

The Winter Season

December 1, 1977 – February 28, 1978

NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION

/Peter D. Vickery

The winter of 1977-78 was again colder than normal. Major snowstorms struck the Region January 9, while the February 8 storm dumped some 28-32 inches of snow on the Boston area. Transportation was so thoroughly paralyzed it was impossible to attempt to assess the impact on birds such as a storm might have had. Late February seemed to ease a bit with sunny days and less severe winds. Considering the destructive impact the winter of 1976-77 had on many semi-hardy species it was not a surprise that birds in this category were very few in number. Aside from several rarities, winter finches and an unprecedented Varied Thrush incursion, it was one of the quietest winters in recent years.



The Region's second Smew and second Eurasian Curlew appeared to be the same individuals seen in 1976. This winter's Smew, a drake at Quonochontaug Pond, R.I., was discovered less than 30 miles from the Region's first occurrence at Newport. The Eurasian Curlew was found less than 50 miles from Monomoy — the locality of the 1976 curlew. The likelihood that such vagrants ever return to their normal range is remote. Considering this, it is not surprising that such individuals, if they can survive, would winter in the same general area year after year.

Contributors are reminded that the last day of the winter season is **Feb. 28**. Although this date has been in effect for two years, some confusion still remains. As a result, records from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland were sadly incomplete and centralized reports

from New Brunswick and New Hampshire were entirely lacking. Without reasonably complete records, editing such a vast area as the Northeastern Maritimes becomes a hopelessly speculative business. I find it very difficult and, no doubt, readers will find this report less than complete. To reiterate, the winter season ends February 28.

LOONS — Along the w. Connecticut shore Com Loons were very scarce or completely absent, but this was apparently a local phenomenon as 110+ loons were observed in Westerly, R.I., Jan. 19 (FWM). An imm. **Arctic Loon** was carefully identified off Provincetown, Mass., Feb. 18 (RRV *et al.*); salient features noted were the obviously smaller size, the thin straight bill, a rounded crown that appeared smoky gray (lighter than mantle) which was clearly noted as extending below the eye, with no white feathering apparent before or above the eye.

TUBENOSES — Apparently N. Fulmar reaches the s. limit of its regular winter range in the s. part of the Gulf of Maine. This January 2500+ fulmar (95% light phase) were observed just n. of George's Basin (RRV) and 600+ were seen just s. of Cashes Ledge Feb. 5 (BN). Significantly, no large concentrations were noted on two trips along the continental shelf s. of Nantucket. Practically unknown during the winter season, a **Sooty Shearwater** was carefully observed along the continental slope some 80 mi s. of Block I, at 39°54'5"N, 71°32'W, Feb. 2 (BN). Perhaps the most unusual fall-out from the Jan. 9 storm was a flock of 20 **Leach's Storm-Petrels** seen flying about Boothbay Harbor, Maine (BT).

WATERFOWL — Waterfowl were generally unimpressive, with fewer birds wintering in the Region. However, increased coverage unearthed unusual winterers which included a ♂ Gadwall shot in Lower W Pubnico, N.S., Jan. 16 (*vide* SIT), a Blue-winged Teal successfully wintering near Manchester, Conn. (RJC), and a Wood Duck in Storrs, Conn. (RJC). Perhaps the most surprising winterers were two ♂ Ring-necked Ducks in e. Maine, one each at Pembroke Jan. 29 (*vide* WCT), and Princeton Feb. 2 (PDV).

The Region's six Eur. Wigeon included a single bird at Groton, Conn., two in Rhode Island (*vide* CW) and three were noted from Nantucket (EFA). A sizable flock of 9 Barrow's Goldeneyes was again reported from their traditional wintering area at Pugwash, N.S., Feb 18-26 (SIT). Other important wintering areas were generally unreported though 15± Barrow's were located in e. Massachusetts (*vide* RRV). The Region's Harlequin Ducks were either scarce, or poorly

reported: only 35 individuals were recorded. Similarly King Eiders were scarce with only 26 individuals reported; 14 from L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Nfld., Dec. 19 (BMacT).

A **Smew**, seen at Quonochontaug Pond, Westerly, R I, Jan. 16-29 (*vide* CW) was considered by many to be the same individual as the Newport bird of two winters past (*AB* 30:691). Unbanded, wary and only sporadically present, the Quonochontaug bird appeared wild. Its occurrence less than 30 mi from Newport suggests that these two sightings involved a single individual. Where it wintered in 1976-77 remains a mystery. Perhaps it simply went undiscovered.

VULTURES, HAWKS, EAGLES — Four Turkey Vultures observed moving N over Lebanon, Conn., Jan. 29 (PJD) may have been early migrants although small numbers are known to winter in Connecticut. The Hidden Valley, Conn. CBC reported 53 on Dec. 18 — a late roost? Rough-legged Hawks were only intermittently present along the New England coast but were considered common inland near Sharon, Conn. (MR); the first in years was seen near Storrs (RJC). Generally light-phase Rough-leggeds are predominant but curiously, of the nine birds reported from w. Massachusetts five were of dark phase — apparently this phenomenon was also noted farther w. in New York (DMcN). A single Golden Eagle was found sporadically at Quabbin Res. (*vide* SK) and a second was easily studied at Ridgefield, Conn., Dec. 12 (MR). In Maine, wintering Bald Eagles were again estimated at 150± individuals (CST). A remarkable count of at least 16 different eagles was reported from Connecticut (*vide* NSP), the highest in recent years for that state. Some 15 individuals (10 ad., 5 imm.) were seen at Quabbin Res. (*vide* SK). Although the species is frequently noted on e. Massachusetts and Nova Scotia CBCs, Marsh Hawks are almost unknown in Maine during the winter season. This year three were found on as many CBCs while a single Marsh Hawk was carefully observed in w. Massachusetts at Agawam Jan. 1 (SK). In New England, single gray phase Gyrfalcons were noted near Bolton, Mass., Dec. 3 (NEM) and E. Orleans, Mass., Feb. 11 (WRP), this latter individual thought to be the same bird that has wintered on that part of the Cape for the last several years. Elsewhere in the Region four Gyrfalcons (2 white, 2 dark) were seen near L'Anse-aux-Meadows (BMacT). In Nova Scotia, a Peregrine seen at South Berwick during the last week of February was probably a remarkably early migrant (*vide* RDL).

RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS — Unusual for the Region was a Clapper Rail which successfully wintered in S. Norwalk, Conn. (*vide* FWM). In Nova Scotia, a **Purple Gallinule** found dead near Pubnico Jan. 15 was a very rare occurrence for that province (*vide* RDL). Unusually far n. was an Am. Coot at Wells, Me., Jan. 1 (RC) but another coot seen on the Eastport, Me. CBC, suggests that with the recent increase in n. New England and the Maritimes the species may winter farther n. than previously supposed.

SHOREBIRDS — The discovery of a **Eurasian Cur-**

lew which lingered at Menemsha Pond, Martha's Vineyard, Feb. 18 – Mar. 18 (GD *et al.*, *vide* RRV) immediately led to the speculation that this was the same individual seen 16 months earlier on Monomoy (*AB* 31:227). Dick Veit, who examined both the Monomoy and Menemsha birds, felt plumage characters to be very similar and sensed they were in fact the same individual. Although discovered in February, there was a strong feeling that the Menemsha curlew may have wintered there since October. It will of course be fascinating to see if this bird reappears in the next few years.

In Rhode Island a late Am. Golden Plover was observed and heard calling at Napatree Dec. 4 (RJC) while in Massachusetts a late (Western) Willet at Eastham Dec. 18 (WRP *et al.*) represented probably only the second winter record for the state. Five Long-billed Dowitchers on the Newburyport CBC Dec. 26 were remarkable — the latest ever for New England (WRP *et al.*). An unusual inland occurrence was that of a Dunlin at Sharon, Conn., Dec. 11 (AG,MR) while a Sanderling at the n. tip of Newfoundland, at L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Jan. 6 was a very hardy bird (BMacT). On the day after a storm Jan. 19-20, 50± Red Phalaropes were seen flying past First Encounter Beach (CAG, *vide* BN). Equally surprising were single Red Phalaropes observed 15 mi n.e. of Provincetown Jan. 15 (RRV) and 60 mi e.n.e. of Cape Cod Feb. 5 (BN).

SKUAS, GULLS, TERNS — A single skua sp was observed from First Encounter Dec. 7 (CAG,BN) while another skua, also unidentified as to species, was noted on the w. George's Bank Jan. 17 (RRV). In the s. Gulf of Maine a large skua, quite likely *C. skua*, was closely studied Jan. 20 (RRV), while 75 mi s of Martha's Vineyard 4-6 skuas, again apparently Great Skuas, were carefully observed Feb. 4 (BN).

In New England, white-winged Gulls appeared in about average numbers. An ad. Glaucous Gull was rare as far s. as West Haven, Conn., Dec. 30 (WR1) while the Iceland Gull concentration off the n. end of Plum I., was estimated at 70 individuals Jan. 29 (RRV). In Maine, a Lesser Black-backed Gull at Saco Jan. 24 (MMcC, *vide* RAF) provided only a second state record. Digby's Lesser Black-backed Gull was again present for its ninth consecutive winter (SIT). Black-headed Gulls in the Maritimes were perhaps fewer than average with 34 on the St. John's, Nfld CBC, and only 23 counted on all the Nova Scotian CBCs. Figures for New England were incomplete, but seemingly fewer birds were present at traditional localities — Watchemoket, R.I., peaked at a slim seven Black-headed Gulls Feb. 20 (*vide* CW) while 13-15 birds were found at various e. Massachusetts localities (*vide* RRV). The only Little Gulls of the season were an imm. bird at Newburyport Dec. 26 (WRP) and an adult at Warren's Pt., R.I., Jan. 27 (*vide* CW). Immature **Ivory Gulls** were seen in Addison, Me., Dec. 26 (M. Lovit) and N. Sydney, N.S., Dec. 28 (DWF *et al.*). At L'Anse-aux-Meadows, MacTavish observed at least 166 Ivory Gulls with 65+ on Feb. 23, the highest single day count. A Forster's Tern in Newburyport Dec. 3 (WRP) was undoubtedly the same bird

noted in the fall season report and furnished one of very few December records for Massachusetts. Perhaps even more remarkable was the Com. Tern on the Nantucket CBC — the bird last observed Dec. 31 (EFA).

ALCIDS — Compared to last year's extraordinary flight, this year's alcids were but a trickle. Sixty-five Razorbills were observed 10 mi. s. of Martha's Vineyard Jan. 14, while 15 mi. n.e. of Provincetown 200+ were noted flying E out of Massachusetts Bay Jan. 15 (RRV). Elsewhere, some 32 Razorbills were noted from six coastal Massachusetts localities Jan. 31 – Feb. 20 (*vide* RRV) while two were seen 6 mi. s.e. of Block I., Feb. 12 (RAC,DLK, *vide* CW) and a single bird was observed from Eastport, Me., in mid-February (*vide* WCT). Eight Com. Murres on the Cabot Strait CBC were seemingly unique in the Maritimes and only a single bird was seen in Massachusetts at Provincetown Jan. 15 (RRV). In New England, Thick-billed Murres were also scarce with only five reported from four Massachusetts localities. Thick-billed Murres totalled a remarkable 1590 on the St. Anthony's, Nfld. CBC. Three M.B.O. pelagic surveys found 80 Dovekies, the only ones reported from New England (*vide* RRV). Black Guillemots s. of their usual range were a single bird at Pt. Judith, R.I., Jan. 9 (DLK, *vide* CW) while in Massachusetts three guillemots off Provincetown and one off N. Eastham Feb. 18 (WRP) were notable. Considering the general scarcity of alcids six Com. Puffins was a surprisingly high figure at N. Eastham Feb. 4 (WRP). Only three puffins were identified on M.B.O. pelagic surveys. Eight puffins on the Cabot Strait CBC, were unusually high for that crossing (DWF,RRV,PDV *et al.*).

OWLS, WOODPECKERS, SWALLOWS — In Nova Scotia, a **Barn Owl** found dead among lobster pots at Lower Argyle was the first provincial occurrence in many years (*vide* RDL). Barn Owls may be consolidating the n. limit of their range as a pair was observed throughout December at Hadley in w. Massachusetts (*vide* SK). After last year's poor showing, observers were again disappointed at the almost non-existent Snowy Owl flight. Reports were astonishingly low; Connecticut (2), Massachusetts (3) Maine (6), Nova Scotia (4), only three from L'Anse-aux-Meadows and *none* from the Tantramarre Marsh area. In February and early March Barred Owls in Maine showed obvious signs of severe food stress — 25+ individuals were seen hunting during the day and 16+ roadkills were collected (*vide* WCR,PDV). In Nova Scotia, 15 Short-eared Owls, including one albino, was a higher-than-average number for that province (*vide* RDL). A Boreal Owl at Homeville, N.S., in early January was apparently unique in the Region (*vide* RDL). In Connecticut, diligent searchers found very large, perhaps unprecedented, numbers of Saw-whet Owls. In the New Haven area a single owl enthusiast found no fewer than 13 or 14 individuals (ES, *vide* FWM) and in w. Connecticut 15-20 birds a night could be heard calling in late February and early March (*vide* NSP).

A Pileated Woodpecker was a notable rarity in Hopkinton, R.I., Feb. 18 (*vide* CW) and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was an unusually late inland occurrence at Springfield, Mass., Jan. 1 (*vide* SK). Considering the severe winter, six Tree Swallows in Warren Jan. 2 and two in Watchaug, R.I., Jan. 7 (*vide* CW) were probably storm-related rather than late stragglers. Notably late were four Barn Swallows in Narragansett, R.I., Dec. 1 (DLK, *vide* CW).

JAYS THROUGH WRENS — Following a pattern established in recent years northern boreal passerines have apparently been extending their range into w. Massachusetts. This winter single Gray Jays appeared at feeders in Egremont and Mill River (*vide* DMcN) and in December two Com. Ravens were noted and heard calling in Clarion, Mass. (*vide* SK). Readers will recall that Rusty Blackbirds bred in w. Massachusetts for the first time in 1977 and that N. Three-toed Woodpeckers have been seen in each of the last two years. In Connecticut, two or three Boreal Chickadees were again reported as far s. as Westport, at their traditional locality in the Smith-Richardson Sanctuary (FWM) Although the picture on Red-breasted Nuthatches was unclear, some areas considered the species below-average while in other areas it was thought present in above-normal numbers. The 200+ Red-breasted Nuthatches in Weston, Mass., Dec. 26 (LJR, *vide* RRV) was certainly an impressive figure. Startlingly late was a single House Wren on the Quincy CBC and even more unusual was a Long-billed Marsh Wren at Harwich, Mass., Jan. 28 (RRV).

THRUSHES, WAXWINGS, SHRIKES —

S.A.

Although the species has occurred annually (or nearly so) in the Region during the last 15 years, the remarkable Varied Thrush incursion across the Region, especially in Massachusetts, was without precedent. First observed in late November, no fewer than 29 individuals were reported, many remaining at feeders as late as mid-April: Nova Scotia (2), New Brunswick (1), Maine (3), New Hampshire (3), Massachusetts (15), Connecticut (3). Considering the size of this flight it was perhaps surprising that few other routine w. vagrants were noted.

Bohemian Waxwings were somewhat fewer than in recent years. No information was available from New Brunswick, but in Maine small scattered numbers were present throughout the winter; 125± birds at their favored locality at the University in Orono was the largest single flock reported (NF). Nova Scotia reported good numbers of Bohemian Waxwings, with 120 at Liverpool Jan. 20 – Feb. 5 the largest concentration in that province (*vide* SC). Very unusual were seven Bohemian Waxwings at L'Anse-aux-Meadows Jan. 7 (BMacT). New England CBC totals for N, Shrikes totaled 135 individuals — the largest flight in recent years. No fewer than four Loggerhead Shrikes were carefully identified, predictably in s. New England

WARBLERS — Late warblers were generally few, these included two Pine Warblers at Southwick, Mass., Dec. 10 – Jan. 2 (SK) and an Ovenbird in Springfield, Mass., Dec. 6 (SK) and another in Milford, Conn., Jan. 3 (WRi). Rare at any season was an “Audubon’s” Warbler collected in Chatham, Mass., Dec. 15 (WWB, *vide* RRV).

ICTERIDS, FRINGILLIDS — Apparently unique this season were a ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird in Stratford, Conn., mid-December – Jan. 3 (CH) and a Brewer’s Blackbird in Edgartown, M.V., Feb. 18 (GD *et al.*, *vide* RRV). In Massachusetts, three W. Tanagers were discovered: one at Nantucket, Dec. 4-5 (EFA), while the previously-reported bird at Manomet remained until at least mid-December (TLL-E) and a dead bird was found in Belmont Jan. 2 (*vide* RRV). Previously unreported was a Cardinal at Sally’s Cove, Nfld., Oct. 20, 1977 — for perhaps a fifth island record (*vide* RJW). A photographically-documented ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak at N. Guilford, Conn., Nov. 27 – March represented a first confirmed record for that



Grasshopper Sparrow, Sackville, N.B., Jan. 2, 1978. Photo/ Laura Burke.

state (NSP). No doubt the rarest passerine in the Region was the **Painted Bunting** at a Hyannis, Mass. feeder, Jan. 20 – Mar. 5 (*vide* BN); a major storm Jan. 19 was undoubtedly responsible for this bird’s appearance. A Grasshopper Sparrow at Sackville, N.B., first seen Dec. 25 survived until a Jan. 25 snowstorm (SIT *et al.*, ph.) while somewhat less unusual was a single Grasshopper Sparrow at Hewing River, Mass., Jan. 11 (*vide* SK). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow at E. Orleans Feb. 25 was an out-of-season occurrence but was possibly a rare early migrant (WRP). A first confirmed record for P.E.I., was a Lark Sparrow at Montague, mid-November – Jan. 18 (*vide* SIT, ph.). A second Lark Sparrow frequented a Needham, Mass. feeder, Jan. 21 – February (*vide* RRV). Single Harris’ Sparrows were found on the Greater Boston CBC and at Milford, Conn., Jan. 2 – Feb. 25 (m.ob., *vide* FWM, ph.).

WINTER FINCHES — Winter finches, notably Pine Grosbeaks and Com. Redpolls, irrupted throughout the Region in impressive numbers. By early December Pine Grosbeaks concentrated along the n. part of the Region, were feeding primarily on ash

seeds. By January this food source disappeared and a shift to coastal areas and s. New England was apparent, with 390 grosbeaks in the Framingham-Concord area Jan. 15 (RAF, *vide* RRV). This was considered the largest incursion into s. New England in recent years. Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches were notably scarce in Maine and Nova Scotia and were somewhat below average in Connecticut. By January, Com Redpolls flooded the entire Region and not surprisingly Hoary Redpolls were well represented: Connecticut (5), Rhode Island (2), Massachusetts (not quantified), Maine (8), Nova Scotia (2). White-winged Crossbills were widely scattered as far s. as Storrs, Conn (RJC) but in general few Red Crossbills were noted

CORRIGENDUM — On Cape Cod, in 1977 breeding success of Least Terns was considered poor, Erma Fisk noting only 0.5 fledglings/pair (*vide* BN).

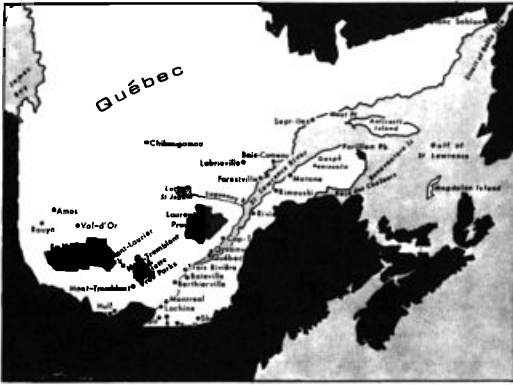
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QUÉBEC REGION /Michel Gosselin

Although temperatures were normal, the impression was of a mild and short winter; over 90 per cent of total precipitation fell in December and January, the southwestern portion of the St. Lawrence River valley getting much more than any other area. February was exceptionally sunny with the last measurable snowfall occurring February 7 at many stations. Such favorable conditions accounted for the many unusual sightings listed below, as well as high numbers of other species which do not deserve special comment (*e.g.* Mallard, Black Duck, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, American Robin, White-throated Sparrow).

Commenting on the season, J. Larivée in Rimouski emphasized the pleasant temperature enjoyed in that part of the Province. Winter (as well as spring) is typi-

cally late in maritime areas; however, the lack of snowstorms in February probably permitted a link with spring conditions similar to those of the Upper St. Lawrence River valley. In connection with this, many amazing winter occurrences were reported from Gaspésie; some of which were not documented at the time of writing, and are not included in this report.



GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL — Pied-billed Grebes were reported from the Eastern Townships and Dégelis, Temiscouata Co., in midwinter (*vide* PL, JL) but exact dates were not available for these outstanding records. Two imm. Gannets were at Percé Dec. 15 (JLD) and one was reported from nearby Port-Daniel on the amazing date of Feb. 2 (DC). A late Great Blue Heron was present at Aylmer Dec. 3 (IJ, PJ), and a Snow Goose lingered at Lévis until Dec. 18 (PBr). A flock of 12 Snow Geese at I. des Soeurs Feb. 11 (DJ) duplicated the 1976 record of Stanbridge East. Noteworthy waterfowl species this season included four Pintails overwintering at Châteauguay (PBN), a Mallard at Bergeronnes Feb. 12, and five Feb. 25 (ABc), a Greater Scaup at Côte Ste-Catherine from Feb. 4 on (GD), and a Bufflehead at Cap-d'Espoir Feb. 26 (RB). Among unusual inland occurrences were a ♂ King Eider at Aylmer Dec. 5-7 (IJ, PJ, m.ob.), four Barrow's Goldeneyes at Laterrière, L. St-Jean Jan. 13 - Feb. 16 (NB), and a pair of Com. Mergansers at Chute-des-Passes, s. of L. Péribonka Jan. 8 (NB). Further evidence of wintering Hooded Merganser came from Sherbrooke when a male, out of a group of six, remained in the area until at least Feb. 13 (PBI); another apparently spent the winter at Dégelis (dates not available — JPL, *vide* JL).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — A Red-tailed Hawk at Rigaud Feb. 22 (GH) was probably termed an early migrant; Sharp-shinned Hawks were observed at Hudson Jan. 4 (*vide* JW) and Philipsburg Jan. 21 (GM). A light phase Gyrfalcon appeared at Vaudreuil Dec. 13 (ABt) and single Peregrine Falcons were present at Percé Jan. 6 (JWm) and Montreal Feb. 12 (MA). A ♂ Merlin at Rimouski Feb. 21 (JRP) may appear to be astonishing, but this area is certainly the stronghold of the species in summer. All observers agreed that Ruffed Grouse populations were at very high levels this winter. The S migration of Willow Ptarmigans reached Matagami and L. Péribonka in

February (*vide* RP, NB) in our most noticeable movement since 1971; cyclical increase of these birds should peak within two years. Could the good numbers of Sharp-tailed Grouse in Abitibi County (*e.g.* Matagami, February, MG) may be related to the abundance of ptarmigan? A Ruddy Turnstone at Rimouski Dec. 6 (GG) is now the latest known occurrence for the Province. A Com. Snipe was reported from the LaPocatière area in January (dates unknown, *vide* PL).

GULLS THROUGH OWLS — On Dec. 3, the Beauharnois' Lesser Black-backed Gull was found dead below power lines (BB), *Nat'l Museum in Ottawa, where a preliminary examination seems to indicate it was *L.f. intermedius* from s. Scandinavia (HO). An ad. Thayer's Gull was photographed at Beauharnois Dec. 3 (BB *et al.*), another adult and two immatures were at the Pointe-Gatineau dump Dec. 4 - Jan. 1, along with 15 Glaucous and five Iceland Gulls (IJ, PJ, m.ob.). This editor is very skeptical about the Montreal CBC high of 124 Ring-billed Gulls; Ring-billed do occur in late December, but misidentification of imm. Herring Gulls certainly accounts for many of them. Two Ivory Gulls were at Lauzon, Québec City in the period Dec. 13-15 (LF *et al.*); Dec. 15 an immature was seen at Mont-Louis, Gaspésie (JLD), and another bird at Percé Dec. 28 (LL, JWm). Does the recent upsurge of reports of these birds reflect an increase? Snowy Owls were scarce in most s. areas until the end of February. Lucky observers noticed single Hawk Owls at Mirabel Nov. 20 (JP), Manseau Dec. 4 (CB), Waterloo Dec. 25 (PT), and Lachine Dec. 13 to the end of the period (JW *et al.*). In early December a pair of Short-eared Owls chose to roost on a garden swing in Vaudreuil (*vide* JW)! A Boreal Owl made its sole appearance at Dorval in the Montreal area on the CBC day (JW); another had been photographed at I. des Soeurs Nov. 19 (FB).

KINGFISHERS THROUGH ICTERIDS — A Belted Kingfisher near Wakefield, Gatineau Co., in the third week of January (*vide* IJ, PJ), and one at Sherbrooke Jan. 4 (PBI) brought to four the all-time total for January and February; interestingly, our previous records were also from the same areas. A Com Flicker at I. des Soeurs Feb. 11 (PBN) was one of the many half-hardy birds found this winter. One of the highlights of the season was the Red-bellied Woodpecker that appeared at Alcove, Gatineau Co., Dec. 18, and remained at the same feeder through February (*vide* IJ, PJ, m.ob.). This sixth regional record strengthened the pattern of late fall and winter vagrancy set by all previous occurrences, with the exception of one spring record. On Jan. 15 a Hairy Woodpecker was sighted at Eastmain (PT), the very n. edge of its range. Ten Horned Larks at Hébertville, L. St-Jean Jan. 24 (NB), was among the very few winter reports in that area. Figures indicating frequency of occurrence provided by the C.O.Q. showed a general scarcity of Blue Jays and Red-breasted Nuthatches; when compared to the average for 1971-78, these frequencies indicated that jays had decreased by 50% and nuthatches by 80%. A Mockingbird at Jonquière Dec. 18

(NB) was a first winter occurrence in the Saguenay River valley. Observers' comments on the abundance of *N. Shrikes* were confirmed by the highest frequency of occurrence this decade (C.O.Q.). Normal numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds visited feeders in the Montreal area (*vide* BB); a Com. Grackle at Gaspé Jan. 21 (DC) was a first winter occurrence there, another in the Saguenay River valley in late December (*vide* NB) represented one of the few local records in winter.

FRINGILLIDS — In addition to an estimated grand total of at least 21 Cardinals in the Montreal area, 13 of which were in Hudson (*vide* JWr), a wintering female was near Aylmer (*vide* IJ,PJ) and single birds were at Ste-Foy Dec. 4, and Lévis Jan. 21-29 (*vide* PL). The Québec City area can now claim seven records, all since 1969. While Evening Grosbeaks were unusually scarce and Purple Finches almost totally absent, the influx of Pine Grosbeaks, already widespread last fall, seemed the largest this decade (C.O.Q.).

S.A.

Using the total number of birds banded annually, Kennard (*Bird Banding* 47:231-238) disclosed a "definite biennial rhythm in the cyclic migration of the Com. Redpoll in North America". A relatively accurate measure of this phenomenon is presented here for the Province of Québec. The following figures are percentages of the total outings during which the species has been recorded for each winter (December — February) since 1971-72 (inclusive): 43.6, 9.1, 23.2, 19.0, 23.5, 7.6, 34.5. This last figure, for 1977-78, was compiled from December and January data only (C.O.Q.).

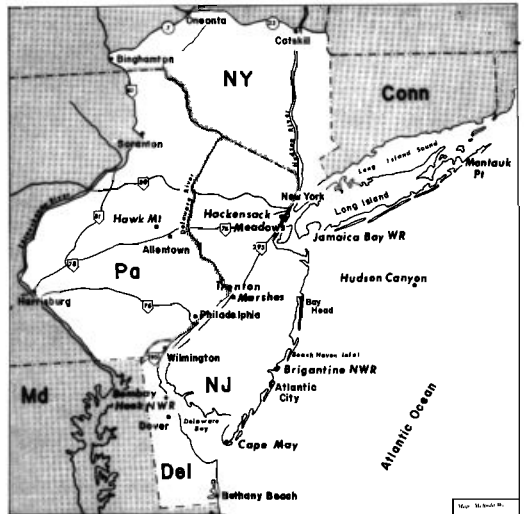
High numbers of Am. Goldfinches was another sign of conditions favorable to those species not always encountered in winter. Among the few Song Sparrows of the season, a bird at Rimouski in January (RC) probably marked a first local winter record. Lapland Longspurs were just a little more numerous than average: a male at Desbiens, L. St-Jean Feb. 14 (NB) was only the second winter occurrence in that area.

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HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

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

Last winter was the winter of ice; this was the winter of snow. A freezing rain on January 13, whose glaze probably harmed birds more than mere snow, was followed by a series of blockbuster snowstorms January 20 (17 inches in New York City), January 26 (23 inches in New York City, and some of the lowest atmospheric pressures on record), and the "great blizzard" of February 5-7. The ground was deeply covered throughout the Region for more than fifty consecutive days. At Kempton, Pa., near Hawk Mountain, MB reported 72 inches for the season. Philadelphia's official seasonal total of 42.2 inches was about twice that of normal, making it the fifth snowiest winter on record.



It was cold, too. Although the mercury did not plunge quite to last January's depths, there was no February reprieve this time. In fact, mean temperatures for the whole season were lower than last year. It was the coldest February on record at Wilkes-Barre, and the third coldest in Philadelphia, where the daily average was 9.1°F. below normal.

Evidence of severe declines in wrens and kinglets and of lesser declines in Eastern Bluebirds is detailed below. On the other hand, many recent colonizers from warmer climates (Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Mockingbirds, Cardinals, House Finches) thrived. Other highlights of the season included Sooty Shearwater, hawks and owls, shrikes, Varied Thrushes, and Townsend's Warbler.

Feeders provided the best birding, for watchers and predators alike. The winter finch flight combined with severe weather concentrated birds around ready food supplies. RJM, a long-time bandler at Norristown, Montgomery Co., Pa., who turned 80 this spring, "captured 2220 birds in those few traps right by the back door in January and February, never had anything like it." He banded and deported seven kes-

trels which were killing siskins in his traps, only to have two of them return from five to ten miles away and try again. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks also hunted in his yard, as in many others.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — Loons have been scarce in recent winters in w. Long Island Sound. Not one was reported from Westchester County, N.Y., after December (M.F.N.). A faint echo of last winter's Red-necked Grebe flight deposited more inland than on the coast, the result no doubt of hard weather retreats from the Great Lakes. Three singles turned up on the upper Delaware R., during January and February (GH,JP), and another was brought to RT by neighbors who found this "strange duck" floundering in a Belle Meade, N.J., street during the Jan. 20 blizzard.

The midwinter status of pelagics is poorly known in this Region. We shall be learning more, now that the Coast Guard is keeping tabs on foreign trawlers at the 200 mi limit and oil drilling has begun 75 mi e. of Atlantic City. BN spent Feb. 1-3 in our waters aboard a Coast Guard cutter. The only tubenose he encountered was a single **Sooty Shearwater** feeding in the wake of a Russian trawler Feb. 2 at 39°54.5'N, 72°32'W, approximately 75 mi s. of Block I. This is a first winter record for this Region, although that may be merely the result of ignorance since there have been several recent observations on Georges Banks. Curiously, no N. Fulmars were found on any of several offshore trips, although BN found them "abundant" e. of Cape Cod on another leg of his February voyage.

December records of southern herons are now commonplace, but some more noteworthy reports included a Snowy Egret Jan. 28 at Riverhead, L.I. (GSR), a Louisiana Heron overwintering at Linwood, Atlantic Co., N.J. (JD), a Yellow-crowned Night Heron inland near Philadelphia Dec. 17 (R.Zumeta), a Least Bittern on the Long Branch, N.J. Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC), Dec. 31 (TK *et al.*), and a Glossy Ibis Jan. 2 on the S. Nassau County, L.I. CBC. A holdover from last summer's White Ibis influx appeared sporadically in the Cape May-Stone Harbor area Dec. 16 to Feb. 10, when it was molting into ad. plumage (PD, MG, KS).

WATERFOWL — Waterfowl numbers were very low inland after the January freeze-up, and even though salt water froze far less extensively than last winter, maritime waterfowl also wintered farther s. than usual. This was thought to explain the 31% decline over last year in the New York January waterfowl census, and 25% in New Jersey.

Greater Snow Goose populations continued to rise. In keeping with the record 186,000 counted last fall on the St. Lawrence staging grounds (Andrews), 80,000 were found on the New Jersey January waterfowl census, the highest-ever figure (F. Ferrigno).

The last two Fulvous Whistling-Ducks of the group reported last fall remained at Hempstead Lake S.P., L.I., until Dec. 4. The January waterfowl count reported 60,000 Black Ducks in New Jersey, 35% more than last year and an encouraging pause in the long decline of this characteristic eastern duck.

S.A.

Brant populations suffered for the second consecutive winter. Following the U.S.F.&W.S count of 46,300 in January for the whole Atlantic population, a follow-up count of 40,000 in February indicated some winter mortality. That figure is well below the February 1977 U.S.F.&W.S. estimate of about 55,000, and brings the Atlantic population down to the crash level of 1972-73. A mediocre 1977 breeding season made matters worse, and this winter's population contained only 20-25% young. Hunting was closed, but the winter die-off affected young birds particularly (Ralph Andrews, pers. comm.). Brant breed in low-lying tundra at the limit of the North American land mass, where delayed spring can prevent breeding altogether. Reproductive failure rather than the disappearance of eel grass (*Zostera*) is now believed responsible for the 1930s crash. Two poor summers in a row in 1971 and 1972, plus hunting pressure, brought numbers down again in the winter of 1972-73. A banner breeding season followed, however (60% young in the winter of 1973-74), which soon restored the population to ca. 100,000 by the middle 1970s. This was still a far cry from the historic highs in the 1950s, of 265,000± (Andrews). The following summer or two, then, will effect this species' recovery more than future winters. In winter, after all, the birds can move farther S. Once again this season Brant refuted the legend of over-specialized feeding by resorting to snow-free patches of highway medians and meadows as far inland as Allentown, Pa. (one, Jan. 15, BM).

The faithful ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye spent its ninth consecutive winter at Shark R. Inlet. Only one other was reported, a male Jan. 7 at Napeague Harbor, L.I. (GSR). Harlequin Duck numbers were not outstanding. A maximum of four was seen intermittently at Shinnecock Inlet, L.I.; as many as a dozen were scattered along coastal New Jersey (m.ob.), and many traditional spots had few or none. Over 200 Com. Eiders wintering at Montauk Pt., were above average, but only up to eight King Eiders were present there. Farther s., eiders were the lowest in ten years. Only singles were found in New Jersey except for four Commons in Barnegat Inlet Feb. 25 (MH), and three Kings there Jan. 16 (BCH). It evidently takes more than a hard winter to move them.

RAPTORS — The trend toward overwintering in vultures was not interrupted by the weather; they profit by road kills and garbage even in the snow. A remarkable 53 Turkey Vultures were still at Hidden Valley, Dutchess Co., N.Y., Dec. 18 (MCK *et al.*), and one or two were seen through the season. Another wintered at Pound Ridge, Westchester Co., N.Y. (M.F.N.). The roost at Sumneytown, Pa., was larger than usual, with 110 birds Feb. 25 (AM), although some of these may be early migrants, judging from first arrival dates farther n. Black Vultures continued to

expand in s.e. Pennsylvania, where 23 were in a Hope-well Village roost Dec. 20 (AM). A Black Vulture was at Glendola, Monmouth Co., N.J., on the remarkable date of Jan. 12 (TJ).

More Sharp-shinned Hawks than ever appeared on CBCs, following ever bigger fall migrations. All three accipiter species made themselves conspicuous around feeders. Red-tailed Hawks continued their steady increase. They seemed particularly conspicuous this year as they hunted along cleared road edges or at food concentrations. One alluring manure pile in n.e. Pennsylvania supported 14 Dec. 28 - mid-February (WR, TB, JT), and 35± were at Fresh Kills Dump, Staten I., Jan. 22 (*vide* RZ). But CBC figures showed that the increase was no illusion. Twenty-two New Jersey counts produced 585 this year *cf.* 557 last year and 402 the year before; 19 e. Pennsylvania counts found 721 *cf.* 591 last year. More unexpectedly, Red-shouldered Hawks were widely reported, perhaps because hunger drove them to hunt at feeders and at warm microclimates like the Hackensack Meadows sewage pools (two Feb. 13, RK). Nineteen areas reported them in s.e. Pennsylvania while six or seven is usual (DAC). After a slow start, Rough-legged Hawks staged a good later flight, out of sync this time with Snowy Owls but in sync with N. Shrikes. Of 27 seen in n.w. New Jersey by GH, 13 were dark phase, while all of the eight to ten wintering in Dutchess County, N.Y., were said to be light. Marsh Hawks were numerous, and even hunted over feeders.

Golden Eagles were reported rather frequently this winter. A pair at Clove Valley, Dutchess Co., enthralled spectators with stick displays at winter's end, while an immature remained at Brigantine N.W.R., into early January. Four December records were probably late migrants (one subadult on Long Island, JA; two adults and an immature in New Jersey, G. Davenport, E. Manners, W. Middleton, D. Lennon). But singles in Rockland County, N.Y., Jan. 11 (W. Lehner, R. Miller) and in Wall Twp., Monmouth Co., N.J., Feb. 27 (F. Loquet) were unexpected. Bald Eagles were widely reported in ones and twos, though there were no concentrations like those of the early 1970s at s.w. New York reservoirs. An immature at Mill Neck, L.I., drew crowds from early January - Mar. 18. Widely scattered New Jersey reports could represent as many as nine individuals, of which six were adult and only one, discouragingly, was specified as immature. Observers should indicate age where possible in endangered species. An Osprey Dec. 13 at Robert Moses S.P., L.I. (JA *et al.*) was an extremely late migrant.

A few Peregrines wintered, as usual, on the New Jersey coast, but we have only four other reports of singles seen once. One at Alpine, N.J., Dec. 17 trailed an antenna (JI). Up to three Merlins wintered on the barrier beach at Jones Beach S.P., L.I. (CW) where they were once unexpected. In New Jersey, beyond the usual few on the coast, two inland observations were unusual. One in Hunterdon County Dec. 26 (J. Ebner) was probably a late migrant. More remarkable was one Feb. 4 at Hackettstown, Warren Co., which "entertained a whole family as it chased small birds around a backyard barberry bush" (H. Gabriels).

SHOREBIRDS TO ALCIDS — We expected the first overwintering Am. Oystercatcher record on Long Island when four lingered at Jones Beach to Jan 14, but the last single was seen Feb. 5. Three were at Nummy's I., Cape May Co., N.J., Jan. 3 (J. Lomax), while one at Longport, N.J., Feb. 27 (JAK) was "typical of an early migrant" (PWS). Among many reports of shorebirds attempting to overwinter, the most remarkable were of two Semipalmated Plovers at Brigantine I., Jan. 14 (JAK), an Am. Golden Plover at J.F.K. Int'l Airport Jan. 16 (S. Chevalier), a Whimbrel Jan. 2 at Jones Beach (H. Pembleton), and an "early" (late?) Lesser Yellowlegs at East Pt., Cumberland Co., N.J., Feb. 25 (KS).

TK found a Pomarine Jaeger 80 mi off Ocean City, N.J., Jan. 4; what little we know suggests that this is the most likely midwinter species. He also saw a skua (sp.) the next day 32 mi e. of Cape May. BN reported three to five skuas which he took to be Greats (as believed normal in winter) Feb. 3, 75 mi s. of Block I

Only two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported, well below recent norms, both in New Jersey: Avon Jan. 8 (GH) and Raritan Estuary Dec. 31 (†B. Krebs). Eighteen Black-headed Gulls (most of them in the Hudson estuary in December) and only four Little Gulls (two on Long Island, two in New Jersey) reversed the usual order of abundance. The fall's great concentration of kittiwakes off e. Long Island continued into early winter, with 2000+ at Montauk Pt., Dec 17 (THD), but later offshore trips found only modest numbers.

Last winter's murre flight was not repeated, and, as in the last several winters, Dovekies were virtually absent onshore. As usual, the end of fall migration was best for alcids. Every New Jersey onshore record coincided with the New Year's weekend: single Razorbills at Sea Girt (PWS) and Barnegat Light (RRY), a Com. Murre at Spring L., Monmouth Co. (TK *et al.*), and a Dovekie or two at Ocean Grove (L&P Warwick). The only other onshore alcid for the Region was a Razorbill intermittently at Montauk Pt. in December (THD, TWB, GSR). As usual, offshore pickings were better. A trip several miles off Asbury Park Dec. 31 (that same New Year's weekend) produced three Razorbills and 13 Dovekies (RRY), and 83 large alcids were reported Feb. 19, 40 mi s. of Montauk Pt.; all that could be specified were Razorbills (THD, BS *et al.*) Even offshore, however, alcids were uneven. BN reported none 75 mi s. of Block I., Feb. 1-3 though they were common e. of Cape Cod on the same voyage, and TK found none off the s. New Jersey coast aboard another Coast Guard vessel in early January.

OWLS, WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS — Owls seemed numerous, but we suspect that greater visibility as hunger forced them into settled areas created this impression. They were widely noted around feeders. A Screech Owl moved into AM's flicker box Feb. 1 as the redpolls peaked and spent half his days there, being seen less frequently after the redpolls moved out in March. Among many reports of suburban Long-eared Owl roosts, the Westtown School, near Philadelphia, had eight all winter "in the

same tree 10 ft from the front door of an occupied house full of cats, dogs, and kids" (JG). The presence of Short-eared Owls in Long-eared Owl roosts surprised observers in two widely separated localities: two in a Philipsburg, N.J., backyard evergreen grove (Mrs. S. Szasi, GH,JD), and one in the New York suburbs (M.F.N.). GH observes that Short-eared Owls are "seldom reported from evergreen groves," although it is not unprecedented. He speculated that rodents eating cast-off seed from feeders might be the principal attraction. Once again, it was not a Snowy Owl year. Three one-time observations of single birds on Long Island in January were even below last year.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers did well in recent n. outposts despite the weather. Several wintered successfully in Westchester and Dutchess Cos., including a Dutchess County female that appeared to eat seeds from the ground around a feeder (R.T.W.B.C.). Up to six Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported in New Jersey, at least one frequenting a feeder, but, unlike last winter, none seems to have wintered farther n. Sapsucker numbers were variable, but there were reports as far n. as Rockland County, N.Y. One indomitable Rye, N.Y., bird was seen Jan. 20 slipping several feet before getting a purchase on an icy tree trunk (M.F.N.).

Following last fall's W. Kingbird incursion, five December reports were perhaps to be expected. The latest was Dec. 11 at Montauk (M. Cooper), well short of a record date. While some E. Phoebes are normal in December, one at Grover's Mill, Mercer Co., N.J., Jan. 2 probably faced a brief future.

CHICKADEES THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — This off year nonetheless produced one Boreal Chickadee, at Nockamixon S.P., Montgomery Co., Pa., throughout the season (R. Hendricks, J. DeWayne). After a long-term decline followed by a precipitous drop last year in coastal New Jersey, White-breasted Nuthatches increased there (155 cf. 57 last year on coastal CBCs, PWS), and in s.e. Pennsylvania (double last year's figure on the Central Bucks County CBC, AM). Red-breasted Nuthatches were down 9% in New Jersey and 37% in Pennsylvania, according to JKM's analysis of CBC figures. Most observers considered Winter Wrens seriously depleted. The Carolina Wren crash was vividly illustrated by CBC numbers, even before this season's rigors had begun: 22 New Jersey counts dropped from 397 last year to 131, a 66% decrease, and JKM's data showed a Pennsylvania decrease of 69%. Carolina Wrens were thinned throughout the Region rather than extirpated from its n. reaches. Remnants hung on in n.w. New Jersey and Dutchess County, N.Y., where one bird worked some wool and feathers provided by a householder into a deserted robin's nest (R.T.W.B.C.).

No fewer than six Varied Thrushes reached this Region: four in New Jersey (Park Ridge, Bergen Co., Dec. 15, D. Werner, JI; a Newfoundland, Passaic Co., feeder for several weeks after Jan. 25; a Franklin Lakes, Sussex Co., feeder from Jan. 14 – Feb. 28+, G. Schultze; and a Lumberville, Burlington Co., feeder, Feb. 25, J. Weber); and two in Pennsylvania (a feeder near Bethlehem for several weeks after Jan. 21, B.

Owen, ph. — D. Mease; and near Harrisburg, Feb. 7 & 19, F. Haas *et al.*). This compares with a normal one or two for the whole Region. The total E. Bluebird count on CBCs was down a statistically insignificant three from last year's 43, but this already frail population did poorly after that. Westchester County figures were the lowest since 1938, and when JG checked 25 bluebird boxes in March, three contained dead birds, his first such experience in seven years. At least half the boxes showed signs of winter use. Both kinglets had suffered major declines by December; JKM's calculations showed Golden-crowned Kinglets down 62% on New Jersey CBCs and 71% in Pennsylvania. The more migratory Ruby-crowned Kinglet was pruned back even more severely, 69% on New Jersey CBCs and 84% in Pennsylvania.

Last year's good shrike season was followed by one of the best in a long time. We received about 14 reports of N. Shrikes. Six out of eight December records were coastal. Midwinter records were more scattered, with one or two all season in Dutchess County, one briefly in February at Jones Beach (J. Bull), one all season at Layton, Sussex Co., N.J. (m.ob.), and two briefly in January in n.e. Pennsylvania (JT, E. Johnson). The most southerly records were singles on the West Chester, Pa. CBC (*vide* JG) and at Cape Henlopen, Del., in February (F. Grabowski, R. Prybis, T. Valega *et al.*), one of very few Delaware reports in the last 40 years and possibly the first fully documented Delaware record (DAC). Of the four Loggerhead Shrikes reported, none remained after December.

The best passerine of the season was the ♂ **Townsend's Warbler** that wintered at a Vincentown, Burlington Co., N.J. feeder, Dec. 5 – Feb. 21, surviving the snows (ph. — C. Welch, JKM). This represents a second New Jersey record, the first having wintered at a Princeton feeder in 1971-72. This fits the past regional pattern. Half of the eight New York records have occurred either in November or so early in the spring as to suggest overwintering (it is a late migrant in the West). Evidently, and unsurprisingly, these birds go astray more often in fall than in spring. Among five lingering Pine Warblers was one that lasted at a Princeton feeder Dec. 26 to the Jan. 13 ice storm (ph. — B. Schwarzchild). Ovenbirds are often late lingerers, but one that subsisted on table scraps and hamburger at a Plainfield, N.J. feeder, into February was unusually resourceful.

A ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird wintered successfully at a Centereach, L.I. feeder, Feb. 18 on, joined briefly Mar. 17 by a female (A. Otero, TWB,FF). There are less than ten state winter records. Only three were reported farther s., one at a feeder in coastal New Jersey in January and single females at Wilmington Dec. 24 (JP) and Newark, Del., Feb. 3 (PJ). Rather more N. Orioles than normal turned up at feeders, over a dozen, some surviving the season. A large but not unprecedented concentration reached seven at a Cinnaminson, Camden Co., N.J. feeder, early in the season (N. Shapiro). Those identified were called "Baltimore," although it must be confessed that few observers try to distinguish the two forms. The traditional Bombay Hook Brewer's Blackbird flock was back, 30 strong Dec. 24, as for the last 20 years (DAC).

FRINGILLIDS — *Pheucticus* grosbeaks were below normal. Only two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported, both at New Jersey feeders, and a ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak spent Dec. 28 – Jan. 20 at a Basking Ridge, Somerset Co., N.J. feeder (ph. — F. Shanholtzer, RK). It was the third winter in a row for that species in the immediate area. Only two Dickcissels were reported, both at coastal New Jersey feeders, after a poor fall.

It was a banner year for winter finches. Every potential species was represented. The ubiquitous Evening Grosbeaks passed through and diminished later in the season. Purple Finches were numerous and widespread, although we have no very precise data. For the first time since 1972-73 Pine Grosbeaks appeared in good numbers, though they were largely restricted to the north and west of the Region. There small flocks were quite widespread, with maxima of "well over 300" in Dutchess Co., N.Y. (R.T.W.B.C.) and 50 at Skyline Manor, Passaic Co., N.J., Jan. 14 (RS). They did not range south of Princeton in interior New Jersey, and thinned out markedly toward the coast. Aside from several Westchester County flocks, the only coastal record was 14 at Eatontown, Monmouth Co., N.J., Dec. 31 (K.Apps). There were none at all on Long Island. Only small flocks reached s.e. Pennsylvania, such as 15 at Nockamixon S.P., Feb. 26 (J De Wayne) and up to ten throughout the period at Allentown (BM).

A massive redpoll invasion seemed to some observers the greatest incursion ever. We doubt that it exceeded the 1959-60 flight, although concentration this time at feeders may have made it seem that way. Although flocks reached every part of the Region, the largest groups were in the west and south, such as 400 at Layton, N.J., Jan. 31 (RK) and 560 banded by RJM at Norristown, Pa. They were his first since 1960, when he banded 60.

Siskins were everywhere; 22 New Jersey CBCs totalled 4307 as compared with 18 last year. For the first time since the incursions of 1973-74, White-winged Crossbills were more widespread than Red Crossbills. Reds moved into the interior early, with the highest regional count 25 at Rancocas S.P., Burlington Co., N.J., Dec. 22 (V. Lavia). White-winged Crossbills became widespread later in the season, and nearer the coast. By far the largest group was 125+ in a barrier beach pine plantation at Gilgo, L.I., in February. Groups of up to 20 ranged widely in central and coastal New Jersey, while farther s. and w. there were only four at Wilmington Feb. 1 (PJ) and eight Jan. 2 at Allentown (BM).

A ♂ Lark Bunting remained at an Elwood, L.I. feeder, Jan. 14 – at least Mar. 5 (R. Benjamin, m.ob.). Of more than a dozen previous New York state records, a majority are in autumn. Among an exceptional number of winter Vesper Sparrows were surprising cases of feeder visits: one at Paulsboro, Gloucester Co., N.J. (J. McNeil), and no less than six instances in s.e. Pennsylvania (AM *et al.*, *fide* DAC). Are these retiring birds often overlooked in winter, except when driven out of the fields by deep snow? One late fall Lark Sparrow lingered to Jan. 8 at Hemp-

S.A.

Among the redpolls were some paler ones, but pale redpolls are not automatically Hoary Redpolls. Redpolls "vary more in size and color than most bird species" (Ian Newton, *Finches*, 51). To make matters worse, Com Redpolls become paler in late winter owing to feather wear, and, on the breeding grounds, Hoary Redpolls are said to be as dark as Commons except for rump and undertail coverts. Trays of museum skins leave an impression of bewildering diversity, and some specimens are mislabelled.

Some individuals, however, exhibit prominently all three of the following characters, not all of which are mentioned in field guides: a short, more conical bill lending a "pushed-in" look to the face; pure white or pinkish rump with no vestige of streaking; and pure white under tail coverts. Size probably does not help. Although Hoary Redpolls from Greenland, *Acanthis hornemanni hornemanni* are extremely large, so are Com. Redpolls from Greenland, *A. flammea rostrata*. Hoary Redpolls in Alaska, *A. h. exilipes*, far more likely to wander here, are no larger than most Commons. This column launched the suggestion in June 1974 (AB 28:620) that Hoary Redpolls wear "pantaloons" of shaggy tarsal feathering. Numerous observers agreed this time that most Commons are equally pantalooned.

Determining the three decisive characters requires close study and color photography. It is difficult to be sure from the side that all under tail coverts are white. We have examined photographs of very pale redpolls whose white rumps showed some flecking, and whose bills seemed as long and slender as Commons. Our scepticism about field identification is heightened by recollection that D. Ford banded 700 redpolls at Robert Moses S.P., L.I., in February 1974, some of which seemed very pale but which invariably, on close inspection in the hand, failed the test with respect to one character or another (AB 28:619).

This season, although a number of Hoary Redpolls were claimed (about 20 in New Jersey alone), we reserve judgment except where all three characters were clearly evident. The best example was of a large female, accompanied by one or two similar males, at a Rye, N.Y. feeder, from Feb. 25 – Mar. 31 (J. Gee, m.ob.), superbly photographed (ph. — J. Wall, H. Darrow). She often drooped her wings to uncover the pure white rump. A strongly persuasive photograph taken at a S. Plainfield, N.J., feeder in February (JDo, ph. — T. Koellhoffer), is still being examined in Alaska, and another probable was at Wilkes-Barre (ph. — WR). RJM examined a very pale bird in the hand at Norristown, Pa., but we do not have full details.



Hoary Redpoll, Plainfield, N.J., tentatively identified first Feb. 11, 1978, feeding among a flock of approximately 150 Commons. Heinrich Karl Springer at the University of Alaska, who has handled and examined thousands of redpolls studied photographs of this bird and reported: "... no doubt that this individual is Acanthis hornemanni exilipes. . . . I am confident to assign this individual to the above race." Photol Thomas J. Koellhoffer.

stead Lake S.P., L.I. (m.ob.), and another was seen the same day at Mattituck, L.I. (R. Tuthill). There were two remarkable Clay-colored Sparrows: one at Montauk Dec. 11 (GSR), and another at a Boonton Township, N.J. feeder, from early January through the period (C. Reeves, G. Mahler). That same prodigious feeder had been host to a **Golden-crowned Sparrow** which did indeed return for its third winter, only to disappear after the heavy snows. The Region's only Harris' Sparrow remained at Buena Vista, New Castle Co., Del., for several weeks after Christmas (A. Ednie, JP). The once irregular White-crowned Sparrow is now a regular winterer throughout the Region. An amazing 42 were at the Red Bank, N.J. airport, Dec. 31 (PWS). Snow Buntings swarmed. Betty Knorr banded 140, her best total in 15 years, at S. Amboy, N.J. But no coastal flocks could hold a candle to the 3000 counted by MB in six acres of sorghum in n. Berks County, Pa., in late February. A similar mass was said to be frequenting another sorghum field near Ephrata, Pa. MB saw some of these birds perch briefly in the tops of small trees, as did FW with a flock of 300 near Libertyville, N.J., Feb. 2.

