

# The Winter Season

## December 1, 1978 - February 28, 1979

### NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION

/Peter D. Vickery

Generally mild weather prevailed in the southern part of the Region in December and January. In February, a two-week period of bitter, unremitting northwest winds and sub-zero temperatures was one of the most severe and longest "deep freezes" in recent years. Frozen bays and iced mudflats caused a predictable, although not especially severe, winter kill of bay ducks as far south as Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.

This winter's incursion of Great Gray Owls, with at least 92 reported, was certainly the season's most extraordinary event. At least six of these remarkable birds were known to frequent a single field near Skowhegan, Maine. Hawk and Boreal owls also appeared in above-average numbers.



Two flights of Purple Gallinules, one each in December and January, involved at least seven individuals and were unquestionably the winter's most puzzling occurrences. Although notorious wanderers, Purple Gallinules are virtually unknown in the Region at this time of year. Seven birds at any season would be unprecedented. In winter it's mind-boggling.

**LOONS, GREBES** — Both Com. and Red-throated loons were especially numerous on the Nantucket I. Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC), with 355 and 375 respectively observed. Single Arctic Loons appeared at Tiverton, N.S., Dec. 28 (ELM *et al.*) and in the Galilee-Quonochontaug, R.I. area Jan. 7-27 (RAC *et al.*, *vide* CW). Three Eared Grebes in s. New England were well above average; in Rhode Island, singles were found at Tiverton

Jan. 2 and Sakonnet River Feb. 28 (*vide* CW). In Massachusetts, an Eared Grebe was seen at Magnolia Jan. 27 - Feb. 4 (*vide* RPE). Two Western Grebes wintered off Reid S.P., Me., for the second consecutive year and were possibly the individuals present the previous winter (*vide* PDV). The Western Grebe seen throughout the fall in New Haven, Conn., was noted in late December and may have wintered.

**TUBENOSES** — A single N. Fulmar was unusual on the Isle of Shoals, N.H. CBC, while 1000± fulmars were noted off the N.E. Peak, George's Bank Feb. 26 (M.B.O. staff, *vide* RSH). In Massachusetts single Sooty Shearwaters off Cultivator Shoals Dec. 12 (*vide* RSH) and at Nauset Beach Dec. 17 (WRP, *vide* BN) were both startlingly late occurrences. The White Pelicans reported this past fall were last seen at Newport Neck, R.I., Dec. 6 (*vide* CW) and on Cape Cod at Chatham Dec. 7 (BN). Gannets were observed on many CBCs: 11,845 on the Cape Cod CBC, was notably high while in New Brunswick two on the Cape Tormentine CBC, Dec. 16, constituted a very late Provincial record. A single ad. Gannet was seen in the Gulf of Maine from the Marine Evangeline Jan. 28 was an unexpected dead-of-winter record (DWF, PDV).

**HERONS, WATER-FOWL** — Unusually late herons farther n. than expected were: a Green on the Tucker-nuck I., Mass. CBC, a remarkable Louisiana on the New Haven, Conn. CBC, and an Am. Bittern on the New Hampshire coast Jan. 16 (*vide* DJA).

After an impressive fall flight, Whistling Swans remained in the Region until cold temperatures and ice forced them S. Seven Whistling Swans at Brunswick, Me., were last seen Dec. 25 (*vide* CL) while the Ipswich, Mass., individual was last observed Jan. 10. In Rhode Island, six Whistling Swans were seen at Ninigret Jan. 23 and singles were noted at Pawtucket Dec. 21 - Jan. 27 and E. Providence Feb. 22-28 (*v.o.*, *vide* CW). A single Eur. Wigeon occurred at Watchemoket Cove, R.I., Dec. 30 (*vide* CW) while a pair was seen at New Waterford, N.S., Feb. 10 (*vide* PRD). In the same Province a single ♀ Wood Duck was an unusual winterer in Dartmouth (IAMcL *et al.*). In Maine a single Ring-necked Duck on the Penobscot R., in Eddington Dec. 17 and five on the Augusta CBC, provided unusual

December records (*vide* ML). New England Barrow's Goldeneyes were more numerous than in recent years: at least 64 individuals were noted. Harlequin Ducks, too, seemed more numerous: at least 71 individuals occurred in New England. Approximately 32 King Eiders were reported from New England. Apparently Hooded Mergansers have recently started wintering on open water in inland New Hampshire; nine were found at Laconia Jan. 10 and two were seen in Meredith Feb. 21 (SAG, *vide* DJA). A flock of 8000± Red-breasted Mergansers at Nantucket Harbor Dec. 30 was one of the largest winter concentrations ever recorded in Massachusetts (RSH).

**VULTURES, HAWKS, EAGLES** — Fourteen Turkey Vultures near Salem, Conn., Feb. 4 (*vide* HCB) may have been remarkably early migrants which found themselves facing two weeks of bitter New England weather. A single Black Vulture was noted near Chatham, Mass., Dec. 19; the species almost seems a regular visitor to Cape Cod (*vide* BN). Cooper's Hawks wintered in impressive numbers in s. New England; several were noted in n.w. Connecticut, as many as 14 were reported from e. Massachusetts (*vide* RSH) and a female was observed near Hampton, N.H., Jan. '29 (DWF). Remarkable was a Cooper's Hawk, apparently an ad. female, at St. John's, Nfld., Jan. 28 (LMT, *vide* MMP). This was apparently only a second island record and was extraordinary for the date. An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk in Lincoln, Me., Jan. 15-16 was well n. of the species' usual wintering range (PDV). A Broad-winged Hawk was reported on the Stratford-Milford, Conn. CBC, Dec. 30. Another Broad-winged Hawk was carefully studied near Jonesport, Me., Dec. 27 (SGr).

The season's Golden Eagles were singles at Brier I., N.S., Dec. 21 (ELM), Quabbin, Mass., Jan. 19 (*vide* SK) and on Cape Cod at S. Orleans Feb. 7 (CAG *et al.*, *vide* BN). A minimum of three Bald Eagles wintering on Cape Cod was unusual (BN). In Maine researchers counted 109 eagles wintering (*cf.*, 109 in '78, 116 in '77) (*vide* ML). Two Marsh Hawks seen near Cutler, Me., throughout the winter suggest that the species might be more regular than previously supposed along the upper New England coast (NF). An Osprey photographed along the Housatonic R., Shelton, Conn., Dec. 24 was remarkably late (*vide* CSW). New England's two Gyrfalcons were a gray-phase bird in Biddeford, Me., Dec. 27 (MF) and a white-phase immature near Plymouth, N.H., Dec. 24 (SAG *et al.*, *vide* DJA). In n. Newfoundland, Bruce MacTavish noted >17 Gyrs near L'Anse-aux-Meadows Jan. 21-25. Winter Peregrine Falcons are scarce indeed, so four individuals in e. Massachusetts were quite remarkable. Singles were seen on

the Newburyport CBC, in Boston Jan 17 - Feb 24, at several localities on Cape Cod in January and February, and at Plum I., Feb. 19 (v o., *vide* RSH, BN).

**CRANES, GALLINULES, SHOREBIRDS** — A Sandhill Crane wintering in Danvers - Beverly, Mass., was unique this season (*vide* RSH).

S.A.

Certainly one of this winter's most extraordinary events surrounded the seven **Purple Gallinules** found in the Region. The first flight, Dec. 27, involved four individuals; two immatures on Deer I., Me., including one specimen (MH) and in New Brunswick single adults near St. John and Alma (*vide* SIT). Nearly a month later, on Jan. 22, single imm. Purple Gallinules were decidedly out of season walking along snow-covered roads near Millinocket, Me., and Sebec L., near Dover-Foxcroft, Me., (*vide* PDV). A single adult captured at Chatham, Mass., Jan. 25, apparently present for several days, was no doubt part of the Jan. 22 movement (*vide* BN). More or less regular as spring, summer and fall vagrants, Purple Gallinules are almost unknown in winter. The only recent records come from Chatham, Mass., Feb. 8, 1970 (AB 24:483) and Pubnico, N.S., Jan. 15, 1978 (AB 32:322). Robie Tufts (*Birds of Nova Scotia*) cites three 19th century January records all from Halifax County and each substantiated with a specimen; Jan. 30, 1870, taken near Halifax; an ad. female on Devil's I., Halifax Harbor ca. Jan. 16, 1896; another found dead ca. Jan. 16, 1896 at Chezzetcook. Ralph Palmer (*Maine Birds*) mentions a Dec. 17, 1906 Maine record.

Unusual winter shorebirds included an Am. Woodcock wintering in Nashua, N.H. (*vide* DJA) and a Com. Snipe at Head of St. Margaret's Bay, N.S., Feb. 17 (ELM). Two Long-billed Dowitchers on the Newburyport CBC, marked the second consecutive year for that species. The Coastal New Hampshire CBC, also recorded a dowitcher sp., probably a Long-billed (DJA). Six Red Phalaropes were notable on the Nantucket CBC, Dec. 31, while 28 were observed off Cultivator Shoals, George's Banks Dec. 12 (M.B.O. staff, *vide* RSH).

**JAEGERS, GULLS, TERNS** — A storm system on Cape Cod Dec. 10 carried >10 Pomarine and one Parasitic jaegers and one skua sp. close to First Encounter Beach (WB, CAG, BN). The Parasitic was particularly late. Four additional skua sp. were noted from coastal Massachusetts, Dec. 17 - Feb. 21 while two Great Skuas were reported from the Gulf of Maine Dec. 6 (M.B.O. staff, *vide* RSH).

The season's six Lesser Black-backed Gulls included two wintering on Nantucket, one at Gloucester, Mass., Feb. 25 (*vide* RPE), one wintering at Greenwich Pt., Conn., the famous Digby, N.S. bird (tenth winter) and a second Nova Scotia bird at Dartmouth Jan. 21 (ELM *et al.*). An ad. **Thayer's Gull** found wintering on Nantucket I., was meticulously and unambiguously described (SAP, RRV *et al.*). In Nova Scotia a first year **Thayer's Gull** was

critically observed in Dartmouth Dec 31 (IAMcL, ELM) In the same Province a second, obviously paler individual was noted in Sambro Harbor Feb. 8-10 (ELM). None of the above birds was photographed or collected and as yet the species lacks specimen confirmation Regionally. Black-headed Gull numbers improved over recent years: at least 39 individuals were noted in New England while 30-40 birds were resident in Halifax (ELM). A single **Franklin's Gull** was unique at Monomoy Dec. 7 (RClem, *vide* BN). New England Little Gulls numbered only seven individuals. Ivory Gulls were apparently thick in n. Newfoundland as hundreds of birds were seen Jan. 21 - Feb. 5. During this period MacTavish observed 800-1000 Ivory Gulls and estimated at *least several thousand* individuals were part of this movement. Band records and direct observation indicate that not all white birds are necessarily adults. By winter some first year birds appear all white, MacTavish notes that black eye-ring color might possibly be a clue to ageing. Adults possess red eye-rings and some of this winter's white Ivorys had black eye-rings. Two **Ivory Gulls** in Sambro Harbor, N.S., Feb. 7-9 (IAMcL, ELM, SIT *et al.*) may possibly have been strays from the Newfoundland influx. Notable this winter were the 48,000 kittiwakes passing out the Bay of Fundy on the Brier I., N.S., CBC.

A Forster's Tern was sadly displaced at Menemsha Pond, Martha's Vineyard Jan. 21 (VL).

**ALCIDS** — The only alcid flight of any size occurred off Rockport, Mass., Feb. 25 when 200 Razorbills, 300 Thick-billed Murres and 25 Dovekies were observed (*vide* RSH). Otherwise, alcids were generally scarce. Excluding the above, 147 additional Razorbills were noted along coastal New England; southernmost was one at Pt. Judith, R.I., Dec. 21 (*vide* CW). New England Com. Murres were few; only five occurred in e. Massachusetts and just six were observed from the Yarmouth, N.S. - Portland, Me. ferry, Jan. 28 (DWF, PDV). Common Murres were slightly more numerous in the Bay of Fundy; 38 were seen on the St. John, N.B. - Digby, N.S. ferry crossing Jan. 27 (DWF, PDV). In e. Massachusetts, 186± Dovekies were seen Nov. 23 - Feb. 25 (*vide* RSH) while only 13 were seen from the Yarmouth - Portland ferry Jan. 28 (DWF, PDV). Notable were 29 Dovekies off Pt. Judith, R.I., Dec. 4 (*vide* CW). The Com. Puffin found inland at Hebron, Me., Jan. 20 was quite likely a first inland state record (*vide* ML). Although Dovekies are regular enough inland, puffins are virtually unknown away from saltwater.

**CUCKOOS, OWLS** — A Black-billed Cuckoo was remarkably late in Nantucket Dec. 24 (*vide* RSH).

It was a remarkable winter for owls. Not only did the rare northern owls appear in very large numbers but our regular, generally scarce winter residents were also more numerous. For the third consecutive year Snowy Owl numbers were not especially impressive. Approximately 16-20 birds were reported from e. Massachusetts and Maine respectively. Hawk Owls appeared in the largest numbers in recent years, no fewer than 12 were reported. In New Brunswick, a Hawk Owl wintered at Cape Tormentine while another was seen near Frederickton (*vide* CJ,

SIT) A single bird occurred in Terra Nova N.P. Nfld., Jan. 14 (*vide* MMP) In Maine nine Hawk Owls seen Nov. 30 - Mar. 22 constituted the largest influx in many years (*vide* ML, PDV).

S.A.

Without question the winter's most extraordinary event surrounded the incursion of **Great Gray Owls** throughout New England and New Brunswick. At least 92 individuals were observed, making this the largest influx on record. But limited evidence suggests that the undocumented 1890-91 flight may have been on the same level of magnitude. Maine recorded 67 individuals Dec. 30 - March (*vide* PDV), New Hampshire, seven owls from late January - late February; Massachusetts, 15 individuals Jan. 28 - Mar. 11 (*vide* RAF). A single **Great Gray Owl** in Coventry, R.I., Feb. 19 was apparently a third state record (RAC, *vide* CW) while two were noted in Connecticut (*vide* NSP). Surprisingly only one **Great Gray Owl** was reported from *New Brunswick*, at Fundy N.P. in February (*vide* CJ, SIT). In Maine Great Gray Owls occurred as far e. as Eastport and Presque Isle. Great Gray Owls were found near Skowhegan, Me., where as many as six identifiably different individuals frequented a single field, in Hatfield, Mass., where two owls were seen together and in S. Penobscot, Me., where another pair was observed together.

It seems that when they first arrived many Great Gray Owls may have been underweight. Two specimens were emaciated. One specimen, a female from Mt Vernon, Me., weighed only 1 lb. 7 oz. At least one other was an obviously underweight owl and found in a weakened state but was vetted back to health. The owls sustained themselves on populations of small rodents in Maine and Massachusetts. Although it is impossible to prove, one suspects that mortality was not great. It will, of course, be interesting to learn what effect, if any, this incursion may have had on the species' breeding range. As of this writing the most recent Great Gray Owl was seen on Mt. Desert I., Me., Apr 11-15.

Long-eared Owls, too, appeared in good numbers. Reports of 37 came from the three s. New England states. A single Long-eared Owl on Grand Manan, N.B., in late December was a notable rarity for the Province (*vide* DSC) Short-eared Owls were common; 60± were reported in s. New England and 49 in e. Massachusetts. The most surprising Short-eared roost location was near Cutler, Me., where >20 owls wintered in a single area (NF, CF) This was by a wide margin the largest concentration ever discovered in the state. Finally five **Boreal Owls** were found in New England. In Massachusetts a single bird appeared at Salisbury Dec. 31 (FA *et mult al.*, ph.) while in New Hampshire another **Boreal Owl** was present for one day only in Monroe Jan. 16 (*vide* DJA). Three **Boreal Owls** were seen in Maine, one each near Boothbay Harbor Feb. 11-16 (JH, BT *et al.*, ph.), Franklin Feb. 13 and Orono in late February, the last apparently



**Boreal Owl, Dec. 31, 1978, Salisbury, Mass.**  
Photo/Peter Trull.

collected by a hungry cat (\*U.M.O., *vide* PDV).

**WOODPECKERS, KINGBIRDS, SWALLOWS** — In Massachusetts Red-bellied Woodpeckers were seen in Swansea Dec. 31 (*vide* RSH) and Southwick Jan. 12-31 (HCB). Red-headed Woodpeckers n. of Massachusetts occurred on the Coastal New Hampshire CBC, the Thomaston-Rockland, Me., CBC, and on the Sackville, N.B. CBC. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers seemed to be flourishing; 15-20 were noted in Maine, >21 from New Brunswick including 11 on the Fundy N.P. CBC (*vide* DSC), at least four were found in Nova Scotia. The southernmost Black-backed Three-toed was a female in Lynn, Mass., Dec. 29 (*vide* RSH). Reports of the much scarcer N. Three-toed Woodpecker were also above average: three in New Hampshire including two males together on the Pittsburg CBC; three in Maine, one wintering as far s. as Falmouth; two in New Brunswick; two in Nova Scotia at Amherst Pt., to mid-December (see Fall Season).

Notably late W. Kingbirds were seen at Truro, Mass., Dec. 3 (CAG, BN *et al.*) and on the Buzzard's Bay, Mass. CBC. Two Tree Swallows far inland at Plaster Rock, N.B., in late December were probably carried N by the same system responsible for the December Purple Gallinules. Amazingly 3 ft of snow lay on the ground at the time (*vide* DSC).

**JAYS, TITMICE** — After a heavy fall flight Blue Jays were scarce throughout s. New England, although they were present in normal or above-average numbers from c. Maine north. In n. New England, Tufted Titmice remained in unprecedented numbers; 47 on the Coastal N.H. CBC, and 11 on the Biddeford-Kennebunkport, Me. CBC, were respectively count highs.

**THRUSHES, SOLITAIRES, WAXWINGS** — No doubt severe E winds were responsible for the 757 Am. Robins on the Moose I. - Jonesport, Me. CBC, Dec. 17, these quite certainly late migrants from Nova Scotia. Interestingly, 1000± robins were seen at Wellfleet, Mass., three weeks later Jan. 7 (CAG, BN).

Massachusetts Varied Thrushes included singles at Norwell and Chelmsford (*vide* RSH) while in Maine two wintered in Limestone Nov. 28 - February and a single bird remained in N. Brooklin from early January - March (*vide* ML). In New Hampshire, a single Varied Thrush was seen in New London Dec. 12-26 (*vide* KC). The previously-mentioned (see Fall Season) **Townsend's Solitaire** in Warren, R.I., was seen through mid-February (*vide* CW). In Nova Scotia a **Townsend's Solitaire** in Halifax Jan. 2 through February represented only a second provincial record (*vide* ELM, ph.). Excepting a few in Massachusetts, Bohemian Waxwings were typically restricted to Maine and New Brunswick. A single flock of 160± Bohemians in Bangor Feb. 13 was quite likely the largest single concentration ever recorded in the state (PDV).

**LATE VIREOS AND WARBLERS** — Late vireos included a Solitary on the Nantucket CBC, Dec. 30. Wilson's Warblers were found on the Woodbury-Roxbury, Conn. CBC, and in Chatham, Mass., Dec. 31 (RClem, *vide* BN). An Am. Redstart was notably late at Barnstable, Mass., Dec. 7 (*vide* BN).

**ICTERIDS, TANAGERS** — A ♂ Brewer's Blackbird wintered at Katama, Martha's Vineyard, Mass. (VL). In Nova Scotia an imm. ♂ "Bullock's" Oriole was seen at a Halifax feeder from mid-December to late January (IAMcL *et al.*, *vide* ELM). Previously unreported was a ♂ **Western Tanager** in Lyme, N.H., Oct. 7 (*vide* DJA). In Massachusetts, Westerns were seen in Taunton in late December and on Nantucket Jan. 13-18 (*vide* EFA).

**FRINGILLIDS** — A single Rose-breasted Grosbeak was impressive in Lubec, Me., Dec. 27 (WCT) but five December Rose-breasteds in Nova Scotia were extraordinary (*vide* PRD). A **Black-headed Grosbeak** at a S. Portland, Me., feeder from late September - February was photographed, for a third state record (*vide* PDV). A ♂ Dickcissel was a rare vagrant in St. John's, Nfld., Dec. 16 (*vide* MMP). In N.H., a **Green-tailed Towhee** in N. Haverhill Dec. 6-20 marked a first state occurrence (*vide* DJA, ph.). A Seaside Sparrow was notable on the Halifax West, N.S. CBC, as was a Lark Sparrow photographed in Little Compton, R.I., Jan. 20 (*vide* CW). Single Harris' Sparrows were found in Acoaxet, Mass., December - February and at Peabody, Mass. (*vide* RRV).

Winter finches were generally unimpressive. Pine Grosbeaks appeared in fair numbers in w. Massachusetts and n.w. Connecticut, and farther n. Redpolls were virtually absent and siskins appeared only in January. Crossbills were notable by their absence.

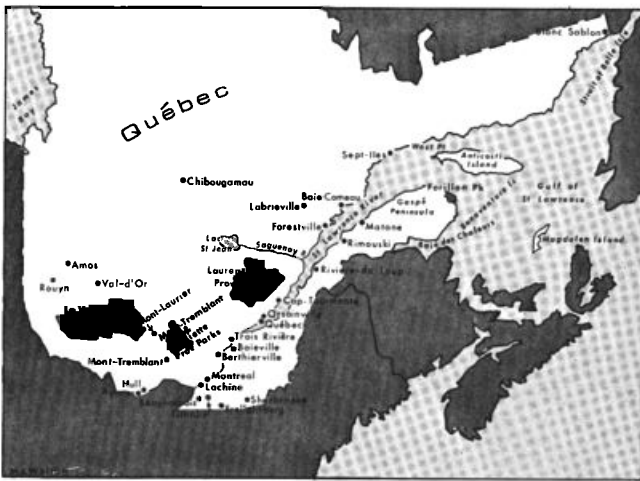
**ADDENDUM** — Please note that the pictures of the "presumed" Am. Redstart X Bay-breasted Warbler hybrid (AB 32:1139-40) were taken by Tom Skaling at Coleman Farms, a banding site partially owned by Bowdoin College. Careful study of the originals and comparison of them with skins at the A.M.N.H. by Peter Cannell and others, suggests a more probable theory; that the warbler might have been a melanistic individual. Although this seems a far more likely explanation questions surrounding bill shape and rictal bristles can not now be resolved as this individual was not collected.

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## QUÉBEC REGION /Michel Gosselin and Normand David

The winter season followed a familiar pattern: snow in December and January, sunny and cold in February. However, the cold period was extreme, lasting 20 consecutive days with temperatures below -15°C. Except for Evening Grosbeaks, winter finches were mostly absent; the few flocks of Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls reported were mainly from northern areas.

**WATERFOWL THROUGH GROUSE** — Unusually late ducks included a Green-winged Teal at Lasalle Dec. 23 (PBn) and a Lesser Scaup at Aylmer Jan. 7 (JC). A Ring-necked Duck at Rapides-des-Joachims Jan. 7 (JB, BW) was the latest ever. At least two Redheads successfully wintered at Lasalle (PBn); there was only one similar record for the Region previously. Three Barrow's Goldeneyes spent the season in the Hull area (BD, m. ob.). A Red-tailed Hawk was at Low Jan. 6 (BD), another at Québec City Jan. 27 & Feb. 18 (JPB) was noteworthy as we know of very few true winter records. Along with past sundry records, the season's reports of Bald Eagles suggested that the Upper Ottawa valley is regularly frequented in winter; one bird was at Aylmer Dec. 15 (IJ, PJ, SG), two at L. 31 Milles, Jan. 24 (MB), Rapides-des-Joachims Jan. 7 (JB, BW), and in Boisclerc Township Feb. 2 (*vide* JC). As usual, Gyrfalcons were few and scattered: at Québec City Dec. 12 (PL), at Aylmer Dec. 16 (SG *et al.*), at Île des Soeurs Dec. 31, seen swooping on a Great Gray Owl (PC), and near Arvida in February (*vide* NB). Single Peregrine Falcons were at Percé Feb. 15 (RBi), near Rigaud in late December (GH), and Huntingdon Jan. 6 (PBn). The S movement of Willow Ptarmigans brought birds to Matagami, Chibougamau and L. Onatchiway by late January.



Five Rock Ptarmigans were found 250 mi n. of Matagami Jan. 20 (MG, JC, MLe). Three Sharp-tailed Grouse were again spotted near Matagami Jan. 19, where they were seen last winter (MG).

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH OWLS** — A Dunlin at Côte Ste-Catherine Dec. 10 (PS) provided a record late departure date. Approximately 35 Glaucous and 15 Great Black-backed gulls near Gatineau in December were considered a good find locally, at least one bird of each species was seen intermittently during the winter (BD, m. ob.). The Gatineau Lesser Black-backed Gull was last seen Dec. 5 (*vide* IJ, PJ), and the Beauharnois Black-headed Gull Dec. 3 (BB, MM). Ivory Gulls were again sighted in the upper St. Lawrence R. valley: three at Beauharnois Jan. 6-13 (BB, MM, m.ob.) and, surprisingly, one at Rapides-des-Joachims Jan. 7 (JB, BW).

—S.A.—

The ornithological event of the season was of course the invasion of **Great Gray Owls**; at least 60 birds were reported, mostly n. of the St. Lawrence R., e. to the Saguenay R. Only seven birds were seen before Christmas; the invasion was in full force Dec. 25 - Jan. 20. At least two birds were reported to feed on rats and another caught a gray squirrel. Most sightings involved only single birds, except at Cap-Tourmente where six were spotted Jan. 7 (FHa). After that period, birds were often found dead; in Québec City several weak ones were easily captured and brought to the Zoological Garden (*vide* RC). On the other hand some birds found productive hunting grounds as the four on Ile à l'Aigle Feb. 15 (YM) and nine near Dundee Feb. 28 - Mar. 9 (DH, PC, PBn). This invasion is apparently the largest on record since 1889-90. Other invasions in the first half of this century were poorly documented and it is impossible today to evaluate their real magnitude.

Nothing concrete indicates that numbers of Hawk and Boreal owls could be related to the Great Gray Owl invasions. The two former species are reported every winter, averaging

5-6 Hawk and 2-3 Boreal owls for the Province. This winter, Hawk Owls were seen in Arvida, Shipshaw (YB), Québec City (BH), Sherbrooke (AC), Montréal (MJ), and 230 mi n. of Matagami (MG), while a Boreal Owl visited a Lachine garden feeder every evening Feb. 2-6 (ST, m.ob.).

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH KINGLETS** — The imm. Red-headed Woodpecker, previously

reported, made it through the cold season (thanks to the suet provided by GH); it molted into ad. plumage and disappeared when warm weather came at the end of February. This establishes a first wintering record by the species, although a bird was reported in Aylmer Feb. 25, 1971. Three-toed Woodpeckers were well distributed. Two Horned Larks in Rimouski Jan. 25 were considered unusual (JRP). Gray Jays staged a minor invasion, and Boreal Chickadees were not altogether rare in their habitat. A **Tufted Titmouse** found Dec. 16 at a N. Hatley feeder (TB) provided only a second Québec occurrence, the first being at Mt. St. Hilaire in November and December 1961; the species was extremely abundant in New England this winter. A Brown Thrasher survived in Aylmer until at least Jan. 27 (RBe), this species has never successfully wintered in Québec; its relative the Mockingbird enjoys a better fate, one or two over-wintered in Montréal (*vide* BB, PBn) and one was seen at Ste-Anne des Monts Feb. 7 (DH). Another in Ste-Foy disappeared during the cold snap of February (JPB). A **Varied Thrush** was intermittently present in a Sawyerville orchard during the period Dec. 23-27 (RD *et al.*). Golden-crowned Kinglets were widely distributed, especially in the Québec City area, noteworthy was one near Rimouski Feb. 10 (JL).



*Tufted Titmouse, Dec. 17, 1978, North Hatley, Québec. Photo/Andre Cyr.*

**ICTERIDS, FRINGILLIDS** — Also noteworthy was a Com. Grackle at Rimouski, last reported Feb. 18 but possibly present after that (JL), and a Rusty Blackbird apparently wintering at Kenogami (*vide* NB). Despite low figures of winter finches, Cardinals, seemingly unconcerned by the cold weather, were still abundant; a record three birds was tallied on the Montréal CBC, Dec. 16, and six were at Hudson Dec. 30 (FHi, IW). Five birds apparently overwintered in Hull (*vide* BD) and single birds were present at Neufchâtel, Québec City until Jan. 22 (MP), and Lévis up to Jan. 15 (PBr). A Swamp Sparrow at Gatineau Jan. 12 (BD) was unprecedentedly late; also unusual were a White-throated and a Song sparrow near Rimouski Jan. 7 (MLa).



*Michel Gosselin birding at the Belle Isle Straits, July 7, 1975. Photo/?*

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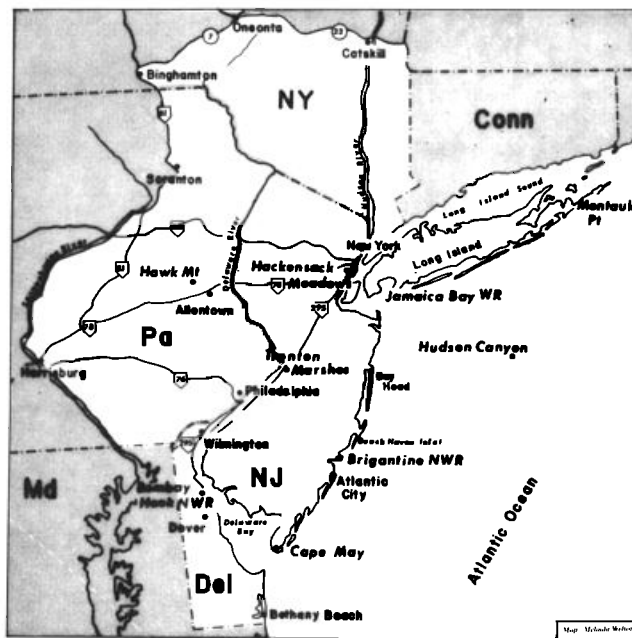
**HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION**  
**/P. William Smith, Robert O. Paxton, and David A. Cutler**

Sometime around the end of January, a reporter for an area newspaper, sensing a canary-in-the-coalmine story, sought out this editor (PWS). "People tell me they have lots fewer birds at their feeders this winter. What's wrong?" he wanted to know. Taken by surprise, I sputtered something about hard winters and a good wild food crop, and took a fearful peek out the window to see if my chickadees were still there. Relievedly I noted the ever-growing brace of over-fed House Finches, along with the other regulars. "No story here," I thought.

Later, while awaiting data for this report from apostate contributors, and nudged by comments from the early ones, I recalled that reporter's question. Idle fingers started thumbing through 15 years of Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) on my shelves. Before I came to, I had also obtained this year's data and had compiled Table 1.

Table 1 reports the total number of individuals counted for 20 species on those 16 CBCs which have been held continuously in New Jersey for the past 16 years. New Jersey seems like a good surrogate for the Region; it is latitudinally centered and includes coastal, suburban, and wooded montane areas. The 20 species chosen generally represent the typical garden birds in winter in this area excluding those so irruptive or colonial that CBC data may misrepresent most people's perception of bird populations.

A problem with the raw numbers is that they do not reflect the significant increase in CBC participation which has occurred since the 1960s. The total party hours (adjusted for obvious errors and inconsistencies) shows that coverage of these 2827 square miles has nearly doubled in 16 years. Should totals then have doubled if populations were constant? I doubt



it; bird counting is questionably efficient, and the law of diminishing returns is probably in effect. Nevertheless, dividing by party hours must give a better indicator of bird populations than the unnormalized numbers, especially on a year-by-year comparison.

Another problem with using CBC data to reflect bird populations is that weather on count day may distort results. The drops in numbers in 1964 and 1972 may reflect only the fact that most counts in those years were held in bad weather.

Nevertheless, my "Perception Index" (total individuals divided by total party hours) ought to give some indication of people's cognizance of birds at their feeders or in their neighborhood over time. Sure enough, at 31.2 the index was the lowest this year than it has been over the measurement period. Moreover, there were almost no northern finches this year,

compared to some other years including last. There have been more severe drops than this year over last in the past, however, such as from 1963 to 1964. If the past is any indication, this winter's fairly mild season, as it was except in February, should be reflected in improved numbers in future years.

There is much to be gleaned from Table 1, but often one needs more information than the raw data provide. "No Blue Jays this year," was the cry over the northern part of the Region, but they just moved to the south seeking food; in absolute

terms, 1968 and 1969 were worse. "Huge irruption of Tufted Titmice," was also heard but only in the north; they just seemingly redistributed themselves a little, as numbers overall were the poorest in years. These data provide almost endless opportunities for insight, which I would encourage those with the time and training to seek.

