Bay (DE), to the end of January at Bodega Bay and S.F. Bay (DS, SFB *et al.*) and throughout the period at Monterey (AE, SFB *et al.*). The inland appearance of two of our most strictly marine species were the biggest events of the season. An imm. **Brandt's Cormorant** (banded on the F.I.) was caught near Fowler, Fresno Co., Mar. 13 following two days of strong NW winds (*vide* RH*) and an ad. **Pelagic Cormorant** was photographed at Silver L., Mono Co., Dec. 8 (DAG*). The former bird, found more than 15 mi. from the nearest river, is not easily explained. It was healthy and released at Carmel Mar. 17. The latter bird, e. of the Sierra nearly 200 mi. from the ocean, is beyond all explanation.

Twenty-seven Green Herons reported from the coast was a very high count. Inland they are more common but 25 counted along a 4-mi. stretch of the American R., in Sacramento Jan 5 (*vide* BK) was exceptional. Most notable among 100 Cattle Egrets reported was a flock of 25 near Delhi, Merced Co., Jan 1 (SS) and one feeding among sea lions at the Cliff House in San Francisco in late December (*vide* DRo). Least Bitterns were reported from both Gray Lodge and Sacramento N.W.R. (*vide* BED, MT). More than 60 White-faced Ibises were reported from the Los Banos area Feb. 12 (TC *et al.*).

WATERFOWL AND RAPTORS—Hundreds of Whistling Swans were found dead from avian malaria or fowl cholera

in the delta (especially on the Rindge Tract, San Joaquin Co) in mid-February (Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game, HLC) The population of Aleutian Canada Geese (*B.C. leucopareia*) is apparently larger than previously known, since 1400 were reported at Los Banos Wildlife Area in February (*vide* RH), and others were found wintering in the Sacramento Valley (RS *et al.*). Inland Black Brant were found at Tule L., Dec 3-12 (*vide* MT) and at Black Butte Res., Glenn-Tehama Co., Jan. 26 (SAL). A first record for the F.I. was the imm. Snow Goose there Dec. 1-Jan. 20. Out-of-range Ross' Geese included one at L. Almanor Dec. 28 (SAL), one found dead on s. Humboldt Bay Jan. 2 (*vide* DRu), one at Bodega Bay Jan. 29 (BDP *et al.*) and two at Clifton Court Forebay, Contra Costa Co., Feb. 4 (DE).

An apparent ♂ Gadwall x Pintail hybrid was seen at the Palo Alto Yacht Harbor Feb. 17 (RS, W. Russell). Individual Green-winged (Eur.) Teal were seen at Bolinas Lagoon Jan 22-28 (J&RW *et al.*) and at Arcata in February (*vide* DRu) The Cinnamon Teal is one of our earliest spring migrants Nonetheless, two at S. Lake Tahoe Feb. 17 (WS), one in Shasta Valley and six more at Tule L., Feb. 20 (*vide* MT) were all considered early for these areas. Only five out of 24 Eur. Wigeon reported were found inland. Hybrids with Am. Wigeon were again noted with single males in San Francisco Jan. 3 (RS), and at Gray Lodge Jan. 28 (BED). Another interesting hybrid was the ♂ Ring-necked Duck x scaup sp at L. Merritt, Oakland Jan. 15 to the end of the period (H. Connon *et al.*). The bird reported as a Ring-necked x Tufted Duck in *Am. Birds* 31: 217 and in previous years was present on Rodeo Lagoon throughout the period (m.ob.). This bird has been the subject of controversy in the past and it now appears that Greater Scaup heritage may be involved as well. The pair of pure **Tufted Ducks** was on L. Merritt to Dec. 12 (m.ob.) and then vanished. The male reappeared Jan. 22 and remained into March. With the bird gone from L. Merritt, probably the same ♂ Tufted Duck was found nearby on Oakland's inner harbor Mar. 19 (*vide* JM) and may explain the earlier absence on L. Merritt. Yet another male was present on Richardson's Bay Dec. 20-Feb. 6 (T. Olsen, m.ob.). A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye at the F.I., Jan. 1 represents the only island record. Up to seven Oldsquaws at Princeton Harbor throughout the period (PM, m.ob.) was a good concentration. The ♂ Harlequin Duck reported in *Am. Birds* 31: 217, on S.F. Bay at Belvedere was present throughout the period (m.ob.). Impressive concentrations of Com. Mergansers were 1034 at L. Almanor Dec. 28 (SAL *et al.*) and 1200 at Bravo L., Woodlake Dec. 29-Feb. 2 (RAB, JLi). Three pairs of Red-breasted Mergansers at Sacramento Feb. 24 (*vide* BK) were the only ones reported inland.

White-tailed Kites remained at Honey L. throughout the period with as many as five there Feb. 19 (SAL, SS). An ad Goshawk at Gray Lodge Dec. 20 (BED) was out-of-range A pair in coastal n. Mendocino County was calling and exhibiting territorial behavior throughout February (DAG) Single Red-shouldered Hawks near Grenada Feb. 3-6 (*vide* MT), at Honey L. to at least Feb. 19 (SAL *et al.*) and at S. Lake Tahoe Feb. 4-7 (WS) were all in areas reported in *Am. Birds* 31: 217-18. Another immature was in Round Valley, Inyo Co., Dec. 7 (DAG). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk was seen in Monterey Dec. 27-31 (*vide* DR.). Rough-legged Hawks were generally reported as scarce except in the Great Basin and on the n. coast where 46 were recorded on the Centerville Beach CBC Jan. 2. Ferruginous Hawks were present in fairly good numbers with one reported in *Am. Birds* 31: 218 still present at Cape Mendocino Feb. 3 (CH). The Klamath Basin has long been known as a winter stronghold of Bald Eagles. On Feb 16 an estimated minimum population of 498 was obtained by a coordinated effort of federal agencies (*vide* MT) Ospreys were

found in good numbers, especially on the coast, with no less than eight found on the Pt. Reyes CBC.

GROUSE THROUGH JAEGERERS—The only Ruffed Grouse reported was at Denny, Trinity Co., Dec. 5 (*fide* Dru). A pair of California Quail at 6800 ft at Soda Springs, Nevada Co., Jan. 8 (JH) was unexpected. Six Virginia Rails and one Sora at Lewiston L., Trinity Co., Dec. 20 (SAL) were at an interesting locality. Black Rails were again reported from Kehoe Marsh, Marin Co., and Benicia with another seen at Tubbs I., Sonoma Co., Feb. 14 (*fide* CP). Christmas Bird Count data and further observations indicate a higher number of Snowy Plovers than usual wintered along the c. coast this year. As many as 11 out-of-place Mountain Plovers were near Alviso Dec. 27–Jan. 22 (m.ob.). Twelve Am. Golden Plovers from coastal Humboldt, Marin, San Mateo, and Monterey Cos., are less than we have grown accustomed to.

A Willet s. of Sacramento Feb. 19 (*fide* BK) provided one of very few recent winter records for the Sacramento Valley. An amazing 850 Red Knots at Alameda Jan. 20 (*fide* ER) appear to be the largest number ever recorded in the region! Rock Sandpipers were reported from Humboldt Bay, Bodega Head, Princeton Harbor, and near Bean Hollow State Beach. The Ruff at Pacific Grove remained there throughout the period and is now generally believed to be a female (m.ob.). A healthy N. Phalarope at Moss Landing Feb. 6 (PM) provided one of few regional winter records. Red Phalaropes were present in fair numbers to mid-December with 10–15 off Monterey Jan. 8 & 9 (F.A.S., P.S.G.), and one at the Cordelle Banks Jan. 15 (RS, C.F.O.) the last seen.