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS — The season's most tantalizing report was a bird carefully described as a Yellow-billed Loon at the Shark R. Inlet, N.J., Dec. 8 (R. Conn *et al.*). Intense searching could not turn it up again. The only previous verified records for the w. Atlantic are of an old Greenland specimen and of remains found on a Long Island beach in 1930. We have a report of six Com. Murres off Gilgo, L.I., Feb. 26 which would be unprecedented and which must remain unconfirmed.

EXOTICS — Six Ruddy Shelducks near Rio Grande, Cape May Co., N.J. are considered escapes, though this rather southerly Old World waterfowl has reached Greenland and Iceland on its own. Flocking behavior is further evidence of escapes, for breeders tell us that escaped broods usually hang together. The Red-crested Pochard at various n. shore Long Island sites in February and March (GSR *et al.*) was also a probable escape. Ryan states that this is one of the commonest waterfowl kept in captivity; its southerly Old World distribution would argue strongly against trans-Atlantic vagrancy.

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With this report, P. A. Buckley relinquishes his co-editorship of the Hudson-Delaware Region, after 19 reports beginning in October, 1973. We are grateful for the intelligence and analytical skill he has brought to these reports, always among our most carefully written and informative. In his place we welcome P. William Smith, of 24 Heyward Hills Dr., Holmdel, N.J. 07733 who will share the chore with Robert Paxton and David Cutler. Smith, it will be remembered was the Changing Seasons author for Spring, 1976 (AB 30:4).

MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

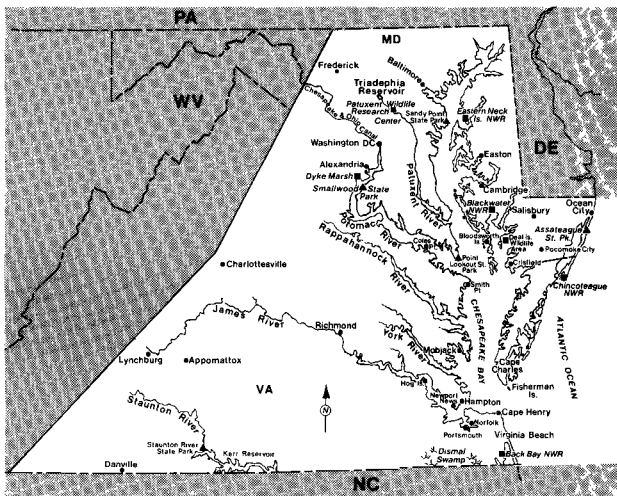
/F. R. Scott

For the second successive winter this Region endured unusually cold weather. Although December was reasonably normal, thus sparing at least the early Christmas bird counters, severely cold temperatures set in December 26 and lasted, with few respites, to the end of the period. Matters got worse in February when Baltimore averaged 7.5°F. below normal versus 4.2° below for January. Precipitation, highly variable in December, was heavy in January and mercifully light during February. Thus most of the Region was saved from heavy, prolonged snow cover. Nevertheless, what snow did fall persisted, and much of Maryland had at least a light snow cover much of the period from January 9 on.

In spite of a generally warm fall and early winter, reports of lingering southern stragglers were fewer than normal. Effects of the winter weather on individual species are noted below, but it is only proper to point out that most field observations were made prior to the onset of the worst of the winter weather. Thus the reaction of many species to the full stress of winter can only be assumed.

For the second time in three winters (see *AB* 30:703) a major oil spill hit the Chesapeake Bay, when 25,600 gallons of No. 6 fuel oil leaked from a sinking barge near the mouth of the Potomac River on February 27. Although it was not nearly as bad as the 1976 spill, damage to water bird populations, particularly Oldsquaws and scoters, was heavy.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Four Red-throated Loons at L. Anna, Louisa Co., Va., Dec 9 (JBB,BWK) were rare late migrants for the Piedmont. A single Red-necked Grebe appeared at Baltimore, Md., Feb. 9 (EATB), and Feb. 25 there were three here (*vide* RFR) and two at Sandy Point S P, Md. (JMA), these records perhaps presaging a repeat of last year's inland flight. Horned Grebes exhibited some strange movements during the period. Eighty-one near Hopewell, Va., Dec. 17 (FRS *et al.*) were obviously very late fall migrants, since they could not be found later, but 23 at L. Anna, Va., Jan. 15 (JBB,BWK) were clearly wintering birds, an unusual Piedmont occurrence for this number. Most amazing, however, was a mass movement northward at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Va. (hereafter, C B B T.) Jan. 22 which was estimated at 10,000 birds (RLake,RLA), by far a record state count. An **Eared Grebe** was present at Hampton, Va., Jan. 17-21 (RHP,RLake,DLH *et al.*). The only shearwaters reported were six Greaters off Ocean City, Md., Dec. 3 (RAR,MVB *et al.*), and a **Brown Pelican** was seen at Back Bay N.W.R., Va., Jan. 27 (EMn,RW), the latter providing only the second winter record for the state.



Gannets were in good numbers during the early part of the winter. Rowlett's pelagic trip off Ocean City Dec 3 recorded 1400, a record Maryland count, 1300 were estimated at Back Bay Ref., also Dec. 3 (FRS *et al.*), and 1291 were counted off Cape Henry, Va., Dec 31 (PWS *et al.*). Virginia had its best year yet for Great Cormorants with record counts of seven adults at the mouth of the Yeocomico R., Northumberland Co., Jan. 2 (FRS) and up to seven along the C.B.B.T., in late January and early February (RLake,RAR *et al.*) An ad. Double-crested Cormorant at Baltimore Feb 25 (RFR,DL) was out of season.

HERONS THROUGH MERGANSERS — Wintering herons were in only moderate numbers this year, and there was no information on winter survival. A few Green Herons were present along the coast in late December, including one at St. Michaels, Md., up to Dec. 27 (JR), and six Cattle Egrets were found near Back Bay Ref., Dec. 29 (PWS *et al.*). One Great Egret remained inland near Hopewell at least to Jan 28 (JWD *et al.*), a Least Bittern was seen near Crisfield, Md., Dec. 27 (DB), and several Glossy Ibises were found along the coast in December, including four near Ocean City Dec. 29 (SW). An imm. **Wood Stork** at Virginia Beach Dec. 4-6 (RLake,DLH,GMW *et al.*) was the state's first near-winter occurrence.

An ad. Mute Swan at Back Bay Ref., Dec. 3 (DLH *et al.*) made a first record for s.e. Virginia, although the possibility of its being a recent escape can't be ignored. In spite of problems with freezing inland waters, Canada Geese wintered in excellent numbers locally on Virginia's Piedmont. Nearly 700 were recorded near Charlottesville Jan. 2 (CES *et al.*), and the peak count at Green Springs, Louisa Co., was 1400 Jan. 16 (JBB). The White-fronted Goose previously reported at Green Springs remained throughout the winter accompanied by various apparent hybrids (JBB *et al.*). A Blue-winged Teal at Charlottesville Jan 2 (*vide* CES) was unusual this far inland, and single ♂ Eur. Wigeon were present at Newport News, Va., Jan. 20-21 (DLM *et al.*) and Virginia Beach from Dec

31 into March (DLH,GMW,RLake *et al.*). Although diving ducks were iced out of many inland areas after early January, there were still some impressive concentrations where waters remained open. Thirty Redheads at Dyke marsh, Fairfax Co., Va., Feb. 1 (DFA) were a local record, and the peak at L. Anna was 83 Feb. 19 (BWK). Ring-necked Ducks peaked at 430 near Hopewell Jan. 8 (FRS) and at 321 at L. Anna Jan. 15 (JBB,BWK). Greater Scaup were noted in numerous inland localities, and a peak of 80 (*vs.* 365 Lessers) at C.B.B.T., Feb. 5 (RAR *et al.*) was a good record for recent years. Both White-winged and Surf Scoters were recorded on the Piedmont, the most notable report being seven White-wingeds at L. Anna Jan. 15 (JBB,BWK). A **Harlequin Duck** at Annapolis first on Feb. 5 (RAR *et al.*) was unique for the upper Chesapeake Bay, and four wintered along the C.B.B.T. (RLake *et al.*). Hooded Mergansers continued in excellent numbers throughout the Region, and peak inland counts included 107 at Swift Creek Res., Chesterfield Co., Va., Dec. 9 (FRS) and 50 at Kerr Res., Va., Jan. 15 (HW,BL,LL). Bazuin's count of 118 Com. Mergansers at L. Anna Feb. 14 was an unusual number for a Piedmont locality.

HAWKS THROUGH GALLINULES — Twenty-eight Black Vultures in s. Dorchester County, Md., Dec. 30 were a local record count (*fide* CSR), and a few Goshawks moved into the n. part of the Region, the most interesting being one picked up dead at Chincoteague, Va., Dec. 4 (TW,CRV). Red-tailed Hawks were in record or near-record numbers on many of the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC), notable counts being 60 at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*), 56 at Fort Belvoir, Va., Jan. 2 (JMA *et al.*), and 31 at Charlottesville Jan. 2 (CES *et al.*). The imm. **Broad-winged Hawk** previously reported remained in the Alexandria, Va. area, throughout the period (DFA, JMA, OEF *et al.*), the first documented wintering of this species in the state. Rough-legged Hawks moved into the Region in force, and although there were no unusual concentrations reported, except for the 21 counted in the Blackwater Ref., Md. area, Dec. 30 (CSR *et al.*), individuals were found in many new localities, and there were actually seven different reports from Piedmont Virginia. Single Golden Eagles were found near Salisbury, Md., Dec. 26 (HTA) and near Cape Charles, Va., Dec. 27 (GMW,PWS *et al.*), and the peak Bald Eagle count in the Blackwater Ref. area, was 13 adults and 25 immatures Dec. 30 (CSR *et al.*), the best regional count in recent years. The only Ospreys reported were two at Fort Belvoir, Va., Jan. 2 (EMK,RS), and Peregrine Falcons were found in numerous spots on the Coastal Plain, including an adult that wintered in downtown Norfolk, Va. (DLH *et al.*). A Com. Gallinule near Hopewell, Va., Dec. 17 (DLH,GMW) was unusual in winter so far inland.

SHOREBIRDS — Wintering shorebirds were a mixed bag with some species in excellent numbers but most in only moderate or low numbers. Eight Am. Oystercatchers at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CPW,HTA, EWM) furnished only the second winter record for Maryland, but 30 mi s.w. a record 603 were counted in

the Chincoteague area Dec. 28 (PAD *et al.*), and a single flock of 280 was found there Jan. 29 (BM) A single oystercatcher on one of the C.B.B.T. islands, Jan. 21 (TRW) was strangely out of place for mid-winter. Black-bellied Plovers were also in above-normal numbers with record counts of 1479 in the Chincoteague area Dec. 28 (JMA *et al.*) and 284 at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*). A Spotted Sandpiper was noted near Yorktown, Va., Jan. 1 (BWs), and two Willets were found at Ocean City Dec. 29 (*fide* CSR). Farther south, 17 Willets were recorded in the Chincoteague area Dec. 28 (PAD *et al.*), ten at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (*fide* HTA), and one was even found at Hampton, Va., Dec. 17 (*fide* WPS).

S.A.

A baffling situation concerns wintering Least Sandpipers in this Region. Of the nine CBCs on hand that were conducted on the coast and Chesapeake Bay, where this species might be expected in winter, only one — Chincoteague — reported it. Yet it continues to be much more regular in winter far inland in the Hopewell area at a fish hatchery and in flooded gravel pits, and this year there was a record winter maximum there of 54 on Dec. 17 (RLake,WCF *et al.*)

A few Dunlin also wintered near Hopewell for the first time, one remaining at least to Feb. 4 (FRS,JWD *et al.*). The usual wintering flock of Marbled Godwits in the Cape Charles area could not be located this year, but seven were found at Chincoteague Dec. 28 (PAD *et al.*), and one lingered at Ocean City at least to Jan. 3 (RAR,MLH). American Avocets were reported only at Craney I., Portsmouth, Va., where the flock of 320 at the beginning of the period dwindled to 30 by late January and then increased to 158 by Feb. 26 (DLH,TRW *et al.*).

JAEGERS THROUGH PUFFINS — The pelagic trip off Ocean City Dec. 3 totaled 38 Pomarine Jaegers (RAR,MVB *et al.*), but there were no other jaeger reports. Inland gull concentrations increased enormously at Kerr Res., after mid-January, and Bazuin estimated 300 Herring and 9500 Ring-billed Gulls there Feb. 27, surely a record count for Virginia's Piedmont. It was a decidedly good year for esoteric gulls, with Baltimore having far more than its share. Both of the usual white-winged gulls were noted in several localities, with at least four different Glaucous and six different Iceland Gulls in the Baltimore area alone beginning in early January (RFR *et al.*). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen in seven different places with Baltimore reporting at least three different birds (RFR *et al.*). An apparently imm. **Thayer's Gull** found at Baltimore Jan. 5 (DFA,RFR,JLS *et al.*) remained throughout the period and was seen by most of the active birders in the Washington-Baltimore area; two immatures were thought to be present Feb. 4 (JMA) An adult was also reported here Feb. 2 (HK,EATB,JO), and another apparently immature was noted at Arlington, Va., Feb. 19 (JMA). Another stranger at Baltimore was the **Mew Gull**, with single probable imma-

tures being reported Jan. 3 & 19 (RFR,EATB *et al.*), an apparently different immature Jan. 12 (DFA,OEF), and an adult Jan. 5 (RFR) and Feb. 12 (CG,JLS,SS). Attempts to photograph both of the last two species met with poor results.

A belated report was received of **Franklin's Gulls** at Baltimore Sept. 10 – Oct. 26 with a peak of four on Sept 27 (EATB,PK,RFR *et al.*). These occurred at the same time as the previously-reported birds at Annapolis. An ad. Black-headed Gull, complete with an outstanding pink flush on its undersides, was present at Baltimore Jan. 1-7 (PK,DWH,OEF *et al.* — ph), and an immature was seen at Ocean City Dec. 29 (JMA) The only Little Gulls reported were single adults at Cape Henry, Va., Dec. 31 (RLake) and Jan. 29 (RLake,RLA,TOS). Rowlett and party counted 424 Black-legged Kittiwakes off Ocean City Dec. 3, and inshore an immature was noted near Cape Charles Dec 27 (PP) and an adult along the C.B.B.T., Jan. 16 (RHP) A Com. Tern along the C.B.B.T., Dec. 3-4 (DLH *et al.*) provided the only report of this species. A Razorbill was seen off Ocean City Feb. 4 (RAR, MVB *et al.*), and Peake saw an apparently ad. **Common Puffin** along the C.B.B.T., Jan. 16, the latter representing only the third record for Virginia.

OWLS THROUGH NUTHATCHES — The Ocean City CBC totaled 100 Screech Owls and 45 Great Horned Owls Dec. 29 (*vide* CSR), and a Long-eared Owl heard calling at Lynchburg Dec. 17 (TD) was seen Jan 7 (RWS). Short-eared Owls seemed in normal numbers in the coastal marshes, and inland on the Piedmont three were found at Liberty L., Howard Co., Md., Dec. 26 (CSR), at least one remaining through Feb. 28. Another wintered at Green Springs for the third year (JBB), one was seen at Kerr Res., Jan 2 (PEM), and two were present during February near Buckeyetown, Md. (RAR). Although complete figures are not available, it appears that Belted Kingfishers and E. Phoebes were in significantly lower numbers on the CBCs than last year. A Barn Swallow along the C.B.B.T., Dec. 4 (DLH *et al.*) was extremely late, and Com. Ravens were again recorded numerous times on the c. Piedmont of Virginia just e. of the Blue Ridge Peak counts of the latter included seven at Lynchburg Dec. 17 (*vide* MPM) and five in s. Albemarle County, Jan. 1 (*vide* CES). A **Boreal Chickadee** which appeared near Baltimore Dec. 9 (RFR,JLS) remained throughout the period and was seen and photographed by many observers. Red-breasted Nuthatches were common in most areas, and the 376 recorded on the Lynchburg CBC, Dec. 17 (MPM *et al.*) was outstanding. Well out of their normal range were four **Brown-headed Nuthatches** at Rustburg, Campbell Co., Va., Feb 14, several remaining into March (DP).

WRENS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS—As expected, numbers of Carolina Wrens were far down on the CBCs as compared to those of the previous year, but there was little information on whether the January and February cold spell made matters worse. Also reported far down in numbers were both kinglets, with Golden-crowns apparently in the worse shape. An ad. ♂ **Varied Thrush** was present at Savage, Howard Co.,

Md., Dec. 11-15 (PGD, ph. — RAR *et al.*) where it was seen by hordes of observers. Late Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were found at Alexandria Dec. 3 (BC,JS) and Hopewell Dec. 17 (DLH,GMW), and possibly wintering White-eyed Vireos were seen near Chincoteague Dec. 28 (PS,LF) and near Back Bay Ref., Dec 29 (IA,DD). Unusual wintering warblers were relatively few this year. There were three Black-and-whites reported, from Cape Charles Dec. 27 (PP), Gloucester, Va., Dec. 28 (MP), and Fort Belvoir Jan. 2 (RR,FS), and a **Bay-breasted Warbler** was well seen at Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (DLH,GMW,BWR). Inland records of Com. Yellowthroats included single birds in Orange County, Va., Dec. 27 (CES), Accokeek, Md., Jan 2 (AAB), and Kerr Res., Jan. 2 (*vide* PEM). As usual in recent years, N. Orioles wintered in many localities, and maximum wintering numbers this year were nine at Williamsburg, Va. (BWs), and 14 at Newport News, Va. (*vide* DLM). A Brewer's Blackbird was seen near Blackwater Ref., Dec. 30 (AB,GR), three were found in the Annapolis area Jan. 1 (*vide* HLW), and a pair was present at Baltimore Jan. 4-19 (EATB,RFR,JLS *et al.*).

FINCHES — A subad. ♂ **Black-headed Grosbeak** frequented a feeder in Richmond, Va., daily from Jan 28–Feb. 28+ (JLM,JRS,FRS, m.ob.). Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins remained common all winter, though the grosbeaks thinned out in c. Maryland after Jan 1 (RAR), and an estimated 500 grosbeaks were seen in Prince William Forest Pk., Va., Feb. 11 (BS,DFA) Purple Finches were probably as common as they have ever been and elicited special comment from observers.

S.A.

The featured finch of the winter, was clearly the Com. Redpoll, which flooded the n. part of the Region in unprecedented numbers. Although two were found near Baltimore as early as Nov 10 (HK) and they appeared in Talbot County, Md., Dec. 18 (JR), it was mid-January before most areas recorded them, and the floodgates didn't open until late in the month and early February. In Baltimore and Laurel, Md., flock sizes reached 150 in February (RAR,RFR *et al.*), and there were lower numbers reported all over Maryland and n. Virginia. On the Piedmont records extended s. to Lynchburg, where the peak was 33 in early February (PEM), but near the coast smaller numbers were recorded s. to Williamsburg, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach. Along with these birds came the predictable reports of possible **Hoary Redpolls**, accompanied by furious and sometimes acrimonious debate concerning identification criteria. Probably valid was one near Burtonsville, Montgomery Co., Md., Feb. 11-16 (FM,CSR,RAR *et al.*), and up to two at Baltimore first on Jan. 29 (MR,EATB,RFR *et al.*). "Convincing" photographs were obtained of the latter birds (DWH) Other reports of this species remained unverified

House Finches staged another big surge in numbers, and record-breaking counts included 255 at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*), 372 in s. Albemarle County, Va., Jan. 1 (JBB *et al.*), and 150 at Green Springs Jan. 14 (BWK). Flocks of Red Crossbills were very scattered, and 18 near Back Ray Ref., Dec. 29 (*vide* PWS) were unusual for extreme s.e. Virginia. Except for two in Prince Edward County, Va., Dec. 28 (PEM, KR), the few White-winged Crossbill reports were all from Maryland with a peak of 11 at Salisbury Dec. 27 (*vide* CRV).

OTHER FRINGILLIDS — The **Lark Bunting** previously reported near Galena, Md., remained into late December (*vide* RAR). A count of 218 Savannah Sparrows in one weed field in w. Charles City County, Va., Dec. 17 (DLH, GMW) was a record count total this far inland, and on n. Assateague I., Md., Rowlett and others totaled 21 "Ipswich" Sparrows Dec. 29. Klockner found a Grasshopper Sparrow near Liberty L., Carroll Co., Md., Dec. 26, and a late Lark Sparrow was still present at Craney I., Va., Dec. 8 (TRW). Tree Sparrows appeared unusually common, though the major influx apparently did not occur until mid-January. A peak count of 58 at Green Springs Jan. 29 (JBB) was excellent, as was a flock of 12 at Craney I., Jan. 15 (RLake *et al.*). Rowlett made a 90-mi roadside census in snow-covered Worcester County, Md., Mar. 4 and totaled 804 Tree Sparrows, most feeding along the road shoulders. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** remained at a feeder near Churchville, Harford Co., Md., Jan. 15 - Feb. 15 (KU.RAR *et al.* — ph.) for the second state winter record. Lapland Longspurs continued to



Clay-colored Sparrow, Churchville, Md., Jan. 22, 1978. Second state winter record. Photo/ R. A. Rowlett.

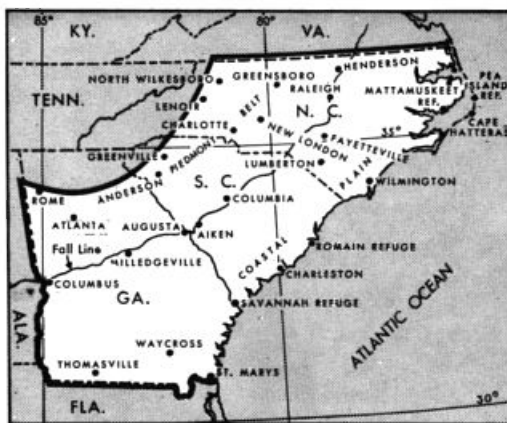
increase slowly in the Region with more records inland than formerly. Two seen at Green Springs Jan. 16 (JBB, BWK) repeated (to the day!) a record from 1977, and the maximum number seen at Craney I., was 40 on Dec. 4 (DLH *et al.*). An unusual inland observation was of 27 Snow Buntings at L. Anna Dec. 6 (JBB).

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

Although the winter of 1977-78 was not quite as cold as the unforgettable winter of one year ago, it was still considerably colder than normal. There was not a single mild period during the entire season, but fortunately there were no freeze-overs of sizable bodies of water. Several light-to-moderate snowfalls occurred, however, no mortality was reported as a result of the snow.



Birdwise, there was good news and bad news. It was definitely a "winter finch" season, with Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, American Goldfinches and Purple Finches, as well as Red-breasted Nuthatches, all appearing in good numbers. However, Red Crossbills stayed to the north of the Region this year. The bad news was the scarcity and presumed mortality, for the second consecutive winter, of many of the smaller insectivores and several of the marsh-dwelling species. Generally speaking, there were many noteworthy waterfowl and finch sightings, yet otherwise it was a rather lackluster winter.

SPECIES ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE SEVERE WEATHER — The two species that were hit the hardest were Winter Wren and Golden-Crowned Kinglet; several observers failed to find either species

after December. Rudy-crowned Kinglets were also hard-hit as were practically all of the warblers and Eastern Phoebe. Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) results from the Carolinas support the contributors' views of the scarcity of the above species, and they also pointed out low totals of many herons and egrets. On the counts American Bitterns and most of the rails were difficult to find. Because marsh birds are secretive, and because birders shy away from marshes in cold weather, it is difficult to determine the extent of this decline, although it seems certain that fewer of these birds have been present in the Region during the past two winters than formerly.

LOONS THROUGH STORKS — There were several noteworthy inland counts of Com. Loons, highlighted by Lynch's observation of 96 birds migrating into Roanoke Rapids L., N.C., Dec. 4. Other impressive totals were 45 on Salem L., near Winston-Salem, N.C., Dec. 5 (RS,PC,FB), 30 on L. Murray, S C, Jan. 21 (BL), 19 on Roanoke Rapids L., Jan. 4 (ML), and ten on L. Wheeler near Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 4 (RJH). Two Red-necked Grebes on Pamlico Sound near Frisco, N.C., Dec. 3 (RKe) were the only ones reported during the season. Well over 1000 Horned Grebes again wintered on L. Murray, and Bob Lewis had a peak count of 1350 Feb. 5. Still another winter passed without any reports of pelagic trips. Such trips during previous winters have yielded rather unexciting results, but at least six species of pelagic birds winter off our coast (Red Phalarope, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, Black-legged Kittiwake, Razorbill, and Dovekie), and the exciting finds on trips to the n. of this Region indicate that much is still to be learned about winter pelagics off our coastline. A White Pelican was a good discovery on the McClellanville, S.C., CBC Dec. 18. Double-crested Cormorants lingered until Dec. 21 at L. Greenwood, S.C., with a maximum of five Dec. 15 & 18 (BL). An **Anhinga** seen in flight in e. Wake County, N.C., Feb. 15 (PHR) was remarkable, as the species is casual in the Piedmont even during the summer months. Just as unusual was a **white morph Great Blue Heron** on a pond with a dark morph Great Blue and a Great Egret far inland in Laurens County, Ga., Jan. 3-31 (TKP, ph.). Midwinter Green Herons were unusual in Atlanta Jan. 8 (BP,LE) and Augusta, Ga., Jan. 21 – Feb. 25 (AW). Fussell had a **Wood Stork** at Ft. Macon S.P., N.C., Dec. 10, for one of the few winter records for the state. Storks also lingered later than normal along the c. coast of South Carolina, where 18 were seen at South I., Dec. 2 (JCe), and 15 were found on the Charleston CBC Dec. 31.

WATERFOWL — Whistling Swans were quite widespread this winter, and numbers continue to increase along the South Carolina coast; 15 were noted as far south as the Savannah N.W.R., S.C., Feb. 12 (AW). Noteworthy inland records were a single individual near Lowes Grove, Durham Co., N.C., Feb. 5 – Mar. 2 (PCa,BW), and two near Winston-Salem Feb. 3 (PC,RS). Brant seemed to be more common than in previous winters in coastal North Carolina, except for the conspicuous influx into this area during January 1977, however, the southernmost report was only at Morehead City, N.C., where two were seen Feb. 11

(JF). For the tenth consecutive year White-fronted Geese wintered at Eufaula N.W.R., Ga. (BO), and the species also again wintered at Santee N.W.R., S C, where as many as five were found Feb. 26 (B&LL). As with the Whistling Swan, Snow Geese (both color phases) continue to be recorded from more and more localities outside of the usual range each winter. Inland birds were noted in Georgia at Eufaula N.W.R., Atlanta, and Augusta; in South Carolina at Townville, and in North Carolina at Raleigh and Rocky Mount. The largest numbers were at Eufaula, where 45 spent the entire winter and 79 were seen Feb. 25 (BO), the ten flying over Raleigh Mar. 8 (DBra) were also noteworthy. The erratic Fulvous Whistling-Duck was noted at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., in November and December, with 80 still there Dec. 14 (PP), 35 were also seen at Pea I., N.C., Dec. 23 (LPH). For the second successive winter a ♂ **Cinnamon Teal** was discovered at Augusta; the bird was seen Dec. 24 and Feb. 6 (AW).

Single ♂ Greater Scaups were inland at Raleigh Feb. 4-6 (JM), Augusta Dec. 24 (AW), and Greenwood, S.C., Dec. 16-18 (BL), with a female also at Greenwood Feb. 12-24 (BL). As expected, the severely cold weather contributed to a good influx of Com. Goldeneyes into the Region, and one was even seen at Okefenokee N.W.R., Ga., Dec. 2 & 15 (RK). The best inland counts were ten at High Point Res., N.C., Feb. 11 (J&PC), and seven on L. Greenwood Jan. 20 (BL). A ♀ Oldsquaw on L. James in w. North Carolina Feb. 13 (TH) was a notable find, as were two ♀ Harlequin Ducks at Oregon Inlet, N.C., Dec. 30 (Bodie-Pea I CBC). There were two records of imm. ♂ eiders a Common in Beaufort Inlet, N.C., Dec. 18 – Feb. 5 (*vide* JF), and a King at Pea I., Dec. 31 (HL,ML). Scoters are rarely seen inland, particularly in winter, and thus it was surprising that all three species were reported. A ♀ White-winged was at L. Greenwood Jan. 15 (BL), a ♀ Surf was seen in Lexington County, S C, Dec. 11 (CW,BEC), and a ♀ Black was at L. Wheeler near Raleigh Dec. 7 (JM). Like the Com. Goldeneye, the Com. Merganser tends to be more numerous in the Region in very cold winters, and the many records for the merganser verify this idea. The most impressive counts were 18 at Roanoke Rapids L., Jan. 22 (ML), and 16 at L. Greenwood Feb. 10 (BL).

HAWKS — A belated Goshawk report came from Long Beach, N.C., where *two* adults were seen migrating Oct. 19 (JMcC). Also, an immature was carefully observed by Lynch at Occoneechee Neck, Northampton Co., N.C. Dec. 4. The population explosion of this species in n.e. North America over the past few years has been responsible for the increase in North Carolina sightings during this same period. Winter reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk continued to increase as well, also undoubtedly reflecting a population change, but Cooper's Hawks have not increased over the past few winters. Rough-legged Hawk reports, outside of CBC records, were singles at L. Tahoma, N.C., Dec. 3 (MT), and near Gardens Corner, Beaufort Co., S.C., Feb. 19 (WR). Three winter records of Golden Eagles for the Region is certainly gratifying, two birds were seen at Eufaula N.W.R., in January and February (BO,SP,BM), an adult was noted on

Lookout Ridge in n.w. Georgia Feb. 12 (TM), and an immature was carefully studied at Chapel Hill, N.C., Feb. 22 (DMK). Bald Eagle reports were as numerous as they have been in this decade, but the number of these eagles in the Region now as compared with 20+ years ago is minuscule, and it is not clear if the species has actually increased in the Region in the past few years. Inland records were of three immatures at Eufaula Feb. 11 (SP,BM), an immature and a sub-adult at Roanoke Rapids L., Dec. 3 (ML), and adult near Raleigh Dec. 6 (JM), and an immature at Santee N.W.R., Jan. 22 (m.ob.). An Osprey was late at Beaverdam Res., Wake Co., N.C., Dec. 23 (RJH). Noteworthy inland reports of falcons were of a Peregrine Falcon near Alpharetta, Ga., Jan. 3 (AB), and Merlins at Eufaula all winter (BO), Folkston, Ga., Feb. 21 (RK), and Pendleton, S.C., Feb. 5 & 25 (HL,SG).

CRANES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — Three Atlanta observers reported independent sightings of apparently the same flock of 175 Sandhill Cranes migrating SE over the city Dec. 1 (LT,VJ,HG), and the 188 cranes at Okefenokee N.W.R., Dec. 16 was a very good count (RK). Out of range was a single bird near Hampton, S.C., Nov. 18 (AW). A Black Rail was seen on the Morehead City CBC, Dec. 18 (DM), at a location where the species presumably breeds. It is likely that the Black Rail is a regular winter resident n. at least to the Morehead City area.

A Wilson's Plover at Beaufort, N.C., was late Dec. 2 (JF), and a Black-bellied Plover inland at Eufaula Jan. 15 was an excellent find (BO). A Long-billed Curlew was again present at Beaufort this winter (JF), and a Spotted Sandpiper at nearby Williston Feb. 11 was a rare winter sighting that far n. (KH,JF). Ortego had two Willets at Eufaula Feb. 25, providing a first winter record for the refuge. For some unknown reason, there was a noticeable, very early migration of Pectoral Sandpipers into the Region beginning in late February. Four localities reported Pectorals in that month, with the earliest being an individual near Clemson, S.C., Feb. 19 (HL). Other "winter" sightings were of six at High Point Res., Feb. 23 (RS *et al.*), two at Eufaula Feb. 25 (BO) and 15 there the following day (TM *et al.*), and four at Huntington Beach Feb. 26 (B&LL). Noteworthy inland shorebirds were as many as five Least Sandpipers at Raleigh Dec. 26 - Feb. 2 (JM), a Dunlin at L. Greenwood Jan. 2 (BL), and Greater Yellowlegs lingering at L. Greenwood until Dec. 21 (BL) and in Laurens County, Ga., until Dec. 18 (TKP). As observers are becoming more familiar with the field marks of the Long-billed Dowitcher, its winter status in the Region is being documented. As usual, it was seen on the Bodie-Pea I. CBC, and other records of note were 100 at a spoils area in South Carolina just n. of Savannah, Ga., Jan. 28 (HL,B&LL), and four inland at Santee N.W.R., Jan. 22 (BEC *et al.*). Fussell found a dead individual at a freshwater pond in Beaufort Dec. 14, at a location that has provided several recent winter records. The spoils area near Savannah yielded 450 Am. Avocets Jan. 14 & 28 (B&LL), and 350 were seen at South I., Dec. 12 (JCe), both excellent regional counts.

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — Three Parasitic Jaegers were observed at the Wrightsville Beach,

N.C., jetty Dec. 16 (RD). Casual inland in the Region was an imm. **Glaucous Gull** at the Walter F. George Dam, Ga., Dec. 4 (D&DC); it was seen by several other birders two days later. An imm. Iceland Gull was a notable find at Oregon Inlet Feb. 19 (DH,RA), and an ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was found at nearby Pea I., on the Bodie-Pea I. CBC Dec. 30 (LPH,PWS). Since imm. gulls typically disperse farther than adults in winter, and since imm. Lesser Black-backed are very difficult to identify and are not pictured in most field guides, one wonders how many immatures go undetected, since nearly all sight records are of ad birds. Several observers noted an increase this winter in numbers of Ring-billed Gulls on inland lakes. Lynch estimated a winter population of 10,000 at Roanoke Rapids L.; other high counts were 1156 at Eufaula Jan. 28 (BO) and 750 at L. Greenwood Feb. 10 (BL). Ten Laughing Gulls at Eufaula Jan. 14 were most unusual for an inland site (BO), and a **Gull-billed Tern** there Dec. 8 provided a first refuge record (BO). Another inland highlight was a sighting of two Forster's Terns at L. Moultrie, S.C., Feb. 26 (BL). Noteworthy coastal tern reports were of a Least at Hunting I., S.C., Feb. 11 (AW), 17 Sandwiches near Morehead City Dec. 2 (JF), and three Caspians at Cape Hatteras Pt., N.C., Jan. 4 (RA). Black Skimmers are seldom seen inland, especially in winter; thus, one photographed at Okefenokee Jan. 23 (RSB) was of interest. The only alcid report was of a probable Razorbill on the Bodie-Pea I. CBC Dec. 30; no Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported. Whether it was a poor winter for alcids and kittiwakes in the Region cannot be determined because of insufficient coastal and pelagic coverage. As hinted at earlier, the biggest gap in the distributional knowledge of birds in this Region is that for pelagic species from mid-October through mid-May.

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS — A **Ground Dove** was present at a feeder near Pendleton late December to the end of the period (PS); this is the first record for the n.w. corner of South Carolina. Another was seen Dec. 2 at Ft. Macon (JF), an area that has provided scattered year-round records during this decade, but at which area breeding has not yet been documented. An unusual incident was the report of two juv. Barn Owls being fed by adults on Jan. 6 at Albany, Ga. (JJ). Inland sightings of Short-eared Owls are always noteworthy; singles were found in Lincoln County, N.C., Oct. 24 (RM), at Beaverdam Res. in mid-December (EP) and Feb. 15 (ML), at Santee N.W.R., Jan. 22 (C.N.H.S.), and in Lexington County, S.C., Jan. 28 (CW,BEC). A Whip-poor-will seen at Bolivia, Brunswick Co., N.C., Feb. 5 (DM,DG) further strengthens the notion that the species is a regular winter resident in the s.e. portion of the state. The probable Rufous Hummingbird at Pamela Spencer's feeder near Pendleton remained until Dec. 7. Exciting finds on the Litchfield-Pawleys I., S.C. CBC, Dec. 29 were two E. Wood Pewees and a Barn Swallow. Noteworthy counts of Horned Larks were 130 near Raleigh Feb. 2 (JM), and nine at Eufaula Jan. 15 (BO), the first record for that refuge.

WRENS THROUGH TANAGERS — Bewick's Wrens were reported from several sections of the

Carolinas, although only the bird on the Clemson CBC, Dec. 17 was described to assure correct identification, however, one seen near Fayetteville, N.C., Feb. 28 was apparently valid (PJC). White-eyed Vireos winter n. only to the c. coast of South Carolina. Thus, records of birds at Aiken, S.C., Dec. 26 (AW), near Sanford, N.C., Jan. 22 (CO), near Pawleys I., Feb. 4 (PP), and at Rocky Mount Feb. 10 (LF) were of interest. Also extralimital was a Black-and-white Warbler near Fayetteville Feb. 16 (PJC). Certainly out of season was a ♂ **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Hickory Knob S.P., in the South Carolina Piedmont on Feb. 11 (m.ob.), and a Black-throated Green Warbler found dead in Chapel Hill Nov. 30 (MC) was very late. Other notable warbler records were of a Yellow-throated Warbler that wintered at a feeder in Dublin, Ga. (TKP), a Yellow-breasted Chat banded at Chapel Hill Dec. 3 (ET), and a ♀ **American Redstart** in a Morehead City yard October – Jan. 1 (CL). Several highlights from CBCs were two ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Columbia, S.C., Dec. 17, a W. Tanager at Wanchese on the Bodie-Pea I. CBC Dec. 30, and an ad ♂ Summer Tanager on the Charleston CBC Dec. 31. Another Summer Tanager, in yellow-orange plumage, was carefully studied at Wambaw Cr. bridge in the Francis Marion Nat'l Forest, S.C., Dec. 3 (BEC).

FINCHES — For the fourth consecutive year, a Painted Bunting wintered in Morehead City; this time it was an ad. male at a feeder (JG). Another feeder bird was a ♂ Dickcissel at Charlotte, N.C., Feb. 20 – Mar. 6 (DB). As mentioned earlier, Evening Grosbeaks invaded the Region in large numbers, and even at Folkston, Ga., in the s.e. corner of the Region, a peak of 50 was noted (RK). Some observers mentioned that House Finches were in reduced numbers as compared with last winter, and others noted a slight increase. At any rate, the species did not take part in the invasion with the boreal finches and, as usual, nearly all wintered in the Piedmont. Noteworthy were 150+ at the Raleigh Rose Garden Feb. 24 (KH, RB), 75+ at Albemarle, N.C., Dec. 6 (DB), ten in Clayton, N.C., Feb. 19 (CO), and one at Columbus, Ga., Feb. 18 (MF). The five reports of Com. Redpolls, all from North Carolina, might be a record for a single winter. At feeders were two in Raleigh Mar. 16 (BWh), one in Albemarle Dec. 31 on the Stanly County CBC, and one in Winston-Salem Feb. 25 & Mar. 4 (DGa). The others were single birds on the coast at Ft. Macon Feb. 1-10 (JF) and Oregon Inlet Feb. 19 (DH, BA, RA). Pine Siskin abundance in winter in the Region usually parallels that of the Evening Grosbeak, and this winter was no exception. The species was common and widespread essentially throughout, even along the coast. Observers anticipated a good year also for Red Crossbill, but it certainly was not a crossbill winter. In fact, there was only one observation, at the unlikely location of Orton Plantation near Wilmington, N.C., of a single male Dec. 11 (RD). Two **White-winged Crossbills** in c. Chatham County, N.C., Jan. 1 on a CBC were quite surprising, the species still has yet to be reported from either South Carolina or Georgia.

Grasshopper Sparrows were convincingly established as winter residents as far n. as Townville, S.C., where one was seen Feb. 9 (HL) and four were found

later in the month (SG). A Lark Sparrow again spent the entire winter at Morehead City (BMo, *vide* JF) Eloise Potter discovered as many as *three* **Dark-eyed (Oregon) Juncos** in her yard near Zebulon, N.C., Mar. 4 which were present for a few days following. All three Tree Sparrow records were from n.c. North Carolina: two at Beaverdam Res., Jan. 23 (BiL), one at Raleigh Feb. 5 and 8 (KH, CO), and one at a Chapel Hill feeder Jan. 25 – Feb. 12 (CH). Kuerzi had a probable Brewer's Sparrow in a flock of Chipping Sparrows Feb. 26 near Okefenokee N.W.R.; though the details were adequate, they were not indisputable enough to firmly establish a first regional record. A well-marked ad. **Clay-colored Sparrow** was very late and unusual near Townville Dec. 3 (SG, HL), and as noteworthy was a **Harris' Sparrow** on the Okefenokee CBC (*vide* RK). Lincoln's Sparrow apparently winters regularly in the Clemson area, as three individuals were seen at Clemson and nearby Pendleton Jan. 20 into February (HL, SG). Another Lincoln's was discovered near Raleigh Dec. 26 (JM). Winter records for this species have been accumulating in the Region in the 1970s, but still no discernable pattern is apparent. The regular occurrence of the species on the coastal CBCs in Virginia suggests that it may winter sparingly over nearly all of this Region. Both the Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting seemed to have had "off" years. For the first time in six winters, Lynch was unable to find a single longspur at Occoneechee Neck, which had previously supported the largest wintering population in the Region. The only reports were of single birds at Pendleton Jan. 22 (HL, BL) and Bodie I., Feb. 18 (RA *et al.*). No Snow Buntings were reported from the North Carolina coast, but they again wintered at Huntington Beach, with a peak count of seven (m.ob.) One at Occoneechee Neck on the Roanoke Rapids CBC, Jan. 1 was seen in a flock of blackbirds (ML) Inland Snow Buntings turn up in the strangest places (dams, lake shores, cattle feedlots, etc.), and seldom occur with Horned Larks as might be expected!

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spread that they probably reached every county in the Florida Region. They were considered "extremely common" at Gainesville (JHH), as many as 200 were estimated at New Smyrna (RDB), two were photographed as far south as Andytown (Richard Biss; *T.T.), and they invaded the Florida Keys probably for one of the very few times of record (CAP,WBR, m.ob.).

SPRING MIGRATION — Migratory species that winter in south Florida apparently had not budged by the end of the period, understandably, but a few species from farther south, unaware of Florida's inclement weather, arrived here earlier than usual (see Swallow-tailed Kite, Am. Golden Plover, Stilt Sandpiper, and Purple Martin).

LOONS, GREBES AND SHEARWATERS — To the few Com. Loons known to have reached the Dry Tortugas, three more were added Feb. 21-23 (BR,BK). A Red-throated Loon reached Key West by Feb. 2 (RTP,FTH,TW), and one on a large Tallahassee pond Jan 1-4 (RMC,m.ob.; *T.T.) was possibly the first ever reported in inland Florida. A Red-necked Grebe was studied at the Merritt Island N.W.R., Dec. 27 (Joe Howell *et al.*), and Eared Grebes were found near Summerland Key Dec. 31 (M&LPB), at Auburndale, late December-early January (Paul Fellers,JBE *et al.*), and at L. Jackson, Leon Co., Feb. 17-23 (RMC,CME). A Cory's Shearwater was seen near land at Lake Worth Dec. 21 (HPL), and one was seen off Canaveral Dec 20 (JJ).

PELECANIFORMS — White Pelicans near Lakeland numbered up to 3000 (*fide* JBE), and a few at Orange L., in November and December were thought to be the first for Alachua County (JHH). An albino Brown Pelican was seen near New Smyrna Dec. 4 & Jan 22 (RDB,MCB *et al.*). Possibly the greatest number of Gannets ever reported in Florida was that of 1300 off Sebastian Inlet Feb. 4 (MCB *et al.*); slightly displaced birds were seen in Florida Bay Jan. 4 (JCO) and St. George Sound Jan. 7 (AC,RMC,CME). The only Great Cormorants reported were single birds: throughout the period at Port Canaveral (m.ob.) and Dec 4 at Ponce de Leon Inlet (DH,MCB). A possibly unprecedented total of five Anhingas reached the Keys during the period (*fide* RTP). Nesting Magnificent Frigatebirds on the Marquesas, apparently unaffected by the weather, had young in many of the 50 nests seen Feb. 23 (RTP,BSW,CAP).

WADING BIRDS — An injured Great White Heron was rather far n. at Satellite Beach Dec. 20 (C.O. Teate), as was the first winter record of the Reddish Egret in the Tallahassee Division — one near St. Marks Light Dec. 12 & 14 (HMS,RMC,CME;*T.T.). The Least Bittern, rarely seen on the Florida Keys, appeared at Bottle Key Dec. 13 (RTP) and Stock I., Feb 25 (FTH,TW). Two Wood Storks 10 mi n.e. of Tallahassee Jan. 13 (HMS) provided Leon County with its second midwinter record; another remained near St. Marks Light until Jan. 8 (AC,RMC,CME). The first reported W flight of White Ibis was of 150

near St. Marks Light Jan. 24 (CSG). A pink ibis at Flamingo Dec. 31 & Jan. 8 (BR,WBR) was considered a hybrid Scarlet x White. Undaunted by the inclement weather, Cattle Egrets had 140 nests, "mostly with eggs," in Greynold's Park, Miami, Jan. 17 (JMK)

WATERFOWL — Single Whistling Swans were seen near Lakeland Dec. 31 – Jan. 1 (JBE, m.ob.) and near St. Marks Light Dec. 12 – Feb. 26 (HMS, m.ob.) Five blue-phase Snow Geese were unusually far s in Coot Bay Feb. 25 (Roger L. Hammer). For the first time of record, Brant remained into midwinter in the Tallahassee Division; numbers ranging from two to four were seen near St. Marks Light Dec. 19 – Jan 23 (CSG, m.ob.; ph. not conclusive). Two Wood Ducks at Summerland Key Nov. 15 – Dec. 1 (MB) may be the first of record for the Florida Keys. A high count of 12 Canvasbacks was made in s. Dade County Mar 3 (JMK). The very rare **Harlequin Duck** at Cocoa held over until Dec. 10 (m.ob.). Southerly records of scoters were as follows: White-winged, Juno Beach Dec. 12 (HPL); Surf, Sanibel I., December-February (GW *et al.*); Black, Sanibel I., December (GW *et al.*), and Miami Dec. 17 (Joel Abramson). Common Mergansers were carefully identified at Cocoa Dec. 29 ff (Helen Cruickshank, m.ob.), Sharpes Jan. 4 (MCB, Helen Dowling), and Summerland Key, January-February (with three Red-breasted Mergansers; MB)

BIRDS OF PREY — A large winter roost of 4000 Turkey Vultures remained through the period at the s end of L. Okeechobee (PWS). The Black Vulture made one of its rare invasions of the Florida Keys, where there were four records of 1-6 birds Dec 27 – Feb. 1 (RTP *et al.*). Swallow-tailed Kites arrived on the s. mainland early — one at Corkscrew Swamp Feb. 21 (*fide* Larry Riopelle) and one at Lane R Rookery near Flamingo Feb. 22 (JCO, Lory Lagna) Two Everglade Kites remained through the period in the savannas near Ft. Pierce (*fide* HWK), and 24 nests were studied in the Everglades of Dade County Feb 20; some were under construction, some had eggs, some young, and other young were out of the nest (Noel Snyder,PWS). A Rough-legged Hawk was carefully described near Palmdale Dec. 30 (B&LA), and a Swainson's Hawk was "reported without details" in n. Pinellas County Dec. 10 (Wesley Biggs, Dave Goodman). An ad. and an imm. **Common Black Hawk** (*Buteogallus anthracinus*) continued to frequent Greynold's Pk. (JMK; see AB 30[3]:661-662). Golden Eagles were reported from Pinellas County Dec 10 (Larry and Gyneth Carpenter, Butler Durham), n Leon County Jan. 29 (B&LA), and near Panacea Dec 20 & Feb. 22 (Frank Zontek, George Byrd, and Marshall Futch). There were two more tidbits of good news about the Bald Eagle: all three nests seen on the Florida Keys were thought to contain young (RTP,BSW,CAP), and the total of six seen in Leon County was the largest number for one winter season there in many years.

CRANES, RAILS AND GALLINULES — A late flight of "many" Sandhill Cranes was heard over Tallahassee Dec. 1 (RMC). A Virginia Rail found

dead at Boca Chica Key Nov. 14 (*vide* FTH) may be the first proof of occurrence for the Florida Keys (*U. Miami). Three Purple Gallinules in Wakulla County during the period may be the largest number recorded so far n. in one winter (m.ob.).

SHOREBIRDS — Single Am. Golden Plovers at St. George I., Feb. 24 (RMC), and near St. Marks Light Feb. 25 (Sam Pate) were about two weeks early. In the same category was a Stilt Sandpiper near St. Marks Light Feb. 24 (RMC); 45 at Stake Key Feb. 1 (JCO) constituted a high winter count for the Keys. The outstanding shorebird of the period was a **Surf-bird** at Ft. Myers Beach Feb. 5 & 6 (Leroy Harrison; *T.T.). Leon County has had very few dowitchers in winter, but this year they numbered up to 19 at Lake Jackson; the only call notes heard were those of the Long-billed Dowitcher (HMS). A second record of the Com. Snipe on the Dry Tortugas occurred Feb. 21-22 (BR,BK), and an Am. Woodcock ranged as far s. as the Naples area in early December (Jim Perkins). An Am. Avocet near St. Marks Light Jan. 4 (HMS) was the second ever recorded in midwinter in the Tallahassee Division (*T.T.). A Red Phalarope was found off Palm Beach Dec. 23 (HPL, Hank McCall).

GULLS, TERNS AND MURRES — Two Iceland Gulls were found at St. Petersburg Jan. 27 (JAL,BA,MH), and two wintered in the Cocoa area (*vide* RDB). Glaucous Gulls ranged as far s. as Vero Beach Jan. 16 ff. (Ted & Diane Maehr) and Sebastian Inlet Jan. 30 (Wm. and Helen Dowling). Great Black-backed Gulls increased in s. Florida, with 8-10 wintering in the Palm Beach area (*vide* PWS) and one reached Cowpens Key Feb. 7 (RTP,BSW), but the most dramatic increase was that of the Lesser Black-backed Gull. St. Petersburg had five, Jan. 6 - Feb. 24 (B&LA,WH), the Cocoa area had three (*vide* RDB), and single birds were at Dynamite Pt., Jan. 22 (Dowlings; first for St. Lucie County), and near Islamorada Nov. 30 - Feb. 18 (Sandy Sprunt, BSW *et al.*). While awaiting confirmation of last winter's bird, Florida had another well-documented record of **Thayer's Gull**, this time at St. Petersburg's Toytown Dump Jan. 7 & 21 (WH,B&LA; *T.T.). That same area had two Franklin's Gulls Dec. 10 - Jan. 6 (B&LA, m.ob.; *T.T.), and a local rarity was a Bonaparte's Gull at the Dry



Thayer's Gull, St. Petersburg, Fla., Jan. 7 & 21, 1978. Photo/ H. M. Stevenson.

Tortugas Feb. 21-23 (BR,BK). The small number of winter records of two terns was increased when three Bridled Terns were seen at the Dry Tortugas during a storm Feb. 22 (BR,BK) and a Least Tern was found at Mullet Key Feb. 25 (Dorothy Freeman). Florida's second **Thick-billed Murre** was encountered off Canaveral Dec. 20 (JJ).

DOVES, CUCKOOS, ANIS AND OWLS — A very rare Florida visitor, the **Ruddy Quail-Dove** was found on the Dry Tortugas Dec. 15 (BG; *E.N.P.; note to *Fla. Field Nat.*). Five Mangrove Cuckoos, rare but regular in winter in s. Florida, were reported this season including singles at Sanibel I., Jan. 6 (GW *et al.*), and *inland* Mahogany Hammock, E.N.P., Jan. 3 (Marshall Eyster). A Groove-billed Ani was at St. Marks Dec. 3 (B&LA). Another Burrowing Owl visited the Dry Tortugas Feb. 12-13 (BG), and Short-eared Owls were reported from Sanibel I., Feb. 18 ff (m.ob.), and St. Marks Light Jan. 23 (RMC).

HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS AND FLY-CATCHERS — A **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at Winter Park Dec. 3-6 (Bruce Anderson) may be only the second ever recorded in Florida (*Fla. Tech. Inst.) The Pileated Woodpecker on Plantation Key in January and February (Bill Pantel) represented a slight range extension. A sight record of the **Tropical Kingbird** came from Torch Key Dec. 4-12 (Lois Kitching, MB), but there are no Florida specimens and the differences are rather subtle between this bird and the W Kingbird. Apparently the winter range of the Vermilion Flycatcher in Florida is farther s. than it was 20-30 years ago; three of this season's four birds were in s.c. Florida — near Zolfo Springs Jan. 4 (Fred Lohrer, JNL,CEW), near Lake Placid Jan. 6 (JNL,CEW), and 8 mi n.w. of La Belle Jan. 26 (JNL), n. Florida's record was at Lake Miccosukee, Leon Co., Jan. 15-21 (RMC,CME,JMS).

SWALLOWS—Perhaps one effect of the cold winter was that of concentrating Tree Swallows into s. Florida. Estimated roosts of 500,000 were recorded near Palmdale Jan. 8 (HPL,PWS *et al.*) and of 100,000 at Long Pine Key, E.N.P., throughout the period (WBR *et al.*) and Lane R. Rookery Feb. 21 (JCO *et al.*). Winter records of the Rough-winged Swallow have been scarce in the Tallahassee Division in recent years, but one was seen at Lake Jackson Dec. 29 (GEM), and one near St. Marks Light Feb. 21 (FWL) may have been a very early migrant. Three **Cave Swallows** were compared with a Barn Swallow and Purple Martins at Flamingo Feb. 11-12 (JAL,JMK,PWS *et al.*). Single Purple Martins, early for n. Florida, were studied near St. Marks Light Jan. 23 (RMC) and 29 (HMS *et al.*) and in s.w. Leon County Jan. 28 (GEM).

NUTHATCHES, CATBIRDS AND THRUSHES — The marked invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches apparently did not extend farther s. than the Tallahassee Division, where at least four inland locations were added to the typical coastal ones (RMC *et al.*). In previous reports of the precocious February migration

of Gray Catbirds in Florida the question was raised as to whether they came from s. Florida or the West Indies. However, 3-4 on the Dry Tortugas Feb. 21, but not Feb. 22 (BK, BR), indicated a "south-of-Florida origin" (WBR). Unusual winter records of two thrushes came from s. Florida — a Wood Thrush near Anhinga Trail, E.N.P., Feb. 11 (Bob Myers, PWS, m.ob.) and a Swainson's Thrush in s. Dade County Mar. 3 (JMK). A remarkable count of 125 E. Bluebirds came from the South Loop of the Tamiami Trail, w. of Miami Feb. 19 (Mark Trafton, Jr.).