But what about the more ominous question? Are our garden birds really down, i.e., in a secular downtrend? Despite a fear of becoming ammunition for a future edition of Huff's encyclopaedic *How to Lie with Statistics*, I constructed Table 2, which gives a population index in individuals per hundred party hours for each species in four-year segments. The implications of this table are disturbing. Only three of 20 species are up in the most recent four years over the previous four: Red-bellied Woodpecker (a marginal species expanding

**Table 1. Total individuals reported on 16 continuous New Jersey Christmas Bird Counts, 1963-78**

Species	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Mourning Dove	5785	3607	5046	4196	5228	5289	6849	9540	9083	9888	10545	15920	12905	12926	9892	10308
Common Flicker	199	269	149	102	213	173	217	241	323	227	244	467	411	255	218	296
Red-bel. Woodpecker	23	29	36	24	33	49	46	90	63	68	73	91	116	93	113	87
Hairy Woodpecker	309	227	228	224	218	256	222	312	219	225	229	256	241	174	214	192
Downy Woodpecker	1185	863	1106	1015	990	1135	1131	1412	1223	983	1153	1389	1221	1158	1125	1074
Blue Jay	5291	4868	4122	5357	5737	2571	2540	6714	6341	3233	4355	5396	5388	5476	5055	3424
chickadee, sp.	3865	2928	3449	2265	2377	3376	3367	3431	3340	2596	3481	3990	5439	3105	4108	3491
Tufted Titmouse	2183	1404	1427	1689	1681	1775	1575	2299	1913	1561	2097	2113	2059	1798	2001	1730
White-br. Nuthatch	1163	481	929	634	674	799	583	913	764	631	780	934	1000	600	1045	645
Mockingbird	644	623	955	1234	934	1107	1033	1369	1288	902	1204	1715	1618	1978	1567	1175
House Sparrow	13255	11682	15052	17355	12045	12856	10808	14203	13538	9389	9814	10232	7886	8084	7502	7003
Cardinal	2299	1656	1798	2378	2122	2374	2080	2865	1918	2014	2311	2392	2766	3151	2425	2273
Purple Finch	283	206	165	131	157	551	268	103	265	862	218	567	383	353	1094	266
House Finch	315	372	578	938	991	1155	1260	1774	1557	1615	1827	3020	2834	3281	4548	4966
Am. Goldfinch	4718	2623	2690	1660	2393	3398	4066	1246	3015	2478	2556	2317	3079	2903	4396	2943
Dark-eyed Junco	11218	5143	5532	6970	11540	7464	7897	9428	7646	6154	7984	8057	11042	8676	9248	6666
Tree Sparrow	4719	3348	3432	4739	5525	7575	6630	3795	3492	2361	5530	4590	4308	2807	3858	2225
Field Sparrow	666	394	541	567	808	827	1095	958	783	602	857	712	819	1305	794	633
White-th. Sparrow	4272	2534	2296	2210	5098	3989	4485	5566	5110	3814	4198	6796	8723	8720	7922	6467
Song Sparrow	3628	2375	2089	2801	3623	3887	3493	4210	3483	2015	2960	4471	3671	4246	2859	3430
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66020</b>	<b>45632</b>	<b>51620</b>	<b>56489</b>	<b>62387</b>	<b>60606</b>	<b>59645</b>	<b>70469</b>	<b>65364</b>	<b>51618</b>	<b>62416</b>	<b>75425</b>	<b>75909</b>	<b>71089</b>	<b>69984</b>	<b>59294</b>
Party Hours	1049	1160	1236	1091	1289	1304	1299	1517	1329	1344	1402	1539	1800	1847	1682	1898
"Perception Index"	62.9	39.3	41.8	51.8	48.4	46.5	45.9	46.5	49.2	38.4	44.5	49.0	42.2	38.5	41.6	31.2

northward), House Finch (an introduction filling a niche), and White-throated Sparrow. Most locally nesting "permanent residents" such as Hairy and Downy woodpeckers, Blue Jay, chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cardinal, American Goldfinch, and Song Sparrow, seem to be on a long-term downtrend. So do winter visitors Dark-eyed Junco and Tree Sparrow after increasing in the 60s. Even Mourning Doves and Mockingbirds, which were increasing, appear to have turned the corner, as have half-hardies Common Flicker and Field Sparrow (more likely owing to weather). About the only "good" news here is that our most endangered garden species appears to be the House Sparrow!

**GREBES THROUGH IBISES** — It was a better-than-usual winter for Red-necked Grebes in the Region, with reports from eight different coastal locations s. to Avalon, N.J., where an oiled individual was found beached Feb. 16 (PD). Inland, where unusual in winter, Red-necked Grebes were seen along the upper Delaware R., at Riegelsville, N.J., Dec. 30 (GH) and at Phillipsburg, N.J., Feb. 17-18 (GH). Well documented single-day observations of **Eared Grebes** were made at Belmar, N.J., Dec. 30 (Frank Frazier *et al.*), at Longport, N.J., Jan. 11 (RM), and at Townsend's Inlet, N.J., Jan. 15 (DW, PD). Possibly the same individual was involved in all these sightings, despite 80 mi of separation.

There were two Manx Shearwaters in the Hudson Canyon area Dec. 2 (PWS, m.ob.), now known to be regular there. The White Pelican which had been present at Brigantine Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, N.J. (hereafter, B.N.W.R.), earlier in the fall conveniently returned for the CBC, Dec. 16, was photographed Dec. 22 (P. M. Stubblebine), and was present until at least Dec. 27 (CS). It was an excellent fall for Gannets, with counts of >1200 passing Montauk Pt., L.I., Dec. 16 (*vide* TD) not being atypical, but they dropped off rapidly thereafter. More than the usual number of Double-crested Cormorants were seen in December including one on a CBC at Glenolden, Pa., Dec. 16; at least three wintered at Longport, N.J. (JD).

The mild early winter allowed unusual numbers of herons, egrets, and ibises to be found on coastal CBCs, and to linger even to late January. Cattle Egrets were reported from two different Delaware CBCs for the first time, and Louisiana Herons were reported north to Long Island, where one was still present at Jones Beach as late as Dec. 30 (*vide* TD). There were as many as five Louisianas at Middletown, Del., Dec. 23 (Paul Beach) and a few in the Stone Harbor-Swainton, N.J. area, as late as Jan. 30 (PB, PD, RM). There were still seven Glossy Ibises at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, L.I., (hereafter, J.B.W.R.) Dec. 16 (W. Reilly), and two Dec. 19 (WW); they, too, were noted on two Delaware CBCs.

**WATERFOWL** — There were 28 Mute Swans found inland on an Orange County, N.Y. CBC, Dec. 16, a new high there (*vide* JT). Whistling Swans attempted to winter in the Hook Pond area of e. Long Island (GR,AR,HR), and at B.N.W.R., where 114 were present Feb. 4 (DW), but the February freeze forced them out. Inland, two Whistling Swans at Amawalk Res., N.Y., Dec. 16 (R. Odell) were locally unusual.

**Table 2. "Population Index" for 16 continuous New Jersey Christmas Bird Counts, 1963-78**

<i>Species</i>	1963-66	1967-70	1971-74	1975-78
Mourning Dove	410.8	497.4	809.3	636.9
Common Flicker	15.9	15.6	22.5	16.3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2.5	4.0	5.3	5.7
Hairy Woodpecker	21.8	18.6	16.5	11.4
Downy Woodpecker	91.9	86.3	84.6	63.3
Blue Jay	432.9	324.7	344.2	267.6
chickadee, sp.	275.7	232.0	238.8	223.8
Tufted Titmouse	147.8	135.5	136.9	105.0
White-breasted Nuthatch	70.7	54.9	55.8	45.5
Mockingbird	76.2	82.1	91.0	87.7
House Sparrow	1264.2	922.8	765.5	421.7
Cardinal	179.3	174.5	153.8	146.9
Purple Finch	17.3	19.9	34.1	29.0
House Finch	48.6	95.8	142.8	216.3
American Goldfinch	257.7	205.3	184.6	184.3
Dark-eyed Junco	636.3	671.6	531.5	493.0
Tree Sparrow	358.0	434.9	284.5	182.6
Field Sparrow	47.8	68.2	52.6	49.1
White-throated Sparrow	249.4	353.8	354.8	440.5
Song Sparrow	240.1	281.3	230.3	196.6

"Population Index" = Total individuals per hundred party hours (over 4-year periods)

A mid-February cold spell froze up most of the fresh water and coastal bays in the Region, causing a massive S movement of waterfowl to be detected *ca.* Feb. 11 at places like Cape May, N.J. (PD,DW). This was followed by an equally massive influx the last two or three days of the month, when mild weather opened up many areas in s. New Jersey. The latter movement involved large numbers of Snow Geese, Black Ducks, Gadwall, and Pintail. Snow Geese were reported to be making increased use of inland lakes, such as five at L. Galena, Pa., Dec. 10 (AM).

"Common" Teal are still being reported, one at Tinicum Wildlife Preserve (hereafter, T.W.P.), Pa., Dec. 16 (Jim Carroll), and one at Hempstead L., L.I., during January (*vide* TD). There were at least six Eur. Wigeons reported from e. Long Island during December and January (GR,AR,HR), but not elsewhere; this species has lost its regular status over most of the Region in recent years.

Diving ducks are increasingly being found wintering inland below the spillways of dams, including several Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks, and Canvasbacks which could be found all winter below the Spruce Run Res. outlet, Hunterdon Co., N.J. (GH *et al.*). A Com. Goldeneye X Hooded Merganser was found at Yards Creek Res., Warren Co., N.J., Dec. 23 and was subsequently seen a few miles away along the Delaware R., near Manunka Chunk (FW, JS).

The hoary Barrow's Goldeneye returned to the Shark R. estuary, N.J., for at least the tenth consecutive winter, where it was widely seen from Dec. 12+ (TK *et al.*). The Region's only other was a male at L. Montauk, L.I., Jan. 10-27 (GR *et al.*). There were about 17 Harlequin Ducks reported from seven coastal locations on Long Island and in New Jersey, about normal; but remarkable was a ♀ Harlequin carefully documented by an experienced observer canoeing on the Delaware R., near the Delaware Water Gap Dec. 23 (Fred Tilly). While not unprecedented, this is one of the very few inland records for the Region. There were four Common and three King eiders reported from Barnegat Inlet to Cape May during the period, fewer than normal.

**RAPTORS** — Perhaps it was owing to the mild winter, but Turkey Vultures seemed to be overwintering farther n. in the Region than formerly. A roost of up to 50± was in the Oldwick, Hunterdon Co., N.J. area (Otto Wurzburg *et al.*), up to 18 in the Great Swamp, N.J. area, during January and February (*vide* IB), and singles in Dutchess County, N.Y., during December and January (R.T.W.B.C.). The Oldwick roost also had two Black Vultures, and there were two at Salem, N.J., Feb. 14 (Will Middleton). In e. Pennsylvania there were observations of Black Vultures on many CBCs, with as many as 70 on the S. Lancaster County CBC. Like several other southern species whose n. range limit has traditionally been in the area of the Mason-Dixon Line, the Black Vulture is clearly expanding N.

There were widespread reports of Goshawks throughout the Region, and Sharp-shinned Hawks seemed increasingly enjoying the live food around feeding stations, and overwintering. Red-tailed and Red-shouldered hawk numbers were up on most CBCs, and many observers commented on their seeming commonness this year. In n.w. New Jersey two different leucistic Red-taileds were reported (GH, Scott Angus), one of which was probably the same individual which, in a past year, caused a flurry on the grapevine when it was reported as a light-phase Gyrfalcon! The 26 Rough-legged Hawks on the Staten I., N.Y. CBC, probably say more about the number of rodents around the garbage landfills there than the number of Rough-leggeds in the Region, which was not notable elsewhere.

There were ten Golden and 18 Bald eagles reported from various locations, both inland and coastal, in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. There was no report, however, of the number of eagles wintering in their Sullivan County, N.Y., stronghold. An eagle passing down Raccoon Ridge, Warren Co., Dec. 23 was thought to be an imm. (Spanish) Imperial Eagle (Peter Both), a species which has also been noted passing Hawk Mt., Pa., and which if correctly identified is tempting to assume had escaped from some falconer. But an immature?

Although Ospreys are normally long gone by December, the mild fall caused several to linger, including one near Blairstown, N.J., Dec. 11 (*vide FW*), one at Chambersburg, Pa., Dec. 16 (K. Gabler *et al.*), one or two on the Rockland County, N.Y. CBC, Dec. 17 (*vide RD*), and two on the Mullica R., near New Gretna, N.J., Dec. 30 (Joe Delasautro *et al.*). American Kestrels were up in numbers on CBCs, again probably owing to the mild weather, but in several areas they were reported to have disappeared after February snowstorms (M. Broun, D. Hartmann *et al.*), hopefully moving S rather than perishing.

**TURKEYS TO RUFFS** — The population of wild-reared Turkeys in Sussex County, N.J., was estimated at 200 by the N.J. Div. of Fish and Game, but most of the birders who went looking for them couldn't prove it. In Dutchess County 20 Turkeys were seen in December (Mary Yegella).

Again owing to the mild fall, at least 25 species of shorebirds were reported from the Region during the period, mainly in December. Among the highlights were numerous Am Oystercatchers on several New Jersey and Delaware CBCs, including a fantastic 42 on the Oceanville, N.J. CBC, Dec. 16 (JM *et al.*). While four were still present near Stone Harbor, N.J., Jan. 4 (DW), they apparently did not winter, although returnees were being noted in late February, as usual. A Piping Plover may have made it through the winter at Stone Harbor, where it was still being seen as late as Jan. 28 (PD, PB *et al.*); six at Broadkill Beach, Del., Dec. 31 (M. Barnhill, J. Lehman) was a good December count. A Whimbrel at Jones Beach, L.I., Dec. 30 (A. Dignan, C. Ward) was very late.

#### S.A.

A Spotted Sandpiper near Bethlehem, Pa., Dec. 30 (B. Kita *et al.*) was one of several which have been reported in recent years at inland locations in the Region during December. One might rather wistfully hope that all were identified in consultation with papers such as in *British Birds* 70 346-348 (1977), which shows how to distinguish the perhaps not unlikely Common Sandpiper of Europe from the similar Spotted Sandpiper in winter.

There were two different White-rumped Sandpipers reported in meticulous detail on the Oceanville, N.J. CBC, Dec. 16 (PD,JD). A Dunlin inland in Orange County, N.Y., Dec. 16 was a real surprise (*vide JT*). A Short-billed Dowitcher identified by call at Jones Beach Dec. 8 (P. Buckley) was unexpected, since late fall and winter dowitchers, including the 11 this year from five different locations, two as late as Jan. 12 at Hempstead L., L.I. (m.ob.), are almost invariably Long-billed. A Ruff lingered on some exposed mud flats at Hempstead L., to the surprising date of Jan. 28 (E. Levine, TD, m.ob.).

**PHALAROPES TO ALCIDS** — About 800 Red Phalaropes well offshore in the Hudson Canyon area Dec. 2 (PWS *et al.*) were not especially surprising, but one at L. Galena, Bucks Co., Pa., Dec. 6-9 (FM), was accidental.

There were eight Pomarine Jaegers at Hudson Canyon Dec. 2 (PWS *et al.*), and lingering Parasitic Jaegers were noted at Townsend's Inlet, N.J., Dec. 5 (DW), and to Dec. 16 at Montauk Pt. (TD *et al.*). There were at least two definitely Great Skuas at Hudson Canyon Dec. 2 (PWS, S. Keith *et mult. al.*); these massive, blotchy, cinnamony individuals look quite different from the South Polar Skua, which seems to be the usual form here in spring.

White-winged Gulls were not widely reported, but a Glaucous Gull at Safe Harbor Dam, Pa., on the Susquehanna R., Dec. 30 (E. Witmer *et al.*) was notable inland. In contrast with white-winged, Lesser Black-backed Gulls were almost a trash bird this winter, being reported from at least seven locations, many of them inland such as at Rockland L., N.Y., Jan. 14-20 (E. Treacy, L. Holland), L. Parsippany, N.J., Dec. 23+ (Glenn Mahler, m.ob.), as well as at the E. Brunswick and N. Arlington, N.J., dumps. Ring-billed Gulls were reported as the most abundant gull in both the Hudson and Susquehanna R. valleys, and five at Middletown, N.Y., Jan. 29 were locally unusual (JT). Black-headed Gulls were on several regional CBCs, and a few remained in the Caven Pt., Hudson Co., N.J. area, from mid-December+ (DR, m.ob.). Again owing to the mild fall, Laughing Gulls were reported on many coastal CBCs including an amazing 85 at Montauk, Dec. 16. Mid-winter Laughing Gulls included one at Manasquan, N.J., Feb. 4 (AB *et al.*), and one at Ocean City, N.J., Feb. 28 (RM). Unusual inland were 30 Bonaparte's Gulls at L. Galena, Pa., Jan. 3 (FM) and one at Allentown, Pa., Jan. 12 (BM). There were four Little Gulls reported from New Jersey and Long Island coastal locations. Like Gannets, good numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported from many Long Island and New Jersey locations in December, and 400 were at Hudson Canyon Dec. 2. Three imm. kittiwakes reported from Reed's Beach along the Delaware Bay in Cape May Co., Jan. 14 (CS) were thoroughly unusual for the area.

A Black Skimmer at J.B.W.R., Dec. 5 (WW) was very late. The only alcid reports at all were of two Razorbills, one Thick-billed Murre, and two Dovekies, all from the last half of December.

**OWLS, FLYCATCHERS** — It was a good owl year in the Region, although Long-eared and Short-eared owls were definitely less widely reported than in most recent winters. There were some surprises. One was a **Burrowing Owl** which roosted in a storm sewer pipe at J. F. Kennedy Airport, L.I., Dec. 3 - Feb. 1 (S. Chevalier *et al.*: ph. WW). The real news event locally was a **Great Gray Owl** at Lloyd Harbor, L.I., Jan. 8 - Feb. 28+ (Dave McNicholas, m.ob.), seen and photographed by hundreds. This was apparently the southernmost straggler of the great n.e. incursion of this species this year. It was not the only one on Long Island, but further details will await the spring report.

A Screech Owl, rare on the coastal strip, was found dead at Robert Moses S.P., L.I., Dec. 16 (D. Ford). There were close to 20 Snowy Owls reported from the Region during the period, more than usual. They were mostly on Long Island, but one was in Dutchess County, Dec. 23 (R.T.W.B.C.), and two were in e. Pennsylvania (*vide DAC*). There were several Barred Owls reported in s.e. New York and n.w. New Jersey, where this bird is normally

scarce. It was a better year for Saw-whet Owls than the last few winters have been, 17 were banded by Manners at Bridgeport, Gloucester Co., N.J., over the winter.

Again probably owing to the mild fall, at least seven W. Kingbirds lingered in s. New Jersey to late December, but most amazing was the one which was thought to have disappeared from J.B.W.R., after Dec. 24, only to be found again exactly a month later (WW *et al.*).

There has never to this editor's knowledge been a *Myiarchus* flycatcher reported from New Jersey after early November. Moreover, all previous confirmed *Myiarchus* in the n.e. in December apparently have been Ash-throateds. This December, no fewer than three different *Myiarchus* were seen in New Jersey, one at Ocean City Dec. 5-16 (RM), one at Middletown, Monmouth Co., Dec. 23 (L&P Warwick), and one near Rio Grande, Cape May Co., Dec. 24 (K. Seager). Only the first was observed at leisure, and it was thought to be Great Crested, notwithstanding apparent precedents.

**SWALLOWS THROUGH THRUSHES** — With the mild weather, there were still 12 Tree Swallows lingering at Cape May Jan. 30 (PD). There were two Boreal Chickadee reports, one at a feeder at Yards Cr., Warren Co., Dec. 30 (P. Both), and one at Nockamixon S.P., Pa., Feb. 3-28 (JP). Although Tufted Titmice were down in New Jersey (*cf.*, introduction), at 45 they were twice the previous high on the Queens County CBC, Dec. 15, and were at a record 125 on the Dutchess County CBC. While Winter and Carolina wrens were widely reported down, Long-billed Marsh Wrens were on almost every CBC, it seemed; one was even still at Stone Harbor, N.J., Jan. 30 (DW).

Varied Thrushes wintered at a Mastic Beach, L.I., feeder Jan. 3+ (GR, m.ob.), and another was seen at Plandome, L.I., Dec. 8 (O Dunning). Swainson's Thrushes were reported on the Chambersburg and Reading, Pa. CBCs, and one was carefully studied and photographed at J.B.W.R., Dec. 29 - Jan. 1 (JA, TD *et al.*). Perhaps owing to the ambitious local nestbox program, E. Bluebirds were found this winter in higher numbers than usual in Dutchess County. A Wheatear was reported from Great Kills, Staten I., Dec. 30 (H. Athas, *vide TD*).

**GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS** — Several observers and CBC compilers were amazed to record Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in mid-December. Among them were one at T.W.P. to Dec. 16 (N. Pulcinella *et al.*), one at Allentown, Pa., Dec. 16 (JP *et al.*), one at Millburn, N.J., Dec. 17 (H. Grobert), and one at Upper Nyack, N.Y., Dec. 17 (E Brown).

Northern Shrikes staged their largest invasion in 29 years. There were over 20 on Long Island and at least ten in n.w. New Jersey, and individuals were recorded from all around the Region, s. to Cape May County, N.J., where one was seen near Dennisville Feb. 4 (PD). Surprisingly, the only Regional Pennsylvania report was from Ridley Cr. S.P. in mid-December (F. Haas *et al.*), but there must have been others. There were also Loggerhead Shrikes reported from five different New York and New Jersey locations, one hopes carefully in a year such as this one.

The mild fall brought about a flurry of

December warbler reports but no more than might be expected. Among them were Black-and-whites at Sands Point, L.I., Dec. 8 (B. Spencer), Constitution I., Putnam Co., N.Y., Dec. 30 (MG, PP), and Dividing Cr., Cumberland Co., N.J., Dec. 27 (JH). There were also a surprising four Orange-crowned Warblers at Constitution I., Dec. 16 - Jan. 7 (MG, PP). A Yellow-rumped Warbler of "Audubon's" race was reported at B.N.W.R., Dec. 27 (E. Hastings). A Black-throated Green Warbler was in Brooklyn, Dec. 10 (J. Lamoureaux). Ovenbirds were at Pelham Bay P., Bronx Co., Dec. 18 (H. Martin) and at a Swarthmore, Pa., feeder until at least Dec. 23 (L. Mitchell *et al.*). A N. Waterthrush was found near Newton, Sussex Co., N.J., Dec. 17 (J. Zamos).

#### BLACKBIRDS THROUGH BUNTINGS

— An amazing **Bobolink** was carefully heard and studied near Rio Grande, Cape May Co., on the Dec. 23 CBC (E. Reimann *et al.*). Eastern Meadowlarks continue to decrease, at least in winter; a mid-December count in the Goshen, N.Y., area customarily finds 30, but this year produced only one (JT). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported from feeders at Staten I., Jan. 7 (CF), Stone Harbor, in mid-January (PD), at Fort Lee, N.J., Feb. 3 (D. Engleke). There were 18 Boat-tailed Grackles at Barnegat Light, N.J., Dec. 3 (S. Lafrance), and some were still present for the CBC, Dec. 31. This has been the northern limit in recent years, but three in the J.B.W.R. area Dec. 6-9 (WW *et al.*) seemed to herald the next move for this expanding species.

A **Western Tanager** visited a feeder at Elwood, Atlantic City, N.J., Dec. 26 - Jan. 28 (Olga Dembicks *et al.*, ph. E. Breden). While there have been >12 previous reports from New Jersey, few were documented as well as this one.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported from feeders near Blairstown, N.J. (FW *et al.*),

Staten I (CF), and at Quogue, LI A Black-headed Grosbeak visited a feeder near Tarrytown, N.Y., in late December and January (BW, TB). Extraordinary was a meticulously described, first winter ♀ Indigo Bunting at Millburn, N.J., Dec. 16 (WB, TH). Only five Dickcissels were reported from the Region this winter, including two at different feeders in the Reading, Pa. area, and one at a feeder at Chadds Ford, Pa. (S. Keller). This species is now far less regular at feeders than it was 5-20 years ago.

Northern finches were generally poor in numbers, although a few Evening Grosbeaks passed through the Region in December, mostly moving on. While they were not reported farther s., there were as many as 100 Pine Grosbeaks in Dutchess County in February (R.T.W.B.C.), and four were at Middletown, N.Y., Feb. 20 (M. Borko). Since redpolls and siskins were very scarce, three Com. Redpolls at Sharpley, Del., Jan. 6 (D. Palmer) were unexpected.

A Grasshopper Sparrow at Lloyd Harbor, N.Y., Jan. 9 (BW *et al.*) probably reflected the mild fall. Both Sharp-tailed and Seaside sparrows were found in good numbers along the coast of New Jersey in December and January, with 17 Sharp-tailed and 47 Seaside at Holgate, N.J., Dec. 31 (RK *et al.*) seeming remarkable. Late Lark Sparrows were at Great Kills, Staten I., Dec. 3-4 (W. Flamm *et al.*), at Caven Pt., N.J., Dec. 10 (PB) and at E. Moriches, L.I., Dec. 26. Tree Sparrows were widely reported to be low, as confirmed by CBC tallies.

While Lapland Longspurs were reported absent in many areas such as Orange County, N.Y., where they often winter, there were about ten on each of two manure spreads in n.w. New Jersey during the winter (J. Ebner *et al.*). On the same manure spreads were good numbers of Snow Buntings. Snow Buntings, which were nearly absent in many coastal

areas seemed plentiful inland as in Dutchess County, where 1000± were reported in February (R.T.W.B.C.), and at Bethlehem, Pa., where 500 were present Jan. 28 (BM).

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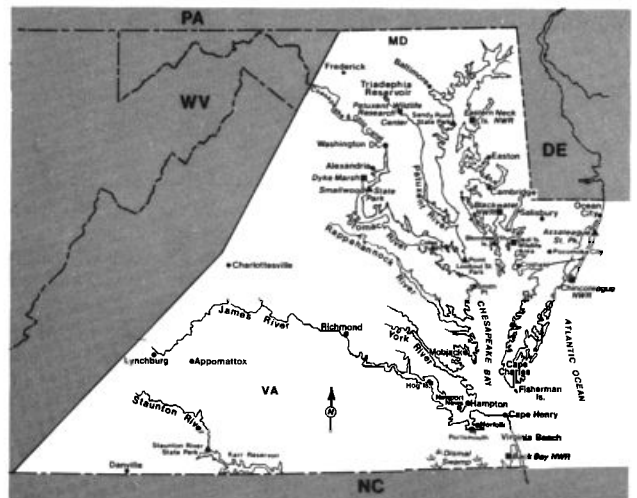
## MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

/F. R. Scott

Those who were hoping for a return to the warm winters of the early 70s got no satisfaction this time around. Things started propitiously enough, following a generally warm fall, with a delightful December which averaged from 1.9°F above normal at Lynchburg to 5.7°F above average at Washington. Matters turned progressively worse, however, and the bottom was hit in February, which at Richmond averaged 10.8°F below normal. As usual, however, averages never tell the whole story, and at Richmond the temperature hit -8°F on February 10. Along with the cold came excessive precipitation, much in the form of snow. Although December had none and January only token amounts, February more than made up for this with from 12.7 inches in Norfolk to 33.1 inches in Baltimore. Most areas except for extreme southeastern Virginia had a snow cover from February 7 - 22-24, and the only reason it did not remain longer was due to a thaw beginning February 21 and torrential rains February 23-25. The last few days of the period saw most rivers and streams in the Region at or approaching flood stage.

The mild early part of the season brought the predictable rash of lingering fall transients, many dutifully chronicled below. As usual, most of these appeared on Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC), but few apparently survived to late January, much less through the critical February cold and snow. The fact that the worst weather of the winter occurred at the end of the season made it difficult to assess its effects on normal wintering bird populations. Nevertheless, a few observers did make this highly appreciated effort. Bazuin ran several sets of "before and after" bird counts in the central Piedmont of Virginia at Green Springs and recorded decreases in 19 out of 23 seedeaters between mid-and-late-February. Numerous mortalities were found, mostly apparently raptor-killed, but there were also road-kills as well as birds that apparently starved or froze. Water-

fowl on upper Chesapeake Bay suffered losses due to starvation, poison-treated corn, disease, and lead poisoning, according to Reese, and in eastern Maryland "hundreds" of small land birds were killed by automobiles as they fed on cleared highways during the big snows. Vaughn, in fact, estimated more than 100 dead Common Grackles per mile on several days along U.S. Route 13 near Princess Anne.



**GREBES THROUGH CORMORANTS** — Eighteen Red-necked Grebes at Ocean City, Md., Dec. 29 (*vide* CSR) seem to be a record count for this CBC. A N. Fulmar off Ocean City Dec. 30 (RAR *et al.*) was the only winter report of this species, and a **Manx Shearwater** was reported in the same area the same day (FC *et al.*). A **White Pelican** appeared at Back Bay N.W.R., Va., Dec. 10 and remained into March (RLA), only the fourth recent state record. Gannets became abundant in the s. in late December, and some of the CBC totals were 1300 at Cape Charles, Va., Dec. 27 (*vide* HTA), 1053 at Little Creek, Va., Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*), and 3400 at Back Bay Ref., Dec. 29 (PWS *et al.*). A count of 332 off Ocean City Dec. 30 (RAR *et al.*) was also considered good. A few Great Cormorants remained near the coast all winter, and one of the previously reported birds inland at Alexandria, Va., remained through Dec. 16 (JMA *et al.*).

**HERONS THROUGH MERGANSERS** — Wintering herons and egrets were in moderate to fairly low numbers in the usual areas of concentration, and Am. Bitterns were downright rare. Single Green Herons were noted at Fort Belvoir, Va., Dec. 23 (JB, JS) and Back Bay Ref., Dec. 29 (JML), and a Great Egret was found inland near Hopewell, Va., Dec. 16 (WCF *et al.*). A few Cattle Egrets were present in early winter with a peak of nine near Mathews, Va., Dec. 31 (JWD *et al.*), and four Snowy Egrets were seen in Talbot County, Md., Dec. 15 (JE). Vaughn found the only mid-winter Glossy Ibis at Wallops I., Va., Jan. 23, and the previously reported **American Flamingo** at Chincoteague N.W.R., Va., was last reported Dec. 28 (JMA, PWS, FRS *et al.*).

The Lower Kent County, Md. CBC, totaled 154 Mute Swans Dec. 17 (FLP *et al.*), and single White-fronted Geese were noted near Chestertown, Md., Dec. 17 (DH,PK) and at Blackwater N.W.R., Md., Dec. 26 (*vide* CSR). The latter bird was accompanied by six apparent Canada X White-fronted hybrids. Snow Geese were in excellent numbers on the Delmarva Pen., during the CBC period. Blackwater Ref., had 4000, mostly "Blues," Dec. 26 (*vide* CSR), Chincoteague Ref., reported 19,500 white-phase plus nine "Blues" Dec. 28 (FRS *et al.*), and there were 14,545 white-phase plus 16 "Blues" at Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR *et al.*). The concentration of "Blue" Geese at Blackwater Ref., is unique in this Region. Far inland at Green Springs, Va., three white-phase birds and one "Blue" Goose appeared Jan. 4 (BWK). The white birds remained until Feb. 21, but the "Blue" Goose was joined by two additional "Blues" Feb. 18 and all remained at least to Feb. 27 (JBB *et al.*)

There were few outstanding duck reports, and inland and upper Chesapeake Bay populations of diving ducks were severely affected by freezing, many birds perishing or dispersing to open water. A dead **Fulvous Whistling Duck** was found on Fisherman I., Va., Dec. 27 (MAB *et al.*), and the N. Shoveler population at Craney I., Portsmouth, Va., was estimated at 1000 Jan. 16 (TRW). A Harlequin Duck was at Ocean City Dec. 29 - mid-January (*vide* RAR), but for the first winter since 1966-67, none was reported, along the C.B.B.T. An exceptional concentration of 20,000 scoters was found along the C.B.B.T., Feb. 28 (RAR), probably pushed out of lower Chesapeake Bay

by extensive ice floes. These were estimated at 10,000 Surfs, 7000 White-wingeds, and 3000 Blacks. Hooded Mergansers were again in excellent numbers locally; 36 at Blackwater Ref., Dec. 26 (*vide* CSR) was unusual, whereas 468 at Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*) appears to be a record Virginia count. Some 2000 Red-breasted Mergansers were seen along the C.B.B.T., Jan. 27 (TRW).

**VULTURES THROUGH RAILS** — Vulture concentrations were excellent on some of the early CBCs. Among these, all on Dec. 17, were 403 Turkeys and 41 Blacks in Lower Kent County, Md. (FLP *et al.*), 501 Turkeys and 48 Blacks at St. Michaels, Md. (JR *et al.*), and 987 Turkeys and 376 Blacks at Charlottesville, Va. (CES *et al.*). There was a minimum of 280 Turkey Vultures at Georgetown Res., D.C., Jan. 1 feeding on dead eels (JMA). An ad. Goshawk near Fredericksburg, Va., Jan. 9 (JMA) was the only report of this species, and single Broad-winged Hawks were reliably reported at Dyke marsh, Fairfax Co., Va., Dec. 30 (JMA) and at Gloucester Pt., Va., Jan. 4 - Feb. 23 (MLW *et al.*). Rough-legged Hawks were generally in low numbers and quite local this winter, none being found on either the Chincoteague or Ocean City CBCs, but 11 in s. Dorchester County, Md., Dec. 26 (CSR *et al.*) was an excellent count.