From Sonoma County south, Pomarine Jaegers were reported in excellent numbers this year. Twenty at the Cordelle Banks Jan. 15 (C.F.O.) and 30 off Monterey Feb. 13 (G.G.A.S.) were the highest counts. A single Parasitic Jaeger was on Monterey Bay Jan. 9 (P.S.G.).

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS—Fifteen Glaucous Gulls were reported: nine from S.F. Bay, five from coastal Marin, San Mateo, and Monterey Cos., and one inland near Knightsen Feb. 27 (DE,* SM). Most interesting finds were *two adults*: one on Tomales Bay Dec. 12 (RS* *et al.*), and the other near Milpitas at the Newby I. dump Mar. 8 (SM, DE*). There is one previously published record of an adult in California (*Am. Birds* 28:688, another corrected in *Calif. Birds* 2:14), but still none of a third-year bird. Observers were requested to report all birds believed to be Glaucous-winged x W. Gull intergrades this winter and as a result we received 21 reports of approximately 50 birds. A recurrent comment was that the plumage of many ad. intergrades rather resembles that of ad. Thayer's Gulls. Immatures are less readily identified.

What could possibly have been a single imm. Franklin's Gull on S.F. Bay generated reports from Pt. Richmond Jan. 9–19 (N. Boyajian *et al.*), the San Leandro dump Jan. 23 (SFB), and at Belvedere Feb. 9 (*fide* JM). Bonaparte's Gulls were found inland with an amazing 222 on the Clear Lake CBC Dec. 19, one at Sacramento N.W.R., Feb. 11 (*fide* BK) and 2–8 at Shadow Cliffs Park, Alameda Co., to Feb. 12 (AE). Heermann's Gulls at Monterey throughout the period are probably normal (m.ob.). An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake at the Martinez marina Feb. 27 (SM, DE) was far from the ocean. Offshore they were generally reported in good numbers with a maximum of 1000+ at the Cordelle Banks Jan. 15 (C.F.O.).

Two unidentified terns (probably Forster's) seen on the Clear Lake CBC Dec. 19 are significant. On the coast at the n limit of their winter range, Forster's Terns were reported in greater-than-normal numbers in both Marin and Sonoma Cos. (DS, BDP *et al.*). An Elegant Tern at Princeton Harbor Dec. 17–Jan. 25 (PM* *et al.*) was unprecedented;

there are no previous January or February records for the U.S. (GMCC *pers. com.*). One at Bolinas Lagoon Dec. 12 (JW) nearly equals the region's previous latest date.



Elegant Tern, Princeton Harbor, Calif. Jan. 25, 1977
First January U.S. record. Photo/P. J. Metropulos.

S.A.

A special effort was made to obtain all records of Herring and Thayer's Gulls in an attempt to clarify their status' in the region. The distribution of the Thayer's Gull is still unclear and it appears that a substantial portion of the population winters here. Some idea of its status can be seen by totaling the individuals from all reports and dividing by the number of reports to obtain an average number per report as shown in Table 2. Despite the table, both species are considerably more common offshore than on the coast, since many observations of "zero" birds on the coast are not included in the averages. The numbers for S.F. Bay are especially high because of considerable observation at refuse sites. Figure 3 shows high counts at various points around S.F. Bay. It appears that these species are present in greatest numbers only in the absence of W. Gulls. The Humboldt Bay and Berkeley dumps both hold very small numbers of Herring and Thayer's Gulls, yet abound with W. Gulls. On the coast W. Gulls are abundant yet decline rather rapidly offshore where the other species begin to increase in number. One hundred Herring Gulls at Wilder Beach, Santa Cruz Co., in early January (TB), 90 at San Gregorio Beach, San Mateo Co., Feb. 16 (PM) and 373 on the Point Reyes CBC Dec. 18, 60 Thayer's Gulls at L. Merced, San Francisco Feb. 8 (PM) and 450 at Richardson's Bay Jan. 1 (SM) are exceptions. The latter concentration was possibly in response to a super-abundance of natural food there. Glaucous-winged Gulls appear not to restrict the Herring and Thayer's Gulls as all three species are common at the Martinez and San Leandro dumps.

It is interesting that all inland reports of Thayer's Gulls came from the area around S.F. Bay and the delta, as far away as Napa, Livermore, Sacramento, Folsom Dam, and finally L. Tahoe. Is it possible that all (or most) of these birds come down the coast and spread inland via S.F. Bay? Perhaps not surprisingly our inland records of Glaucous Gull show the same pattern. Herring Gulls were not reported in the Great Basin until Feb. 20 at Tule L., when an increase in California and Ring-billed Gulls was noted as well (*fide* MT). Herring Gulls are at best casual in the Basin in the winter and the Thayer's Gull is presently unrecorded there in winter.

Table 2. Herring and Thayer's Gulls/report (see text)

	Herring	Thayer's
Offshore	51	5
Outer Coast	45	6
S F. Bay & Delta	181	122
Inland	53	5

Table 3. High Counts of Herring and Thayer's Gulls: S.F. Bay Area

	Herring	Thayer's
Holland Tract* Contra Costa Co.	900 2-27 (SM, DE)	600 2-27 (SM, DE)
Mallard Res.**	300 2-27 (SM, DE)	75 2-27 (SM, DE)
Martinez Dump	800 2-27 (SM, DE)	200 2-27 (SM, DE)
Novato Dump	?	50+ 2-24 (JW, DS)
Richardson's Bay	?	450 1-1 (SM)
Berkeley Dump	1 1-29 (SFB)	20 1-30 (SFB)
Alameda Dump	5 12-19 (JM)	10 12-19 (JM)
San Leandro Dump	800 1-15 (DE)	550 1-23 (SFB)
L. Chabot, Oakland**	300 12-14 (SM)	550 12-14 (SM)
Turk I. Dump Union City	650 11-20 (SM)	267 1-2 (SFB)
Newby I. Dump near Milpitas	800 3-8 (SM, DE)	150 3-8 (SM, DE)
Calaveras Res.**	550 12-9 (SM)	0 (SM, DE)

* Pig farm.

** Major roosting areas for the Martinez, San Leandro, and Newby I. dumps respectively.

A Thick-billed Murre at the mouth of the Eel R., Humboldt Co., Jan. 3 (S. Harris*) represents the first California record away from Monterey Bay. Very rare in winter, Xantus' Murrelets were found repeatedly in Monterey Bay with at least seven seen Feb. 20 (W.F.O.). Marbled and Ancient Murrelets and Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets were all reported in what seems to be normal numbers. A Horned Puffin was photographed at the F.I., Mar. 18 & 19 and a Tufted Puffin was seen off Bodega Bay Jan. 15 (TC, C.F.O.).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS—Great Horned and Pygmy Owls were reported in good numbers along the coast by several observers. Spotted Owls were reported in typical numbers mostly from areas near the coast. Blue-listed Burrowing Owls were noted as being "harder to find" this

winter in the C.V. (JH). This species appears to be declining over most of its range in the region.

S.A.

On Jan. 29 while driving e. over Donner Pass in the Sierras, Dan Guthrie picked up 18 dead Saw-whet and four dead Screech Owls along the highway on the w. slope at the 3500-6500 ft level. Judging by the condition of the specimens Guthrie stated that the birds might have been dead as long as two weeks. All the birds appeared to have been hit by cars. He further estimated that there may have been as many 30 dead owls along the highway when birds lying dead along the westbound lanes were tallied. This is indeed a remarkable observation. Saw-whets are rarely noted in the Sierras and numbers of this magnitude are rather startling. Some species of owls, i.e. Elf Owls, have been noted as migrating (or wintering) in flocks and since some Saw-whets from the north winter in California Guthrie's birds may have been part of such a flock. The reason for so many falling victim to cars remains a mystery.