PIPITS, WARBLERS AND BLACKBIRDS — Single Sprague's Pipits were found near St. Marks Light Dec. 1 (RMC, HMS) and on St. George I., Dec. 7 (JMS), and a count of 25 Water Pipits at Miami Dec. 22 (MY *et al.*) was high for s. Florida. Yellow and Prairie Warblers — probably the breeding races — were singing on islands in Florida Bay as early as Feb. 1 (RTP). The only report of Wilson's Warbler came from near Ft. Pierce Dec. 26 (MCB, DH, m.ob.). As many as four Yellow-headed Blackbirds each were found at Casey's Dairy, St. Petersburg, up to Feb. 8 (LH, MH, m.ob.), and at Miami Dec. 17 (JMK). The former locality had as many as 12 Brewer's Blackbirds until Feb. 5 (LH, Karl Thompson, m.ob.), and the few records in the Tallahassee Division were increased by a flock of 200 near Monticello Jan. 29 (RMC), and single birds near Wakulla Station Feb. 9 (RMC) & 19 (FWL). An invasion of **Bronzed Cowbirds** brought 1-2 to Casey's Dairy Dec. 3 - Jan. 29 (LH, Judy Fisher, m.ob.), three to n.w. Dade County Dec. 14 (JMK, MY), and 1-5 to Flamingo Dec. 30 - Jan. 6 (BR, WBR).

TANAGERS, FINCHES AND SPARROWS — A W. Tanager was reported from Homestead Mar. 2 (Erma Fisk), and single Summer Tanagers were at Jack I. State Preserve Feb. 11 (Dowlings) and Tallahassee Feb. 12 (Mrs. Herbert Miller). Also n. of their usual winter range were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Feb. 18 (Sam Altwerger & PWS), and single Dickcissels near Ft. Pierce Feb. 22-26 (Dowlings) and on Summerland Key Jan. 30 (second record for Keys?; M&LPB). Evening Grosbeaks ranged over most of n. Florida, but not in numbers comparable to those of 1968-69. At Jacksonville they were simply dismissed as "not plentiful" (VMM), the maximum number reported in the Tallahassee area was 17 on Dec. 16 ff. (Jeff Valentine, m.ob.), and after their late arrival of Jan. 28 at Gainesville, some feeders hosted as many as 40 (*vide* JHH). Perhaps for only the second time, two Purple Finches reached the Florida Keys (Cudjoe Key Dec. 29-30, M&LPB). (For Pine Siskin, see Introduction.) Two Clay-colored and six White-crowned Sparrows wintered in a field w. of Boynton Beach (PWS). Other White-crowns were recorded at Zellwood Jan. 7 (Betty King, Becky Payne) and Paynes Prairie, near Gainesville, Feb. 25 (Barbara Muschlit), as was a Fox Sparrow as far s. as Wekiwa Springs S.P., Jan. 28 (Othel Sullivan). Lincoln's Sparrows were studied in n. Leon County Jan. 29 (B&LA), and on Sunshine Key Dec. 20 (RTP, David Galinat). Two **Snow Buntings** again wintered on Ft. George I., Duval Co. (*vide* VMM).

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ONTARIO REGION /Clive E. Goodwin.

In southern Ontario winter 1977-78 will be remembered as one of heavy, in many cases record-setting, snowfall. Both December and January had about double normal snowfall, and on January 26 a blizzard swept across the south that produced an all-time low barometric pressure, blew windows out of skyscrapers in Toronto and made travel impossible. By contrast February was unusually dry, but very cold. The north had relatively less snow but was colder than normal, and at the end of the period some reporting areas had not been above freezing for three months.

These conditions were not hospitable to birds, and much more than usual mortality was seen. This was particularly true after the January blizzard, when many observers cited examples of dead birds being



picked up near feeders. Winter mortality is often inferred but not observed: the birds just disappear. Most reporters felt that the "half-hardy" winterers — for example, blackbirds and sparrows — were hard-hit, and cited in support lower Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) totals of such species as Song Sparrows. But there was not unanimity on that point (there rarely is!) and one observer in a traditionally favoured area suggested there were more blackbirds around than usual. Perhaps "hard weather" movements had concentrated these birds more, an idea supported by such reports as 17 White-crowned Sparrows at one feeder in Niagara-on-the-Lake, for example.

There was no doubt that the blizzard brought open-country birds into feeders. Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were all plentiful, the larks exceptionally so, and these species moved into feeders after the storm. This follows the trend noted for the first time in Ontario reports last year. The severe impact of the storm may have been in major part owing to the heavy rain that preceded it, as the temperatures dropped very rapidly in less than an hour, and left a thick coating of ice as a base for the snow that followed.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — In addition to scattered Com. Loons along the lower Great Lakes there was a bird north to Lake of Two Rivers Dec. 4 (RT) and one at Gannon's Narrows from Feb. 9 (m.ob.). A Red-throated Loon on the Barrie CBC was noteworthy, although in general CBC details will not be repeated here. Rather more grebes than usual were seen, again principally along the lower lakes where at least three Red-necked Grebes were reported and several Horneds, but birds of both species inland at Peterborough were far more unusual: Red-necked Feb. 24 (GC,RDM) and Horned Dec. 25 (MP). The same area had several Great Blue Heron reports through the period (*vide* DCS). Most northerly of several Pied-billed Grebe sightings was a bird at Moore's Falls, Haliburton Dec. 30 (WMcC).

S.A.

Three species made the Toronto area a magnet for birders from all over the Province: the first was an imm. **Great Cormorant**, seen at Port Credit from Jan. 14 to the end of the period (AW, m.ob.). It was at first misidentified as a Double-crested but subsequently well described and photographed. Interestingly, its appearance closely parallels an earlier record of a cormorant in 1970 which was seen about the same time of year and in the same general area. That bird was the subject of considerable controversy and details on the sighting were never received; however, many of the observers who saw it at the time felt it was a Great, and retrospective comments on the sighting suggest this to be correct. The one Ontario specimen is also from the Toronto area taken in the late 1800s.

A Least Bittern was found road-killed near Whitby Dec. 2 (RN).



Immature Great Cormorant, Port Credit, Ontario Jan. 21, 1978. Photo of Alan Wormington.

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS — Mute Swans continued their steady increase, and this winter new localities for the species were Kingston Jan. 6-20 (PEL, K.F.N.) where the bird was shot, and Allandale Dec. 4 (CGH,CJM) the first for Simcoe County. In their main stronghold w. and e. of Toronto there were counts of up to 22 and 7 respectively (CEG, JM). A Whistling Swan was seen at Newcastle on the late date of Dec. 16 (ERM), and a Brant on the Niagara R., Dec 22 (AJR,TH). A blue-phase Snow Goose at Cambridge Feb. 19 (GD), believed to be a wild bird, was most unusual for that area. Other reports in this class were a Black Duck on Oxtongue R., Jan. 15 – Feb. 14 (PW), a Gadwall at Barrie (CJM), and a Pintail at Norwich (WMcC), both Dec. 3. On the Toronto CBC Pintails and other dabbling ducks were located in the aeration tanks of the main sewage treatment plant, a location not previously known as a source of birds! Toronto had a particularly good assortment of wintering individuals — a N. Shoveler and a Ring-necked Duck were most noteworthy — and the south and southwest generally had the usual scattering of such species, often surviving with the help of handouts. Good counts of waterfowl from Presqu'île P.P. were 525 Redheads Dec. 1, 1250 Buffleheads Dec. 5, and 1350 Com. Goldeneyes Jan 24 (GC,RDM). Goldeneye was one of the three species seen on a trip out over n. L. Huron on a flight from Manitoulin I., beyond the edge of the ice Feb. 11 there were 451 with 61 Oldsquaws and 15 Com. Mergansers (CB,DF,JN). At Toronto wintering Com Mergansers increased sharply — over 2½ times the previous high — with 1038 recorded on a Jan. 8 wild-fowl inventory (T.O.C.). This increase seems directly related to the development of warm water pools associated with large power plant cooling water outlets Inland or northerly records of diving ducks were from Peterborough, which had a Canvasback Jan. 28 (RDM *et al.*) and a Greater Scaup through February (m.ob.), Lake of Two Rivers, where there was a Hooded Merganser Dec. 4 (RT); and a Red-breasted Merganser at Cambridge Jan. 15 (GF,CAC). The six Lesser Scaups at Colpoy's Bay Jan. 19 (LR) would have been noteworthy farther south. Ottawa's Barrow's Goldeneye was again present throughout the period (m.ob.), and

another bird was reported from Owen Sound (*vide* GB) Another perennial rarity, Toronto's Harlequin Duck, was accepting handouts with the local Mallards throughout the period, and others were at Hamilton from Dec. 3 (KMCL), Lennox from Feb. 21 (RKE), and Peterborough Jan. 7 (MO,RDM), the second and first area records respectively for the latter two localities There were two King Eiders seen: at Presqu'île to Dec. 1 (R.Alison), and Kettle Pt., Dec. 14 (AR,DR).

HAWKS — A Turkey Vulture was seen on a road kill at Peterborough Feb. 19 (R.Carley). Thirteen Goshawk, 19 Sharp-shinned and 14 Cooper's Hawk sightings for the period seemed about average. Red-tailed Hawks continued to move at Hawk Cliff, Port Stanley, through December, and there were peaks of 100 Dec. 11 and 112 Dec. 17 (*vide* WJR). Wintering numbers were good along the L. Ontario shore: there were 50 on Wolfe I., and 45 from Napanee to Kingston in late December (*vide* RDW) and in the Toronto area, where good numbers of wintering Red-taileds are usual, there were approximately ten to every one Rough-legged Hawk seen (*vide* GB). By contrast, however, three on the Barrie CBC was a low number, suggesting that the more northerly birds had moved south. At Marathon, well north of the species' normal wintering range, one was seen Jan. 8 (NGE). Rough-legged Hawks were plentiful but it was not an exceptional flight year. The highest count was 162 on Wolfe I., Dec. 18 but heavy snow made later counting difficult and relatively few were present elsewhere in the Kingston area (*vide* RDW). The comparative Wolfe I. count for 1974-75, the last heavy flight year, was 195 Dec. 15. Rough-legged movement also continued in December, Hawk Cliff recording 86 Dec. 10-11 (WJR), and birds were moving in advance of a heavy storm at Presqu'île P.P., Jan. 1 (DM,JM,RDM) and moving W over the L. Ontario shore at Pickering Feb. 4 (CEG,JEG). One in Algonquin P.P., Dec. 15 provided the latest record there (RT). The winter Golden Eagle numbers were unprecedented, in keeping with the increasing sightings of this species at other seasons. There were "a few" in Algonquin P.P. as usual, feeding on wolf kills (*vide* RT) and in Cambridge a bird was thought to be feeding on deer killed by dogs, Dec. 18 (DP,CAC). Others were seen at Melbourne Dec. 24 (DMu), Port Royal Feb. 6 (CR *et al.*) and on Amherst I., where a bird seen from Jan. 1-8 was found dead with its feet, face and neck covered in porcupine quills, although there are no porcupines on Amherst (*vide* RDW)! Most interesting, however, were the seven birds seen moving at Hawk Cliff, with no less than six Dec. 11 (WJR). The five Bald Eagles included two adults seen over Manitoulin I., at eye-level from the duck-count flight Feb. 11 (CB,DF,JN). Wolfe Island's 23 Marsh Hawks Dec. 4 was a good count (K.F.N.) and an Ottawa bird, very rare in winter there, was seen Jan. 8 (SO,GMCG). Five Merlin reports included four from the south, an unusual number Two Gyrfalcons, one at Ottawa Dec. 25 (IJ,PJ) and the second at Toronto Jan. 22 (DFi, m.ob.), were usual but the exceptional predictability of the Toronto bird was not. Every evening it obliged birders from all over the east by returning to roost on a waterfront

warehouse, usually first picking a duck off over the frozen harbour for a bedtime snack.

PHEASANTS THROUGH GULLS — A Ring-necked Pheasant at Peterborough throughout the period (AE) was unusual for this locality. There was a scattering of shorebirds, mainly Com. Snipe which were north to Barrie Jan. 24 (CGH), but Hamilton reported a Killdeer to Dec. 11 (RC) and a Pectoral Sandpiper Dec. 4 (RF,AW), and a Ruddy Turnstone was at Toronto to Jan. 1 (m.ob.).

As usual white gulls turned up around the turn of the year, just too late for various CBCs. Their numbers were relatively low, the largest count being six Glaucous Gulls at Marathon Feb. 26 (NGE) Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen on the Niagara R., Dec. 3, and a Black-headed Gull the same day (HHA,MP,AW). Herring Gulls were relatively scarce, perhaps paralleling their decline as a breeding species on the lower Great Lakes. Probably no one mourns the trend, but decline is real nevertheless! The Province's first Ivory Gull since 1974 was seen off Amherst I., Dec. 9 (M.&G.Matthews).

DOVES, OWLS — Mourning Doves were again more common than ever before in winter. The highest single count was 300 at Maple Dec. 17 (R.Cubitt), and in Oxford County the 284 reported compared to 189 average over the past three years (BP). Even Barrie had 100, Jan. 1-8 (AM). Snowy Owls were few, mainly migrants at the beginning and end of the period, but six birds at Peterborough represented a minor invasion there (DCS). Hawk Owls were seen at Thunder Bay Feb. 26 (NH), Ottawa Dec. 26 (IJ,PJ) and Huntsville Dec. 11 (VH). A Barred Owl at Pickering from Dec. 26 (DEP,JL) was away from its normal breeding range At Thunder Bay five Great Gray Owls were seen in February, but the only other report was of a dead bird at Ottawa Feb. 26 (RJ). No great numbers of Long or Short-eared Owls were seen, although Long-eareds were widespread in their usual haunts. At least five Saw-whets in the Toronto area was an unusually large number for winter, and others were at Barrie Jan. 24 (*vide* CGH) and Wahnapiatae where one was found dead early in February (CW). For the third year in a row there was an unusually heavy Boreal Owl flight — unusually heavy in the context of early years. Flights of 10-15 birds occurred in 1954-5, 1962-3 and 1968-9, but there have been about nine reports in each of the last three years. Two of the Toronto birds were unusually predictable, and combined with the Great Cormorant and Gyrfalcon made the city a birding Mecca in February!

WOODPECKERS THROUGH LARKS — There were four Pileated Woodpeckers visiting a feeder in Bridgenorth, and reports of two more at Lakefield (R.Chenoweth,DCS). Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported e. to Burlington Jan. 6 (AW), and Peterborough recorded both a Red-headed Woodpecker Dec. 4 (RB) and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker throughout (*vide* DCS). The scattered Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker reports suggested fewer birds than in recent years. Kingston, with three, and Ottawa with

four birds yielded the most reports s. of the species' usual range. As so often happens, Ottawa was also the source of most of the Northern Three-toed reports and 25-30 birds were estimated for the period (*vide* SG,RAF). Others were seen at Peterborough, and Orilla on Feb. 4 & 19 (*vide* DCS,CJM). Outstanding among the exceptional numbers of Horned Larks were 100 at Whitney Jan 1 (E&HK) and 600 at Wolfe I., Dec. 8 (K.F.N.).

CROWS THROUGH WRENS — Gray Jays near Peterborough throughout the period are probably part of a southerly breeding population there (*vide* DCS). Others were seen at Owen Sound Dec. 8 and Colpoy's Bay Dec. 26 (*vide* GB). The two Black-billed Magpies of the winter were in MacGregor Twp., Thunder Bay, Feb. 18 (BW), and on the Atikokan CBC. The gradual spread of wintering Com. Crows N and E was emphasized this year by unusual numbers at Kingston (*vide* RDW), six at Marathon to Jan. 1 (NGE) and four wintering at Atikokan, where the first winter record was made only last year (SP). Common Ravens found the Atikokan dump a good source of food; early morning counts there recorded a high of 215 (DHE,TN).

Tufted Titmice were seen at Troy Dec. 18 and Jan. 2 (BD), Ancaster Feb. 10 (RC) and two at Branchton Jan 15 (DL). Bill Jarman also reported two from Melbourne in January and February, but noted that the species was in smaller numbers in the London area than 10 years ago, when the birds bred, although unfortunately it was not possible to obtain enough evidence of nesting to satisfy the requirements for Provincial nesting records. This can be a problem with cavity-nesting species. The White-breasted Nuthatch situation was difficult to assess following the heavy fall flight. There was a northerly bird in Virginiatown on Dec 18 (PWR) but all-time low numbers on the Barrie CBC seemed to point to an exodus from many areas. However, the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey, a project of Long Point Bird Observatory now in its second year, showed a 100% increase in this species (*vide* ED). Carolina Wrens showed no signs of recovery as there were none at Hamilton, and two at Oakville were the only ones reported.

MIMIDS THROUGH STARLINGS — The most northerly Mockingbird report was from the species' former Sudbury stronghold, where one was kept alive at a feeder from Dec. 9 on a diet of peanut butter and jam sandwiches (OZ)! Robins were much reduced in numbers from last winter, but birds were e. to Presqu'ile P P, Jan. 24 (RDM) and Kingston, with two Feb. 8-10 (AEB,FA). Varied Thrushes, however, were the focus of attention in this group, because more were recorded than ever before. In fact only some 19 birds have been seen in the Province since the first in 1962, with three in December 1972 the most in one period. This time there were nine records in all including the fall birds, and one report now documented was of a pair! Birds were seen e. to Ottawa and n. to Barrie, but most were in the Toronto area. Several stayed around feeders and were seen by most birders in the south of the Region, and one at Shanty Bay was finally found dead and is now with the Royal Ontario Museum. A very late Gray-cheeked Thrush was a Kingston Dec. 18 (FA,AH).

After the heavy fall flight of N. Shrikes there were good numbers at Ottawa with 30-40 in December and January, on the Barrie CBC and three were seen at Crozier (GIP); but on the whole the species became quite scarce in the new year. Bohemian Waxwings followed a familiar pattern, with flocks of up to 300 birds at Ottawa and possibly several thousand birds in the area in January and February (*vide* SG). By March large flocks were appearing in Peterborough (FH) but elsewhere only scattered small numbers were seen, and at Marathon there were none after Dec. 24 (NGE). The latter area had 30 Starlings throughout.

WARBLERS — Late warblers were an Orange-crowned at Hamilton Dec. 6 (AW) and a Magnolia at Oshawa Dec. 5 (KB). These were rather eclipsed by the **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Ottawa which finally vanished Dec. 6 (SG), and by an **Audubon's (Yellow-rumped) Warbler** at Port Hope Dec. 12-18 (m.ob) Both are very rare in the Province at any season.

S.A.

One of the most interesting ornithological events of the past year was by request not reported in the nesting season summary. It was the discovery of a singing ♂ **Kirtland's Warbler** at Petawawa in June (P.Aird). In the summer of 1916 the late Paul Harrington, who was stationed at Petawawa at the time, recorded singing Kirtland's Warblers as "not uncommon" among the jack pines of the artillery range there. The birds were not present the following year, and the A.O.U.'s neglect of the observation in its 1957 Check-list may reflect the amount of significance the record was given by the ornithological community of the day. But the nagging question has always remained: had Kirtland's ever nested at Petawawa, and were they there still? Last year Aird obtained permission from the Ministry of Defence to visit Petawawa, and in the course of three weeks succeeded in locating one singing male. This does indeed suggest that there has been, and indeed may still be, an "outlier" population of Kirtland's in this area. It might be worth noting that Aird, who is a forester with a keen interest in endangered species, feels that there are several areas in Ontario where the soil and floristic composition could be suitable for this species, and a program has now been developed to visit these areas in the coming year.

HOUSE SPARROWS, BLACKBIRDS — There were three House Sparrows at Whitney, where they are rare, Dec. 15 (RP). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen at Cambridge Jan. 1 (J.Ledingham) in the same location where one was seen last winter. A N Oriole at Orillia Nov. 26 (WZ) was late, and an even later bird was at Kingston Dec. 7 (EP). A Brewer's Blackbird was seen at Melbourne Jan. 27 (DMu). Northerly Brown-headed Cowbird sightings were 12 at Sudbury throughout (DF), but the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey recorded a 60% decrease from last year in the

first half of the winter, supporting the impression of blackbird scarcity (ED).

FINCHES, SPARROWS — Cardinals wintered again at Parry Sound (CAC), and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at Wiarton to Dec. 20 (JWJ). On Feb 26 a House Finch was located at Niagara on the Lake, and the next day four, and later six birds were located (PT,RR,AW, m.ob.). The birds were still present at the time of writing, and we face the prospect of the first Ontario breeding.

It was a big winter-finch year, with only Purple Finches absent or in very small numbers. Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins staged a moderate flight, with both species reducing in numbers as the winter wore on. Pine Grosbeaks were exceptionally abundant: heavy movements of this species have been recorded in three years since 1950, but the available details on the flights make comparison difficult. However, the past year's movement seemed to equal and perhaps exceed the large flights in 1965-6 and 1971-2. As usual in finch flights, the birds were commonest in the east, with flocks of up to 800 at Ottawa (SG) but they were present throughout, and the CBCs give a good picture of the flight: six counts recorded 200+ birds and 17 100+. There was some decline in numbers in the new year, and by late February the birds were thinning out considerably. Common Redpolls also moved in considerable numbers, but the flight was not exceptional for a good flight year, although numbers at feeders seemed unusual. There has been a series of poor redpoll years and this was the heaviest movement since 1972: the CBCs show ten counts of 300+, four 200+ and five with 100+ but in this case the December figures do not tell the full story, as the birds increased noticeably during February. As is also usual in redpoll movements Hoarries were mixed with the flocks, especially in February, with about 50 reports in all, and two birds of the *rostrata* race of the Common species were also reported, one described from Kettle Pt (AR) and one banded at Kingston (*vide* RDW). White-winged were the commoner of the two cross-bills, but neither species was seen in more than isolated flocks, widely scattered.

A Rufous-sided Towhee was at Peterborough to Jan. 7 (*vide* DCS) and a Tree Sparrow in Algonquin P.P., Dec 18 (DS, M. Pageot). Harris' Sparrows occurred at Melbourne Dec. 27 (DMu) and at Ottawa to Jan. 20 (A Munro, m.ob.). Ottawa also had a White-crowned Sparrow wintering (WM), but on the whole those sparrows which customarily winter in small numbers were scarce.

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NIAGARA — CHAMPLAIN REGION /Douglas P. Kibbe

This fall rain-sodden fields prevented many farmers from harvesting corn. These standing fields proved a godsend this winter for waterfowl, Turkeys, Mourning Doves and meadowlarks, which might otherwise by January have had their usual provisions buried beneath several feet of snow. Natural food supplies were generally rated only fair, except for the cone crop which was nearly uniformly poor.

Snow followed by two ice storms characterized the early portion of the season and sharply diminished the usual winter lingerers, a loss particularly well demonstrated by some of the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) returns. Snowfall was well above normal in January, as blizzards raged across the Region in rapid succession. February was the coldest in recent history with most areas never seeing the temperature above freezing. Despite these adversities observers managed to amass an amazing composite list of rarties, while bewailing the scarcity of usual winter visitants and late-lingerers.

LOONS TO WATERFOWL — Rare at any season, single Red-throated Loons were spotted at Rochester (G.O.S.) and Dunkirk, where up to four were present by late February (RS *et al.*). Red-necked Grebes were recorded from four locations only, all sightings in late January and February, presumably when freezing of the Great Lakes forced birds into open bays and rivers. Horned Grebes vacating ice-covered L. Erie Jan. 9-10 were met by an ice storm which forced them down on a broad front extending from extreme w New York to Pico Peak in Vermont. About fifty mistook Quaker L. for open water (SE); survivors were released on the Allegheny R. Necropsies of ice-coated casualties showed excellent body fat content, all apparently dying from multiple contusions and fractures associated with their crash landings (SE) A single Double-crested Cormorant at Rochester in early December (NH *et al.*) furnished the Region's only report. Considering the severity of the winter, a rash of Great Blue Heron sightings in Vermont the third week of January probably represented overzealous



the second consecutive winter local record. **Gyrfalcons** included two possibles in the e. half of the Region and a third gray-phase bird at Honeoye Falls Dec. 22 (J&HT, *vide* G.O.S.). An imm. Peregrine, very rare in winter, spent January near Greece (NH), and Merlins, also rare inland in winter, were found in three localities: Kendall, N.Y. (H&GB), Plainfield (MM) and Brattleboro, VT., the latter apparently a window kill (*vide* LM). American Kestrels set several local CBC records including 76 at Geneva, N.Y. By way of

migrants; however several were reportedly attempting to winter in c. New York (O.A.S., R.B.A., G.O.S.). Even more unusual were several lingering Black-crowned Night Herons, one through December near Ft. Plain in the Mohawk Valley (DA, U&HK) and three near Buffalo until Jan. 2 (DF *et al.*).

Whistling Swans loitered on Conesus L. (R.B.A.) and Cuba L. (AS) through December. A "Blue" Goose was present on Cayuga L. in mid-January (AG, DPK), while single Snows remained on the Allegheny R. throughout (SE) and at Burlington Jan. 30 - Feb. 12 (DH, m.ob., *vide* WE). The latter may have been Vermont's earliest arrival ever. A Brant at the same location Feb. 9 (DH, *vide* WE), for the second Vermont winter record in three years, was also exceptional. Scaup are normally considered among our hardest wintering waterfowl so a selective die-off of ♂ Greater in February on a small pool of open water at Irondequoit Bay Outlet is perplexing (RGS). **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were identified at Celoron (RS *et al.*), Robert Moses Power Dam (JVR) on the St. Lawrence (hereafter, R.M.P.D.), the Essex ferry landing, L. Champlain (MP, P&GR), and at Oswego Harbor, L. Ontario (MR). Harlequin Ducks appeared at only three locations; Niagara Falls (DF *et al.*), Dunkirk (RS *et al.*), and Greece (NH). A ♀ **Common Eider** carefully studied at Irondequoit Bay Jan. 5-6 (NM, m.ob.) and single Kings at the mouth of the Niagara R. (DF) and at Pillar Pt. (RW), plus up to four at Oswego Harbor (O.A.S.) round out the unusual waterfowl this winter.

HAWKS TO ALCIDS — Although Accipiter reports were well above previous winters, so was observer coverage and it is doubtful that any population increase was involved. Goshawks were present in modest numbers and Cooper's outnumbered Sharp-shinned by about a ratio of 4:3. Extremely rare in winter, Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from two locations, Hemlock L., Dec. 26 (*vide* G.O.S.) and Essex County mid-December through Jan. 2 (*vide* H.P.A.S.). Opinions regarding the Rough-legged Hawk flight varied but several observers termed it a banner year. A dozen Bald Eagle reports included six wintering along the St. Lawrence R. (GS). An unlucky thirteenth was shot at Oneida L. (*vide* LC). Stray Ospreys were found at Hamlin Dec. 19 (NH, *vide* G.O.S.) and Ithaca Feb. 11 (SS, *vide* DM), the latter

comparison, seven on Bennington's CBC set a new Vermont record, clearly reflecting differences within the Region in habitat and weather severity. All Gray Partridge sightings were from the Watertown and Massena areas. Only a handful of Killdeer and Com Snipe attempted to overwinter. The only other shorebirds noted this season were a half dozen Dunlin at Braddock Bay in early December (G.O.S.).

Winter inevitably produces a deluge of rare Larid reports and this year was no exception. A Parasitic Jaeger was at Buffalo Harbor Dec. 1 (DF). Although regularly recorded on the Great Lakes in the fall, this represented a record late date for the Region. An **Ivory Gull** apparently spent a month at R.M.P.D. Sighted Dec. 8 & Jan. 13 (JVR), it eluded observers in the interim. White-winged gulls put in modest showings, the only notable occurrences being individuals of Kumlien's race of the Iceland Gull at Irondequoit Bay (CP, WL) and Niagara Falls (HA, DF *et al.*). Other rarities included a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Niagara Falls in early December (HA, DF *et al.*), for the second consecutive year there, and an imm. Black-legged Kittiwake at R.M.P.D. throughout December (JVR, m.ob.).

The W to E migration pattern of Little Gulls through the Region was exceptionally well documented this season. Buffalo's last report was of one Dec. 4 (DF *et al.*); they peaked at 13 near Rochester the same day (G.O.S.), declining to one bird by the end of the month; meanwhile, two appeared at Westport, N.Y., Dec. 30 and remained through Jan. 2 (H.P.A.S.). The latter two birds represent only the second reported sighting from L. Champlain. Westport's rarest waterbird this season, however, was a **Black Guillemot** present Jan. 7-10, when the bay froze (H.M.B.C., GC, MP). This is the first record for upstate New York although the second for L. Champlain.

OWLS TO FLYCATCHERS — Screech Owls continued to be found regularly in the L. Champlain valley. Five set a state record on the Burlington CBC and they were reported from six other valley locations. They were, as usual, abundant in the w. portion of the Region. Snowy Owls remained scarce. A **Hawk Owl** spotted near Ithaca Feb. 18 (DG, *vide* DM) vied for rarest raptor of the season with Rochester's **Boreal Owl** seen Feb. 4 & 6 (CP, WL, m.ob.); and a **Great**

Gray Owl which appeared near Plattsburg Jan. 24 (HL, *fide* PW) and [same bird?] near Essex, N.Y., Jan. 28 (BI&RB). Despite fervent searching all three eluded subsequent seekers. Only four Long-eared Owls were sighted and the usual concentration of 50 Short-eared Owls along Avon's Nations Rd. dispersed in January, apparently owing to snow accumulation. No Long-eared and only a single Short-eared report came from Vermont.

S.A.

Each winter a number of reports are received of owls frequenting the vicinity of feeders, even during daylight hours. This year an unusually large number of Barred and Saw-whet Owls was reported at feeders as deep snow apparently made foraging difficult in woodland areas. Concern is frequently expressed regarding the impact of these raptors on other birds using the feeder. Although there is no doubt that small passerines are occasionally taken, the attraction of feeder areas to nocturnal raptors is generated in great part by the abundance of small mammals in these areas. Most feeders, in addition to being used by diurnal red and gray squirrels, are diners for flying squirrels and a myriad of small rodents whose presence is rarely suspected. Feeder watchers who heighten their observation pleasure by installing dim red lights and by carefully searching conifers and nesting boxes in the vicinity of their feeders may be rewarded with views of previously undetected owls.

Nations Road led all areas with 19 Red-headed Woodpeckers (RC,WS). Two unusual sightings were of immatures at Massena, N.Y. (JVR), and E. Thetford, Vt. (WE). Only three wintering Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported. Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers were found at Chubb R. Swamp and Island Pond and in a pine plantation at Camp Dittmers near Phelps, N.Y., Dec. 31 (RBr,P&MT). An E. Phoebe arrived Feb. 7 at Webster, N.Y. (PZ), while one lingered until Dec. 31 in Plainfield, Vt., an extraordinary location for a species only recorded in that state on four past CBCs. Probably the season's greatest rarity was an emaciated Say's Phoebe found Dec 13 near Ithaca and which subsequently died; *Cornell Univ. (*fide* DM). There are only four previous New York State sight records all except one from Long Island, and a single specimen.

CORVIDS TO THRUSHES — Data recently received indicated that Adirondack Com. Ravens were fledging 4-5 young/nest this past year (PB). Given recent population increases in the Adirondack and Green Mts., this may be an increase over reproductive rates of past decades. Unfortunately comparable historical data are lacking. A Com. Raven over Conn. Hill, c. New York (BT, *fide* DM) was apparently a straggler from the Schuyler County population, but nesting should be watched for. Boreal Chickadees wintered in Peru, Vt. (LW, *fide* WN) and Trumansburg, N.Y. (ND, *fide*

DM). Red-breasted Nuthatches staged a fair showing in w. New York, 200 at Hamlin Beach Jan. 2 (SL) being the best tally, but were down markedly from last year's record numbers in e. areas. Still suffering from last winter, Winter Wrens were unreported. Mockingbird numbers were still low in c. New York, but they set record highs on at least two Vermont CBCs. Only three Gray Catbirds and two Brown Thrashers were noted, and apparently none survived the winter Robin, Hermit Thrush, and E. Bluebird numbers were also below normal. In addition to the three reported this fall, two **Varied Thrushes** appeared in Aurora in December (DF,m.ob.). The bird in Rochester's Durand-Eastman Park, the only one reported throughout the period, gave unsuccessful Boreal Owl searchers some solace.

KINGLETS THROUGH ICTERIDS — Golden-crowned Kinglet continued to be scarce and Ruby-crowned, always rare, was sighted only twice. An early Water Pipit arrived Feb. 12 at Honeoye Falls (J&AF *et al.*) and continued through Feb. 28. Bohemian Waxwings staged a major invasion in the n. portion of the Region with several flocks numbering in the 100s in the St. Lawrence R. and L. Champlain valleys. Surprisingly, very few Cedar Waxwings were noted there, although they were present in normal numbers elsewhere. Northern Shrikes also launched an invasion of staggering proportions with over 150 reported excluding CBCs. Considering the drastic decline in breeding Loggerhead Shrikes, a Jan. 9 sighting at Nine Mile Pt., on L. Ontario (RGS) is astonishing; excellent details accompanied the report. Gates, N.Y., hosted a half million Starlings in December (JS). A ♂ **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found at Chili and a pair appeared in Irondequoit (*fide* RGS). There are only five previous winter records. A N. Oriole in Springfield Dec. 18 may have provided only the fifth winter record for Vermont in 30 years.

FRINGILLIDS — Yearly variation in the distribution and abundance of winter finches is one of the most fascinating aspects of the season. Unfortunately it remains a poorly understood phenomenon, and will, it appears, remain so until a sufficient number of banded bird returns are accumulated and analyzed to determine what the yearly movement patterns actually are. Banding at feeders can be incredibly productive, both in numbers of birds handled and data generated from band recoveries.

Evening Grosbeaks were remarkably sparse after a good early fall flight which apparently chose to pass farther s., and Purple Finches were virtually nonexistent in all but extreme w. New York. They were replaced with a massive flight of Pine Grosbeaks which spread from n.e. areas to cover the entire Region by February. A **European Goldfinch** present throughout February at a Chili Center feeder with Am. Goldfinches (TB, m.ob.) was probably an escapee or release House Finches, now firmly entrenched in c. New York (94 on the Ithaca CBC alone), wintered in more than a dozen localities. It is unfortunate that no one has, as yet, undertaken a comprehensive study of the dynamics of this species' increase within the Region. The House

Finch has many attributes which could facilitate intensive marking studies (e.g., sociability, trapability, affinity for urban areas) and could undoubtedly keep a bevy of graduate students busy for years.

Redpoll was the only fringillid besides Pine Grosbeak making a strong showing this winter. Commons were widespread and abundant, with several reports of 5-700 birds in January and February (G.O.S., R.B.A.). They were accompanied by an extraordinary number of Hoary Redpolls. At least nine Hoaries were reported, most with convincing photographs and/or descriptions. This nearly equals the total number of currently-accepted records for New York State and reflected a movement of unprecedented magnitude. Both Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches were fairly scarce in the e. half of the Region although common to abundant in w. areas. Red Crossbills continued to be rare while White-wingeds put in modest showings with about 30 widely-distributed sightings.

Solitary reports of a Rufous-sided Towhee in Rochester (R.B.A.); Savannah Sparrow in Ithaca (WD, *vide* DM); and an "Oregon" Junco in Webster (A&BK) were received. Both juncos and Tree Sparrows were scarcer than normal, the latter termed "virtually absent" in some areas. Up to two Chipping Sparrows were present in Dryden until Jan. 18 (*vide* DM) and several Field Sparrows lingered well into or through the period, all in w. New York except for a single in Ferrisburg in mid-December. Over 20 laggard White-crowned Sparrows were noted, many apparently surviving through the period. Fox and Swamp Sparrows were reported only three times each. Song Sparrows appeared to have suffered considerable mortality during two mid-winter ice storms. It is probably true that borderline freezing conditions accompanied by rain exact a far greater toll of birds than does severe cold and snow. Lapland Longspurs appeared in good numbers throughout, with flocks of up to 300 in the Rochester area (RD) and a tally of 43 at Ferrisburg, the latter a Vermont record. Flocks of Snow Buntings were also widespread and reached incredible proportions along the Ontario lakeplains near Rochester with numerous reports of massive flocks of 2-5000 birds (R B A., G.O.S.).

ERRATUM — AB 31(6):1138 should read "Am. Redstart and Com. Yellowthroat were the most commonly recorded species, . . . Thirteen additional species recorded each formed less than one percent of the total. Most frequently reported from the New York lakeplains, Hooded Warblers proved surprisingly common at Letchworth S.P., . . ."

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APPALACHIAN REGION /George A. Hall

The following table was inadvertently omitted from the Fall Migration Report, 1977.

Table 1. Hawk Migration, Fall, 1977

	Days		Br.-wg		
	Obs.	Total Sh.	-sh.	Br.-wg.	High
Tuscarora Mt. Pa. (CG)	88	11,382	1285	5657	
Hooverville, Pa. (RSa)	42	379	22	270	58(9/9)
Beam Rocks, Pa. (RCL)	11	80	10	34	20(9/12)
Peters Mt., W.Va. (GH)	10	6256	91	6060	1536 (9/25)
Mendota Tower, Tenn. (TF)	25	16,856	319	10,735	6888 (9/23)
Kyle's Ford, Tenn. (TF)	14			4772	2577 (9/23)
Turkey Mt., Va. (TF)	26			6028	
Blue Ridge, Asheville, N.C. (RR)					1015 (9/23)

For the second year in a row the Region experienced a rigorous winter. December was generally milder than normal and except for in the north, there was little snowfall. This situation changed drastically in January, which was the snowiest on record at most weather stations. Temperatures were colder than normal but not usually as cold as in 1977. At Pittsburgh, February was much drier than usual but also much colder than normal. Most stations reported the coldest February on record. Except in the far south, all of the precipitation during January and February came as snowfall. There were no warm spells in the period and so the snow cover remained throughout the period. As far south as southern Virginia the land remained snow-covered for over two months and most of the water bodies were frozen.

Despite the prolonged cold weather there were few reports of bird mortality. Perhaps those species that suffer most from bad weather had already been nearly eliminated during the winter of 1976-77. Those species that had suffered heavy losses a year ago, e.g. Carolina

and Winter Wrens, the kinglets, and Screech Owl remained in low numbers, and such comebacks as they had made during the breeding season were probably negated.

The mild December weather had produced some very successful Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) with a number reporting record high counts of individuals if not of species; but, after the bad weather set in the numbers of both species and individuals dropped. Indeed weather and road conditions were so poor that many observers were limited to home feeders. But even with all the negatives it was an interesting season. Perhaps most remarkable was that many of the so-called northern invaders (and there were many) penetrated much farther south in much larger numbers than usual.

Except for a few waterfowl and for scattered species in the south there was little sign of northbound migration by the end of February. Normally a number of species have made their appearance by the last week of February but few were seen this year. The Appalachian Region is not usually noted for the appearance of raptors, but this year there were three, two of which were almost unique for North America, as indicated below.

LOONS THROUGH STORKS — A Red-throated Loon was seen at State College, Pa., in early December (MW) and one was found on the CBC, Dec. 18 near Luray, Va. (DC). A Red-necked Grebe was near Waynesboro, Va., Feb. 24 (BC) and another was sighted at Watauga L., Tenn., Feb. 27-28 (LRH *et al.*). A most unusual catastrophe occurred during a blizzard Jan. 9-11 when large numbers, probably hundreds, of Horned Grebes were forced down in a wide area stretching from about Erie, Pa. to Olean, N.Y., and s. at least to Warren, Pa. At Warren at least 50 were picked up and returned to open water. This was also done elsewhere but the number that perished must have been high (WH).

There were more than the usual number of Great Blue Herons reported on CBCs and many of these remained through the coldest weather wherever there was open water. A Green Heron Dec. 17 on the Dalton, Ga., CBC (AH) was noteworthy as were Am. Bitterns at Youngstown, O., Dec. 17 (WB) and at Daleville, Va., Dec. 18-26 (BK *et al.*). Perhaps the most unusual sighting of the season was that of three **Wood Storks** flying over the French Broad R., sighted by U S. Park Service personnel from their seventh floor office in downtown Asheville, N.C. (RBr).

WATERFOWL — The record of the season was the **Lesser White-fronted Goose** which appeared at North Park, Allegheny Co., Pa., in late November and spent the winter there with a flock of Canada Geese. This bird was observed by literally hundreds of birders, and the full details of this, apparently the second North American record, will be reported elsewhere. Snow Geese were reported in late December from Pymatuning L., Pa. (RFL) and from Erie County, Pa. (DS). Seven Brant on Deep Creek L., Md., Dec. 8 made a first county record, and one of the few from the Allegheny Highlands (FP). Other unusual waterfowl included a Eur. Wigeon in Clarke County, Va., Feb. 21 (RSi) and a Harlequin Duck at Presque Isle, Pa.,

Jan. 4-8 (DS). In the past all reports of any species of scoter from this Region have been noteworthy, but all three species seem to be changing their migratory routes and are being reported yearly. This year White-winged Scoters were reported from Knox County, Tenn., Dec. 18 (JH), Bath County, Va., Feb. 11-23 (KF), and Botetourt County, Va., Feb. 19 (JP); Surf Scoters were found at Presque Isle, Pa., Dec. 18 (DS) and three in Wise County, Va., Dec. 12 provided the first local record (RP); a Black Scoter was listed on the Presque Isle CBC, Dec. 18 (DS). The commoner species of waterfowl went almost unreported owing to widespread lack of open water. Most CBCs showed good numbers of waterfowl, but these largely disappeared in early January. However northbound ducks were reported in late February from those places fortunate enough to have ice-free water.

HAWKS AND EAGLES — It was a great season for raptor reports but it is not possible to tell much about population trends. The prolonged snow cover apparently made hunting difficult and as in no recent winter hawks were attracted to feeding stations. Numerous reporters commented on Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and even some of the Buteos regularly visiting backyard feeders to prey on small birds there. This resulted in many more reports of Cooper's Hawk than in any recent season, but it is unlikely that such reports reflect any real population increase. The more common raptors were joined in a number of places by Goshawks. There were about a dozen reports from various places in w. Pennsylvania and they were seen as far s. as Oakland, Md. (FP), and Elizabethton, Tenn. (GE).

Rough-legged Hawks normally do not come much farther s. than n.w. Pennsylvania, but this year they were reported, often in numbers, throughout the Region as far south as s. Virginia with one record from Spartanburg, S.C. (MP). Bald Eagles reported were: three wintering at Warren, Pa. (WH), four adults at Pymatuning L., Dec. 18, one at Conneaut, Ohio, Feb. 18 (RFL), one found dead at Martinsburg, W Va (CM), at Rockingham County, Va., Jan. 4 (R.B.C.), in Botetourt County, Va., Jan. 4-18 (BK,NM,MPu), at Roan Mt., Tenn., Jan. 2 (ES,RL), Boone L., Tenn., Feb. 4 & 9 (RK,DL,HD,SG), as well as the more usual reports from Norris L., Tenn. (JBO). Golden Eagles were found at Pymatuning L., Pa., in January and early February (SF,RFL), two reports came from Lock Haven, Pa. (PS), Pendleton County, W.Va., in December, and Bluestone S.P., W.Va. (*vide* GP), three at Roan Mt., Tenn., Feb. 15 (GE,HF), and an injured bird rescued in Pisgah N.F., N.C. (*vide* RR).

In the n. the usual number of roadside Am. Kestrels declined during the season but they were reported numerous to the s. One can presume, then, that the decline was an exodus rather than owing to serious mortality. A Peregrine was reported on the State College, Pa., CBC (ML) and one was seen near Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 4 (KF).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS — There were mixed reports as to the possible mortality of grouse and turkey owing to weather, and definitive answers will

come only after some spring counts. In w. Pennsylvania pheasants were at the lowest numbers in 20 years on the CBC (PH), but at Lock Haven, Pa., Bobwhite were reported on the CBC for the first time (PS).

CRANES, SNIPE AND GULLS — Five Sandhill Cranes at Dalton, Ga., Feb. 28 (EPW) were somewhat early. There were more reports than usual of wintering Com Snipe: Latrobe, Pa., Dec. 27 (JMC), Washington County, Pa. (PH), Cambridge Springs, Pa., Feb. 12 (JGS), Salona, Pa., Feb. 23 (PS), Garrett County, Md. CBC (FP), Harrisonburg, Va., all season (R.B.C.), and Swannanoa, N.C., Jan. 31 (GM).

An estimated 110,000 gulls (record high) were present at Erie in early December. This included 300± Great Black-backed, 9400± Herrings, 94,000± Ring-billed and 6000± Bonaparte's, as well as one Glaucous, one or two Icelands, and one Little Gull (DS). About 1000 Bonaparte's Gulls were at Pymatuning L., Dec. 4, and one at State College, Pa., Jan. 3 provided the first winter record there (MW).

DOVES, PARAKEETS, AND OWLS — Mourning Dove populations are booming in this area with a record high of 194 listed on the Clarksville, Pa. CBC (RB) and 506 on the Dalton, Ga. CBC (AH) being typical. Very large numbers of doves were reported at some feeders, *i.e.*, 52 daily at East Liverpool, O. (NL), but these may have represented atypical concentrations rather than increased populations. A Monk Parakeet was present at Wintersville, O., for some time during December (CB).

Screech Owls suffered heavy mortality last winter and had not recovered. At Wheeling, W. Va., an organized Screech Owl census turned up only 11 birds whereas the same census in December 1976 counted 46 (GP). There were four reports of Snowy Owls: Little Hocking, O., Jan. 9 (RPu), Garrett County, Md., January (*fide* FP), Warren, Pa., early February (TM), and Waterford, Pa., late February (SR). The Short-eared Owl is added to the list of species that came farther s. than is normal with reports from Lock Haven, Pa. (CH), State College, Pa. (MW), L. Arthur, Pa. (MD), Ligonier, Pa. (AS), Morgantown (RSm), Washington County, O. (first local record — JS), Botetourt County, Va. (TW), and Knox County, Tenn. (PP). A Long-eared Owl was found dead at Marietta, O., Feb. 8 (JS) and one was seen at Erie Feb. 17 (BG). This species is rarely reported in this Region.

WOODPECKERS AND FLYCATCHERS — More Com Flickers were present during the CBC period than is usual, but no information is available on how they fared later in the winter. The Hairy Woodpecker has been in low numbers for several years, but many observers felt that it was more numerous this winter. The Red-bellied Woodpecker continued to expand northward with two on the Lock Haven CBC (PS), two present in Erie County, Pa. (JHS,JB), and one at Meadville, Pa. (RFL). Nine Red-headed Woodpeckers on the Dalton, Ga. CBC made the highest count in 11 years (AH).

At Gatlinburg, Tenn., only one E. Phoebe was listed

on the CBC compared with 15 last year, suggesting mortality last winter (JBO).

CORVIDS, TITMICE AND NUTHATCHES — Blue Jays apparently went S in greater-than-usual numbers as witnessed by the 445 on the Dalton, Ga. CBC, twice the normal number (AH). The Com Raven continued to be observed in places in w. Pennsylvania where it was unknown a short time ago.

Reports of Black-capped Chickadees were mixed. The 1220 listed on the Pittsburgh CBC was a record high (PH), but nearby at Powdermill Nature Reserve they were in lower-than-normal numbers (RCL). Two Black-capped were seen on Roan Mt., Tenn., at the fairly low elevation of 5500 ft, Feb. 17 (GE).

In n. West Virginia the White-breasted Nuthatch continued in good numbers after some years of low populations (GAH). There was no major invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatch and only a few scattered records except in the s. where it was numerous. Brown-headed Nuthatches were found in Henderson County, N.C., for the first county record (GK) and 16 were listed on the Dalton, Ga. CBC compared with 12 a year ago (AH).

WRENS, THRASHERS AND THRUSHES — The CBC data vividly pointed up the catastrophic decline of the Carolina Wren during last winter in the n. part of the Region. At Clarksville, Pa., only four were listed compared with 25 in 1976 (RB), while at Pittsburgh the figures were 29 for 1977 compared with a peak year of 458 in 1974 (PH). Elsewhere this species ranged from scarce to absent. On the other hand at Swannanoa, N.C., 64 Carolina Wrens were listed Dec. 31, which was lower than the years before 1977 but still indicated some recovery from winter 1976-77 lows. At most places the scarcity of the species in December makes it very difficult to assess any additional mortality during the hard winter this year. Winter Wrens were also in greatly reduced numbers everywhere. A Gray Catbird on the Buncombe County CBC was noteworthy (JHa). There were four reports of Brown Thrashers during the period in the Pittsburgh area (PH). Mockingbirds were present at Erie throughout the period (DS) and were seen at Warren, Pa., Jan. 17 (WH). The first regional record for **Varied Thrush** occurred last year and this year there were two: one at Caledonia S.P., Pa., near Chambersburg Jan. 22 and later, and one at Monterey, Va., from mid-December on. Both of these birds attracted birders from many places in the East.

KINGLETS, WAXWINGS AND SHRIKES — Golden-crowned Kinglets suffered heavy mortality last winter and this was reflected in the general scarcity this year. Reporters were unanimous in considering them in very low numbers. At Kingport, Tenn., only 13 were listed on the CBC (TF), and this area should be in the very heart of their winter range. Ruby-crowned Kinglets never winter in great numbers here but this species also was in reduced numbers. No large flocks of Cedar Waxwings were reported this year, and almost the only northern "invasion" species that was not reported at all was the Bohemian Waxwing.

Northern Shrikes were reported from Warren, Pa., Jan. 8 (WH); Erie, Pa., five sightings during the season (DS); Somerset County, Pa. (RSa); and as far s. as Rockingham County, Va., Feb. 18 (R.B.C.).

PIPITS, STARLINGS AND VIREOS — Water Pipits at Luray, Va., Jan. 22 were most unusual (DC), but those seen at Fayetteville, Pa., Feb. 11 may have represented the start of the N migration (CG). It is interesting to note that the 2822 Starlings listed on the Pittsburgh CBC constituted a 13-year low (PH). Solitary Vireos were reported on CBCs from Youngstown, O. (WB), Harrisonburg, Va. (R.B.C.) and Elizabethton, Tenn. (GE), as well as in Botetourt County, Va., Dec. 17 (JO). At this latter location they have wintered for several years.

WARBLERS AND BLACKBIRDS — Despite the bad winter Yellow-rumped Warblers wintered in about normal numbers, or even in unusually high numbers as at Shenandoah N.P. (DC). A Com. Yellowthroat was found in Botetourt County, Va., Dec. 18 (JP). A N. Oriole was at Warren, Pa., as late as Dec. 9 (WH) and another was coming to a feeder in Mt. Lebanon, Pa., in early December (PH). At Wise, Va., a large blackbird roost showed increased numbers in late January (RP) indicating probable movement from the n. Red-winged Blackbirds, E. Meadowlarks, and Com. Grackles had not generally arrived by late February, as is normal.

FINCHES — It certainly was a "finch winter" and this entire account could have been devoted to detailing the "winter finch" invasion but fortunately some general summaries are possible. Evening Grosbeaks were extremely common in December but after January 1, distribution was spotty with some locations reporting large numbers and others having few. They reached all parts of the Region but the flight was not as heavy as in some recent years. American Goldfinches and Pine Siskins were extremely abundant almost everywhere. The increased use of thistle-seed feeders has served to attract these two species in numbers. Purple Finches were abundant in the s. but much less common to the n. The House Finch had now reached all parts of the Region except possibly n. Georgia. In the e. part of the Region some large concentrations were reported at feeders. However, the real "finch-of-the-year" was Com. Redpoll. In what may have been the heaviest flight of this species in modern times, it was found in numbers as far s. as Virginia and Roan Mt., Tenn. The numbers reported were not as large as along the e. seaboard but e. of the Alleghenies they were numerous. West of the mountains the numbers were lower. Along with Com. Redpolls came a few Hoary Redpolls which were reported from Lock Haven, Pa., Dec. 31 (PS), Hagerstown, Md., Feb. 20 (KG), and Winchester, Va., Feb. 27 (RSi). There were 12 scattered reports of small flocks of White-winged Crossbills. Most of these were from w. Pennsylvania, but they were seen as far s. as Jackson County, Ky. (PA), Roan Mt., Tenn. (GE) and Strasburg, Va. Red Crossbills were reported only from Charleston, W. Va., in December (ASH), Shenandoah Mt., Va., Feb.

21 (R.B.C.) and Watauga L., Tenn. (GE).

Tree Sparrows were scarce in the n. part of the Region but were correspondingly numerous in s. Virginia and e. Tennessee where they normally are scarce or absent. White-throated Sparrows continued to winter farther n. in larger numbers, and there were a few more scattered reports of wintering White-crowned Sparrows than is usual.

Snow Buntings are usually found only in n.w. Pennsylvania but this year they too came S in numbers. The farthest penetration southward was in the Great Valley as far as Waynesboro, Va. (RS). To the w. they were reported as far s. as Charleston., W. Va. (GH,NG). The buntings were joined in many cases by Lapland Longspurs, normally a rather uncommon species. These were found as far s. as New Market, Va. (R.B.C.) and in the northern panhandle of West Virginia.

There were a number of unusual reports, unusual even in this extraordinary season. The best fringillid record for this or any recent year was a **Brambling** which showed up in Allegheny County, Pa., Feb. 2 and remained to the end of the month (m.ob.). There have been only a handful of North American records outside of Alaska, but of course this one, and the earlier ones, may have been escapees. Other unusual records were of a Dickcissel at Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 19 (R.B.C.) and most remarkably of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks from Youngsville, Pa. (WH), Cumberland, Md., banded Dec. 17 (KH), Harrisonburg, Va., Jan. 15 (R.B.C.), and Knox County, Tenn., in late February (JBO). Pine Grosbeaks were reported only from State College, Pa., Dec. 19 (DP), Presque Isle, Pa., Dec. 18 (BG), and Shenandoah Mt., Va., Feb. 18 (R.B.C.). A Harris' Sparrow was at Lexington, Va., Jan. 22 (*vide* KF).

CORRIGENDUM. *Am. Birds* 31:1139, under **RAPTORS**. The fifth sentence should read "In the Warren, Pa., area, however, Red-shouldered Hawks were more common than usual (WH). Near Youngstown, O., four Red-shouldered Hawk nests fledged 14 young and two Red-tailed Hawk nests fledged five young (WB)."