Golden Eagles were found in four localities in e. Maryland, and in a winter Bald Eagle survey in Virginia Jan. 19-27, some 114 birds were totaled, 73 adults, 40 immatures, and one of unknown age (MAB *et al.*). Many of the adults were near known nest sites. Late Ospreys included one at Charlottesville Dec. 17 (BMK, SW) and another near Cape Charles, Va., Dec. 27 (NCM), and Peregrine Falcons wintered in downtown Norfolk and at nearby Craney I., Va. The peak count of Am. Coots at L. Anna, Louisa Co., Va., was 1263 on Dec. 8 (BWK).

#### S.A.

The find of the winter was an injured **Paint-billed Crane** (*Neocrex erythrops*), picked up in w. Henrico County, Va., Dec. 15 and turned over to C. R. Blem. The specimen is now in the National Museum (Natural History). Further details of this remarkable record will be published shortly.

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH PUFFINS** — Shorebirds were in moderate numbers during the winter, but survival through the February freeze was unknown for most species. Peak mid-winter numbers of Am. Avocets at Craney I., were 300 in mid- and late-January (TRW), and the best Marbled Godwit counts were 45 at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (*vide* HTA) and 23 at Chincoteague Dec. 28 (PP *et al.*). A **Long-billed Curlew** near Chincoteague Dec. 2 (SHD) was the feature shorebird of the season and represents only the third winter record for the state. Unusually high winter counts for Cheapeake Bay included 45 Greater Yellowlegs and 1065 Dunlins in s. Dorchester County, Md., Dec. 26 (*vide* CSR), and nine **Red Phalaropes** were recorded off Chincoteague Feb. 3 (RAR *et al.*). The Chincoteague CBC, reported 81 dowitchers Dec. 28 (CRV *et al.*), of which 15 were specifically identified as Short-billeds and 23 as Long-billeds. There were 230

Purple Sandpipers at Ocean City Dec. 29 (*vide* CSR)

At least seven Great Skuas were recorded off Ocean City Dec. 30 and one off Chincoteague Feb. 3 (RAR *et al.*). Happily, several of these were well photographed. Curiously, in marked contrast to recent winters, there was only one report of Iceland Gull, but Glaucous Gulls were found in four localities and Lesser Black-backed in eight. Three Black-headed Gulls were reported, an adult at Sandy Point S.P., Md. (hereafter, S.P.S.P.) Jan. 6 (HLW), an immature at Baltimore Jan. 5-9 (EATB, RFR), and an adult at Baltimore Jan. 8-27 (RFR). The only Little Gull reported was at Ocean City from mid-December to mid-January (RAR *et al.*), and the pelagic trips off Ocean City recorded 227 Black-legged Kittiwakes Dec. 30 and 88 Feb. 3 (RAR *et al.*).

Among late terns were two Forster's at Bellevue, Md., Dec. 17 (AJ, LC), single Com Terns at Back Bay Dec. 29 (TRW,SA) and Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (RLA,JRA), and a Caspian Tern at Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (SA *et al.*). Alcids showed up very well on the pelagic trips off Ocean City, with two Razorbills Dec. 30 and six Feb. 3 (RAR *et al.*). But it was the Dovekies that really dazzled the observers. On the glassy smooth seas off Ocean City some 759 were counted Dec. 30, whereas 68 were noted, along with one **Common Puffin**, off Chincoteague Feb. 3 (RAR *et al.*).

**OWLS THROUGH VIREOS** — A **Snowy Owl** was present at Fairlee, Md., Dec. 16-27 (HS, DM), a Long-eared Owl appeared at S.P.S.P., Dec. 31 (HLW), and two Long-eareds were noted at Rockville, Md., in late January (HLW). Populations of Short-eared Owls were rather high near the coast with maximum CBC totals of 12 in s. Dorchester County, Md., Dec. 26 (*vide* CSR) and 16 at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (MAB *et al.*). Three or more wintered on the Piedmont at Green Springs (JBB). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was seen by many observers and photographed at Cheriton, Va., Dec. 27-30 (JMA, RLA, LT *et al.*), provided the first confirmed record for the state, and an unidentified *Myiarchus* flycatcher was seen at Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (JC, GMW). An unidentified *Empidonax* was reported at Chincoteague Dec. 28 (TA,SD), and a calling Black-capped Chickadee near Ocean City Dec. 29 (CP) was somewhat s. of its usual range. The Charlottesville, Va. CBC, Dec. 17 produced a **Long-billed Marsh Wren** (CES) and a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** (KL), whereas a **Swainson's Thrush** was observed at Back Bay Dec. 29 (FCB *et al.*). There were four reports of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, three near Hopewell Dec. 16 (DLH *et al.*), one at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (PGD), two at Back Bay Dec. 29 (*vide* PWS), and one in Anne Arundel County, Md., Jan. 9 (EATB,RFR). Cedar Waxwings wintered in excellent numbers on the Virginia Piedmont, and a count of 858 at Charlottesville Dec. 17 (CES *et al.*) was exceptional. There were a few White-eyed Vireo reports from s.e. Virginia in late December, and elsewhere one was seen at Gunpowder S.P., Md., Dec. 11-12 (EATB,RFR) and another in Amherst County, Va., Dec. 17 (R&SC). The only Solitary Vireo report was of one at Back Bay Dec. 29 (TRW).

**WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS** — More lingering warblers were noted on the



CBCs than in any recent winter, but as usual there were few reports after early January. Black-and-white Warblers were found in four localities, and one was still present near Hopewell Jan. 22 (GMW). Some of the other more notable records were single Nashville Warblers at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (PP) and Back Bay Dec. 29 (TRW), a Northern Parula near Hopewell Dec. 16 (DLH,GMW), a Magnolia at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (GMW), and a Black-throated Green at Ocean City Dec. 29 (EMM), the last a first winter record for Maryland. Also of interest were a Blackpoll Warbler at Accokeek, Md., Dec. 21 (ETM), three Prairie Warblers at Back Bay Dec. 29 (HL,PWS) and one at Virginia Beach Dec. 31 (GMW), and an Ovenbird at Chincoteague Ref., Dec. 28 (DKR). Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported, one at McLean, Va., Jan. 26 - Feb. 3 (JT *et al.*) and another at Columbia, Md., Jan. 28 - Feb. 7 (DH *et al.*).

**FRINGILLIDS** — A belated report was of two Black-headed Grosbeaks in Amherst County, Sept. 10 (SC), the eighth record for Virginia. A Dickcissel wintered in Campbell County, Va. (*vide* RSF), and others included one near Chincoteague Dec. 28 (JVD), one

near Baltimore Jan. 13 (HK), and one at Green Springs Feb. 16-17 (JBB *et al.*). Northern finches were generally in low numbers, although Evening Grosbeaks were locally fairly common, becoming more so late in February. There were almost no crossbills or Pine Siskins and absolutely none of the rarer species. House Finches continued their irregular increase with notable peak counts of 570 at Warren, Va., Dec. 31 (*vide* CES) and 250 at Green Springs Feb. 9-10 (JBB), the former a record count for the state. The Ocean City CBC, totaled 14 "Ipswich" Sparrows (*vide* CSR), and Bazuin found wintering Savannah Sparrows greatly reduced at Green Springs by the February snow and cold. Two or three Grasshopper Sparrows wintered at Virginia Beach (ph., RLA *et al.*), and one was noted at Green Springs Feb. 8-10 (JBB *et al.*). Startling numbers of Chipping Sparrows were found locally on the Coastal Plain. Some of the counts included 23 at Bozman, Md., Dec. 17 (RK *et al.*), 119 at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (*vide* HTA), 102 near Mathews, Va., Dec. 31 (JWD *et al.*), and 42 at Gloucester, Va., Feb. 19 (EDP). The high count of Lapland Longspurs at Craney I., Va., was 35 Feb. 13 (TRW), and farther inland single birds were noted in

Washington, D.C., Dec. 16 (HB *et al.*), S.P.S.P., Dec. 2 & 24 (HLW), and Green Springs Feb. 8-10 (JBB, BWK *et al.*).

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## SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION

/Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

For the third consecutive year, temperatures were considerably below normal in January and February, although this winter was not quite as cold as the past two. The season was characterized by a succession of cold fronts, with one passing each midweek and one each weekend; all seemed to carry precipitation. The quick frontal passages often meant gusty winds and two major snowfalls occurred in February. Fortunately, the fronts passed so swiftly that no strong high pressure center was able to lodge over the eastern half of the country and bring severely cold weather. As a result, no major body of water froze solid.

It was a rather poor season from the birders' point of view. Nearly every weekend had rain, the winter finches stayed north, and some of the small passerines hard hit by the past two winters were present in low numbers and difficult to find. On the plus side, three productive pelagic trips were taken, two off North Carolina in December and one off Georgia in February. However, the major highlight was coverage of some of the larger inland lakes in Georgia and South Carolina, yielding records for some waterbirds (especially shorebirds) that were previously believed to winter only coastally.

**THE HARD HIT SPECIES** — The two species that have been hardest hit in this Region during the past three winters are Winter Wren and Golden-crowned Kinglet. The kinglet was in noticeably increased numbers this winter, although still far from common in most places. Ruby-crowned Kinglet appeared to be faring well, but it was still much less abundant than in 1976. Winter Wren, however, was still difficult to find, and concern for this species was expressed by numerous observers. Eastern Phoebe and Her-

mit Thrush were in below-normal numbers, and most of the warbler species have also shown little improvement. Yellow-rumped Warbler no longer seems to be a common winter resident in many inland localities, especially in the Piedmont. Rail and American Bittern populations still appear to be lower than normal, after three severe winters, but their secretive habits make it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. Certainly, the above species need a few consecutive successful breeding seasons and a few normal or mild winters to completely recoup their losses.

**LOONS THROUGH WADERS** — Two Red-throated Loons on L. Moultrie, S.C., Jan. 26 (BL) were unusual inland; this lake is so huge that the species might winter regularly there. On the same date Lewis had counts of 1000± Horned Grebes at L. Moultrie and 580 farther upstate at L. Murray, indicating that South Carolina contains some of the largest inland winter populations in the country. The first winter records for the Manx Shearwater in the Region were obtained by Dave Lee offshore from Oregon Inlet, N.C.: one was seen Dec. 5 and four were collected from a flock of five on Dec. 30 (\*N.C.S.M.). A White Pelican



was an excellent find Feb. 2 at Hatteras Inlet, N.C. (RFS,EP) and a pelagic trip out of Jekyll I., Ga., Feb. 11 turned up approximately 300 Gannets, a noteworthy count for that state (TM *et al.*). The two Great Cormorants noted at Wrightsville Beach, N.C., during the fall remained at least to Dec. 16 to be counted on the Wilmington Christmas Bird Count, (hereafter, CBC). Another "coastal" species that probably winters

on South Carolina's larger reservoirs is the Double-crested Cormorant: Lewis found two on L. Greenwood Jan. 6 and nine on L. Marion Jan. 26. Others seen inland were singles at L. Surf, near Vass, N.C., Dec. 10 (BLa) and Eufaula N.W.R., Ga., Feb. 10 (BO).

A Cattle Egret Feb. 23 near Lowland, N.C. (PIC,MEW), was somewhat n. of the species' winter range. The n. limit seems to be the Morehead City, N.C. area, where several winter records this year were considered normal (JF). The Reddish Egret first noted at Eufaula in November lingered until Feb. 10, thereby establishing the second winter record for the Region (BO). Two ad. White Ibises were at L. Moultrie Jan. 26 (BL), and an adult and an immature were there Jan. 28 (BL). An Am. Flamingo spent the entire winter at Pea I., N.C. (m.ob.).

**WATERFOWL** — An out-of-range Whistling Swan was seen near Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 30 (JM), another was at Eufaula throughout January and February (BO,RL,DC), and seven spent the winter at Augusta, Ga. (ARW *et al.*). The seasonal peak of White-fronted Geese at Eufaula was 14 on Feb. 10 (BO,DC). A group of six near Raleigh Feb. 16 - Mar. 5 was quite

unusual (m ob), as were four near Dublin, Ga., Feb 17 (TKP), and one in Colleton County, S C, Jan. 21 (JHD). Inland Snow Geese were reported from Clemmons (MG,JS) and L. Surf (TH) in North Carolina and Augusta (ARW) and Dublin (TKP) in Georgia. The **Cinnamon Teal** at Augusta was noted Jan. 28 (ARW), the third consecutive winter it has been there. Six Greater Scaups at Pendleton, S.C., Jan. 17 (HL) was a good inland count, as were 35 Com Goldeneyes on L. James, N.C., Feb. 17 (THa) and nine near Raleigh Feb. 23-26 (JM). Three Oldsquaws, rare inland, were at L. Wheeler near Raleigh Dec. 27 (CS). The first inland **King Eider** for the Region was an ad. male seen on a rock in the middle of the Saluda R., near Columbia, S.C., Jan. 2 (MLi). Much less astonishing, although still very noteworthy, were the ad. ♂ and ♀ King Eiders seen flying over the surf at Carolina Beach, N C, Jan. 20 (RD). Excellent Com. Merganser counts were 13 on L. James Feb. 17 (THa) and 16 on L. Surf Feb. 22 (KM). Especially interesting is that 11 of the 13, and 10 of the 16, were males; the vast majority of Commons observed in this Region are females.

**HAWKS** — Single Rough-legged Hawks, both light-phase, were noted at Seaforth, Chatham Co., N.C., Dec. 10 - Feb. 10 (BR *et al*) and at Magnolia Gardens near Charlestown Feb. 24 (TR, JR, PN). There were also two reports of Golden Eagles: an immature near McClellanville, S.C., Dec. 11 (JBS), and one of unspecified age near Burlington, N.C., Feb. 15 (CL). The upswing in Bald Eagle records continued this winter, and again most involved immatures. Eagles away from the coast were noted at Beaverdam Res., near Raleigh (WHW), L. Surf (TH), and Mouse Harbor, Pamlico Co., N.C. (PJC,MEW); Magnolia Gardens (TR, JR, PN) and L. Moultrie, S C (BL); and Eufaula, Ga. (BO, DC). At the latter locale two immatures were present all winter, and two adults were observed until Feb 3.

On a negative note, a Prairie Falcon was lost by a falconer in Atlanta in early February. Whether others have escaped from this area in the past is not known to me, but nevertheless, suspicion is cast on the records of Prairies near Atlanta and Clemson, S.C., within the past few years. Probably no type of documentation could prove that "wild" Prairies visit this Region. A Peregrine Falcon near Surrency, Ga, Dec. 27 (ARW) was quite noteworthy, as were single Merlins inland at Augusta Dec. 18 & Jan. 27 (ARW) and at Chapel Hill, N.C., Feb 19 (SG, GG).

**CRANES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS** — Three **Sandhill Cranes** in Bladen County, N C, Jan. 10 - mid-February (JFP, JF), provided one of the few records for that state. Virginia Rails and Soras were detected in the first half of December near Raleigh (RJH) and Clemson (HL), but it is not known if they spent the entire winter. Inland records for the winter season of these two rails are slowly accumulating, and it seems that both (especially the Virginia) winter sparingly over most of the Region, perhaps with the exception of the w. Piedmont of North Carolina. Fussell gathered additional Black Rail wintering records in North Carolina with the use of a tape recording of the species' territorial call and aggression "growl" call. He had responses of one

near Beaufort Dec 13 & 17, at Wanchese Dec 30-31, and two at Cedar I, Jan 16 He believes that many, if not most, of his winter records involve non-migratory individuals maintaining the same year-round territories. Another Black Rail was flushed at Magnolia Gardens near Charleston Feb. 24 (TR, JR, PN).

A Wilson's Plover was a late straggler near Beaufort, N.C., Dec. 20 (JF). Inland yellowlegs are rather rare in winter; reports of Greater came from Eufaula and Fayetteville, N.C., whereas reports of Lessers were from Eufaula, Augusta, and L. Moultrie. At the latter site, a surprising 16 were noted Jan. 28 (BL), and 200 Purple Sandpipers was an outstanding Regional count at Sullivan's I., S.C., Feb. 7 (TR). Observers are finding that Least Sandpipers winter over much of the inland areas of the Region, with records this season from Raleigh, Augusta, Clemson, and Lakes Greenwood, Marion, and Moultrie (all in South Carolina). Notable totals were 28 all winter at Clemson (HL), 50 at L. Marion Jan. 28 (BL), and 30 at L. Moultrie Jan. 26 (BL). Dunlins rarely linger inland past December; thus, noteworthy were three or four at Augusta until Jan. 27 (ARW), three at Eufaula Feb. 11 (JO), and one at Santee N.W.R., L. Marion Jan. 28 (BL, HL). It had been assumed that Long-billed Dowitchers wintered only along the coast, but apparently small numbers now winter on large Coastal Plain lakeshores. Eighteen were counted Jan. 28 at Santee N.W.R. (BL, HL), where the species was also reported last winter, and six were at Eufaula Feb. 10 (BO, DC). Nine were also along the coast at Davis, N.C., Feb. 3 (JF). Among other noteworthy Georgia highlights were a W. Sandpiper at Augusta Jan. 16 (ARW), and three **Northern Phalaropes** off Jekyll I., Feb. 11 (TM *et al.*). The streaked backs and very thin bills of the phalaropes were seen; this appears to be the first winter record for the Region.

**JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS** — The pelagic trip off Jekyll I., turned up an ad. Parasitic Jaeger Feb. 11 (TM *et al.*), the only jaeger reported excepting those sightings noted on CBCs. Immature Glaucous Gulls, the more common of the two white-winged species in the Region, were observed at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., Jan. 27 (BL, HL *et al.*), Buxton, N.C., Feb. 3 (AB, KH), and Morehead City Feb. 18 (JF). The only Iceland reported from the Charleston area, lacked description of bill size and color, and thus could not be accepted. A count of 20-25 Great Black-backed Gulls, all immatures, at Jekyll I., and offshore Feb. 11 was an excellent Georgia total (TM *et al.*). Adult **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, were reported at three sites: Huntington Beach S.P., Jan. 27 (HL, JO, BL *et al.*), Charleston early January and late February (BE), and two or three Feb. 24 near Lowland, N.C. (PJC, MEW). Another adult was observed Oct. 15, 1977 at Jekyll I. (RM *et al.*), establishing the first Georgia record. There is still no specimen evidence from the Region, nor record documentation by photographs. There has not been any Regional controversy over Lesser Black-backed sightings (unlike the situation with the Iceland), but state records committees would rest easier with tangible documentation. A well-described Black-headed Gull at Bodie I., N.C., Jan. 7 (OLM *et al.*) provided one of the

few records for that state Bonaparte's Gulls normally are uncommon in winter at inland sites, but excellent numbers were noted this season on the larger lakes: e.g., 230 at Eufaula, Jan. 28 (BO, DC), 160 on L. Greenwood Jan. 6 (BL), 130 on L. Wateree, S.C., Jan. 7 (BL), and 120 on L. Moultrie Jan. 26 (BL). Flocks of 30 or more were noted during the season at Raleigh and L. Surf, N.C.; and Fishing Creek Res., L. Marion, Clemson, and Townville, all S.C. Still another "coastal" species that may winter inland is Forster's Tern. One to two were seen at Eufaula Jan. 14 - Feb. 18 (BO, DC, JO), eight at L. Marion Jan. 26, 20 at L. Moultrie Jan. 26, and 150 at L. Moultrie Jan. 28 (all BL). The first Regional record of **White-winged Black Tern**, not previously mentioned in this journal, was an individual mentioned in detail at Jekyll I., Sept 15, 1977, by Robert Manns and Jean Bevis (*Oriole* 43:30-31). A few alcids managed to reach the Region this winter, as evidenced by North Carolina sightings of single Razorbills near Wrightsville Beach on the Wilmington CBC, Dec. 16, and at Pea I., Dec. 31 (HL, ML), a Dovekie was at Oregon Inlet on the Bodie-Pea I. CBC, Dec. 30.

**DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS** — The five Ground Doves Dec. 5 at Ft. Macon S.P., N.C., at the n. extremity of their range, provided a record area count (JF). One of the few **Snowy Owl** sightings in the Region in recent decades was an individual at Cedar I, N.C., Jan. 27 (EP). Other owl records of note were a Short-eared at L. Surf Dec. 18 - Jan. 11 (JC), and a Saw-whet seen and heard (both a "tut-tut-tut-tut" and a "ting" call) at I. of Palms, S.C., Dec. 28 & Jan. 22 (HEW).

#### S.A.

Winter hummingbird records almost always present problems. The majority are ♂-plumaged individuals, and because these birds frequently afford observers just brief glimpses, the presence or absence of rusty coloration in the plumage (*Selasphorus* vs. *Archilochus*) is often not noted. A bird at a Marietta, Ga., feeder most of December - Jan. 3 (*vide* TM), with no trace of red or rust coloration, was almost certainly a Ruby-throated. A ♀ Ruby-throated was reported at Summerville, S.C., Dec. 19 (RDL), but no description was given. Highly significant was the discovery of a dead **Rufous Hummingbird** at Athens, Ga., Nov. 6 (HBH), a first state record and fourth *Selasphorus* for the Region (two \*\*, one ph., one sight record). The specimen was confirmed by the National Museum of Natural History, and it is now in the University of Georgia Museum of Natural History. There are a number of winter sight records of Ruby-throateds, most probably valid, although one wonders how many of these birds were examined for rufous flanks and tail patches. Even when one does make such a complete examination, can he assume an *Archilochus* to be Ruby-throated, and a *Selasphorus* to be Rufous?

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH VIREOS** — A W. Kingbird was late at Pea I., Dec. 9 (RPT *et al.*), as were Barn Swallows on CBCs in mid-December at Wilmington and McClellan-

ville Most surprising was a Barn Jan 28 at Savannah N W R , S C (JO) Very few Red-breasted Nuthatches visited the Region this winter, and they were seemingly absent over much of Georgia and South Carolina. Both marsh wrens winter sparingly inland, mostly in the Coastal Plain; noteworthy was a Long-billed at Augusta Jan. 13 (ARW) and a Short-billed in a snow-covered field at Clemson Feb. 19 (HL)! A rare midwinter White-eyed Vireo record was of a single bird near Wilmington Feb. 16 (RD), whereas singles near Newport Dec. 13 and Core Cr., Dec. 14 (JF), both farther n. along the coast, might represent late stragglers.

**WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS** — Single Black-and-white Warblers were found at four North Carolina sites: Durham Dec. 9 (JH, CSa), Newport Dec. 8-20 (JF), Fayetteville Jan. 20 (PJC *et al.*), and in e. Brunswick County Feb. 2 (RD). At long last the Clemson area has a winter record of Orange-crowned Warbler, as one was seen Feb. 11 near Townville (HL). Single **Cape May Warblers** on the Raleigh CBC, Dec. 16 (GW) and at McCain, Hoke Co., N.C., Dec. 19 (LWa) add to the surprising number of winter records for that state. Despite the mild fall, few other lingering warblers were detected, with only a Prairie at Sullivan's I., Feb. 8 (TR) and a Com. Yellowthroat at Chapel Hill Feb. 2 (ALB) being worthy of mention. On Jan. 19 a ♂ Brewer's Blackbird was seen in the same yard in Raleigh where a female was noted two years ago (GW).

**FINCHES** — Adding to the remarkable number of winter records of Blue Grosbeak in North Carolina were individuals on the Durham and Chapel Hill CBCs. Another bird, apparently injured, was seen regularly at an Easley, S.C., feeder Jan. 17-31 (AT). Evening Grosbeaks were rare to absent over most of Georgia and South Carolina, but a midwinter influx occurred in North Carolina. An estimate of 300 in a Chapel Hill yard (CH) during late February was remarkable, even for an invasion year. As expected, Purple Finches were in rather low numbers over much of the Region, and at Winston-Salem this winter they were considered to be outnumbered by House Finches 100:1 (*vide* RS)! Other House Finch reports of note were 150 in a single Chapel Hill yard Feb. 18 (CH), 210 at the Raleigh Rose Garden Feb. 26 (KH,DA), tallies of 20 or more at several Atlanta feeders (*vide* TM), and four at Whispering Pines, Moore Co., N.C., Dec. 18, for the first North Carolina Sandhills record (*vide* JC). It is surprising how scarce the species is in the Coastal Plain, considering its abundance in many Piedmont cities.

Pine Siskins, like Evening Grosbeaks, were scarce everywhere, especially in South Carolina and Georgia; Red Crossbills were not observed at all in the Region, although many wintered in the North Carolina mountains. Grasshopper Sparrows are so secretive in winter that the few that are seen at this season must weigh heavily when attempting to delineate the wintering range. At Townville, where it winters regularly, an individual was observed Jan. 10 & Feb. 11 (HL). One seen at a "ground feeder" in a Pinehurst, N.C., yard Feb. 7-28 (MJJC) was near the n. edge of its range. A **Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco** was an excellent

find in Columbia, where it was noted Jan 17 - Feb 28+ (LW, EW, KS) Most winter Tree Sparrows occur in the n. Piedmont of North Carolina; thus, as many as five at a feeder in Corapeake, N.C., during the winter (DB *et al.*) provided a very rare Coastal Plain record. Another was at Chapel Hill Feb. 9 (WHW,MW). Chipping Sparrows were remarkably common on many CBCs in the Region, highlighted by 436 at Southern Pines and 608 at Atlanta. A surprising number of Lapland Longspurs wintered with Horned Larks in a field near Townville where longspurs have previously wintered. Twenty were seen Jan. 10 (HL), and 30 were there Jan. 27 (SAG), perhaps a record count for the Region! Interestingly, there were no other seasonal reports, although there is no question that a fair number must winter with larks in extensive plowed fields; habitat that is definitely underbirded at this season.

—S.A.—

A major problem in identification has recently surfaced in this Region, and perhaps it is present in others as well. Inexperienced observers have been turning House Finches into Com. Redpolls, a problem especially acute at feeders, where so many of the former occur. The inadequacy of the Peterson and Robbins *et al.* field guides are partly to blame. The Peterson Eastern guide does not include House Finch; thus, observers familiar with Purple Finches seeing an unfamiliar bird with a red forehead-crown and dull red or rosy breast believe they have a ♂ redpoll. The illustration of the ♂ redpoll in the Robbins guide shows a rosy color to the breast and little whitish cast to the upperparts, but most males have a pinkish breast and a whitish cast to the upperparts. Last winter redpolls were reported from several feeders by observers unknown to me, and I published the records, because two coastal reports (one with an excellent photograph) were received from experienced birders. A report of redpolls this winter at a Cary, N.C., feeder was confirmed as a House Finch; a report of redpolls at a Raleigh locale, at a feeder where seen last winter, seems highly unlikely, and I suspect that House Finches were involved. From now on, I will not accept redpoll records without convincing details, and I *strongly* encourage experienced birders to corroborate all such reports, particularly at feeders. [An easy way to distinguish between House and Purple Finches in any plumage is the *ground color* of the underparts. In Purple Finches it is white or creamy: the streaks are quite distinct. In House Finches it is gray, "dirty" or dusty: the streaks are far less distinct.—Ed.]

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**FLORIDA REGION**  
/Henry M. Stevenson

The beginning of the winter period was more like a continuation of autumn, with temperatures generally continuing well above normal. At the beginning of the month near Tallahassee a number of live Silk Spiders persisted in the woods, ripe muscadines (*Muscadinia Munsoniana* of Small?) were found on the coast on December 8, and a Formosa Azalea was in full bloom on the 13th. But hopes for a mild winter were dashed in January, when temperatures averaged below normal for the fourth successive year. February was also cold, and the deficiencies in average temperature for the two months ran to 5°F or more in north Florida. Nevertheless, it was the mild fall and December that decided the avian characteristics of the winter, as the bulk of the southward migration is completed before January. Observers generally spoke of the paucity of many species, some indicating that it was the duldest winter in many years. One reason was surely the fact that many species whose winter ranges extend well north of Florida did not (because of the mild weather) move south in their usual numbers, especially waterfowl and fringillids. Ironically, mild weather apparently did not induce more than the usual number of tropical winterers to remain in Florida. Further aggravating the situation, some semi-hardy species hard hit by the two preceding cold winters have not fully recovered their losses, and there was little evidence that the western element was any better represented than usual.

**AVIAN DECREASES** — When the frequencies (birds-per-hour) were computed separately for Leon County and the coastal counties of the Tallahassee Division for November through February, as explained in previous years, the data seemed to bear out other observers' commentary on the lackluster season. Of six to eight "months of record" (four for strictly coastal species), 64 species had subnormal frequencies in at least 75% of those months, excluding species that were adversely affected by a change of field coverage beginning in 1975-76. The following species were low in *all* months of record: Com. Loon (coastal counties), Canada and Snow goose, Mallard, Gadwall, Com. Goldeneye, Ruddy

## **Cooperator's Form The Blue List for 1980**

Each year *American Birds* publishes a list of species of birds which appear to be declining in number, either in species range proportions or regionally. Birds considered eligible for the Blue List are those apparently involved in non-cyclical population changes, but *which have not reached the endangered status*. In previous years we've termed it an "early warning list," for its purpose was to alert the scientific, governmental, and birding public to possible causes for alarm, present or future.

Although the Blue List has been much quoted, used in Environmental Impact Statements, and is probably the inspiration for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service list of threatened species, it has a glaring weakness. There simply has not been a broad enough input base from the field; not a few of the designations to, or deletions from, the list, are based on viewpoints from too few respondents to make them unimpeachable. Although our response in recent years represents the views of several hundred active observers from coast to coast, this response represents the views of less than 1% of our far-flung network of observing contributors.

This year we want to attempt to reach and elicit opinions from a far greater cross-section of our readership. In the past, selected editors and contributors received blue sheets to be completed and returned. This year, the "blue sheet" is the reverse side of this page. You are invited to contribute your knowledge to the Blue List for 1980, *with one reservation*. We must restrict our input to information supplied by persons of experience. Obviously, if you have been birding only a few years, you cannot, through first-hand knowledge, know which species have suffered declines over the last 10-20 or more years. For this reason, we solicit returns from those observers only who have at least ten years' of comparative knowledge in one particular area or region. Obviously, the more years you have birded your area, the more valuable your ballot.

Blue-listed birds will be: 1. those species that may or may not be declining now, but may be in jeopardy in the foreseeable future; 2. those species that occur in such small numbers that their status should be monitored; 3. those species for which there is no scientific data to determine whether or not they are declining, but there is definite concern for the species; and 4. those species which give definite evidence of non-cyclical declines in all or part of their ranges.

Please use the opposite side of this page for your ballot, attaching additional pages when necessary. Mail them to *American Birds*, 955 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

*The deadline for receipt of these ballots is September 15, 1979.*

**Blue List Report Form — 1979 for 1980**

This year we will make no reference to the Blue List of 1979, or of recent years, but start from scratch with nothing on paper to influence our cooperators. If recent lists were accurate, of course, we should come out with a list similar to last year's to a major degree.

On the sheet below (or attached sheets) you are asked to list your candidates for the 1980 Blue List by species, or by races if your designation is for one race only.

If you have specific data pertinent to your nominations, note them on the sheet below or attached sheets.

There is no limit to the number of species you may nominate but lists longer than 50 species will probably carry somewhat less weight than shorter lists.

DO NOT list Endangered Species, or species not found in your area.

In addition to the reasons 1-4 to be listed by number (see reverse), you may also wish to list probable or possible causes by letter: A — habitat loss; B — pesticides; C — predators, including man; D — breeding disruptions; E — adverse weather; F — always rare, dwindling; G — other; H — unknown.

Species	Reason Listed (1-4)	Cause (A-H)

Area reported on \_\_\_\_\_

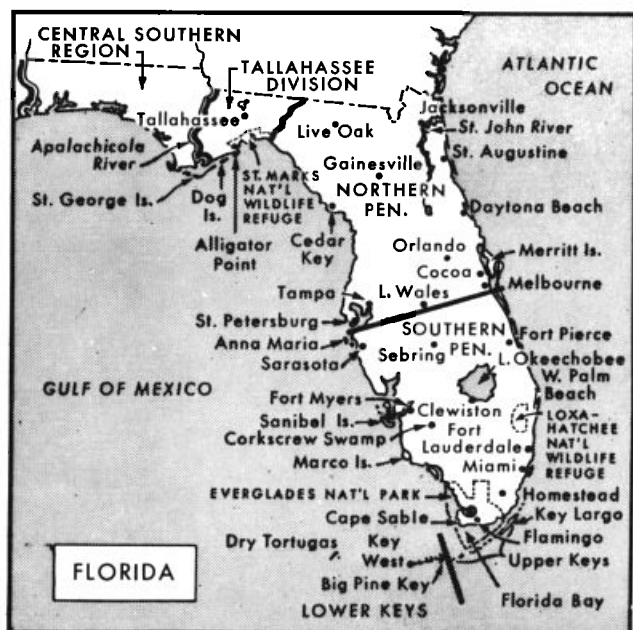
Number of years studied \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your assistance! The Blue List for 1980 will appear in *American Birds*, November, 1979.