Approximately 100-150 White-throated Swifts were found wintering in "breather holes" in a bridge near Sailor Bar, Sacramento Co., (fide BK). The Costa's x Anna's Hummingbird hybrid reported from Oakland in the fall issue remained at its feeder until Dec. 27 (JM). The temperate winter weather may have encouraged Rufous Hummingbirds to return early. At least two males were seen at Bodega Bay Dec 22-late January (H. Corey *et al.*). Anna's Hummingbirds were noted as down in numbers in the Sutter Buttes area owing to lack of flowers resulting from drought conditions (BED)

Pileated Woodpeckers were reported in excellent numbers with a total of 11 birds submitted from both the coast and the Sierra foothills. Springville, Tulare Co., appears to be the Acorn Woodpecker capital of the world. On the Springville CBC at least 727 were reported which more than doubles last year's count, then the highest in the country (fide RAB). A Williamson's Sapsucker seen at Butte Meadows Jan. 18 was the first ever recorded in Butte County (SAL *et al.*). This species tends to be more common on the e. slope of the n and c. Sierras. Nuttall's Woodpeckers staged a virtual invasion of Marin County this year. At least 13 were seen on the Pt. Reyes CBC Dec. 18 (fide DS, RS) while 14 more were seen in various parts of the county over the winter period. This species tends to be more common in the dryer interior oak-woodlands and seems to shun the wetter coastal oaks. The drought may have played a role in directing this invasion toward the coast.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PARIDS—Two Tropical Kingbirds wintered in San Francisco at L. Merced and Golden Gate Park (m.ob.). Both were still present at the end of the period. Quite rare in winter, a W. Kingbird was found on W. Butte Rd., near the Sutter Buttes Dec. 5 (JRI). A W Flycatcher seen on the Chico CBC Dec. 19 registered only the fifth winter record for the region (AC). Tree, Violet-green and Barn Swallows appear to have returned to the region earlier than normal with a few probably overwintering. Two different Scrub Jays were seen gathering nesting material Feb 17 at Dog I., Tehama Co., and at Concord (SAL, DE), at least a month early. Yellow-billed Magpie records for Siskiyou County continue to mount as another was photographed Feb 5 just e. of Grenada (fide MT, MR). This species may be expanding its range N. Most interesting was the observation on the Pt. Reyes CBC of a Com. Raven catching and eating

a small shorebird at Limantour Spit Dec. 18 (JRe). The shorebird must have been asleep to have been caught by the slow-moving raven! Chestnut-backed Chickadees were found in two additional El Dorado County locations, at L. Walton and just below Georgetown (WS). Both observations consisted of 10± birds each. This species is continuing to expand its range S into the Sierra, but breeding has yet to be firmly established. Perhaps some enterprising observer will document the first breeding record for the Sierra and confirm what we have long suspected. For a more complete discussion of this problem see Crase (*Am. Birds* 30:673–675).

NUTHATCHES THROUGH WAXWINGS—Unseasonable weather allowed Winter Wrens to remain at high Sierra locations through much of the winter period. One was seen Jan. 4 near Little Norway, El Dorado Co., at an elevation of 6800 ft (WS), and two more at 6400 ft. in Holy Meadow, Tulare Co., Dec. 22 (RAB). An unusually high count for Cañon Wrens was tallied on the Peace Valley CBC Dec. 23 when 50 were found (*vide* BED). The Bendire's Thrasher reported in the fall issue spent its second winter in Courtland and started singing in mid-February (m.ob.). Sage Thrashers returned to the Klamath L. Basin early, where 12+ were seen at Laird's Landing Feb. 17 (MT). Another was found at Lindsay, Tulare Co., Dec. 18 where there is only one other winter record (*vide* RAB). Several observers noted that Am. Robins were down in numbers all winter. Comparison of some CBC data from previous years indicated that the populations were down by as much as 80–90% in many parts of the region. Temperate weather in the Pacific Northwest might have encouraged robins to remain farther n. this winter.

As usual, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were reported wintering in small numbers. Two were found at the Carmel R. mouth, and single birds were seen s. of Livermore and at Clear L. Highlands (m.ob.). Following last winter's invasion, Bohemian Waxwings made a small reappearance this winter: 18 were seen on the Lake Almanor CBC Dec. 29 (P. Laymon), five were seen near Bray, Siskiyou Co., Feb. 20 (*vide* MT) and 15 appeared at S. Lake Tahoe Dec. 28 (*vide* WS). Cedar Waxwings, like robins, were noted as being very low in numbers throughout the period.

SHRIKES THROUGH WARBLERS—A total of 13 N. Shrikes was found at two coastal and nine inland locations. This is an above-average count. Most unusual was the presence of a singing Solitary Vireo Dec. 24 at the Calaveras Big Trees (4700 ft) (MK). Another was found on the Monterey CBC Dec. 28. Three Black-and-white Warblers were found wintering Dec. 14–Jan. 18 with single birds at the Carmel R. mouth, Inverness and Dog I., Tehama Co. (m.ob.). This species appears to winter in the region in small numbers nearly every year. Much rarer in winter were two Tennessee Warblers. Single birds were at Pt. Reyes Station Dec. 18–Feb. 26 (JL, SLu, m.ob.) and at the Carmel R. mouth Dec. 11 (RS, LCB, DE, BDP *et al.*). Several observers commented that Orange-crowned Warblers were heard singing actively in mid-February which is about a month ahead of their normal singing time. A total of four Nashville Warblers wintered at three coastal localities which is about normal. A single Yellow Warbler seen on the Peace Valley CBC Dec. 23 was the only one reported (RS). One of the Cape May Warblers that wintered at Santa Cruz last winter apparently returned and put in a brief appearance Jan. 15 but was never seen again after that date (W. Greene). A single Black-throated Gray Warbler on Inverness Ridge, Marin Co., Dec. 1 was the only one reported (DS). At least six Hermit Warblers, all on the coast from Marin County Dec. 3–Feb. 18, were reported (DS, BSo, RS) A Chestnut-sided Warbler at the Carmel R. mouth Jan. 3 was the region's first in winter (W. Palsson*) This bird may

have been the same individual seen here in late November (FN, FBc). Another found at Tilden Park, Contra Costa Co., in late November was last seen Dec. 4 (*vide* DRo). A very late Bay-breasted Warbler was seen at the Carmel R. mouth Dec. 12 (D. Dittmann, *vide* DRo).

The Prairie Warbler seen last fall at Sharp Park, San Mateo Co., was last seen Dec. 5 (JM) while another was found in late November at Arcata and was seen by several observers Dec. 4 (DRU). These are the first and second winter records for the region. Five Palm Warblers, all from the coast from Ferndale to Asilomar Dec. 1–Feb. 20, were reported (m ob) A N. Waterthrush at Redding Dec. 14 & 15 was the first ever found in Tehama Co. (PD*, SAL *et al.*). This species is rarely ever found inland, and is very rare in winter. A Wilson's Warbler found near Springville Dec. 12–31 is the first Tulare County record for winter (*vide* RAB). Two Am. Redstarts were reported: one at the Pajaro R., Santa Cruz Co., Jan. 1, (PM) and an ad. male that apparently returned for the second consecutive winter just n. of Sebastopol in mid-December and remained to at least Jan. 29 (BDP, m.ob.).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH SPARROWS—Three Brown-headed Cowbirds at Standish, Lassen Co., Dec. 30 were of interest as this species is rare in the Great Basin in winter (DE)

S.A.