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WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

/Kim Eckert

After the infamous winter of 1976-77, the last thing we needed to hear was a long-range weather forecast predicting another winter almost as cold and with more snow. But with the same uncanny and unfortunate accuracy that accompanied predictions of our recent droughts, those weathermen came through again this winter. Except for a brief but substantial thaw in mid-December, temperatures throughout the



season in Minnesota and Wisconsin were consistently below normal. Michigan had more seasonable temperatures in December and February. As expected, January was the coldest month, and, while without the extreme cold of last year, it was consistently below average nonetheless and was not tempered by a warm February as was the case in 1977. And, with the exception of northern Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota, it was certainly snowier than usual. Michigan was especially hard-hit, most notably on January 24-27 when a blizzard paralyzed much of the state. Several passerines apparently did not survive this storm which also seemed to force more hawks than usual to bird feeders. But Minnesota and Wisconsin escaped the brunt of this and other storms which generally went farther south and east of the Region. Still, there was enough snow to contribute to late March flooding in parts of western Minnesota. It is doubtful if all this weather had much to do with the two main ornithological events of this winter which are described in full

below: the spectacular influx of Great Gray and Boreal Owls into northern Minnesota, and the widespread invasion of winter finches throughout the Region.

LOONS THROUGH SWANS — Late lingering Com. Loons were found in Wisconsin until Dec. 4 at Madison and during the Door County Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) count week, while in Michigan they were spotted on the St. Clair R., Dec. 16, at L. St. Clair Dec. 21, and on the Sault Ste. Marie CBC. Even more interesting was the Red-throated Loon lingering at the n. end of L. Michigan for the Petoskey CBC Wintering Red-necked Grebes were confined to Michigan on the Port Huron CBC, at Metropolitan Beach on L. St. Clair Jan. 16-23, in Detroit Jan. 19, and at the Monroe power plant Feb. 11 (AR). Horned Grebes in Benzie County, Mich., Jan. 1 were quite late (AM), and at Knife River, Minn., Jan. 21 (m.ob.), while Pied-billed Grebes lingered in Michigan until Jan. 7 on the St. Clair R., and at Black Dog L., Minn., into February. But most interesting, in spite of sub-normal temperatures, was the **Western Grebe** which overwintered at Ortonville, Minn., providing the first winter record for that state (m.ob.). As usual, a few Great Blue Herons were found December and into early January, and a noteworthy concentration of 35 was still at the Monroe, Mich., power plant Jan. 22 (AR). Black-crowned Night Herons wintered only in Michigan at Gibraltar and the Erie marshes along L. Erie. Mute Swans wandered as far as St. Clair and Wayne Cos., in s.e. Michigan and across L. Michigan to three Wisconsin CBCs, while a few Whistling Swans lingered to late December for two Minnesota and five Wisconsin CBCs

DUCKS — High numbers of ducks were confined to Michigan which had relatively normal December temperatures, while very cold late fall conditions in Minnesota and Wisconsin discouraged less hardy waterfowl from overwintering. Gadwalls fared better than usual, with sightings until Jan. 2 at Fergus Falls in n. Minnesota, a peak of 221 on the Madison CBC and overwintering birds in Dane and Marquette Cos., Wis., and records came from no less than five Michigan locations. No wintering Am. Wigeon could be found in Minnesota, only two Wisconsin CBCs had them, but they were found at five locations in Michigan. A Blue-winged Teal Jan. 28 at Detroit was unusual, even for Michigan (AR). Wood Ducks did well in all three states, but Redhead numbers were up only in Michigan as evidenced by the concentration of 3000 at Harsen's I., L. St. Clair, Jan. 7 (AR). Canvasbacks were also virtually absent in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but they again did well in s.e. Michigan with a peak of 1000 at Detroit Dec. 7 (AR). Midwinter Buffleheads are unusual in Minnesota, but this year one overwintered at Black Dog L., another stayed until Jan. 27 at Rochester, and two were in Duluth until Feb. 4 (m.ob.)

More Harlequin Ducks than usual occurred: up to four were in Duluth throughout December (KE); an imm. male at the French R., near Duluth was present Jan. 21-29 (m.ob.); three were spotted near Racine, Wis., Dec. 19-21 (LoE *et al.*), and another imm. male overwintered at Sault Ste. Marie (D. Rocheleau). For the fifth consecutive winter the **King Eider** was

recorded from Michigan; an imm. male was recorded on the Port Huron CBC, Dec. 18 and a female was at this same location Jan. 17 – Feb. 11 (AR,DBe). Three White-winged Scoters in Kewaunee County, Wis., Feb. 4 were interesting (RKO); as were Surf Scoters near Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 29 and Port Huron Jan. 29 (AR). Black Scoters were noted at three Wisconsin locations on L. Michigan (BC,NC,LoE) and in Benzie County, Mich., Dec. 17 (AM). A Hooded Merganser x Com. Goldeneye hybrid was described from Detroit Jan. 3-16 (AR).

RAPTORS — Turkey Vultures were unusual in Dane County, Wis., Dec. 10 (S&PT) and in Detroit the same date (AR *et al.*). Goshawks and Cooper's Hawks were reported in normal numbers, but there were more Sharp-shinned than usual, especially in n. Minnesota and s.e. Michigan where they are normally rare. In s.e. Michigan Red-tailed Hawks seemed more common than usual, with some moving into urban Detroit after the late January blizzard, while in Minnesota Rough-legged numbers were up, including in the Sax-Zim-Meadowlands area, St. Louis County where 39 were concentrated Dec. 7 (KE). The best hawk of this season was unquestionably the **Ferruginous Hawk** carefully studied in Columbia County, Wis., on the unlikely date of Feb. 17 (RaH), which represented the eighth state record. Also unexpected were Golden Eagles in Buffalo County, Wis., Dec. 3 (RaH), Ashland County Jan. 22 (SR,DT *et al.*), and also on the Berrien Springs, Mich. CBC. Always exciting, if not unusual, is the Gyrfalcon in this Region, and this winter no fewer than six were present: three Wisconsin CBCs listed this species (though dates, locations and descriptions have not been submitted), one was adequately documented from Eden Prairie, Minn., Dec. 12 (VL), and two were in Duluth Feb. 6 (found poisoned; see Rock Dove below) & 8 (M. Carr). A Merlin in Sherburne County, Minn., Jan. 2 was most unusual (SM) as was another overwintering in Benzie County, Mich. (AM).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS THROUGH DOVES — Spruce Grouse occurred in n. Minnesota near Itasca S P., at Voyageurs N.P., and near Babbitt. Greater Prairie Chickens found at Tamarac N.W.R., and in Stevens County, Minn., in early December indicated this species is partially migratory. Bobwhites continued to barely persist in extreme s. Minnesota, with a covey of 12 found in Houston County Jan. 6. Gray Partridge continued to do well in Minnesota as evidenced by a survey in Wilkin County that tallied no fewer than 866 birds in 111 coveys (S. Musielewicz). Virginia Rails were recorded twice in Wisconsin, most notably at Madison as late as Jan. 22 (TdB), and twice in Oakland County, Mich. Only a few Glaucous Gulls were found on Lakes Superior and Michigan, but there were several seen in s.e. Michigan between Port Huron and Monroe County (AR). In Minnesota Iceland Gulls are considered very rare and usually difficult to separate from small Glaucous Gulls and lighter plumaged imm. Thayer's; but, there seems no such problem in Wisconsin, where Icelanders were reported in Kenosha County Jan. 15 (LoE) and Douglas County Feb. 27

(RaH). Four reports of Icelanders Dec. 20 – Feb. 4 came from St. Clair, Macomb and Wayne Cos., Mich (AR). There were in Minnesota, however, two close studies of what were either dark first-year Icelanders or very light first-year Thayer's: Duluth Jan. 6 (KE) and Castle Danger, Lake Co., Minn., Feb. 10-19 (m.ob.) Good photos of one of these gulls were taken and are being submitted to "experts". A more typical imm Thayer's was seen Jan. 21-22 at Grand Marais, Minn (JG *et al.*), while in Michigan, Thayer's were well described at Detroit Dec. 7, Port Huron Jan. 24 and the Monroe power plant Feb. 11 (AR). Very late in Wisconsin were a Franklin's Gull Dec. 19 at Prairie du Sac (J&LZ) and a Little Gull on the Milwaukee CBC. The thousands of Rock Doves concentrated in the Duluth-Superior harbor area have sharply declined this winter as the result of a professional exterminator's use of gram poisoned with Avitrol on the Superior side (banned in Minnesota) and strychnine in Duluth. An estimated 90% of the pigeons have been killed; however, as a result, two dead Snowy Owls, a dead Rough-legged Hawk and a dead Gyrfalcon, with a partially eaten pigeon still in its talons, were collected and submitted for pesticide analysis. Even though traces of strychnine were found in the Gyrfalcon, it remains very difficult to legally halt the poisoning program.

OWLS — It was definitely not a Snowy Owl winter, with fewer sightings than usual; birds did not arrive in their favorite Duluth-Superior harbor area in numbers until January, and even then no more than a half dozen were present. A normal total of six Hawk Owls was recorded in n. Minnesota, two of which uncharacteristically remained in the same areas (near Fourtown, Beltrami County and just n.e. of Duluth) for the entire period; another was at Two Harbors Feb. 13 – March (KE), one was sporadically seen at the Silver Bay airport, and two were in Koochiching County Dec. 29 and Jan. 16 (LG). Barred Owls staged a mild invasion along the n. shore of L. Superior in February; several being spotted hunting along roadsides even in midday, this influx seemed to coincide with the appearance of Boreal Owls. Long-eared Owls, usually rare in Minnesota in winter, were reported from no fewer than ten counties, including two in February in the Duluth area. Short-eareds as well were up in numbers, with reports from eight Minnesota counties, Saw-whet Owls were frequently encountered with three Minnesota, five Wisconsin and four Michigan reports.

The most significant and exciting event this winter was the massive invasion of Great Gray and **Boreal Owls** in n. Minnesota. Reports of this influx and of two very cooperative Hawk Owls even reached the tape recorded birding hot-lines in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, and consequently at least 200 birders from 21 states descended on the north shore of L. Superior at Duluth. A total of 54 **Great Gray Owls** was counted. Between Silver Bay and Tofte along Hwy 61, 39 were concentrated during January. Owls were frequently seen here and elsewhere hunting along roadsides even in midday, resulting in so many road kills that they became difficult to find by mid-February. Approximately 20 Great Grays (including some of the 39 along the North Shore) were counted in the Duluth



Great Gray Owl, Lake Co., Minn., Jan., 1978, one of the many in the second greatest invasion in the state. Photo/ Ted Hammond.

vicinity, with reports also from Marshall (two), Roseau (four), Beltrami, Cass, Koochiching, Itasca, n. St. Louis and Carlton Cos. This represents the second largest Great Gray Owl invasion ever in the state, the greatest occurring in 1968-69 when owls even reached s. Minnesota in numbers.



Boreal Owl, Stoney Point, Minn., February, 1978. Photo/ John Eaton.

Even more exciting were the staggering numbers of Boreal Owls. No fewer than 65 individuals were counted, more than four times the previous high Minnesota invasion of 1965-66. This may be the largest invasion south of the Canadian border of this species ever recorded; the winter influx of 1922-23 in New England, Ontario, Michigan and Minnesota being its closest rival. As with the Great Grays, almost all of the sightings were along the n. shore of L. Superior, primarily between Duluth and Two Harbors, with only four other records from Becker, Koochiching, n. St.

Louis and n. Lake Cos. The invasion of this species clearly began during the week of Jan. 30; from then through February hardly a day passed without a new Boreal being found, and after a brief hiatus in late February several more owls were counted well into March. It was unusual that only ten dead Boreals were found. Only three apparently starved to death whereas normally, most Boreals found in Minnesota in late winter are dead or weakened from starvation and only seven were road-killed (almost all of the owls were first found hunting along roadsides). Also unusual was the number of Boreals found hunting in broad daylight. Uncharacteristically many lingered at the same location for days or even weeks at a time.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH THRUSHES — Pileated Woodpeckers are apparently on the increase in parts of Michigan. They were reported from Marquette, Benzie (said to be increasing here), St Clair (reportedly marginal in s.e. Michigan) and Ingham Cos. (the last the first acceptable area record in 55 years was of one that "demolished suet feeder, then picked pieces of suet off of ground"). A Red-bellied Woodpecker far north in Thief River Falls, Minn., at a feeder until Jan. 2 was unusual (J. Joppru) as was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Dec. 31 at Itasca S.P., Minn. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers were again widespread in n. Minnesota (eight reports) but could only be found once in Wisconsin, while the elusive N. Three-toed was found but once in Cook County, Minn., Feb. 13 (T. Getz, S. Loch). Nine reports of Black-billed Magpie in n. Minnesota were received, as far e. as Sax-Zim and Proctor. Red-breasted Nuthatches were common in n. Minnesota during late fall and early winter, but after that numbers returned to normal. There were no unusual numbers in Michigan, but in Wisconsin the situation was described as "unbelievable" and "exceptional", especially in the n. part of the state, where one CBC counted 109 Red-breasteds and another had 261.

One Carolina Wren could still be found in Wayne County, Mich. (JAF) in spite of the severe winter of last year. Two Mockingbirds at Hartford, Wis., Feb 14 were unusual (NS), as were birds in Detroit in January (DBe) and on the Sarret and Berrien Springs CBCs in Michigan. A Gray Catbird was found on the Oakland, Mich. CBC, while Brown Thrashers lingered at each of three feeders in Michigan and Wisconsin and two in Minnesota. Varied Thrush was reported more often than usual: nine were at feeders in Minnesota, at least ten in Wisconsin represented the highest total ever there, and two even made it as far as Michigan and were listed on the Alpena and Port Huron CBCs. Two Hermit Thrushes lingered in Michigan, one occurred on a Wisconsin CBC, but was more unusual at Duluth Dec. 30 - Jan. 1 (KE). Eastern Bluebirds were late in three Minnesota counties: Hennepin Dec. 4 (C&MB), Dakota Dec. 18 (JD) and Wabasha Jan. 4 (RL). A Mountain Bluebird found at Le Sueur Jan. 14 was most unusual (RJ) and by lingering into March, represented only the second overwintering record for Minnesota. Perhaps becoming more regular in this state, although still very rare, is the Townsend's Solitaire. The most ever were found this winter: in

Duluth Dec. 31 & Feb. 19; at Itasca S.P., Dec. 31; at North Oaks, Ramsey County Dec. 3; and another near Grand Marais Dec. 26 – Feb. 26. (m.ob.).

KINGLETS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — Golden-crowned Kinglets appeared to be scarcer than in recent winters; although no Wisconsin reporters commented, Minnesota had only four December reports with none thereafter, and “very scarce” was the post-December description from Benzie County, Mich. Ruby-crowns were reported from one Wisconsin CBC and at a Clinton County, Mich. feeder Jan 23 – Feb. 3 (SF). Few Bohemian Waxwings were seen in Clinton County Mich., Dec. 6 (GB) and St. Ignace Jan. 2 (AR), on five Wisconsin CBCs and until Jan 4 in Racine County (FF *et al.*). In Minnesota reports came from 14 counties s. as far as Washington (peak 160), Dakota, Le Sueur, Kandiyohi and Chippewa, while Duluth had 3-400 erratically present all winter. Totally unexpected was a hopelessly lost **Water Pipit** watched closely at Duluth Jan. 19 (EC); there was no previous state record later than November. Loggerhead Shrikes were carefully identified in Eden Prairie, Minn., Dec. 17 (VL,MW), and in Chippewa County, Wis., Dec. 21 (SR). A report of a Black-and-white Warbler near East Lansing Feb. 21 (JM) was most interesting and said to be reliable, but confirmation awaits complete details. Yellow-rumped Warblers were mentioned Dec. 22 at Flushing (JBU), until Jan. 21 in Lansing (DM,JW); while in Minnesota there was a late migrant Dec. 3 in Houston County (E&MF) and a very hardy individual at a Duluth feeder until Feb. 1 (KE). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were unexpected and late in Dane County, Wis., Feb. 19 (TdB), and on Harsen’s I., Mich., Dec. 17 – Feb. 4 (m.ob.). A N. Oriole survived the winter at the Simek’s feeder in Detroit on a diet of sliced fruit and raisins.

FRINGILLIDS — Late Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were seen in Wabasha County, Minn., Dec. 2 (RL) and through Dec. 17 at an Oakland County, Mich., feeder. Wisconsin and Michigan reported good Evening Grosbeak numbers in December, but the situation returned to normal later. Purple Finches were uncommon everywhere, but Pine Grosbeaks invaded in near-record numbers. No fewer than 13 counties in s.e. and s.w. Minnesota submitted reports, while farther n. birds were literally everywhere (*e.g.*, Duluth CBC counted 661) Wisconsin described it as a “bonanza year”, with Michigan documenting high numbers especially in the Upper Peninsula, Benzie County and the Detroit area. Redpolls also appeared in near-record numbers Regionwide. Although the largest flocks seemed to occur in late winter, one CBC near St. Paul counted an incredible 4615, and from mid-January on a bander in a St. Paul suburb netted 4000+ in his yard. Peak Wisconsin counts were 2000, Price County Feb. 20 (CF) and a single flock of 1000, Columbia County Feb. 26 (DT *et al.*), almost all Michigan observers mentioned high numbers, especially in February. More Hoarics than usual were identified, especially in Wisconsin with reports from 15 counties of flocks of up to ten, and Minnesota from an unprecedented 23 counties, including Fillmore, Mower and Freeborn on the Iowa line.

Most Pine Siskins seemed to have left Minnesota by December, which was the peak month for this species in Wisconsin; most impressive were 4500± in an uncut 80-acre sunflower field in Clark County Dec. 26 (KJL) Michigan also reported very good numbers as evidenced by a Lansing area resident with so many at her feeder that she “sold their second car to pay for thistle seed.” Red Crossbills were decidedly uncommon, but White-wingeds appeared in most areas in good numbers although there were few s. Michigan reports Wisconsin had one of its best invasions ever for this species until February when food supplies became depleted, and the n. Minnesota situation was similar when the cones were cleaned out by the end of January by big flocks that had been present since November. None were seen in Duluth after Feb 4, though a few stayed on through the month in s. Minnesota.

Rufous-sided Towhees are unusual enough in winter in Minnesota, but an individual of the “Spotted” western race at a St. Paul feeder into January was even more interesting (B. Mettler). Overwintering Field Sparrows were also interesting at Appleton, Wis (DT) and East Lansing (L&MS), as was a Vesper Sparrow on the Sheboygan, Wis. CBC. Harris’ Sparrows were reported more often than usual in Minnesota, including four which even overwintered, and another as far n. as the Walker CBC, while another made it as far as a Washington County, Wis. feeder Jan. 25 – March (m.ob.). A partial albino Harris’ at an E. Lansing feeder Dec. 20 (DMC) was well worth noting, as was a White-crowned Sparrow throughout the winter at a feeder in Luce County in the Upper Peninsula (*vide* AR). Undoubtedly the most unusual species in the Region were Michigan’s first **Golden-crowned Sparrows**. Many observers saw one that had been banded in Battle Creek (J. Wykoff; no date given), and many saw another (or the same one?) found by R. Adams at Dowling, Barry County Jan. 14-15 (DMC described it as “that scruffy looking immature”). A Fox Sparrow at a St. Paul area feeder until Feb. 7 was very late (*vide* EC). Finally, good numbers of Snow Buntings were concentrated in several areas; 2500 were counted near Ortonville, Minn., Dec. 17, at least 3350 were in Ozaukee County, Wis., Feb. 22 (NC), and a peak of 1000 in the Lansing area Jan. 19-21 dwindled to almost nothing after the blizzard a few days later.

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whites, and Screech Owls were also among the notable victims of the season.

On the brighter side, the season was the best in many years for feeder watchers, as great variety provided continuous entertainment for observers — as well as the only source of sustenance for many of the birds. In addition to the greatest variety of northern finches in years, there were a few western strays, an influx of the eastern population of House Finches and the regular appearance of Accipiters or shrikes which utilized the feeding stations as prey areas. For the record, many areas reported the coldest January and February in history; in addition, more snow fell and stayed longer than any other season in recorded history. Therefore, bird data assembled this spring can be used as the starting point for population comparisons — especially for the permanent residents — in future years. Let's hope that the worst of our winter seasons is now finally behind us.

Since this season included the Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) most of their records have not been repeated; however, a few exceptional observations which may otherwise be missed by the readers have been included. Since all extraordinary sight records must be thoroughly documented at the time of observation, more accurate and informative data are being collected. A total of 110 documentations was received this season (Ohio, 22; Indiana, 21; Illinois and Kentucky, 18; Iowa, 17 and Missouri, 14). In addition, 12 photographs were received. Documentation for all unusual sight records reported here has been received and is on file. Records which were not satisfactorily documented appear in the UNCORROBORATED REPORTS section. Specimens are denoted by an asterisk (*).

MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Vernon M. Kleen

We really experienced an *Arctic winter*. The invasion of winter finches exemplified the arctic surroundings and the traditional bird populations suffered greatly. The obvious dominant features of the season were the snow and extremely cold weather — including blizzards. All lakes and ponds except those influenced by warm water discharges were frozen solid. Bird mortality was obvious and many species were hit exceptionally hard.

In some cases, observers found dead House Sparrows, cowbirds, and Starlings frozen to death while still perched in the shrubbery. Cardinals, chickadees, titmice, Carolina Wrens, kinglets, doves, Bob-

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — A few Common Loons lingered into early December, but none stayed throughout the winter. Single Red-throated Loons were found at Louisville, Ky., Dec. 1 (LR,BM) and Cleveland Dec. 11 (M). A Red-necked Grebe was present at Summit L., O., Jan. 25 – Feb. 1 (*vide M*), another was found at Cleveland Feb. 22-28 (CW,JHo, m.ob.); and one was observed at Springfield, Ill. (hereafter, Spfld.) Feb. 10-15 (H). Horned Grebes were in normal numbers during early December, but none wintered; maxima were 74 Dec. 2 at Cleveland (OD), and 34 Dec. 4 at Columbus, O. (J). An Eared Grebe was reported as usual at Michigan City, Ind. (hereafter, Mich.C.), Dec. 3-4 (EH, m.ob.). A White Pelican was

still present along the Mississippi R., St. Charles Co., Mo., Dec. 26 (TBk). Single Double-crested Cormorants were observed around Cleveland Dec. 19-30 (M). A **Wood Stork** was found dead at Lexington, Ky., Feb. 15 (MiW). Only a few Great Blue Herons managed to survive the extreme winter season.

WATERFOWL — Notes suggested that more Mute Swans are regularly moving into the Region each winter. Practically all birds reported are in ad. plumage, suggesting that they are from a wild population (since aviculturists find the birds too expensive to allow risk of escape); five spent most of the winter at Rising Sun, Ind. (W) — one of which was shot there Feb. 14 (*fide* W *et al.*); two were present at Cleveland Dec. 17-29 (M); three or four wintered around Chicago (*fide* B); one was found in Wabash County, Ind., Feb. 9-17 (DHe *et al.*); and one was noted at Bettendorf, Ia., Dec. 3-4 (P). A Whistling Swan remained at Columbus, O., through Dec. 17 (J) and two appeared at Niles, O., Feb. 10 (CJ). The winter population of Canada Geese in s. Illinois and w. Kentucky totalled 525,000 birds. Over 100 White-fronted Geese were still present at Squaw Creek N.W.R., Mo. (hereafter, S C R.) in late December (R). The peak population of Snow Geese at the Ballard County Conservation Area, Ky., in January was 15,000 birds; small flights of birds were noted in Henderson County, Ill., Jan. 7 (LM) and Danville, Ill., Feb. 6 (MCA). An estimated 1500 Canvasbacks were reported from Oregon, O., Jan. 1 (BST); 50+ were observed at Springfield, Mo., Feb. 4 (*fide* CB). Although most lakes (including the large lakes) and ponds froze solid, several diving ducks found isolated shelters throughout the Region. Common Goldeneyes were most numerous of the wintering divers. A possible hybrid Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser (see photo) was quite unusual in St. Charles County, Mo., Feb. 6-19 (BR,PB). A few Oldsquaws found enough open water in Lakes Erie and Michigan to winter; however, the total number of individuals was considerably lower than in normal years. Two Harlequin Ducks were observed at Mich.C., Dec. 4-26 (KB, m.ob.); another was found at Mishawaka, Ind., Feb. 26 (VR,m.ob.). White-winged Scoters were reported in either early December or during February with no observations in between; one was present at Louisville, Dec. 10-18 (S,m.ob.); another in Hamilton County, O., Dec. 4 (VW *et al.*); and one or two at Cleveland Dec. 2-18 (M); two appeared at Peoria Feb. 4-5 (VH *et al.*), and eight arrived at Cleveland by Feb. 12 (JHo); 175 were counted at Evanston, Ill., Feb. 21 (DJ). Four Surf Scoters were reported — singles at Cleveland Dec. 17 (M); Franklin County, O., Dec. 3 (J), Mich.C., Dec. 3-4 (KB *et al.*); and Joliet, Ill., Feb. 26 (JFu *et al.*). One Black Scoter remained at Cleveland through Dec. 24 (M) and one or two were witnessed at Mich.C., through the same period (KB *et al.*) "Several thousand" Red-breasted Mergansers arrived at Cleveland by Feb. 11 (JHo).

DIURNAL RAPTORS — As usual a scattering of Black Vultures was seen during January and February along counties in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana bordering the Ohio R. A few Turkey Vultures wintered

in s.e. Adams County, Ill. — much farther n than usual; it was believed that they fed on the many animals which were dying from the severe winter conditions. This was not an invasion year for Goshawks; the few reports received of them were not sufficiently documented.

S.A.

Accounts of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were rather interesting — both *Accipiter* species were reported much more commonly than in recent years. Although many of the birds reported were observed chasing and killing passerines at feeding stations (too many such Regionwide reports this year to be of casual incidence), good numbers were seen in more normal habitats as well. Knowing the conditions of this winter, and the detrimental effects suffered by bird species, we cannot be totally convinced that the number of birds reported represents an increasing population, we feel that the birds were more conspicuous during their diligent search of a declining food supply.

Many observers reported Red-tailed Hawks in good-to-excellent numbers this winter. The total number of Red-shouldered Hawks throughout the Region was encouraging with singles or pairs reported from 13 locations — including all states. Rough-legged Hawks were found in moderate to above-average numbers throughout most of the Region; however, the s. areas found the species to be less common than average, 53 birds were counted in the 90-mi section of Interstate Hwy. 72, between Spfld., and Champaign, Ill., Jan. 10 (JE). Golden Eagles were sighted as singles or pairs as far s. as the two at Land between the Lakes, Ky., Feb. 11 (CP); as far n. as Winnebago and Boone Cos., Ill., Dec. 17 (LJ) and Jan. 16-22 (RGA), respectively; and at large reservoirs in Iowa and Missouri during the period. An excellent number of Bald Eagles was found at many locations during the period; of greatest interest was the report of the One-Day Eagle Count throughout the Region on Feb. 11; the highest number of eagles ever reported for the 20 years of counting (1444) was tallied (*fide* EF) — the adult to immature ratio was 71:29. Single Bald Eagles were reported at seven less typical locations ranging from s. Ohio along the Greater Miami R. to c. Illinois. Marsh Hawks were reported as less common than usual from many localities. An Osprey was found along the Ohio R in Meade County, Ky., Jan. 14 (LaS) & Feb. 11 (WE,EN). The **Gyr Falcon** at S.C.R., Dec. 18 (RR,TBk) and **Prairie Falcon** at Golden City, Dec. 23 (CB) were certainly noteworthy discoveries for Missouri.

GAMEBIRDS AND SHOREBIRDS — Bobwhites suffered another harsh winter and were reported as absent or in very low numbers in many areas; however, they were reported as common around fields where fodding stations occur or where fields were spread with manure in w. Illinois (JFu); in addition, the species "fared well" in w. Kentucky (JTE). Up to 12

Gray Partridges were found regularly near Richmond, Ill (AK). The 350-400 Turkeys in the Stephens State Forest, Ia., speaks well for the species there (*vide* LCM). American Woodcocks, which usually arrive well in advance of the end of the season, were held back by the extreme ice and snow conditions experienced well beyond the end of the period; a few individuals braved the conditions and arrived by the end of February in the extreme s. areas. Two Purple Sandpipers were observed regularly at Cleveland Dec. 31 - Jan. 7 (M). A Red Phalarope was also reported from Cleveland Dec 2 (M).

GULLS AND TERNS — The usual number of Glaucous Gulls was reported from around Chicago; a maximum of three was present at L. Calumet, Ill., Jan. 15 (m ob.); one was found at Havana, Ill., Feb. 11 (H); six were observed in St. Charles County, Mo., Dec. 26 - Jan 1 (TBk); one occurred at Mich.C., Dec. 3-24 (KB *et al.*); and the number fluctuated at Cleveland from five on Jan. 15 to more than 14 by Feb. 5 (JHo). Iceland Gulls, too, were noteworthy; one wintered in the Chicago area (*vide* B); one was at Havana, Ill., Feb 11 (H); nine different individuals were encountered at Cleveland Jan. 21 - Feb. 22 (JHo); and two were found at Louisville (and adjacent Indiana areas) Feb 23 - Mar. 5 (BM, EH *et al.*). The only Great Black-backed Gulls reported were observed in Ohio; beginning with four Jan. 14 and building to 75 by Jan. 23 (JHo); then dramatically disappearing until Feb. 5 when 350 (M) were counted at Cleveland; it is surprising that none skipped over the lower portions of L. Michigan; another 18 were present at Oregon, O., Feb. 19 (BSt). A Lesser Black-backed Gull reappeared at Cleveland Feb. 5 (RH). Acceptable records of Thayer's Gulls include: three in the Chicago area (*vide* B), one at Havana, Ill., Feb. 11 (H); one at Cleveland Jan 15 (JHo); and "present" (with two collected) in St. Charles County, Mo., Dec. 26 - Jan. 8 (*TBk). The only Little Gulls reported were 3-6 at Cleveland Dec. 16-26 and one Jan. 15 (M). A Com. Tern was encountered at Maumee Bay, Lucas Co., O., Dec. 18 (*vide* LV, m.ob.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Mourning Doves wintered in medium-to-large flocks through many parts of the Region; they regularly visited feeding stations in groups of 30±. A Barn Owl was found injured in Palos, Ill., in January (*vide* B). It is believed that Screech Owl populations may have been hurt by the harsh winter this year. Only a few Snowy Owls reached the n. portions this winter; a few were observed in Iowa; none in Illinois; one at Lafayette, Ind, Feb. 8 (TiK); and singles at Sandusky Bay, O, Jan. 1 (*vide* V, m.ob.) and Cleveland Dec. 17 (M). Small numbers of Long-eared Owls were observed; they were reported primarily from the n. — as far s. as Columbus, O., and Beverly, Ill.; four was the maximum reported for any one location. Short-eared Owls were much more common and widespread; they were reported as singles through groups up to 23 with the normal maxima < 10; they were apparently absent or very scarce in Missouri (R). Saw-whet Owls were sparingly encountered from late December through

mid-February; only six birds were reported — one as far s. as Siloam Springs S.P., Ill., Jan. 29-30 (JFu) Belted Kingfishers found enough open warm water areas to survive in above-normal expectations this winter. Pileated Woodpeckers were reported from unusual locations; most noteworthy were the two near Findlay, O., (RP); the one at Willow Springs, Ill (B), and several in Iowa (*vide* N). Red-headed Woodpeckers were absent from much of the Region, however, they did occur in fair numbers in choice bottom-land woods — often associated with oak trees and major rivers.

LARKS THROUGH WRENS — There were numerous reports of very large flocks of Horned Larks — especially along roadsides after snow storms. It was not unusual to find 1000+ birds at a time; however, most interesting were the many reports of these birds, with longspurs and Snow Buntings, visiting feeding stations in large numbers; in many instances in town A Barn Swallow was unusual for Hickman, Ky (at a sewage treatment plant) Dec. 27 - Jan. 1 (DC) Although there are several roosts of Com. Crows, few observers have taken the time to find or report them, the only one observed this winter consisted of 6-8000 birds near Aurora, Ill. (PD). Red-breasted Nuthatches arrived in excellent numbers last fall; however, the majority moved through with only a moderate number wintering. Carolina Wrens faced their second fateful year in succession; there were isolated instances where individuals were encountered at feeding stations, however, the total picture was bleak.

MIMIDS AND THRUSHES — A few Mockingbirds wintered successfully at isolated locations farther n. than would have been expected. Only one Gray Catbird was mentioned — Jan. 13 at Louisville (BPB). A few Brown Thrashers survived at feeding stations. Large numbers of Am. Robins braved the season; they stripped trees and shrubbery of all possible food sources and found food scarce as the season moved on; it was not unusual to find small-to-medium flocks hopping in the snow in yards looking for food, in some areas in Iowa, and n. Illinois hundreds were present. The first Ohio record for Varied Thrush came from Mentor, Dec. 18 - Jan. 5; the bird was duly photographed (M); one occurred at Long Grove, Ia, Dec. 25 - Feb. 17 (PF); another wintered at Lake Forest, Ill. (*vide* B). In contrast to robins, E. Bluebirds were scarce this winter. Single Townsend's Solitaires were present at Decorah, Ia., Dec. 23 (DKo) and Jan 15 (JSc), and Splfd., Jan. 15 - Feb. 21 (*H, m.ob.)

KINGLETS THROUGH SHRIKES — Golden-crowned Kinglets were very low in numbers; in some areas they were actually absent where several would normally have been found. Ruby-crowned Kinglets, too, were down in numbers. A few Water Pipits were observed feeding with Horned Larks and Snow Buntings in Oldham County, Ky., Feb. 24 (S,FS) Two Bohemian Waxwings were present at Lake Forest, Ill., Dec. 26-30 (*vide* B, m.ob.); one was reported from Danville, Ill., Feb. 28 (ME); singles were observed at Iowa City, Ia., Jan. 13 & 28 (N) and a few others were

probably present in Iowa (GBI). There was an excellent number of N. Shrikes reported; six were noted for the Chicago area (*vide B*); singles were encountered in the L. Michigan area of Indiana Dec. 24 – Feb. 12 (m ob.); another was identified at Munster, Ind., Feb. 5 (RK); nine were found in n.e. Iowa (JSc,DKo); singles were found at Spencer, Ia., Feb. 5 (DiB); Iowa City Dec. 24 – Feb. 26 (ToK, m.ob.); and at an Elkhart, Ind., feeder for several days (DM). The Loggerhead Shrike was reported as “increasing” around Danville, Ky (FL); “haunting” feeding stations around Springfield, Mo. (*vide CB*); and in small numbers in Iowa.

WEAVERS AND BLACKBIRDS — Among the winter casualties were large numbers of House Sparrows; Ohio reporters indicated this most frequently. The unquestionable photograph of a **European Tree Sparrow** at a Lone Oak, Ky., feeder documents an excellent record for this species there — December and January (DBE). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found at Fairbury, Ill., Dec. 5 (PJ) and Council Bluffs, Ia., Feb. 26 (JG). A few Rusty Blackbirds were evident at feeders as far n. as Willow Springs, Ill., in February (PD). Brewer's Blackbirds were also occasionally encountered — small numbers were reported from South Bend, Ind., during December and January; and singles were observed at Lexington, Ky., Dec. 17 & Jan. 1 (DC) and Baskett, Ky., Feb. 2 (DKi).

S.A.

Blackbirds in roosts were affected by the winter. In Kentucky it was reported that “This winter's unusually severe weather accompanied by extensive periods of snow has resulted in the shifting of bird populations. One result has been the frequent shifting of roost populations into and out of the area.” (HS). The roosts at Munfordville and Russellville, Ky., each comprised approximately one million birds in December, but declined sharply during the cold of January. The same was true of the 350,000-bird roost at Bowling Green. “The total number of roosting individuals in the area is much lower than in the past five years.” (HS)

CARDINALS AND WINTER FINCHES — The Cardinal was another of the resident species often found dead; the species was reported as scarce in many of the n. areas. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed at Evansville, Ind., Feb. 12 (MaW). A Black-headed Grosbeak was photographed at Des Plaines, Ill.; it visited a feeder Jan. 4-8 (MCh,C, m ob.). This past winter was reported as the best winter finch year since 1971-72. Evening Grosbeaks were widespread; although they were not abundant, they were common enough to delight many feeding station operators. Pine Grosbeaks were the most noteworthy visitors, ranging as far s. as St. Joseph, Mo., and Pike County, Ill.; the best numbers ever were recorded for Chicago; 50+ were reported from Iowa; 25 were found at Pines, Ind., Dec. 18 (TiK); the species was not reported from Ohio. Purple Finch distribution was similar to that of the Evening Grosbeak

— widespread but in small numbers; Kentucky and s.w. Ohio observers found the species to be more common than observers elsewhere. **House Finches** staged the largest influx ever into the Region, most noteworthy was the heavy invasion in Cleveland where 45 were reported by Dec. 10, then 125 by Jan 2 (*vide M*, m.ob.) and in Kentucky — especially in Madison County — flocks of up to 30 individuals visited feeding stations daily Jan. 15 – Feb 28+ (JH,AW, m.ob., ph.); and one came to a Louisville feeder Feb. 12 (S). Another treat was the presence of a number of Hoary (or possible Hoary) Redpolls. The records included: singles at Chesterton, Ind., Feb 14-15 (KB *et al.*); Valparaiso, Ind., Feb. 25 – Mar. 2 (PG), Marian, Ia., Jan. 22 – Feb. 15 (m.ob.); Davenport, Ia., Feb. 12 (P); Calumet, Ill., Jan. 15 (DJ); Jacksonville, Ill., during February (m.ob.); and Porter County, Ind., Feb. 18-19 (KB). Of course, Com. Redpolls are usually scarce but not so this year. They were widespread and very common, ranging well into Kentucky, s. Illinois and Missouri; in many of the s. reaches it was the first good record of any abundance for the species. The birds arrived in greatest numbers in late January and stayed through February. Pine Siskins, too, were very common regionwide — enjoying well-stocked feeding stations. American Goldfinches were just as or more common than the siskins. The only record of Red Crossbills was of 13 present at the Sand Ridge State Forest, Ill., Feb. 11 (H). White-winged Crossbills, on the other hand, were scattered (sparingly) throughout the Region; as many as 25 reached Lexington, Ky., Dec. 6 & Jan. 1 (DC), eight were found in Louisville Jan. 2 (S); 12 were noted in Cincinnati Dec. 9 & 29 (WR); others were encountered more regularly farther n.

SPARROWS, LONGSPURS AND BUNTINGS — A **Lark Bunting** was found and photographed at Spfld, Dec. 4 (H, m.ob.). Savannah Sparrows in Pike and Adams Cos., Ill., were considered unusual for Jan 21 & Feb. 13 (JFu *et al.*). Observers noted that there was a significant drop in “Slate-colored” Juncos — for example, a 47% decline on the Louisville CBC (S) Wintering Harris' Sparrows were found at Ridgeville, Ind., Feb. 1 (*vide LCr*); and Plato Center, Ill., all winter (*vide B*). The Smith's Longspur in Andrew County, Mo., during February was noteworthy there (L). Lapland Longspurs were common and conspicuous in large flocks often mingled with Horned Larks and Snow Buntings; the species was reported as abundant all winter; on many occasions, the flocks even visited in-town feeding stations. Snow Buntings, too, were more conspicuous and/or abundant this year than most previous years; large flocks were encountered in Kentucky with 200+ birds in Jefferson County Dec. 12 (GC) and smaller flocks in Missouri — especially the n.w. Several accumulations of 1000+ birds were reported from Iowa and n. Ohio.

UNCORROBORATED REPORTS — Oldsquaw, Brookville Res., Ind., Dec. 10. Glaucous Gull, Louisville, Jan. 14 and Trimble Wildlife Area, Mo., Jan 29. Yellow-headed Blackbird, Spring Grove, Ill., Dec 10

Hoary Redpoll, Toledo; Columbus Jan. 30 – Feb. 5; LaPorte County, Ind., Feb. 18; Indianapolis Feb. 24. House Finch, 2-3 at Columbus during January. Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, one in Fayette County, Ia., during January and early February. Lincoln's Sparrow, Trimble Wildlife Area, Mo., Jan. 29 – Feb. 12; Columbia, Mo., Dec. 23.

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CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

/Robert B. Hamilton

This season started out well with mild temperatures prevailing into late December. As expected, many birds delayed their departure south; some of these were found and reported on Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBCs). Once January arrived the winter turned severe, with temperatures averaging approximately 10°F. below normal in January and February. Precipitation was slightly below normal. The most noteworthy aspect of the late winter weather was the continuous below-normal temperature. With the cold weather came many northern invaders, to an extent almost unprecedented. Many insectivores undoubtedly did not survive the harsh weather, but this was not quantified by our observers; the CBCs occurred during the mild weather of early winter.

[In the following report a number of noteworthy CBC records have been omitted for lack of space; they will be found, as usual, in the CBC issue of *American Birds*, July, 1978].

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — Observers in Louisiana (MMy,NN) reported that the nine Com. Loons at L. Pontchartrain, La., Dec. 14 represented a

high number; as did 40 at Ross Barnett Res., Miss., Dec. 3 (M.O.S.), the 31 at Gulfport Harbor, Miss., Dec. 20 (WCW), and the 50 at Horn I., Miss., Jan. 15 (WCW). Other loons also moved in with an Arctic Loon seen (HE,MTD,CD ph.— S&EL) at Gulf Shores, Ala., Dec. 31, for the first coastal Alabama record and



only the second state record; the **Red-throated Loon** found at Horn I., Jan. 14 (WCW) furnished only the sixth Mississippi record. Large numbers of Horned Grebes were reported in Mississippi: 87 on the Sardis L. CBC and 250 at Horn I., Jan. 15 (WCW); Eared Grebes, rare in Mississippi, were found on the Jackson County CBC (CW,JF), one at Gulfport Harbor Dec. 20 & Jan. 1 (WCW), and five at Hattiesburg Dec. 29 (WCW). One was at L. Pontchartrain Jan. 11-15 (RDP, JR) The **Least Grebe** found at Mud. L., Cameron Par., Feb. 11 (ME) was only the second Louisiana occurrence.

At an oil platform 100 mi. s. of Cameron, La., several Blue-faced Boobies were seen daily Dec. 1-7 (JB). The maximum number of Gannets reported was six off Grand I., La., Feb. 12 (NNe,SN) and six off Horn I., Feb. 27 (WCW). The **Great Cormorant** was reported in Louisiana for the first time this winter: two immatures at Grand I., Feb. 5 (RN,BC,SH) were found approximately one week after an earlier report (MWe, *fide* RN) Large concentrations of Double-crested Cormorants were noted at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. (CV) where approximately 200 wintered; at Ross Barnett Res., 100 were seen Dec. 3 (GEA,GA). The **Magnificent Frigatebird** at Biloxi Dec. 16 (JTo) provided the first Mississippi winter record. The 161 Great Blue Herons at Eufaula N.W.R., Ala., Feb. 11 (BO) was the maximum for the inland coastal plain. The Little Blue Heron at Calion L., Union Co., Ark., Dec. 1 (HHS,KLS) was late; the adult at Horn I., Feb. 27 (WCW) was a probable spring migrant. The **Reddish Egret** at Gulfport Harbor Dec. 20, represented Mississippi's first winter record (WCW); one was at E. Ship I., Miss., Feb. 13-16 (WCW). The three Least Bitterns at the aforementioned oil platform Dec. 1-7 (JB) were apparently migrating S. The Am. Bittern was seen at Noxubee N.W.R., Miss., Jan. 23-28 (BJS, JAJ,DCo) and at Bellefontaine Pt., Miss., Feb. 13 (JT).

WATERFOWL — Whistling Swans now occur annually near Wheeler N.W.R. (*fide* TI); at least four were seen near Decatur Dec. 3 – Feb. 19 (DMB, m ob); four wintered near Forrest City, Ark. (ER). More Canada Geese than usual may have wintered: four were present near Pace, Fla., Dec. 16 – Feb. 28 (BM), two were at Paxton, Fla., Jan. 21 (CK,MJ, B&GP); the 456 on the Washington County, Miss., and the 3800 on the Sardis L., Miss. CBCs were an increase over last year's 400 and 3332 respectively. A White-fronted Goose at Old Hickory L., (MLB,TH,TM) was only the fourth Nashville area occurrence. The 45 Snow Geese overwintering at Eufaula N.W.R., were the most ever there (BO); they are scarce in n.w. Florida in winter, but one was at Pace Jan. 14 (DR,BM,AFW,DA). The **Ross' Goose** at Holla Bend N.W.R., on Jan. 21 represented the second Arkansas record (WMS,MWh). Two extralimital Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were seen between Gibbstown and Creole, Cameron Par., Dec. 16, as were four Fulvous Whistling-Ducks (BO). Two Fulvous apparently wintered at LaHayes' L., Evangeline Par. (HG); they were seen on the Pine Prairie CBC and Feb. 12. The first sightings for the New Orleans area in 44 years (*fide* RDP) began Feb. 12 when more than 40 were

seen (JW); 12 were seen Feb. 14 (NN,JR,MHo), and 38 on Feb. 19 (JT).

Black Ducks are rare on the Mississippi coast but a male was seen at E. Ship I., Feb. 13-15 (WCW) The 500± Redheads at Horn I., Jan. 13-20 (WCW) was a very large number. About 20 Greater Scaup were at E. Ship I., Feb. 11 (WCW); six were at Horn I., Feb. 28 (WCW,EA). There were six Com. Goldeneyes at False River, Pointe Coupee Par., Jan. 14 (RBH) and a female at Fontainebleau S.P., St. Tammany Par., on the same day (RN,BC,DFe). A female was seen in Cameron Par., Feb. 26 (RN,BC) and up to ten at E. Ship I., Feb. 10-17 (WCW); the 200 near Decatur Feb. 25 (DMB) was a maximum count for inland Alabama. A flock of 50 Bufflehead was among the 120 seen at Horn I., Jan. 16 (WCW). Oldsquaws were among the many waterfowl found off the Mississippi coast with up to 16 at Horn I., in January and February and up to 20 at E. Ship I., in February (WCW); only one was reported from Alabama, at Mallard-Fox Creek W.M.A., Jan. 3 (DMB,DC) and a pair from Arkansas at Calion L., Union Co., Jan. 22 (S.A.A.S.) The White-winged Scoter, rare in middle Tennessee, occurred on three bodies of water: at Radnor L., Nashville, until Dec. 9 (MM, m.ob.); Nashville area from Feb. 4 – Feb. 28+ (CSt); Woods Res., Franklin Co., Dec. 28 (FBr) & Feb. 12 (LD,DRJ). Off the Mississippi coast up to 13 were near E. Ship I., Feb. 11-17 (WCW), and five near Horn I., Feb. 28 (WCW,EA) Surf Scoters were reported at L. Pontchartrain Nov. 28 (JG, m.ob., *fide* RDP), Dec. 1 & 3 (NN); two were at Pensacola Dec. 2 (RD); up to 40 off Ship I., Feb. 11-17 (WCW); and 80 off Horn I., Feb. 28 (WCW,EA) The usually casual Black Scoter was reported at Destin, Fla., Dec. 8 and at Gulf Breeze Dec. 9, 11 & 17 (RD). The female at Wheeler N.W.R., Dec. 17 (DMB, CD,GJ,HE) and Jan. 3 (DCo, m.ob.) was a first for inland Alabama. A female was at L. Pontchartrain Nov. 27 – Dec. 16 (JR, m.ob.). There were up to 50 off E. Ship I., Feb. 11-17 (WCW) and two females off Horn I., Feb. 28 (WCW,EA). Common Mergansers were reported at several locations; two males and a female were at Reserve, La., Dec. 8 (MWe); one at Eufaula N.W.R., Jan. 15 & 21 (BO); a female at Gulf Breeze, Fla., Feb. 4 (RD); eight were at Moon L., Miss., CBC (BBC,LC) and a female at Noxubee N.W.R., Feb. 4 (WCW). The ♂ Red-breasted Merganser at Miller's L., Dec. 13 was a first for Evangeline Par

HAWKS, CRANES, RAILS — There were more reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks this winter than of Cooper's. There were nine Sharp-shinned on five Mississippi CBCs and 2-4 were reported from New Orleans several times during winter (NN,MB) One wintered in Baton Rouge, preying on wintering finches In Alabama, a Cooper's Hawk was reported from Eufaula N.W.R., Dec. 8 & Jan. 29 and one in Russell County Jan. 28 (BO). Red-shouldered Hawks were down on Arkansas CBCs from last year's 57 to 35, on the other hand the 13 at Noxubee N.W.R. surpassed the previous high of five. The only Broad-winged Hawk was at Grand I., La., Jan. 29 (MMY,NN,RDP, JR). The usually rare Rough-legged Hawk was relatively common in middle Tennessee Jan. 21 – Feb

28+, when a maximum of at least 22 was present (T O S.); only two were dark-phase. Maximum in Arkansas was four at Otwell Dec. 23 (EH,NL). In Louisiana, two were at Reserve Dec. 27 (MWe) and one 5 mi w. of Crowley, Acadia Par., Dec. 18 (MJM). Ferruginous Hawk records for Louisiana were significantly increased with three birds reported: one 2 mi n. of Creole Nov. 18 (RBH); one at Cyremont Pt., St. Mary Par., Dec. 31 (MJM); and one 1 mi s. of Alexandria, Rapides Par., throughout December and January (H&TN,KC,RN *et al.*). Golden Eagles increased this winter: one at Eufaula N.W.R., Dec. 8 and two Jan. 15 (BO), one Jan. 17 at Wheeler N.W.R. (WCD); an adult was found at Noxubee N.W.R., Dec. 18 (JAJ); at Memphis, one Nov. 1 (DV, *vide* BBC). Four others were reported in Louisiana (MB,JTH,BB,KZ *et al.*). At Guntersville S.P., Ala., Bald Eagles increased from one immature Dec. 11 to seven immatures and two adults Jan. 28 (HE). At Wheeler, an immature was seen Dec. 24 (DMB,WCW); two immatures apparently wintered at Eufaula (BO,MFu). The U.S.F.&W.S. surveyed Arkansas and found more than 300 (up from 125 last year) along rivers and at large lakes; a maximum of 31 was at L. Dardanelle, Pope Co. (AP). At Noxubee N.W.R., an adult wintered; on Feb. 4, two adults were present there (WCW,DS). Also, three (two adults) were found on the M.O.S. field trip to Ross Barnett Res., Oct. 3; four immatures were found on the Jackson CBC, and one, possibly two adults, were near the only known Mississippi nest site near Gulfport Jan. 21 (WCW). In Louisiana, three wintered at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. (CV *et al.*). The annual count by U.S.F. & W.S. found 12 active eagle nests (up from eight last year) with nine eggs and ten young (five young fledged last year). Several former nesting trees have died owing to salt water intrusion; the Mississippi nest site was believed inactive (RA).

Tennessee reported an abundance of Marsh Hawks; numbers seemed usual elsewhere. There was an unexpected number of winter Osprey records. In Louisiana two were at Venice Dec. 11 (LH,MMY,NN, JR) (nested at site later, *vide* RA); one at Bonnet Carre Spillway Dec. 23 - Jan. 1 (MWe,BO), and one at L. Belsa, Avoyelles Par., Dec. 9 (CV). One was seen at Eufaula N.W.R., Dec. 8 (BO). One was at Pass Christian Feb. 5 (JT), and two at Horn I., in mid-January (WCW). Nesting activities on Mississippi coastal islands began in late February (WCW). The only Peregrine Falcons reported were singles at Cameron Dec. 18 (MB,NN, RDP, JR) and at Horn I., Jan. 18 (WCW). A Merlin wintered at Eufaula N.W.R. (BO) and apparently (Dec. 9 - Jan. 9) n. of Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co., Tenn. (RuM, m.ob.). In Louisiana, two were at New Orleans Dec. 7, one at Venice Dec. 11, and one at New Orleans Dec. 25 (RDP). In Mississippi two apparently wintered at Horn I. (WCW) and singles were seen at Gulfport Harbor Dec. 20 and E. Ship I., Feb. 11-17 (WCW). The Sandhill Cranes again wintered near Cheneyville, Avoyelles Par.; 26 were reported Jan. 8 (RN,MN,PM). The two heard near Byrdstown, Pickett Co., Tenn., Dec. 2 (RH), and 24 seen at Monterey, Tenn., Dec. 1 (S&KC) were believed to be migrants. The 39 reported on the Jackson County, Miss., CBC probably represented almost the total

population of this endangered Mississippi subspecies. The Yellow Rail flushed on the New Orleans CBC (SiG) was the first recorded in s.e. Louisiana since 1928 (*vide* RDP).

CHARADRIIFORMES — The Am. Oystercatcher appeared twice in unusual places. On the Jackson County CBC, one was observed at Pascagoula R flats (SP,LG) and one was at the e. jetty. Cameron Feb. 18 (DTK *et al.*). On the Mississippi coast, maxima of three Snowy Plovers at Horn I., and seven at Ship I., were reported. An Am. Golden Plover at Swan Creek W.M.A., Feb. 18 (DMB) was the earliest ever in Alabama (*vide* TI), and one at Sneads, Fla., Dec. 4 represented the first n.w. Florida December record (B&LA). A Black-bellied Plover found at Headland, Henry Co., Jan. 4 (MFu) was the first Alabama inland record (*vide* TI); one (same bird?) was at Eufaula N.W.R., Jan. 15 (BO). One Long-billed Curlew, rarely reported in Mississippi, wintered after Dec. 16 in Gulfport (AB, JT, WCW, JWJ). A Solitary Sandpiper was out-of-season at Galloway, Pulaski Co., Ark., Jan. 7 (KLS,HP,MP); latest previous date is Nov. 25. The two Willets at Eufaula N.W.R., Feb. 25 (BO) were probably early migrants. The relatively large numbers of Greater Yellowlegs reported at Eufaula (31) Feb. 4 (BO) and Bellefontaine Pt., Miss. (24) Feb. 8 (WCW) suggest very early migration. The Lesser Yellowlegs reported at Swan Creek W.M.A., one Dec. 11 and ten Jan. 19 (DMB), make only the second and third winter Tennessee Valley records for Alabama (*vide* TI). Dunlin are apparently becoming numerous inland in winter, at least in Alabama: at Swan Creek 50± wintered (DMB); at Headland 40 were present Jan. 4 (MFu), and at Eufaula the numbers decreased from 51 Dec. 8 to four Feb. 11 (BO). Two Semipalmated Sandpipers were identified (by plumage) at Swan Creek W.M.A., Jan. 3 (DMB,DCo); the one identified there Feb. 25 (DMB) may have been a migrant (although this species migrates late). The one reported at Lonoke County, Ark., Jan. 7 (KLS,HP,MP) was 11 days later than previous records. The 6-7 Black-necked Stilts at New Orleans Dec. 4 (MMY,NN) were late; one at Pascagoula R. marsh Dec. 17 (LG,SP) was a first Mississippi winter occurrence.