Duck, Red-breasted Merganser, Royal Tern, Black Skimmer, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, *Mockingbird*, Hermit Thrush, E. Bluebird, *Golden-crowned* and *Ruby-crowned kinglets*, *Water Pipit*, Palm Warbler, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, Vesper Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco. Italicized species have been reduced ever since the unusually cold winters of 1976-77 and/or 1977-78, as were a few additional species with normal or high frequencies in one or two months this winter.

**NESTING ACTIVITIES** — Brown Pelicans began nesting in December at three rookeries on the Atlantic coast (HWK), but not until mid-February near Naples (THB). By early February at least two colonies of Reddish Egrets were nesting in Florida Bay with "excellent" results, and other colonies began in late February (RTP). Roseate Spoonbills in the same area began nesting in December (later than usual), but their success was varied (RTP).

**LOONS, GREBES AND SHEARWATERS** — A Red-throated Loon at Summerland Key Feb. 1 (LPB) added to the small number of records for the Florida Keys. Two Eared Grebes were found in Pinellas County — Dec. 15 (Glen Woolfenden) and Jan. 23 (Polly Sherman). There was a substantial increase in the small number of *Manx Shearwaters* known to Florida. Two were seen 15 mi off Cape Canaveral Dec. 6 (JJ), and one off Ft. Pierce Feb. 11 (PWSy, HPD, WED *et al.*); one was found dead at Sebastian Inlet Jan. 1 (RDB; \*Brevard Mus.). The similar Audubon's Shearwater, rare in winter, was reported at Copolum Beach, Florida Keys, Jan. 10 (Barny Dunning).

**GANNETS, CORMORANTS AND BITTERNS** — Gannets were found in perhaps unprecedented numbers on the East Coast; 371 were counted off Juno Beach Dec. 2 (PWSy *et al.*), and 1000 estimated off Cocoa Jan. 26 (JJ), but no evidence of an increase was noted in the Gulf of Mexico. The only Great Cormorant remained at Boynton Beach Dec.

30 mid January (HPL *et al.*). A Least Bittern at Summerland Key Dec. 8 (LPB, Marge Brown) was one of very few known to the Keys.

**DUCKS** — In much of the Region, Fulvous Whistling Ducks are hardly newsworthy, but two at Stock I., Jan. 27 & 29 (FTH, JKS, TBW) and 40 flying SE at Cowpens Key Feb. 15 (Sandy Sprunt) were unusual. Stock I. also had a Green-winged Teal Feb. 12 & 19 (FTH, JKS, TBW). Six Ring-necked Ducks at Alligator Pt., Feb. 19 are the only ones I can recall having seen on salt water. A Com. Goldeneye was unusually

far s. at Rookery Bay, Collier Co., Dec. 6 (THB), and the only Oldsquaw reported was at L. Okeechobee Dec. 24 (DMM, GY, Polly Rothstein). Almost incredibly large numbers of scoters were seen as far s. as Juno Beach — ca. 800 were considered Surf Scoters and 3350 were not identified to species; the fact that these birds were flying S is anomalous considering the evident scarcity or absence of scoters farther s. A Black Scoter was identified at Pasadena, Pinellas Co., Dec. 12 - Jan. 1 (Butler Durham). Masked Ducks again visited the Loxahatchee N.W.R.; four remaining Dec. 23 - March (HPD, DWF, Wally George). A high count of ca. 80 Hooded Mergansers was made near St. Marks Light Dec. 11 (HMS). An ad. ♂ Red-breasted Merganser as far s. as Estero I., Lee Co., Jan. 13 was unusual (HWK, WI). Common Merganser records in Florida are not always reliable, but there were two probably valid records provided this year: a female at Ward's Bank (mouth of St. Johns River, n. side) Dec. 31 - Jan. 28 (JLW) and a male at Crescent Beach Jan. 7 (Caroline Coleman).

**DIURNAL BIRDS OF PREY** — A presumed late migration of Turkey Vultures was a s. flight of ca. 140 just ahead of a cold front near Tallahassee Dec. 9 (GEM). As many as 15 Everglade Kites were seen at the Tamiami Trail w. of Miami (m.ob.) on various dates, and a pair began nesting in January near Ft. Pierce (HPD, WED). Single Swallow-tailed Kites were early near Punta Rassa Feb. 25 (DWF) and Orlando Feb. 27 (Nancy Sharp, Charlie Tate), but unidentified personnel at L. Kissimmee S.P., reported one "before Feb. 10." A Red-tailed Hawk had moved as far s. as upper Key Largo by Feb. 5 (Wayne Scott). Also on Key Largo was a Swainson's Hawk Jan. 9 (N&RTP); a concentration of 12 Swainson's near Homestead was feeding on *large green caterpillars* Feb. 19 (DWF, PLF, PWS, RJS). As most Short-tailed Hawks breeding in n. Florida apparently winter farther s., 2-4 seen at the Tosohatchee State Preserve Feb. 24-27 (RDB, Dorothy Freeman *et al.*) may have been early arrivals. At this locality an imm. Golden Eagle was seen Jan. 13 (Chuck Turner), and others were found at Wakulla

Springs Wakulla Co., Dec. 14 (HMS) and 7 mi e. of Myakka River S.P., Dec. 31 (John Patterson). An Osprey was late at L. Talquin, Leon Co., Dec. 3 (GEM).

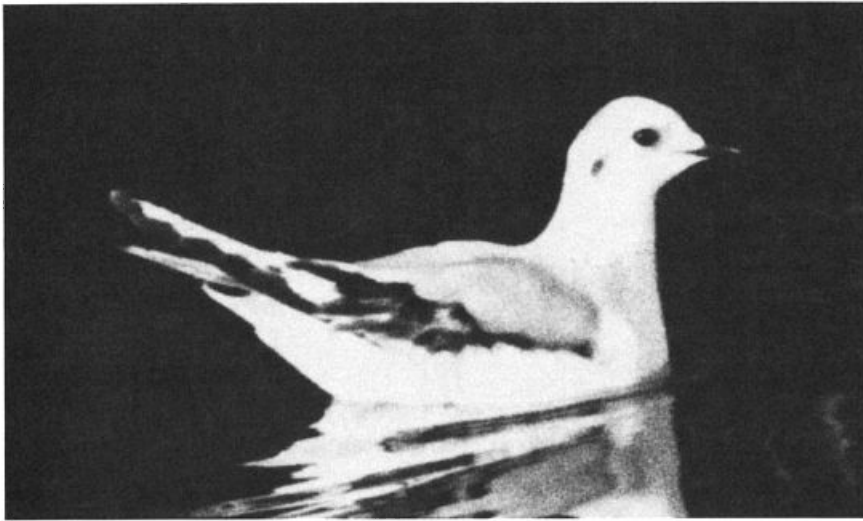
**TURKEYS, CRANES AND COOTS** — Turkeys are rare near the Atlantic coast, but four flew across I-95 in Indian River County, Jan. 27 (HWK). A flock of seven Sandhill Cranes made up a late E flight near L. Jackson, Leon Co., Dec. 1 (JMS, Richard Thompson).

—S.A.—

Another report of a **Caribbean Coot**, Port St. Lucie, Dec. 19 - Feb. 28+ (HPD, WED, CTC), coupled with hearsay records from various other states, points up a drastic need for further studies of this "species." One contributor asks whether all such birds reported in Florida have been males, and whether females (anywhere) also have "high, unspotted shields." Characteristics of the frontal shield are surely variable among North American coots (although probably less so than in the Caribbean birds), but this difference may not be sufficient to warrant full specific rank. Here is a case where a study of extant museum skins might be quite revealing.

**SHOREBIRDS** — The Spotted Sandpiper rather rarely winters inland in the Tallahassee Division, but Menk saw one at L. Talquin Jan. 2. In the same general area Long-billed Dowitchers were considered rare until last winter, but 18 again wintered at L. Jackson (HMS) and two were at the Tallahassee sewage disposal plant Dec. 18 (GEM). A N. Phalarope was identified at Port Canaveral Dec. 30 (Don Devitt *et al.*). Unusually high counts for the respective species were: 40 Snowy Plovers at Estero I., Jan. 13 (HWK, WI), 6500 Red Knots at Casey Key, Sarasota Co., Jan. 23-26 (Stedmans), and 18 Purple Sandpipers at the St. Johns R. jetties Feb. 18 (JLW).

**JAEGERS, GULLS AND TERNS** — Single **Long-tailed Jaegers** were reported without details off Cape Canaveral Dec. 8 & Jan. 24 (JJ), and a Pomarine Jaeger (rarely wintering in the Gulf) was at Longboat Key, Manatee County, Jan. 5 (Michael Resch). One-to-two Glaucous Gulls at each location were seen off Canaveral Dec. 6 & 8 (JJ), at Port Canaveral Dec. 28 (DH *et al.*), and at Ward's Bank (first-year bird) Dec. 17, (second-year bird) Dec. 27 (JLW). The only Iceland Gull was also at Port Canaveral Dec. 28 (DH *et al.*). A Great Black-backed Gull was 20 mi inland at Mandarin, St. Johns R., Feb. 9 (PCP). An imm. **Thayer's Gull** was reported to be at St. Petersburg's Toytown dump Dec. 8-16 (LA), but apparently no authority has yet confirmed any Florida photograph of one. Florida records of Lesser Black-backed Gulls mushroomed. St. Petersburg had eight Feb. 9 and others throughout the winter (LA *et al.*); single birds were at Port Canaveral Dec. 28 (RDB *et al.*), 18 mi e. of Cape Canaveral Jan. 16 (JJ), off Ft. Pierce Jan. 14 (m.ob.), and at Stock I., Jan. 14 (CTC, FTH). Through Jan. 12 there were three records of Franklin's Gulls in Pinellas County (LA, Wayne Hoffman *et al.*), and a **Little Gull**



*Imm. Little Gull, Ft. Pierce Harbor, Fla., Jan. 14, 1979. Photo/Alan Wormington.*

was seen by many and recognizably photographed (Alan Wormington; ph., T.T.R.S.) at Fort Pierce Jan. 13 - March. Bonaparte's Gull was again present in large numbers on the Gulf coast; ca. 500 around Eastpoint in late February (JMS) and 50 as far s. as Naples in late January (THB, Va. Below, Nonie Grieve). Almost unknown in North America in winter, a **Sooty Tern** appeared at Cocoa after a nor'easter Dec. 28 (m. ob.) and possibly the same bird at Sebastian Inlet, ca. 70 mi s.e., Dec. 30 (MCB). Rare inland, a Royal Tern was found dead near Sebring, Feb. 26 (*vide* Fred Lochrer).

**DOVES, PARAKEETS, OWLS AND NIGHTJARS** — The prize of the entire season was a Key West Quail-Dove seen by most birders in s. Florida and many from elsewhere and photographed by several (ph., T.T.R.S., PWSy, Fred Barry), representing probably only the third United States record of this century. It was first seen on or about Jan. 22 and was still present long after the end of the period. A White-winged Dove was late on St. George I., Dec. 1 (RMC,HMS). The Monk Parakeet reported at Tallahassee last fall was also seen this winter (v.o.); according to Mrs. Glenn Heinlen, it has been present since last summer. Two Short-eared Owls were seen at Dunedin Beach Dec. 23 - Feb. 25 (m.ob.) and one at St. Marks Light Dec. 18 (Frances James) and 30 (HMS *et al.*). Early singing by a Chuck-will's-widow was noted Feb. 28 near Vero Beach (MCB, John Treadway). In his description of five silent nighthawks seen near Royal Palm Hammock, E.N.P., David Mark (with GY *et al.*) commented that the white bar appeared close to the end of the wing, but that the Lesser Nighthawk so far e. in winter would be "ridiculous." We have no assurance, though, that all nighthawks wintering in Florida are *C. minor*, and the occurrence of *acutipennis* is not as unlikely as one might suspect (see, e.g., *Fla. Field Nat.* 6:50).

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS AND WRENS** — A **Wied's Crested Flycatcher** was at Gumbo Limbo Trail, E.N.P., Jan. 20-27 (HPL, J. Pratt *et al.*). The numbers of Tree Swallows reported in Conservation Area 3A (Everglades) ran into millions — *five million* going to roost in one section Dec. 13 and *eight*

*million* in another section the next day (PWSy). As few Barn Swallows persist *throughout* winter in n. Florida, the sight of two flying E at Eastpoint Feb. 3 (JMS, Mark Baxley) was surprising. Early Purple Martins reached Orlando by Jan. 23 (DF) and St. Marks Light by Jan. 28 (RMC,GEM). Five Long-billed Marsh Wrens at three Leon County sites this winter (GEM,HMS) may have been unprecedented numbers, but by February apparently none remained.

**WARBLERS, ICTERIDS AND TANAGERS** — Early N. Parulas reached Jefferson Co., by Feb. 25 (GEM) and Tallahassee by Feb. 27 (HMS). A N. Waterthrush collected near Tallahassee Dec. 27 (GEM,HMS) furnished the second known winter record for this part of Florida (\*T.T.R.S.; note sent to *Fla. Field Nat.*). At least six Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintered to Feb. 5, in Pinellas Co. (LH,DG *et al.*), and one was at Port Charlotte Jan. 25 (Malcolm Simons). Menk's estimate of 100 Brewer's Blackbirds in e. Leon County was unusual for Florida, and at least three **Bronzed Cowbirds** wintered near St. Petersburg (LH, Paul Fellers *et al.*). Boat-tailed Grackles are rare inland in the Tallahassee Division and unknown there in winter; the earliest spring records were established on Feb. 21 by single males at L. Lafayette (HMS) and L. Iamonia (JMS). A well described ♀ Summer Tanager was found at Kendall Feb. 22 (DWF *et al.*).

**GROSBEAKS THROUGH SPARROWS** — A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a Belle-air feeder, Pinellas Co., Jan. 5 (D.&K. MacVicar), and a Blue Grosbeak near Homestead (PLF,PWS,RIS). A ♂ Painted Bunting frequented the feeder of Angel Whitehurst at Gainesville Jan. 22 to March (*vide* JHH), and single Dickcissels were listed near St. Petersburg Jan. 1 (m. ob.) and Homestead Feb. 19 (PLF, PWS, RIS). Purple Finches reached n. Florida only in small numbers, and the only Pine Siskin was seen by Virginia Markgraf at Jacksonville Jan. 23. Marshes near Fort Pierce Inlet are about the s. wintering limit for Sharp-tailed and Seaside sparrows on the Atlantic coast, and their respective numbers this winter were in the range of 12-15 and 20-30. But Kale notes that this out-

lying refugium will soon be eliminated owing to the replacement of *Spartina* by Red Mangroves. Lark Sparrows are becoming too regular in the Florida Peninsula to detail; single birds this year were found at Hypoluxo, Estero I., and near Clearwater. An area near Hypoluxo also featured three Clay-colored Sparrows Dec. 13 - Feb. 4 (HPL,TT) and a White-crowned Sparrow Jan. 2 - Feb. 18 (HPL); another Clay-colored was near Clearwater Feb. 17-19 (LH,DG, Judi Hopkins *et al.*). Until recent years, winter reports almost invariably ended here, but now two additional species are frequently reported. Both Lapland Longspur and **Snow Bunting** were found this winter at one of their favorite haunts — Ward's Bank — the longspur Feb. 24 (Jas. Lane) and the bunting Dec. 31 (JLW).

**CORRIGENDUM** — The Thayer's Gull photograph (*Am. Birds* 32 [3]:341) should have been credited to Brooks and Lyn Atherton, not to H. M. Stevenson; three lines above the picture, change \* to ph.

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## ONTARIO REGION /Clive E. Goodwin

It was the winter of the Great Gray Owl — and not much else, as the unprecedented influx of these rare owls relieved a winter when other birds were scarce. In the south December was an open month but relatively few migrants lingered past the start of the period, although the first few days did yield the customary scattered sightings of late warblers and other species. January brought heavy snow and February extreme cold, and in the north weather was severe from the beginning of the period. At the end of February cloudy mild weather seemed to promise an early spring, but the only noteworthy bird report that resulted was a Tree Swallow at Sudbury February 28 (T. Ingran, *vide* CB).



**SCARCITY AND ABUNDANCE** — It is not customary or even desirable to deal with large elements of the report separately from the systematic summary. This winter, however, presented so many unusual patterns of scarcity and abundance that it seemed inappropriate to submerge them all in the usual sequence.

In the fall report we speculated on the reasons for the apparent scarcity of many species. For this season the same question arises: why were many of the birds that winter regularly in small numbers — black-birds and sparrows are the most noteworthy groups — unusually scarce? The succession of severe winters had clearly reduced some populations to very low numbers: for example, the only Carolina Wren report was from Ottawa (of all places) Dec. 2-3 (StG, DP). But perhaps in the case of the commoner migrants such as Song Sparrows, that component of the population that winters at the extreme north of the winter range has been severely reduced in numbers. Whatever the reason, such species were unusually scarce.

This scarcity extended to some species, such as Dark-eyed Juncos and Tree Sparrows, that are common wintering birds in the south. For others a patchy picture emerged. Blue Jays were exceptionally common from Toronto to Algonquin, and even continued so during the bitter cold of February, but were unusually scarce in the southwest. Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost absent in many southern areas, but set records on Algonquin and Middlesex County Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC), and Black-capped Chickadees presented a similar pattern.

The widespread occurrence of Am. Robins and Cedar Waxwings in unusual numbers is easier to explain. When the season commenced, wild fruits in the Toronto area were exceptionally abundant, and this seemed true over much of southern Ontario. Mountain Ash, normally stripped by robin flocks in migration, was often untouched until well into the winter and much still remained at the end of February. In Algonquin P.P., tree fruits generally were in remarkable quantities (*vide* RT)

although farther north around Virgimatown, most fruits were gone before the start of the period (PWR). This probably also explains the flocks of winter finches in Algonquin and their poor showings elsewhere, with only Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches and goldfinches appearing in even moderate numbers over most of the Province.

Intriguing patterns were not confined to passerines. Hawks were unusually scarce except on Amherst Island, and in the southwest where both Red-tailed and Rough-leggeds were widespread. Ring-billed Gulls remained in astonishing numbers:

the most dramatic example was a Toronto waterfront trip in the February freeze-up, when most of the Lake was frozen, and Ring-billeds actually outnumbered Herrings. In former years Herrings typically outnumbered Ring-billeds by ratios ranging from 20:1 to 40:1, and even in recent years when Herring Gulls have seriously declined, ratios have been from 5:1 to 10:1.

To those who find the above generalizations irritating, the CBCs provide some relief. Long Point Bird Observatory's Bird Feeder Survey will also become increasingly valuable in the future as its data increase, but unfortunately in its nature it will only give early winter information for the current year.

**LOONS, GREBES** — The warm waters off the Toronto Hearn power plant had a concentration of waterfowl including 16 Red-necked and three Horned grebes Feb. 23 (HK), when almost the whole of L. Ontario was frozen. The Great Cormorant that spent last winter at Port Credit reappeared there from the first week in December (m.ob.). Ottawa's latest-ever Double-crested Cormorant was seen Dec. 12 (MG, SiG).

**SWANS, GEESE, DUCK** — Can anyone shed any light on the origin of three young Whooper Swans that spent the late winter along the w. end of L. Ontario? One bird was seen first in Hamilton in late December, and by late January there were three and they had moved E to Oakville. By that time also they had joined up with an ad. Whistling Swan which had been working slowly W along the waterfront, and the entire group was gratefully accepting hand-outs with the feral flocks of Canada Geese, Black Ducks and Mallards in the area. It is ironic that the fall report discussed the problems of escaped waterfowl, because it is possible to construct convincing arguments to support either wild or escape origins for these three, and their final disposition thus presents a problem. Here this report itself might help: the publicity surrounding the fall Barnacle Goose apparently did result in the probable owner (from Québec) reporting a loss from about the time the bird appeared in Ontario. If wild the

Whoopers would be firsts for both the Province and Canada as a whole. Supporting this view is the fact that the dates and even the weather conditions were right, and these are expensive birds not present in most waterfowl collections. In favour of escape status is the fact that there is only one prior record for e. North America, and in continental terms the birds probably do occur in many collections.

A flock of 30± Snow Geese near Clyde flying SE on Feb. 11 (P. Staite, CAC) was remarkable. Peterborough had some waterfowl late for that inland locality: a Green-winged Teal Dec. 6-8, a Ring-necked Duck to Dec. 18 and a Black Scoter to Dec. 6 (m.ob.). They also had a Ruddy Duck, but one at Ottawa Dec. 16 (LS, MG, SiG) was the latest-ever there. There were up to 3500 Redheads and 2500± Canvasbacks on the St. Clair R., to mid-February (DR *et al.*), and there was also a Barrow's Goldeneye there from Jan. 7 (JPK, JAG, *et al.*). The two Ottawa Barrow's were again present throughout. Toronto's Harlequin Duck was also present throughout, and another appeared at Oakville in February (m.ob.), but the real numbers were at Sarnia in December, when up to six birds were reported (m. ob.). Only three King Eiders were seen, two at Lennox Feb. 22 (FP) and one off Fort Erie Jan. 28 (RFA, J. F. Thill). The more noteworthy scoter reports were of 600 White-wingeds off Hamilton Jan. 28 (RC) and seven Blacks at Toronto Jan. 27 (JAK).

**VULTURES, HAWKS** — Hawk movement continued to Dec. 29 at Hawk Cliff (MHF *et al.*), and there were late Turkey Vultures at Cambridge (R. MacLaren) and at Mississauga (EK, HK), both Dec. 17. Buteo numbers hit a 10-year low at Toronto and Kingston but, on Amherst I., there were 25 Red-taileds and 55 Rough-leggeds Feb. 3 (KFE). Accipiters, by contrast, were in average to good numbers across the s. There were five Bald Eagles seen in the s.w., and three reports elsewhere, excluding the CBCs. Few Merlins were seen and kestrels became very scarce in most areas in January, but eight Gyrfalcons and six Peregrine Falcons represented good totals for winter. The Gyrs included one white-phase bird, with the others evenly divided between gray and dark phases, and the sightings of these birds followed no pattern either geographically or chronologically.

**GROUSE THROUGH GULLS** — One of few southerly Sharp-tailed Grouse records away from Prince Edward County was a bird on Amherst I., Feb. 21 (FC). Late records included a Sora at Cayuga Dec. 10 (BD), and Am. Coot at Peterborough to Dec. 8 (m.ob.) and a Black-bellied Plover at Erieau Dec. 6 (*vide* AHK).

Glaucon Gulls were in moderate numbers throughout the period: high counts included 12 at Orillia (WZ), ten on the St. Clair R., in February (DR) and nine at Marathon Feb. 17 (NGE). Iceland Gulls were widespread in ones and twos. The Jan. 12 Lennox high of 50 Great Black-backed Gulls (*vide* HQ) was a good count for this species, although its numbers increase towards the e. and were relatively high elsewhere. The gull concentrations on the St. Clair R., included two Thayer's to Jan. 11 (DR). Rarer gull species included a

Laughing Gull at Frenchman's Bay Dec. 24-30 (JMS *et al.*) and two Black-legged Kittiwakes at Sarnia Dec. 9 (DR).

ANIS, OWLS — Ontario's first fully authenticated **Groove-billed Ani** arrived at the Royal Ontario Museum after being found at Sundridge during the last period, Oct. 27 (*vide* RDJ). The Barn Owl at Barrie was last recorded Dec. 24 (CJM,CGH). The interest in other owl species led to a major influx of Great Horneds going almost unnoted. The species appeared in exceptional numbers along the lower Great Lakes, but by contrast was rather scarce farther n. Both Long and Short-eareds were reported in generally small numbers, although the former at Ottawa Jan. 21 (StG) and the latter in Oxford County, Dec. 7 & Jan. 18 (D. Bucknell, *vide* BP) were noteworthy. Barreds yielded their usual scattering of reports, and Snowies staged a moderate flight and were present in the s. throughout.

But the big event of the winter was the unprecedented influx of **Great Gray Owls**. The first hint, readers may recall, was in the fall where we suggested that "small movements" of the rarer northern owls seemed to be developing. In the case of Hawk and Boreal owls the adjective was reasonably accurate. Eight Hawk Owls were seen in addition to the four in the fall report; and only two were later than December, suggesting the species moved through our Region in the last two months of the year. The two later birds were at Moonstone Feb. 4 (FW), and on Amherst I., from Jan. 3, where it was one of the ten species there that made that island the owl capital of North America for a period in late February! (See p. 245). Boreals were found road-killed at Bowmanville Dec. 20 (RN), and there were birds in Ennismore Township Jan. 21 & 27 (*vide* RDM), and at Ottawa Dec. 27 & Jan. 27 - Feb. 28 (ED, D&LS). Most of the Amherst birds appeared past the end of the period, but there was one there from Feb. 25 (MC).

But for Great Gray Owls, the Algonquin bird in November was just a hint of the influx to come. In fact, not much happened until late December, although rather more reports than usual were coming from the Ontario breeding grounds. A bird was hit by a train near Scoville Dec. 13 (RCL, *vide* RWN), and at least three birds were around Marathon from Dec. 11. In all there were some five owls reported from the area between Nipigon and Manitowadge to Feb. 15, plus perhaps another six reported from non-birders (NGE). Farther w., at Thunder Bay, the only bird reported was Feb. 20 (TP, *vide* DA). These dates, of course, overlap those of the s. birds. These appeared first in the last week of December, mainly at Ottawa where there were 17 reports Dec. 25 - Jan. 14 (*vide* StG), although birds were w. to Ancaster and Pickering. By mid-January they appeared in numbers at Peterborough, with 25 isolated reports to mid-February (*vide* DCS), and Kingston, with 14 birds in the same period (*vide* HQ). At the same time there was one at Hillsdale Jan. 17 - Feb. 3 (WZ), and by the beginning of February the movement was farther s. and w. again, with 7-14 in the Cobourg area from Jan. 30, and six to Feb. 24 in the Oshawa area over the same period, and maybe another four at Toronto, some of which were present



Great Gray Owl, Toronto, Ontario, February, 1979. Photo/T. A. Modro.

at the period's end. On Feb. 3 only three birds were known to be on Amherst I., but by Feb. 17 eleven had been found and by Feb. 25 at least 30 were present (*vide* HQ), and there are unauthenticated reports of even more. (See p. 245). In all, even if the Ottawa and Peterborough birds are considered to have been relocated farther s.w., a grand total of 61 Great Gray Owls seems possible. The total of all birds reported in the only previous influx of anything like these proportions, in 1965-6, was 38. About ten birds were recorded in the s. in each of the winters of 1969-70, 1971-2 and 1973-4.

The direction of movement, into e. Ontario and then S and W, is traditional and suggests an origin for these birds in Québec; the Amherst concentration probably reflected the shortage of rodents over much of e. Ontario this year, when Amherst by contrast teemed with prey. By the time of writing (March 15) most of the birds had departed.

Kay McKeever writes a sorry postscript to this influx. The Pickering bird was never seen to capture any prey, and in fact proved to be injured in one ear by shotgun pellets. Capture of the starving bird was delayed because people wanted to "get it on their lists," and just prior to its capture photographers were seen pounding on the branch on which the bird was sitting to force it to take off, so they could get shots of it in flight. It proved to be too far gone to digest rodent food, but has now been nursed back to health. Mrs. McKeever says "this kind of priority makes me sick with a sense of outrage. What can be done to protect these rare incursions from the witless and selfish zeal of the human idiots in our midst?"

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FLY-CATCHERS — The most northerly Com. Flicker report was of a bird at Clavering to Jan. 24 (JWJ) and two Red-headed Woodpeckers in Asphodel Twp., Jan. 13 (AGC) fall into the same class. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to hold their own in the s.w. Ontario strongholds around Middlesex and Elgin Cos. (*vide* WRJ), and there were birds e. to Amherst I., Feb. 22 (FP) and Ottawa to Jan. 21 (m. ob.). A moderate flight of

both three-toed species was centred in Ottawa; the CBCs tell the story, although the ratio of Northern: Black-backed was much lower at Ottawa during the rest of the period. An E. Phoebe at Hyde Park from Feb. 5 (TDP,TNH) was hard to explain — an exceptionally early migrant or a very hardy survivor?

CROWS THROUGH THRUSHES — The appearance at London of Gray Jays Feb. 5 & 24 (JB,AFJ) was remarkable in a year when no flight of this species occurred. A Black-billed Magpie was seen in the Thunder Bay area Jan. 4 (L. Jarvis). Mockingbirds appeared in scattered areas e. to Ottawa; however, there were fewer reports than in past years, suggesting this species is yet another southerner hard-hit by the recent series of severe winters. Other mimids included a Brown Thrasher at Sheguiandah which survived to Dec. 18 (GG) and a hardy Gray Catbird which appeared in Toronto Feb. 11 (DRo). Varied Thrushes continued their pattern of winter occurrences. A bird at Ottawa to Feb. 21 was the third there (m. ob.), there was one at Toronto from Jan. 3 and another at Pickering from Feb. 16 (m. ob.), and others were at Hurkett Dec. 14 (*vide* HA) and N. Keppel Township to Dec. 27 (LSH). Seven Ottawa reports of Golden-crowned Kinglets were surprising for a species that has become rare in winter over much of the Province.

PIPITS THROUGH TANAGERS — A late Water Pipit was at Woodbridge Dec. 3 (AD,GB). Bohemian Waxwings were scattered across the Province in small numbers: the largest flock was 180 Thunder Bay Jan. 27 (KD). The N. Shrike flight was average, and followed the usual pattern of being heaviest in December. Yellow-rumped Warblers were n. to Tobermory Dec. 28 (JWJ) and e. to Amherst I., on a late date of Feb. 25 (*vide* HQ), but the most interesting warbler report was a hold-over from summer, and that was the Peterborough area's first Prairie Warbler nest, located near Apsley June 24 (P.F.N.C.). Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds stayed near the corn cribs of the Mitchell's Bay area Jan. 26 - Feb. 17 (J. Wilson Sr. *et al.*), following summer sightings of this species in that area. A N. Oriole at Ottawa to Dec. 19 was eclipsed by a report of what appeared to be a ♀-plumaged Scarlet Tanager in Douro Twp., Peterborough Co., Feb. 5 (AGC). A Brown-headed Cowbird was extremely late in Algonquin P.P., Dec. 9 (DS) and a Com. Grackle wintered there (PW). Another was at Marathon to Feb. 22 (NGE).

FINCHES, SPARROWS — Cardinals seemed scarce along the limits of the species' range, although there was a bird at Evansville in December (*vide* JL). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at Meaford in January (*vide* JC), and a much rarer **Black-headed Grosbeak** at London throughout. The bird was first identified Jan. 27 (GEM), and represents the third recent record in the Province. Reports of House Finches in the Niagara-on-the-Lake set the current population at 12 (*vide* AD *et al.*) and there was an unsupported report from Burlington Dec. 26-27. Noteworthy late or wintering sparrows — in a winter when these birds were scarce —

included two Chipping Sparrows at Kingston Jan. 3-27 (*fide* HQ), a White-crowned Sparrow at Angus Jan. 1 - Feb. 11 (CJM), a White-throated at Markstay and a Song Sparrow at Sudbury Downs, both throughout and both the first successful winterings for the Sudbury area (CB, JL), a Lincoln's Sparrow at Whitby Dec. 12 (MB) and a Swamp Sparrow at Violet Hill Dec. 14 (AW). Some large Snow Bunting flocks were seen, with several exceeding 1000 birds.

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## NIAGARA-CHAMPLAIN REGION /Douglas P. Kibbe

Although the season opened serenely enough with generally mild conditions persisting through early January, the plummeting temperatures and deep snowfall that followed forced many to conclude that this was the worst winter in recent memory; no small accolade considering the severity of the past two. Seemingly eternal cold made February the chilliest in four decades (second coldest in history). Lake Ontario nearly froze over completely in response to continuous subzero temperatures and even 435-foot deep Cayuga Lake was icelocked briefly.

Excellent food supplies in western sectors induced exceptional numbers of several frugivorous species to overwinter but low numbers of waterfowl, hawks, gulls and winter finches made birding spotty. Birds were particularly scarce in mountainous regions as evidenced by Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) returns (*e.g.*, the Vermont total was down 16 species from last year's tally). The season could hardly be termed lackluster, however, as an unprecedented invasion of highly-sought northern owls literally overran the eastern two-thirds of the Region.

**LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL** — Mid-February brought a flurry of grounded divers, apparently fleeing ice-choked lakes, to w. New York including a Red-throated Loon and three Red-necked Grebes. An **Eared Grebe** appeared briefly, Jan. 1 at Sodus Bay (R&MMc, *fide* G.O.S.). Reversing recent trends Double-crested Cormorants were well down, Oswego yielding the only reports (FS). Great Blue Herons were reported sporadically into January in several areas and may have successfully wintered at Elmira (*fide* WB). An Am. Bittern discovered at Braddock Bay Jan. 24 (NH) was the only other long-legged wader reported.