A very odd assortment of migrants showed up at Younger's Lagoon, Santa Cruz Dec. 4–11. First to arrive was an Indigo Bunting Dec. 4–11, followed by a Dickcissel and a Tree Sparrow Dec. 7, and finally a Rusty Blackbird Dec. 11–17. The area was being very closely watched during this time so apparently the migrants all arrived shortly before they were discovered. The Indigo Bunting was only the third ever recorded in the region in winter; the Dickcissel was the second winter record for the region. The Rusty Blackbird is quite rare on the coast particularly in December. Tree Sparrows are casual on the coast in fall but are considerably rarer in winter. Since most coastal records for Tree Sparrows in winter are of birds that remained in the area of discovery for some time, the Younger Lagoon bird was probably a late fall migrant; it was not seen again after Dec. 7. Further, since the Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, and Rusty Blackbird can hardly be considered wintering birds in the region and the fact that the Tree Sparrow was probably a migrant would suggest that this flock was a very late "fall" wave of vagrants—most remarkable! Contributors: (TB*, DP*, RM, PM *et al.*)

Three wintering W. Tanagers were reported; two from the coast and one inland Jan. 8–Feb. 27. A single ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen in Pt. Reyes Station Dec. 18 (JL, SLu, m.ob.). Two ♀ Evening Grosbeaks at Inverness Dec. 18 and several in the East Bay area in February (*vide* DR). were the only ones found near the coast this winter (RS *et al.*) A ♀ Pine Grosbeak seen at Lava Beds Nat'l Mon. Jan. 11 was quite interesting since there is only one other record for the Great Basin (PD*). A single Gray-crowned Rosy Finch seen on Summit Park Rd., Lassen N.P., Dec. 7 (SAL) was particularly interesting since the bird is rare in Shasta County and little is known of its status there (see Johnson, R. E 1975 *Auk* 92:586–589). Red Crossbills were reported in four locations near the coast, the largest flock of which comprised 125 birds on Mt. Tamalpais Jan. 1 (NS). A flock of eight birds that included two in juvenile plumage was seen at L. Mary,

Mono Co., Dec. 7 (DAG). Two interesting Green-tailed Towhee records were submitted: one 5 mi. n. of Knight's Landing, Yolo Co., Jan. 16 appears to be the first winter record for the Sacramento Valley (G. Howe*), and another at June L., Mono Co., Dec. 8 was the first winter record from the Great Basin (DAG). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow was seen, subsequently banded and photographed at Bolinas Lagoon Feb. 4-6 (JE, BSo*).

Vesper Sparrows were reported in fewer-than-normal numbers. The most interesting record was of a single bird at Redding Jan. 2; they are rare this far north in winter (SAL). A Sage Sparrow 5 mi. n. of Branscomb, Mendocino Co., Feb. 13 was in a location that should be watched for possible breeding; this species' status n. of Marin County on the coast needs clarification. Most unusual was the presence of a Black-throated Sparrow at Kaweah L., Tulare Co., Feb. 13-Mar. 12 (RAB*, m.ob.). This makes the second winter record for the region.

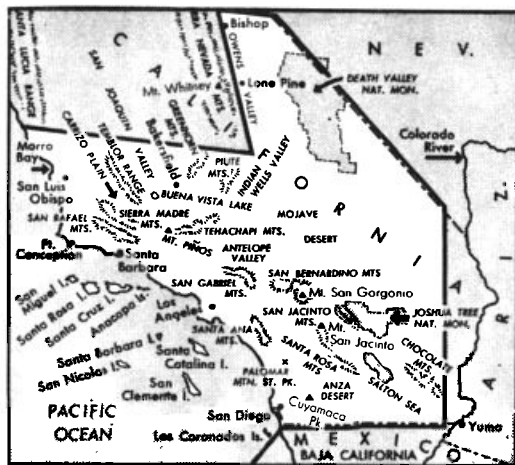
Rare along the Coast, a Gray-headed Junco was seen at Pt. Reyes Station Mar. 2 (JE*). In addition to the Tree Sparrow mentioned earlier, a single bird was seen on the Peace Valley CBC Dec. 23 (RS, BED *et al.*). A Clay-colored Sparrow in Pt. Reyes Station Dec. 18 represented only the third winter regional record (JL, SLu). Harris' Sparrows were seen in fewer-than-normal numbers. An imm. bird that wintered in Porterville Nov. 15-Feb. 28 was the first ever found in Tulare County (RAB, C. Gunderson*). A bird that appeared to be a melanistic Golden-crowned Sparrow was seen on Mines Rd., near Livermore Feb. 20 (AE). It was described as having very dark brown underparts with black wings and tail. White-throated Sparrows were reported in normal numbers regionally. A Fox Sparrow of one of the rusty e. races wintered at a feeder in Oakland Jan. 4-Feb. 18 (RS, JLu *et al.*). At least 14 Swamp Sparrows were reported Dec. 5-Feb. 5 with nearly all found on or near the coast; two were seen in the C.V. (m.ob.). Three Lapland Longspurs were found along the coast from Ferndale, Humboldt Co., to Halfmoon Bay Dec. 4-Jan. 5 (PM, TS, *vide* RS, DS).

CORRIGENDUM—The E. Kingbird reported in *Am. Bird* 30: 1000 was seen July 11, not July 1.

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SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION /Guy McCaskie

This winter was exceptionally mild and dry with prolonged periods of clear, sunny weather, but we did not experience the extreme drought conditions prevalent in Northern California. This mild weather could have made it possible for many species, normally found only as summer visitors to have wintered. However, this did not appear to be the case, and we had only an average number of wintering flycatchers, vireos, warblers, orioles and tanagers in the region. The presence of nighthawks and calling Poor-wills may be attributed directly to the weather.



Mountain species such as chickadees, nuthatches, finches and siskins were quite scarce in the lowlands, although small numbers were to be found in coastal Santa Barbara County. This could be attributed to the fact that virtually no snow fell in the local mountains, thus making conditions there less harsh than usual. However, more than the normal number of Brown Creepers was reported from lowland localities, and numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets remained much higher than usual after last fall's influx.

American Robins and Cedar Waxwings were more scarce than noted in any winter during the past twenty years even though there appeared to be plenty of berries to hold them had they ever arrived. Possibly the mild conditions to the north permitted both species to winter farther north than usual.

A few rarities were found, including California's first documented Anhinga, a Broad-billed Hummingbird, a Common Grackle and a wintering Ovenbird and Dickcissel.

LOONS, GREBES—A Red-throated Loon in El Monte Los Angeles Co., Jan. 20 (GSS) was unusual, but there are now a number of records from lakes in the coastal lowlands though the species remains an accidental straggler e. of the mountains. A Red-necked Grebe was at Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Mar. 14 (FS), and appears to be only the second acceptable record from this far s. on the Pacific Coast. Horned Grebes continue to use some of the larger inland lakes for wintering with up to 40 found on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co., throughout the period (PL), four on Legg L. in El Monte Jan. 20 (GSS), one on L. Perris, Riverside Co., Jan. 15 (EAC, SC) and one on L. Matthews, Riverside Co., Feb. 27 (EAC, SC); this species was formerly considered accidental inland. A count of 205,000 Eared Grebes on the Salton Sea during an aerial census in late February (DVT) indicates the importance of this area as a wintering locality

for the species. Western Grebes were found to be in virtually all stages of breeding activity on Sweetwater Res., in San Diego, when the area was visited Feb. 5 (GMcC); some were in full nuptial display, some were sitting on nests, some were attending newly hatched young, while others were accompanying fully grown young.

FULMARS, SHEARWATERS—Northern Fulmars were rare in S. California waters this winter with one seen from Goleta Pt., near Santa Barbara Jan. 6 (PL) being the only one reported. Pink-footed Shearwaters are normally rare in this region at this time of the year so one seen from Goleta Pt., Mar 1 (PL) was unexpected. Sooty Shearwaters appeared to be more scarce than normal with very few reported. Manx Shearwaters were relatively common along the coast throughout the period with the greatest numbers off San Diego County.

ANHINGAS, FRIGATEBIRDS—A ♀ *Anhinga* discovered on Sweetwater Res., Feb. 4 (WTE) was still present at the end of the period; the bird was photographed (p. S.D.N.H.M.) and constitutes the first documented record for California, though one was seen near Imperial Dam on the Colorado R. by Allan Brooks Feb. 9, 1913 (*Condor* 15:182, 1913). An imm. Magnificent Frigatebird near Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., Feb. 16 (M. Hansen, B. Jones, *vide* AS) was most unusual since there are virtually no winter records of this species in California.