A Glaucous Gull was present at L. Pontchartrain Dec. 7-31 (JR,RDP,JPP,SPP). One at Decatur Jan. 29 (DMB) represented the sixth Alabama record (*vide* TI). The Great Black-backed Gull has been found in n.w. Florida every winter since 1973; this year two were reported Jan. 28 at Pensacola Bay (EB,MLM). Usually rare in late winter inland, Laughing Gulls were seen at Eufaula Jan. 14-15 (BO). An ad. Franklin's Gull was the eighth recorded in Alabama. Bonaparte's Gulls were more common inland than usual. Five at Clear L., Natchitoches Par., Dec. 18 were the first reported in several years (CV). Large numbers were counted at several localities in Alabama and Louisiana. The imm. **Little Gull** at Cameron Ferry Feb. 7 & 14 (RN,BC) was one of the few ever for Louisiana. The **Black-legged Kittiwake** was reported twice this winter: at Bay St. Louis, Miss., Dec. 19 (SP,LG) and at Cameron Feb. 18 (DTK). The Gull-billed Tern at Eufaula Dec. 8 was a first for the refuge (BO). At

Gulfport Harbor, Miss., 1200 Black Skimmers were present Dec. 3 (WCW).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS — Two White-winged Doves were seen in Baton Rouge Jan. 11 (BH). This species is rare anywhere in Louisiana, but especially inland. A Ground Dove was seen at Natchitoches Jan. 13 (CV); a small flock was present in Baton Rouge Jan. 11 (BH). A Groove-billed Ani was at New Orleans Dec. 1 (NN); Dec. 17 seven were at Holly Beach, Cameron Par. (NN,RDP), and Dec. 18 five were at Willow I., Cameron (MB,NN,RDP,JR). The Burrowing Owl reported on the Sabine CBC remained in same area until at least Feb. 18 (RN,BC). The one near Mamou Nov. 14-22 (CG,HG) was at the same location as the only previous Evangeline Par. record. The one at the aforementioned oil-platform Nov. 14 (JB), was apparently migrating S. The only Long-eared Owl reported was a roadkill at Arkadelphia, Ark., Feb. 5 (TW,BWh). Short-eared Owl reports were widely scattered: 1-3 at Bonnet Carre Spillway, La., Nov. 25 – Jan. 4; one at Natchitoches Airport Jan. 13 (CV); one in Bay County, Fla., Dec. 30 (MGr,FS); one at Decatur, Ala., Feb. 18 (DMB); and a maximum of two at Memphis Jan. 20 – Feb. 12 (AL, RWh). A Saw-whet Owl at Wheeler N.W.R., Dec. 29 (DHH,JS) furnished a fifth state record (*fide* TI). One was found dead in Natchitoches Parish Feb. 15 (PY,JOH). At least two Chuck-will's-widows were found at Venice Dec. 11 (LH,MM,NN,JR); one was reported at Horn I., Jan. 17 (WCW). A ♂ Black-chinned Hummingbird was at Reserve, La., Nov. 29 – Jan. 3 (RJS,MWe *et al.*). The third **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** ever recorded in s.e. Louisiana was in New Orleans Feb. 1 – Mar. 16 (KM, m.ob.). A Great Kiskadee wintered in New Orleans East; records extended from Oct. 8 – Mar. 23 (NN,BC, m.ob.). An *Empidonax* flycatcher was found at Grand I., Feb. 19 (MMy,NN, RDP,JR). In Louisiana, single Vermilion Flycatchers were found at Venice Dec. 11 (LH,MM,NN,JR), and near Elton, Jefferson Davis Par., Dec. 25 (MJM), and two at Natchitoches Dec. 18 – Jan. 30 (CV).

HORNED LARKS THROUGH TANAGERS — Bob Newman reported that Horned Larks were more widespread than in previous winters; he found approximately 1000 near Cheneyville, Rapides Par., Jan. 22 (RN,BC). There were also large flocks in Tennessee; the largest reported was 2000± in Coffee County Jan. 30 (T O.S.). In Alabama, the Horned Lark regularly winters as far s. as the Black Belt; the nine at Eufaula Jan. 15 (BO) were the first there and the second occurrence s. of the Black Belt (*fide* TI). The first Purple Martin report was at Horn I., Feb. 1 (JN); the first record for Arkansas was one in Pulaski County Feb. 12 (BW). The cold weather was apparently responsible for the nine found dead at Horn I., Feb. 6-10, three more were dead there Feb. 21 (GV). An estimated 19,000 Com. Crows roosted in suburban Pensacola in late January (CK). Red-breasted Nuthatches made a major invasion, as indicated by CBCs. They were reported as far s. as E. Ship I. (WCW); many observers commented on their large numbers. Brown Creepers were reported as more numerous than in

recent winters in n.w. Florida (CK), and in s. Louisiana. The House Wren at Ashland City was the first Nashville area winter occurrence (DCo). Bewick's Wren continued to be difficult to find: one was at Ship I., Feb. 14-15 (WCW); and one was near New Roads, Pte Coupee Par., Feb. 12 (RN,BC). The Long-billed Marsh Wren at Ashland City was a third Nashville area occurrence (DCo). Several observers commented that Short-billed Marsh Wrens were more common than usual. Gray Catbirds were reported in the relatively n. areas of Dyersburg, Tenn., Dec. 2 – Jan. 2 (JSL), and at Memphis Dec. 18 (A&NS). A **Swainson's Thrush** was well studied at Buccaneer S.P., Miss., Feb. 18 (JT). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were relatively abundant in the mild early winter: this species was even recorded for the first and second times in December in Arkansas. The severe weather later in winter greatly reduced numbers. Orange-crowned Warblers also were present relatively far n. at least early in the season: one was at Ross Barnett Res., Dec. 3 (GA,GEA). The usual Yellow-throated Warbler was at Venice, La., Dec. 11 (LH,MM,NN,JR). The Palm Warbler at Nashville Jan. 18 (TM) was the only one reported. An Ovenbird was at Venice Dec. 11 (NN), at Marianna, Fla., there were three on Dec. 17, one on Jan. 4 (MGr). The N. Waterthrush at Eufaula Dec. 26 (MFu,DC,DJ) was only the third state winter occurrence. Wilson's Warblers were reported more than in recent winters (all from Louisiana): one at Venice Dec. 11 (LH,MM,NN,JR); one at New Iberia Jan. 26 (MJM); one at Slidell Dec. 27 & 30 (WCW); one at New Orleans City Park Dec. 28 (WCW), one in the city Jan. 16 & Feb. 4 (BC); and one on the L S U campus, Baton Rouge all winter (CRG,GG,TS). Two Yellow-breasted Chats were observed near Eunice, St. Landry Par., Feb. 3-10 (BA,LF,HG).

A ♀ Yellow-headed Blackbird present Jan. 14 – Feb. 5 at Clarksville, Montgomery Co. (AHe) made this the third Tennessee record. "Baltimore" Orioles frequented Verda Horne's feeder in Fairhope, Ala., for the third consecutive year; a maximum of three was present. Another was seen and photographed near Murfreesboro Jan. 15 – Feb. 28+ (CA, *fide* AH). The recent trend of Summer Tanager wintering continues. The male at Murfreesboro Dec. 15-26 may represent the only middle Tennessee winter record (JC *et al.*) Possibly there were two in Memphis, one Dec. 5 (VJI) and one 5 mi away Feb. 11-24 (GRO, *fide* WM). In Louisiana, there was one at Lafayette, Dec. 24 (GEy, KE,ME), and one in Metairie Dec. 14 (MMy,NN). The one at Marianna, Fla., Dec. 23 – Jan. 15 (EW, *fide* MGr) has frequented the same feeder for the last four winters.

FINCHES — A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a feeder in Ocean Springs, Miss., Jan. 10 (AD) and up to three (1 ♂ & 2 ♀) Black-headed Grosbeaks wintered at Eunice, St. Landry Par., from Jan. 14 (CM). Dickcissels were reported in Tennessee at Murfreesboro Dec. 14 (AH) and at Martin Jan. 24 (DP); in Louisiana, two were at a feeder in New Iberia Feb. 6 – Mar. 27 (MJM). Evening Grosbeak reports were too numerous to list. The birds arrived in Arkansas and Tennessee in late November or early December; in Louisiana, they did not arrive in numbers in the Baton Rouge area until

mid-January, with the maximum in February, and in New Orleans they did not arrive until late February. Many observers commented on the large flocks; in the Tunica Hills area of Louisiana, Paul McKenzie reported a flock of 3000. An appeal for reports in the Arkansas Gazette brought more than 200 replies; birds were reported in 45 of Arkansas' 75 counties. Purple Finches were numerous in the n. part of our Region. In middle Tennessee, for example, two feeding stations banded more than 1000. They were less abundant than last year in s. Louisiana. The House Finch continued its expansion into our area. In middle Tennessee there was a minimum of 11 birds recorded in seven counties; they were seen, photographed, and banded (T.O.S.) (first record only three years ago). A male at Birmingham Mar. 5 (TI) was the fourth Alabama occurrence. It arrived in Louisiana this year: a female was present in Natchitoches from Christmas on (CV *et al.*) and a female was at a Baton Rouge feeder Jan. 8-18 (RBH). A **Pine Grosbeak** was seen and photographed in Arkansas at Salesville, Baxter Co., in early January (RKH); this represents the first Arkansas record. The Com Redpoll was present in the Nashville area from late January to the end of the period. The largest group recorded was three (N.T.O.S.). There was only one previous Nashville area record. The one at Little Rock Feb 5 (HEv) was the fifth ever reported. Pine Siskin was a major invasion species with large numbers reaching the coast and birds common throughout the area (I received no comments from Alabama). Its numbers in s. Louisiana were unprecedented in my memory. Normally it is rarer in Baton Rouge than Purple Finches. This year I estimate that there were ten times as many. The Am. Goldfinch was also common. The White-winged Crossbill was found at Martin, Tenn., twice: two males Nov. 28 & two females Dec. 2 (DP). The birds were observed at 4 ft and are only the second and third w. Tennessee occurrences. Charlie Viers reported at Natchitoches that the Le Conte's Sparrow was more common than usual. A comparison of recent CBCs supports this observation. A Henslow's Sparrow was reported from Bay County, Fla., Dec. 30 (MG,DSc). There were many Tree Sparrow reports from Tennessee and Arkansas, especially after mid-January; in middle Tennessee, "flocks of 100 were common in the fields." (T.O.S.). Many were also observed in w. Tennessee. In Alabama three were at Greenwood and Bessemer, Jefferson Co., Jan. 20 - Feb. 12 (CWB,VMB); 6-20 were at Swan Creek W.M.A., Jan. 29 - Feb. 19 (DMB, m ob); and 12 were at Huntsville Jan. 28 (CD,JMH). Observers in Louisiana and Mississippi either were not looking or the invasion did not reach these states. The Harris' Sparrow was regular in Arkansas this winter (see CBCs). The Lincoln's Sparrow at Swan Creek W.M.A., Dec. 3 (DMB,RWL) was late (*vide* TI). Lapland Longspurs were found as far s. as New Orleans (150 on Jan. 21 - NN,JR,RDP), and more than 100 were at Cheneyville Jan. 22 (BC,RN). The maximum in Alabama was 70 at Swan Creek Dec. 10 (DMB). In the Nashville area 1-5 were at Old Hickory L., Jan. 28 - Feb. 24 (LK *et al.*) and 1-6 were at S. Harpeth Valley Feb. 8-15 (KG); there were 7-8 area records. A Snow Bunting was found at Destin, Fla., Dec. 22 (CS,JS, m ob) and one was in Bay County

Dec. 30 - Feb. 15 (M&HW). These represent the first for n.w. Florida.

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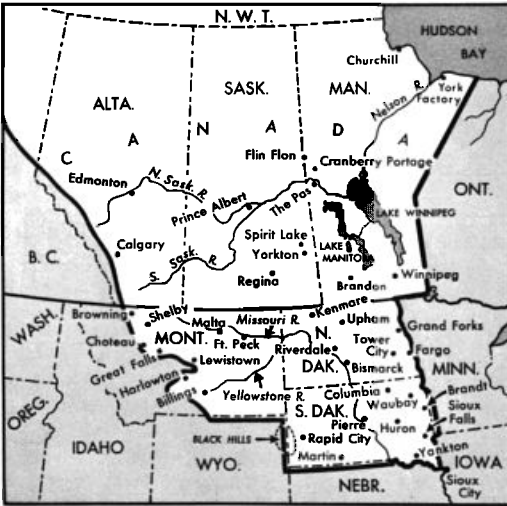
NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

/Esther M. Serr

Winter weather set in in mid-November with no letup thereafter. There was constant snow cover and records were set for continuous below freezing weather. This was the general weather pattern for the entire Region except for Manitoba, which missed most of the blizzards and had less snow.

The northern jetstream had dropped far to the south, leaving high arctic cold stalled along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains for most of the winter. Then the worst blizzard in fourteen years, lasting from February 2-9 blasted southwestern Saskatchewan. Winds above 60 miles per hour piled previously fallen snow into 15-foot drifts. The storm then moved down into eastern Montana and along the western borders of the Dakotas.

The northern prairie was intensely cold and stormy and birders simply didn't go birding. Yet, an unusual number of normally-migratory species remained in the Region, to be seen by the few hardy observers.



SWANS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Trumpeter Swans numbered 191, under management, at Lacreek N.W.R., Martin, S.D., a 20% increase over 1976.

Imagine one Great Blue Heron Jan. 5 at the edge of the ice on the Bighorn R., Mont. (TCH)! Mountain streams such as these dash onto the prairie and are then slowed by the many power dams at lower elevations. There is always open, fast water in the foothills or in tailwaters below the dams. Springs and rapids also provide open water in a few places. Consequently, Montana and South Dakota each had ten species of ducks in small numbers.

Mallards had an estimated mortality of 4000 along the Bighorn R., as a result of heavy snow and lack of available food. The Mallards found and used feed lots on ranches, after which the cattle wouldn't feed. Cracked corn was spread in an attempt to keep the ducks away from the cattle feeding areas (TCH,CMC). A ♂ Wood Duck was on Canyon L., Rapid City, all

season (TMH), and another was on Oahe Dam, S.D., Jan. 2 (RLH). Single Oldsquaws were found at Ft Peck Dec. 10-17 (CMC) and one was at Giant Springs near Great Falls, Mont., Feb. 20 (BRW). A pair of Hooded Mergansers was also at Giant Springs Jan. 24. Two Com. Ravens harassed a Com. Eider Dec. 3 at Churchill, Man., until it died, probably of exhaustion. The corpus couldn't be recovered as the ice in Hudson Bay is not safe to venturing out upon. Relocating the eider was impossible as ice crystals in the air impeded the focussing of a high-powered 'scope (BC).

HAWKS, EAGLES — Saskatchewan had the most Goshawk sightings (MAGA,LWO,WJA); however, the Regional total was half that of winter 1976. Sharp-shinned were common, as usual, at feeders in areas where there was heavy snow cover. Cooper's Hawks were not observed this winter. Red-taileds remained in South Dakota during the period, with 29 sightings reported. A late Swainson's Hawk was seen Dec. 2 at Upper Souris N.W.R., Foxholm, N.D. (IOR). Rough-leggeds continued on the upswing with 100+ sightings in the Region. Four Ferruginous Hawks were seen Jan. 9-18 in Yankton and Pennington cos., S.D. (WH,VBV,RDM)

It seemed to have been a good winter for Golden and Bald Eagles; however, perhaps these species were simply more noticeable against snow cover while hunting the more available, cold-weakened prey. Montana had an especially good count of both species along the Bighorn R., where waterfowl were also in substantial numbers. In s. Clay County, S.D., Dec. 10 a Golden Eagle perched on a windmill platform not 50 feet from a dwelling as it watched for a cat that had taken refuge in a barn (KJH). Three lingering Marsh Hawks were seen Jan. 12 in Tripp County, S.D. (RLH) and a single individual was observed Jan. 2 at Billings, Mont (HWC). A Gyrfalcon was hunting along the Cannonball R., N.D., Dec. 14 (DGD) and Mallards below Oahe Dam, Pierre, S.D., were the prey during January and February of one or two Gyrfalcons (RLH). There were 11 Gyrfalcon sightings reported in Canada, with six of those in Manitoba — two of them white phase — (IAW,PT,BC) and four were in Saskatchewan (MAG,GJW). Prairie and Peregrine Falcons and Merlins were most numerous in Saskatchewan, as usual. There were 11 Am. Kestrel sightings in Manitoba, possible owing to the more mild weather there (DRMH,RWN, M.J.Koes).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS — This is the group that probably suffered heaviest loss in the storms. Birds concentrated where cattle were being fed (SOJ,MAG) Snow forced them out from cover, which made them more visible and vulnerable, or they suffocated under the snow, as reported from the Dakotas and Montana (GBB,CMC). A total of 72 Willow Ptarmigan was observed Jan. 13 - Feb. 21 in the Churchill area (AC). Two Greater Prairie Chickens were observed Dec. 22 & Jan. 29 at Sand Lake N.W.R., Columbia, and one was in Deuel County, S.D., Dec. 23 — the first noted there in eight years (SW,BKH). Sharp-tailed Grouse populations seemed stable. About 300 regularly fed around Arrowwood N.W.R., Edmunds, N.D., during the season (JRF). Sage Grouse were noted on the lee

side of sagebrush clumps, seeking protection from the wind, in Butte County, S.D. (JMS). Two coveys of Bobwhite were seen in Yankton County Jan. 1 & Feb. 25 (WH) and a covey was in Gregory County, S.D., Dec. 23 (GLS). Gray Partridge could be close to peak populations with increases reported from the entire Region (BKH).

SHOREBIRDS — Killdeer and Com. Snipe overwintered at Hot Springs, Rapid City and Sturgis, S.D. (EEM,NRW).

OWLS — Manitoba alone had ten species of owls this winter. Four Screech Owls were in the Bismarck-Mandan, N.D. area Dec. 22 – Jan. 31 (RNR). Great Horneds probably thrived on the abundance of snowshoe hares in Saskatchewan (WCH). North Dakota had a better than usual owl count (JRF,DLK,CMM,LHW). Snowy Owl reports were very few, suggesting that their arctic food supply was sufficient. There were seven **Hawk Owls** sighted during the period in s.e. Manitoba (GEH,HWRC). A first confirmed occurrence for South Dakota was established Dec. 12 & Jan. 13 with two Hawk Owls at Brookings (NJH,CAT,CMP). One Pygmy Owl was at Dogpound Dec. 12 and two were at Water Valley, Alta., Jan. 1 (RJB,JJP). A Burrowing Owl was weak but alive Dec. 1 at Morris, Man. (JCh). Single Barred Owls were observed in December at Sandilands and St. Adolphe, Man. (Nykuliak & Layman), and one each occurred at Saskatoon (AJ,SJ) and Endeavor, Sask. One was seen Jan. 2 at Bottrel, Alta. (JJP). Great Gray Owls really moved into the Winnipeg area with 58 reported in December, 46 in January, and 21 in February. H.W.R. Copland and former Regional Editor R.W. Nero captured and banded 32 of those big birds. Seven Great Grays were sighted in Alberta Dec. 4 – Feb. 10 (DC,DMC,JJP). One Long-eared was found at Brookings, S.D., Dec. 23 (BKH). Short-eared sightings increased with 15 reported from Saskatchewan (DBH,FB,JBG). There were 14 in South Dakota with six of those in a pasture near Rapid City Jan. 28 (RDM). **Boreal Owls** don't usually inhabit Manitoba in the winter, but five were there during the period (RFK) and one was at Rosetown, Sask., Dec. 31 (GJW). Seven Saw-whet Owls were discovered in Saskatchewan Dec. 21 – Jan. 2 (JMH,MS,GGA,PLB). Others were seen Jan. 14 – 24 at Highmore and Pierre, S.D. (JHH,RLH), at Morris and Winnipeg, Man. (GEH) and at three places in Alberta.

LARKS — Flocks of Horned Larks upwards of 10,000 were observed in Montana throughout the period. There was a migratory flock of 83 males only, in Meade County, S.D., Jan. 14 (JLM,EMS). By early February, migrants had arrived in s.w. Saskatchewan (GJW,MAG,SOJ).

CORVIDS — Gray Jays were in unusual numbers in s. Saskatchewan, at Moose Jaw, Indian Head and Asquith (EWK,MS). Blue Jays continued to increase with a total of 747 birds reported in Saskatoon (PON). Black-billed Magpies averaged ten daily during the period at Arrowwood N.W.R., Edmunds, N.D., which is on the e. edge of their range (JRF). There

were 48 Com. Ravens at the Churchill garbage dump Feb. 15 (BC) and a total of 100 around Prince Albert, Sask. (WCH). Highway kills between Browning and Cutbank, Mont., attracted 35 ravens Dec. 31 (HMM) Farther s.e., two were sighted irregularly Jan. 6 – Feb. 18 at Billings, Mont. (HWC,BBF). Common Crows were very scarce, with the largest flock seen only 40 on Jan. 9 & Feb. 4 at Fargo, N.D. (CAS,VJS). Piñon Jay flocks in Montana and South Dakota were fewer in number and smaller in size. A Clark's Nutcracker Feb. 3 at Belfield, N.D., was the third there in 10 years (ESw). One was in Billings Jan. 12 – Feb. 18.

CHICKADEES THROUGH WRENS — Black-capped Chickadee abundance varies from place to place, probably owing to the size of feeding stations. Two Mountain Chickadees were observed Dec. 3-4 in Calgary, Alta. (HDM), and one was at Billings, Mont., Jan. 20. Red-breasted Nuthatches continued to outnumber White-breasted in the Region except in Saskatchewan. Saskatoon alone had a total of 260 White-breasted individuals sighted. A Pygmy Nuthatch was sighted Jan. 19 & 28 at Piedmont, S D (DAD). Brown Creeper numbers were much increased with 25 sightings this period. South Dakota reported the most, but they were also found as far n. as Prince Albert (SML) and Duck Lake, Sask. (BCG). Dippers are not always easy to find in winter observers found out as they worked their way to Rough Lock Falls, Spearfish Canyon, S.D., through snow and ice Feb. 3 to find only two birds (NRW). Two were at Calgary Dec. 11-17 (DD,GW,DJS). One Winter Wren was in Fall River County, S.D., Dec. 21 (JLM). One Long-billed Marsh Wren was flushed from bullrushes at the s. end of Prioux L., Man., two weeks after a severe blizzard (George Cotter).

THRASHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS — A Brown Thrasher was in Winnipeg Dec. 1-29 (A. Brady) An ad. ♂ Varied Thrush was at Stonewall, Man., Dec. 4-21 (KAG). Golden-crowned Kinglets were very scarce in the Region. Two E. Bluebirds were observed Dec. 24 & Jan. 21 and could easily have overwintered in Yankton County, S.D. A Mountain Bluebird Jan. 13 on Meadowlark Hill in Rapid City might have overwintered in the Badlands Nat'l Mon., S.D., and was not a true migrant. Single Townsend's Solitaires were unusual at Grand Forks Dec. 18 (GSL, L.Oring) and at Mandan, N.D., Jan. 3. One was sighted in Calgary Dec. 2 & 8 (WA) and another was at Fort Walsh, Cypress Hills, Sask., Dec. 18 (SML,WCH).

This was a good year for Bohemian Waxwings in the larger cities, where flocks of several hundred were reported during the season. These birds have interesting group habits as observed in Minot, N.D. (GBB). At Rapid City, S.D., a Townsend's Solitaire seemed to call the signals for the movements of a flock of 175 Bohemian Waxwings stationed in a tree. Cedar Waxwing numbers were higher throughout South Dakota — especially at Rapid City, Yankton and Vermillion, S.D. (LAW,JMW,KLH). A few wandered W to Billings and Great Falls, Mont. North Dakota had good numbers and a few were as far n. as Saskatoon Jan. 1 – Feb. 7 (CSH,SLW).

BLACKBIRDS — For a winter that set cold records, 18 W. Meadowlarks in South Dakota was surprising. Red-winged Blackbirds were reported from all states and provinces, and Com. Grackles were observed in half of them (TMB).

GROSBEAKS, FINCHES — Cardinal sightings in South Dakota totalled 58, and two were at Fargo, N D., Dec. 1 – Feb. 20 (MAB). Evening Grosbeaks numbered into the hundreds in the area. Most surprising was the major invasion of **Pine Grosbeaks**. A census of a few blocks in Grand Forks, N.D., indicated several hundred (DOL,SOL), and for former Regional Editor, Ann Gammell, it was an invasion year at Kenmare, N.D.

Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were present in small numbers and one **Black Rosy Finch** was noticed on Feb. 27 with the Gray-crowns at Great Falls, Mont. (BRW). A Gray-crowned was caught by hand in a garage Jan. 2 at Prairie City, S.D. (AH). Common Redpolls were the most abundant invaders across the Region. All reporters mentioned large numbers, but Rapid City was swamped with them. On a “hog-back hill” in the middle of the city, there was a tight, swirling flock of at least 1000 Feb. 27 (BLG). With the Commons were numbers of Hoaries — many more than the field guides would lead one to believe possible. Rudolf Koes estimated the proportion in Winnipeg to be three Common to one Hoary. One **House Finch** was identified at Billings Dec. 24 – Jan. 11 (HWC). “Virtually none” were the words used for Red Crossbills. But at Rapid City Feb. 23, one female with two small heavily-streaked young was observed (Horace Jackson). **White-winged Crossbills** were unusual in e. South Dakota all winter (RB,RRJ,GHF); a flock of 25 was heard in full song in Deuel County (BKH) and one was seen at Billings Feb. 23 (BBF).

TOWHEES THROUGH SPARROWS — Four Rufous-sided Towhees overwintered in Deuel and Yankton Cos., and at Reliance, S.D., Dec. 17 – Feb. 5 (WCT). South Dakota had 46 sightings of Harris’ Sparrows (IW,JWJ). Single White-throated Sparrows overwintered in Deuel County and Yankton, S.D. (JMW); at Fargo, N.D. (EGA), and one was at Saskatoon Dec. 1-5 (JBG,MFG). There were no Lapland Longspurs sighted at Kenmare, N.D. It is unusual for them not to be mixed with Snow Buntings, which were numerous in most places. A sizable flock of 4000 Snow Buntings was at Consul, Sask., Dec. 18 (MAG). Two thousand were feeding in an unharvested sunflower field in Grand Forks County, N.D., Feb. 18 (GSL,SOL). Small flocks were seen at Rapid City for the first time in 13 years of record-keeping (EMS).

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SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION
/Frances Williams



Winter on the Southern Plains was one of contrasts. December was dry and mild and migrants moved southward very slowly. Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) in Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma registered high numbers of species and individuals while Texas counts in general were low in both. Summer rainfall had resulted in good cover and plentiful plant food in the three northern states while Texas rainfall was below normal and west Texas areas were experiencing severe drought.

Beginning the second week of January the winter was the coldest on record at Kansas City, Lubbock, Texas and North Platte, Nebraska. Temperatures averaged eleven degrees below normal at Tulsa, eight degrees below normal at Wichita, Oklahoma City and Dallas. Many large lakes were still completely frozen in late February. It was also the snowiest winter on record, with forty-four days of continuous snow cover in Oklahoma. These same forty-four days were completely overcast in eastern Texas where nearly continual rain combined with cold temperatures to produce two severe ice storms. At the end of the period there were no signs of spring.

Nearly every contributor reported winter-killed birds but the greatest number of birds died on highways where they sought warmth radiating from exposed pavement. The birds were either too cold or too weak from hunger to fly from passing automobiles and were killed by the hundreds. Meadowlarks, Horned Larks and longspurs were the most numerous victims.

GREBES THROUGH HERONS — Three Red-necked Grebes were present in Crosby County, Tex., Jan. 21 (KH *et al.*). Received too late for the fall report but important enough to be included here was the attempted nesting of **Least Grebes** at Huntsville, Tex., Sept 3 (RM, KBB). One bird disappeared but the other remained until Oct. 15. Photographs (ph. T.C.W.C.) provided the first documented record of this species in e. Texas. White Pelicans were present at El Paso Jan. 14 – Feb. 28 (JD), on both the Oklahoma and Texas shores of L. Texoma in January (WP) and along the Trinity R., in Walker and Trinity Cos., Tex., throughout the period. Tony Gallucci estimated that as many as 40,000 Double-crested Cormorants wintered on L. Livingston in e. Texas. One of this species in Coffey County, Kans., Jan. 18 was unusual for the date (JHS) as were two in Crosby County Jan. 21 – Feb. 28 (KH). Olivaceous Cormorants wintered at L. Somerville, Tex (KA). Anhingas were reported during December and January in Trinity, Polk, San Jacinto, Walker and Montgomery Cos., Tex. (KBB).

With all lakes and ponds frozen, the presence of Great Blue Herons in Kansas during February in Coffey, Jefferson and Kiowa Counties was surprising. This species remained at Omaha until Dec. 26. A Great Egret was present at Dallas Jan. 8 (SC). A roost of Black-crowned Night Herons in Presidio County, Tex., comprised 21 birds Dec. 21 and 30 on Feb. 25 (SWe).

WATERFOWL — Whistling Swans were present in Washington County, Okla., Dec. 24 (BG), the Dallas area Dec. 16 & 22 (WP) and Coleman County, Tex., Dec 28-29 (CSe). Geese moved N in late February but were more widely dispersed than usual, small flocks appearing throughout the Region in areas where migrating geese are not common sights. The Ross' Geese which arrived at Hagerman N.W.R., Tex. in fall remained throughout the winter (KWH). Other Texas appearances of this species were in Culberson County Feb 19 (TGa, SWe), Midland Feb. 9-19 (MC, m.ob.) and Castro County (shot by hunter, *Texas Tech.). A

new hazard to wintering ducks was reported from Comanche and Eastland Cos., Tex., by Fain McDaniel. He discovered a large die-off of ducks due to aflatoxins produced by molds on wasted peanuts left in fields. Mr. McDaniel noted that these same molds may be present in seed grains, corn, pecans and other food crops.

S.A.

John P. Hubbard, project leader of New Mexico's endangered species program, captured nine "Mexican-like" ducks near Alpine, Tex., Jan. 26 and reported to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department that all nine were Mallard x Mexican hybrids. He also observed 24 ducks on a stock pond and was able to identify only six as resembling the Mexican Duck more than the Mallard. Whether this is a large enough sample to warrant the statement that there are no pure Mexican Ducks in Texas is debatable. Since similar estimates of the number of Black x Mallard hybrids have been offered one wonders how many of the "Black" Ducks sighted in Coffey and Wyandotte Cos., Kans., and Cleveland County, Okla. were of pure stock.

Unusual for the season were an Am. Wigeon in Lancaster County, Neb., Feb. 11 (DG) and a Gadwall at Omaha Dec. 17 (MW). Cinnamon Teal were sighted in Real County, Tex., Feb. 2 (E&KM). A single Wood Duck was sighted in Washington County, Okla., Feb 4 but 150 were present at Greenville, Tex., Jan 3. Redheads were very scarce throughout the Region. Seven Greater Scaup were present at L. Ogallala, Neb., Feb. 19 (FZ *et al.*) and there were several records in e. Texas. Common Goldeneyes were seen frequently in open water along the N. Platte R. An Oldsquaw at Tulsa Jan. 15-27 was the only one anywhere in the Region. A phenomenon of recent years has been the tremendous increase in Hooded Mergansers wintering on the plains. This year they were seen at nine localities in Texas, four in Oklahoma, Coffey County and L. Ogallala. The largest flock comprised 100 birds in Washington County, Okla., Dec 17. On many frozen lakes the most abundant species in small open areas was Com. Merganser. An estimated 500 were on Hulah Res., Okla., and 2000 at Keystone L., near Tulsa. In Hudspeth County, Tex., the presence of 61 Red-breasted Mergansers Jan. 28 was noteworthy.

VULTURES THROUGH FALCONS — A Turkey Vulture remained at Topeka until Dec. 16 (A&BD). Early migrants were seen at Jay, Okla., Feb. 11 (MB), Davis Mts., Tex., Feb. 13 (PE) and Midland Feb 11 (PE). A flock of Black Vultures comprising 26 birds rested on a sandbar in the Rio Grande, Big Bend N P, Feb. 20 (JMi). White-tailed Kites were located in the Davis Mts., in January and in Brewster County in February (*vide* TGa).

Raptors were unusually numerous, reports to the contrary being decidedly in the minority. Goshawks were sighted in six w. Texas localities from the Panhandle south to Presidio County. Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were abundant in urban areas, not only at feeding stations but in any protected spot where House Sparrows gathered. A Sharpie which wintered in the barnyard of a ranch in Presidio County feasted on Scaled Quail. In early December there was a concentration of Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks in Pawnee and Rush Cos., Kans., with an average of about two/sq. mi and with about equal numbers of each species (SS). A Harris' Hawk was sighted in Lubbock County Feb. 3 (GJ).

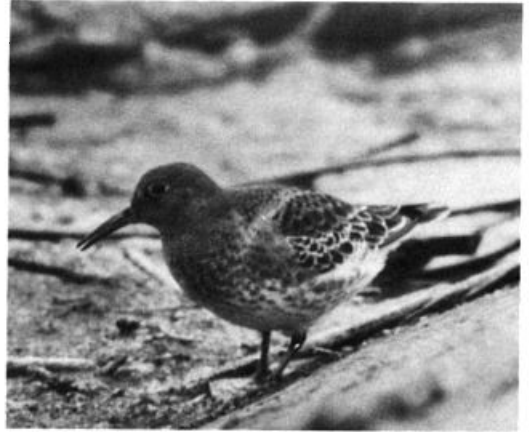
At many reservoirs numerous Bald Eagles could be seen on the ice where they presumably fed on frozen waterfowl. At one roost in Osage County, Okla., there were 36 imm. and 17 ad. Bald Eagles Feb. 15. An aerial survey Feb. 25 up the Arkansas R., from Pawnee County, Okla., to the Kansas border revealed 101 eagles (*vide* EHa). At Quartz Mts. S.P., Okla., there were 16 imm. and two ad. Bald Eagles Jan. 28 (*vide* JDT). Sandy Korowotny censused eagles in an area n. of the coastal counties from the Brazos R., e. to the Sabine R., and estimated 300 Bald Eagles wintering in the area. At the end of the period a pair of Bald Eagles was reported to be nesting in Montgomery County.

An Osprey was seen in Douglas County, Neb., Dec. 26. There were sightings of this species at seven Texas localities, the most winter records in many years. A Caracara in Tarrant County, Tex., Dec. 28 provided the first record there since 1951. Peregrine Falcons were sighted during December in Pawnee County, Kans., and Topeka and in January in Big Bend N.P. Merlins wintered in good numbers throughout the Region. Prairie Falcons were seen at Norman, Okla., Lyon County, Kans., and Omaha.

QUAIL THROUGH TERNS — Gambel's Quail are seen with increasing frequency in Big Bend N.P. A Sora in Grayson County, Tex., Dec. 19 was unusual for the season (SWo). At L. Thunderbird, Cleveland Co., 167 dead Am. Coots were noted along the shoreline, on paved roads and the grass verges. Bald Eagles, Ring-billed Gulls and coyotes feasted on the frozen coots.

Many shorebirds lingered past normal departure time. Four Killdeer in Keith County, Neb., Feb. 19 were unusual for the season (FZ *et al.*). A Mountain Plover at Midland Dec. 11 provided the first record since 1970 (BE,FW). A Black-bellied Plover was noted in Greenwood County, Kans., Dec. 2 (CH). An Am. Woodcock remained in a residential area of Ft. Worth Jan. 9-21 (JMS). At Lincoln, Com. Snipe were sighted Dec. 31 & Feb. 18 (DG). Numerous Spotted Sandpipers were discovered during the CBCs and one lingered in Tarrant County until Jan. 14. Lesser Yellowlegs were observed in Tillman, Caddo and Cotton Cos., Okla., in December (JDT, JMo), Dallas Jan. 8 (SC) and Donley County, Tex., Feb. 5 (KS). Solitary Sandpipers in Llano County, Tex., Feb. 2 and Real County, Tex., Feb. 26 were probably early spring migrants (E&KM). The Pectoral Sandpiper discovered

at Hagerman N.W.R., in late November was still present Dec. 31 (KWH *et al.*). Also surprising was a Baird's Sandpiper at Dallas Dec. 21 (TGo,WP). A Dunlin remained at Wichita until Jan. 7 (DV). One of the more exciting finds of the season was a **Purple Sandpiper** at L. Overholser in Oklahoma City Dec. 9 (JS,HW). It remained through Dec. 12 and many photographs were taken to document this "first" for Oklahoma. At Abilene, Tex., an Am. Avocet lingered until mid-December.



Purple Sandpiper, Lake Overholser, Okla., Dec. 11 1977. Photo J. S. Shackford.

A Glaucous Gull visited Oklahoma City Jan. 28 – Feb. 4 (JGN,JS). At Tulsa this species was noted Dec 17 (BF,EHa) and Jan. 22 (ES,RL). A Franklin's Gull was sighted near Topeka in early December. Forster's Terns were present on both the Oklahoma and Texas shores of L. Texoma until the end of December (CRB). Both Com. and Forster's Terns were noted at L. Somerville, Burleson Co., Tex., Feb. 20 (KA).

DOVES THROUGH OWLS — A flock of White-winged Doves comprising 55 birds wintered in Alpine, Tex. (JFS). Inca Doves wintered at feeders in Dallas, Amarillo and Montgomery County. Astounding is the word for a Yellow-billed Cuckoo discovered in Hunt County, Tex., Dec. 14 (TGo). Two Roadrunners found dead at Norman were victims of starvation. One weighed less than half the normal weight (GMS). The Groove-billed Anis reported in Kansas in fall remained into December. A Screech Owl succumbed to starvation at snow-covered Norman. Snowy Owls were reported in Douglas County, Neb., Feb. 15 and Junction, Kans., Jan. 8. Burrowing Owls sighted near Norman Dec. 28 & Feb. 27 were the first at that locality since 1973. A vandal shot and killed a **Great Gray Owl** in Dixon County, Neb. A deputy sheriff apprehended the culprit and sent the specimen to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The Great Gray Owl is listed as accidental in Nebraska on the basis of a specimen taken in Omaha in 1893 (*vide* RGC). A Barred Owl wintered in Lyon County (A&TH). A Saw-whet Owl was discovered at Denton, Neb., Dec. 18

WOODPECKERS AND FLYCATCHERS — Four Pileated Woodpeckers were present at Tishomingo N.W.R., Okla., Dec. 30 (CRB). A fine acorn crop at Tulsa resulted in an abundance of Red-headed Woodpeckers. A Golden-fronted Woodpecker was sighted in Big Bend N.P., Jan. 2. The Lewis' Woodpecker which arrived in Midland in late November was still present at the end of February. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered at Shawnee Mission, Kans. A Cassin's Kingbird was discovered in Big Bend N.P., Jan. 11 (GG). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Great Salt Plains N.W.R., Okla., Dec. 3 was very late (BC,NJa). Eastern Phoebe wintering at Athens, Tex., were able to survive a five-day period in which all vegetation and the ground were covered with a heavy coating of ice. A Black Phoebe was observed at Lubbock Dec. 23. An E. Wood Pewee was present in Medina County, Tex., Feb. 23 (E&KM). Vermilion Flycatchers in Montgomery County Dec. 22 (KBB) and Trinity County Jan. 8 (JF) were noteworthy.

SWALLOWS THROUGH WRENS — On February 18 a Cave Swallow flew through an open doorway into the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, Alpine, Tex., circled the room and flew out again (DL,DW). Red-breasted Nuthatches were present throughout the Region but were common only in e. Texas. The peak count comprised 35 birds at Athens (CWE). House Wrens were still at Winfield and Baldwin City, Kans., in late December. One at Caprock Canyon S.P., Briscoe Co., Tex., Jan. 1 provided a first record. Nearly all contributors noted that Carolina and Bewick's Wrens were either absent or in very low numbers. Mrs. Randolph reported that the number of Carolina Wrens on the Ft. Worth CBC was the lowest in 20 years. Winter Wrens were reported at only four locations. A Cactus Wren at Caprock Canyon S.P., Dec. 4 was n. of its usual range (KS). A Rock Wren was present at Junction City, Kans., Jan. 2.

MIMICS THROUGH KINGLETS — On a February day when the temperature in Pawnee County, Kans. was -7°F., a Mockingbird made its appearance. Gray Catbirds braved the cold until Jan. 9 at Tulsa (YMT)



Oklahoma's first Varied Thrush at Tulsa, Jan. 6, 1978. Photo J. S. Shackford.

and Jan. 1 at Ft. Worth (*vide* MR). Brown Thrashers wintered at feeders in Ellis and Johnson Cos., Kans. A Curve-billed Thrasher was observed in Ellis County Dec. 3 (RW). At Crescent L. Ref., Feb. 18, 200+ robins fed on small dead fish at the only open spring.

Oklahoma's first Varied Thrush was discovered Dec. 11 at Tulsa (GB). It stayed for a month and was photographed and observed by many. A second Varied Thrush (differently marked) was discovered Feb. 12 (EHa). Equally exciting was a Varied Thrush at Lincoln Feb. 18-28 (DG, m.ob.). A single Hermit Thrush was present at Marais des Cygnes Waterfowl Ref., Kans., Feb. 4 and three were found at Winfield Jan. 19.

The only Mountain Bluebirds reported anywhere were in Armstrong County, Tex., Feb. 26 (BZ,KZ) Townsend's Solitaires wintered in the N. Platte R valley, and were noted at Crescent L., Dec. 11 & Feb 27, Omaha Feb. 24, Bartlesville Jan. 1 and Odessa Jan 6. All contributors noted that Golden-crowned Kinglets were either absent or very scarce.

PIPITS THROUGH ICTERIDS — The only Sprague's Pipits reported were in Cleveland County Dec. 1 and Jan. 31 (WH,JG). Bohemian Waxwings were seen at Omaha, Hays and Lubbock. Cedar Waxwings were either absent or in very low numbers everywhere except Wyandotte County, Kans., where 1000 were seen Feb. 26 (*vide* MLM). Northern Shrikes were reported at Lincoln, Omaha, Crescent L. Ref., Kingman County, Kans., and Lubbock. A Yellow-throated Vireo appeared at a Walker County, Tex feeder Feb. 8 (MY). Orange-crowned Warblers lingered until early December at Halstead and Kansas City and wintered in Tulsa and Yukon, Okla. A Nashville Warbler was sighted in Medina County, Tex., Feb. 23 (E&KM). A Townsend's Warbler remained at Kerrville Jan. 11 - Feb. 28 (E&KM). A Louisiana Waterthrush was found in Walker County Dec. 17 - mid-January (KBB *et al.*). A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Cleveland County Dec. 2 was unexpected (WH).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird arrived in Sarpy County, Neb., Feb. 18. Red-winged Blackbirds wintered as far n. as Crescent L. Ref., and Pawnee County, Kans. A "Baltimore" Oriole at Dallas Jan. 17 - Feb. 11 (LL) and a "Bullock's" Oriole at Odessa Jan. 9 - Feb. 28 (BE) were unusual winter residents. Rusty Blackbirds were sighted in Ellis, Cowley and Sedgwick Counties and in Coleman, Lubbock and Midland Counties. A Great-tailed Grackle wintered in Sedgwick County (SK).

FRINGILLIDS — Two Cardinals were observed at Lewellen, Neb., Feb. 19 (FZ *et al.*). Pyrrhuloxias were seen in fair numbers at six localities n. of their usual range in w. Texas. Evening Grosbeaks were seen at 26 localities, their numbers decreasing from e. to w. Westernmost observations were at Hays, Norman and Waco. A Dickcissel was observed at Dewey, Okla., Jan. 24-26 (ED). A House Finch was seen at Oshkosh, Neb., Feb. 19 (FZ *et al.*), and another was located at Omaha Dec. 12 (MM). Pine Grosbeaks visited Omaha Jan. 2-29 (RA), Salina, Kans., Dec. 18 (JB) and Amarillo in early December (VD).

It was a redpoll winter. Common Redpolls were

present at Crescent L. Ref., Lincoln, Omaha, 12 localities in Kansas, Oklahoma City, Bartlesville and Washita County, Okla. **Hoary Redpolls** were located in Lincoln Feb. 25 (DG, m.ob.) and Omaha Feb. 15-17 (TB, m.ob.).

S.A.

Every contributor except five (those in trans-Pecos Texas) mentioned the Pine Siskin invasion. "Invasion" is not the word — it was more like a plague. At Merriam, Kans., one feed store sold 17 tons of "finch seed" plus 100,000 lbs. of other wild bird food. The siskins became very tame and frequently fed from the hand. In Baldwin City, Kans., four banders banded 3300 siskins, in Lawrence one person banded 800, in Johnson County, Kans., Mrs. Myers banded over 300, and as far s. as College Station, Keith Arnold banded 225.

Red Crossbills remained in Ellis County, Kans. throughout the period (CAE), and were sighted at Norman Dec. 14 (JG). A White-winged Crossbill was found dead in Lyon County Dec. 8 (CG, *Emporia State College). During the next few days five live ones were sighted (MS). A White-winged Crossbill was rescued from a cat in Ellis County, Kans., Oct. 29 (NN). A **Green-tailed Towhee** spent the last two weeks of February at Lincoln (E&MG, m.ob.). Rufous-sided Towhees were very scarce in w. Texas so Chuck Sexton was astounded to see more than 50 at Hord's Creek Res., Coleman Co., Dec. 7. Probably because of extreme drought conditions in s.w. Texas, Lark Buntings dispersed to Palo Pinto County, Waco, Wichita Falls and several panhandle localities.

In a day's birding in s.w. Texas, birders normally expect to find hundreds of sparrows including 14 to 17 species. This winter one could drive along fence rows for hours without seeing more than 30 White-crowned and a few Vesper Sparrows. None of the less common species could be found and even normally common ones e.g., Song and Lincoln Sparrows, were very scarce or missing. Sparrows were scarce as far e. as Ft. Worth, where only Vespers were present in normal numbers. Apparently some of the missing birds remained n. of Texas as Kansas observers reported abundant Savannah and unusually common Lincoln's Sparrows. Dead Grasshopper Sparrows were found at Tulsa Jan. 29 and Tyler, Tex., Jan. 31. Bryan reported that the place to find Le Conte's Sparrows in e. Texas was in broom sedge fields. Cassin's Sparrows were seen at Alpine and El Paso in late January. A Black-throated Sparrow in Crosby County Jan. 8 provided a first midwinter record. Tree Sparrows were as abundant as usual in Nebraska and Kansas but a S movement occurred Feb. 17-19 when large numbers appeared in n.c. Texas. On Dec. 21, Seltman found about 1000± Harris' Sparrows roosting in a shelter belt in Pawnee County, Kans. Song Sparrows wintered at Crescent L. Ref. A Swamp Sparrow in Sedgwick County Feb. 7 was unusual for the date (SK).

LONGSPURS AND SNOW BUNTINGS — The easiest way to find longspurs on the plains is to wait until all the fields are deep in snow, then drive along the roads where longspurs gather to feed on seeds uncovered by road clearing machinery. McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs were abundant in the Texas Panhandle as far s. as the Lubbock area. Thousands of Lapland Longspurs were present from Lincoln to Tulsa to n. Texas, where hundreds died in a snowstorm Feb. 18-20.

On Jan. 10, Richard C. Rosche counted approximately 2017 Snow Buntings as they flew up from the edges of 70 mi of Hwy. 20 between Crawford and Gordon, Neb. On February 24 he found a flock of 3000 in the Gordon area. In e. Nebraska this species wintered in numbers at large lakes, as many as 100 being present at Branched Oak L., near Lincoln (DG). There were no reports of this species in either Kansas or Oklahoma but the **Snow Bunting** was added to the Texas list Dec. 21 when Kelly Bryan and Tony Gallucci discovered one at L. Livingston, Polk Co (*Sam Houston St. Univ.).

CORRIGENDUM — *Am. Birds* 31:1156. The Black Skimmer in Russell County, Kans., was discovered by Chuck Hall and Tom Cannon. Another bird was seen at Cheyenne Bottoms N.W.R., about the same date by Ed Martinez.

CONTRIBUTORS AND INITIALED OBSERVERS

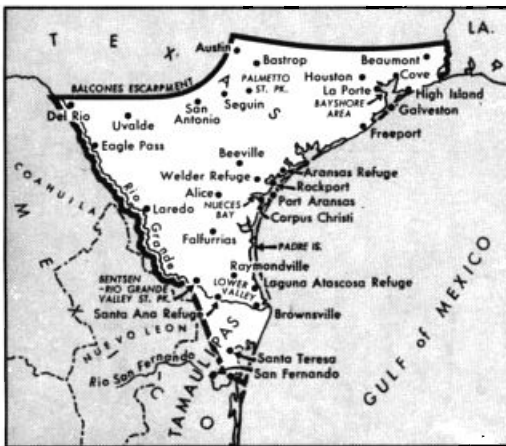
—**Kansas:** Jay Bishop, Arlene & Bob Delker, Charles A. Ely, Clarence Gladfelder, Charles Hall, Anne & Tom Hutton, Katherine B. Kelley, Steve Kingswood, Earl McHugh, Mary Louise Myers, Nina Norvell, Sebastian T. Patti, Marvin Rolfs, Jean H. Schulenberg, Ed Schulenberg, Marvin Schwilling, Scott Seltman, Donald Vannoy, Rick Weber. **Nebraska:** Rose Anderson, Tanya Bray, Patty Burchard, R.G. Cortelyou, Dot Duda, Daryl Gliblin, Ruth Green, Everett & Mildred Gross, Norma Johnson (NoJ), Sandy & Jim Kovanda, Marian Meier, Loren & Babs Padelford, Richard C. Rosche, Dorothy Rosche, Andy Saunders, Melba Wigg, Gertrude Wood, Fred Zeillemaker, Melly Zeillemaker. **Oklahoma:** Gene Balsley, Marguerite Baumgarter, Pat Bergey, Ina Brown, Brad Carlton, Ella Delap, Wayne Easley, Bob Farris, Bill Good, Joe Grzybowski, Elizabeth Hayes (EHa), Warren Harden, Deloris Isted, Nick Jackson (NJa), Rosemary Locke, Janet McGee (JMc), Jerry Moore (JMo), John G. Newell, John Shackford, Eleanor Sieg, Richard A. Stuart, George M. Sutton, Jack D. Tyler, Yula M. Thomas, Henry Walter. **Texas:** T.C.W.C.-Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection at Texas A.&M. University. Peggy Acord, Keith Arnold, Charles R. Brown, Lillian M. Brown, Kelly B. Bryan, Mary Crockett, S. Crowe, Vera Deason, Joseph DiPasquale, Charles W. Easley, Bill Edwards, Pansy Espy, John Ford, Tony Gallucci (TGA), Gayla Gatling (GGa), Tim Gollob (TGo), G. Griffin (GG), Karl W. Haller, Kelly Himmel, George Jury, Dirk Lanning, L. Leonard, Rick LoBello, Jody Miller (JMi), Ralph Moldenhauer, Ernest & Kay Mueller, Warren Pulich, Midge Randolph, James F. Scudday, Kenneth Seyffert, Chuck Sexton (CSe), Jessie Mae Smith, Lafayette Stankewitz, Darlene Stevens, Daniel M. Watson,

Steve West (SWE), David Whitacre, C.C. Wiedenfeld, Sam Wolfe (SWO), Jim Yantis, Maynard Yoes, Barry Zimmer, Kevin Zimmer. — **FRANCES WILLIAMS, 3307 Neely, Midland, TX 79703.**

SOUTH TEXAS REGION

/Fred S. Webster, Jr.

A super invasion of Pine Siskins, a dearth of many common winter passerines, a sprinkling of western and southwestern species unusually far eastward, and a most consistently cold and cloudy January and February — these are the facts that protrude from the usual clutter of seasonal data. Average temperatures were several degrees above normal in December. January promptly reversed the trend, and until about February 20, temperatures averaged from a few to as many as 20° F. below normal. Houston weather data, for example, showed January to be the coldest month on record there, based on average temperature — 40.8° — which is 11.3° below average. February averaged 45.1°, and was the coldest February on record.



With the jet stream well to the south of Texas, and no major impediment to the progress of cold fronts, the usual routine was two fronts per week. This rapid turnover precluded prolonged spells of extreme cold which are most damaging to plant and animal life. Often-persistent cloud cover helped keep temperatures down, but contributed little more than drizzle in the dry western half of the Region (from about Austin to Corpus Christi and westward), where stock tanks and natural ponds were drying up. Frequent high winds accelerated evaporation. After a dry December, the eastern half of the Region returned to normal rainfall until mid-February. Perhaps typical, Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, on the upper coast, had excellent marsh habitat and a good food supply for waterfowl and waders (WJK). Berry crops were more than ample in the dry western areas. On the other hand, dry range and pasture land may not have provided sufficient food for seed eaters. Cold and dry weather inhibited plant growth, except possibly in the

“evergreen” Rio Grande Delta, and plants of all types were two to four weeks late in budding.

GANNET THROUGH SPOONBILL — An ad Gannet was seen from the Port Aransas jetties Feb. 26 (PY). A concentration of 2000+ Double-crested Cormorants at San Antonio’s Braunig L., Jan. 21 (JAM) deserves mention. Unusually high numbers of White-faced Ibises wintered on Aransas N.W.R. (SEL), and Roseate Spoonbills were in good numbers at nearby Rockport (DNW).