Mute Swans staged an unusual winter incursion, with singles at Niagara Falls, Rochester, and Oswego for varying periods of time. The New York State waterfowl tally in January was the lowest in the count's 30-year history (*fide* VP). It's unclear at this point whether this decline (43% below average) is attributable to extensive ice coverage or other factors. Rarer diving ducks included a Harlequin at Russell Station (RO, *fide* G.O.S.); Barrow's Goldeneye at Niagara Falls (DF *et al.*), Oswego (FS *et al.*), and L. Champlain (*fide* RY); and a King Eider on the Niagara R. (DF *et al.*, *fide* B.O.S.).

**HAWKS TO PARTRIDGE** — Each year overzealous CBC counters record one or two Red-shouldered Hawks. This season no fewer than nine were reported, a few of which may have been correctly identified. It is probable that most of the Region experienced a low in the *microtine* cycle, since Rough-legged Hawks were exceptionally scarce (*e.g.*, only ten sightings in Vermont all winter), and even Red-tailed Hawks and Am. Kestrel numbers were below average in central New York. Six Bald Eagles were noted, three of them in the Rochester area. Smaller-than-usual numbers of Marsh Hawks wintered in New York. With the exception of a **Gyrfalcon** in E. Craftsbury Dec. 31 (FO, JW) all rare falcon reports lacked confirming details. A single Spruce Grouse on the I. Pond CBC, constituted the season's only sighting. Ring-necked Pheasant populations continued to plummet while wild Turkeys expanded their range on several fronts. The latter's success in the face of several severe winters underscores both the importance of using wild birds in restocking programs and the extent to which abandoned farm land has reverted to forest in much of the Region. Both reports of Gray Partridge were from the St. Lawrence R. valley where



this species continues to maintain its toehold in the Region. Reasons for its failure to expand along either the Ontario or Champlain lakeplains warrant investigation.

**RAILS THROUGH OWLS** — A hardy Virginia Rail located Feb. 8 at Mendon Ponds P. (G.O.S.) was the only one reported for the season. The nine Com. Snipe sightings included three in February when the mercury stayed below zero for more than a week. Four Dunlin, two Purple Sandpipers, and a Red Phalarope tarried into December. An ad. **Black-headed Gull** and single Franklin's and **Thayer's Gulls** were discovered at Niagara Falls in December (*fide* B.O.S.). Little Gulls lingered into January at both Buffalo and Rochester and Vermont got its first winter record when last fall's adult was tallied on the Ferrisburg CBC. Despite, or perhaps owing to, prolonged cold which closed nearly all



♂ Great Gray Owl. Photo/Robert P. Yunick.



open water, gull concentrations were un spectacular and Glaucous and Iceland gulls were particularly scarce. Single **Black Guillemots** were identified on a pond near Phelps, N.Y., Dec. 23 (PT *et al.*, *vide* WB) and at Burlington Dec. 22-28 (B&OE, m.ob.). The latter is the second consecutive winter record for L. Champlain but Vermont's first since 1955. It is problematical whether these birds represent the same wreck which produced this fall's acid reports.

—S.A.—

It all started innocuously enough with a single **Great Gray Owl** report from Jay, N.Y., on New Year's Eve but before the season was over as many as 52 may have been sighted in the Region and the total for the Northeast was several times that high. It was without question the greatest documented invasion in history (there are fewer than 30 previously confirmed New York records). Virtually all the Region's reports came from the St. Lawrence R. valley, the lake plains e. of L. Ontario, or the e. edge of the Adirondacks. Apparently no birds ventured into w. New York and only two adequately detailed reports came from Vermont although judging from the number of sightings to the s.e. many must have traversed that state. It should be noted that the Great Gray is not, by nature, a bird of the open country, unless driven there by food scarcity. Thus the absence of sightings from wooded mountainous portions of the Region is, perhaps, a better reflection of observer distribution than owl density. The actual number of birds which participated in this influx must be several times the number observed. The reasons behind this huge invasion, particularly in the absence of a similar influx farther w., are obscure. Surely a species which reputedly (Godfrey, 1966, *Birds of Canada*) breeds no farther e. than c. Ontario would not be expected to stage a unidirectional movement to the ESE. It seems more likely that this year's irruption involved a different population than last year's Lake States' influx (see *Am. Birds* 32(3)). In all probability it encompassed a portion of a suspected breeding population in n. Québec. (See also p. 242). Unfortunately very few birds were banded and processed for meaningful data, e.g., age, size, weight, plumage, sex, etc. There were, of course, tragic chapters to the birds' appearance. Several were downed by sportsmen.

Although it was generally a poor winter for other owls, the Great Grays were accompanied by a few **Boreal Owls**. Four were found in the Adirondacks (*vide* TD), one of which was photographed while a second, found dead in Glenville, became New York's thirteenth specimen (*vide* RY). Others, as this spring's report will reveal, undoubtedly escaped notice. It should, perhaps, be noted that Boreals breed across northeastern Canada and would be expected to accompany Great Grays s. Surprisingly, in view of the strength of the movement the other boreal species, only two Hawk Owls were located, both in Vermont. One bird was present in Westford Dec. 26 - Feb. 28+ (S&MM, m ob.). Long-eared, Short-eared and Saw-

whet owls were very scarce while a Barn Owl seen in Middlebury (BP) was Vermont's third and the Region's only winter record.

**PICIDS THROUGH PARIDS** — Red-bellied Woodpeckers have shown a slight but constant increase in numbers over the past several years and now regularly equal or exceed Hairy Woodpeckers on some central New York CBCs. A Red-bellied frequenting a Stratton feeder most of the season was only Vermont's second, the first record, in 1971, was also a winter report from the s.e. corner of the state. Another bird in Henderson, N.Y., provided only the third St. Lawrence R. valley record (*vide* LC). A single foolhardy E. Phoebe was noted, in Webster, N.Y., Dec. 25 (RS). Gray Jays were sighted in a number of locations including Montezuma N.W.R. (*vide* WB) and Albany, N.Y. (unconfirmed), plus three s. Vermont localities. While regions to the s. bewailed the absence of Blue Jays, feeder fillers in Vermont bemoaned their presence as they set local abundance records. One was observed killing chickadees on three occasions in Plymouth, Vt. Common Ravens continued their range expansion with several sightings near Alfred, N.Y. (VP *et al.*). The origin of these birds is presumed to have been w. Pennsylvania. Boreal Chickadees dispersed slightly from their breeding grounds with singles sighted in Jerico, Cabot, and Plainfield, Vt., and on Slide Mt., N.Y.

Recent studies (Weise and Meyer, 1979, *Auk* 96:40) have shown that young Black-capped Chickadees regularly disperse from breeding areas while adults are relatively sedentary. Feeder utilization and banding studies near Corinth, N.Y. (RY) have found that Black-capped stage invasions at two year intervals with the invading birds being comprised, as expected, primarily of young. This winter, however, birds staged an "odd year" (*i.e.*, consecutive) invasion comprised of nearly 50% returnees (*i.e.*, adults). Equally puzzling was an unprecedented movement of Tufted Titmice, normally considered relatively sedentary, into the Northeast. The species extended its range both latitudinally and altitudinally in the Adirondack and Green Mts., and temporarily increased enormously in abundance.

**WRENS THROUGH WARBLERS** —

Two lingering Long-billed Marsh Wrens were found in c. New York in mid-December. Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers loitered around the bumper berry crop in w. New York, but few if any lasted through January. American Robins in "astonishing numbers" and Hermit Thrushes "too numerous to warrant reporting" were terms used to summarize these hardy birds in berry-rich areas. Eastern Bluebirds were also unusually numerous by recent standards. Although recent visitors were believed responsible for the decimation of the species, interpid observers in Craftsbury, Vt. (lured onward, perhaps, by the possibility of finding the Gyrfalcon seen locally the previous day) tallied an astonishing 100 Golden-crowned Kinglets (three times the previous state high). It would be interesting to know if these birds were local breeders and, too, why the apparent decline in those wintering farther s. Water Pipits, exceedingly rare during winter, appeared in c. New York for the second consecutive year. Singles were identified at Ham-

mondspout in late December through early January and Horseheads Jan 1 (*vide* WB) Cedar Waxwings were, predictably in view of the bountiful fruit supply, common to abundant in much of the Region but were accompanied by only modest numbers of Bohemians: 100 at Cornwall, Vt. (BP), being the best tally. The latter species, usually considered a vagrant in the Region, has been incredibly regular at Cornwall, this being their fourth consecutive yearly appearance Northern Shrikes continued in good numbers, setting records on several CBCs. Perhaps owing to the selective pressure of the past several winters, lingering warblers were virtually absent; a handful of Yellow-rumped and one Com. Yellowthroat constituting the only reports.

**ICTERIDS AND FRINGILLIDS** —

Appearances of N. Orioles at Ithaca and Glenville, N.Y., from late December through mid-January are exceptional and probably a further reflection of the abundance of natural food. Even more extraordinary were reports of a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in S. Royalton, Vt. (*vide* V.I.N.S.) Jan. 19 and two in Greece, N.Y., through mid-January (*vide* G.O.S., R.B.A.). With the exception of Pine Grosbeaks which were locally very abundant (flocks up to 400 birds) in mountainous areas, winter finches put in only token appearances. Common Redpolls and both crossbills were virtually absent while Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, and Am. Goldfinches were present in modest numbers, mostly in w. New York, although the latter put in a strong showing in the Champlain valley. Abundant food induced many half-hardy sparrows to linger, particularly in New York. Rufous-sided Towhees and White-throated and Swamp sparrows were all much more abundant than usual. Other rarer lingerers included two Savannah and Chipping sparrows and >24 Field Sparrows, including a banded fifth winter returnee (RY). Dark-eyed Juncos, Tree Sparrows, and Lapland Longspurs, on the other hand, were all down while Snow Buntings were only present in modest numbers.

**ADDENDUM** — An ad. ♂ **Townsend's Warbler** was photographed May 11, 1978, near New Haven, Oswego Co., N.Y. (DC,FS) to become the state's tenth record.

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## APPALACHIAN REGION

/George A. Hall

The consensus was that it was a dull season. The general impression was that birds were scarce, and many observers so commented, in many cases not quite accurately. There was no sizable influx of "northern finches" and this in itself made for a quiet season. December was much milder than usual, with little snowfall, and throughout the month few birds came to feeders. Most Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) were quite successful. At Pittsburgh ten species were listed in record numbers and four more in the second highest counts (PH). At Garrett County, Maryland seven species were listed in record numbers (FP). At Blacksburg, Virginia, however, only 7648 individuals were counted as compared with 17,805 last year although four species were seen in record numbers (JMu).

In mid-January the weather changed and a very cold period ensued. At Pittsburgh January and February showed a total temperature deficiency of over 500 day-degrees. Snowfall was general but not as heavy as last year. In south to central West Virginia the ground remained snow-covered for about six weeks. This cold spell was not broken until the very end of the period. Despite the prolonged cold there was little evidence of additional bird mortality, and some of the species that have been hit hard in the past two winters showed signs of a small recovery.

**LOONS, GREBES, HERONS** — The only reports of Red-throated Loons were from Bald Eagle S.P., Pa., Dec. 16 (DP) and Presque Isle, Pa., Dec. 17 (*vide* DS). At Presque Isle there were records of as many as six Red-necked Grebes throughout February (DS) and one was seen at Bald Eagle S.P., Dec. 16 (DP).

### S.A.

On the night of Jan. 6-7 a sleet storm over much of s.w. Pennsylvania and w. Maryland forced down large numbers of Horned Grebes, apparently migrating S as the Great Lakes froze up. This must have involved many hundreds of birds, judged by the reports of rescued individuals at hand. In the Ligonier Valley, Pa., at least 20 were picked up (RCL), 23 in Greene County, Pa. (RB), 40 in Fayette County (RB), "hundreds" at State College, Pa. (KJ) and 75 near Cumberland, Md. (KH).

**WATERFOWL** — The mild December caused many ducks to linger and CBCs listed good numbers both of species and individuals, but with the advent of cold weather in January most of these departed. The N migration had barely started by the end of the period.

Two flocks of Whistling Swans near Knoxville in December were most unusual, one of which stayed through the period (CN); a lone bird lingered at Blythe Ferry, Tenn. (RSt). A small flock of Whistling Swans was seen flying S at Meadville, Pa., Jan. 23 (RFL). The wintering population of Canada Geese at Pymatuning L., Pa., was 5000±, the normal number (RFL). A flock of 200± wintered on the Ohio R., near East Liverpool, O. (NL). Early

migrants had returned to Warren County, Pa., in the last week in February (DSn). About 2000 Canadas wintered at Blythe Ferry (RSt). There were records of Snow Geese from Blythe Ferry Feb. 26 (8 "white" and 12 "blue" — RSt); Elkton, Va., Feb. 6 (4 "white" and 3 "blue" — R.B.C.); Franklin, W. Va., Feb. 16 (30 "white" and 13 "blue" — R.B.C.); Knoxville Dec. 25 (one "blue"); Feb. 24 (8 "blue" — *vide* CN); and Linesville, Pa., Feb. 23 (one "white" — RFL). At Knoxville a flock of 15 White-fronted Geese remained Dec. 25 - Feb. 28+ for the largest number ever recorded there (CN *et al.*). A White-fronted Goose was also seen at Chattanooga Jan. 1 (LD).

Of the rarer ducks, White-winged Scoter was at Chickamauga L., Tenn., Feb. 27 (LD) and Ft. Loudon L., Tenn., Feb. 24 (B&SS), Surf Scoters were at Chickamauga L., Feb. 25 (DJ), and Presque Isle Jan. 20 (JM,JF), and a Black Scoter was at Presque Isle Dec. 2 (JM,BG). A Harlequin Duck at Presque Isle Jan. 16 - Feb. 8 provided the second local record (SSt).

**HAWKS AND EAGLES** — Western Pennsylvania had an unusual number of Goshawks: Pymatuning L., Dec. 2 (RFL), State College Feb. 25 (MB), Powermill Nature Reserve (hereafter, P.N.R.) one through February (RCL), Clarksville two (RB), and several others in the Pittsburgh area (PH). There were more reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks than is usual, and Cooper's Hawks were also more common. In both cases the unusual numbers may be an artifact of snowy weather forcing *Accipiters* to frequent feeding stations more than usual.

The most interesting raptor news of the winter was the extensive influx of Rough-legged Hawks, which normally reaches no farther s. than n. Pennsylvania. It was thought that 20-30 (14 seen at one time) wintered in the Ligonier Valley of Pennsylvania (RCL). Reports came from as far s. as Elizabethton, Tenn. (GE), Chattanooga (LD), and Menlo, Ga. (TM), but at Knoxville numbers were lower than last year (CN).

A Golden Eagle wintered in Greene County, Pa., being fed on road-killed deer supplied by the local game warden (RB). Golden Eagles were also reported from Thornwood, W. Va., Dec. 26 (BKa), Kline, W. Va., Jan. 23 (R.B.C.), Lexington, Va., Dec. 15 (DW), and Woodbury, Tenn., Feb. 24 (RSt). There were three sightings of four Bald Eagles on the Allegheny R. in Warren County, Pa., in January and February (WH), six sightings of nine eagles in the Crawford County, Pa. area (RFL); a census Jan. 23 counted 23 Bald Eagles on the e. Tennessee lakes as far s. as Chattanooga (*vide* CN).

An Osprey on the Fayetteville, Pa. CBC, was unusual (CG). The only Peregrine report was of one at Meadville, Pa., Feb. 23 (RFL). In



the n. the prolonged snow cover prevented the usual buildup in Am. Kestrel populations but most of the missing birds apparently moved rather than perished.

**CRANES, RAILS, SHOREBIRDS** — Sandhill Cranes were seen at Charleston, Tenn., Dec. 4 (DJ), Knoxville Dec. 6 (GW). A flock of five at Menlo, Ga., Feb. 17 was of very early migrants (TM). A Com. Gallinule at Shenandoah L., Va., remained Nov. 14 - Jan. 2 (R.B.C.).

Common Snipe was in good numbers at the few places where it winters in the Region. Joining the snipe at Chattanooga Dec. 17 was a total of 65 Dunlins (RSt). One was still present on the Presque Isle CBC, Dec. 17 and a Greater Yellowlegs was seen there Dec. 29 (BG).

**GULLS** — Most areas that had open water reported good numbers of gulls present through December and into early January, i.e., 2000± Ring-billed and 1000± Bonaparte's gulls on the Linesville, Pa. CBC (RFL). However, the real gull capital of this Region is at Presque Isle and Erie Bay. In December the total population there peaked at 34,000 and in January at 26,000 but on some days not a single gull could be found, indicating a highly mobile population (DS). The Great Black-backed Gull numbers there peaked at 200 in mid-February (SSt), and Dec. 17 a Lesser Black-backed Gull was there for the second local record (JB). Glaucous Gulls were present there on 20 or more days, with a peak of seven on Feb. 12 (SSt), and Iceland Gulls were present throughout the period with a high of three on Feb. 11-12 (SSt, JM). A bird tentatively identified as an Iceland Gull was seen Jan. 28 near Chattanooga (m.ob.). The bird was photographed, and if the identification is confirmed it would represent the first Tennessee record. A Little Gull was at Presque Isle Dec. 2 (JM, DS).

**DOVES AND OWLS** — Mourning Doves seemed to be doing well over much of the n. part of the Region and many comments have been received on increased numbers at feeding stations.

A Snowy Owl was present at Presque Isle Dec. 28 - Jan. 16 (SSt, JM, JF) and one was seen

near Union City, Pa., Feb. 9 (AR). There were two sightings at Pymatuning L., Pa., Jan. 19 & 23 (RFL), and one was seen near Petersburg, W. Va., Jan. 17 (R.B.C.). A Long-eared Owl was seen in Erie County, Pa., Jan. 20-21 (JM,SST), one was found dead near Front Royal, Va., Jan. 23 (LL); one was at Berryville, Va., throughout January and February (RSi). Four were seen at Nickajack L., Tenn., in January (RSi). There was a small invasion of Saw-whet Owls in Erie County where six roost sites were discovered (DS), and one was found in Washington County, Pa., Jan. 17 (LR). However, the real owl news of the season was the unusual number of Short-eared Owls found Regionwide. The records were mostly of singles but as many as nine were reported from Mercersburg, Pa., Feb. 18 (CG). Most of these records were scattered through Pennsylvania but reports came from as far s. as Knoxville Jan. 9 (PP), Elizabethton Feb. 13 (GE,HF), Botetourt County, Va., Feb. 7 (BK), Waynesboro, Va., Dec. 16+ (RS), Harrisonburg, Va., many sightings (R.B.C.), and Blue Grass Valley, Va., Dec. 19 (BKA).

**WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS, CORVIDS** — Common Flickers were unusually numerous in w. Pennsylvania, with 38 listed on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH) and "best wintering numbers ever" at P.N.R. (RCL). The Red-bellied Woodpecker continues to expand N, with excellent numbers at P.N.R. (RCL), four on the Pittsburgh CBC, a record (PH), one through January and February and another in February in Erie County, Pa. (DS). Most remarkable were the ten Red-headed Woodpeckers at Erie N.W.R., Pa., Feb. 18 (JM,SST,DS).

The only reports of the E. Phoebe were of one from Shenandoah N.P., Jan. 12 & 20 (DC), and six through the season in Rockingham County, Va. (R.B.C.). At Shenandoah N.P., 110 Com. Ravens were listed on the CBC (DC) and this species has become fairly common in parts of the Great Valley of Virginia, for example near Lexington (RP).

**TITMICE, NUTHATCHES AND CREEPERS** — At Pittsburgh 1086 Black-capped Chickadees were counted on the CBC (PH), 972 Tufted Titmice were a count record there. Red-breasted Nuthatches were very scarce throughout; many areas did not report them. The Brown-headed Nuthatch reported earlier from near Waynesboro, Va., remained through the period (RS). Brown Creepers were reported as being scarce almost everywhere.

**WRENS, MIMIDS, THRUSHES** — Carolina Wrens remained scarce or even missing at places. At Elizabethton populations were about 75% of normal (GE), and at Waynesboro, Va., two CBCs listed 31 as compared with 67 in 1976 (RS). There were some signs that this species is recovering: the 43 on the Charles Town, W. Va. CBC, was an improvement (CM). A House Wren was at Natural Chimneys, Va., Dec. 3 - Jan. 23 (R.B.C.) and there were two separate reports from Botetourt County, Va., Dec. 16-17 (JV,BK).

Brown Thrashers are often reported on CBCs, but seldom are found after the first of the year. This season reports came from State College, Pa., late January - Feb. 26 (MM,PB), Indiana, Pa., Jan. 16 (CW) and four from the Pittsburgh area (PH). Robins were considered

scarce at State College (MW), but elsewhere they were unusually common, and in Allegheny County, Pa., a flock of >4600 was counted coming to a roost (PH). A wintering Hermit Thrush was reported from State College (PB) and there were 12 reports through the period from w. Pennsylvania (PH), but only two sightings at Elizabethton (GE). The most unusual thrush of the season was a Swainson's at Fayetteville, Pa., Dec. 16 (CG).

**KINGLETS, WAXWINGS, SHRIKES** — The two kinglet species, hard hit by the past two winters, remain in low numbers at most places; for example, only 14 Golden-crowneds on the Pittsburgh CBC vs. 198 in 1973. However, there were some signs of recovery; at Lexington, Va., the 62 Golden-crowneds and the 34 Ruby-crowneds were considered to be good numbers (RP), and 26 Ruby-crowneds on the CBC at Shenandoah N.P. was a record high (DC). Cedar Waxwings were in good numbers throughout the Region with record CBC counts (361) at Shenandoah N.P. (DG) and Elizabethton (378) (GE), but as usual it was missing from some areas.

There was a remarkable number of N. Shrikes reported: Montour County, Pa., Dec. 8 & Feb. 3 (SSI), Bald Eagle S.P., Pa., Dec. 9 (DP), Bradford County, two Dec. 27 (EW), Vawter, Pa., Feb. 22 (EW), Butler County, Pa., three Dec. 29 - Feb. 25 (RBy,CB), three sightings of four birds in Crawford County, Pa. (RFL), several throughout the period in Erie County, Pa. (m.ob.), and one at Youngstown, O., Dec. 16 (WB).

**WARBLERS, ICTERIDS** — An unusually large number of warblers lingered into late December: Black-and-white at Roanoke, Va., Dec. 16 (BKl, GV), Nashville at Waynesboro, Va., Dec. 5 & 8 (RS); and Huntington, W. Va., Jan. 16 (HS); N. Parula at State College Dec. 7 (DB); Cape May at Butler, Pa., Dec. 12-17 (MG) and Belpre, O., Jan. 7 (PC); Bay-breasted in n. Shenandoah County, Va., Dec. 16 (RSi); and Palm Dec. 15 at Clarke and Shenandoah cos., Va., Dec. 27 (RSi). Yellow-rumped Warblers were more common in the n. than usual in December and a record total of 71 was counted on the Charleston, W. Va. CBC (NG). A Com. Yellowthroat was banded at P.N.R., Dec. 7 (RCL).

The Yellow-headed Blackbird at Harrisonburg, Va., Feb. 17 (RBC) would have been unusual for the Region in any season. There were three reports of late winter N. Orioles from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia at Stanton Jan. 17 (YL), Harrisonburg Dec. 20 - Feb. 3 (R.B.C.) and Bridgewater Feb. 7 (R.B.C.).

**FRINGILLIDS** — Many observers felt that the numbers of Cardinals coming to their feeders were lower than normal, and at P.N.R., this species was in the lowest numbers on record (RCL), but at nearby Pittsburgh the CBC listed 1430, the second highest total on record (PH). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen at P.N.R., Dec. 8-29 (RCL), and two were reported coming to a feeder at Harrisonburg, Va., in mid-January (R.B.C.).

Of the "northern finches" only the Purple Finch was a widespread invader and it was fairly common at most places. At Pittsburgh it was reported that Evening Grosbeaks staged a "major invasion" (PH), but this was the only area where this was so. Most areas in the n.

reported at least a few grosbeaks, which arrived about Jan. 1, but numbers were low, to the s and w. they were widespread but scarce. The only report of Pine Grosbeak was from State College (KJ). House Finch numbers continued to climb. At Pittsburgh the species was first recorded on the CBC in 1977 and this year 190 were listed. Pine Siskins were reported only from State College (MW), Sheffield, Pa. (RSm), Highland County, Va., Dec. 29 (BKA), and from above 5000 ft (two flocks) on Roan Mt., Tenn. (GE). The only reports of either crossbill came from the mountains around Harrisonburg, Va.: eight sightings of small flocks were made from Jan. 10 - Feb. 22 (R.B.C.). There were a few scattered sightings of Com. Redpolls in w. Pennsylvania.

A Rufous-sided Towhee wintering at State College was unusual (AF). Dark-eyed Juncos were in lower-than-normal numbers and Tree Sparrows were very scarce, being essentially absent at many places. The White-throated Sparrow continues to do well in the n., with record numbers on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH), but at P.N.R., they were below normal (RCL). In a previous report I commented on the effect of the eradication campaign for multiflora rose on wintering Mockingbirds, and now the effect of this program on winter populations of White-crowned Sparrows is becoming evident in lower numbers. In the Huntington, W. Va. area, February floods on the Ohio R., and other streams left the usually weed-choked bottomlands covered with a layer of mud, and eliminated the usual winter feeding ground for many sparrows (LW).

A Fox Sparrow at State College in February (RC) and a Swamp Sparrow on the Raccoon Creek S.P., Pa. CBC, were unusual. Lapland Longspurs were reported from Williamson, Pa., Feb. 18 and Mercersburg, Pa., Feb. 18 (CG), Lawrence County, Pa., through February (PH), Butler County, Pa., Feb. 25 (RBy), and several sightings in Erie County Jan. 9 - Feb. 24 (DS). There were the usual reports of Snow Buntings from n. Pennsylvania, with a flock of 100+ seen at State College (MW), but more unusual was one seen at Knoxville Jan. 7 (MS) and a flock of eight near there Jan. 11 (WJ). Three Snow Buntings were located on the Roan Mt., Tenn. balds (GE).

**PASSING NOTED** — This Region lost two of its most faithful contributors during the winter with the passing of William A. Clarke, Jr., of State College and L. R. Herndon of Elizabethton. Both of these gentlemen had been contributing since almost the inception of reports from this Region 30 years ago.

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## WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

/Kim R. Eckert

No one can remember when morale among Minnesota birders had been so low. Wisconsin observers apparently included a few expletives in their descriptions of the season that had to be deleted from the compiler's summary. If it had not been for some excitement in the Sault Ste. Marie area, the situation in Michigan would have been just as depressing. For the third winter in a row this Region suffered through almost intolerable weather conditions. The heights of the snowdrifts were matched only by the depths of the thermometer readings. Although there were some average and even mild temperatures in December, especially in Michigan, and some thawing in late February, there was simply too much cold and snow. While the severity of this winter perhaps deserves further elucidation, this writer would just as soon drop the subject.

Because the weather was so bad, birders failed to venture out as often as usual, and when they did they typically found little to encourage their efforts. With few exceptions an obvious scarcity of birds prevailed throughout. Woodland and field birds must have found food scarce in all that snow, but curiously very little was driven to feeding stations, suggesting that more than the usual number of birds wintered farther south (or, in the case of the winter finches, never really arrived from the north last fall). Open water was at a premium, but while this served to drive some species away, a better-than-usual variety of water birds was reported owing to their concentration into fewer areas. Indeed, while the number of individual birds present was clearly down, the overall total of different species recorded was at least close to normal. But this variety was little consolation, especially to Minnesota and Wisconsin observers who grimly had to endure too much winter and too few birds (let alone rarities) — if it had not been for some isolated excitement in Michigan, this report would read like, and would have as much life as, an obituary.

**LOONS THROUGH BITTERNs** — Linger- ing Com. Loons in the s. part of the Region are not unexpected, but the one that overwintered far n. at Sault Ste. Marie was noteworthy (*vide* WG). Even more unusual was a Red-throated Loon at Detroit Feb. 24, for only the third local winter record (*vide* AK). Also unusual were a Red-necked Grebe in n. Michigan at Petoskey Dec. 30 (WG) and another inland near Detroit found on the ice at Kensington Metropark Feb. 18 which later died (*vide* AK). Far more remarkable was Minnesota's first winter Eared Grebe which somehow found its way to Fergus Falls on the unlikely date of Jan. 20 and remained through February (GO). Also a first for Minnesota were four **White Pelicans** which inexplicably



decided to overwinter at Albert Lea in spite of the severe weather (m.ob.). Double-crested Cormorants were very late Dec. 10 at Lac Qui Parle L., Minn. (CMB) and until Dec. 17 at St. Joseph, Mich. (WB *et al.*). Great Blue Herons were surprisingly widespread in December in Minnesota (ten reports) and Michigan (five reports including a maximum of 36 at the Erie Marshes); two were even found into February in Michigan at Lansing and Allegan. Two Am. Bitterns were exceptionally late at Horicon N.W.R., until Dec. 16 (RD).

**SWANS AND DUCKS** — Whistling Swans unexpectedly overwintered as far n. as Fergus Falls, Minn. (GW) and Green Bay (EC). Ducks also made an unexpectedly strong showing despite the general lack of open water; some examples of lingering numbers and species: 175 wintering Gadwall at Madison plus an above-average 13 individuals in the Detroit area, Green-winged Teal as far n. as Duluth on the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) and Green Bay Dec. 30 (EC,BC), 65 wintering N. Shovelers at Madison plus another Dec. 16 at E. Lansing (CF), no fewer than 15 Minnesota Wood Duck reports, Canvasbacks wintering at Fairmont, Minn. (EB), Milwaukee and on the St. Clair R., near Detroit (peak of 3000), more than the usual number of December reports of Hooded Mergansers in Wisconsin, and a good concentration of 8000 Com. Mergansers in Muskegon County, Mich., Dec. 30 (GW).

A few rarities also brightened the potentially dim waterfowl picture: a ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye was carefully studied and photographed on both the Michigan and Ontario sides of the St. Clair R., throughout the winter (m.ob.), Harlequin Ducks were found Jan. 20 on L. Superior at Two Harbors, Minn. (FL) and near Grand Marais, Minn. (TS), at the mouth of the French R., near Duluth Feb. 8-14 (KE), at New Buffalo, Mich., Jan. 1 (CS,WB), and at Sault Ste. Marie throughout the winter (m.ob.). White-winged Scoters were seen in Wisconsin on L. Michigan in Manitowoc and Kenosha counties and at Milwaukee,

and reported from Muskegon and Monroe County, Mich., and late Black Scoters lingered on L. St. Clair near Detroit Dec. 2-3 & 9 (AR).

**HAWKS** — This winter presented a confusing and inconsistent picture of the status of diurnal raptors. In Minnesota, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were reported more often than usual, the same held true in Wisconsin especially around feeders, but the only Michigan increase noted was just from the Detroit area and just for the Cooper's. Red-tailed Hawks were said to be up in the Detroit area while Am. Kestrels were down, but other Michigan areas reported good kestrel numbers. Wintering Bald Eagles were down in Minnesota and on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi R., but at the same time they were up farther e. along the Wisconsin R. Hawks in general were notably scarce in Wisconsin (except for *Accipiter*s), but Berrien County, one of Michigan's key birding areas, reported hawks as "more numerous than any winter I can remember" (CS). Among the more unusual species, Golden Eagles were almost widespread: there were no fewer than seven Minnesota reports as far n. as Crow Wing County Dec. 16 (TS) and at two Lake County locations Jan. 21-22 (FL, M. Hoffman), as many as five individuals were found throughout the winter in Wood County, Wis. (DF *et al.*), and at least one was present at the usual Allegan County, Mich. site Dec. 16-20 (AR,BB). All three states also reported the always-exciting Gyrfalcon: gray-phase adults were seen at Duluth Jan. 24 (M. Hoffman) and in n. Beltrami County, Minn., Dec. 17 and again Feb. 26 (*vide* D. Warner), another gray individual was carefully studied Jan. 1 near Readfield, Waupaca Co., Wis. (DT), while a dark-phase Gyr was one of the attractions at Sault Ste. Marie during January and February (m.ob.). Merlins were reported four times from Minnesota and Wisconsin, with two of these attracted to bird feeders.