HERONS, IBISES—A few Cattle Egrets were found along the coast as is now expected, but two near the Edmonston Pump Station, Kern Co., Dec. 22 (SS) and two near Bishop, Inyo Co., Nov. 14 (DGa) were more noteworthy. Two Louisiana Herons at Imperial Beach all winter (PU, WTE) were apparently the only birds of this species present this year. Over 100 White-faced Ibis were at the s. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, S.E.S.S.), Jan. 8 (DVT), and a flock of about 35 spent the winter around Oceanside, San Diego Co. (GMcC, GSS), this species has been declining in numbers in recent years.

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS—Up to 36 Whistling Swans present on Tinnemaha Res. in the Owens Valley all winter (TH), and up to four in San Luis Obispo Dec. 1–Feb. 15 (FRT), were all in areas of normal occurrence; however, one at S E S S., Dec. 3 (DVT) was quite far south. A Ross' Goose in Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., Feb. 6–16 (PL, BS), and another found on L. Miramar near San Diego Feb. 26, and still present Mar 16 (CGE, JD), had probably both wintered locally; this species is a rare wanderer to the coast of S. California despite the fact that fair numbers winter at S.E.S.S. Two Fulvous Whistling Ducks at S.E.S.S., Dec. 29 (DVT), and four more at nearby Finney/Ramer L., Dec. 30 (DVT) were unexpected since the species is exceedingly rare in winter. A ♂ Eurasian Green-winged Teal was photographed at Carpinteria, Santa Barbara Co., Feb. 25–26 (WBD, GH) and another was on Legg L., in El Monte Jan. 22–Feb. 15 (J&DM), this race is a casual wanderer to S. California. Three Eur Wigeons were found, with one on Newport Bay, Orange Co., all winter (LS, R&MW), another near Oceanside, San Diego Co., all winter (GMcC) and the third at S.E.S.S., during December and January (DVT). A few Wood Ducks were present throughout most of the region with a flock of 21 on L. Sherwood, Ventura Co., Dec. 24 (SS) being the largest group.

The ♂ Tufted Duck remained on L. Sherwood to the end of January (LB, GSS). Canvasbacks appeared more numerous than usual with up to 800 present on Big Bear L. in the San Bernardino Mts., during December (JRG) and 2500 at S E S S., Feb. 10 (DVT). A ♂ Harlequin Duck was present near Cambria, San Luis Obispo Co., throughout the period (FRT, LB), this is within the species' normal winter range.

An Oldsquaw spent the winter at Bolsa Chica, Orange Co (JA, LJ), one was at Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., Jan. 19 (JD), and another was on San Diego Bay Mar. 8–14 (R&EC), this species is always scarce in S. California. Over 80 White-winged Scoters were counted around San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Is., Jan 19 (LJ) but were virtually nonexistent elsewhere along the coast. Two Black Scoters, a species that has become decidedly rare along the S. California coast in recent years, were off Goleta Mar. 2 (PL), one was at Marina del Rey Dec. 12 (BB), and another was on San Diego Bay Mar. 8–21 (R&EC). Much more unusual was an imm ♂ Black Scoter at S.E.S.S., Jan 29–Feb. 11 accompanied by an ad. male, Feb. 9–27 (DVT, EAC, R&EC); there is but one verified record for inland California. A few Hooded Mergansers were present along the coast as usual with up to three at Santee near San Diego most of the winter (WTE, PU) being the farthest south. Common Mergansers may be on the increase as a wintering bird of the larger inland freshwater lakes, for some sizeable groups were reported including 300 on Big Bear L. in January and February (JRG), and 200 on Los Serranos L., near Pomona most of the winter (GSS).

KITES, HAWKS, FALCONS—Two White-tailed Kites near Mecca, Riverside Co., Dec. 28 (HLC) were somewhat outside their normal range as was an ad. Red-shouldered Hawk near Big Pine in the Owens Valley Jan. 20 (TH). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk in San Diego Dec. 14 (JD) was the only one found this winter. The only Rough-legged Hawks reported were two at the Edmonston Pump Station at the extreme s. end of the San Joaquin Valley Jan. 1 (SS), one near Lakeview, Riverside Co., all winter (EAC, SC), one around L. Henshaw, San Diego Co., Jan. 22–Mar 20 (WTE, R&EC), one at L. Cuyamaca Mar. 3 (WTE, R&EC), and two around S.E.S.S. most of the winter (DVT). Ferruginous Hawks were reported throughout the region, but 15 around L. Henshaw during January was an unusual concentration. Bald Eagles may have been more numerous than usual with concentrations of up to 17 on Big Bear L., and up to 20 on L. Matthews being the largest groups, but smaller flocks and scattered individuals were found at other localities including one or two on Santa Rosa I. in January (LJ, GH), five on L. Henshaw Jan. 22 (WTE) and three at S.E.S.S., Jan. 5 (DVT). At least ten Peregrine Falcons were reported, indicating that a few still winter in the region. Only six Merlins were reported; this species is much more scarce today than a decade ago.

CRANES, RAILS—The only Sandhill Cranes in the region were up to 3000 on the Carrizo Plain and another 100 near Brawley throughout the winter. A Black Rail was well seen on Newport Bay Dec. 18 (R&MW); this species is now very rare in the coastal marshes of S. California.

OYSTERCATCHERS, PLOVERS, SANDPIPERS—The Anacapa I., Am. Oystercatcher was still present Mar 6 (R&EC). A flock of 14 Am. Golden Plover on San Clemente I., Dec. 8–9 (LJ) was unexpected since one in Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., all winter (PL), two or three around Marina del Rey, Los Angeles Co., in December and January (BB, J&DM) and one in Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Dec. 18–19 were the only others reported; only the Marina del Rey birds were identified as *fulva*. The only Stilt Sandpipers found this winter were one near Brawley, Imperial Co., Jan. 23 (R&EC) and three there Feb. 13 (WTE). Two Dunlin at Owens L., Inyo Co., Dec. 12 (TH) were at an unusual locality for that time of the year. Red Phalaropes remained along the coast in decreasing numbers through December after the November influx, with one near Imperial Beach Jan 2 (WTE) and another in Goleta Jan. 7 (PL) being the last reported. As usual a flock of about 60 N Phalaropes spent

the winter on the saltworks evaporation ponds at the s. end of San Diego Bay (GmC); this appears to be the only locality in North America where the species regularly winters. Unusual were six Wilson's Phalaropes at the s. end of San Diego Bay all winter (GmC); this species is casual in California during the winter.

JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS—Only five Pomarine Jaegers were reported, indicating fewer than normal were off the coast this winter. Single Parasitic Jaegers were seen from Goleta Jan. 6 and Feb. 4 (PL), and three were at the mouth of Mission Bay in San Diego Feb. 24 (R&EC) indicating that a few were present along the coast during the period. The only Glaucous Gulls, rare but regular winter visitors to the coast of S. California, were one in Goleta Jan. 7 (JD, PL) and another at McGrath S.P., Ventura Co., Jan. 27–Feb. 22 (LB). A yellow-legged W. Gull (*L. livens*) was at S.E.S.S., Feb. 18 (CGE); this form is very rare on the Salton Sea outside the period from late June to early September. A Thayer's Gull, scarce inland, was at the n. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, N.E.S.S.) Feb. 27 (LJ). A Mew Gull, also scarce inland, was in Riverside Dec. 22 (EAC, SC) and another was at N.E.S.S., Jan. 15 (KG). An ad. Laughing Gull, a casual straggler to the coast at any time of the year, was near Imperial Beach Dec. 28 (DP). An imm. Franklin's Gull spent the entire period at Malibu, Los Angeles Co., (GSS, JD); this species is very rare in California during the winter. A flock of up to 30 Bonaparte's Gulls at S.E.S.S. throughout the period was unexpected since the species is normally very rare away from the coast in winter. Four Caspian Terns remaining around the Santa Barbara / Goleta area through late January (PL) were quite far n. for mid-winter. What was probably the same Black Tern was seen at two different localities along the San Diego shoreline Dec. 31 (RLP) and Jan. 3 (WTE); this species is most unusual at this time of the year in California. Black Skimmers remained around S.E.S.S. into December with two still present Dec. 20 (DVT), and seven or eight remained at the s. end of San Diego Bay throughout the period.