WATERFOWL — Six Whistling Swans were reported in Chambers County in November and December (JL, *fide* DTD). An immature was seen at Rancho Santa Margarita, Starr Co., in early December (GWB,DF *et al.*, *fide* WR). Geese were at least normally abundant on the upper coast (JGM), especially Snow Geese in w. Harris County. Fewer than usual were observed wintering in the productive Eagle L., Colorado Co., area; this was blamed on the early spring plowing of fallow rice and soybean fields (WAS). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks seemed reluctant to move S. As many as 50 were seen at Maner L., Brazoria Co., Jan. 8 (SC,TC), unusual for the upper coast, and 39 wintered at Eagle L. (WAS) On a ranch near Beeville a breeding population, now numbering 200, wintered for the first time (AHG) Single Oldsquaws were at Freeport Jan. 6 (LB,MB), and at Houston Jan. 21 (JGM *et al.*), and a pair was seen at Cove, Chambers Co., Jan. 21 (EM *et al.*) Scoters on the upper coast fell below the large numbers of the previous winter. A Masked Duck was found at Anahuac N.W.R., Dec. 28, and remained through January (WJK). Two in ♀ plumage were seen in the marsh at Freeport Jan. 13 (LB,MB). A Com Merganser, rare in the Region, wintered on the sewage ponds at Kyle, Hays Co. (DGH).

VULTURES, HAWKS — The Turkey Vulture has “increased twenty-fold as a wintering bird in the agricultural portion of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (delta) since the return to sugar cane production six years ago. Rats are drawn to the cane fields for cover and for the sweet juice at the base of the stalks. The fields are fired before harvesting, and fire races through the fields so fast that the mammals cannot escape. Vultures follow the cane harvest, feeding on fire-killed rodents. Every stand of river woodlands has a large vulture roost from which they range each day. The roost at Santa Ana (N.W.R.) may number 500 birds.” (JCA). A pair of **Hook-billed Kites** was observed at Santa Ana N.W.R., Dec. 20 (TH) & 28 (KH,MT) White-tailed Kites were either more common or more conspicuous than usual on the c. and lower coasts Wolf reported them hunting along U.S. 77 s. of Kingsville. They were seen on the coastal plains from Galveston to the Rio Grande Delta. There were several reports of an imm. Gray Hawk around Falcon Dam in December. An ad. Golden Eagle was seen at Panna Maria, Karnes Co., Feb. 17 (WS), and an immature frequented the Warren L. area of Harris County (*fide* JGM). On Dec. 26, Axtell travelled between Sarita and Raymondville on U.S. 77 and failed — for the first time in 30 years — to see a Caracara.

CRANES, JACANAS — The season began with 61 ad and 9 juv. Whooping Cranes on Aransas N.W.R. The population was reduced by the apparent loss of one adult in late January (SEL). Up to 500 Sandhill Cranes could be found in w. Karnes County in January and February, feeding in grain fields (WS). Joe DeLeon, guide at Maner L., home of the Jacana, estimated a population of 35-40 on Jan 1. By late January only an adult and an immature remained (*fide* DEW *et al.*).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS, TERNS — Mountain Plover were rediscovered at Seguin, Guadalupe Co. (JAT,PT). This species was found again in the New Braunfels area, Comal Co., (DEW). An Am. Woodcock was found dead near La Feria, Cameron Co., Feb 7 (CK, *fide* DEW); this species is rare in the delta. Single Purple Sandpipers were located at the Freeport and Port Aransas jetties. About a dozen Black-necked Stilts were found at High I., in January (DTD,TLE,JGM); this is a rare winter resident on the upper coast. A Glaucous Gull was discovered on Bolivar Pen., Dec. 3 (DTD,JDa). One was at Texas City Dike (same bird?) in January. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was photographed on S. Padre I., Jan 7 (JCA). A Black Tern was on Bolivar Flats Jan. 7 (DTD,TLE,JGM); the latest published "fall" date is Dec 30.

OWLS, GOATSUCKERS — A Burrowing Owl appeared at Texas City Dike in November and remained until late February (DTD *et al.*). Three Long-eared Owls were found roosting at the Anzalduas unit of Santa Ana N.W.R., Jan. 27 & Feb. 21 (JCA). A first Short-eared Owl for Wilson County was seen hunting at dusk Dec. 23 (WS). A Whip-poor-will, rare in coastal areas in winter, was at High I., Jan. 29 (DTD,TLE,JGM).

HUMMINGBIRDS — A green-backed *Selasphorus* hummingbird, a possible ad. ♂ Allen's, was a guest of Mrs. Lacoke at San Antonio Sept. 29 – Feb. 21. This bird was well photographed by Braun — except for the individual rectrices, an examination of which is essential for correct identification. Although it may further muddy the water, the green-backed *Selasphorus* individual found dead at Houston in 1976 and reported as an Allen's (AB 30:741) subsequently failed the tail-feather test and should be considered neither a good Rufous nor a good Allen's (ARP). Hybridization is suspected.

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS — A ♂ Rose-throated Becard was seen occasionally in December at the campground below Falcon Dam (TH,WR *et al.*). A Black Phoebe, second ever for the upper coast, was seen at Elm L., Fort Bend Co., Jan. 29 & Feb. 25-26 (JT *et al.*). A Say's Phoebe was at the same locality during early winter (TLE,JGM).

CROWS THROUGH WRENS — The Brownsville city dump continued to provide Mexican Crows for visiting birders: 2000 were present Feb. 19, with about 800 White-necked Ravens (JCA). Brown Jays were in and out of Rancho Santa Margarita during the season.

Three Green Jays visited a feeder in Dinero, Live Oak Co. (MTa, *fide* AHG); for a first county record. Red-breasted Nuthatches were in good numbers in Travis and Bastrop Cos., and were present in above-normal numbers on the c. coast. House and Winter Wren numbers were below normal, and even resident Bewick's and Carolina Wrens were reported low in some localities.

THRASHERS THROUGH BLUEBIRDS — Brown Thrasher numbers were low on the upper coast and in most n.c. localities. A Long-billed Thrasher was found on the Freeport CBC, and consequently; this is a new species for the upper coast. Another was reported at Aransas N.W.R., Feb. 17 (DEW), near the limit of the species' range. Small flights of Am. Robins were sighted as far s. as the Rio Grande Delta in November, but then disappeared from deep South Texas. Numbers were down everywhere, but most noticeably southward. A Clay-colored Robin was found dead near Pharr, Hidalgo Co., in mid-January (DD, *fide* DEW). One was seen in dense woods near Santa Ana N.W.R headquarters, Mar. 1 (DEW). Hermit Thrushes and E Bluebirds were down generally.

GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS — A pair of Black-tailed Gnatcatchers was seen in scrub on dry, eroded hills above Rancho Santa Margarita, Jan. 17 (JCA). Golden-crowned Kinglets were extremely scarce, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were considerably less common than usual. Cedar Waxwings were scarce in extreme South Texas, below normal in intermediate areas, and occasionally approached normal numbers in the n. tier of counties from Austin to Houston. Numbers started building in January and held through February.

WARBLERS, ORIOLES, BLACKBIRDS — Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers, usually common-to-abundant, were much below normal throughout the coastal plains. Black-throated Gray Warblers, widespread in the Rio Grande Delta in recent winters, were all but absent. A Prairie Warbler wintered at Virginia Pt., near Galveston (TLE,JGM *et al.*). A Lichtenstein's Oriole in O'Neil's yard in Falfurrias, Nov 13, was a first for Brooks County. Several of these orioles could be found at the campground below Falcon Dam. Black-headed Orioles regularly visited feeders there (HHA). A ♂ N. (Baltimore) Oriole turned up at a hummingbird feeder in Corpus Christi for the third consecutive January (TL, *fide* KM). A ♀ Rusty Blackbird was described from Santa Ana N.W.R., Jan 21 (DEW), although this species had never been reported from the delta. A small flock of Com. Grackles spent most of February in Edinburg, for the first delta record in 20+ years (JCA).

FRINGILLIDS — A dry winter in the w. half of the Region may have accounted for unusual concentrations of Pyrrhuloxias in some areas. In Karnes and Wilson Cos., near the n.e. edge of their range, Sekula observed flocks of 50 or more. Obviously there was an E shift of part of the population. Mrs. Winship reported many more than usual at Rockport. Four were observed on the upper coast, equalling all previous records. Two on Galveston I., were farthest e.

A Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa parellina*) was observed in a floodplain thicket in s.w. Hidalgo County, Feb. 4-5 (JCA). This female responded to the imitated call of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, a species with which it shares living room in Mexico. (Note to birders: Habitat destruction in Mexico may send more Blue Buntings into Texas.) A Lazuli Bunting in "surprisingly good" ad. ♂ plumage was seen on the Attwater Prairie Chicken N.W.R., Dec. 22 (DTD,JGM), apparently only the fourth winter report for Texas. A fair number of Evening Grosbeaks appeared in the Houston area by mid-January and remained through the winter. A few were reported in Austin in February. Among the earliest reported were 13 in a flock at San Marcos, Hays Co., Jan. 17 (HLC,RP,SS). Although it was a relatively light invasion, it was the first in several years. Purple Finches were reported as far s. as Beeville, but counts were low; numbers increased on the upper coast in February. A late fall incursion of Pine Siskins developed into a major invasion region-wide. At Baytown, Tveten banded over 600. Early in the season, flocks roamed the upland portions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, but later became common throughout the delta as they joined equally large flocks of Am. Goldfinches in river woodland (JCA). Apparently the first occurrence of the **Brown Towhee** in the Rio Grande delta was an individual 3 mi n. of La Joya, Hidalgo Co., Dec. 16 (JCA).

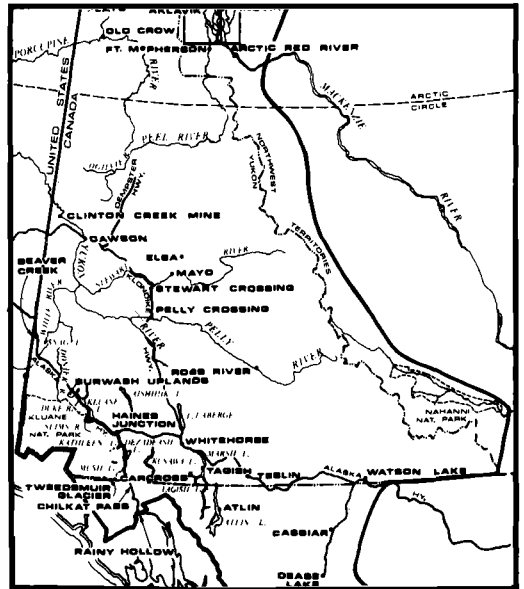
Most sparrow species were reported in below-normal numbers. Savannah Sparrow numbers were high on the upper coast and at Rockport but low elsewhere. Vesper Lark, Chipping Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows were down appreciably in most localities. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow was found 3 mi n. of Fronton, Starr Co., Dec. 17, it was the first reported along the lower Rio Grande in two decades (JCA). In Texas, this species normally does not occur s. or e. of the limestone hills of the Edwards Plateau. Clay-colored Sparrows, usually common to abundant in the dry uplands of Starr and n. Hidalgo Counties were much below normal (JCA). Lapland Longspurs were abundant in w. Harris County. A large flock of Chestnut-collared Longspurs was found near New Braunfels, Dec. 7 (DEW).

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NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION /Helmut Grünberg

In contrast to last year's mildest winter on record this December's mean temperature of -26.1°C . (-15°F) in Whitehorse (some areas below -30°C . — -22°F) was the lowest ever recorded. Temperatures in January were normal and in February slightly above normal. Whitehorse received less than half the normal amount of precipitation and the average wind speed was lower than normal.

Another record, a very pleasant one, was the increased number of contributors for this report. Twenty-seven observers from the southern Yukon and from Cassiar, British Columbia, reported. The general sentiment of contributors, "not much going on this winter", was probably owing to the cold December weather and was reflected in individual reports which showed few species and small numbers of individuals. Nevertheless, the thirty-six species observed (*cf* last winter's thirty-one) was due mainly to the increased number of observers and partly to relatively good food supply.



WATERFOWL AND RAPTORS — This winter there were few areas of open water. Accordingly, many fewer waterfowl were seen (see *AB* 31:351-52), nine birds were recorded altogether. Two goldeneye sp., and, surprisingly, two White-winged Scoters, providing the first winter record for the Region, were noted on the Teslin R., at Johnson's Crossing Dec 26 (BK). Two Com. Mergansers were observed in Whitehorse Dec. 26 — Jan. 2 (MD,DM), and three were seen at Tagish Feb. 15 (B&GM).

Two Goshawks, a Marsh Hawk and an ad. Golden Eagle were noted near Haines Jct., Dec. 18 (*vide* RB). Two more Goshawks were reported 15 km n.w. of Whitehorse, in January (BK). Golden Eagles were reported several times including one at Tagish Dec 20

(HM) There were three reports of Golden Eagles from the Yukon Game Farm n.w. of Whitehorse (BK, DN, *vide* BK). Two Gyrfalcons were reported from the s. Richardson Mts., Feb. 10 (D&JR) and one was observed at Kluanine L., Feb. 12 (HM).

GROUSE THROUGH OWLS — Spruce Grouse was once again the most common woodland species. It was reported by seven observers in numbers of up to five and was seen in all three winter months. One to three Ruffed Grouse were observed in three general areas of Teslin (D&PD), Whitehorse (HG, DR), and Beaver Cr. (ML). A Sharp-tailed Grouse was seen 8 km e. of Tagish Dec. 20 (B&GM). Willow Ptarmigans were reported in normal numbers in the s. Yukon (*vide* RB, HG, BK). In the s. Richardson Mts., 100± ptarmigans were seen Feb. 10 (D&JR). Rock Doves were in Whitehorse throughout the winter in flocks of 10-150± birds (HG, BK, JL, DM). The Great Horned Owl, probably our most common owl, was noted in the s. Yukon every winter month (*vide* RB, HG, BK). A Snowy Owl was seen at the Tagish Rd., Feb. 20 (GM). The only Hawk Owl reported this winter was one at the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 10 (D&JR). Two reports of Boreal Owl were received, one from Mile 925, Alaska Hwy., at the end of February (JL), and one from the Haines Jct. area in mid-December (*vide* RB).

WOODPECKERS — No fewer than six reports of Hairy and three of Downy Woodpecker were received this winter, all from the vicinity of feeders. One or two Hairy Woodpeckers were seen in the following areas: Carcross (HW), Tagish (B&GM), greater Whitehorse area (KB, DM, DS) and Haines Jct. (*vide* RB). One pair of Downy Woodpeckers was seen each weekend at Tagish (B&GM) and one bird was also at Tagish in December and January (HM). Two females were observed a few km n. of Whitehorse Dec. 3 (DS) and one female thereafter on 16 different days ("probably present daily"). One Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was seen near Haines Jct., Dec. 18 (*vide* RB). Our most common woodpecker, the N. Three-toed, was reported in normal numbers throughout the season.

JAYS THROUGH STARLINGS — Gray Jays were reported by almost every observer including the ones from Cassiar, B.C. (PM) and from Beaver Cr. (ML). Black-billed Magpies, apparently increasing over previous years, were mentioned in 18 reports, with four individuals as far n.w. as Beaver Cr. (ML). Common Ravens were seen by every contributor. They were mostly found in urban areas, but one was seen as far n. as the s. Richardson Mts., Feb. 10 (D&JR).

Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees were very common again this winter, the Boreals possibly having decreased somewhat in relative abundance. Dippers had to retreat to the few creeks and rivers that remained open. One or two were at the Whitehorse dam Dec. 19 & Jan. 2 (B&GM, DM). South of Haines Jct., 3+ were observed at Kathleen and Klukshu R., in December (*vide* LF) and one at Quill Cr., Feb. 11 (RB, SM, *vide* LF). Bohemian Waxwings were scarce. Sixteen were seen in Whitehorse (RC) and more than

six at Mile 925 of the Alaska Hwy. in December (JL) In February, 23+ birds were noted in Whitehorse (RC). Some N. Shrikes apparently stayed for the winter. Two were reported from the Haines Jct. area in January (*vide* LF). Four Starlings were seen at Teslin Dec. 6 (D&PD).

FINCHES, SPARROWS, SNOW BUNTINGS — Pine Grosbeaks were present in small numbers in all s. areas of the Region. Thirty birds were seen s.w. of Mt McIntyre Dec. 2 (HG). Near the beginning of December more than five Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were noted in Carcross. One Hoary Redpoll was associated with 11 Commons in Whitehorse Feb. 6 (HG). The largest flocks seen during the winter were 25+ redpolls in Whitehorse Feb. 16-18 (B&GM) and 25+ at Beaver Cr., Feb. 19 (ML). Five Red Crossbills were observed a few km n. of Whitehorse Jan. 13 (DS). There were several reports of White-winged Crossbill, the more common crossbill in the Region. The most unusual observation of the season was that of two Tree Sparrows which were seen in a gravel driveway in Whitehorse Feb. 10-12 and again in late February (RA). Up to 35 Snow Buntings were seen in Whitehorse (RC, HG, B&GM), and fewer were in other areas of the s. Yukon (D&PD, BK, BS).

CORRIGENDUM — The numbers given for the precipitation in the summer season 1977 (AB 31:1161) should be divided by ten.

CONTRIBUTORS — Ralph Archibald, Ross Barclay, Kate Bennet, René Carlson, Denny & Patricia Denison, Malcolm Dennington, Lloyd Freese, Bob & Carolyn Hayes, Helen Horback, Bill Klassen, John Lammers, Maria Ledergerber, Hector MacKenzie, Paul Mantle, Bea & George McLeod, Shirley Moore, Dave Mossop, Dan Nowlan, Don & John Russell, Don Schuler, Barbara Studds, Henry Wilkinson. — **HELMUT GRÜNBERG, Yukon Conservation Society, Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3S9, Canada.**

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN — INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/Thomas H. Rogers

Except for a cold spell in late December and early January, the Region experienced a mild winter. December precipitation was generally above normal with heavy snowfalls. January and February continued the trend and temperatures were normal or above, except for northwest Montana and adjacent Alberta. A deep snowpack in the mountains resulted, promising adequate summer water. More northerly and mountain areas still had much snow cover at the period's end. The long drought was over.

No great influx of most northern and mountain species occurred and no unusual numbers of semi-

hardy stragglers and winterers appeared. Persistent snow cover seemed to work hardship on species such as Marsh Hawk, American Kestrel and juncos in some localities.

We note with deep regret the passing of Ralph Hand during the winter. His records and reports of the birds of the Northwest date back to the early 1940s in northern Idaho and continued in western Montana until his death. As a student of birds, a conservationist and a friend, he will be greatly missed.



LOONS AND GREBES — Small numbers of Com. Loons wintered on Okanagan L., B.C., and on the Columbia R., near Wenatchee, Wash. Omak, Wash., had one Dec. 17 and Flathead L., Mont., had the species at Bigfork in mid-December and at Yellow Bay in late January. An Arctic Loon was with one or two Com. Loons at McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Wash., Jan. 23 – Feb. 28+. Supposedly the same bird was killed by a hunter there (m.ob.). Two **Red-throated Loons** were sighted Jan. 29 at Okanagan Landing; they are rare in interior British Columbia in winter (JG). Two to six were on the Columbia R., near Wenatchee Dec. 31 – early February (HO). At least one Red-necked Grebe apparently wintered at Yellow Bay, for the only winter record (DS). A few Horned Grebes on the Snake R., s. of Asotin, Wash., in December and January and in the Lewiston, Ida.-Clarkston, Wash. area, in late January through February furnished the first winter records for the locality as did 25 W. Grebes; the New Lower Granite Dam Res. probably a factor (EMcV, JWW). A Pied-billed Grebe was on the Blitzen R., Malheur N.W.R., Burns, Oreg., Dec. 21. The species is only occasional there (CDL).

CORMORANTS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Ten Double-crested Cormorants wintered on the Snake R., near Pasco, Wash. (CDL). A **Green Heron** was sighted along the Snake R., at Marsing, Ida., Jan.

21 (JH, BH, KE). An imm. Black-crowned Night Heron lingered at Malheur N.W.R., until Dec. 6 and two adults and one immature were observed at McNary N.W.R., Feb. 11 (WH, BW).

Whistling Swans were on Swan L., s.e. of Bigfork, Mont., Dec. 6-20. Unusual were appearances of 19 at Rimrock L., w. of Yakima Dec. 17 and 12 near Yakima Feb. 23-24 (Y.A.S.). Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., had a maximum of 247 Trumpeter Swans but peak numbers at Turnbull N.W.R., Cheney, Wash., dropped from 16 to six. Two were at Philleo L., Spokane Co., Feb. 18. Most of the Canada Geese were reported from the Nampa, Ida. area, which peaked at 7250 Dec. 6, and Malheur N.W.R., where 2000 wintered. Toppenish N.W.R., Wash., had 200 Feb. 16 and Turnbull N.W.R., 1000 Feb. 8. A **Cackling Goose** was with Canadas on the Columbia R., near Wenatchee Jan. 5 (PC) and two appeared near Spangle, Wash., Feb. 18 (JA). Conley L., near Cove, Oreg., had 350 White-fronted Geese Feb. 21 (MH, RR). Otherwise only singles were reported, at Malheur N.W.R., Dec. 21; near Spangle, Wash., Feb. 1 & 18; at Mann's L., Lewiston, Ida., Jan. 21, and on Hagerman Ref., Pocatello, Ida., Feb. 12. Snow Geese were at Swan L., near Bigfork, Mont., Dec. 2-6. One or possibly two **Ross' Geese** at McNary N.W.R., Jan. 8 – Feb. 17 attracted statewide attention (KK, WS, m.ob.).

Duck numbers were generally low, particularly for wintering birds. The biggest concentration reported was of 14,000 Mallards, about normal, at Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, Ida., in early December. About 200 wintered there. The species peaked at 2100 in the Nampa, Ida., area, Dec. 16. The peak at Turnbull N.W.R., was 600 Jan. 5. They were almost absent in the Pocatello area, where usually there are thousands. The drought apparently was responsible. A ♂ Mallard x Pintail hybrid was described in the Flathead Valley near Somers, Mont., Dec. 16 (DS). A few Gadwall wintered at Red Rock Lakes and Malheur N.W.R. The Nampa area had a peak of 1250 N. Shovelers Jan. 15. Pend Oreille L. and River in n. Idaho had 7600 Red-heads and Canvasbacks numbered 40 on Jan. 10 (I.F.G.). Up to 100 of the latter were at Mann's L., near Lewiston, some wintering. Large numbers were reported on Flathead L. in January and February (U.S.F. & W.S.). Common Goldeneyes were the most common wintering duck at Red Rock Lakes and 600 was the greatest concentration reported. A Harlequin Duck on the Snake R., at Marsing was the first ever for s. Idaho (JH, RH). Ten Ruddy Ducks on the winter survey on Pend Oreille L., were unusual (I.F.G.) Common Mergansers numbered 890 on the winter survey in n. Idaho (I.F.G.).

HAWKS — Six Goshawk sightings came from e Oregon and Washington and w. Montana. A Swainson's Hawk was reported for the Nampa, Ida. area Jan. 20, (G.E.A.S.) and the species was reported Dec 17 near Moxee and on Yakima Indian Reservation, Wash., Feb. 16 (Y.A.S.). A Ferruginous Hawk was sighted in the Potholes area at Dodson and Frenchman Hills Rds., Grant Co., Wash., Jan. 15 (WH, BW). Wintering Bald Eagles at Wolf Lodge Bay, Coeur d' Alene L., Ida., numbered 50 ad. and ten imm. birds Dec. 30

(I.F.G.), and a count Jan. 10 over the Pend Oreille R., Bayview, Hayden L., and Coeur d' Alene revealed 70 ad and five imm. birds (I.F.G.). In the Flathead Valley of w. Montana from Kalispell s. to Post Cr., Lake Co., and w. to Noxon, 21 were found, down from previous years (U.S.F.&W.S.). Absence of Am. Coot was believed responsible. By contrast, the Yakima R. mouth and the Columbia R., at Rocky Reach Dam near Wenatchee and between The Dalles and Cascade Locks had an unusual number of sightings (REW). Two Ospreys were near American Falls, Ida., Jan. 21 (MRC) and one was reported near Mt. Pelier in that area Feb. 19 (*vide* CHT). Single Gyrfalcons were reported from British Columbia and w. Montana. Prairie Falcons were sighted at 14 localities but there were only five sightings of Peregrine Falcons. Merlins were seen in at least seven localities.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS THROUGH GULLS — Ruffed Grouse numbers on a winter census plot near Spokane showed a decided increase. A "good flock" of Sharp-tailed Grouse was found in n. Douglas County, Wash. A covey of ten was seen s.e. of Kalispell. Sage Grouse were sighted in the Nampa area Dec. 17 and were on their strutting grounds near Foster Flat, Malheur N.W.R., Feb. 25. Seven coveys of Gray Partridge in the Reardan-Davenport, Wash. area, totalled $50 \pm$ birds. Small groups of Mountain Quail were located near Eagle Cr., Salmon R. Breaks, 30 mi s.e. of Lewiston, Ida. (DK). Up to 31 Turkeys were reported for the Nampa area and the species was sighted in the Kalispell vicinity (JR). At least six were in Marble Valley 3 mi n.w. of Addy, Wash. (JN).

Greater Sandhill Cranes had returned to Malheur by Feb. 17; they numbered 820 Feb. 25. Two Lessers appeared there Feb. 25. Three Sandhills were in the Nampa area Jan. 23. Wintering Am. Coot appeared scarce. The Snake R., at Firth, Ida., had a Spotted Sandpiper Jan. 17 (MRC). A Lesser Yellowlegs was along the Columbia R., at Irrigon, Oreg., Jan. 12 (JM) and four were along the Snake R., near Asotin, Wash., Jan. 22 (EMcV). A flock of 24 Dunlin at the Yakima R. mouth, near Richland, Wash., Dec. 10 & Feb. 13 may have wintered (REW). Up to three first-year Glaucous Gulls were on the Clearwater R., in Lewiston Jan. 22 – Feb. 26 (EMcV, JWW) and one was at the Walla Walla, Wash., city dump Feb. 8 (WS). A first-year Iceland Gull was identified at Coeur d' Alene city dump Dec. 28 (IOB, JWW) and a bird believed to be of this species was near Canyon Ferry Dam near Helena, Mont. (SM, M.A.C.). A Glaucous-winged Gull at Nampa Feb. 17 was only the second sighting for Idaho (JHi). Two adults and an immature were at Richland Feb. 11 (WH) and probably the same birds were at Pasco Feb. 14 (JA). One adult was at Coeur d' Alene Dec. 28 (JWW). An ad. ♀ **Thayer's Gull** collected at Coeur d' Alene Jan. 30 was probably Idaho's second definite record and the first specimen (JWW). Three ad. gulls at the Yakima R. mouth; Feb. 11-14 were at first thought to be Thayer's but an alternative suggested by Eugene Hunn was that they were Western x Glaucous-winged hybrids (WH, LH, RH, BK, BW, REW). A Thayer's was sighted at Orondo n. of Wenatchee Dec. 12 (PC).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — Thirty \pm Mourning Doves wintered along the Kootenai R., between Kootenai N.W.R., and Bonners Ferry and a few wintered along the Columbia R., in the Gifford-Bissell, Wash. area. A Screech Owl was found Dec. 26 & Jan. 2 roosting in an abandoned barn w. of Bozeman, where the species is rare (JR, SC). A scattering of Snowy Owls was detected in every state and province of the Region except Alberta and e. Oregon. A Hawk Owl wintered in an apple orchard containing some spruces and Douglas firs near Vernon, B.C. (JG) and one was reported just n.e. of Pocatello in January and February (MRC, *vide* CHT). Pygmy Owls were commonly reported and appeared definitely up in numbers at Missoula and at Polson and other places in the Flathead Valley, Mont. One in the Salmon, Ida., area was Roberts' first ever there and one reached the Council, Ida., area Feb. 5 (DJ). This was the third straight winter a Barred Owl appeared on Lewis-Clark State College campus in Lewiston, Ida. (EMcV), and single birds appeared near Asotin and Colton, Wash. (JWW). One in Penticton, B.C., captured a Pygmy Owl. One was found perched on a steel beam at the Fast Flux Test Facility, Hanford Atomic Energy Reservation, Benton Co., Wash., Feb. 15 (EM, REW). The Great Gray Owl was reported in Pleasant Valley w. of Kalispell (DD) and between Kalispell and Columbia Falls (MS). One was hunting voles near Vernon, B.C., Feb. 18 (JG) and a freshly road-killed bird was found at Addy, Wash., Feb. 9 (TA, *vide* SZ). Seven Long-eared Owls in a good breeding colony were on Umatilla N.W.R., near Umatilla, Oreg., Feb. 20 (C&MC). Saw-whet Owls were reported at Yakima (TM) and Wenatchee (PC) and at Nampa and Deer Flat N.W.R., near Nampa (BH, JH, ST). Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, Ida., also had one (LDN) and the Vernon, B.C. area had several December sightings. A ♂ Anna's Hummingbird was still visiting a feeder in Kelowna, B.C., Jan. 2 (RY) and three wintered at a Wenatchee feeder (PC). Yakima had one at a feeder before Christmas (Y.A.S.) and a female at a Lewiston feeder Dec. 11 – Jan. 1 provided the second Idaho record (JWW, EMcV, JW, EB).

WOODPECKERS — Lewis' Woodpecker numbers were "still way down" in the Wenatchee area (PC). Ten were reported for the Ahtanum Valley w. of Yakima Dec. 10 and one near Naches, Wash., Feb. 10 (Y.A.S.). Single birds were seen at Johnson Bar, Hell's Canyon of the Snake R., s. of Lewiston in mid-January and Feb. 18-20 (DK) and Salmon, Ida., had one Dec. 23 (HBR). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the Kalispell area Feb. 20 seemed very early (MS). A ♀ Williamson's Sapsucker was found along Spring Cr., Upper Grande Ronde R., w. of La Grande, Oreg., Dec. 20 (MH) for the only report. A White-headed Woodpecker was seen Dec. 11 at Bridge Cr., 6 mi s. of Ukiah, Oreg. (JM) and one was near Chewelah, Wash., Dec. 4-5 (JN). The only reports of Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers were from Harvey Cr., s.e. of Metaline Falls; near Chewelah; near Long L. Dam, downriver from Spokane, w. of Springdale, all in Washington, and at Yellow Bay, Flathead L. The N Three-toed was found only at Banff and Turner

Valley, s.e. British Columbia and in the n. Flathead Valley area, precise location not given.

JAYS THROUGH WRENS — Idaho had one Blue Jay near Twin Falls Feb. 13 and two in Pocatello Feb. 20 (MRC), and one at Nampa Feb. 18-19 (G.E.A.S.). In Montana one wintered in Helena (SM), one visited feeders regularly in Bozeman (PDS) and three were at feeders daily in the Kalispell area Dec. 1 on (JR). The only Washington records were of one sporadically at a hazelnut tree (AL) and one at a feeder (DR) in Walla Walla. One wintered at a feeder in Coldstream near Vernon, B.C. (LB) and one appeared at a Kimberley, B.C. feeder, Feb. 22 (MVW). Apparently the first records of the **Scrub Jay** for Washington e. of the Cascades were of one at a feeder in Ahtanum Valley w. of Yakima Dec. 10 (DW,ZB,ERC) and one at a Walla Walla feeder for about ten days beginning Dec. 17 (DR,EF). Up to 110 Com. Ravens simultaneously frequented the dump at Coeur d' Alene, Ida. Clark's Nutcrackers were very sparsely reported; Spokane seemed to have fair numbers. A Black-capped Chickadee appeared in Richland, Wash., Dec. 18 (REW) and a Mountain Chickadee visited a feeder there Jan. 1 (MC). The latter also appeared at Umatilla N.W.R., Feb. 20 (C&MC). Boise, Ida., had a sighting of a flock of 15 Plain Titmice Feb. 9 (FR). The Pygmy Nuthatch was reported for the Kalispell area (E.A.S.). A Brown Creeper ½ mi w. of Wapato, Wash., in late February was noteworthy (AH). A Cañon Wren wintered at cliffs 4 mi n. of Chewelah, Wash. (JN), and a Rock Wren was frequenting a rock jumble at Adventure Bay near Vernon, B.C. The species has wintered there previously (DP).

MIMIDS AND THRUSHES — The only Mockingbird sighting was of one at Ephrata, Wash., Jan. 13 (PC,BJ). Except for the most northerly part of the Region, Am. Robins were reported wintering in many localities, from a few to fairly good numbers. Unusually large numbers wintered at Pocatello. A Varied Thrush was with robins there Feb. 19 (MRC). The species wintered in good numbers at Wanatchee and one was at a feeder in Wapato, Wash., Feb. 16. At Bigfork it was regular starting Feb. 24. Malheur N.W.R., had the best spring buildup of W. Bluebirds since 1971. A Golden-crowned Kinglet there Dec. 21 supplied one of very few winter records for the refuge (CDL). Oregon had a few Water Pipits: three at Malheur Dec. 21 (CDL) and eight at Hot L., Feb. 25 (GS). In Washington one or two were at Walla Walla Dec. 31 and nearby College Place had one the next day (WS). At Nampa, Ida., 30 appeared Jan. 2 (G.E.A.S.). Overall numbers of Bohemian Waxwings appeared about average, with best numbers at Bozeman, Mont.; Salmon, Ida.; Kimberley, B.C., and Spokane, where the largest flock approximated 3000 Dec. 19. A N. Shrike got as far s. as Deer Flat N.W.R., Nampa, Jan. 21 (JH,DH). Loggerhead Shrikes were suspected of wintering in small numbers in the Pocatello area: one was there Jan. 22 and another near Shelley Jan. 17 (MRC, *vide* CHT). A few "Audubon's" Warblers were near Pocatello the last half of January (MRC) and Lewiston, Ida., had one Dec. 15 (JWW).

BLACKBIRDS AND TANAGERS — A few W. Meadowlarks appeared in unusual winter localities Salmon, Ida., had Dec. 25 & Feb. 24 sightings, the Kalispell area had groups of up to six birds, one was near Corvallis, Mont., Jan. 18, and Bozeman had one Dec. 26. A ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird was with Brewer's Blackbirds at Waterville, Wash., Jan. 13 (PC). Near Charlo, Mont., a male appeared Oct. 24 at a feeder and was joined in November by another. One remained until Jan. 1 and the other until Jan. 8 (CJH). A **Rusty Blackbird** was with Brewer's near Pocatello Jan. 19-20 (MRC). College Place, Wash., had a ♂ and ♀ Brown-headed Cowbird about Jan. 8 (WS,KK). A ♂ W. Tanager at Meridian, Ida., Jan. 22 made the second winter the species has been sighted in that area (Efr,CF).

FINCHES — A ♂ **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at a Bozeman feeder, reportedly since October, was confirmed as that species Dec. 30 for the first winter record for Montana and probably for the Northwest (SB,BD, PDS). A rare sighting near Frenchglen, Oreg., was of 40 Cassin's Finches Dec. 21 (CDL). House Finches were present in good numbers at Bozeman feeders all winter for the first time and visited a feeder at Ennis, Mont., Dec. 30 (PDS,WH). A flock of 30± frequented feeders near Corvallis, Mont., Dec. 23 - Feb. 24 (RS). The species was regular through the winter at Kalispell feeders for the first time (F.A.S.) and a few wintered at a Helena feeder (SM). Pine Grosbeaks appeared in many localities, sometimes in large numbers. Concentrations of 1000± Gray-crowned Rosy Finches appeared at Gardiner, Mont., Salmon, Ida., and fairly good numbers were near Evans and Almira, Wash. Eight at Malheur N.W.R., Dec. 17 was the second sighting there (CDL). A Jan. 24 sighting of 25 at Roza Dam in the Yakima area was noteworthy (Y.A.S.). About 12% of the rosy finches at Gardiner were Blacks (JEQ).

It was a redpoll winter for many areas. Single Hoary Redpolls were reported for Gardiner (JEQ), Missoula (SF), and Ennis (JGo,SC), Mont.; Nampa, Ida. (BS), and Chewelah, Wash. (JN). Influxes of Com. Redpolls occurred in many places. Pine Siskins were very scarce and Am. Goldfinches and Red Crossbills, were reported nearly as infrequently. A few Com. Redpolls at Malheur N.W.R., in December were the first ever for the refuge (LMcQ,STh,GW) as were three Pine Siskins there Dec. 17 (CDL). The only White-winged Crossbills reported were at Kalispell and (a flock of 50) at Bozeman.

SPARROWS — A Harris' Sparrow wintered at Helena where it is rare (AS) and one at Gardiner, Mont., was the first observed there in three years (JEQ). Umatilla N.W.R., Oreg., had a Golden-crowned Sparrow Jan. 2 (C&MC). A White-throated Sparrow was at a Livingston, Mont., feeder in December (CL) and one was at Kalispell Dec. 12-13 (BR). Canmore, Alta., had one Dec. 13 (EMV). A very few Lapland Longspurs were reported for the Kalispell area (DD,MB,MS); Helena (SM); Gardiner (JEQ); Mud L., Ida. (MRC), and Asotin (JW) and Almira-Hartline (JA,WH) Wash. Snow Buntings were abundant. Some

7500 swarmed in the Reardan-Davenport, Wash., area, Feb. 12 (JA) for the largest concentration. The Council, Ida., area had up to 70 in early January (DJ).

CORRIGENDUM — Delete the reference to Least Flycatchers June 11 at Heyburn S.P., Ida., AB 31:1165.

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MOUNTAIN WEST REGION

/Hugh E. Kingery

“The year of the Snow Bunting” was Scott’s assessment of the Mountain West winter which was appropriate at least for Wyoming and Colorado.

Snow covered the ground in northern Wyoming (and also, probably, to the north) from Thanksgiving to the end of February, an unusual circumstance which very likely drove Snow Buntings and Horned Larks south by the thousands. Winter brought heavy snows to the mountains throughout the Region, buoying hope for a break in the drought, and brought mild weather to the valleys.

Observers often get excited about rarities, but two observations this winter dramatize the folly of migratory birds that prolong stays in the cold country. A Double-crested Cormorant seen early the morning of the Denver Christmas Bird Count, (hereafter, CBC)



stretching a broken wing, expired later that day, leaving only a heap on a sand bar (PJ). At Ridgway, Colo., a Rufous-sided Towhee that tried to winter in too-snowy country gradually grew weaker until on February 15, it was caught by a cat (*fide* JRG).

LOONS THROUGH BITTERNS — A decrease in loon reports from Nevada was owing to lack of observers in the s. tip rather than from a decrease in the wintering population. Loons stayed late in Colorado, with the last three at Durango Dec. 26 (RWS) Arctic Loons were at Shadow Mt. Res., Nov. 27 (†DJ) and near Denver Dec. 3 (†HEK), and a Red-throated Loon found on the Denver CBC stayed Dec. 18-25 (D.F.O.,PM). Grebes also stayed late with a Horned at Estes Pk., Colo., December and January (WR *et al.*), and Boulder had one Jan. 22-28 (PM, JR). Other late Horned Grebes included two at Pueblo through December (D&CG) and one at Bear River N.W.R., Dec. 14 (DD). Huge numbers of **Eared Grebes** (10-50,000) perished in the Great Salt Lake owing to a streptococcal infection, with dead birds scattered along 15 mi of shoreline in December. A smaller kill occurred in 1975 when 5000 died from a similar epidemic (U.D.W.R.). In s. Nevada, numbers of wintering grebes recovered from last year; at least 1000 Eareds and 15,000 Westerns wintered on L. Mead (VM). At Pyramid L., n. of Reno, 500+ Eared and 1000 W. Grebes wintered (D&KG).

We received a late report of a Little Blue Heron at Bear R., Oct. 1, 1977 (†SSi). One or two Cattle Egrets wintered at Overton W.M.A., providing the first Nevada wintering record. Reno had its usual 6-10 wintering Black-crowned Night Herons (JA). An Am Bittern stayed into December at Bear R. (RK), and one wintered at Tule Springs near Las Vegas (VM).

WATERFOWL — Very few birds used Monte Vista N.W.R., probably owing to poor refuge production during last summer’s drought. At its low point Feb. 13, it had only 3300 ducks and geese, 75% Mallards. By Feb. 28 the migration had started, with 12,040 waterfowl including 9600 Mallards and 1200 Canada Geese (MTN). Surprisingly, Bear R. had fewer birds than Monte Vista Feb. 28, with only 10,375 ducks (7000 Pintails), 500 Canada Geese, and 350 Whistling Swans U.D.W.R. reported duck totals at 13 Utah refuges at 58,464 Feb. 28, much lower than last year’s 99,846

This year's totals included 24,545 Pintails and 16,576 Green-winged Teal. Browns Park N.W.R., Colo., moved from a low of 58 ducks and 165 geese Dec. 31 to 1300 ducks and 360 geese by Feb. 28. Even though 95% of its marsh froze, Ruby Lakes N.W.R., Nev., held 1200 wintering ducks. In s. Nevada, fewer ducks wintered, possibly because the mild winter allowed them to remain farther N.

Colorado had several Whistling Swans in December, plus 24 at Walsenburg Jan. 15 (D&CG). The tri-state survey of Trumpeter Swans tallied 73 adults and 15 immatures in Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and National Elk Ref. (RS). Shea's studies of Trumpeters suggest that the entire inland Canadian population winters in the Yellowstone area, mostly in Idaho, and that some Trumpeters may mix with Whistlings and continue farther S. As evidence, a group of seven ad. Trumpeters plus one apparently imm. Whistling stayed near Westcliffe, Colo., Dec. 12 - Feb. 11 (†VAT,D&CG *et al.*) At Ruby Lakes 20-25 wintered (SB) Six wintered at Fish Springs N.W.R., Utah; they could have come from either Ruby L., or the Yellowstone area.

Many more Ring-necked Ducks wintered in e. Colorado; 290 were counted in Boulder County in January (B.A.S.), while average numbers wintered at Las Vegas. Greater Scaup appeared at Lyons, Colo., Dec 14 (RJB) and Davis Dam, Nev., Jan. 14, and four Feb 18 (KR). Largest counts of goldeneyes came from Davis Dam with 975 Commons Feb. 4 (VM), and 37 Barrow's Jan. 26 (KR). Oldsquaws visited three Colorado reservoirs in December (Longmont, Denver, Pueblo) and L. Mohave produced one Jan. 27 (TB,JB). Fall's surfeit of scoters continued into the winter. White-winged Scoters flew into Estes Pk., Dec. 14 (two—WR), Denver Jan. 4 (D.F.O.), Las Vegas Nov. 30 - Dec. 5 (CL,PLo, ph.), and Sutcliffe, Nev., Dec. 29 - Feb. 28 (D&KG, ph.). Denver had two Black Scoters Dec. 3 (JR), and the Surf at Hygiene, Colo. (AB 32:236), stayed to Dec. 4. Reno's 100 wintering Ruddy Ducks was a high number (JA).

DIURNAL RAPTORS — The Cache Valley, Utah, midwinter raptor survey came up with 232 birds, including 65 Rough-legged, 36 Red-tailed and 47 Marsh Hawks and 53 Am. Kestrels the leading species. Compared with last year, the total is up, and the kestrel count doubled; last year showed 57 Rough-legged, 47 Red-tailed, and 55 Marsh Hawks (AS). A LaPlata County, Colo. survey, Feb. 18 found 82 raptors, topped by 32 Bald and 20 Golden Eagles and 17 Red-tailed Hawks (RWS). U.D.W.R. studied 214 dead or injured raptors during 1977. Principal causes were: 28% road killed, 22% shot, 10% electrocuted which were all eagles, including 47 Goldenes.

Early Turkey Vultures appeared at Golden, Colo., Feb 14 (AC) and Boulder City, Nev., Feb. 27 (DB). Observations of Goshawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks increased, Cooper's declined. Observers in Denver, Ft Collins, and Durango, Colo., commented on unusual numbers of Sharp-shinneds observed in town. CBC counts of accipiters/party-hour reflected the increase, and CBCs also indicated more Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks/party-hour. A Red-shouldered

Hawk appeared at Corn Cr., near Las Vegas intermittently all winter (VM *et al.*). Most interesting was a report of a Rough-legged Hawk described as hunting the tundra of Colorado's highest mountain, Mt. Elbert, Feb. 20 (CG).

Lund discovered two new eagle roosts near Casper, Wyo., and within 30 mi of Casper counted 150 roosting Bald Eagles, the highest count in 3 years. In Nevada the state's aerial survey produced the lowest eagle count in 5 years, probably attributable to drought-diminished wetland habitat (PL). Peak numbers of Balds included 25 wintering at Gunnison, Colo. (KJC), 83 in c. Utah (MW), 30 on Jan. 28 at Farmington Bay, Utah (SD), and 28 at Jackson Res., Colo., Jan 14 (HH). An Osprey reportedly wintered at Ft. Collins (F.C.A.S.) and single birds were seen at Moose, Wyo., Dec. 8 (RM) and Durango Feb. 24 (EF) At Sheridan five observers reported a Gyrfalcon present throughout the winter (HD). As presaged by autumn reports, a few more Merlins wintered than usual, the count included six on Dec. 29 in Pawnee Nat'l Grassland, Colo. (TG).

PTARMIGAN THROUGH GALLINULES — White-tailed Ptarmigan had excellent nesting success and production of young last summer; it has reached the high point in its cycle in most of Colorado. This winter 150 individuals, the third highest count on record, wintered at Guanella Pass (CEB) A ptarmigan was in the mountains of the S. Fork of the Shoshone R., near Cody, Wyo., in January (DJu), although checklists from nearby Yellowstone and Grand Teton Parks lack the species, they do occur in w. Montana. Sage Grouse populations in Colorado remained stable, with possible increases in a few locations (CEB). Jarbidge, Nev., had 52 Dec. 28 (LB) Sandhill Cranes arrived at Monte Vista in numbers by Feb. 23, and 7000 were there by Feb. 28. A flock of 80 flew over the Dead Mtns., in the s. tip of Nevada Jan 26; they winter in nearby Arizona (KR). From 25-30 Com. Gallinules wintered at the Las Vegas sewage canals (CL), and one was seen near St. George, Utah Feb. 20 (MW).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS — Killdeer began migrating in February, with three landing atop a house in Carson City, Nev., Feb. 22 (BP), and 21 arrived in Reno by Feb. 28 (JA). Common Snipe wintered in a hot water stream near Walden, in one of Colorado's coldest winter valleys (DJ). Several dozen Least Sandpipers wintered at Davis Dam, and 1-2 wintered at Las Vegas. By Feb. 20 four had arrived at St. George (MW). Colorado tallied about a dozen Glaucous Gulls, the only regional reports. At L. Mead, 1-2 first-year Glaucous-winged Gulls appeared Jan. 17-22 (VM) A large black-backed gull at Farmington Bay W.M.A., Utah could have been either a Western or Great Black-backed; the observer thought it large enough for the latter (†WWB). Colorado reported six Thayer's Gulls, and 1-4 first-year birds wintered at Las Vegas. Large numbers of Herring Gulls visited Colorado, with 150 in Boulder County in February (B.A.S.), and 49 Feb. 18 near Denver (D.F.O.). An imm. Mew Gull visited L. Mead Jan. 5 - Feb. 20; a different one appeared Feb 26

(VM), and one was at L. Mohave Jan. 25 (KR). A late Franklin's Gull remained at Utah L., near Provo to Dec. 3 (MW), and five Bonaparte's Gulls were very late at Boulder Dec. 11 (PM). "Not part of the winter season, but of great interest was the report of a **Red-legged Kittiwake** picked up alive at Tule Springs July 3, 1977, which died the same day. This represents only the third North American occurrence away from the Bering Sea or coastal Alaska, only the second inland record, and also the second s. of Alaska — the other in Lincoln County, Oreg." (CL).

PIGEONS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — A sizable flock of Band-tailed Pigeons wintered in the Carson range of w. c. Nevada (GH), the same area where they congregated in 1972 (AB 26:636, 27:93). An Inca Dove wintered at Boulder City, for about the twelfth state record (PLO). Snowy Owl reports included five from Utah (U.D.W.R.), one at Sheridan Jan 10 (*fide* HD), and one each at Eldora and Eagle, Colo., Feb. 23 (*fide* GS, JM). The 27 Pygmy Owls reported included seven at Durango (RWS). A Burrowing Owl flew across a highway near Golden, Colo., Jan 3 (WWB). Utah's third Great Gray Owl was at Bear L., in late January (U.D.W.R.). In Larimer and Weld Cos., Colo., a researcher found 54 Short-eared Owls in January and February (RKA); 18 were at Ft. Collins Jan. 3 (BM). At Bear R., 30-40 wintered (RK). Migrating Short-eareds appeared at the unusual locations of Eagle, Colo., Feb. 27 – Mar. 1 (JM) and Jensen, Utah Feb. 25-26 (JoA). This winter brought more **Boreal Owls** to Colorado than the past 5 years together: one Dec. 2 near Grand L., a ski pole's length from the observer (DJ); and dead birds from Evergreen Feb. 2 (WWB, *Denver Mus. Nat. Hist.) and Estes Pk., Feb. 6 (WR, *Colorado St. Univ.). Also records of four Saw-whet Owls came from Wyoming (Sheridan two, HD, Greybull, BO, and Cody, RMJ), plus one at Provo Feb. 19 (MW), and six Colorado birds. A surprising combination of 200 Vaux's mixed with 1200 migrating White-throated Swifts were at Davis Dam Feb. 4 (VM, EM). An Anna's Hummingbird visited a campground near L. Mead Jan. 18-22 (BP, VM, J&BA).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH SWALLOWS — Common Flickers have increased steadily on CBCs for 6 years, this year up to .84/party-hour, from .52 in 1972. A surprising Red-headed Woodpecker at Wetmore, Colo., Jan. 7 was changing into adult plumage (EW, DGr). CBC averages for Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers dropped. The spread of the ponderosa pine beetle continued to attract N. Three-toed Woodpeckers; now Ft. Collins and Colorado Springs can find them close to town with some regularity. On Feb. 25, D.F.O. counted 10,000 Horned Larks at Pawnee Nat'l Grassland. Large numbers around Cody, e.g., 1500 on the Meeteeetse Hwy, support Kepler's comment that "our large flocks were Horned Larks, not Snow Buntings," and Casper had unusually large flocks. The 50 Violet-green Swallows at Davis Dam Feb 18 (KR) were the first reported in winter for Nevada. Large numbers of Tree Swallows wintered in s. Nevada; from Davis Dam came counts of 1500-5000 in January (VM, KR). Also more Rough-wingeds than

ever wintered with 35-50 at Davis and 1-4 at L. Mead (VM). A Barn Swallow reportedly reached Provo Jan 31 (MC). Early Cliff Swallows arrived at Davis Feb 18 (KR).

JAYS THROUGH MIMIDS — Blue Jays were seen a few times in Logan and Salt Lake City, and four wintered at Sheridan. The two Steller's Jays which wintered at Story, Wyo., furnished the Sheridan area's first records. Salt Lake City reported very few, and Logan and Ogden reported none; poor scrub oak acorn crops may have sent them elsewhere. Only Salt Lake City reported wintering Winter Wrens, while two Cactus Wrens wintered at Las Vegas. A Short-billed Marsh Wren stayed briefly in Pueblo Jan. 2 (DGr, CK). Rare Cañon Wrens were at Salt Lake City Dec 26 (DD) and Jarbidge, Nev., Jan. 4 (LB), the first winter report for n. Nevada. A Gray Catbird wintered on a Las Vegas golf course (CL), and another occurred in N. Las Vegas Jan. 29 (NP). Single Brown Thrashers were at Denver Dec. 26 (JR), and Pueblo Dec 3-26 (D&CG) with one Sage Thrasher there Dec. 17 – Jan 10 (RA, EB *et al.*).

THRUSHES THROUGH SHRIKES — Hundreds of Am. Robins wintered in valleys from Sheridan s w to Logan, Salt Lake City, Cedar City, Utah and across Nevada; also at Pueblo, but not along the Piedmont from Cheyenne to Colorado Springs. Nevada reported more Varied thrushes than in 7 years, with two wintering at Corn Cr., and three others reported One found on the Casper, Wyo. CBC, stayed through January (OKS). A Hermit Thrush wintered at Corn Cr (VM, CL), and others occurred at Boulder City Jan 12 (PLO) and Verdi Jan. 29 (J&BA) to give Nevada its first winter records in several years. One also appeared in Salt Lake City Feb. 19 (†SD). Wintering E Bluebirds were at Prewitt Res., near Sterling, Colo., Jan 7 (TSh), two at Colorado Springs Feb. 14 (*fide* CLC), and three at Bonny Res., Feb. 18 (SDe). In Colorado 36± W. Bluebirds wintered at Beulah, a pair wintered at Boulder (BAs), and 40 were at Texas Cr., Jan 9 (JR). Pueblo had 250 wintering Mountain Bluebirds, and produced a high count of 740 Jan. 7 (JR) Two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers lingered at Utah L., to Dec 3 (MW). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet and 20 Water Pipits at McElmo Canyon, Montezuma Co., Colo., may have wintered (RWS). A few pipits did winter at Pueblo, Reno, and Boulder City, and Dubois had one Dec 30 (MB). Bohemian Waxwings staged a normal flight — numerous in n. Wyoming, some in c. Wyoming, a few in n. Utah, and one Colorado record of 260 at Red Feather L., Dec. 11-18 (F.C.A.S.). By the end of the season, one section of Las Vegas already had 34 nesting pairs of Phainopeplas. In fact one pair laid two eggs Dec. 8, but abandoned the nest after hatching, during cold rains (GA). In the intermountain area from Durango to Kanab and Cedar City, more N. Shrikes wintered than usual, even outnumbering Loggerheads

WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS — Utah L. had two Orange-crowned Warblers Dec. 3-18 (MW) and they had returned to St. George, s. Utah by Feb. 20 (MW) A Magnolia Warbler confounded observers at Ft

Collins Dec. 3 (RAR). Numbers of wintering Yellow-rumped increased at Davis Dam with over 1000+ Dec. 13 (VM), 500+ in January, and 150 in February (KR). In February Utah observers found them at Cedar City, St. George and Logan. A Com. Yellowthroat remained at Pueblo Dec. 3-18 (CK, JL), and Nevada's first recorded winter Am. Redstart flitted about near L. Mead Jan. 18 (BPa). A Rusty Blackbird was at Beatty, Nev., Dec. 10 (SSp). Late Com. Grackles were at Pueblo Dec. 3 - Jan. 5 (D&CG) and Cheyenne Dec. 30 (FC).