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS** — As usual, Spruce Grouse reports were confined to n. Minnesota with four on the Itasca S.P. CBC, and another Dec. 18 near Babbitt (TH). Bobwhites continued scarce in the s. parts of the Region, with three consecutive severe winters certainly a factor; although there was no comment from Wisconsin, there was only one Minnesota report and in Michigan, Berrien County observers managed only one sighting while the Detroit area total was a mere three coveys. Pheasants were

also reported down around Detroit but in Minnesota there continued to be an encouraging comeback in many areas, although it is too soon to tell if the former decline has truly been arrested and what has contributed to this apparent revival. There is no question, however, that Minnesota Gray Partridge are much easier to find than a few years ago, a good example of this being no fewer than 80 counted during a 15 mi drive in Murray County (AD). December Virginia Rails were very late on the St. Paul N.E. CBC, and in Detroit (five reports), and one even overwintered in Berrien County (CN), but the Com. Gallinule Dec. 28 in Muskegon County was even more exceptional (EP). Truly exceptional as well were these late shorebird records: two Dunlins Dec. 2 in Milwaukee (JI, EE) and 32, amazingly, on the same date in Monroe County, Mich. (JK), Sanderlings Dec. 25 - Jan. 1 at New Buffalo, Mich. (CS, WB), and, most amazing of all, careful identifications of a N. Phalarope at New Buffalo and a **Red Phalarope** at St. Joseph, Mich. — both by CS and both Dec. 31

**GULLS** — Minnesota and Wisconsin observers reported gulls harder to find this winter owing to the lack of open water; e.g., with L. Superior almost completely frozen, Herring Gulls were totally absent in Duluth from January through mid-February and only two could be found at Grand Marais, Minn., Jan. 20-21. Michigan, however, reported no scarcity as evidenced by impressive December maxima in Monroe County of 7000± Herrings, 8000± Ring-billeds and 1800± Bonaparte's. As usual, a few Glaucous were reported from all three states, and an Iceland was reported from Madison Dec. 4 (RH), but, while it was compared to nearby Glaucous and Herring gulls, neither its age nor the Thayer's possibility was mentioned. Two possible Icelands, a second year immature and an adult, were seen in December at Black Dog L., Dakota Co., Minn., but it seems more likely they were just small Glaucous. The usual number of Great Black-backed Gulls was seen in s.e. Michigan, but unexpectedly there were two reports on the e. shore of L. Michigan in Ottawa County Feb. 10 (LF) and at Pigeon L., Feb. 19 (VJ). That amazing Black-headed Gull found by J. Greenhouse in late November at Detroit remained until Dec. 2, and Wisconsin salvaged an otherwise dismal gull picture with a **Black-legged Kittiwake** inland at Madison Dec. 4-15 (RH *et al.*).

**OWLS** — Both Minnesota and Wisconsin reported lower owl numbers than usual, especially Great Horneds, in Minnesota, and Long-eareds and Short-eareds, in Wisconsin. But Snowy Owls were widely reported in all three states: at least 20 reporting counties in both Minnesota and Wisconsin (including an unprecedented 30-35 in the Duluth - Superior harbor, 23 of which were banded by D. Evans), and about 15 counties in Michigan (including ten reports from the Detroit area and seven individuals at Sault Ste. Marie). Seven Hawk Owls, all in the general vicinity of Duluth, were seen in Minnesota, but it only took one wintering at Sault Ste. Marie to keep the crowds of Michigan birders there happy. Minnesota failed to record an "echo" invasion of Great Grays, but did manage 13 individuals from seven locations including one as far s. as a Minneapolis suburb Dec. 19-27 (m.ob.). The

real news came from the Sault Ste Marie area where scores of Michigan birders witnessed that state's greatest recent Great Gray invasion, which corresponded nicely with the huge influx farther e. in Ontario and New England. At least 12 and perhaps as many as 20 individuals were recorded, mostly on Neebish I., where local residents first spotted owls in late October. The birders didn't arrive until late January, but from then on through February all this was clearly this winter's highlight in Michigan. The spectacular Boreal Owl influx witnessed in Minnesota last year did not result in an echo invasion this year; there were only three isolated February individuals reported from Duluth, Itasca and Beltrami counties.

**KINGFISHERS THROUGH CORVIDS** — The good numbers of Belted Kingfishers seen in Minnesota represented a good example of some water birds being concentrated into fewer open water areas as a result of below-average temperatures; kingfishers were also up in the Detroit area. Two woodpeckers which are often partial to open oak woods in Minnesota showed noteworthy trends this winter; Com. Flickers were up and Red-headed Woodpeckers were down in numbers (the latter was also down around Detroit). There were the usual few reports of Black-backed Three-toeds in n. Minnesota and Michigan, but a most unusual concentration of 30± Black-backed plus about five or six N. Three-toeds was found in January in n.w. Cook County, Minn. (C. Bergman); this latter species has been very scarce in Minnesota in recent years. There was another interesting agreement between Minnesota and the Detroit area on another species: many observers found fewer Blue Jays, especially at feeding stations. One of the many good finds in Michigan was a **Clark's Nutcracker** Dec. 16 at Whitefish Pt., on the Upper Peninsula (WG).

**TITMICE THROUGH WARBLERS** — It is in this group that the reader will find the most telling examples of losses from three consecutive severe winters. Among those showing a continued decline in numbers: Tufted Titmouse (two reports each for Minnesota and Michigan), Winter and Carolina wrens (especially down at Detroit and in Berrien County), Mockingbird (especially in Berrien County, although defying this trend were four Detroit area sightings and one on the Minneapolis CBC), and E. Bluebird (especially Berrien County). But there were also a few species that might have been expected to be vulnerable to the weather but seemed not to be: Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets were much more in evidence in Minnesota than in recent winters, Am. Robins and Cedar Waxwings were up in all three states, and several Michigan locations reported Yellow-rumped Warblers (especially the Detroit area with 59 individuals).

A few unexpected lingerers also defied the weather, including a Gray Catbird Dec. 17-18 in Berrien County (CS, GS), six Brown Thrasher reports (two from each state), three Lansing, Mich., area, Ruby-crowned Kinglets as late as Jan. 17 (*vide* DM), late Michigan Water Pipits Dec. 2 in Macomb County (AR) and Dec. 3 in Berrien County (CS), and three Com. Yellowthroats in Detroit until Dec. 23 (*vide* AK). Vagrant Varied Thrushes exhibited a predictable e.-w. pattern with one in Michigan, four in Wisconsin and seven in Min-

nesota, while another w. visitor now almost regular in Minnesota, the Townsend's Solitaire, appeared at Austin Dec. 23 - Feb. 17 (C. Wilson *et al.*). Bohemian Waxwings were difficult to find in Michigan and Wisconsin (only three reports between them), but in Minnesota there was a decent showing with 11 reports. And N. Shrikes were also inconsistent, with Minnesota having fewer reports than usual while Wisconsin observers found them easier to find than normal, and, despite several Michigan sightings, the Detroit area report said they were down.

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH TOWHEES** — Although Wisconsin observers found blackbirds generally few in numbers, this Region had enough to go around. Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds unexpectedly lingered until the Cottonwood, Minn. CBC, and another was at a Waukesha County, Wis. feeder in January. Red-winged and Rusty blackbirds and Com. Grackles were reported more often than usual in Minnesota; also three Rusty reports from Detroit and a grackle overwintering in the Upper Peninsula were considered noteworthy. A N. Oriole was very late at a Winona, Minn., feeder until Dec. 12 (G. Gordon).

After the surplus of winter finches last year, this winter's general scarcity was all too apparent. Although there were some isolated exceptions, the overwhelming consensus was that this was one of the worst winters ever for northern finches. Evening and Pine grosbeaks were very obviously down; e.g., only 24 Pine Grosbeak reports were received with the only concentrations noted from Minnesota on the Itasca S.P. CBC (28) and at Ely feeders, and from the Sault Ste. Marie area with >100 seen Dec. 21 (CS). The lack of redpolls was even more striking when compared to last winter. The largest daily total from Minnesota was a mere 200, Wisconsin could manage only 14 reports for the entire season (!), and the only Michigan concentration reported was 235 at Whitefish Pt. Hoarics were identified only three times in n. Minnesota. Pine Siskins were clearly down in Minnesota, although some Wisconsin and Michigan areas reported good numbers especially later in the season. Crossbills were also conspicuously absent. Reds were only reported three times, once from each state, and White-wingeds were mentioned only four times, from Minnesota (three reports) and Wisconsin (once)! In contrast, Purple Finch numbers appeared to be average everywhere, and, although not truly a "winter" finch here, Am. Goldfinches were generally up, especially in s. Minnesota where feeders were full of them (even in n. Minnesota there were perhaps unprecedented overwintering numbers). One of Wisconsin's few rarities was its first western or (Spotted) Rufous-sided Towhee at Milwaukee Dec. 16 - early January (MD,EE).

**SPARROWS AND SNOW BUNTINGS** — Michigan reported two very late sparrows, a Savannah at E. Lansing (SW) and a Vesper at nearby Okemos (*vide* DM) both Dec. 16. Although several unverified and probably misidentified Chipping Sparrows have been reported in winter in Minnesota, the individual photographed at an Austin feeder Dec. 19 & Jan. 6 (T. Dorsey) represented only the third valid record. The usual few Harris' Sparrows lingered in s.w. Minnesota, but unexpected



were individuals at feeders overwintering at Aitkin, Minn. (WN) and at Port Huron, Mich. (DEM). Although fewer White-throateds were reported from Wisconsin, more than the usual number were found in Minnesota where Song Sparrows were also much more in evidence than usual (both species lasted at least until mid-January as far n. as the Duluth area). Michigan's last of a long list of rarities this winter was a Lincoln's Sparrow at an Alpena feeder Dec. 23 (*fide* WG). However, Minnesota and Wisconsin observers at least managed to have the last word over Michigan (which seemed to claim all the good birding this season) in this report; both states reported exceptional numbers of Snow Buntings that were quite widespread in December and seemed to increase later in the winter (*e.g.*, no fewer than 50 Minnesota counties recorded this species).

**ADDENDUM** — A belated but very convincing report of an eider, sp. was just received; it was seen Dec. 27 at Stoney Pt., St. Louis Co., Minn., by C. Bergman whose description of this imm. male seems to suggest the exceptionally rare Com. Eider.

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## MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Vernon M. Kleen

The 1978-79 Winter Season was rather dull and unremarkable for the majority of observers. Record-breaking snowfalls and cold temperatures dampened most observers' spirits — not only because of the lack of interesting birds, but the inability to travel to see them.

Many species were found in the lowest numbers ever and others, such as doves and robins, wintered in the area in relatively large numbers, to the surprise of most birders. This was obviously not a "winter" finch year — in fact, those species were extremely scarce on a Regionwide scale. As cold and snowy as it was, observers felt cheated that the birds did not respond to the generous handouts provided them. On several occasions hawks were present at feeding stations, selectively reducing the natural populations of small bird visitors.

Other species reported in fewer numbers than expected were Rough-legged Hawk, wintering owls, Bobwhite and pheasant, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, bluebird, both kinglets, and in some cases, various sparrow species. Large influxes were noted primarily for Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings. By early February, the only species noted migrating was the Cedar Waxwing.

As noted, the bad weather was again a factor in the fight for survival for many species for the third consecutive year. December was somewhat above the norm both in temperature and for total rainfall; however, January and February were both well below normal in temperature and above normal for total amount of snowfall; many extreme records were established.

Owing to the dullness of the season, many observers did not submit notes; however, we greatly appreciate the information from all who did. As usual, all extraordinary sight records must be thoroughly documented at the time of observation. For the Winter Season, a total of 116 documentation forms was received: Ohio — 31, Iowa — 24, Missouri — 18, Illinois — 17, Indiana — 13, and Kentucky — 3. In addition, two photographs were received. All documented records have been denoted by a dagger (†) and specimens by an asterisk (\*). Records which were not satisfac-

torily documented, but which may be credible, appear in the UNCORROBORATED RECORDS section.

**LOONS, GREBES** — Common Loons lingered in all states except Iowa well into December; at some locations through the end of the month; 170 were still present at Columbus, O., Dec. 9 (J). The only Red-throated Loon encountered this winter was reported from Cleveland Dec. 2-7 (†CT, m.ob.). Four single Red-necked Grebes were reported — all probably spring migrants: Louisville, Ky., Feb. 18 (†BP *et al.*); Gibson County, Ind., Feb. 28 (TKI); Lorain County, O., Feb. 19-20 (†JJP); and Akron, O., Feb. 25-28 (LR). Horned Grebes lingered along with Com. Loons through early to mid-December at several Regionwide locations; singles were noted at Michigan City, Ind., Jan. 28 & Feb. 11 (KBr) and three other locations until Christmas or later (m.ob.); 97 were still present at Cleveland Dec. 8 (M). Small numbers of Pied-billed Grebes wintered; however, the majority departed during December.

**CORMORANTS, HERONS** — Single Double-crested Cormorants were noted at Michigan City, Ind., Dec. 6-25 (KBr) and Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 2 (NM). A Green Heron was still present at Springfield, Mo., Dec. 5 (CBo *et al.*). A Great Egret was noted at Newton, Ill., Dec. 5 (LHr). Three Black-crowned Night Herons were present at Lorain, O., Dec. 10 - Jan. 24 (JP).

**WATERFOWL** — Three Mute Swans stayed at Rising Sun, Ind., Feb. 5-28+ (W); another was noted at Rocky River S.P., Cleveland Feb. 4-18 (M). Whistling Swans were more widely encountered; the latest were seven at Elizabethtown, Ky., Jan. 3-5 (†JR); others included 12 at Horseshoe L. Conservation Area, Alexander Co., Ill., Dec. 28 (K); two in Madison County, Ill., Dec. 13-20 (A) — one later illegally killed; one at Charleston, Ill., Dec. 13-22 (RCO); one at L. Waveland, Ind., through Dec. 27 (AB); and several in



areas close to the Great Lakes; spring arrivals were noted at Rising Sun, Ind., by Feb. 5 (W) and Cincinnati Feb. 10 (VW). Some Canada Geese were still heading S in late January near Cincinnati (W) and had begun returning there in early February; large numbers (hundreds) lingered at favorable locations through early December; spring migrants began reappearing during the last week of February. Single White-fronted Geese were found at Bloomington, Ind., Feb. 17-18 (SG, m.ob.) and Amana, Ia., Jan. 6 (CBn). The 51 Snow Geese at Bowling Green, Ky., Dec. 23 were considered unusual there.

Fairly large numbers of Mallards wintered at several locations; a few Wood Ducks survived the winter and small numbers of other dabblers were sporadically encountered. Up to 1150 Ring-necked Ducks wintered at Madisonville, Ky. (JHa). Small-to-large groups of Canvasbacks were noted; the largest — 1500 — was reported from Lorain, O., Jan. 17 (JP); 500 were found at Cleveland Jan. 28 (CT); 61 at Madisonville, Ky., Dec. 26; and 10-20 at a few Illinois locations during December. Regular numbers (max. 400) of Oldsquaw were encountered along L. Michigan vantage points; however, the number in L. Erie appeared to be low in contrast to most previous years; inland encounters included four in St. Charles County, Mo., Dec. 7 (PS *et al.*) with one still present Dec. 22; Delaware County, O., where one or two lingered into January (J); and one at Tiffin, O., Feb. 19-20 (†TBtJK). At least one of the Chicago Harlequin Ducks remained through Dec. 5; one or two (same as Chicago's?) were noted along the Indiana shores of L. Michigan Dec. 1 - Jan. 28 (KBr *et*

al), another reappeared at Cleveland Dec 17 (M) and one or two were noted at Lorain, O., Jan. 24. The best duck of the season was the **King Eider** at Springfield, Ill. (hereafter, Spfld.) present from at least Feb. 19 through Mar. 17 (†H, †m.ob.). Large numbers of White-winged Scoters wintered along Chicago's lakefront (up to 1000); only small numbers were noted along Cleveland's lakefront; one appeared in St. Charles County, Mo., Jan. 25 (TBk). The only records of Surf Scoters were of singles at Lorain, O., Dec. 4 & Feb. 24 (JP) and in St. Charles County, Mo., Dec. 15 (PS,WRu). From one to three Black Scoters were found at Cleveland Dec. 2 - Jan. 4 (M, m.ob.). The 55 Ruddy Ducks at Madisonville, Ky., were unusual there Dec. 17-26 (JHa).

**VULTURES THROUGH FALCONS** — According to Kentucky Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC), there was a 67% decrease in the Turkey Vulture population; Cincinnati reported only one during the period; however, nine were observed in s. Illinois Dec. 28 which is unusual there. Goshawks were reported from only three locations this winter. The other two *accipiters* were widely encountered — often during their frequent visits to bird feeding stations. Observers reported an excellent number of Red-tailed Hawks. The total number of Red-shouldered Hawks was encouraging; although rarely reported in groups of two or more, the number of encounters has definitely increased this winter. Rough-legged Hawks staged only a modest incursion this winter; the largest concentration was 27 at the Atterbury, Ind., Fish & Game Area in February (CK). The Missouri eagle count indicated the presence of at least 38 Golden Eagles Jan. 2-5; two were reported from Kentucky Lakes, Ky., Jan. 20 (CP) and three were found in n.e. Iowa during the period; single birds were encountered at two Indiana, two Iowa, three Missouri and one Illinois locations during the period. Bald Eagles were reported in the greatest concentrations ever, since current record-keeping, with >1400 found along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers Jan. 20 (m.ob.); the species was also widely reported from inland locations in all six states; an excellent concentration of 812 was reported from Squaw Creek N.W.R., Mo. (hereafter, S.C.R.) in January.

Marsh Hawks were noticeably scarce this winter; however, a "roost" of 20 individuals at Lawrenceville, Ill., during February was quite unusual (LHr). The **Prairie Falcon** in Jersey County, Ill., Dec. 2 (†BSy, †WRu, m.ob.) was an excellent find. At least one, sometimes two, Peregrine Falcons were regularly observed (and photographed) in Lawrence County, Ill., Dec. 23 through late January (†LHr, †DJn, m.ob.); another was sighted in Douglas County, Ill., Dec. 27 (†EL); singles were also encountered in St. Charles County, Mo., Dec. 1 & Jan. 6 (PS,MS). The only Merlins satisfactorily reported were singles at three Missouri locations: Kansas City Dec. 28 & Feb. 1-12 (m.ob.); Ozark County, mid-December (NF); and St. Louis Jan. 11 (PS *et al.*). The Am. Kestrel was found to be scarce in some areas and relatively common in others; overall, the species apparently fared well.

**GALLINACEOUS SPECIES** — A Greater Prairie Chicken was observed sitting in a tree at Pisgah, Ia., Feb. 7 (†JSc *et al.*). The Bobwhite was still scarce this winter Regionwide.

Ring-necked Pheasants were also scarce, but it was noted that they were better able to survive because they readily "dug" under the snow for food. The highest number of Turkeys reported was 31 at Amana, Ia., Dec. 24; the species is spreading in w. Illinois and has now been reported from St. Charles County, Mo. (m.ob.).

**CRANES AND SHOREBIRDS** — Fifty Sandhill Cranes were observed at Cincinnati Dec. 13 (KM); one was found in St. Charles County Dec. 9 (PS *et al.*). A small number of Killdeers managed to winter in favorable locations. Three Purple Sandpipers appeared at Cleveland Dec. 3-7 (JHo, †m.ob.).

**GULLS** — Herring, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's gulls were periodically abundant [in the Cleveland area—Ed.], moving with wind and weather and joined by other species at times. All gulls were in poor evidence Jan. 23 - Feb. 7 with fewer than 50 gulls of any species being evident on a single day in this period (M). Other species were most often reported owing to their rarity. The Glaucous Gull was recorded from all six states — two at Louisville Feb. 14-18 (†BP *et al.*); along the Indiana lakeshore; at Cincinnati Feb. 14-15 (DS) and several locations along L. Erie; Council Bluffs, Ia., Dec. 5-7 (†TBr, m.ob.); Thomas Hill Reservoir, Mo., Feb. 4 (WG *et al.*); and St. Charles County (five) during the period (m.ob.); Warsaw, Ill., Mar. 1 (†DF) and Spfld., Jan. 5-6 (H) and along the Chicago lakefront. The Iceland Gull was identified at Cleveland (1-2) Feb. 15-18 (M, †RHn); in Lorain County, O., Jan. 6-15 (max. three) and Feb. 9-25 (max. five; JP, m.ob.); and Dolton, Ill., Feb. 17 (†JL). The second Great Black-backed Gull record for Iowa was established at Council Bluffs Dec. 6 (†RG, †*et al.*); one appeared at Michigan City, Ind., Feb. 23 (†KBr); and the species was termed "regularly increasing" in the Cleveland area with two general waves reported: Dec. 9 - Jan. 22 (max. 52 birds, Jan 12) and Feb. 10 - Feb. 28 (max. 500+ birds on Feb. 16) — (M). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was documented for Cleveland, Lorain Harbor, Feb. 19-21 (†J, †m.ob.). Thayer's Gulls continued their widespread realization through observer searches; the focal point of the species distribution seems to be the St. Louis, Mo., area — at least more birds were identified there than anywhere else; the other reports were from Cleveland (January), Lorain County, O. (January, February); Chicago (January) and Spfld. (January). A Franklin's Gull made a brief Spfld. appearance Dec. 21 (H). A Black-headed Gull was noted for Lorain, O., Dec. 27 (†JP) and Cleveland Dec. 31 (†RHn). From two to six Little Gulls remained in the Cleveland area through Jan. 5 (M, m.ob.). The only Black-legged Kittiwake reported was located at Port of Indiana, Ind., Jan. 1 (†TKI).

**DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — Mourning Doves wintered in much greater numbers than usual and apparently survived to a significant degree. Two Barn Owls were reported from Missouri CBCs; another took up residence at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo Dec. 16-30 until it succumbed (KBe, m.ob.). Only a few Snowy Owls appeared this winter; Iowa, where most are usually recorded, reported few; none were found in Missouri. Long-eared Owls were rather scarce, being reported from only eight locations. Short-

eared Owls were somewhat more common and widespread than Long-eareds, however, not regularly encountered. Saw-whet Owls were found in as many locations as were Short-eareds including three in Iowa, one in Indiana, five in Illinois, one in Missouri and one in Ohio. A hummingbird (Ruby-throated?) lingered at a feeding station at Cape Fair, Mo., through Dec. 9 (†AG). Belted Kingfishers found a few places where the water never froze and managed to survive the winter without leaving the Region; however, the total number of successes was low. Many areas reported a 50% decline in Com. (Yellow-shafted) Flicker populations based on CBC data; the species was regularly encountered at bird feeders this winter; two Red-shafted forms were identified: one at Hamburg, Ia., Dec. 3 (IG) and one at St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 7 (L). The Pileated Woodpecker in Buena Vista County, Ia., was a welcome sight there Dec. 1 (DB), two in e.c. Illinois were also welcome (MCJSm). For the most part, Red-headed Woodpeckers had departed; only those choice areas along bottomland forests were attractive to birds that lingered for the winter.

**FLYCATCHERS, NUTHATCHES AND WRENS** — An E. Phoebe was reported from the Sullivan, Mo. CBC. A **Say's Phoebe** was present for the Beverly, Ill. CBC, and remained through at least Jan. 1 (†Fu, †m.ob.). Red-breasted Nuthatches wintered in small numbers and were patchy in distribution. A House Wren found the Shades S.P., Ind., suitable for a few days Dec. 17-22 (†AB). Winter Wrens were very scarce. Carolina Wrens were also very scarce — but a few continued to survive. One Long-billed Marsh Wren was present at Oxford, O., Dec. 16 (DO).

**MIMIDS AND THRUSHES** — Mockingbirds encountered a poor winter season, several areas reported decreases exceeding 50%. Small numbers of Brown Thrashers wintered successfully. Large groups of robins were encountered throughout the entire period — a surprise to most observers. The only Varied Thrush reported was found at Shenandoah, Ia., Feb. 23 (†RP). The E. Bluebird population continued its downward trend; many birds were found dead in boxes; from individuals to small groups were occasionally encountered throughout the winter. Four Townsend's Solitaires were satisfactorily documented; one each at Des Moines, Ia., Dec. 24-29 (DMn, m.ob.); Sheldon, Ia., Feb. 3 (†JV); St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 18 (LG,L); and Crab Orchard N.W.R., Ill., Jan. 25 (†SH).

**KINGLETS, WAXWINGS AND SHRIKES** — Golden-crowned Kinglets were still exceedingly scarce, often absent, in most areas. Bohemian Waxwings were reported from five Iowa locations; none from elsewhere. Cedar Waxwings were detected as migrants in large numbers Regionwide beginning in early February; max. numbers were noted in mid-February (m.ob.). A normal number of N Shrikes was identified; again, only at the n. edge of the Region: one in Indiana, many in Iowa, ten in Ohio, and one in Illinois. Small numbers of Loggerhead Shrikes were encountered somewhat n. of their usual winter range.

**WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS** — The three December records of Com. Yellowthroats

were L Waveland Ind Dec 16 (†TKI) s e LaPorte County, Ind., Dec. 30 (†VR); and Lorain, O., Dec. 22 (JP). There were no large blackbird roosts reported; it was believed that the extremely cold winter forced the birds to move S of the Region. Yellow-headed Blackbirds were pleasant additions to the winter scene at Dunlapville, Ind., Dec. 17 (*fide* LC); Indianapolis Feb. 18 (†WW); Nelsonville, O., Jan. 3 (†KJ, m.ob.); and Franklin County, O., Jan. 3-13 (†JFr). Two N. (Baltimore) Orioles attempted to winter at Cincinnati (W); others were noted at an Oxford, O., feeder during January (DP); and one at St. Louis Dec. 6-13 (A). Except for the 1000 Rusty Blackbirds in a c. Ohio roost (J), the species was rarely encountered this winter, although some were present at feeders. The first ever **Bronzed Cowbird** was found in Missouri at S.C.R., Jan. 5 (\*BH *et al.*).

**FRINGILLIDS THROUGH BUNTINGS** — A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was present at an Oxford, O., feeder in January (TP). A Black-headed Grosbeak stayed at Cedar Rapids, Ia., Dec. 1-10 (†SM, m.ob.). An Indigo Bunting was still present at Ft. Wayne, Ind., Dec. 3 (†DL). Evening Grosbeaks were recorded in only token numbers this winter — scarce everywhere. The Purple Finch was observed in only "fair" numbers; in Kentucky they were noted as "the lowest numbers in history." Up to 14 House Finches were found at Lorain during the period (JP); small numbers were regularly observed at Akron feeders all winter — max. 12 (CT). Common Redpolls were found in only three locations: Kansas City, Mo., Lafayette, Ind., and Iowa (exact location unknown). Pine Siskins were also relatively scarce; they were sporadic in distribution and encountered most frequently in the north. American Goldfinches were termed "common" in some areas and absent from others; clumping may have been the case. From one to two Red Crossbills were found in four widely scattered locations from early January through early February; however, 14 were found in Lorain County, O., Dec. 28 (JP). Only two flocks of White-winged Crossbills were detected; one at Burlington, Ia., in December (*fide* GB) and one in Lorain County Dec. 28

(JP) The 74 Rufous sided Towhees at Oxford O., in mid-December were exceptional (DO). Small numbers of Savannah Sparrows were reported this winter. Three Vesper Sparrows spent the winter in Lawrence County, Ill. (LHr, DJn). The Tree Sparrow was found to be quite abundant in the n. portions of the Region; however, scarce — often absent — in many s. parts of the Region. There were a few Iowa encounters of Harris' Sparrows; one was regularly observed in Franklin County, O., Feb. 5-20 (†JFr, m.ob.) and Beverly, Ill., Jan. 25-31 (JFu). Some observers found more wintering White-crowned Sparrows than in the past. The Dec. 19 & Jan. 27 presence of Lincoln's Sparrows (one each) at S.C.R. (TBk) and Shenandoah, Ia. (RP), respectively, was unusual. An excellent number of Lapland Longspurs wintered throughout the Region; most were observed during January and February; a peak of 1500 was reported from St. Louis Jan. 27 (A). The first St. Louis area record for **McCown's Longspur** was firmly established when one to two birds were documented Jan. 11-16 (†PS *et al.*, m.ob.). Snow Buntings were also widely reported; most were found in areas that did not have an icy ground covering beneath the snow; the heaviest concentrations occurred in January and February; large numbers were reported throughout the Region as far s. as c. Missouri and Gibson County, Ky.; >3000 were present in one Seneca County, O., field Feb. 16 (TBt).

**UNCORROBORATED RECORDS** — Ferruginous Hawk at Amana, Ia., in early February and at Kansas City Dec. 10 & 30. Prairie Falcon at Taberville, Mo., Feb. 24. A Swainson's Thrush at Chicago Dec. 27. A Gray-cheeked Thrush at Bloomington, Ind., Dec. 16. One McCown's Longspur at Atterbury Fish & Game Area, Ind., Feb. 4.

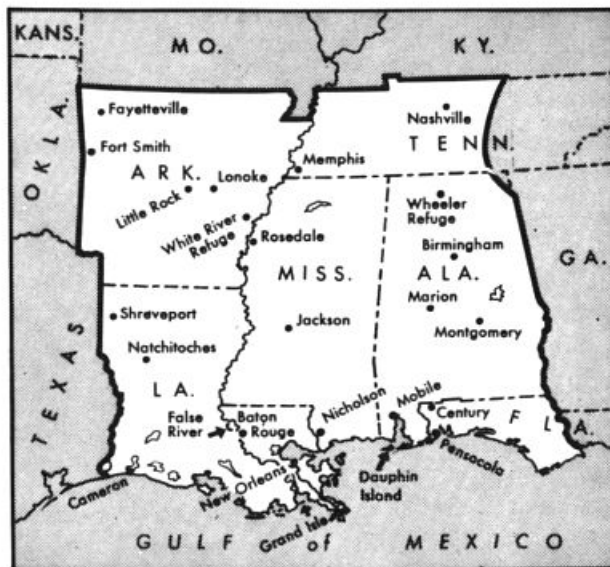
**ADDENDUM** — Two Boreal Chickadees visited an Osage, Ia., feeder, Nov. 24-26 (†AW).

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## CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION /Robert B. Hamilton

The weather pattern was similar to last year's with a relatively warm December and much colder January and February. January was the coldest on record throughout the Region and February was colder than normal. Despite the cold, there was only a tiny echo of last year's Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin invasion. The relatively mild December was probably responsible for many of the hummingbirds, flycatchers, warblers and tanagers reported on Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) as well as the million plus Tree Swallows at a roost in southern Louisiana. Tree Sparrow was the most obvious invader; several other species, such as Whistling Swan, were reported more than usual. Several species — mostly western — extended their ranges into or within the Region.



**LOONS THROUGH HERONS** — The only concentration of Com. Loons was the 45 at Gulfport Harbor, Miss., Jan. 16 (WCW). The Red-throated Loon at Waveland on the S. Hancock County CBC (LG) furnished the eighth Mississippi record and the **Red-necked Grebe** identified at the Hattiesburg sewage ponds Dec. 9-12 (LG, RM, JAT, BWo) provided the first Mississippi record. Eared Grebe was present in good numbers in Mississippi: a maximum of 12 was at Hattiesburg sewage ponds Dec. 18 (WCW); one was at Pascagoula

R marsh, on the coast where this species is rare Dec 16-21 (m ob ), the two at Horn I, Dec. 22 (JJ) were the first for the Mississippi offshore islands. White Pelicans were found at several unexpected places: Miller's L., Evangeline Par., Dec. 8 (RDe); Sibley L., Natchitoches Par., Dec. 18-20 (CV); Merritt Mill Pond, Jackson Co., Fla., Dec. 16 (HMS,GM) — first inland county record; 17 at W. Ship I., Feb. 25 (JJ,CDC) — first February Mississippi record. Ralph Havard's offshore marine biology activities have increased knowledge of pelagics off of s. Alabama (*vide* TI). Two Blue-faced Boobies were found Jan. 28 (JaP,Rha, RM) and one Feb. 24 (RHa). The five **Brown Boobies** Jan. 11 (RHa) provided Alabama's first winter record; three were found Jan. 28 (JaP,RHa,RM). The 250 Gannets Ralph found Jan. 4 easily eclipsed the previous high of 100+ and were an extraordinary number for the w. part of the Gulf as were the 50 at W. Ship I., Feb. 24 (JJ,CDC *et al.*). The 34 Double-crested Cormorants reported at Swan Creek W.M.A., Jan. 7 (RWL) documented an increase in Alabama (*vide* TI) and echo several comments suggesting a Regional increase. Normally, wintering Olivaceous Cormorants in s.w. Louisiana would not be of interest but the report of nesting with young approximately 2-3 weeks old at Johnson's Bayou Dec. 17 (HD,McR) is noteworthy. There were the usual reports of wintering Anhingas in s. Louisiana but the two at Hattiesburg Dec. 28 (LG,JAT,B&MWO) were reported as unusual at any season. Lingering Magnificent Frigatebirds were at Petit Bois, I., Jackson Co., Miss., Dec. 3 (CDC,JJ,BJS) and at Sabine L., Cameron Par., Dec. 30 (MC,BO,BCr,LML,H&LM). The fifth Nashville area wintering Green Heron, Nov. 22-31 (CE,RMi), and the sixth Dec. 10 (D&PC) occurred before severe weather, as did the one on Buffalo R., Ark., CBC. Other herons lingering early in the season were five Little Blues (CMi,EP,CM) and the Am. Bittern at Nashville which marked the second winter record Dec. 9 (LJ). There were several Reddish Egret reports from the e. section of our Region: one at Gautier, Miss., Dec. 29 - Jan. 15 (JAT,LG,WCW,J&TI); one at W. Ship I., Feb. 24 (JJ,CDC *et al.*); a dark-phase at Eufaula N.W.R. (JBO,DC) was the third inland Alabama record and first in winter. A Snowy Egret was at Escambia County, Fla., Dec. 16 (CKi *et al.*) and Feb. 10 (DR *et al.*); there is only one previous winter record. The Least Bittern at Pensacola Beach, Fla., Feb. 10 (JPh; L,R&SD) provided a third winter record. The *Plegadis ibis* sp. found at Miller's L., Dec. 17 (MWe) & 20 (JBO) was unexpected that far inland, especially in winter.