ALCIDS—Common Murres were fairly numerous offshore with counts of 150 off Oxnard Mar. 7 (GmC), and 60 from shore in Goleta Mar. 2 (PL) being reported. An Ancient Murrelet, scarce in S. California waters, was seen from Goleta Dec. 13 (PL), two were seen from Pt. Dume, Los Angeles Co., Mar. 2 (JD) and another was in King Harbor, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 1 (TH).

PIGEONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS—One or two White-winged Doves were present at Agua Caliente in the desert portion of e. San Diego County throughout the period, this species is now found wintering regularly in very small numbers every year in this area. Unexplainable was a White-winged Dove seen flying in from the ocean off Goleta Mar. 2 (PL). A wintering roost of Long-eared Owls was found on the Anza-Borrego Desert of e. San Diego Co., in January (CGE) and one was seen on Santa Barbara I., Jan. 20 (LJ). The resident Saw-whet Owls on Santa Cruz I., were actively calling by Mar. 4 (JA). Poor-wills were heard calling throughout the winter around San Luis Obispo (FRT), one was heard near Redlands Dec. 27 & Jan. 1 (MP), and a few were audible around Del Mar just n. of San Diego during February and March (JB); this winter activity was probably brought about by the exceptionally mild conditions. Three Lesser Night-hawks were seen in Blythe along the Colorado R., Jan. 31 and one was there Feb. 1 (KR); winter sightings are few indeed. The presence of 25–30 Vaux's Swifts near Oceanside, San Diego Co., Jan. 7 (BED) and Mar. 15 (JD) indicates that a small flock wintered locally. A ♂ Allen's Hummingbird in Goleta during December and January (PL) and another male in San Diego Dec. 14–18 (JD) were probably both of the race *sedentarius*. A ♂ **Broad-billed Hummingbird** at Agua Caliente

in e. San Diego Co., Jan. 16–Feb. 10 (JB, JD) was only the seventh to be found in California.

WOODPECKERS—Only three "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were reported with one on Santa Cruz I., Feb. 11–Mar. 4 (JA), one at L. Sherwood Jan. 9 (LB), and the other near Brawley Feb. 27 (GmC); it is amazing how interest in a "species" wanes once it is lumped. An Acorn Woodpecker at the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery near Lone Pine Dec. 12 to the end of the period (TH) was well outside its normal range. Lewis' Woodpeckers were again scarce in the region, but single birds did find their way s. to Mesa Grande and Santa Ysabel in the mountains of San Diego Co., in January (WTE). A ♀ Williamson's Sapsucker on Figueroa Mt., Santa Barbara Co., Dec. 5 (BS) appeared to be somewhat w. of its normal range; two on Mt. Palomar Mar. 20 (R&EC) and another in the Cuyamaca Mts. of San Diego Co., Mar. 3 (R&EC) were at the s. extreme of their range. One or two Downy Woodpeckers were near Oceanside, San Diego Co., all winter (JB, JD); this is the southernmost locality of normal occurrence in California.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS—Three Tropical Kingbirds were in Goleta Dec. 23–Jan. 10 (PL, GH) and a fourth was present there Feb. 7–Mar. 8 (PL, BS); although this species is a regular visitor to the Coast during October and November it still remains very rare in winter. Rather startling was the presence of three Ash-throated Flycatchers with one in Santa Barbara Jan. 2–5 (PL, GH), another in Gardena Jan. 12–28 (JA) and the third near San Diego Feb. 6 (WTE). There are very few documented winter coastal records. An E. Phoebe was seen off and on at San Eljio Lagoon, San Diego Co., Dec. 5–Feb. 6 (JB) and another was at Santee, San Diego Co., Jan. 12–Mar. 9 (WTE); one or two of these birds are found in California every winter. A Hammond's/Dusky Flycatcher was seen at Morongo Valley Jan. 15 (EAC, SC) and another was in Riverside throughout February (EAC, SC), either species is very rare in California in winter and much carefully documented work must be done to determine just which of these two is the more likely. Only six Vermilion Flycatchers were reported from along the coast, but one of these was a male, in Goleta Feb. 7 (PL) at the extreme n. limit of its recorded range in California.

Two Violet-green Swallows near San Diego Feb. 5 (JD) appeared to be the first noted this spring. Two Bank Swallows at S.E.S.S., Dec. 23 (GSS) were unexpected since the species is rarely noted in winter. Small numbers of Rough-winged Swallows wintered in the s.e. portion of the region as appears to be normal; one at Malibu Dec. 19 (LJ) is best treated as a wintering bird, whereas another in Oceanside Feb. 6 (GmC) was probably a new spring arrival. A Barn Swallow, quite rare in winter, was near Port Hueneme, Ventura Co., Jan. 27 (LB).

CREEPERS THROUGH SHRIKES—Some Brown Creepers evidently moved into the lowlands, as indicated by a few around Santa Barbara all winter (PL), one on Santa Cruz I., Mar. 5–6 (JA), one near Malibu Jan. 27 (GSS) and two at N.E.S.S., Jan. 29 (GSS). Winter Wrens pushed a little farther s. than normal with one near Julian in the mountains of San Diego Co., Jan. 18 (CGE) and two at S.E.S.S., Dec. 20 (KG). A Sage Thrasher in Colton Dec. 30 (MP) was at an unusual locality for that time of the year. The only Varied Thrushes reported were four in the hills above Santa Barbara all winter (PL, BS) and one on Mt. Palomar, San Diego Co., Mar. 11 (FS). A Townsend's Solitaire on Pt. Loma in San Diego Dec. 9 (WTE) was most probably a late fall migrant Golden-crowned Kinglets declined in numbers during December, but were present throughout much of the region all winter; some of the more significant sightings included six still on Mt. Palomar Mar. 20 (R&EC) and one at Finney L.,

Imperial Co., Jan. 30 (EAC, SC). A flock of about 120 Bohemian Waxwings near Valyermo, on the n. side of the San Gabriel Mts., Feb. 6 (KG) came as a real surprise since Cedar Waxwings were virtually nonexistent in the region this winter; these birds remained in the area feeding on mistletoe well into March. An imm. N. Shrike at Tinnemaha Res., in the Owens Valley Jan. 23 (TH) was the only one reported.

VIREOS, WARBLERS—A Solitary Vireo was present in Riverside all winter (EAC, SC) and another was at Agua Caliente in e. San Diego Co., Jan. 22–Feb. 10 (JD); one or two of these birds are found in California every winter. A Warbling Vireo, decidedly rare in California during winter, was in Pasadena throughout January and February (GSS), and another was found in Riverside Feb. 24 (DMM); one in San Diego Dec. 14–18 (JD) is best treated as a late fall migrant.