FINCHES — The Cardinal in Wheat Ridge, Colo. (AB 32:239) wintered (PE). Observers uniformly reported fewer Evening Grosbeaks than last year. Only one Purple Finch came to Ryder's Ft. Collins feeder; a female, apparently Purple, was at Bonny Res., Colo., Feb. 18 (†PM). Sheridan had its normal complement of 1-2 Purples all wintering, feeding with Cassin's (HD). Ski touring has brought birders into the high country in winter, and as a result they see more Pine Grosbeaks — this winter at Logan, Jackson, Grand L., and Summit Co., Colo. Rosy finches visited feeders in greater-than-usual numbers this year, probably because of snow in the high country. At Sheridan, where they had not patronized feeders before, flocks of 50-200 appeared. Peak counts came in February, after the snows had built up, at Divide, Colo., with 750 Feb. 20 (CLC) and McCoy, Colo., with 500 Dec. 18 - Mar. 7 (ME). Dubois, Wyo., seems like the best site for Black Rosy Finches, with daily callers at feeders and a peak of 190 Feb. 2; the flock on Jan. 15 also included a Brown-capped (MB). Common Redpolls arrived in substantial numbers, penetrating across Wyoming to Salt Lake City and Woodland, Utah (MW), Gunnison (KJC), and Denver. The flight included a handful of Hoary Redpolls at Sheridan and Jackson. They, like the rosy finches, arrived in February, with Jackson's appearing Feb. 14 (BR) and Sheridan's three Feb. 24 (HD). Colorado had numerous Red Crossbills, as did Sheridan and Logan, the latter also had White-winged Crossbills, seen intermittently all winter by ski tourers (AS). At Jackson, the first local record of White-winged Crossbills came with 10-35 birds Jan. 25 - Feb. 19 (DT).



Lapland Longspur, Jackson Hole, Wyo., Feb. 26 - 27, 1978. Photo/ Daniel Abrams.

SPARROWS THROUGH BUNTINGS — A Green-tailed Towhee wintered at Bountiful, Utah (SD) and again at Ridgway, Colo. (JRG). Two Vesper Sparrows spent Jan. 2 - Feb. 12 at Corn Cr. (VM). Tree Sparrows did drop on CBCs, to a low level of 2/party-hour. For the third year, Harris' Sparrow counts were average on CBCs. Reports of White-throated Sparrows also dropped. Pueblo had five Lincoln's Sparrows Jan 15-17 (D&CG). Denver's new Chatfield Res., had at least six Swamp Sparrows wintering (HEK). Average numbers of Lapland Longspurs spread across e Colorado, but one at Ridgway several times in February was surprising. Jackson Hole, Wyo., had its first record with 45-50 birds at Kelly Feb. 26-27 (BG et al.).

S.A.

Thousands of Snow Buntings pushed into the Mountain West. Flocks of hundreds blanketed Wyoming all winter. First word of the massive dispersal in Colorado came with the discovery of 5-10,000 at Grover in the Pawnee Nat'l Grassland Jan. 21 (SL, PG). Smaller flocks drifted S to c. Colorado, from Burlington to Saguache. Utah had fewer, 500 spent January between Vernal and the Colorado line, 50 stopped briefly at Logan at Christmastime, and one was found at Arches Nat'l Mon., Jan. 29 (DGT). (Vast areas of e. Utah had no observers.)

First local records for Snow Buntings came to four Colorado latilongs, Rocky Mountain N.P., Browns Pk. N.W.R., Arches Nat'l Mon., and on the Logan and Denver CBCs. Only Nevada failed to share in the bunting bonanza.

ADDENDUM — "Contra to *Am. Birds* 31:1170 (1977), Brown-capped Rosy Finches were at apparently normal levels in Colorado alpine areas all summer. They are difficult to find if there are not snowfields, as they are not as conspicuous. Observers should check the wet areas near rocky sites when there is no or little snow." (CEB).

ABBREVIATIONS — B.A.S., Boulder Aud. Soc.; D.F.O., Denver Field Ornithologists; F.C.A.S., Ft Collins Aud. Soc.; U.D.W.R., Utah Div. of Wildlife Resources; *, specimen; ph., photograph; †, written description on file with Reg. Ed.

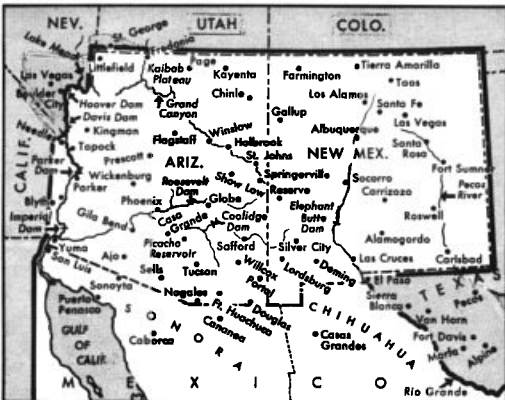
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SOUTHWEST REGION

/Janet Witzeman, John P. Hubbard and
Kenn Kaufman

The unusually warm temperatures of late fall continued through December over most of the Region, and throughout the winter in some areas. Several bird species appeared to respond to the mild conditions by wintering (or attempting to winter) farther north, or at higher elevations, than usual. For instance, most of the late-lingering shorebirds at Willcox, Arizona, mentioned in our last report, continued there until spring. Some other examples are discussed in the species accounts that follow.



LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Two Arctic Loons on L. Havasu throughout the period (KVR *et al.*) and one at Davis Dam Feb. 18-20 (KVR VM) were the first to be recorded in late winter in Arizona.

Although Red-necked Grebe is still unverified in New Mexico, there have been a few sightings in the lower Pecos Valley. Adding to these was one reported, with fairly good details, at Harroun L., near Loving Dec. 30 (LW,RWI). A Least Grebe was at Quitobaquito Pond, Organ Pipe Cactus N. M., Ariz., from December at least into March; this bird may have been present there continuously since October 1976.

A late Brown Pelican was near Martinez L., on the L.C.R., Dec. 17 (DW,AEH), and an adult was seen on the Gila R., s. of Cliff, N. Mex., Dec. 13 (AG); the species is still on the hypothetical list in New Mexico. Few Olivaceous Cormorants are reported in New Mexico in winter, so one well-described from Caballo L., Feb. 4 (KZ), was noteworthy. Another Olivaceous seen with 150 Double-crested Jan. 27 at Cibola L., L.C.R., was the first ever recorded in w. Arizona (THA).

WATERFOWL — New Mexico had more than the usual number of Whistling Swans, including singles near Farmington Jan. 12 (CS) and n. of Albuquerque Dec. 23-27 (J. Phillips), plus one or two near Alamogordo Jan. 15 – Feb. 5. (LM *et al.*). In Arizona's L.C.V., six were at Parker in late December with two remaining to mid-February, and three wintered at Topock.

Ross' Geese away from areas of regular occurrence were singles at Palominas, Ariz., Nov. 27 – Jan. 3 (RNd,MK *et al.*) and one n. of Clayton, N. Mex., Dec. 29 – Jan. 6 (W. Cook, A. Krehbiel). Although Greater Scaup are quite rare over most of the Region, they may be regular in the L.C.V.: four were seen below Davis Dam Feb. 18 (KVR), and 14-17 were below Parker Dam all winter. The highest count of Barrow's Goldeneyes this winter at their "traditional" locality, Davis Dam, was 37 on Jan. 26 (KVR,JDB). More surprising — unprecedented, in fact — was a scattering of Barrow's farther down the Colorado R., with at least four below Parker Dam all winter (m.ob.), one at Parker Dec. 23 (GMcC,JD), two below Parker in February, and probable females at Cibola Feb. 14 (TB) and 10 mi s. of Blythe, Calif., Feb. 21 (DW,JDB).

One of the most amazing records of the period was of a ♂ **Harlequin Duck** present from mid-December – Jan 5 or 6 at Bitter Lake N.W.R., N. Mex. (DLB *et al.*, ph.) There was only one previous state record, November 1945, near Tres Piedras in the extreme north.

A perplexing duck seen on the L.C.R., below Parker Dam Dec. 8-13 (†AEH *et al.*) may have been either a Masked Duck — well outside the species' normal plumage and normal range — or perhaps some very unusual hybrid.

RAPTORS, CRANES — The **Red-shouldered Hawk** in the B.W. Delta (see last report) was observed by many through late January, but not subsequently. However, *another* individual — an adult — was seen near Yuma Mar. 11 (KVR,TB,JDB), for the third Arizona record. Two ad. Harris' Hawks were seen near

Hatch, N. Mex., Jan. 26 (S. Crowe); the species is rare in the Rio Grande Valley.

As of mid-December six Whooping Cranes from the transplant experiment were known to be present in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico: five near Socorro and one near Hatch. The latter was apparently the same individual that was present November - Dec. 5 near Las Vegas (*vide* J. Woody). Northward migration began as expected, in February; three were seen in flight n. of Albuquerque Feb. 26 (J.N. Durrie *et al.*).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS — A single Mountain Plover was photographed in a field e. of Rt. 666, s.e. Arizona Jan. 7 (DK,ALG). We had no previous mid-winter records for the southeast, and very few records there at any season in recent years; specimens collected there in late February, 1915, could have been early spring migrants. Two late Marbled Godwits were on L. Havasu Nov. 20 and one stayed until at least Dec. 8 (KK,ML,AEH *et al.*).

For the third consecutive winter, a Heermann's Gull was recorded in Nogales — this year Jan. 11 (CM).



Mountain Plover, s.e. Ariz., Jan. 7, 1978. Photo/DK

OWLS, HUMMINGBIRDS, KINGFISHERS — A flight of Saw-whet Owls reached the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, where the species had been practically unrecorded previously; beginning in mid-October, six were found dead on the roads (*vide* Bryan Brown), and three birds were called up as late as Jan. 14 (KK,EC). This flight may have been more widespread, as suggested by the record of one found dead at Puerto Peñasco Nov. 12 — possibly the first record for Sonora.

One of the Rivoli's Hummingbirds present in November in the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., was present at least until Jan. 28 (RLT). In Arizona, one Rivoli's wintered at feeders in Madera Canyon (R. Newcomer) and two at feeders at Portal (SSPf). The latter locality also had two Blue-throated Hummingbirds throughout the winter. Although it is likely that none of these birds would have survived without the aid of feeders, their presence may still have reflected the mildness of the season.

A Green Kingfisher remained from Oct. 15 at least into March near Nogales (CM, m.ob.); this is apparently within the area of normal dispersal for the population in n. Sonora.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — A Thick-billed Kingbird was found Dec. 2 at Parker (PM,AEH, *A.S.U.). There is one previous winter record from the L.C.V. (AB 27:648). These records could reflect dispersal from well to the south in w. Mexico, rather than simple W straying from the s. Arizona breeding population. Ten individual E. Phoebes recorded in scattered localities in s. Arizona and in the L.C.V., late October-March, were probably not unusual considering the increased amount of coverage. One or two Coues' Flycatchers are generally found in Arizona every winter, but this season there were *four*: one in Tucson all winter (KK, m.ob.); another near Tucson Dec. 11 (DSz), one at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 15 (†PM), and one in Phoenix Feb. 7 (SRD,HL).

Cave Swallows reportedly returned to Carlsbad Caverns N. P., Feb. 27 (RWI), the earliest date we have on record. A Bank Swallow was noted at Parker Dec. 23 (JD,†GMcC) and another or the same was seen Mar. 1 (KVR), too early for a normal migrant, in the same area the species is very rare in Arizona in winter.

CORVIDS, PARIDS — Large numbers of Com Crows again moved into the L.C.V., echoing last winter's unprecedented invasion. At Cibola N.W.R., a flock built up to 250 birds by Nov. 22 (TB,DC,JFD) and up to 500 there in midwinter (GC), and other individuals and small flocks were seen elsewhere along the L.C.V. during the season (AEH,KVR). This species is rarely reported in extreme n.e. New Mexico, but it was heard on the Dry Cimarron R., n. of Clayton Dec. 9 (JPH).

A Mountain Chickadee appeared at Cibola N.W.R., Ariz., Sept. 26 and was seen again Oct. 18 (JDB), with two there Dec. 8 & 13 (PM). There were no records for the L.C.V., prior to last winter, when one spent the season in the B.W. Delta. Another Parid formerly thought rare in the L.C.V., is the Com. Bushtit: this season four were at Poston, Ariz., Dec. 9 (DW), two were at Parker Dec. 23, and four were in the B.W. Delta Dec. 24 (KVR *et al.*).

WRENS, THRASHERS, THRUSHES — At least four Winter Wrens were found at Prescott — an unusually high number for that area (CST).

Single Brown Thrashers were at Nogales Dec. 5 to at least Jan. 5 (BH, m.ob.), Organ Pipe Cactus N. M., Dec. 18 (KK, R. Burgoon), and Flagstaff Jan. 15 (†KK,EC); the latter may represent the first midwinter record for n. Arizona.

This winter's widespread Varied Thrush invasion reached our Region mainly in c. and w. Arizona. At least two of the birds in the B.W. Delta were still present in February, and the scattered locations of sightings there during the season suggested that the total number present was considerably higher than the five reported in November (see autumn report). Elsewhere singles were at Prescott Dec. 20-21 (†V. Miller, CST), Parker Dec. 23 (†KK,EC), Phoenix Dec. 26 (†AEH), L. Havasu City Jan. 12 (GR,DSz), and Topock Jan. 26-28 (PM,KVR). These add up to Arizona's largest recorded invasion, although greatly increased coverage especially in the L.C.V., undoubtedly contributed to the high total. Hermit Thrushes were noticeably common in s. Arizona and in the L.C.V., with numbers

running from 3-5 times higher than usual, from the pine-oak areas down into the desert.

PIPITS, SHRIKES — Exciting news was the discovery of four to five (or more) Sprague's Pipits in agricultural fields near Parker Dec. 23 – January (†KVR,ML,HA); the species had been virtually unknown in the L.C.V. before this winter. Three were found Feb. 4 at Rodeo, N. Mex., where the species is rarely reported (JPH).

Numbers of N. Shrikes in New Mexico during the fall and winter surpassed those which occurred in last year's record invasion, with 30-40 reported December–February. In Arizona, one at Continental Jan. 28 (MN,AB,RM) was farther s. than usual.

WARBLERS — Observer activity in several parts of the Region has reached the level where we can discern correlations between temperatures and bird occurrences. The winter warblers perhaps demonstrate the most noticeable response; in this unusually warm season, the numbers of wintering individuals and the late occurrences of some half-hardy species were remarkable.

Orange-crowned Warblers lingered in New Mexico where normally absent in winter, with one photographed at Hobbs Dec. 27 (J. Shipman) and three seen in the Carlsbad area Dec. 28-30 (RWI,LW). This species was also unusually numerous around Phoenix; it was widespread in the Tucson area, although the CBC total there was reduced by the scarcity of vegetation along the flood-scoured Santa Cruz R. (*vide* DSz). Townsend's Warblers were found at higher elevations than usual in Arizona, with one in the Mazatzal Mts., Dec. 3 (RNT), one at Portal Dec. 31 (F. Scheider), numbers in the Huachuca Mts., during December, and one at Bisbee Jan. 14 (DD), and two in Madera Canyon Feb. 11 (DSz). Audubon's Warblers were unusually common around Tucson; a fair handful of Wilson's Warblers wintered in the L.C.V. and at Phoenix; and all three areas reported good numbers of Black-throated Gray Warblers. Four Painted Redstarts remained in Arizona, with one wintering in Madera Canyon, two wintering at Portal (SSpf), and one seen Jan. 2 in the Atascosa Highlands (SM).

A Lucy's Warbler at Phoenix Dec. 3 (DSj) was very late for this species. Single Yellow Warblers occasionally linger through December in Arizona, particularly in the L.C.V., but the *four* found Jan. 12 at L. Havasu City (GR,DSz) were most unexpected; this is our first January record. Late Hermit Warblers were one at Phoenix Dec. 6 (SRD,HL) and two s.w. of Phoenix Dec. 10 (GR).

Typical December vagrants (or late low-density migrants) included a Chestnut-sided Warbler at Phoenix Dec. 26-27 (†GR *et al.*) and an Ovenbird — Arizona's 14th for 1977 — at Parker Dec. 23 (†BE,AG). American Redstarts made a good showing with three at Phoenix and five in the L.C.V., early December–mid-January. Myrtle Warblers were unusually numerous at Tucson, where singles could be found with practically every flock of Audubon's, and in the L.C.V., where at least 20 were present through the winter.

Genuine vagrants, with no previous January records in Arizona, were a **Black-throated Green Warbler** in Sycamore Canyon, Atascosa Mts., Jan. 2 (GR,†KK,DSz), a ♀ **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Indian Gardens, Grand Canyon Jan. 11 (†W.H. Buskirk), and a **Magnolia Warbler** in the B.W. Delta Dec. 24–Jan. 23 (†GR, m.ob.; ph. KVR).



Magnolia Warbler, B.W. Delta, Dec. 24, 1977 – Jan. 23, 1978. Photo/ Ken V. Rosenberg.

ICTERIDS, TANAGERS — Two ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbirds at Kirtland, extreme n.w. N. Mex., Feb. 13 (CS) were probably unusually early spring migrants rather than wintering birds. An ad. ♂ Scott's Oriole spent the period near Silver City (M. O'Byrne, *vide* RAF); this is likely the same individual that has wintered there for the last three years. The only Rusty Blackbird reported in Arizona this winter was a male expertly identified near Nogales Jan. 10 (†HA); it should be noted that this bird, like the Rusty near Willcox last winter, was associating with other blackbirds — in this case, Brewer's and Yellow-headed.

A ♂ Summer Tanager wintered in the B.W. Delta, being seen Dec. 24 – Feb. 24 (†DSj *et al.*). Subspecies could not be determined, but past winter specimens from Arizona (and from the West generally) have been of the e. race, *P. r. rubra*.

FRINGILLIDS — Space limitations preclude detailed discussion of the invasionary species, but their status in Arizona this season may be summarized thus: Cassin's Finches and Red Crossbills were scarce; Pine Siskins were common to abundant in many lowland and middle-elevation areas; Am. Goldfinches were widespread in typically small flocks; Lawrence's Goldfinches staged a fair invasion, with numbers occurring farther n. than usual, perhaps reflecting the mildness of the season.

A ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at B.W. Delta Dec. 8 (AEH) and another was at Portal Feb. 17-23 (ph. SSpf); this grosbeak seems about as likely here in winter as the Black-headed. The only Purple Finches of the season were one in the B.W. Delta Dec. 24 (KK), one at Parker Jan. 28 (DSz), and two at Prescott Feb. 5 (CST). Most unusual was a Grasshopper Sparrow near Parker Dec. 23 – Feb. 6 (DW,ML,†KVR); the species is extremely rare in the L.C.V. A Gray-headed Junco of the race

dorsalis was found in Madera Canyon, Santa Rita Mts., Ariz., Feb. 11 (DSz,SH). This race tends to be quite sedentary on its breeding grounds in the n. and c. parts of the Region, and it is rarely detected in s.e. Arizona. About 25 Brown-capped Rosy Finches were noted Dec. 23 at Miller Mesa, e.n.e. of Farmington (CGS); the species is infrequently reported in n.w. New Mexico.

Lark Buntings were present in good numbers in parts of s.e. Arizona this winter, and flocks were recorded w. to the Colorado R., in December (e.g., 74 on the Parker CBC), although numbers in the latter area dropped off in January; normally the species is rare or absent in the L.C.V. Several hundred also wintered in the Prescott region, where the species is normally present only in very mild seasons such as this one. KK points out, incidentally, that the request (AB 31: 1095) for "monitoring" of Lark Bunting populations by western bird-watchers is unrealistic. Local populations of this species, both wintering and breeding, fluctuate so drastically from year to year that no ordinary fieldwork can hope to detect overall population trends except perhaps over very long periods; even the decline claimed by the Breeding Bird Survey may be partly an artifact of observation.

Cassin's Sparrow was "the bird of the winter" in s. Arizona, according to Stotz, and records much too numerous to list support the contention that the species was more common than usual; the CBC results (q.v.) will provide added evidence. The reason for this abundance was thought to be the lush condition of the grasslands following the October rains, possibly combined with the mildness of the season. Apparently this plentitude extended to s.w. New Mexico, where the species is rarely reported in winter — three were found (one *) at San Simon Cienega Feb. 5 (JPH).

S.A.

For years now, Bill Harrison has sought wintering Five-striped Sparrows on Sonoita Cr., Ariz. This year he found one Dec. 11, for the first U.S. winter record. Of particular interest was the fact that this bird was unbanded — all individuals known to have been present in the area last summer were banded (*vide* SM). Another individual, banded, was seen in the same area Dec. 18 (†SM *et al.*); and in the Atascosa Mts., Jan. 2, one bird was seen in Holden Canyon (DB) and one in Sycamore Canyon (KK). The question now is whether the Five-striped always winter in small numbers or whether they, like the excess Cassin's, were responding to this season's unusually favorable conditions.

The status this season of the low-density wintering sparrows in Arizona could be summarized thus: White-throateds were in about normal numbers, thus well below last year's level. Harris' Sparrows were about normal, with seven reported statewide — a new locality was Duncan, Ariz., where one was seen Jan. 18 (†TJ). Golden-crowneds were in usual small numbers over most of the state, but unusually

common in the L.C.V., with at least 15 noted during the period; two also wintered at Prescott, where unusual (CST). Last winter's prevalence of Swamp Sparrows in the L.C.V. was repeated, with the species "fairly common" (KVR) after Nov. 15, and 18 reported on the Valley CBCs. Fox Sparrows were normal over most of Arizona, but "invaded" the Prescott region, with 10-15 located during the winter (CST).

In the past, any longspur in the L.C.V. has been considered a rarity, but this winter three species occurred there. Chestnut-collareds formerly known as rare fall strays on the L.C.R., were first noted Dec. 23, and in January flocks of up to 25 were found in several places between Parker and Ehrenberg (KVR *et al.*) At least five (up to eight — one * A.S.U.) Lapland Longspurs wintered in a field s. of Parker (KVR, m.ob.), there were only three previous records (of singles) for the L.C.V. And two McCown's Longspurs found Dec. 24 in the B.W. Delta (†DSz) provided the first record for the L.C.V.

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ALASKA REGION

/Daniel D. Gibson

Winter 1977-1978 was widely described as uneventful. It was not particularly cold after December, and there was below-average snowfall inland. Although not as mild as winter 1976-77, it was, as Mary Miller put it, "hardly an old-fashioned Alaska winter."



GREBES, HERONS, WATERFOWL — A **Pied-billed Grebe** present all season in Cordova (MEI,REI) was only the second southcoastal Alaska record (see *AB* 31:1176, 1977). None was reported this season from Southeastern. A **Great Blue Heron** was seen at Uyak Bay, Kodiak I., Jan. 16-17 (JLT), the fourth record for the island, which is w. of the normal range (see *AB* 32:243, 1978). Diving ducks, which made news in Alaska all last year, continued to be of particular interest. There were two Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC), records of Canvasbacks, two at Juneau Dec. 17 and one at Cordova Jan. 2, echoing last winter's widespread records (*q.v.*). Up to three ♂ **Red-heads** present at Womens Bay, Kodiak, Jan. 30 – Feb. 28+ (RAM,JLT,WED; ph—U.A.M.), provided the first substantiated record for the Kodiak archipelago and the second Alaska winter record. An ad. ♂ **Ring-necked Duck** was seen with Greater Scaup and Gadwalls at Kodiak Feb. 20 (RAM), and four females were seen at Cordova at the end of February (MEI). This species may prove to be a regular rare migrant and winter visitant at Kodiak (RAM), as it has proved to be, locally, in s.e. Alaska at the same latitude. A ♀ **Tufted Duck** observed with Greater Scaup and Steller's Eiders at Kodiak Jan. 28 – Feb. 23 (RAM,JLT,WED; ph—U.A.M.) represented the second island record, the fourth in southcoastal Alaska (see *AB* 31:1036, and 32:244).

RAILS, SHOREBIRDS — An Am. Coot was present at Cordova from mid-November into early December (MEI), a casual spring/fall migrant in the southcoastal area, and one was seen at Petersburg Jan. 26 (JH), a rare winter visitant in s.e. Alaska. A flock of 50+ **Sanderlings** at Larsen Bay Jan. 17 (JLT) adds Kodiak to the list of scattered Pacific Alaska localities where the species has been seen in winter.

GULLS THROUGH OWLS — An ad. Slaty-backed Gull carefully studied at the Buskin R. mouth, Kodiak, Feb. 23-25 (RAM *et al.*, ph—U.A.M.) was the easternmost record on Alaska's Pacific coast. The species is widely reported at almost any season in w Alaska.

S.A.

Paul D. Arneson, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, Anchorage, wrote, "After rather strong southerly winds on . . . Feb. 25 [Common] murre were observed heading NE up the *Matanuska Valley* [head of Cook Inlet]. A flock of four and another of 40 . . . at least three were found in *Palmer* — one alive and one dead . . . another was found alive along the *Denali Highway* [exact location not known, but at least 200 km inland]!" The inland occurrence of these birds was part of an undetailed wreck of Com. Murres that involved numbers of apparently ill birds inshore and inland in the Cook Inlet-Kenai Peninsula-Prince William Sound area beginning the third week of February and continuing into March (MEI).

Snowy Owls appeared to be fairly common along Alaska's Pacific coast. Three were seen on the Amchitka CBC, Dec. 29; the species was recorded during count period at Adak I., Glacier Bay, and Sitka, "high numbers" were reported from Middleton I., Gulf of Alaska (MEI), where there is a substantial population of introduced European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*); one was noted in Anchorage Dec. 30 (EEB); and one was seen as far s. and e. as Petersburg Dec. 27 (JH). **Hawk Owls** were present but continued to be distinctly scarce in all areas. There were only two observations all winter at Cordova (MEI), there were very few reports in the Fairbanks area, one was reported Feb. 3 in Turnagain Pass (EEB), and two birds were seen on the lower Noatak R., Feb. 19 (*vide* DPH). **Boreal Owls** were calling in the Fairbanks area, where they were more common than last year, by the third week of January (RHM), and one was heard at Ambler, on the Kobuk R., Feb 11(OW).

CORVIDS THROUGH STARLINGS — Irregular fall and winter visitants in the Region, **Clark's Nutcrackers**, perhaps three birds, were observed in the Juneau area this winter: one at Douglas Dec. 1 – Feb 28+ (RHA,FAG *et al.*, ph—U.A.M.) and at least one at Auke Bay Jan. 10 & Feb. 3 (RBW). **Mountain Chickadee** is an irregular fall and winter visitant in

Alaska known only from the s.e. mainland (see *AB* 29 105, 30:755). One was observed in the Juneau area Dec 17-29 (FAG,RHA, ph—U.A.M.) and another was reported in February (*vide* RHA). Common throughout the taiga, Boreal Chickadee is, however, a rare winter visitant in the Sitka spruce/w. hemlock forests of the s e mainland. Thus one in the Juneau area Jan. 18 (RBW) and another in February (*vide* RHA) are of interest. Robins were mentioned at a number of coastal locations. A flock of 15 birds was present all period at Wrangell (VKG), a flock of 20 wintered at Petersburg (JH), and a few were present all period in Juneau (FAG,RBW). One bird at Kodiak Feb. 6 (RAM) was only the third recorded by the observer there in five years. Varied Thrushes wintered as far w. as Kodiak, where, during periods of heavy snow/low temperatures that forced birds from the forest to feeding stations, 30-50 birds/day were seen (JLT, RAM). The late fall Townsend's Solitaire at Juneau (*q.v.*) was present through Dec. 2 (RHA). For at least the third consecutive winter, Starling was recorded in winter beyond Southeastern, in the Kenai Peninsula-Prince William Sound area. This season's only such record, of a single bird, was from Soldotna Feb 16-17 (EEB).

FRINGILLIDS — The Cordova **Brambling** (see *AB* 32 245) was found again Jan. 2 (CBC) and was seen at irregular intervals through the end of the period (MEI). The Juneau **Evening Grosbeak** (see *AB* 32:245) was not seen after early December (RHA), and there were no reports of others.

S.A.

The **Bullfinch** in the w. Aleutians last fall (*q.v.*) proved to be only the first of four fall/winter 1977-78 records, all singles. Two of the three other records involved individuals that wandered as far from the Bering coast as Anchorage, where one was found in early November (AEA) and a different bird was seen in midwinter, on Feb. 9 (CO,AP; details on file U.A.M.). It would seem likely that a similar phenomenon 111 years ago — birds arriving on the w. Alaska coast in fall and moving inland, where found in midwinter — produced the type specimen of *P. p. cassinii*, the Kamchatka-breeding subspecies of this widespread pale-arctic bird, taken in January 1867 at Nulato, 140 km inland from the Bering Sea.

Pine Grosbeaks were fairly common during the period, particularly in December, in c., southcoastal, and s e. Alaska — all eight Alaska CBCs within the forests recorded them, maximum 406 at Anchorage. Both redpolls were present, though not particularly common, in c. Alaska (Fairbanks, m.ob.) and they were noted in midwinter as far n. and w. as Kotzebue (DPH). Hoarics characteristically outnumbered Commons in these areas. South of the Alaska Range, redpolls were widely commented on, primarily from January on. In the Juneau area, an irruption that began

the third week of January involved an estimated 10,000+ redpolls, 5-10% of them Hoary (RBW), in the Cordova-Prince William Sound area there was an increase early in the period, and numbers peaked at the end of February (MEI); at Anchorage, Commons were apparently numerous early in the period, *e.g.*, CBC total of 1903 Dec. 17; on the Kenai Pen., there were good numbers of redpolls (MAM); on Kodiak, Com. Redpolls were abundant all winter (RAM,JLT), and Commons were recorded in small numbers as far w as the tip of the Alaska Pen., with nine Dec. 26 on the Izembek N.W.R. CBC, and the Aleutian Is., with 16 on Dec. 30 on the Adak CBC; and 31 on Dec. 29 on the Amchitka CBC. Pine Siskins were recorded in s.e. and in southcoastal Alaska, but only on Kodiak (RAM) were they described as abundant.

White-winged Crossbills were present but uncommon all winter in c. Alaska (Fairbanks, m.ob.) and on Kodiak (RAM), but they were apparently fairly common on the coastal mainland from the Kenai Pen (MAM) and on the Anchorage CBC, e. to Prince William Sound (MEI) and Juneau (RBW). Dark-eyed Juncos, which winter regularly in small numbers in the Region, were widespread on Alaska's Pacific coast. They were remarkably numerous on CBCs, recorded at Kodiak (19 birds), Homer (1), Anchorage (35), Cordova (69), Glacier Bay (33), Juneau (101), and Sitka (294). And inland at Fairbanks (2). Harris' Sparrows were more numerous than in past winters in the Juneau area (RBW,RHA), where the maximum count was 19 at Auke Bay (RBW). The Kodiak **Harris' Sparrow** (see *AB* 32:245) remained through the winter season (WED, RAM, ph—U.A.M.). Tree, White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and Fox Sparrows wintered in small numbers as far w. as Kodiak (RAM,WED,JLT).

CORRIGENDA — These deletions/corrections pertain to the fall 1977 report. The report of a Bean Goose banded at Amchitka was a misidentification and must be deleted. Numbers/dates of St. Paul sparrows were incorrectly stated; they should have read White-crowned up to four Aug. 28 – Sept. 7, Golden-crowned from Aug. 27, single Fox Sparrows Aug. 28 and Sept 8. And the Amchitka Golden-crowned Sparrow was a first for the c. and w. Aleutians, but the species regularly occurs in the easternmost Aleutians.

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NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION
/Eugene S. Humm and Philip W. Mattocks, Jr.

The Region experienced a mild, moderately wet winter with few birding surprises. Temperatures at Seattle-Tacoma averaged 4°F. above normal for the period with precipitation ten per cent of the long-term average, yet still enough to end the drought. The fair numbers and variety of lingering shorebirds may have been owing to the mildness of the winter, but late-lingering landbirds were not evident. Common Redpolls and White-winged Crossbills staged minor irruptions, but other boreal and montane species apparently stayed home. Eastern *Zonotrichia*, however, were unusually common. Raptors wintered in excellent numbers. Accipiters, Red-tailed Hawks, and Bald Eagles were widely and frequently noted as common-to-abundant. Falcons generally were also well represented, and the elegant White-tailed Kite continued to consolidate its position in the southern half of the Region. Other potential range extensions which bear watching involve two normally sedentary species, the Scrub Jay and the Wrentit. Abbreviations used are: S.J.C.R., South Jetty of the Columbia River, Oreg.; V.I., Vancouver Island, B.C.; †, written description on file; and CBC, Christmas Bird Count.



LOONS THROUGH SHEARWATERS — Loons and grebes were reported in good numbers. The 109 Com. Loons Dec. 17 at Victoria was a new high for that CBC. Arctic Loons were locally concentrated as usual, mostly near Active Pass off s.e. V.I., where there were 2400 Dec. 24 (MGS, *vide* VG) and in Discovery Passage near Campbell R., V.I., with 1200+, Dec. 31 (HT). Single Yellow-billed Loons were found at Pt. Roberts, Wash., Dec. 4 & Feb. 4 (E&NH,ESI), at Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 31 (JH,†DE), and at Winslow, Bainbridge I., Wash., Dec. 31 (DP,BH-T *et al.*).

Winter beachcombing provides indirect evidence of avian activity in the more inaccessible offshore areas.

For example, one of the seldom-observed Laysan Albatross was found dead Dec. 4 near the S.J.C.R (MSm, *vide* ME) as was a late Leach's Storm-Petrel Dec 4 in the Renfrew Land District, V.I. (RS, *vide* VG) One N. Fulmar was off Clover Pt., Victoria Dec 3 (RS, *vide* VG), all other fulmar records were of birds dead on the beach; the 60 on Sunset Beach, Clatsop Co., Oreg., Jan. 7 (HN), was the high count. Late records for Sooty Shearwater were of singles Dec. 3 at Cape Meares, Tillamook Co., Oreg. (DF,HN), and Dec. 4 near Whidbey I., Wash. (BR), and 40 s. of Victoria, V.I., Dec. 17 (MGS,GS, *vide* VG). The Short-tailed Shearwater fall spectacular continued into mid-December. The latest recorded for Oregon were 6+ off Cape Meares Dec. 3 (DF,HN *et al.*), for Washington were singles Dec. 4 off Whidbey I. (BR), and in Rosario Strait w. of Anacortes (MMo,TW *et al.*), and for British Columbia was one seen Feb. 11 near Victoria (VG,WC *et al.*). Two Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels off Cape Meares Dec. 12 were late (JGi, *vide* HN).

PELICANS THROUGH DUCKS — Four Brown Pelicans near Portland, Oreg., Dec. 14 were probably driven inland by the mid-December storms (HH,RSm, *vide* HN). A few Green Herons wintered n. of the Columbia R., including two on the Cowichan R., near Duncan, V.I. (JC *et al.*) and one in Bellevue, Wash (TWe,JBe). There were many other December reports, with 22 on Oregon CBCs. Oregon's 20± Cattle Egrets were more widely distributed than ever Single Cattle Egrets appeared at Dungeness, Wash, Dec. 18 (DSm) and in Saanich, V.I., Dec. 7-26 (VG *et al.*). The 86 Great Egrets observed on w. Oregon CBCs was comparable to the totals of recent years. The only record n. of Oregon was of one near Tacoma Jan. 17 (JHo, *vide* TB). The Coos Bay Snowy Egret wintered again (AC,GG,TC), while another was reported nearby at Bandon, Oreg., in late February (*vide* AC) Black-crowned Night Herons appeared on six Oregon CBCs with high counts of 19 at Coos Bay Dec. 17 and 15 at Portland Jan. 1. A single on the Leadbetter Pt, Wash. CBC, Dec. 17 provided the northernmost record (*vide* IB). American Bitterns, by contrast, were widely reported only in Washington.

Whistling Swans were widespread, and flocks of several hundred each wintered at the Skagit flats, Wash., and at Sauvie's I., Salem, and Eugene, Oreg The Clear L., Wash., Trumpeter Swan concentration was up to 300, 50% above previous high counts (*vide* TW). Pitt L., e. of Vancouver, B.C., had 77 Jan. 20 (WR, *vide* DM). In addition Trumpeter Swans were found more widely than has been usual, e.g., five (3ad., 2imm.) near Blyn, Clallam Co., Wash., Jan. 14-28 (KG,DP,CC); four (2ad., 2imm.) at Ocean Shores Wash., Feb. 5 (E&NH); six (3ad., 3imm.) on Sauvie's I., Jan. 21-22 (DF *et al.*); and one as far s. as Corvallis Dec. 20 (*vide* GG). The 46,000 Canada Geese counted on Willamette Valley CBCs quantifies the high numbers wintering throughout the valley (AC). The ad Emperor Goose at Reifel Ref., B.C., stayed through the season (DM), and another was found Feb. 11-12 near Victoria for the third area record (VG,WC *et al.*) Very few White-fronted Geese were noted, these

mostly singles, and those at Coos Bay and Eugene in mid-December were considered most unusual (AC).

At least four Eur. Green-winged Teal were found on s. V. I. (†VG *et al.*), one was at Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 7 & 17 (†DE), and another was found at Sauvie's I., Feb. 8 (PR, *fide* DDS). Three Blue-winged Teal lingered n. at Iona I., B.C., to at least Dec. 18 (*fide* DM), and six Cinnamon Teal at Portland Jan. 1 and 20 nearby on Sauvie's I., Feb. 16 (GG) probably wintered. Many ♂ Eur. Wigeon were reported, with the high count of 25 on the Samish flats, Skagit Co., Wash., Feb. 12 (DP). Victoria's 15,000 Am. Wigeon nearly doubled its previous CBC high count (*fide* VG) and they were in very good numbers elsewhere. A single hybrid wigeon wintered in Portland (DDS,HN). The 3-9 ♀ Wood Ducks near Campbell R., V.I., Dec. 18 & 27 (RW,HT) furnished the first local winter records; 13± more wintered on s. V.I. (VG). A flock of 280± Red-heads wintered at Coos Bay (DF,AC), and 24 were reported on the Eugene CBC for the only concentrations reported. Oregon coastal CBCs had high Canvasback counts with a maximum of 1523 at Yaquina Bay, Lincoln County. Lesser Scaup were down dramatically and Greater below normal at Campbell R., and in the Victoria area, V.I. (HT,VG).

RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS — Sightings of distinctly aseasonal Turkey Vultures, possibly of a single individual, were made over Mercer I., near Seattle Dec. 19-20 (TK) and near Lynden, Wash., Jan. 1, 27, & Feb. 15 (PDB, *fide* TW). Migrants arrived on schedule in mid- to late February (DF,HN,TW). The number of White-tailed Kites located in Oregon this season doubled from last fall to 35, with 27 counted on seven CBCs. The adult at Raymond, Pacific Co., Wash., was seen repeatedly Jan. 29 – Feb. 28+ (EH,PM *et al.*, ph. J&AD). Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were widely reported in very good numbers, several CBCs had record high counts. There were also ten Goshawk sightings. Wintering Red-tailed Hawk populations were in even better shape, with Oregon observers nearly unanimously commenting on their abundance. A "Harlan's" Red-tailed was reported Feb. 24 from the Samish flats (BA, *fide* BH-T), a regular wintering locale for this form. A sub-ad. **Ferruginous Hawk** found on Sauvie's I., Jan. 28-29 (†TC,†HN) was most unusual, although not unprecedented. Rough-legged and Marsh Hawks and Golden Eagles were in normal to slightly above normal numbers throughout the Region. A concentration of 618 Bald Eagles (418ad., 200imm.) was counted Jan. 22 on the Squamish R. delta, B.C. Smaller concentrations included 109 Jan. 23 in the Harrison Bay area, B.C. (A&JG, *fide* DM); 87 (38ad., 49imm.) near Duncan, V.I., Dec. 17; 78 along Washington's Skagit R., Feb. 2; 25 along the Nooksack R., near Bellingham, Wash., Jan. 28; 17 around L. Quinault, Wash., Jan. 1, and 11 (3ad., 8imm.) on Sauvie's I., Feb. 5. Smaller groups of 1-6 Bald Eagles were much more widely reported than usual from w. Washington and Oregon.

Single out-of-season Ospreys were near Oakridge, Lane Co., Oreg., Dec. 30 (*fide* AC), at Ridgefield N W R., Wash., Jan. 14 (R&MB, *fide* AD), and on the

Skagit flats Jan. 29 (JW *et al.*). An Osprey Feb. 26 at Albany, Oreg. (GG), was considered a very early migrant. Two Gyrfalcons were noted; one in s.w. British Columbia Dec. 21 (DE,JH), and one in w. Washington Jan. 27 – Feb. 15 (*fide* TW). Prairie Falcons were widely reported in w. Oregon with eight in the Medford area Jan. 2 (*fide* SS). The only report from outside Oregon was of a single at the Skagit flats Feb. 2 (*fide* TB). Regional Peregrine reports totalled at least 20, about the same as last year, but Merlins were up with at least 60 individuals reported including 16 on the Grays Harbor, Wash. CBC, Dec. 17 (*fide* BH-T) Kestrels also fared well.

California Quail numbers were down on V.I. (VG), and low numbers near Albany, Oreg., were thought to be owing to last nesting season's drought (GG). The 35 Mountain Quail near Tahuya, Mason Co., Wash., Feb. 17 (*fide* TB) indicated that local populations still survive in scattered areas of s.w. Washington.

SHOREBIRDS — Three Semipalmated Plovers at Ocean Shores Dec. 10 (G&WH,J&GM) and an Am Golden Plover near Eugene Dec. 8 (CW, *fide* AC) were notable late migrants. Several shorebird species wintered coastally in unusually large numbers. Thirty-five Snowy Plovers at Tillamook, Oreg., through February (GG,JE), and 21 at Leadbetter Pt., Wash., Feb. 24 (JnB, *fide* BH-T) were surprising winter concentrations. Ruddy Turnstones wintered in small numbers at half a dozen Oregon points, while a Ruddy was at Whidbey I., Wash., Feb. 4 (B&PE), and another was in Vancouver, B.C., Feb. 24-28 (JTo, *fide* DM) At least five Whimbrels lingered at Yaquina Bay, Lincoln Co., Oreg., through February (GG *et al.*) and a single was found near Victoria, V.I., Feb. 11 (VG,RS *et al.*) Seventy Greater Yellowlegs on the Victoria CBC, Dec. 17 set a local record. A dozen Wandering Tattlers scattered from Gold Beach n. to Tillamook Bay (TC,JE,GG, *fide* AC) was striking for a species totally unrecorded in most winters. The North R. delta, Willapa Bay, Wash., apparently marks the n. limit of regular winter residence for the Willet; a flock has wintered in the vicinity for four consecutive years with 18 observed Jan. 29 (EH,PM). Two Long-billed Dowitchers Feb. 17 and six Feb. 28 on s. V.I., were unusual (VG), as was the Marbled Godwit Feb. 4 at Newport, Lincoln Co., Oreg. (ME,TC).

Mid-December storms brought Red Phalaropes ashore, primarily at Coos Bay, Oreg. Two hundred were counted there Dec. 17 (*fide* AC), and singles were inland the same day at Alma, Lane County (*fide* AC), and northward Dec. 16 at Ocean Shores, Wash (G&WH), and Dec. 18 near Victoria, V.I. (CG, *fide* VG). Later in the season two were near Tillamook, Jan. 22 (TC) and one was still near Victoria Feb. 11 (WC,GS, *fide* VG).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — A Parasitic Jaeger at Tillamook Bay, Dec. 3 was later than usual (DF,HN), and another Jan. 2 at White Rock, B.C., was nearly a month later than any previous regional record (MSc, *fide* DM). Single Glaucous Gulls, mostly first and second year birds, were found in their usual wintering locations in the Region, s. to Yachats, Lin-

coln Co., Oreg. (ME). Ladner, B.C., had six (*vide DM*), while Duncan, V.I., had three (JC *et al.*) Four W. Gulls wintered n. to Stanley Pk., Vancouver, B.C. (DE,JH), where they are rare at any season.

S.A.

Eighteen Glaucous-winged x Western Gull hybrids were identified in Puget Sound near Seattle Dec. 31 (DP,BH-T), and the Grays Harbor CBC recorded 217. This phenotype may become increasingly common as interbreeding continues on the outer coast. Care must be exercised to distinguish these hybrids from the smaller, decidedly paler-mantled Thayer's Gull which it resembles superficially in exhibiting a dark iris, blackish (not black as in Thayer's) wingtips dorsally with whitish undersurface to the primaries. These hybrids are also frequently misidentified as Herring Gulls.

Thayer's Gulls outnumbered Herrings 10 to 1 on V I, and in Puget Sound; farther s. Herring Gulls appeared to predominate. Five thousand Bonaparte's Gulls off Victoria, V.I., Dec. 17 (*vide VG*) were many more than usual, and several hundred were noted there through the end of the period. Otherwise very few were reported. Two ad. Heermann's Gulls w. of Anacortes, Wash., Dec. 4 (TW,MMo *et al.*) and one near Victoria Dec. 12 & 17 were late. The extraordinary Caspian Tern carefully observed along the Skagit R., near Conway, Wash., Feb. 11 & 19 (†JeM,IK,TB) was either four months late or two months early.

Five thousand Com. Murres flew through Discovery Passage near Campbell R., V.I., Dec. 31 (HT), a high count. Marbled Murrelets were reported widely and in unusually high numbers; 5200 flew past Pt. Roberts, Wash., at dawn Jan. 28 (TW), high counts were reported on several Puget Sound CBCs, and 40+ were on Willapa Bay, Wash., Jan. 29 (EH,PM). Ancient Murrelets, as usual, were concentrated about s. V.I. (*vide VG*), and the San Juan archipelago, Wash. (TW,SSp *et al.*) The Victoria CBC, Dec. 17 logged local record counts of both Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets — 23 and 37 respectively. Clearly the waters about s. V.I., are a very important Pacific alcid wintering ground, a point underscored by recent controversy over Puget Sound oil tanker traffic.

OWLS THROUGH SWALLOWS — Snowy Owls remained widespread but in low numbers throughout the season. Fourteen on the Fraser R. delta, B.C., Jan. 15 was the high count (*vide DM*). Pygmy Owls invaded the Vancouver, B.C. area (*vide DM*); they also had a good winter in Oregon (*vide AC*). Single Burrowing Owls appeared at the S.J.C.R., Dec. 3 (MSm, *vide HN*), on the Eugene and Gold Beach, Oreg. CBCs, and in Seattle Feb. 19 & 26 (PMo,ESp), adding to the very few westside records. The Barred Owl in Stanley Pk., was photographed (A&JG) and remained through the period (*vide DM*). Eight Spotted Owls were counted on the Alma, Oreg. CBC, and three were at Oakridge,

s.e. of Eugene, for its CBC. At least nine different Long-eared Owls were reported from near Vancouver, B.C., s. to Medford. Short-eared and Saw-Whet Owls seemed in normal numbers in appropriate habitat

Anna's Hummingbirds are now well established and are being found in increasing numbers and in many new localities. Rufous Hummingbirds returned to Oregon on schedule in mid-February (AM), moving up the outer coast; one male in Vancouver, B.C., Feb. 25 was considered early (BM, *vide DM*). The seldom-mentioned Belted Kingfisher was counted in record numbers on the Campbell R., Victoria, and Seattle CBCs. The Seattle count was 50% higher than the previous 32-year high. Eleven Com. "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were reported, from Victoria s. to Eugene, and "Red-shafted" were said to be more common than usual in Oregon (GG,HN). A flock of 12 Lewis' Woodpeckers wintered again on Sauvie's I., with singles at Sea I., near Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 2 & 6 (*vide DM*), and Seattle Dec. 11 (JS) and a pair at Eugene Dec. 8 (*vide AC*). A pair of Acorn Woodpeckers just w. of Portland was pioneering Douglas fir habitat (JE *et al.*)

Single Say's Phoebes were near Grant's Pass, Oreg., Dec. 4 (*vide SS*) and at Baskett Slough N.W.R., w. of Salem, Oreg., Feb. 26 (TC). The four Black Phoebes seen in the Rogue and Applegate R. valleys of s.w. Oregon are resident at the n. limit of the species' range (*vide SS*). Tree and Violent-green Swallows arrived on schedule, with early dates for the Tree Swallow of Feb. 9 at Tacoma, Wash. (ESH, *vide TB*) and Feb. 22 at Cowichan, V.I. (VG), and for the Violet-green of Feb. 22 near Salem (FS), and Feb. 24 near Duncan, V.I. (JC *et al.*)

JAYS THROUGH SHRIKES — Four Blue Jays stayed throughout the season; one each in Poulsbo, Kitsap Co., Wash. (JCA,IS), and Springfield, near Eugene, Oreg. (AC), and two in Medford, Oreg. (SS)

S.A.

Scrub Jays may be spreading out from their range in the Willamette and Columbia R. valleys. One was on the Oregon coast near North Bend, Coos County all winter (LF, *vide AM*) One in Seattle Dec. 24 & Jan. 2 was a local first (AR), while two were upriver in Stevenson, Skamania Co., Wash., Jan. 8 (DF). These correlate with eastside reports from Yakima and Walla Walla, Wash.

The light influx of Mountain Chickadees to the lowlands throughout the Region continued from last autumn. A White-breasted Nuthatch stayed at a feeder in Vancouver, B.C., November – Jan. 15 (*vide DM*), and another was seen Dec. 20 & 24 in Saanich, V.I., for only the third island record (†JTa *et al.*, *vide VG*) Red-breasted Nuthatches remained scarce on V I (VG). Wrentits are increasing in the Willamette Valley; several CBCs there had record counts. They are abundant all along the Oregon coastal plain but heretofore rarely reported e. of the Coast Range. Single Rock Wrens found Dec. 17 on Chatham I., off

Victoria (MGS,GS, *vide* VG) and Dec. 24 on the sea wall in W. Vancouver, B.C. (DSu, *vide* DM), were unusual.

A Mockingbird appeared in early January near Vancouver, B.C. (PL,JTo, *vide* DM) and another tramped in a Seattle backyard Feb. 16 – Mar. 31 (DB *et al*) Varied Thrushes remained scarce on V.I., but returned to normal numbers elsewhere after last winter's absence. Hermit Thrushes appeared by the dozens along the Oregon coast during December (DF,GG) but were in their usual low numbers elsewhere The 93 W. Bluebirds at Medford Jan. 2 were about one-third of normal numbers for the early 1970s (SS) A dozen in the sand dunes n. of Coos Bay, Oreg., Feb. 26 (LF, *vide* AM) were apparently migrating, and about 30 returned to Harts L., near Tacoma Feb. 28 (GR, *vide* TB). The only Mountain Bluebirds reported were two on the Samish flats, Wash. (JF, *vide* BH-T).

Waxwings of both species were scarce. A total of only 43 Bohemians was reported, these from Campbell R., V.I., Bellingham and Seattle, Wash., and spread through the season. Observers in British Columbia, Puget Sound, and s.w. Oregon all reported Cedars to be virtually absent. The Willamette Valley CBCs, however, had normal numbers, ranging to 1033 at Eugene. A few Loggerhead Shrikes were identified, all in Oregon; two at Medford Jan. 2 (SS) and one each at Finley N.W.R., Feb. 10 (GG) and Coos Bay Feb. 26 (EGW).

WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — A ♀ **Black-and-white Warbler** was found Dec. 17 on the Coos Bay CBC (MMA). The bird was subsequently photographed and seen by many observers through Jan 22 for Oregon's first winter record. The five Orange-crowned Warblers on Oregon CBCs were the only ones noted, until one appeared Feb. 9 in Saanich, V I (RM-G, *vide* VG). Three Nashville Warbler sightings in a single winter was most unusual; all were in Oregon, at a feeder in North Bend Dec. 3 (AM), in Corvallis Dec. 20 (AS, *vide* AC), and at Shore Acres S P, near Coos Bay Jan. 22 (EW,ME *et al.*). A few Townsend's Warblers wintered n. to V.I.; one was at Duncan Dec. 29 (JC *et al.*), another at Saanich Feb. 18 (DSt,RW). Palm Warblers remained near Newport, Oreg., to Dec. 24 (GG), in the Coos Bay area through Jan 14 (AC), and at Westport, Wash., to Feb. 4 (E&NH,BH-T). Another was found at Iona I., B.C., Dec 18 – Feb. 12 (KH,JH,DM,BK). A **Northern Waterthrush** was found freshly killed at a window in North Bend, Coos Co., Oreg., Jan. 7 (CM, *vide* AC).

A ♂ **Yellow-headed Blackbird** visited Stanley Pk., Feb 21 & 25 (DE,JH). Four Tricolored Blackbirds in Medford Jan. 2 were the first there in winter for several years (*vide* SS). A first-year ♂ N. Oriole stayed Jan 14-29 at Ladner, B.C., feeding on windfall apples (ph, CR,LE). A **Rusty Blackbird** was seen Dec. 24 – Jan 12 in Saanich and near Duncan, V.I. (*vide* VG).

FINCHES THROUGH SPARROWS — The only Gray-crowned Rosy Finches reported were 30± on the Samish flats, Wash., through the period (JF,JW) and one at Campbell R., V.I., Dec. 18 (*vide* HT) Several hundred Com. Redpolls near Sea I., and

Ladner, B.C., in late December were described as a small invasion (*vide* DM). Elsewhere only 25 were reported in Mt. Vernon, Skagit Co., Wash., Jan 27 (TO) and four in Seattle Jan. 17 (JS). None was reported from V.I., Bellingham, or s. of Puget Sound. Pine Siskin numbers were about normal throughout American Goldfinch numbers however, were very low in Vancouver, B.C., and V.I., but normal elsewhere Red Crossbills continued their fall season trends, nearly absent everywhere but the Oregon coast Two **White-winged Crossbills** were found at the North R mouth, Pacific County Dec. 11 (AR,CE), a flock of 40 was in Hoquiam, Grays Harbor County Dec. 17-18 (*vide* BH-T), and 30 more were near the Wind River Research Station, Skamania County, Dec. 18 & 25 (DF), all in Washington. These sightings indicated a significant movement S and W for this rare and erratic species.