**WATERFOWL** — There was an unprecedented invasion of **Whistling Swans** this winter. A widespread flight reached the s.e. about Nov. 19 with birds wintering in Mississippi and Alabama (*vide* JBO). The maximum number reported was 47 at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala. (TZA, *vide* JBO). The four on S. Hancock County CBC (J&RCh) were a coastal Mississippi first. There were several scattered reports from Tennessee and Arkansas with maxima of 27 at Woods Res., Tenn., Nov. 27 (JWS,K&LDu), 12 at Hopefield Chute, Ark.-Tenn., Jan. 14 (JH), and ten at Reelfoot L., Tenn., Dec. 24 (WCr). In Tennessee, White-fronted Goose numbers were sufficient to be termed an invasion (*vide* MLB). Snow Geese

now regularly use Eufaula N W R , as wintering grounds (*vide* JBO) The 55 Ring-necked Ducks at Hancock City Feb. 2 (JAT) were reported as high for s. Mississippi. Seven Greater Scaup were at Wheeler N.W.R., Dec. 10 (L&RWL); up to seven at Pascagoula R. marsh, Dec. 16 - Jan. 6 (PD,WCW,RCh,JAT *et al.*); four at the Hattiesburg sewage ponds Dec. 28 (LG,MFH); and offshore approximately ten in Mississippi Sound Feb. 23 (JJ, CDC *et al.*). There were several other reports. Scattered records of Com. Goldeneyes crossed my desk: the most interesting was the 30 at L. Maumelle, Pulaski Co., Ark., Feb. 4 (H&MP). A ♀ **Barrow's Goldeneye** wintered and was photographed at Radnor L., Nashville. It was last reported Dec. 30 and marked the second Tennessee record (*vide* MLB). The cold weather probably accounted for the 85 Oldsquaw at W. Ship I., Feb. 25 (JJ,CDC *et al.*); 50 were there Feb. 26. Four were at Ross Barnett Res., Hinds Co., Miss., Feb. 10 (FW,RDo,CB,EL). An imm. **Harlequin Duck** was collected in n.w. Decatur, Limestone Co., Jan. 19 (HS,DHu); it was the fourth reported Alabama occurrence. The only White-winged Scoter was an ad. male at Old Hickory L., near Nashville, Feb. 24-28 (TM). Bruce Crider reports that Black Scoters were rarer than in the previous two winters at Cameron, La. On the other hand, 175 were reported off Petit Bois I., Dec. 3 (JJ,CDC *et al.*); Dec. 4, 75 were present. The 400 Hooded Mergansers at Noxubee N.W.R., Jan. 10 (WCW,CDC) is a noteworthy number as is 228 at Eufaula, Feb. 10 (JBO,DC).

**HAWKS, CRANES, RAILS** — Black Vultures were far s. at Holly Beach, Cameron Par., Dec. 3 (one — BC,RJN,KZ), and Sabine N.W.R. (CBC — seven). An indication of the improvement is the five Sharp-shinned found on each of two Mississippi CBCs and the three Cooper's Hawks found on the Pine Prairie and the Hattiesburg CBCs. Broad-winged Hawks were reported at Gulf Breeze, Fla., Dec. 12 (LD), and on the Reserve CBC. The light-phase **Swainson's Hawk** reported at Ocean View Beach, Cameron Par., Jan. 9 (BC,RJN) provided the second Louisiana January record. A minimum of 16 Rough-legged Hawks was found in 9 middle Tennessee counties and five were reported from Arkansas and Louisiana.

The increase in Golden Eagle records is encouraging. They were found on 5 Regional CBCs; one was near Jasper, Ala., Nov. 8 (HWR,AM), an immature was at Leaf River W.M.A., Perry Co., Miss., Jan. 27 (WM); and an especially encouraging four at Spring Bayou Plantation, Madison Par., Feb. 25 (BC,RJN). The Nat'l Wildlife Federation mid-winter eagle count tallied 30 Golden Eagles: two in Alabama, one in Mississippi, 27 in Arkansas, and none in Louisiana. The same survey found a total of 444 Bald Eagles: 21 (17 imm.) in Alabama, 19 (10 imm.) in Mississippi, 368 (160 imm.) in Arkansas, and 36 (14 imm.) in Louisiana (*vide* Ray). Several observers reported increased Bald Eagle presence: locations included Natchitoches Par. (CV), Toledo Bend Res. (CBD&JWG), St. Charles Par. (MiB,TC), St. Tammany Par. (juv. in nest — JAT,J&CF), and Noxubee N.W.R. (WCW,CDC). There were many other records but persecution persists: in Arkansas at least eight were shot this winter (*vide* ENH).

The extremely cold weather apparently did not adversely effect Marsh Hawks in Arkansas, 17 were found in Prairie County Feb. 4 (H&MP) and 24 in Craighead County Feb. 10 (ENH,HHH,H&MP). There were more Osprey reports than usual especially from Louisiana and Mississippi. Singles were reported from Jackson County, Fla. (RCa), Clark County, Ark. (H&MP), Eufaula, Ala. (JBO), Abita Springs (NN. Cr. B.C.), Johnson's Bayou, Pine Prairie (two — CBC), L. Ponchartrain (BC, RJN,EK), Bonnet Carre Spillway (PN), all Louisiana; also Natchez and S. Hancock CBCs, Jackson County CBC (five), and two at Jackson City (JAT,MFH), and one elsewhere, (JAT,MFH,GMO,AD) and Hancock City, all Mississippi, Dec. 3 - Feb. 24. The Peregrine Falcon was found at three locations in Louisiana: near Ville Platte, Evangeline Par., Dec. 15 (JBO); at Rutherford Beach, Cameron Par., Jan. 8 (RJN,BC,EK); and at Venice Jan. 9 (N&PN). In Mississippi there was one at Horn I., Dec. 23 (JJ) and one at W. Ship I., Feb. 25 (JJ,CDC *et al.*). One was at Bay County, Fla., Dec. 29 (B&SS). The only non-CBC Merlin was one at Petit Bois I., Dec. 3 (JJ,CDC *et al.*) The 385 Am. Kestrels found on the 18 Arkansas CBCs, were 70 more than in any recent year (average for the last 5 years is 241).

Sandhill Cranes were first reported migrating through Tennessee at Byrdstown, Pickett Co., Nov. 1, with a flock of 10; a flock of 25 was seen Nov. 22, but the major movement was Dec. 1-2 when 765 were counted in eight flocks (D&RH). Two were at Holla Bend N.W.R., Pope Co., Ark., Jan. 20 (ENH,HHH C&EA). The 35± near Cheneyville, Rapides Par., Feb. 8 (BC,RJN) is an area high. A Sora at Ashland City, Tenn. (TM) made the first Nashville area winter record; although this species has been recorded at Columbia, 50 mi s. for four consecutive winters; a seldom-seen Yellow Rail at Reserve (BC,RBH); and a Purple Gallinule at Sabine (BC,KZ).

**CHARADRIIFORMES** — Two Am Oystercatchers were found at Gautier Jan 6-27 (JAT,MFH,RCh,WCW). The 30 Semipalmated Plovers at W. Ship I., Feb. 24-25 (JJ, CDC) was a large number for an uncommon winter resident as were the 36 Piping Plovers at Bay St. Louis, Miss., Feb. 22 (JAT). On the other hand, Piping Plovers were notably absent in n.w. Florida (*vide* CKi). Snowy Plovers were recorded several times this winter all in Louisiana: total, 24-25 birds at four locations, various dates Dec. 10 - Feb. 24 (BCO,KD,McR,RJN,BC,JJ,CDC *et al.*) The Wilson's Plover on the Johnson's Bayou CBC, was unexpected. A Whimbrel was at Johnson's Bayou Jan. 29 (RJN,BC). The Solitary Sandpiper at W. Ship I., Feb. 23 (JJ,CDC *et al.*) was nine days earlier than the Mississippi spring record; three were there Feb. 24. On Dec. 18, 40 Greater Yellowlegs were at Graveline Bayou, Jackson Co., Miss. (J&RCh) The 20 Lesser Yellowlegs at Jackson City Feb. 10 (JAT,PD) were probably early migrants. The 40 Red Knots at W. Ship I., Feb. 23 (JJ,CDC), provided a record Mississippi high count. Six Long-billed Dowitchers at Eufaula Feb. 10 (JBO,DC) were unexpected inland in winter. A Semipalmated Sandpiper was reported at Pascagoula R. marsh, Dec. 26 (J&RCh). The 50 at W. Ship I., Feb. 25 (CDC,JJ *et al.*) are difficult to explain; this species is primarily a late migrant.

Marbled Godwits, usually rare in Mississippi, wintered at Gautier where they were observed Dec 6 - Feb 26. The maximum number was six on Jan. 7 & 11 (JAT, LG). A Wilson's Phalarope was observed in a flooded field near Miller's L., Dec. 13 (JBO). American Avocets were locally abundant. The 90± at Pascagula R. marsh, Dec. 25 (J&RCh), had dwindled to 21 by Feb. 10 (JAT, PD). They were accompanied by Black-necked Stilts: six on Pascagoula marsh Dec. 18 (J&RCh) decreased to one Feb. 10 (JAT, PD). There had been only one previous Mississippi December record. There was a January record this year from Gautier (WCW).

Single Pomarine Jaegers were found Dec. 16 (REH) & Jan. 28 (JaP, RHa, RM) near Dauphin I., for the fifth and sixth Alabama records. A direct comparison with 16 Parasitics was made Dec. 16. Another Parasitic was found Dec. 19 at Fort Pickens, Fla. (RD), where it provided the first winter record. The Glaucous Gull at L. Millwood, Little River and Hempstead Cos., Ark., Dec. 10-11 (CMi, CM *et al.*) was an exciting record but does not compare with the first year **Iceland Gull** reported at Old Hickory L., Feb. 27 (MPS *et al.*) that represented the first Tennessee record. The 1680 Ring-billeds at Eufaula Feb. 10 (JBO), may further indicate a movement into our Region. The ad. Franklin's Gull at Dauphin I., Jan. 28 (JaP, RHa, RM) marked the second coastal Alabama record. Bonaparte's Gulls were more common than usual to the s. and were reported as abundant on the Mississippi coast; 230 were at Eufaula Jan. 28 (JBO). The three Gull-billed Terns at W. Ship I., Feb. 26 (CDC, JJ, JB) were perhaps early migrants. A Black Tern was found n. of Creole, Cameron Par., Dec. 6 (PN).

#### DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

— Another unusual bird this winter was the **Band-tailed Pigeon** at Petit Bois I., Dec. 2 (JJ, CDC, BJS, FS) for the first Mississippi record. In addition to the White-winged Doves reported on the CBCs, one was at Hancock City, Feb. 22 (JAT). Three ground doves were near Van Cleave, Miss., Dec. 16 (LG, SP). Inca Dove is the final unusual *Columbid* reported this winter; two were at Peveto Beach Woods, Cameron Par., Dec. 16 (BCo, KD, McR).

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Marianna, Fla., Dec. 16 (MB, D&PM) provided a first winter record there. **Groove-billed Anis** made an unprecedented appearance into Alabama where previously ani was on the hypothetical list. In late fall and winter anis were recorded at Dauphin I., Oct. 7 - Dec. 31; Mobile Jan. 1; Gulf Shore and Fort Morgan Oct. 21-22; and one was photographed at Eufaula, 100 mi inland, Nov. 4-18 (JBO, *vide* TI). Another inland record was at Miller's L., Dec. 17 (JBO, RBH). Other records were two at LaPlace, La., Feb. 24 (MWe) and one at Pascagula R. marsh Dec. 17 (WCW, RCh). A Burrowing Owl was at Sabine Jan. 9; another was at W. Ship I., Feb. 23-25 (JJ, CDC *et al.*). There were scattered records of Short-eared Owls, as usual: 20 individuals at 7 locations in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Louisiana, including 12 at LaHay's L., Evangeline Par., Feb. 8 (BC, RJN). A Chuck-will's-widow was banded at Petit Bois I., Dec. 1 (JJ, CDC *et al.*); one at Venice, Jan. 9 (N&PN); and one was on the Johnson's Bayou CBC. The mild early winter weather probably helped to account for the

Com Nighthawk at Clarkesville, Montgomery Co., Tenn., Dec. 12 (DSn) At Cameron, the **Lesser Nighthawk** reported Dec. 14 (PN) provided a first Louisiana winter record.

There was an unprecedented number of hummingbirds this winter. In Tennessee, the hummingbird reported at Murfreesboro, Rutherford Co., Nov. 28 - Dec. 3 (EH) was believed to be a late Ruby-throated (details not given — other species more likely). At Arkansas feeders: a hummingbird was at Batesville, Independence Co., Dec. 8 (*vide* EMN); a *Selasphorus* sp. was present at Little Rock until Jan. 28 (HHH, ENH, J&RC); another *Selasphorus* stayed at Little Rock until Dec. 11 (HHH, ENH, WMS, W&VS) and a definite **Rufous Hummingbird** was at the same location Dec. 10 (ENH). In Mississippi the one at Gulfport Jan. 13 (CT) was thought to be a Rufous. In Louisiana, a ♀ *Archilochus* wintered in Shreveport (JRS); a Black-chinned, a Rufous and a *Selasphorus* sp. wintered at my feeder; several wintered at Reserve and as usual the maximum concentration was at New Orleans where several observers maintain feeders.

#### S.A.

In New Orleans Nancy and Paul Newfield captured, measured (for identification) and marked many hummingbirds. A brief summary of wintering New Orleans hummers follows (all records are from the Newfields or Bob Raether unless otherwise noted: 2 Ruby-throateds (1 ♀, 1 imm. ♂), 7 Black-chinned (1 ♂, 4 ♀, 2 imm. ♂), 1 Broad-tailed (imm. ♂, Dec. 5-20, third state record), at least 4 *Archilochus* sp., 11 Rufous (5 ♂, 3 ♀, 3 imm.), *Selasphorus* hybrid ?; ad. ♂, measurements and appearance suggest Rufous × Allen's cross. Bird present Dec. 17 - Jan. 6 when it died (\*LSU Mus. of Zool.), 3 Buff-bellied Hummingbirds (BRa, BM). One hummingbird was seen and captured Jan. 5-10 that could not be attributed to species. There were several black feathers on its chin but feather shape eliminated Black-chinned.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH WAXWINGS** — Apparently the Region acorn and pecan crop was good because Red-headed Woodpeckers did not reach the Mississippi coast in numbers and several observers noted high numbers in n. Mississippi (See CBCs). The L. Georgia-Pacific, Ark. CBC, had 31 (vs. 23; 1977) Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. There were several interesting flycatcher reports; the New Orleans CBC found W. Kingbird, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee and a controversial kingbird first identified as a Tropical. It was seen subsequently Jan. 4. The tail was forked deeper than the Tropical's and there was a light outer web on at least the right rectrix. Photographs seemed to indicate a smaller bill than the Tropical's (*vide* MiB). Unfortunately, this record will have to be *Tyrannus* sp. The *Myiarchus* at Cottdonale, Jackson Co., Fla., Dec. 16 (B&SS), was believed to be an Ash-throated Flycatcher; the description of a "Great Crested Flycatcher" from an unspecified Mississippi location matched Wied's Crested Flycatcher more closely. Observers need to be extremely careful with wintering *Myiarchus*. In addition to the CBC Vermilion Flycatchers a male was at Chicot

S P., Evangeline Par., Dec. 14 (JBO), and a female was at Albermarle L., Issaquena Co., Miss., Dec. 2-10 (LPC). Several observers commented on **Tree Swallow** concentrations 1000± at Jackson City, Miss., Jan. 27 (JAT), 10,000 at Harrison City, Miss., Feb. 27 (JAT, J&CF); and the unprecedented million plus observed roosting in sugar cane at Edgard, St John Par., La., Dec. 20-29 (PN, RS, MWe). The two Barn Swallows reported at Reelfoot L., Dec. 22-23 (WCr) were the first w. Tennessee December record; one has been at L. Lurleen, Ala., since Jan. 13 (WF; D&RCo; F&JT). The Purple Martin reported at Marianna, Fla., Dec. 16 (MG, MWa) continues the recent trend of winter sightings.

The ten Brown Creepers at Marianna, Dec. 16 (NW, m.ob.) were the first found there in many years; other reports indicated a good S movement. Some observers reported large numbers of Winter Wrens: 21 at Marianna Dec. 16 (NW, m.ob.), and eight on the Hatfieldburg CBC, and four in January (WCW, LG). In Arkansas, a Gray Catbird at El Dorado Feb. 20-22 (HHS, KLS) was unusual. The partial albino (upper surfaces white) Am. Robin at Gulf Breeze, Fla., Feb. 5 (LEP) was similar in appearance to one at Ocean Springs, Miss., Feb. 27-28 (AD). A Wood Thrush was at Memphis Dec. 17 - Jan. 1 (RP, VH, BBC *et al.*). There were several encouraging E. Bluebird reports: 845 were found on 18 Arkansas CBCs (5 yr. avg.: 761), 50 were at Garland County, Ark., Jan. 6 (H&MP); and 30 at Hancock City, Miss (JAT). The ♂ **Mountain Bluebird** at Grenada Dam, Miss., Dec. 26 (RWh, BBC, ASm, MD) constituted a first Mississippi record; one was seen in the fall in Cameron Parish. The largest Cedar Waxwing flock reported was 1300± at Decatur, Ala., Feb. 17 (RWL).

**VIREOS THROUGH TANAGERS** — The Bell's Vireo in Cameron Par., Mar. 1 (DTK, GHD, RBT) may have been an early migrant. A first winter record of Yellow-throated Vireo was at Garcon Pt., Santa Rosa Co., Fla., Dec. 16 (DR, DT, D&RA). The Solitary Vireo at Clayton, Miss., Dec. 19 (BBC) and two at Sardis L., Jan. 13 (EA, BBC, LCC, C&SR), were of interest. Black-and-white Warblers were more in evidence than usual: one was at Baton Rouge Dec. 10, 23 & 30 (PMc) and seven were on the Reserve CBC, as well as singles on several other counts. The Tennessee Warbler at Kosciusko, Attala Co., Miss., Dec. 7-8 (JS) may have been late departing. The Nashville Warbler at Venice, La., Jan. 9 (N&PN) probably was wintering but the N. Parula in s.w. Escambia County, Fla., Feb. 20 (MLM) was probably an early migrant. Two Black-throated Gray Warblers were near Venice Dec. 6 (BC&RJN) and a female was found on the New Orleans CBC. The Yellow-throated Warbler at Wheeler N.W.R., Dec. 13 (AM) provided the only winter Tennessee valley record for Alabama. Three Pine Warblers were at feeders in Hot Springs, Ark., Jan. 25 (H&MP). The Prairie Warbler at Apalachee W.M.A., Jackson Co., Fla., Dec. 7 (RCA, *vide* HMS) marked the first local winter record. The only Palm Warbler concentration was of >15 at Ocean Springs Feb. 27 (MFH). An **Ovenbird** stayed at a feeder in Nashville Dec. 14 - Jan. 8 (JM).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found in widely scattered locations: the imm. male at



Nashville Jan 3-24 (CKn, LB, J&LN, M&OPa) was the third middle Tennessee record, the female at Wheeler N.W.R., provided a first Alabama Tennessee valley record; and the female at Pascagoula R. marsh Jan. 13 (WCW, LG; T&JI) was a fourth Mississippi record. Northern Orioles wintered at several localities: Stuttgart, Ark., Feb. 2-16 (SMc), several at Baton Rouge and New Orleans; and at Nashville (HFE) where one photographed provided a fourth winter record. A Great-tailed Grackle was heard at Miller's L., Dec. 13 (JBO). **Bronzed Cowbirds** were seen in New Orleans as usual, a male Feb. 24 (N&PN), but extended their range E to Mississippi where it was observed at Pascagoula R. flats: one, Jan. 6, three, Jan. 7; one, Jan. 10; and >15 on Mar. 13 (MFH, JAT; J&RCh). In addition to the W. Tanagers found on CBCs, a male was at a Baton Rouge feeder Jan. 25, 28 & Feb. 1 (VC). Summer Tanagers were reported in Baton Rouge Dec. 15 (VJS) & 23 (PMc, TH); at Shreveport this species has wintered at the same feeder for six consecutive years (*vide* JRS); and one wintering at Mobile (PB) constituted a fourth vicinity record.

**FINCHES** — Observers in Arkansas reported a decline of Cardinals. The ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak wintering at Nashville feeder (sixth winter record) was present Dec. 29 - Feb. 7 (JM). Single Black-headed Grosbeaks were at LaPlace, La., Jan. 20 (MWe); Baton Rouge Jan. 28-31 (B&PMc *e al.*); and near Baxley, Newton Co., Ark., Jan. 23-26 (H&MH); and at Little Rock Mar. 4 (LP). An Indigo Bunting was a window-kill at Memphis (WJB, *vide* BBC) was the first December occurrence there. Dickcissels were found Jan. 6 at Gallatin, Summer Co., Tenn. (PL, *vide* PC) and at Nashville (JA); on Feb. 27 one was at Campti, Natchitoches Par. (BC, RJN). In Tennessee, there were reports of a few single Evening Grosbeaks for a day or two. In Louisiana, a female was near Haynesville Jan. 22-24 (C&LK) and one was at Gretna Mar. 19 (GB). Observers throughout the Region reported Purple Finch numbers low early in season. Later, they were in normal numbers in e section of the Region. They arrived *en masse* in Tennessee in mid-January and some arrived in Arkansas in early February, but birds remained very scarce in Louisiana and Mississippi. Male House Finches were at Florence Jan. 26-27 (PK) (fifth Alabama record) and at Wilton Feb. 17 (CMi) (fourth Arkansas record). There were very few Pine Siskins this winter, in contrast to last year's record invasion. Siskins did stay at several Baton Rouge feeders, however. There were several reports of Vesper Sparrows from the n. part of the region where they are rare. There were scattered records in middle Tennessee (T.O.S.); one was seen at Noxubee N.W.R., Dec. 11 (JS, EWP) & Jan. 10 (CDC), and five in Lonoce County, Ark., Jan. 27 (H&MP). A Lark Sparrow was at Pulaski County, Ark., Dec. 30 (MF). A Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco was reported Jan. 25 at Little Rock (ENH, HHH); five were in Hot Springs in February (H&MP). There was a major invasion of Tree Sparrows into the n.w. In Tennessee, an invasion (smaller than in 1977-78) occurred Jan. 21 - Feb. 19. Most were observed in fields; max. flock size was 30 (T.O.S.). There were also reports from Mississippi (Oxford, 10-MD); Arkansas, mostly February, scattered locations, flocks 2-90

(H&MP, DoJ), Louisiana, Haynesville, Feb 4 50+ (RJN, HJ, C&LK *et al.*), and Tallulah Feb 25 (BC, RJN), there are about seven previous Louisiana records. In addition to CBC Harris' Sparrows, four were at Bella Vista, Benton Co., Ark., Jan. 14 (DRG); two were at Fort Smith, Sebastian Co., Jan. 28 (H&MP); and at least eight near Loggy Bayou W.M.A., Bossier Par., Feb. 26 (RJN, BC, HJ). The Golden-crowned Sparrow found near Loggy Bayou Feb. 11 (RJN, BC) & Mar. 17 (BC, SH) provided a fourth Louisiana record. The three Lapland Longspurs found at Destin Dec. 17 - Jan. 6 (R&LD, m.ob.) marked a second n.w. Florida record; the one heard at Ocean Springs Dec. 21 (WCW) was the first reported for coastal Mississippi. The largest number reported was 290 at Memphis penal farm Jan. 24 (T.O.S.-Memphis chapter). A Snow Bunting was found with Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs there Feb. 11 (RB, *vide* BBC); for a second Memphis record.

**CORRIGENDUM** — The Chuck-will's-widow reported last winter at Horn I., Miss., Jan. 17, has been reidentified as a ♀ Whip-poor-will by the observer after extensive consulting of his field notes and study of museum skins.

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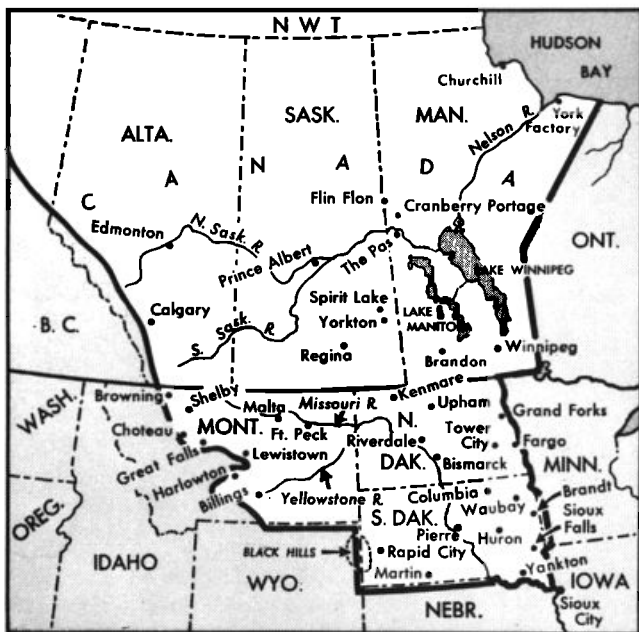
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**NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS**  
/Esther M. Serr

This winter season was exceptionally cold — the coldest since 1936. Moderate snowfall continued to build up without any melting and some parts of every province and state had at least 65 days of continuous temperatures below freezing. Luckily, there were only a few storms and not much wind. At Squaw Rapids, Sask., on February 13 over 12 inches of snow fell with wind velocity up to 30 mph combined with a -44°F temperature for an incredible wind chill factor. In spite of the cold an amazing number of migratory bird species managed to survive the winter.

**HERONS** — A Great Blue Heron was late Dec. 1 in Roberts County, S.D. (DL); singles were also seen Dec. 10-19 at Spruce Woods P.P., Man. (DRMH); the Little Big Horn R., Mont., Feb. 21 (D. Howell, *vide* H. Downing) and one spent the entire period at Canyon L., Rapid City, while its wing mended.



**GEESE AND DUCKS** — Again an attempt was made at Wascana Marsh, Regina, Sask., to force Canada Geese and Mallards to leave after freeze-up by not feeding them. Yet 835 Canadas and 215 Mallards remained on the ice for three weeks without food or water. Finally the power plant was started to provide water, but this plant will be demolished during the summer of 1979 (LS). Canadas, migrating N numbered 10,000± at Fort Randall Dam, S.D., Feb. 25 (JEW,WH).

A few of almost every duck species were reported from part of the Region. Three Wood Ducks wintered with captives at Jamestown, N.D. (JTL) and 30 were seen at Billings Feb. 22 (HWC,BBF,RDF). A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was first observed Dec. 17 and remained on Canyon L., Rapid City, the entire period (JLB). A pair was on the Wabamun L., Alta. CBC, Dec. 16 and three were at Calgary, Alta. (ACS). Three ♀ Buffleheads wintered at Rapid City; 23 were seen Dec. 16 at Wabamun L., and one made the only known record in January at Point du Bois, Man. (GDG,IAW). A ♀ Hooded Merganser, that did not appear to be injured, was on an open pool Jan. 4 at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., N.D., where there had been a breeding population last summer (RLB).

An **Oldsquaw** was seen Dec. 15 below Oahe Dam and a **White-winged Scoter** was on Capitol L., Dec. 14, both at Pierre, S.D. (RLS).

**HAWKS AND EAGLES** — Goshawk sightings in the Region were the most frequent since 1974-1975, with dates throughout the period. The forested areas of Prince Albert and Squaw Rapids, Sask., had an unusual total of 43 (WCH,SML,TAGu,GNK) and 12 were sighted in s.e. Manitoba. One was found in a trap at Churchill, Man. When it was released, it flew 3/4 mi with the talons of one foot dangling and perched in a tree (BC). Another caught and ate a Black-billed Magpie at Calgary (JJP); four were sighted in the Black Hills, S.D. (RAP) and one at Chester, Mont., dived into a flock of 30 Sharp-tailed Grouse and 12 Gray Partridge, missing them all as they flew in every direction (HMM).

With constant snow cover, Sharp-shinned Hawks were more prevalent at feeders. Single Cooper's Hawks were observed at Eastend,

study was given to the convincingly described dark-phase **Swainson's Hawk** reported from Webb, Sask., Dec. 3 - Jan. 10 (BP). Numerous Rough-legged Hawks settled into e. Montana and w. South Dakota for the winter. There was a concentration near Reliance, S.D., with ten along 8 highway mi Nov. 30 and 17 along 4 mi Jan. 11 (WH,WCT).

By Jan. 1 most Golden and Bald eagles had left the Provinces with the Golden's spreading out over the prairie and the Balds concentrating along the Missouri R., in the three states. Eleven Marsh Hawks wintered in South Dakota.

Gyrfalcons did not venture into the states of the Region this winter. Six birds, white and dark, were at Churchill Dec. 28 - Feb. 25 (BC); five were sighted in s.e. Manitoba Dec. 31 - Jan. 25 (RWK,IAW). One was counted Dec. 16 at Wabamun L., Alta., and singles were at Fort Walsh, Maple Creek and Eastend, Sask., Dec. 28 - Feb. 10 (GIW,MAG,JED). Only a few Prairie Falcons wintered in Canada; however, there were 13 sightings Dec. 7 - Feb. 15 in South Dakota, six in North Dakota and many were seen in e. Montana during a duck-banding operation (TMH). Single **Peregrine Falcons** were noted in December at Fort Peck (CMC) and at Lewistown, Mont. (W. Bell); an immature was seen in the Grand Forks area Dec. 12 (DOL,GSL) and one immature was at La Broqueri, Man., Jan. 24 (IAW). Merlins wintered in good numbers at Saskatoon (PON,MIH,JBG) and at Edmonton, Alta., with just a few reported from other parts of the Region.

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS** — A total of 29 Spruce Grouse was seen at Prince Albert, Squaw Rapids and Waskesiu, Sask., Dec. 1 - Feb. 25 (TAGu,LJS,DR) and seven in all were seen in Sandilands and Belair Forest Reserves on Jan. 24 & Feb. 24. Ruffed Grouse numbers totalled 29 from Waseca (CDP), Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Wolseley (JDH), Round L. (DF) and Moose Jaw, Sask. (PRK). There were still good numbers in Manitoba after a peak last winter (RFK). Three were sighted in the higher Black Hills, S.D.; and one was around Calgary during the period (JJP). At Churchill,

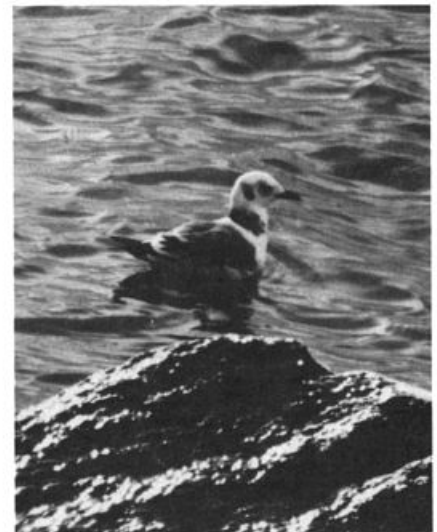
Sask Nov 28 & Feb 7 (JEJ,MAG); one was at Burke Jan. 25 (GLS) and another near Spearfish, S.D., Feb. 26 (RMH). Numerous Red-tailed Hawks stayed near the Missouri R., in s.e. South Dakota (WH) with only a few reported from the rest of the Region this winter. An ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk** was roadkilled Dec. 1 at Clearwater, Man. It was taken to the Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg, to become the first confirmed record for the Province and lends credibility to earlier records considered hypothetical (R. Dyck, A. Schritt).

Much discussion and

Man Willow Ptarmigan peaked at 150 Jan 25 and one Rock Ptarmigan was found Feb. 5 (BC). Thirty White-tailed Ptarmigan were seen at Fort Chipewyan, Alta., Dec. 4 (GRAE).

It was this group that suffered heavy losses in the winter storms of 1977-1978, yet South Dakota showed better production than usual. This was probably owing to the increased moisture that produced good prairie grass for habitat. **Greater Prairie Chicken** sightings totaled 177 from Turner, Bon Homme and Charles Mix counties, S.D. (LAW,JEW,WH). Sharp-tailed Grouse have not been observed in such numbers for years and Gray Partridge peaked at >10,000 Feb. 8 in Deuel County, S.D. (BKH). Sharp-tailed wintered well, with 750 at Upper Souris (IOR) and 300 at J. Clark Salyer Ref., N.D. (JRF); there were 125+ in one field at Spring Valley, Sask., Dec. 18 (FB). Five Sage Grouse were seen in January at Eastend, Sask., the only ones reported in the Region (RSJ,JEJ,MAG). Pheasants were easy to find only in the Billings, Mont., area (HWC). A flock of 35 Turkeys wintered at Valley City, N.D. (RPM) and a total of 140 was counted in the Black Hills (DLB,EEM). Ten Bobwhite were seen Dec. 9 in Yankton County, S.D. (WH).