A Black-and-white Warbler, always rare in winter, was near Morro Bay Jan. 15 (D&CA). A Nashville Warbler was present in Pasadena all winter (GSS) and another was near Pt. Mugu Jan. 22 (KG); a few are found in s. California every winter. A Virginia's Warbler in Goleta Dec. 7 (PL) was undoubtedly a late fall migrant. A Yellow Warbler in Goleta all winter (PL) and another at McGrath S.P., Jan. 19 (JD) were of special interest since the species is decidedly rare along the coast at this season; two or three at S.E.S.S. during January (KG, GMcC) were in an area where small numbers regularly winter. A Black-throated Gray Warbler in Goleta and two more in Riverside all winter (PL, MP, EAC) were the only ones reported. A rather late Black-throated Green Warbler was in Goleta Dec. 6 (BS) and an even later individual was at N E S S., Dec. 23 (JA); both were fall migrants. The only wintering Hermit Warblers were two in Santa Barbara Dec. 27–Jan. 13 (PL) and another in Goleta Dec. 14–Jan. 14 (PL). A Palm Warbler spent the entire winter in Goleta (PL, BS) but two more there on Dec. 7 (PL, BS) and another on Santa Cruz I., Dec. 21 (LJ) were all fall migrants. An **Ovenbird** in Riverside Feb. 12–Mar. 14 (DGr, SC) was only the second ever known to winter in California. A N. Waterthrush was near Malibu all winter (GSS) and another near Imperial Beach Dec. 5–18 (GMcC) probably wintered locally; one or two are now being found each winter in S. California. As usual a few Wilson's Warblers spent the winter in the region with six individuals being reported. One or two Am. Redstarts were seen around S.E.S.S., throughout the period; small numbers are known to winter regularly in this area. The Painted Redstart found in Coronado, San Diego Co., Nov. 21 was still present Dec. 25 (R&EC) but not seen thereafter.

ORIOLES, BLACKBIRDS, TANAGERS—Reports of Hooded Orioles included three or four in Santa Barbara during January and February (GH), a male in Encino, Los Angeles Co., all winter (GSS), and another in Laguna Beach, Orange Co., Jan. 7 (JAJ); this appears to be an average number for the winter period. A ♂ Scott's Oriole was seen in Morongo Valley Feb. 24 (EAC, SC); this species is decidedly rare in California during the winter. The only "Baltimore" Orioles reported were a male in Goleta Feb. 7 (PL) and a female in San Diego Dec. 14–18 (JD). About 15 "Bullock's" Orioles were found along the coast; small numbers regularly winter around feeders and in flowering eucalyptus. A Rusty Blackbird at Oasis, Mono Co., Dec. 5 (CH) and another at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley Dec. 4 (CH) were clearly fall migrants, and in an area where small numbers occur during migration; one in Goleta Jan. 2–Mar. 3 (PL) clearly wintered and establishes one of the few documented wintering records for California. A ♀ Great-tailed Grackle at Sweetwater Res., in San Diego Feb. 5–6 (WTE, JD) was the first to be found on the coast of California,

the species is now well established in the Colorado R. Valley with small numbers regularly reaching the Imperial Valley around S.E.S.S. A ♂ **Com. Grackle** was present in Carlsbad, San Diego Co., Feb. 9–Mar. 26 (R&EC, PU); this was only the fifth to be found in California.

As usual a few W. Tanagers were found wintering around flowering eucalyptus, with at least four in Goleta (PL), one in Riverside (EAC, SC) and two or three in San Diego (GMcC). The ♂ Scarlet Tanager banded in San Luis Obispo Nov. 27 remained in the area through Dec. 13 (FRT) and another male was well seen in Goleta Nov. 12 (SIR). A ♀ Hepatic Tanager found in Oceanside Jan. 1 was still present Feb. 6 (GMcC) and undoubtedly wintered locally; there are only a handful of winter records of this species from along the coast of California. The only Summer Tanagers reported were two on the Palos Verdes Pen., Dec. 28 (D&BH) and one in San Diego Dec. 23 (WTE); a few are normally present every winter.

FINCHES, SPARROWS—Four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen during December with a female in Santa Barbara Dec. 7 (LJ), a male near Malibu Dec. 12 (GVH), another male in Sierra Madre de Los Angeles Dec. 25 (GSS) and a male captured by a cat in San Diego Dec. 13 (CL). A ♂ **Dickcissel** was the star attraction of a feeder in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo Co., Jan. 26 to at least Mar. 27 (FRT); there is only one other record of this species wintering in California. Six Red Crossbills on Mt. San Geronio Dec. 26 (MP) and another in Morongo Valley Feb. 24 (EAC, SC) were the only ones reported. A Green-tailed Towhee near Brawley, Imperial Co., Feb. 27 (GMcC) was at an interesting locality for that time of the year. A Lark Bunting, always rare in California during the winter months, was at Sweetwater Res., San Diego Feb. 5–8 (WTE).

A few "large-billed sparrows" regularly winter around S.E.S.S. and ten were counted there Jan. 23 (EAC, SC), this well-marked form of the Savannah Sparrow apparently moves n. into this area after having nested in the Gulf of California. Two Grasshopper Sparrows at Sweetwater Res., San Diego Feb. 6 (WTE, PL) were of extreme interest since there are very few winter records for California. Two Sharp-tailed Sparrows were still at Upper Newport Bay Mar. 6 (PL) where they undoubtedly spent the winter. Two Gray-headed Juncos in Big Pine Dec. 8 (TH) and another at Oasis Jan. 16 (TH) were all in an area from which no previous winter records exist; this species occurs regularly in small numbers throughout the mountains of S. California every winter with a few in the lowlands e. of the mountains. Six Harris' Sparrows were found in the n.e. part of the region during December, one was in Kelso, Mar. 6 (EAC, SC), one spent the entire winter in Goleta (GH, PL), another was in nearby Summerland Dec. 7–8 (GH), one was at Morongo Valley Jan. 1 (MP) and single birds were found on Santa Barbara I., Jan. 20 (LJ) and on San Clemente I., Dec. 9 (LJ), about an average number of reports for a winter season. About 15 White-throated Sparrows were reported. Along the coast single Swamp Sparrows were at Morro Bay Jan. 15 (D&CA), Goleta Jan. 2–Feb. 13 (LJ, PL), Fillmore Dec. 28 (PL), San Elijo Lagoon Dec. 10 (PU) and Sweetwater Res., Feb. 6 (WTE); in addition six were found around S.E.S.S., Jan. 16 (KG). This species occurs regularly in small numbers, but is quite secretive and easily overlooked.

The only Lapland Longspur reported was one on Santa Rosa I., Jan. 27 (LJ). Most interesting were reports of Chestnut-collared Longspurs. A flock of 20 at Baldwin L., Dec. 17–20 (JRG) may have been present locally since mid-October, but one at L. Henshaw Jan. 9 (GMcC) and 25 near Oceanside Feb. 6 (PL, BS) along with the 75 found on the Orange County CBC Dec. 26 (PU) would suggest some may

winter in suitable areas of s.w. California. Small flocks found in March 1968 (*Aud. Field Notes* 22:480) and 1969 (*Aud. Field Notes* 23:523) support this suggestion.

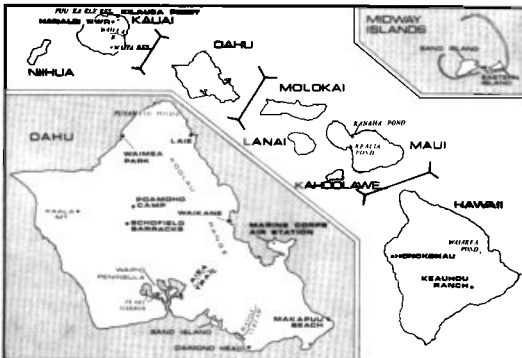
CORRIGENDUM—A noteworthy record that has just come to light is that of a South Polar Skua captured alive on the beach in Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Nov. 23, 1975 (JA—specimen at Long Beach St. Univ.); this is an exceptionally late date for this species to be found in California, and provides us with the only specimen-supported record in S. California.