Savannah Sparrows were found n. to Victoria and Delta, B.C., with singles at both locations Dec. 17 (*vide* VG). Two Chipping Sparrows wintered at Alton Baker Pk., Eugene, Oreg. (AC). There were 11 Harris' Sparrows reported, from V.I., through Puget Sound s to Roseburg, Douglas Co., Oreg. All apparently were in the speckle-throated subdominant (not immature) plumage. There were 29 White-throated Sparrows noted, including 23 on Oregon CBCs and four on V I (JC,RF). A **Swamp Sparrow** seen Dec. 22 at Finley N.W.R., Benton County (ME,LM), represented w Oregon's eighth record. The only Lapland Longspur report was of one in Victoria, V.I., Dec. 17 (VG) Flocks of Snow Buntings were s. to Leadbetter Pt, Wash., and the S.J.C.R., throughout the period, and to Tillamook, Oreg. for the CBC.

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MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Jon Winter and Tim Manolis

The midwinter storms typical of the Region reappeared with atypical ferocity, ending with breathtaking speed the worst drought in California's history. Rain continued on and off from December through the end of the period, filling most of the Region's empty reservoirs by the end of January. Water rationing was called to a halt in many areas. Observers in the Central Valley (hereafter, C.V.) reported that waterfowl concentrations seemed to disperse after the rains, as birds scattered widely throughout the Region (BED,RH). Pelagics reported onshore and coastal species inland were at least, in part, storm-related.



It was a winter with especial interest in gulls, with Little, Black-headed, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls wandering into the Region; the latter for the first time in the state's history. Many montane species appeared at lower levels, possibly owing to tremendous snowfall at higher elevations.

With this report we regretfully announce the retirement of Dick Erickson. Dick wishes to devote more time to finishing his thesis. Dick's successor is Tim Manolis, an observer with much skill and experience, who is well known to many of the Region's active birders. We wish to thank Dick for his excellent work as editor; his contributions will be sorely missed.

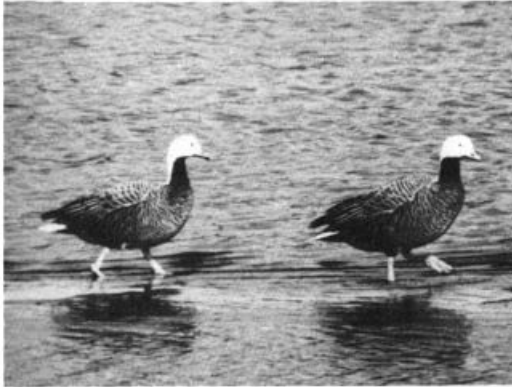
LOONS, GREBES — Only one Yellow-billed Loon was reported, at Pacific Grove Feb. 12 (SFB,VR). At least six Arctic Loons reported on various freshwater lakes in the Region is a slightly higher-than-normal total for one winter. A Red-throated Loon on the Thermalito Afterbay Dec. 31 (SAL,J.Webb), and probably the same bird there Feb. 25 (†TM, B.Webb,K.V.V.), was a Butte County first. Another, probable Red-throated Loon was observed briefly on the American R., near Sacramento Jan. 18 & 22 (*vide* BK,†EH). Red-necked Grebes seemed slightly more common than usual on the coast, and one on Avocado L., Feb. 15 was the first Fresno County record (†KH *et al.*).

TUBENOSES — A "good early winter flight" of N Fulmars "seemed to disappear in January" (LCB), but shearwaters made an excellent showing. Pink-footed Shearwaters were in Monterey Bay in small numbers through the period with a maximum of eight there Feb. 5 (DRo,JM,G.G.A.S.). There were three reports of singles off Marin and Sonoma Cos., in December, four were seen from shore at Pt. Reyes Jan. 4 (DD), two were off Bolinas Feb. 4 (JE,O.S.) and ten were at the Cordelle Banks (BDP,GMcC,W.F.O.). Two or three Flesh-footed Shearwaters were also at the Cordelle Banks Feb. 4 (†GMcC,BDP), and one was in Monterey Bay Feb. 5 (†JM,DRo); they represent the fourth and fifth regional winter reports. Impressive numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters, once only sporadically abundant winter visitors offshore, were reported for the first time in at least 20-30 years. A "spectacular concentration" of 600 accompanied 1500 fulmars at a mass of dead anchovies 4 mi w. of Moss Landing Dec. 2 (*PK). Numbers in Monterey Bay apparently dropped off after that, but at least 18 were still there Feb. 5 (†JM,†DRo). Two were off Bodega Head Dec. 31 (RS *et al.*) and 30-75 were at the Cordelle Banks Feb. 4 (BDP,DS,†GMcC). After their best fall in recent years, Manx Shearwaters were reported throughout the winter in Monterey Bay with as many as 15 off Pt. Pinos Jan. 15 (RS *et al.*) and two as late as Feb. 7 off Santa Cruz (DP). During stormy weather on the Pt. Reyes CBC, Dec. 17, a Manx Shearwater, a Leach's Storm-Petrel and an Ashy Storm-Petrel were seen from shore at Abbott's Lagoon (BDP,JP,BL). One or two Ashies were in Monterey Bay Jan. 14 (LCB, GMcC,W.F.O.).

PELICANS, HERONS, SPOONBILLS — Brown Pelicans were present in excellent numbers and stayed very late (m.ob.). A few were present in Monterey Bay through February, as usual. Singles lingered n. at Bodega Bay Feb. 23 (DS) and Bolinas Lagoon Feb. 15 (JE), with two off San Francisco Feb. 27 (PM). Cattle Egrets continued their steady expansion in n. California. Reports of 260± this season included a flock of 128 following a tractor near Kerman, Fresno Co., Feb. 26 (RH *et al.*).

Perhaps the most bizarre find of the season was an imm. Roseate Spoonbill in artichoke fields with egrets near Moss Landing Jan. 1 (P. Gordon, †E&AM *et al.*) and seen by many until at least Feb. 13. This apparently represents the second regional record and only the second spoonbill ever found in California in winter, but then who has been checking artichoke fields?

WATERFOWL — An ad. Bewick's Swan was with massed Whistling Swans on Victoria I., Dec. 21 – (DRU,CH,†DE) at least Dec. 30 (m.ob.). Up to three possible Bewick's x Whistling Swan hybrids were also seen there (†DE,†VR,GMcC). Another possible Bewick's x Whistling Swan was near Benton, Mono Co., Feb. 19 (†TH *et al.*). An Emperor Goose, at the Pajaro R. mouth Dec. 19 (J&RW,DP,TB), was found again at Moss Landing Jan. 2 (m.ob.). Three very obliging Emperor Geese delighted countless observers at Limantour Estero Dec. 28 (*fide* DRo) to mid-February. Up to four ad. Ross' Geese were near Napa Dec. 6-15 (JP,BDP,MR) and one adult was at Novato Dec. 24 – Jan. 11 (RS *et al.*).



Emperor Geese, Pt. Reyes, Limantour Estero, Jan. 29, 1978. Photo/ Joel H. Hornstein.

An apparent Eur. x Am. Wigeon was at the San Francisco Zoological Gardens Jan. 17-18 (PM,HLC). Forty-four inland Greater Scaup was a good showing, and larger-than-usual numbers were reported from Pajaro Dunes (J&RW,DP), Golden Gate Pk. (LCB) and the Benicia area (FKB). A ♂ Tufted Duck was on L. Merritt Jan. 23 (EM) and another was on L. Hennessey Jan. 30 – Feb. 5 (†JP, JM *et al.*). The Tufted Duck found at Muddy Hollow Jan. 7 (RS *et al.*) was identified as a female as late as Jan. 29 (†JM), but the only Tufted Duck noted there Feb. 4-12 was a molting male (GMcC,DD *et al.*)! Some observers felt that only one bird was involved, but finally Feb. 20, a male and female were there together (D. Hutchinson, *fide* P.R.B.O.). Two ♀ Barrow's Goldeneyes at Moss Landing Jan. 1-2 (†E&AM) and one female on the Kings R., below Pine Flat Dam Feb. 11 – Mar. 5 (†RH *et al.*) were the farthest s. of 38 reported. Very rare "spring" migrants inland were two Surf Scoters on Leavitt L., Lassen Co., Feb. 4 (RS *et al.*) and up to three on L. Shastina Feb. 11-28+ (*fide* MT).

RAPTORS, RAILS — White-tailed Kites were reported reduced in numbers in parts of the C.V. and San Francisco Bay area (AE,FKB,RAB,SFB). This apparent trend should be carefully watched. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk found in Tiburon Dec. 5 was seen by many until the middle of January (RS *et al.*). Another was reported on the Pt. Reyes CBC. There are only four or five previous records from the Mon-

terey Bay area of wintering birds. Rough-legged Hawks were reported from the coast and C.V. in numbers comparable to the big flight of 1973-1974 (m.ob.) Some observers felt that the proportion of ad. Rough-leggeds to immatures was perhaps greater than usual w. of the Sierras (DS,TM). Very encouraging news of Bald Eagles in the Region were reports indicating that 100+ birds, mostly immatures, wintered in the C.V. and surrounding foothills from Shasta to Tulare Cos., and there were 20± reports from the coast (m.ob.) Numbers were near normal in the Klamath Basin (*fide* MT).

A Black Rail was flushed at Benicia S.P., Dec. 9 (*fide* P.R.B.O.) and one was at the Palo Alto Baylands Jan. 9 & Feb. 5 (E. Parker, TC).

S.A.

It was perhaps inevitable, given the manic levels reached by birders in the past few years, that our zealousness would get the best of us. Despite forewarnings from within their ranks, a group of n. California birders, converging on Benicia S.P., during a high tide Dec. 10, managed to literally harass a Black Rail to death while attempting to flush it. A sobering experience for those involved, but who among us does not recognize, in this story, behavior perhaps too similar to his own at times?

SHOREBIRDS — A Black Oystercatcher circled a small farmyard pond near Scott's Valley, Santa Cruz Co., Feb. 14, then landed, 5 mi from the nearest ocean, only to be chased off by domestic geese (*fide* TB)! Only one previous inland record exists for the Region (*Calif. Birds* 1:83). The decline of Snowy Plovers in the Region has recently attracted attention. A census of "all beaches" in Marin and Sonoma Cos. Feb. 8, produced 248 birds (*fide* DS), and an "all-time high winter flock" of 151 was at the Pajaro Dunes Jan. 22 (J&RW). Alarm was expressed at the rate with which "reliable areas" for Mountain Plovers in Tulare County are fast "turning to cotton" (RAB).

For the second consecutive year a Ruff was found wintering at Pacific Grove Dec. 27 – Feb. 28+ (BDP,JP *et al.*), but this bird was apparently different from last year's, and at a different spot. Red Phalaropes were widely reported in good numbers along the coast (m.ob.). Hundreds were seen flying S from shore on the Pt. Reyes CBC (BDP,JP,DE) and they stayed in Monterey Bay through the period, with up to 50 still flying S past Pt. Pinos Feb. 11 (DP,TB). Two were near the Dumbarton Bridge Jan. 25 (JRI) and a very out-of-place individual was on L. Shastina Dec. 18 (†R. Ekstrom, *fide* MT). A N. Phalarope at the Salinas R. mouth, Dec. 8 was late (†DP).

JAEGERS, GULLS — Slightly better than average numbers of Parasitic Jaegers were reported, with four sightings around Monterey Bay Dec. 27 – Jan. 3, one at a concentration of gulls and terns in Tomales Bay Dec. 12 (DS,P.R.B.O.), and one at Bodega Bay Dec

30 (BDP,JP). A dark phase bird at L. Hennessey Jan. 28-31 (B. Lutes, JP) established only the second inland winter record for the Region.

S.A.

The most mysterious bird of the season was an ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull at Robert's L., Seaside, Monterey Co., on the afternoon of Jan. 14 (LCB,BDP,JP, ph. R. Branson). The bird was carefully studied at very close range and a description has been sent to the W.F.O. Records Committee. Many of California's leading field ornithologists were in the Monterey area that weekend for boat trips, but the bird could not be found the next day or subsequently despite intensive searching. Having wandered an ocean and a continent to surface as a first state record, it quickly resubmerged into the anonymity of a gull's world.

Fresno County's first Mew Gull was an immature near Pinedale Dec. 4-29 (†KH,RH *et al.*). The fifth or sixth regional Black-headed Gull was near Arcata Feb. 19 to at least Feb. 26 (BDP,JP *et al.*). Originally identified as an aberrant Franklin's Gull, it was correctly identified Feb. 25 (J. Dunn,VR,†GMcC). A previous individual at this location in 1972 was "apparently . . . Larus ridibundus sibiricus" (AB 26:901), and at least one observer felt that this bird was also of Siberian origin. But if Lesser Black-backed and Little Gulls can get here, apparently from the east, why not L. r. ridibundus? An ad. Little Gull was also in the Arcata-Eureka area from Feb. 21 to at least Feb. 26 (M. Phillips,†DE *et al.*), and this is not the first time Little and Black-headed Gulls have been found at the same spot on the Pacific Coast within days of each other (AB 29:109). A report of two imm. Sabine's Gulls seen from shore at Pt. Reyes in stormy weather Jan. 4 (†DD) was exceptional. Heermann's Gulls paralleled Brown Pelicans in abundance and tardiness this season (m.ob.), with a few still as far n. as Bodega Bay at the end of the period (DS).

TERNs, ALCIDS — Single Com. Terns at Pajaro Dunes Dec. 9 (J&RW) & 19 (†DP,TB, J&RW) were very late, as was an Elegant Tern there Dec. 5 (J&RW). A Thick-billed Murre was carefully described from Pacific Grove Jan. 21 (†DRo,†DD). For the second consecutive winter a few Xantus' Murrelets were in Monterey Bay with a maximum of three Jan. 15 (RS *et al.*)

PIGEONS THROUGH OWLS — In the n. C.V., Band-tailed Pigeons staged an awesome invasion from early December through early February. A census conducted by the Calif. Fish and Game Dept., above L. Oroville produced 30,000+ birds (*vide* SAL). This downslope movement may have been triggered by the heavy snowfall in the mountains in early December. A late report was received of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo seen Nov. 2 along the Pajaro R., Santa Cruz Co. (*vide*

DP). Apparently there have been no records of this species in Santa Cruz County since 1903. In addition to the Snowy Owl reported from Arcata during the fall period two more birds found at Manila, Humboldt Co., Jan. 8 remained through Feb. 28 (DE,SH, m.ob.) At least 15 Pygmy Owls were reported, all except one from inland locations. An injured Long-eared Owl picked up just s. of Ukiah Feb. 9 (OJK), provided Mendocino County with its first record. Eleven dead Saw-whet Owls were found along Hwy 80 between Colfax and Donner Summit Jan. 29 (RS). This species, rare in the Sierra, may winter here in larger numbers than is suspected.

GOATSUCKERS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS

— Most unusual was the presence of two Vaux's Swifts near Piedra, Fresno Co., Feb. 11 (†RH *et al.*), and yet another bird was seen at Friant Feb. 13 (†KH) A ♂ Costa's Hummingbird frequented a feeder in Longvale, Mendocino Co., Dec. 28 – Jan. 26 (B.Breese) This hummer is rarely found in winter and this individual the first ever recorded in Mendocino County (OJK). Perhaps the most remarkable event of the season was the discovery of a ♀ Blue-throated Hummingbird at a feeder in Three Rivers, Tulare Co., Dec. 27 – Feb. 28+ (†G. Schuckert, m.ob.). The bird was easily seen and was observed by literally hundreds of birders. It was the first time this species has ever been recorded in California. A juv. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*S.v. varius*) was seen Dec. 31 – Feb. 28+ in Tiburon, Marin Co. (†GMcC, m.ob.). It was the first time this race was recorded in the Region, and points out the need for more careful study of subspecies distribution by all observers (see *West. Birds* 6 69-86, 1975). A Williamson's Sapsucker was found well out of its range in Portola Valley Dec. 26 (†R.&A.Wallace) It is very rarely ever reported away from the mountains. Four more Tropical Kingbirds were found after last fall's invasion and elected to stay most of the period. A single E. Phoebe was at Kelly L., Santa Cruz Co., Jan. 1 (RM *et al.*).

SWALLOWS THROUGH THRUSHES — A good description of a ♀ Purple Martin at Stinson Beach, Marin Co., Jan. 1 was received (RS *et al.*). This represented the first time this species was recorded in winter in California. In addition to the Blue Jays reported during the autumn, two more birds appeared in Humboldt County. One was present from the middle of January – Mar. 9 at Fieldbrook (†DE,CH,JW, JM, m.ob.) and the other was Dec. 31 – Jan. 8, 2 mi n of Willow Cr. (S.Anderson, DA, m.ob.). A stray Clark's Nutcracker on Mt. St. Helena Dec. 12 was well w. or s. of its normal range (KVV). Very scarce in winter in the C.V., and in the Great Basin, single Winter Wrens were found at Putah Cr., Dec. 18 (DE,DS,SJ) and near Cedarville, Modoc Co., Dec. 21 (WS *et al.*). The Bendire's Thrasher in Courtland has become something of a regional fixture and the last word the editors received was that it was still present Feb. 21 (JRi). Unreported in the fall period, a Brown Thrasher was present in Santa Rosa Nov. 24 – Feb. 28+ (†M. Shepard,BDP *et al.*). Varied Thrushes made a massive invasion into the Region this winter. Many

observers reported abnormally high numbers. Townsend's Solitaires were reported in Lake and Fresno Cos., and on Mt. St. Helena in mid-December.

SHRIKES THROUGH WOOD WARBLERS — At least 14 N. Shrikes were reported, which is above normal for the period. Six were found on the Peace Valley CBC, Dec. 19 (BED). Single Solitary Vireos were reported at Lover's Pt., Monterey Co., Feb. 26 (PL), and at Burris Pk., Kings Co., Jan. 18 (KH *et al.*). As expected, Black-and-white Warblers wintered in small numbers. Five were reported, four from near the coast and one inland. A Worm-eating Warbler was present in Sunnybrae, Humboldt Co., Dec. 29 – Mar. 10 (SH, †DRu *et al.*). It is the second winter occurrence of this species. An incredible ten Tennessee Warblers wintered from Marin to Monterey Dec. 4 – Feb. 26 (m.ob.). Four Yellow Warblers, three from the coast from San Francisco to Santa Cruz and one inland were present Nov. 28 – Feb. 2 (PM, SAL, TB, LCB). A Magnolia Warbler was found along the Pajaro R., Santa Cruz Co., Jan. 2 – Mar. 3 (†TB, PM, EM). This represents the first regional winter record for this species. At least 11 Hermit Warblers were seen November – Feb. 25, all coastal, six of which were recorded on the Pt. Reyes CBC (RS, DS, LCB, EM *et al.*). Following last fall's record number of Palm Warblers, at least 20 birds were found along the coast from Bodega Bay to the Carmel R., Dec. 1 – late February (m.ob.). A single Wilson's Warbler was on the Carmel R., Dec. 4 (EM *et al.*) American Redstarts were on the Pajaro R., Jan. 1–22 (PM) and a bird found last fall at Forestville, Sonoma Co., was last seen Jan. 7 (BDP).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES — Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported in concentrations five times their normal numbers on the Peace Valley CBC, Dec. 19, where 2500+ were tallied (*fide* BED). A Tricolored Blackbird seen at Weaverville, Trinity Co., Feb. 18, provided the first record for that county (DA). Always scarce in winter, an ad. ♂ Hooded Oriole was at Dry Cr., Fresno Co., Feb. 11 (BK *et al.*). An imm ♂ "Baltimore" Oriole was present at Pacific Grove Dec. 27 – Feb. 5 (RS *et al.*). Brown-headed Cowbirds were reported this winter in surprising numbers, a total of 465 was reported, of which 350 were at Bethal I., Dec. 21 (DE).

Observers discovered two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, males were seen at Los Altos Hills Dec. 1 (†TC) and at Golden Gate Pk., Dec. 30 (LCB *et al.*). A Black-headed Grosbeak found at Three Rivers, Tulare Co., Dec. 19, was the only one reported (JLi). Following last fall's downslope invasion of Evening Grosbeaks, 187 more were found wintering throughout the Region, all in coastal areas. This suggests that the birds may have come from the Cascades rather than the Sierra. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow was at the Palo Alto Baylands Ref., Feb. 8 (A. Ghorso, JM *et al.*) and the Bolinas Lagoon bird was last seen Jan. 1 (RS). Ten Vesper Sparrows found at Panoche Valley Dec. 9 were the only ones reported (TC). The Red Bluff CBC tallied a substantial count for Rufous-crowned Sparrows. At least 13 were found at the mouth of Antelope Canyon Dec. 17 (DAG). Tree Sparrows were at Davis

Dec. 18–19 (H. Smith), and at Lost L., Fresno Co., Dec. 11, where it furnished the first county record (†RH). Incredible was a report (with no substantiating details) of 20 Tree Sparrows at Hospital Rock, Tule L. (*fide* MT). Harris' Sparrows were in lower-than-normal numbers; with only three reported, two inland and one along the coast Dec. 17 – Jan. 7 (m.ob.). Another good description of a Golden-crowned x White-crowned Sparrow hybrid was submitted of a bird seen at Putah Cr., Dec. 18 (DS). A Fox Sparrow Dec. 30 at Lee Vining was clearly not one of the far western races, being very rusty in color (†TM). Swamp Sparrows were reported in excellent numbers; the high count of 44 seen on the Peace Valley CBC, Dec. 19 (*fide* BED) This editor can remember not too many years ago when this bird was considered rare in winter. A Lapland Longspur seen on the Pt. Reyes CBC, Dec. 17 (RS, DS *et al.*) and two more seen at Estero Americana, Sonoma Co., Feb. 10 (BDP, DS). A single Chestnut-collared Longspur was found in the Arcata Bottoms Dec. 1 (GMcC).

CORRIGENDA — In the introduction AB 31 1183 the reference to nesting should pertain to N. Parulas and not to Yellow-crowned Night Herons. In the same issue AB 31:1187 although Grace's Warblers have been found on territory in California (*West. Birds* 5 45–56, 1974, AB 31:1048, 1977, and AB 29:1034, 1975) and breeding is almost certain, an actual nest has yet to be found.

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Please note Blue List Cooperator's Form pages 405-6. It is due your Regional Editor by September 15.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION /Guy McCaskie

The Region experienced one of the wettest winters on record, but the mild temperatures accompanying the rain may have accounted for the overwintering of numbers of species which normally occur only in summer or as migrants.

Varied Thrushes and Golden-crowned Kinglets were the most conspicuous of the northerly invaders, but Rough-legged Hawks were present in above-average numbers, and a few Northern Shrikes pushed far south to reach the central areas of the Region. In addition, the sighting of a Flesh-footed Shearwater off Morro Bay, and the occurrence of two Emperor Geese on the coast, are consistent with observations of these species in northern California this season.



An indication of the number and variety of species occurring this season, not normally present during the winter, can be seen in the warblers. The only warblers normally wintering in the Region are Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's and Common Yellowthroat. Nashville, Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Hermit and Wilson's Warblers occur in extremely small numbers, with one or two Black-and-white and Palm Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes and American Redstarts. In addition to all the regularly occurring species, this winter produced two each of Tennessee and MacGillivray's Warblers, and single Cape May, Pine and Hooded Warblers, a Northern Parula, an Ovenbird and a Painted Redstart. An amazing 21 species!

Throughout a special effort to eliminate all reported sightings only on days of Christmas Bird Counts has been made. This should not detract from the validity of those records, but is meant to conserve space for records other than those on Christmas Bird Counts.

LOONS, GREBES — A Com. Loon at the n. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, N.E.S.S.) Jan. 14 (BED), and another at the s. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, S.E.S.S.) Mar. 11 (GMcC), are of interest since there is a paucity of inland records of wintering birds away

from the Colorado R. A few Red-throated Loons were found inland, but w. of the mountains; one in MacArthur Pk., Los Angeles, Feb. 19 (GSS), two on Legg L., El Monte, Mar. 11 (GSS) and another at Santee, San Diego Co., Jan. 27 - Feb. 19 (WTE,DP). A Red-necked Grebe in Santa Barbara Jan. 13 - Feb. 28+ was the only one found.

SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS — Offshore N. Fulmars were: 30 Morro Bay Jan. 22 (KG,JD), four Goleta Pt., Jan. 5 (LB), 15 La Jolla Dec. 10 (JD), with individuals seen from various coastal points. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, rare any time, was with four Pink-footed Shearwaters off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD,KG) Significant were five Short-tailed Shearwaters off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD,KG), one dead in Santa Barbara Dec. 13 (PL, *S.B.M.N.H.) and four off La Jolla Dec. 10 (DM,JD). Offshore Manx Shearwaters records included 50 Morro Bay Jan. 22 (KG,JD), 26 Goleta Pt., Dec. 12 (PL,BS), 1000 La Jolla Jan. 24 (DP,WTE) and 150 still there Feb. 21 (DP); this species regularly moves N close to shore in the late fall and early winter Two Ashies off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD) were the only storm-petrels reported.

PELICANS — Two imm. Brown Pelicans at S.E.S.S. Dec. 30 (WTE) and another at N.E.S.S., Jan. 14 (BED) were the latest ever recorded on the Salton Sea normally withdrawing to the Gulf of California in October.

HERONS, STORKS, SPOONBILLS — The imm Little Blue Heron near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Nov. 9 was present Mar. 9 (DP). Cattle Egrets were numerous coastally with ca. 48 around Santa Barbara during December and January (PL), up to 50 at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles Co., in late December (BB,KG,FH) and about 150 around Imperial Beach in early December (JD); three in the Antelope Valley Dec. 11 (KG) were at an interesting locality. One or two imm. Reddish Egrets remained around San Diego throughout the period (PU,DP). The only Louisiana Herons were one around Imperial Beach all winter (PU,EC), and another at the mouth of the San Diego R., Jan. 26 (BC). Most unusual was a **Wood Stork** at S.E.S.S., Feb. 18 - Mar. 12 (GMcC, H&PB) since virtually no winter record exists. A White-faced Ibis at Goleta all winter (PL,LB) was a little n. for a wintering bird; a few of these birds regularly winter along the coast of Orange and San Diego Cos., as well as around the Salton Sea. Unprecedented was the imm. **Roseate Spoonbill** at Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., late December - January (Elmer Colley, *vide* GSS) and another at S.E.S.S., Jan. 29 (EB) & Mar. 12 (H&PB), since there are no previous winter records from anywhere in the southwest.

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS — A Whistling Swan at Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley (hereafter, F.C.R.) Dec. 20 (REM,PMR), four in Baker, San Bernardino Co., Dec. 21 (SC) and another around Ocean-side, San Diego Co., Dec. 31 - Jan. 14 (WTE,PU) were all at interesting localities. A Brant at Apollo L., near Lancaster, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 29 - Mar. 12 (FH,KG) and another at S.E.S.S., Feb. 16 (HHA)

were both at inland localities. Most exciting was an **Emperor Goose** at Pt. Mugu Jan. 1 – Feb. 20 (Elmer Colley. *fide* GSS) and another captured at Pismo Beach. San Luis Obispo Co., Dec. 15 (FRT); these two records, along with others found to the n., indicate a small flight on the West Coast this winter.

A Green-winged (Eur.) Teal was in Long Beach Jan. 7 – Feb. 4 (BD,TH); this distinctive race is a casual straggler to s. California. About ten Eur. Wigeon were found in the s.w. portion of the Region with up to three males together near Hemet, in February (DM). Greater Scaup were more numerous than usual along the coast, with small flocks at some locations, and 20+ individuals being seen as far s. as San Diego (PU); in addition a few appeared inland with one at F.C.R., Dec. 11 (DR), up to 18 on the Colorado R., below Parker Dam Dec. 24 – Mar. 4 (JD,KVR), up to 12 at Imperial Dam on the Colorado R., Dec. 22 – Feb. 19 (PL,DR) and one on Quail L., in the Antelope Valley Dec. 11 (KG). Three or four Barrow's Goldeneyes were on the Colorado R., below Parker Dam Dec. 23 – Mar. 4 (JD,KVR). The only Oldsquaws were one shot at Pt. Mugu Dec. 21 (GSS) and another inland on Apollo L., near Lancaster Dec. 29 – Jan. 2 (JD,FH). As usual up to three Harlequin Ducks were present on the coast near Cambria, all winter (FRT), but a stunning male in Carlsbad Dec. 31 – Mar. 9 (JBi) was at the s. extreme of the species' range. Up to seven Surf Scoters were seen together on the Salton Sea during January (ASE,BED,PS) and a few wintered there. Black Scoters appeared in small numbers along the coast with up to ten at Marina del Ray in February (H&PB,BB,FH) and one as far s. as Imperial Beach Jan. 25-28 (DP). Small numbers of Hooded Mergansers were found throughout the Region with one at Santee Jan. 15 – Feb. 8 (BC) and another near Niland Jan. 9-14 (PS,EAC) being the southernmost. Five Red-breasted Mergansers on Tinnemaha Res., Jan. 22 (TH) and another at Desert Center, Riverside Co., Dec. 27 (JVR) were unexpected at this time of the year.

HAWKS, EAGLES, FALCONS — An ad. Goshawk present in Arcadia Dec. 18 – Feb. 13 (AC) was away from areas of normal occurrence. Red-shouldered Hawks continued to appear e. of their normal range with two near Needles on the Colorado R., Jan. 21 (SC) and five individuals in the Coachella Valley n. of the Salton Sea during January (PS,BED) being the most interesting sightings. Five imm. Broad-winged Hawks were found with one in Santa Barbara Jan. 23 – Feb. 28+ (BS,LB), another in nearby Carpinteria Jan. 28 – Feb. 28+ (BS,PL), one at F.C.R., Jan. 7-8 (JD,PU), one in Riverside Dec. 24 (BP, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) and the fifth inland near Brawley, Imperial Co., Jan. 28 – Feb. 18 (LJ,KG); this is more than is normally expected. An imm. **Zone-tailed Hawk** was well seen near Ocean-side Jan. 13 (Jbu) providing the third winter record for California. Rough-legged Hawks remained numerous and widespread throughout the period with some along the coast, e.g., one near Playa del Rey Dec. 24 – Feb. 28 (BB,FH), and others reaching as far s. as L. Cuyamaca, San Diego Co., Dec. 11 – Feb. 25 (Jbu,CGE) and Holtville Jan. 1 (EAC,SC). Bald Eagles were encouragingly numerous with concentrations of up to 18 on some inland lakes; an imm. Bald Eagle at F.C.R., Dec.



Immature Broad-winged Hawk, Springbrook Golf Course, Riverside, Dec. 24, 1977. Photo/ B. G. Prescott.
26 (REM,PMR) and another near Playa del Rey Nov. 24 – Feb. 28+ (BB) were both at interesting localities.

SHOREBIRDS — A few Black Oystercatchers were along the s. California coast, with one at Leo Carillo St. Beach Jan. 2 (KG), three at Playa del Rey all winter (FH), one in San Pedro Jan. 7 (TH) and 1-2 on Pt. Loma Dec. 31 – Mar. 12 (RHW,JC). A Mountain Plover at Oasis, Mono Co., Dec. 11 (JVR,DR) was at an unusual locality. An Am. Golden Plover (*P. d. dominica*) in Goleta since Aug. 26 was still present Feb. 28+, being joined by another Nov. 23 – Dec. 4 (PL,LB), and a bird of the Asiatic race (*P. d. fulva*) was at Playa del Rey all winter (FH,JD). A Black Turnstone at Salton City Mar. 12 (GMcC) had either wintered locally or reached this inland locality as an early spring migrant; it is a casual straggler away from the coast. Up to 30 Sanderlings were found at Salton City through the period (EAC,SC); this species has previously been considered extremely rare inland except during migration. A **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** in Goleta Dec. 13 (PL) provided the ~~least~~ record for this casual fall straggler. A Stilt Sandpiper at S.E.S.S., Feb. 18 (GMcC) was the only one found this winter. Red Phalaropes remained off the coast well into January with 250 off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD), 45 off La Jolla Jan. 24 (DP,WTE) and three at Leo Carillo St. Beach Feb. 4 (FH) being the latest.

LARIDS — A few Pomarine Jaegers were present throughout the period with high counts of 25 off La Jolla Dec. 10 (JD) and ten off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD). About equal numbers of Parasitic Jaegers were reported, all being close to the shore. A first year Glaucous Gull at McGrath S.P., Dec. 29 (LRB) and a second year bird at Salton City Feb. 26-28+ (EAC,JD) were the only two positively identified. An imm. Glaucous-winged Gull at Colton Feb. 3 (SC) was a long way from the coast. For the first time small numbers of yellow-footed W. Gulls remained on the Salton Sea throughout the winter with a high count of 15 at Salton City Feb. 26 (EAC,SC). An imm. Thayer's Gull in

Colton Feb. 3 (SC), and two more near Brawley Feb. 6 (KG,LI) were all at inland localities. Similarly, an imm. Mew Gull at N.E.S.S., Dec. 19 (DR,PL), an adult there Jan. 13 (BED) and another adult at Salton City Feb. 26 (EAC,SC) were all far from the coast. An ad. Laughing Gull at N.E.S.S., Dec. 19 (PL,DR) was exceptionally late. An imm. Franklin's Gull, rare in California during the winter, was at MacArthur Pk., Jan. 15-19 (FH,GSS) and an adult was near Imperial Beach Jan. 21 (RCS). An Elegant Tern in Goleta Dec. 15 (PL) and two more on San Diego Bay the same day (EC,LB) were late stragglers. Up to 12 Black Skimmers remained around San Diego Bay throughout the winter.

ALCIDS — Four Xantus' Murrelets off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD) were of interest since the species' winter habits are poorly understood. Three Ancient Murrelets off Morro Bay Jan. 22 (JD) were in an area of normal occurrence, but two off San Diego Mar. 12 (CL) were quite far s.

DOVES, OWLS, GOATSUCKERS — A White-winged Dove near Palo Verde on the Colorado R., Jan. 26 (KVR) was unexpected. Along the coast two were in Goleta Jan. 26 (DS) and another was near Imperial Beach Feb. 12 (PU,EC). The largest concentration of Long-eared Owls located this winter was 18-20 in Afton Canyon, in the desert of e. San Bernardino Co., Jan. 29 - Feb. 27 (EAC,SC). A Saw-whet Owl at Regina Feb. 4 (KG) was one of the few to be found in s. e. California. A Poor-will was at Regina Mar. 4 (JD); we still have much to learn about the winter status and distribution of this species. Five or six Lesser Night-hawks seen near Regina Feb. 3-4 (KG) & Mar. 5 (DR), and another at Finney L., near S.E.S.S., Jan. 28 (GSS) were all probably wintering locally.

SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS, WOODPECKERS — A flock of 30 Vaux's Swifts near Oceanside Jan. 31 (AF) indicates that the species again wintered there. Four Allen's Hummingbirds found in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area during December and January (PL,LB) may well have been individuals of the non-migratory race *sedentarius* which has been thought to be confined to the Channel Is., and the Palos Verdes Pen. of Los Angeles County. A ♂ Broad-billed Hummingbird, a casual straggler to California, was in Marina del Rey Dec. 9 - Jan. 25 (JAJ). Four Acorn Woodpeckers at the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery near Lone Pine Jan. 22 - Feb. 28+ (TH) were far from known areas of occurrence, and one in San Diego all winter (DH) was at a coastal locality w. of the species' normal range.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — Up to two Tropical Kingbirds were present in Goleta Dec. 8 - Jan. 21 (PL,LB). One or two Ash-throated Flycatchers, rare in s. California during the winter, were around Regina Feb. 4 - Mar. 6 (KG,DR). Four E. Phoebes were found, with one near Riverside Mar. 11 (SJR), another near Calipatria Jan. 9 - Feb. 26 (ASE,BD), one near Blythe on the Colorado R., Mar. 4 (JD,SC) and the other at Imperial Dam Jan. 14 (KVR). A Gray Flycatcher in Arcadia all winter (AC) was the only one

reported; this species is much more rare in s. California as a wintering bird than in former years. A Coue's Flycatcher was near Irvine Dec. 18-21 (EB) and another was at Parker Dam Dec. 24 - Mar. 19 (JD,KVR, ph. S.D.N.H.M.); this species remains very rare. A Vermilion Flycatcher at Pt. Mugu all winter (KG) and another at F.C.R. (TH,JD) marked the northernmost occurrences for the coast and interior this winter. A Rough-winged Swallow near Pt. Mugu Jan. 1 (LJ) was unexpected since winter records from along the coast are few, though the species does winter in small numbers in s.e. California.



Coue's Flycatcher, Parker Dam, Dec. 24, 1977 - Mar 19, 1978. Photo/ G. McCaskie.

JAYS, CROWS, CHICKADEES, WRENS — A Steller's Jay in San Diego Dec. 4 - Mar. 7 (DH) was at a lowland coastal locality. A Scrub Jay near Brawley Dec. 30 (WTE) was outside the species' normal range. A Com. Crow at Daggett, San Bernardino Co., Feb. 25 (SC) was at a desert location away from known wintering localities. A few Mountain Chickadees were present in the coastal lowlands, as appears normal, but one at Regina Feb. 26 - Mar. 5 (DM,SC, *S.B.C.M.) was far out in the desert and established the southeasternmost record for California. Winter Wrens remained relatively numerous through the winter after the influx of last fall, with individuals found as far s. as Imperial Beach Dec. 15-17 (EC), and near Borrego Springs in e. San Diego County Dec. 7 (BC) & Feb 16 (BC).

THRASHERS THROUGH VIREOS — A Brown Thrasher, always a rare bird in California, was in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 - Feb. 28+ (KG,PL), and another was at Finney L., Feb. 26 (RC). A Sage Thrasher in Afton Canyon Dec. 21 (SC) was unexpected. Varied Thrushes remained numerous along the coast, with smaller numbers scattered throughout the deserts of Inyo and San Bernardino Cos., one reaching as far s. as Finney L., Mar. 11 (GMcC). Golden-crowned Kinglets were present along the coast in above-average numbers, with one at Parker Dam Dec 26 (JVR) and another at Finney L., Dec. 22 (PL) being in areas from which few records exist. Northern

Shrikes reached s. California in unprecedented numbers with an adult in Afton Canyon Jan. 8-29 (EAC,SC), six different immatures in the Antelope Valley Dec. 28 – Jan. 8 (FH,KG,JD), another immature in the Lucerne Valley, San Bernardino Co., Jan. 8 (SC) and an imm. on the coast at McGrath S. P., Jan. 27 – Feb. 3 (PL,BS); there are only four known occurrences of this species s. of the Owen's Valley and Death Valley prior to last fall, and the record from McGrath S. P., is the first from a coastal locality s. of Marin County. Seven Solitary Vireos, all *cassinii*, were found in coastal San Diego County Dec. 17 – Feb. 19, and single birds were at Laguna Dam on the Colorado R., Dec. 22 (DR) & Feb. 19 (LB). A Warbling Vireo, very rare in winter, was in Santa Barbara Jan. 2 (LRB).

WARBLERS — A Black-and-white Warbler in Tapia Pk., Los Angeles Co., Dec. 5 (JD) was a late fall migrant, but one in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 – Mar. 18 (JVR,BD,PL), another in San Diego Nov. 15 – Jan. 6 (DH,PU) and one more near Imperial Beach Sept. 28 – Mar. 30 (EC) were clearly wintering birds. A Tennessee Warbler near Imperial Beach Dec. 15 (EC) was the last of the fall migrants, however, two in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 – Feb. 12 (PL,LB) were clearly wintering. The only wintering Nashville Warblers were one in Goleta Dec. 30 – Feb. 16 (PL,LB) and another in Newport Dec. 26 – Feb. 11 (SJR). A N. Parula was at Big River on the Colorado R., Dec. 23 – Mar. 4 (JD,JVR). Yellow Warblers were exceptionally common with 4-5 around Goleta all winter (PL,LB), one at Pt. Mugu Feb. 11 (BS,LRB), five different birds seen around San Diego during December and January (PU,EC), one near N.E.S.S., Jan. 15 (BED) and three or four at S.E.S.S. during February and March (GMcC). A Black-throated Gray Warbler was at Brock Ranch, Imperial Co., Jan. 1 (EAC) and another spent the winter near Blythe (KVR); this species may prove to winter regularly along the Colorado R. valley. A Townsend's Warbler near Vidal on the Colorado R., during January (KVR) was in an area from which there are virtually no winter records. The only Hermit Warblers reported were one in Goleta Feb. 28 (BS) and two more in Santa Barbara all winter (PL). Amazing was a ♂ Pine Warbler at Regina Feb. 4-26 (KG,JD) for this is only the fifth record of this species in the Region, the previous four all being from along the coast during the fall. Two Palm Warblers were in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 – Jan. 14 (PL,LB) and another was near Imperial Beach Nov. 30 – Feb. 28+ (EC,PU). An Ovenbird in San Francisco Canyon, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 28 – Jan. 4 (FH,KG) would appear to be only the second ever found in California during the winter. As usual a few N. Waterthrushes were present along the coast with one or two at Pt. Mugu Jan. 7 – Feb. 11 (KG,LRB) and one in Oceanside Jan. 2 (GMcC). A MacGillivray's Warbler, was in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 – Jan. 3 (PL) and another was at Laguna Dam Dec. 22 (DR,PL). A ♀ Hooded Warbler near San Diego Dec. 17 – Jan. 27 (WTE) was the first to be recorded in California during the winter. An Am. Redstart was in Goleta Dec. 31 – Jan. 21 (PL), another was in Hollywood Feb. 19 (LRB), two were along the

Colorado R., below Parker Dam Dec. 26 (JVR) and three or four were around S.E.S.S. all winter. Exciting was a Painted Redstart at L. Norconian, Riverside Co., Dec. 30 – Feb. 23 (DM,SC) since there are few winter records for California.

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS — A Tricolored Blackbird near Barstow, San Bernardino Co., Feb. 20 (EAC) was e. of its normal range, and another near Finney L., Mar. 12 (GMcC) was the first to be found in Imperial County. An Orchard Oriole found in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 (PL,LB) was still present Feb. 28. A few Hooded Orioles remained through the winter with two in Goleta Feb. 6 (PL), up to four in Santa Barbara all winter (LB), two in Arcadia throughout the period (AC) and another in El Centro, Imperial Co., Feb. 14 (LJ). The imm. ♂ Scarlet-headed Oriole was still present at E.C.R. Dec. 11 (JVR,DR) but could not be found in early January. Two Scott's Orioles were near Goleta Feb. 19 – Feb. 28+ (PL,LB), this tends to be rarer as a winter straggler than most other orioles. The only "Baltimore" Orioles reported were one in Goleta Jan. 2 (PL) and another in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 – Feb. 28+ (PL,LB). Bullock's Orioles were numerous with about 27 in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area during December and January (PL), up to five in Newport Dec. 26 – Feb. 11 (SJR), one or two around San Diego throughout the period (PU) and a male near N.E.S.S., Jan. 11 (PS). A Rusty Blackbird at F.C.R., Dec. 15 (REM,PMR) was a late fall migrant, but a female in Goleta Dec. 10 – Mar. 17 (PL,LB) may have wintered there last year. Up to five Great-tailed Grackles spent the winter around S.E.S.S. (WTE,PS), an area being colonized by this rapidly expanding species.

As usual a few W. Tanagers remained throughout the winter with up to three in Goleta during the period (PL,LB), up to four in Arcadia in January (JD,FH), one in Newport Dec. 26 – Jan. 22 (SJR) and three in San Diego during December (PU). A ♀ Hepatic Tanager again wintered in Oceanside Jan. 7 – Mar. 18 (CL). Four Summer Tanagers were found with one in Goleta Dec. 5 – Feb. 16 (PL,LB), another in Encino, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 18 – Feb. 19 (JD), a female in Oceanside Jan. 7 – Feb. 7 (CL) and a male in San Diego Nov. 15 – Jan. 8 (DH).

FINCHES, SPARROWS, LONGSPURS — A ♂ Pyrrhuloxia, a casual straggler to California, was at the Brock Ranch Dec. 23 (EAC,SC). Three Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in Santa Barbara during January (PL), a male was in Sierra Madre, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 14 (GSS) and another was in San Diego Dec. 17-18 (DH,PU). A Black-headed Grosbeak, much rarer in winter than the previous species, was in Goleta Dec. 1 – Jan. 16 (PL). Small groups of Evening Grosbeaks were scattered along the coast and throughout the mountains, with up to 15 in Claremont during February and March (SJR,GSS) and 39 on Mt. Palomar Jan. 22 (RC) being the largest concentrations. A few Green-tailed Towhees were found in Imperial and San Diego Cos., but one in Afton Canyon Feb. 27 (EAC) was a little n. of its normal winter range. A few Lark Buntings were scattered throughout the Region with single birds at

Pt. Dume, Los Angeles Co., Feb. 11 (FH), near Imperial Beach Feb. 12-15 (PU,EC), at L. Tami, San Bernardino Co., Dec. 19 - Jan. 8 (EAC,SC), near Sunnymead, Jan. 10-29 (DM,JD) and at Regina Feb. 4-6 (KG,LJ). A Grasshopper Sparrow at L. Henshaw Jan. 27 (CGE) was expected, but one at Regina Feb. 5 (LJ) was outside the species' normal range. Six Gray-headed Juncos were found in the s. of the Region with one at Nojoqui Falls Pk., Santa Barbara Co., Feb. 3-28+ (PL) being somewhat n.w. of areas of normal occurrence. A Clay-colored Sparrow, very rare in California in winter, was in Arcadia throughout the period (AC). A Harris' Sparrow in Santa Barbara Dec. 31 - Feb. 28+ (PL) was the only one reported, whereas, some 16 White-throated Sparrows were reported. Five Swamp Sparrows were found, with one at F.C.R., Dec. 6 (LJ) and another at Holliday L., in the Antelope Valley Dec. 11 (KG) likely fall migrants, leaving only one at L. Norconian Jan. 16 (KG), another at Malibu Dec. 18 - Jan. 1 (LJ,FH) and a third in Santee Feb. 4 (BC) as wintering birds. A flock of 10± Lapland Longspurs near the Edmonston Pump Station Dec. 11 (REM,PMR), one or two in the Lanfair Valley of San Bernardino County Dec. 22 - Feb. 19 (SC), one at L. Henshaw Dec. 29 (CL) and another near Imperial Beach Jan. 13 (DP) provided an interesting assortment of localities. The only Chestnut-collared Longspurs were 20 at L. Henshaw Jan. 7 (EC) with one still present Jan. 13 (DP).

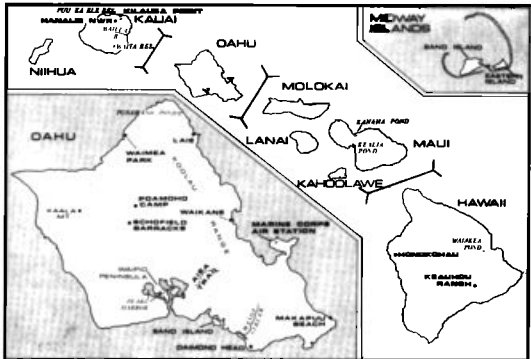
ADDENDA — Two significant records received too late for inclusion in the fall report were a Gray Vireo on Santa Cruz I., Sept. 24 (DS, *U.C.S.B.) and up to three Rusty Blackbirds on San Nicholas I., Nov. 4-7 (DS, *U.C.S.B.).

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HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

/C. John Ralph and Robert L. Pyle

The extended drought of the past three years continued unbroken through the winter. Rainfall at Honolulu during the season was one-fourth of the long-term average, and the total for 1977 was just barely half of the annual mean. The higher mountain areas had some rain, but the dry slopes and lowland areas throughout the state continued to suffer. Little effect of the drought on birds was noted, although the expansion of some exotic species may be related to it.



ALBATROSSES THROUGH EGRETS — Despite its unsuccessful nesting attempt last year, several Laysan Albatrosses returned to Kilauea Pt., Kauai (hereafter, K.) again this winter. Breeding activity, including two eggs laid, was noted in mid-January at three sites (GVB). No nests, however, were successful. Hopefully, the area will soon be given much-needed protection. A Black-footed Albatross was observed on the ground with two Laysans on one occasion. The Cattle Egret, well established on several islands, only recently has made substantial progress on the island of Hawaii (hereafter, H.) (*vide* JMS), despite its being the largest cattle-raising area in the state. Lokoaku Pond, H., boasted 79 on Jan. 27 (RLP), ten times the usual population there in recent years.

WATERFOWL — The lone Canada Goose that spent the past year on Mohouli Pond near Hilo, H., was joined by two more during the last week of December (JMS,CJR,CPR). They remained through the end of January (RLP,MEM *et al.*). The (Black) Brant overwintered on Kealia Pond, Maui (hereafter, M.) (CBK). The highlight of the season was two Emperor Geese along the shores of Lanai I. (PJC), and later at Lahina, M. (DS) for at least 10 days in late December. They were rather tame and were subsequently photographed on M., receiving publicity statewide, *albeit* being referred to as "Imperial Canadian Geese" by the news media. A lone White-fronted Goose at the Kaunakakai treatment pond, Molokai I., Jan. 24 (RAC), was one of the rare appearances of this species in the state. Two Gadwall, very uncommon, were found Dec. 17 at Waipio Pen., Oahu (hereafter, O.) (WMO,RL,CPR,RLP,CJR), and one was there Jan. 29 (RL). The rare Asiatic wanderer, a ♂ Garganey,

was well observed and sketched in the field, at Waipio, O., Jan. 7 (HDP,CJR,CPR). A ♂ Blue-winged Teal, unusual in the islands, was at Aimakapa Pond, H., Jan. 24 (RAC), and six were there Jan. 29 (RLP). Kanaha Pond, M., boasted one Jan. 30, and two Feb. 27 (CBK). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was reported at Waipio, O., Jan. 7 (CJR,CPR,HDP), and remained at least until Feb. 12 (H.A.S. *et al.*). Two ♂ Redheads on Kawaiui Marsh, O., were first recorded Nov. 13 (RJS,H.A.S.), and remained through the winter. A ♂ Canvasback was seen regularly at Aimakapa Pond, H., early December through late January (EK,RAC,RLP,HDP,DS)

SEA EAGLES THROUGH GULLS—The first state record of a **Steller's Eagle** (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) was reported initially by Coast Guard personnel on Kure Atoll in early February, and was photographed late in the month (GHB). Reportedly, the bird sustained itself on young Laysan Albatrosses. The Kalij Pheasant has expanded its range significantly on Hawaii I. It is rather common in dryer areas, and now has spread into native rain forests as well (MEM,HDP,CJR *et al.*). The Killdeer, present since September 1976, at Waipio, O., remained through the season, and another was recorded Dec. 17 on the Lihue, Kauai Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC) (GVB,P&SF), remaining at least a month (WS). Two Com. Snipe were in Kawaiui Marsh, O., Dec. 6 (TAB), and single birds were recorded at Waipio, O., Dec. 17 (WMO), and Kii Pond, O., Jan. 7 (PP). An ad. **Black-headed Gull**, representing the second state record, was observed at Waipio, O., Dec. 26 (DS). It was seen by several people Dec. 27-28, and 29 (RLP,CJR,CPR *et al.*) but not thereafter. A Bonaparte's Gull, casual straggler to the islands, was seen at Aimakapa Pond, H., Dec. 7-February (RAC). Another, first recorded last fall at Kealia Pond, M., remained through the season (CBK).

SWIFTLET THROUGH BABBLERS — The reported rediscovery of Vanikoro Swiftlet on Oahu September 1976, (introduced from Guam in the middle 1960s), left few lingering doubts as to its status. However, as indisputable evidence, several nests were found Jan. 16 in a cave in n. Halawa Valley, O., an area where some birds had been seen two days before. None of the nests appeared to be active, although at least one was reasonably fresh (CTA,ALT). A **Belted Kingfisher** provided only the third substantiated record for the state, at Kokoaku Pond, H., Jan. 3 (CFS). The bird then moved down the coast where it remained for the rest of the season (RB, *vide* DHW). A laughing-thrush of unknown species, reported sporadically along a specific section of the Pohomoho Trail, O., during the 1940s and 1950s, was thought to be the Gray-sided Laughing-thrush, *Garrulax caerulatus*, although the birds were never positively identified. On Feb. 16, two individuals were well seen at this same spot (MC,ALT, *vide* RJS) and described. This is 18 years after the last report of the species, and probably indicates that it is established. The Red-vented Bulbul continued its population explosion on Oahu, with several observers reporting it from a number of new areas. The Honolulu CBC tallied a record 744, *cf.*,

1977 CBC total of 453, itself a record high. The introduced Red-billed Leiothrix, once common on Oahu, was much reduced in numbers, but still persists. Twenty-seven were recorded (*vide* RJS) in 200 days of surveying in the relatively unexplored forests of the Koolau Mts., O., during the season.

HONEYCREEPERS THROUGH CANARY — Among the honeycreepers, only 10± Iiwi and three Hawaiian (Oahu) Creepers were seen during a survey on Oahu. These creeper records are the first to be well-verified in several years, and prove that the form persists despite severe habitat loss. They were observed Dec. 30, s. of Manana Trail (PLB), Jan. 29 in Moanalua Valley (MS), and Feb. 10 in n. Halawa Valley (MC,RJS). The Red Munia was in a new locality, 20 mi from its traditional area around Pearl Harbor, O., across the Koolau Mts. Fifteen were in Kawaiui Marsh, O., Dec. 6 (TAB). The Warbling Silverbill in n. Kohala, H., reached almost plague proportions with "hundreds, if not thousands" seen Feb. 7-8 (HDP). A startling discovery was the **Yellow-fronted Canary** at several places on Mauna Kea, H. This species was never before reported away from the area of Diamond Head, O. Eleven were first found at 2130 m near Puu Laau Dec. 29 (CvR). During February, an amazing 125 were found in at least five localities on Mauna Kea (EKo,JMS,NS,CBK). This area has been extensively and regularly censused during the past 3 yrs, and CvR has spent 750+ days in that habitat in the past 7 yrs. The origin of these birds is a mystery, although they probably spread from an undocumented release some years ago. (See *Elepaio* 38(9):99-100, for details.)

S.A.

A report from a visit to Kure Atoll by Mark J Rauzon deserves special mention. Two first records for the state, a **Redpoll** (sp.?) seen Nov 25 - Dec. 6, and a **Savannah Sparrow** seen Nov 29 - Dec. 6 were described in good detail. A third state record of **Snow Bunting** was also seen Nov. 15-18. These exciting reports and the two previous bunting records are the only records of migratory Fringillidae from the state. Others undoubtedly reach the islands but go unreported on the major islands, where the land area and vegetative cover are so much more extensive.

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