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HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

/C. John Ralph and Robert L. Pyle

The 1976-77 winter was the driest in the 31-year record of rainfall at the Honolulu airport. The cold fronts that usually bring 75 per cent of the year's rainfall mostly dissipated before reaching the islands. Several record high temperatures were set during the season. Significantly higher counts of many water-birds may have been owing to the concentrating effect of the drought, although the increased numbers of the endangered Hawaiian Coot may indicate a significant comeback.



While a few introduced species continued to decline in numbers, several experienced a rapid population increase, and four were recorded in unprecedented numbers during the season.

GREBES THROUGH CORMORANTS — A single **Horned Grebe**, the first Hawaii record, was found near the mouth of the Wailua R., Kauai Dec. 26 (SLL) and again Jan. 8 (GY). Laysan Albatrosses were present this winter at Kilauea Pt., Kauai with a single bird Dec. 8 and up to six throughout the period (CFZ),

some landing on shore. This is only the second year that the species has indicated potential for breeding on any of the main islands, except Niihau. On Niihau, a private island, four were seen from a helicopter, apparently on territory Jan. 14 (CFZ) Here, their presence is apparently a regular occurrence (TT) although previously unreported. A **Pelagic Cormorant** representing the second state record, was seen on Sand I. Lagoon, Midway Jan. 8 by persons familiar with the species in Alaska (BH, BS).

WATERFOWL — Wintering waterfowl reached all-time highs in the Hawaii Division of Fish and Game (hereafter H.D.F. & G) semi-annual census Jan. 13. Totals for all the main islands included 1829 Pintails and 1413 N. Shovelers (RLW) which are about 10 per cent above previous highs. At least ten other migrant species were found in what observers termed "one of the best winters for waterfowl in recent years." A single Canada Goose (probably *taverneri*, possibly *parvipes*) wintered on Waiakea Pond, Island of Hawaii (JMS, CPR, CJR). A ♀ **Garganey Teal**, one of the few records for the state, was closely studied at Hanalei N.W.R., Kauai, for a week and was last seen Dec. 1 (CFZ). With only about five previous state records, a pair of Blue-winged Teal appeared at Hanalei N.W.R., Jan. 27 and remained through March (CFZ). Another was seen Jan. 13 at Honokohau, Hawaii (EFK). One of the first records for the state was a ♂ **Cinnamon Teal**, first reported in October (CFZ) and remaining until at least Dec. 28 at Hanalei N.W.R. (BG).

Fewer than a dozen records of Ring-necked Duck existed for the state until this season when more than 20 individuals were recorded: five at Waiakea Pond (CJR, CPR, JMS) through the period; four at Puu Ka Ele Res., near Kilauea, Kauai Dec. 18 at least Jan. 13 (CFZ, DK); six on Morita Res., Kauai Jan. 13 (CFZ); one on Punamano Pond, Oahu Jan. 13 (PS, BG) - Feb. 6 (RLP); and five to six on Kahana Pond, Maui Dec. 22 (CJR CPR) - Feb. 8 (BG, CFZ). A pair of Greater Scaup frequented Waiakea Pond, Hawaii with a pair of Lesser Scaup all season offering excellent comparisons to aid in the identification of this very infrequent migrant (CFZ, JMS, CJR, CPR). On Jan. 30 a ♂ **Tufted Duck** also appeared on Waiakea Pond (JMS). All previous records in the state have been from Midway and Kure Atolls. It remained throughout the season (CJR, CPR). A group of six Hooded Mergansers, first found Dec. 4 (PO), frequented the ponds at Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station, Oahu through the season (TAB, RLP). Three more were sighted Jan. 13 at Kehena Res., Hawaii (EFK).

HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — An Osprey was present on Kealia Pond, Maui August through the winter season (MLU, BG, CFZ). One of the few records for Peregrine Falcon occurred on the Aiea Trail just on time for the Honolulu CBC Dec. 19 (FGH, OB). Presumably the same individual was seen the following day at Makapuu, Oahu (JG), and again Jan. 19 at Pearl Harbor (RL). The population of the endangered Am. (Hawaiian) Coot on Kauai remained high, at nearly 2000 since the normal migration to Niihau for nesting had not occurred by season's end. The birds may have been aware of the unfavorable conditions on Niihau caused by the drought since 1100 of these were on Waita Res., Kauai (TT, CFZ). On Jan. 13 2330 were counted statewide (RLW, H.D.F. & G), topping last year's previous high of 956. About 10-15 per cent of the coots at Hanalei N.W.R., Kauai and at Waipio Pen., Oahu have red frontal shields, perhaps indicating an incursion of the mainland race (CFZ, CJR). With less than six previous records, a Killdeer was at a reservoir near Omaoio, Maui Jan. 13 (MLU, EA), and another present all season on the Waipio Pen., Oahu (RLP H.A.S.). A Willet, one of the few ever recorded, was discovered on Maui and commuted between Kanaha and Kealia Ponds through at least Feb. 8 (CFZ, BG).

JAEGERS THROUGH TERNS — The usual concentration of Pomarine Jaegers frequented the sewage outfall area off Sand

I, Oahu through the winter, but reached an extraordinary count of more than 500 birds Jan. 9 (WMO, RLP, H.A.S.). Hawaii is normally gull-less with perhaps one or two sightings in any winter. This season about 15 individuals were observed on the various islands, including Glaucous, Glaucous-winged, Herring, California, Ring-billed, Franklin's (or Laughing), and Bonaparte's (RL, m.ob.).

BABLERS THROUGH OLD WORLD WARBLERS — The formerly-abundant Red-billed Leiothrix (Japanese Hill Robin) has become quite scarce on Oahu as many H.A.S. field trips could find no more than one or two. This introduced species is still locally common on Maui and Hawaii. The Red-whiskered Bulbul has had a population explosion in the past year, with 77 seen on the Honolulu CBC, up from the previous high of seven in 1968! Observers reported large numbers throughout Manoa Valley, Oahu (SC, RLP, CJR). The Red-vented Bulbul has also increased in numbers, with the Honolulu CBC tallying 453, more than double last year's 212, and nine times the previous high in 1972. The species was reported for the first time on the n. end of the island at Laie Jan. 27 (PLB, RJS). The introduced Dyal Thrush was seen at Waimea Park, Oahu Jan. 22 (EW, MW). The species has not been reported since 1967, but a remnant population may persist. The Japanese Bush Warbler has increased in numbers throughout Oahu, e.g., 40 observed on the Poamoho Trail, Feb. 4, cf. previous years' counts of no more than six (RJS, MC).

HONEYCREEPERS — In the last 20 years only about 40 Iwi have been reported from Oahu, thus a report of about 25 in December during a survey at 3000 ft., near Kaala Mt., was welcome news (RJS, MC, RW, JJ). A bird with the field marks of a female of the hitherto presumed extinct Oahu race of the **Akepa** was very carefully observed Dec. 14 at 2350 ft. on the Scholfield-Waikane Trail (RJS, MC). The Volcano CBC Jan. 2 counted good numbers of endangered species, but the star performers were 100 Hawaii Akepa (LK *et al.*), mostly on Keauhou Ranch.

PLOCEIDAE THROUGH FRINGILLIDS — The populations of Lavender Fire-finches and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu at Diamond Head are estimated to be at least 30 - 50 individuals each (JW), and may be established. The Black-headed Munia has spread away from Pearl Harbor, with flocks reported 15 mi. inland during the season (RJS, MC), and several individuals found on the windward side of the Koolau Range at Laie, Oahu (PLB, DGB). The Java Sparrow also seems to be rapidly increasing. The Honolulu CBC recorded 231 cf. the previous high of 45 last year. Many flocks of mostly young birds have been recorded in Manoa Valley (CJR, SC, RLP). Three nests of **Yellow-fronted Canary** were found this winter near Diamond Head, Oahu (AJB, CJR, CPR), and young were fledged. This is the first positive breeding record for the state.

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