**GULLS** — Two Glaucous, 23 Herring and six Bonaparte's gulls were at Fort Peck Res., Dec. 9. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was observed Dec. 23-26, also on Fort Peck, to become a second occurrence for Montana (JCC,CMC). There was a total of 14 Glaucous Gulls on Garrison Dam, N.D. (RNR, m.ob.) and 26 Herring Gulls near Gavin's Point Dam, S.D., all observed in December (WH).



*Black-legged Kittiwake, Ft. Peck, Mont., Dec. 24, 1978. Photo/C. M. Carlson.*

**OWLS** [by D. O. Lambeth] — Ten species of owls were reported for the Region. A Screech Owl was seen occasionally on a window ledge in Regina Beach, Sask. (FWL *et al.*) and a gray-phase was discovered Feb. 3 by C. W. Owen in his hen house near Hatton, N.D. (*vide* JFK). The latter bird had apparently entered through a ventilation shaft and the residents seemed more bemused than alarmed by their unusual visitor. Other observations were of one in Minot, N.D. (GBB) and four in South Dakota. Snowy Owl sightings totaled



more than 250 for the Region, but converting the number of sightings into an estimate of birds present was difficult as usual. Despite the early autumn flight into North Dakota and the scarcity noted in some areas of North Dakota and Saskatchewan in mid-winter, South Dakota reported only ten sightings — all from the n.e. quadrant. It was a good year for Hawk Owls. Four were banded in December near Lac du Bonnet, Man. (RWN,HWRC) and Alberta observers reported singles at Water Valley (ACS), Didsbury (DJS) and Irricana (CMc) and two each at Bottrell (JJP,RJB) and near Fort McMurray (BW). Saskatchewan had singles at Squaw Rapids and Pike Lake (SJS *et al.*). A Barred Owl was banded Feb. 4 near the Bird R., n.e. of Lac du Bonnet (RWN,HWRC) and others were at Fargo (MBB) and Big Stone L., S.D. (BKH).

How many Great Gray Owls were in s.e. Manitoba during the current invasion — the third major one in a row? The number banded was 46 (RWN,HWRC) and observers traveling to points e. and s.e. of L. Winnipeg to view the solar eclipse Feb. 26 saw seven along 60 highway mi (GSL,DOL). A return trip Mar. 4 turned up eight — three in view at one time and seven in different locations from those seen just six days earlier (SOL,JFK). The birds were hunting in broad daylight and the perches chosen (utility poles, edges of aspen groves) were reminiscent of Red-tailed Hawks seen in other seasons. Great Grays were also seen at five locations in Saskatchewan and at Cochrane, Alta. (MO).

The only Long-eared Owl reported was seen at Regina in December. Short-eared Owls wintered in good numbers, with 50 in Alberta, six in Saskatchewan, five in North Dakota, eight in South Dakota and three in e. Montana. A **Boreal Owl** near Winnipeg in late January was often observed hunting at mid-day (W. D. Kyle *et al.*) and perhaps a different one was seen Feb. 12 (Ray Tuokke). A very rare sighting for North Dakota was one Dec. 22 at Minot (GBB *et al.*). Saw-whet Owls were found at Lethbridge, Alta. (MDO), Endeavor and Indian Head, Sask. (N. Harris, MS) and at Bismarck, N.D. (TAG). A total of four in January and February in s. Manitoba was unusual (CWC). One was found dead Jan. 8 at Upper Souris N.W.R., N.D. (LHW).

**WOODPECKERS, CORVIDS** — Ten species of woodpeckers were reported, all showing an increase in numbers. The Red-bellied has expanded its range to the n.w. One wintered at Fargo (PPF) and another was seen near Bismarck Feb. 7 (RNR). Six were sighted in e. South Dakota including a pair in s. Brookings County where they had not been seen in ten years (NJH). An imm. Red-headed was very late at Stonewall, Man., Dec. 4 (KAG). One was at Burke Dec. 15-24 (GLS) and one at Yankton, S.D., Feb. 13-28.

Horned Larks by the hundreds were hedge-hopping across the stubble fields in s. South Dakota by late January and by Feb. 28 numbers were estimated in 1000s (JHH,KJH, NRW). Migrants arrived at Jamestown, N.D., Feb. 10 (JTL) but no migrants had arrived at Moose Jaw by Feb. 21 (EWK).

Common Crows and Piñon Jays were noticeably scarce. Common Raven numbers have increased, with total sightings of 138 at Squaw Rapids (TAGu,LJS,GNK) and 785 at Prince Albert, Sask., for the period (WCH).

Fourteen were seen feeding on roadkills between Browning and Cutbank, Mont (HMM). A peak of 50 was at Fort McMurray (BW) Dec. 9 - Feb. 18 and 19 were seen near Janet, Alta., Feb. 18 (RJB).

**CHICKADEES, WRENS** — White-breasted Nuthatch numbers appeared to be on the upswing after being lower than Red-breasted for a few years. Four Pygmy Nuthatches were observed Feb. 10 at Billings, Mont. (HWC, m.ob.). The Regional total of Brown Creeper sightings increased to 45 during the period this winter. Two Cañon Wrens were observed Jan. 15 & 20 in the higher Black Hills, S.D. (RAP,NRW).

**THRUSHES** — More robins than usual started moving N, with flocks of 200 observed Jan. 19 on Rapid City streets and by Feb. 26 the flocks peaked at 300. It is known that migrating robins arrive in Rapid City in October and winter in the cedar breaks along the edges of the Black Hills. These robins have a much grayer back, orange-toned breast, a bit of white in the edge of the tail, a more prominent eye-ring and no spots remain to indicate juveniles. According to Salts' "The Birds of Alberta," this is the robin of Canada. The really red-breasted robin doesn't arrive until the forepart of April to claim territory. Single Townsend's Solitaires were rare finds in Spruce Woods P.P., Dec. 10 (CWC) and also at Regina Dec. 11 - Jan. 22 (RK,FWL) and at Saskatoon Dec. 26. A **Varied Thrush** was extremely unusual Dec. 26 at Pierce L., Sask. (L. Christie). This species is proving to be a regular winter visitor in South Dakota: a window killed bird was found Dec. 16 at Pierre (RLS) and one stayed at Billings, Mont., Dec. 1 - Jan. 29 (S. Morse). Mountain Bluebird scouts usually appear with regularity on Feb. 19 around Rapid City (NJE) but none was observed this winter period. Bohemian and Cedar waxwings were present in all parts of the Region in regular numbers.

**BLACKBIRDS, FINCHES AND SPARROWS** — A few of most of the regular blackbird species wintered at some place in the Region. A W. Meadowlark stayed in a barn with pigeons near Saskatoon, Sask., during January (LMH). A few Yellow-headed, Red-winged, Rusty and Brewer's blackbirds, Com. Grackles and even Brown-headed Cowbirds remained and one might guess that they were caught in the early November storm and didn't try to migrate. The numbers of Evening Grosbeak, as well as the other "winter" finches, were very low.

Rufous-sided Towhees wintered at Grand Forks, N.D. (*vide* DOL,SOL) and at Burke, S.D. (GLS). One was seen at Edmonton, Alta., Dec. 12 (E&E Kuyt) and another was last seen alive in a weakened condition at Pinawa, Man., Jan. 12 (PT). There were many reports of White-crowned and White-throated sparrows that managed to live into late January and some made it to the end of the period, A late Fox Sparrow was seen Dec. 30 near Bismarck (EBP,RSc). Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were in average numbers this winter.

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## SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

/Frances Williams

During the first three weeks of December and last two weeks of February the weather was seasonal. But the seven weeks from Christmas until February 17 provided the coldest winter spell on record in most of the Region. Snow storms and ice storms were widespread, even in Texas. Birds reported found dead of exposure and/or starvation included Rough-legged Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Bobwhite, flicker, Horned Lark, Brown Thrasher, House Sparrow, meadowlark sp., Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, Tree and Harris' sparrows.

Northern finches were absent but the invasion of montane species filled the gap. Mountain Chickadees, Mountain Bluebirds, Townsend's Solitaires and several jay species were found far out on the plains. There were also more Golden-crowned Kinglets than in the past few years, but by no means could their presence have been called an "invasion."

### LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS —

Few loons wintered in the Region. Although about 100 Com. Loons were on L. Livingston in e. Texas in early winter only three remained at the end of February. Other reservoirs hosted fewer loons and all the birds departed when severe cold arrived. Red-necked Grebes were observed in Tarrant County, Tex., Dec. 5-6, Crosby County, Tex., throughout the period and Lubbock County, Tex., Dec. 23. Horned Grebes at Midland Feb. 5-25 and L. Buchanan in c. Texas Feb. 12 were w. of their usual range. Western Grebes were present in early December in Texas at Buffalo Lake N.W.R., Midland, Dallas and Fort Worth. One remained in Dallas Jan. 12-24. White Pelicans wintered at L. Livingston, as did at least 15,000 Double-crested Cormorants. About 100 of the latter were present Feb. 11 near Keystone Dam on the Arkansas R. in Oklahoma. A Double-crested Cormorant at Midland Dec. 20-26 provided a first winter record (m.ob.).

### HERONS THROUGH GEESE —

A Great Blue Heron found some open water in the Platte R., in Douglas County, Neb., Feb. 1. Little Blue Herons, Cattle and Great egrets lingered in n. Texas until mid-December. In the Texas Panhandle Am. Bitterns remained at Buffalo Lake N.W.R., until mid-December and one in Crosby County Jan. 21 provided a first winter record. Whistling Swans were reported in several Texas localities, with a peak of 19 at Lubbock Dec. 4. Other observations were from Red River, Ellis, Dallas and Crosby cos. Five spent January at newly created L. Limestone in Limestone, and Freestone and Navarro cos. Ross' Geese were present at Tishomingo N.W.R., Okla., a not surprising record as the species has wintered on the Texas side of L. Texoma at Hagerman N.W.R. In Comanche County, Okla., 400 White-fronted Geese stopped to feed in a wheat field Feb. 24.

### DUCKS AND MERGANSERS —

Nebraska observers were surprised to find Gadwalls wintering on the Platte R., in such a severe winter. In February, Cinnamon Teal were located in Texas in Hutchinson, Real and Brisco cos., Buffalo Lake N.W.R., and L. Livingston. A Eurasian Wigeon was photographed at Clint, Tex., near El Paso, Feb. 11 (KZ,BZ). A Wood Duck visited Alpine, Tex., Feb. 25. A Greater Scaup was sighted on L. Texoma Feb. 2 and three were present at Nacogdoches Dec. 13-20. Lesser Scaup wintered in Sedgwick County, Kans. Common Goldeneyes were abundant in Texas from the Brazos R. to the Pecos R. In the plethora of recently published books on waterfowl, not one mentions the phenomenal increase in the number of Hooded Mergansers wintering on Southern Plains reservoirs. The species was reported this winter at Lawellen, Neb.; Osage and Sedgwick cos., Kans.; Tulsa and Ellis cos., Okla.; and many Texas localities. Peak counts were 237 at Hagerman N.W.R., Dec. 16 and 50 in Crosby County during January. An amazing 1500 Com Mergansers were present in Crosby County, and 200 were counted at Balmorhea L., Tex., Feb. 10. A Red-breasted Merganser was recorded at L. Ogallala, Neb., Feb. 17.

**RAPTORS** — A White-tailed Kite was sighted at L. Conroe, Montgomery Co., Tex.,



Dec. 19 (JF,DS). A Goshawk visited Lincoln, Neb., Jan. 13 (NJ). Nearly every contributor mentioned how common Sharp-shinned Hawks were at feeding stations. Although a wide variety of passerines provided sustenance to the Sharpies, House Sparrows seemed most often taken. An extremely large population of Red-tailed Hawks amazed observers at Tulsa and Nacogdoches but numbers were the lowest since 1961 at Fort Worth. Four Red-shouldered Hawks were present on the Missouri R., Douglas Co., Jan. 15 (DD). Rough-legged Hawks were common in Nebraska along the North Platte R., Crescent Lake N.W.R., and Lincoln. In Pawnee County, Kans., they were common in early December and late February but absent between. Perhaps those were the ones observed at Hagerman N.W.R., in January. A Zone-tailed Hawk photographed in Bastrop County, Tex., Feb. 1 (GL) provided the first documented record e. of the Edwards Plateau. One was also sighted in Uvalde County, Tex., Feb. 24 (E&KM).

Although numbers of wintering Bald Eagles were down in Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, they were "super-abundant" in the Texas Panhandle and more numerous than usual in n. and e. Texas. The reports from all areas that imm. eagles outnumbered adults were encouraging. Like most raptors, Marsh Hawks were common in December but hard to find during the January cold. Two Ospreys were present near open water on the Platte R., in Douglas Co., Feb. 2 (AG,RW). Lakes Livingston and Conroe each boasted two wintering Ospreys while two were sighted at Sam Rayburn Res., St. Augustine Co., Tex., Jan. 28. One at Lubbock Jan. 19 provided one of the few winter records there.

An imm. Gyrfalcon was captured 7 mi n. of Crescent L. Ref., Dec. 27. It had apparently flown into a telephone line and broken a wing. It was airshipped to a Minneapolis raptor rehabilitation center (MLS,CFZ). Very few Prairie Falcons were reported. A Peregrine was observed in Robertson County, Tex., Dec. 14. An unusual number of Merlins wintered in

trans-Pecos Texas but were scarce in the remainder of the Region. A Merlin chased a cat from a yard in Oklahoma City. Did it realize the feline was a competitor for the sparrows?

**PRAIRIE CHICKENS THROUGH RAILS** — About 200 Greater Prairie Chickens live in a commercial air park near Baldwin, Kans. They use the intersection of the two main runways as a booming ground (fide RLB). Two Greater Prairie Chickens spent the winter at the Cushing, Okla., Country Club where they survived by eating acorns. Numbers of Sharp-tailed Grouse at Crescent L. were much lower than in the winter of 1977-78. Several Nebraska

and Kansas observers reported finding flocks of frozen Bobwhites. In December flocks of 100 or more Ring-necked Pheasants were common in c. Kansas, but after the January cold it was difficult to find a flock of 20 Gray Partridges seen in Sarpy County, Neb., Feb. 4-23 were presumed to be a spill-over from a flock introduced in Iowa. The introduced population of Rio Grande Turkeys in n.w. Texas survived by feeding with cattle or by being fed by ranch families. Virginia Rails wintered at Lubbock and L. Meredith in the Texas Panhandle and remained until late December at Hagerman Ref. A Com Gallinule was sighted at Lubbock Jan. 21 (DS).

### SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS —

Shorebirds completely deserted the Region in January and for most of February. Not even the usually ubiquitous Least Sandpipers could be found. This makes the appearance of an Am. Avocet in Crosby County Jan. 25 even more amazing (ML)! Two sub-adult Glaucous Gulls were in Shawnee County, Kans., in mid-December (OR) and 1-5 could be found at Oklahoma City most of the winter. No reports of wintering Bonaparte's Gulls were received. Have they become so common that observers no longer consider them worth reporting? Forster's Terns remained at Hagerman Ref., until Jan. 27 (CRB) in spite of the severe weather.

### DOVES THROUGH NIGHTHAWKS —

Very few Mourning Doves wintered n. of Texas and several were found dead in Lyon County, Kans., in January (YG). An Inca Dove visited a feeder in Stillwater, Okla., during most of the winter. Two Inca Doves were seen at Alpine, Tex., Feb. 12. A confused Barn Owl sat beside a road at high noon Dec 11 in Rush County, Kans. A Barn Owl in Nacogdoches County, Tex., Dec. 24 provided a first record there (SL), while one found in Washington County, Okla., Feb. 27 was the first observed at that locality since 1971 (AP,ED)

At Sherman, Tex., a Screech Owl roosted in an aluminum martin house. The only Snowy Owl seen was in Sarpy County Feb. 4 (WT *et al.*). Long-eared Owls were discovered at Oklahoma City Dec. 2, Midland Feb. 3, Hueco Tanks S.P., Tex., Dec. 16, Crescent L., Jan. 6 and in Pawnee County, Kans., Feb. 12. Very few Short-eared Owls were seen, but then very few birders were in the field at sundown during sub-freezing weather. Mobbing Com. Crows revealed the presence of a Barred Owl in Hemphill County, Tex., Jan. 28 (KS,BZ). A Saw-whet Owl was found in Sarpy County Feb. 4 (WT *et al.*). Perhaps the most unexpected bird found this winter was a **Common Nighthawk** seen and heard calling over Alpine, Tex., on several warm afternoons in January (TG,AR).

**SWIFTS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS** — A *Chaetura* swift was seen at College Station, Tex., Feb. 28 (DD). This was 21 days earlier than any previous record for Chimney Swift and it is possible the bird might have been a Vaux's Swift. Rufous Hummingbirds remained at Tulsa until Jan. 1, at Nacogdoches until mid-January, and at Garland, Tex., until Feb. 11. A Belted Kingfisher at Crescent L., Feb. 18 provided an unusual winter record. Red-headed Woodpeckers were abundant at Tulsa, L. Conroe and Huntsville, Tex. Birders wishing to add Red-cockaded Woodpeckers to their lists should visit the CBC circle at L. Conroe, for there are 57 colonies in the circle! A Lewis' Woodpecker visited Odessa, Tex., Feb. 4-10 (BE). A Williamson's Sapsucker was located in the Davis Mts., Jan. 27 (MAC,AB). A Black Phoebe in Kinney County, Tex., Feb. 1 was unexpected. A Say's Phoebe in Hutchinson County, Tex., Dec. 30 was far n. for the season (BZ).

**CORVIDS** — Blue Jays wintered at Alpine and Fort Davis, where they were unknown until last year. Steller's Jays were notable for their low-elevation movements in the Davis and Guadalupe Mts. (TG). Single birds were found in the Chinati Mts., Tex. (SW), and in Morton County, Kans. (MS,AW). Scrub Jays were incredibly numerous in the Guadalupe Mts., during February. Others were found in Morton County Dec. 29 (MS,AW), Odessa Feb. 4 (BE) and Balmorhea, Tex., Feb. 10 (FW). Thousands of Com. Crows were in Yoakum and Terry cos., Tex., in December. They outnumbered the resident White-necked Ravens as much as 20 to 1. In Lincoln hundreds of Com. Crows invaded the city, inspiring Norma Johnson to write: "Some sight, watching and listening to 200 crows circling your house and neighborhood. I admit a great fondness for them." Flocks of Piñon Jays comprising 100-500 birds could be found on the Davis Mt. loop road and sometimes there were two or three Clark's Nutcrackers in the flock (TG). Piñon Jays in Howard County, Tex., Feb. 3 provided a new county record (GW,SC). The species was also located at L. Meredith Dec. 23 (m.ob.). A Clark's Nutcracker visited Amarillo briefly Jan. 19 (BZ).

**CHICKADEES THROUGH WRENS** — **Mountain Chickadees** were photographed in Morton County, Kans., Dec. 29, providing a first documented record for the state (MS, m.ob.). There had been one previous sight

record in Finney County. This species also visited the Black Mesa area of Oklahoma, El Paso, Hueco Tanks S.P., and Balmorhea and were present in astounding numbers in the lowlands of the Guadalupe Mts. One at Amarillo Jan. 11-14 provided the first record there in 12 years (BZ,KS). White-breasted and Pygmy nuthatches also left the high Guadalupe and were seen feeding in cactus and yucca plants in the lowlands. A single White-breasted Nuthatch visited Potter County Jan. 20 (BZ) and one at L. Ogallala, Neb., Feb. 17 provided an unusual locality record (CFZ). Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen at Lincoln, Oklahoma City and Amarillo.

A House Wren in Kendall County, Tex., Jan. 12 - Feb. 16 constituted one of the few records at that locality. Winter Wrens were sighted in Cowley County, Kans., Jan. 20 (SK), Johnson County, Kans., Dec. 6 (MLM) and Potter County, Tex., Jan. 20 (BZ). With one exception, all contributors mentioned the scarcity of Bewick's and Carolina wrens. Two Carolina Wrens which frequented Mrs. Myers' feeders had been banded by her; one in April, 1976 and the other February, 1977, so both had survived two previous severe winters. A Rock Wren was observed near Cleburne, Tex., Dec. 17, rather far e. for this species (MD). Very few Rock Wrens could be found at Lubbock, Crosby County, or Muleshoe N.W.R.

**MIMICS THROUGH THRUSHES** — A Mockingbird frequented a heated bird bath at Omaha all winter (B&LP). A Brown Thrasher that remained at a Pawnee County, Kans., feeder through December was found dead Jan. 9. Brown Thrashers were abundant in w. Texas where normally they are difficult to find. A Curve-billed Thrasher in Roberts County, Tex., Jan. 28 was n. of its expected range (BZ,KS). A Sage Thrasher fed on various berries in an urban garden at Midland during January, a most unusual habitat for this species. Thousands of Am. Robins congregated in Red River County, Tex., and numbered in the hundreds in several w. Texas cities. A **Varied Thrush** visited Idalou, Lubbock Co., Tex., Feb. 18 - Mar. 10 (E&RD, m.ob.). Mountain Bluebirds roamed the plains in good numbers and were seen as far e. as Payne County, Okla., Grayson and Edwards cos., Tex. A W. Bluebird in Crosby County Feb. 28 provided a new county record (KH). Townsend's Solitaires were dispersed widely in the Region, occurring e. to Omaha, Emporia, Kans., Oklahoma City, Fort Worth and San Angelo, Tex.

**KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS** — Golden-crowned Kinglets appeared in small numbers at ten localities, an increase compared to the past two years. A Sprague's Pipit encountered in Big Bend N.P., Feb. 18 was carefully identified (BF,RB). Small flocks of Bohemian Waxwings were present at Crescent L., Dec. 11 & Jan. 9 and a flock comprising 25 birds was located at Alliance, Neb., Dec. 25 (VED). Cedar Waxwings were scarce until mid-February, but after that they inundated the Region. Northern Shrikes were sighted at Crescent L., and Riley County, Kans., as well as three localities in the Texas Panhandle. A hungry Orange-crowned Warbler ate wild bird seed at a Fort Worth feeder and attempted to eat sunflower seed. A **Cape**

**May Warbler** was caught in a net at Baldwin, Kans., Dec. 1 (AJB,KBK). A Palm Warbler was sighted Dec. 3, at College Station, where it is considered an irregular winter visitor (HH).

**ICTERIDS** — Mike Schrick, park manager at Hulah Res., Okla., reported observing a meadowlark lying on its side holding a Tree Sparrow while other meadowlarks killed and made off with the sparrow. In Pawnee County Seltman observed meadowlarks crawling into the cracks between bales in haystacks. He wrote: "Undoubtedly many survived because of this practice but many died where they huddled. When we loaded up bales to feed our cattle, frozen meadowlarks constantly fell at our feet as we dismantled the haystacks." On Dec. 31, when the temperature at Lubbock was -2°F., and there were three inches of snow on the ground, a "Baltimore" Oriole visited a feeder (DS, m.ob.). In Lyon County, Kans., Rusty Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds and Com. Grackles numbered in the hundreds. Rusty Blackbirds and Great-tailed Grackles were unusually common in Sedgwick County, Kans., and Tulsa. About 50 Com. Grackles wintered at Midland, the first time more than four have been recorded there.

**FRINGILLIDS** — A Cardinal was sighted near Jewell, Neb., Feb. 17 (CFZ). Mrs. Myers counted 60 Cardinals at once at her feeders or near-by and there were hordes of Cardinals in Tulsa. The only Evening Grosbeaks and Com. Redpolls in the Region were at Omaha (MW). Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were largely absent. A few Cassin's Finches were seen at several spots in the Davis, Guadalupe, Chinati and Chisos Mts., and at Alpine. The largest flock comprised five birds.

#### S.A.

In AB 32:(6) 1136 there appeared a statement that the westernmost e. House Finches were in St. Louis and the easternmost w. House Finches were in s.w. Oklahoma. This prompted observers in n.e. Kansas to report two records which had previously appeared only in the *Bulletin of the Kansas Ornithological Society*: a ♂ House Finch was caught, banded and photographed at Baldwin Feb. 22, 1977, and was seen regularly until Mar. 12 of that year (AJB,KBK), and House Finches nested at Oberlin in n.w. Kansas in 1976

At El Paso, "The numbers of Fringillids went through the ceiling, with more sparrows and towhees present than in any winter in several years." (KZ). This was in contrast with the remainder of the Region, where sparrow numbers of most species were extremely low. At San Angelo, grassland sparrows in general and Vesper Sparrows in particular were in very low numbers, but Song Sparrows and other wet habitat species seemed to be present as usual (TM). A Grasshopper Sparrow at Hueco Tanks S.P., Dec. 16 constituted a first record (KZ) and several near Alpine Feb. 23 were also noteworthy (MB). A Le Conte's Sparrow was seen near College Station Feb. 21 (PT). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow was sighted in Llano County Feb. 12

(E&KM) Lark Sparrows normally linger in s.w. Texas through December, but were mostly absent this winter. One that visited a feeder in Sherman Feb. 8 after a snowstorm certainly gives cause for speculation as to where it had been wintering. At Hueco Tanks S.P., 35 Sage Sparrows were counted Feb. 11. The occurrence of Dark-eyed Juncos was erratic, some contributors reporting hundreds, others stating there were very few. The "Oregon" race was reported farther e. than usual. Gray-headed Juncos were unusually common at Lubbock and were also sighted at Amarillo. Tree Sparrows staged a major invasion of the n. and e. sections of the Region. They were present from Crescent L., s. to n.c. and e. Texas. At Lincoln, enormous mixed flocks of juncos, Tree and Harris' sparrows fed in weedy pastures even when snow was several inches deep. At Bartlesville, Okla., Emma Messerly and Sophia Mery banded a thousand Tree Sparrows. Chipping Sparrows at Buffalo Lake N.W.R., Feb. 18, Caprock Canyon S.P., Feb. 25 and Midland Jan. 28 were unusual for the season.

The best time to find longspurs is immediately after a severe snowstorm. They leave the vast open expanses of pasture and farmland to feed along highways where traffic or snowplows have revealed accumulated seeds. In Donley and Randall cos., in the Texas

Panhandle observers estimated 7000 Lapland Longspurs Jan. 13 and over 20,000 Jan. 14 (KS,BZ). Lapland Longspur was the most abundant species in the Region and McCown's and Chestnut-collared longspurs were locally common. Smith's Longspurs were scarce but a single individual at Huntsville, Tex., Dec. 15 constituted a first county record (KBB,RM).

A flock of 30± Snow Buntings was in Scotts Bluff, Neb., Jan. 26, and a large flock comprising at least 50 birds was in Cherry County Feb. 9.

**CORRIGENDA** — AB 32:(5) 1027: Loggerhead Shrikes in Big Bend N.P., were feeding juveniles Mar. 31, not Mar. 1. AB 32:(6) 1181: Four hummingbirds of two species, Rufous and Broad-tailed, were seen in n.w. Nebraska. AB 32:(6) 1182: a line was omitted in the Fringillid section which should have read: Pine Siskins from last winter's invasion remained into June in many areas. Grasshopper Sparrows were present in good numbers at Tulsa . . .

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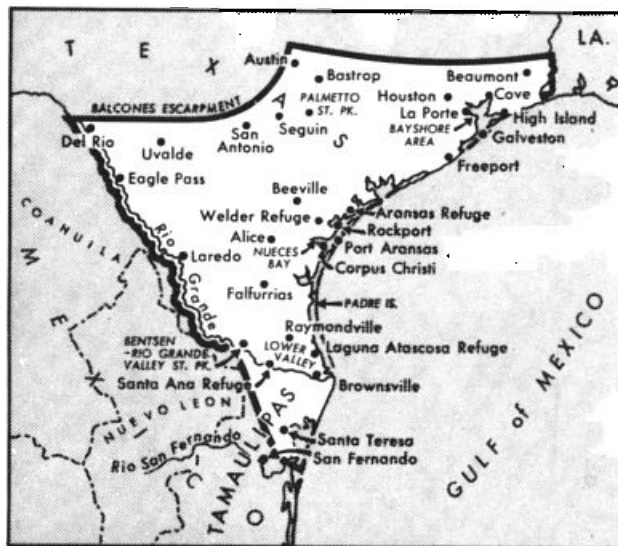
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**SOUTH TEXAS REGION**

/Fred S. Webster, Jr.

An early December intrusion of arctic air provided a fitting introduction to a cold, wet, cloudy winter. Freezing temperatures killed tender vegetation as far south as the Coastal Bend. A 19°F. reading at Austin December 10 was the lowest temperature recorded for the locality in 1979 despite below-normal averages during the previous winter. Although the remainder of December was relatively mild, January blew in with an ice storm in the northern and upper coastal counties. A 13°F. reading at Austin January 2 was a record low for the date and the coldest for any date since 1963. At Aransas National Wildlife Refuge "even the saltwater bays were covered with a thin layer of ice along the shoreline and up to 200 yards out into the bay" (SL). Effects of this cold spell on vegetation were very evident as far as the southernmost tip of Texas. Thereafter, throughout the Region, temperatures averaged considerably below normal until late February. Rainfall was below normal until Christmas, then above normal until mid-February, except in the more xeric counties south and west of a (approximate) Kingsville-to-San Antonio line.

Seed and berry crops were reported ample to abundant in most areas, but insect populations were suppressed except in far south Texas. In the Rio Grande Delta, vegetation made a rapid recovery from the early January freeze, while northern localities remained brown and barren of deciduous foliage. January rains assured soggy or flooded fresh water habitat at least as far west as San Antonio and as far south as Corpus Christi. Cold and wet conditions were assumed to be at least partial causes for the smaller-than-usual numbers of many passerines observed in almost all areas



except the Rio Grande Delta where numbers were sharply above those of recent years. This does not seem to explain the relative scarcity of northern finches this winter.

**LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS** —

Loons were generally scarce. Single Red-necked Grebes, found on the Houston and Freeport Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC), were quite unusual, and 15 Horned Grebes on Canyon L., Feb. 10 (JS) was high count in a better-than-average season for this scarce species. Eared Grebes were in below-normal numbers along the coast. Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., again hosted W. Grebes, as many as five individuals being reported during the season. Two Audubon's Shearwaters and two Gannets highlighted a Feb. 24 cruise to the snapper banks about 45 mi e. of Port Aransas (J&BR,SH). An ad. Masked Booby

was seen flying over a resaca (old water-filled river bed) at Brownsville Feb. 16 (SB), a most unusual setting for this pelagic species. Unusually large numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were present on the c. coast and as far inland as Eagle L., Colorado Co., where 3000 wintered (WAS).

**HERONS, IBISES, SPOONBILLS** —

Cattle and Reddish egrets were again "extremely scarce" on the upper coast during the coldest weather (TE); similarly most Roseate Spoonbills left the Coastal Bend in January. On the other hand, 2500 White-faced and 500 White ibises wintered at Eagle L. (WAS), and the former species was found in greater-than-usual numbers on the lower coast.

**WATERFOWL** —

Habitat was generally good for waterfowl on the coastal prairies, so that populations could and did disperse readily. Among the larger concentrations of geese were up to 30,000 Snows and Blues which began gathering on Anahuac N.W.R., in late December and remained for about three weeks (WK). Fulvous Whistling Ducks were seen at Mitchell L., in late November and December, the first in recent years for the San Antonio area (fide JAM). The Bahama Duck (White-cheeked Pintail), reported for the fall season, remained at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., at least until Mar. 23 (JA&SB). A pair of Wood Ducks

was seen in the San Ygnacio area, Zapata Co., Feb. 3 (B&CY), apparently a county first. Since the creation of Falcon L., and "discovery" of L. Casa Blanca, near Laredo, birders have worn ruts in U.S. 83 while filling gaps in the state's county bird lists. Probably many of these firsts have escaped our notice, since touring birders are not usually well-informed regarding local records. Of course the main contributing factor to swelling county lists along the Rio Grande is the availability of fresh water habitat, formerly lacking. Numbers of diving ducks, especially Lesser Scaup, were considered low along the coast.

**HAWKS** — One or two Hook-billed Kites were seen occasionally around Santa Ana N.W.R. An ad. female was reported at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., Jan. 19 (EC, KE&JG). White-tailed Kite numbers continued on the upswing on the upper coast. "Two were regularly seen throughout the winter, kiting over the grounds surrounding the Astrodome in Houston." (TE). Observations of this species at San Ygnacio Feb. 2, and L. Casa Blanca Jan. 30 (B&CY) may represent firsts for Zapata and Webb cos. A Mississippi Kite at Austin Feb. 19 (AB, J&BR) was the first winter observation for c. Texas in this century. An unusually large population of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks in the Rockport area was coincidental with lower-than-usual passerine numbers (DW). It was a good season for *Buteos*. Red-tailed Hawks were unusually common along the coast. Two Zone-tailed Hawks at Bastrop S.P., Feb. 1, were new for the area (G&BL). Rough-legged and Ferruginous hawks were scattered liberally throughout the Region. A Rough-legged Hawk in Karnes County in December (WS) may be new to the county list, as may be a Ferruginous Hawk(s) reported by multiple observers in Zapata County. A Gray Hawk was seen in the Falcon Dam area by several observers in January, and an adult was downriver at Santa Margarita Ranch Jan. 27 (DH). A possible Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) was seen at Rancho Santa Margarita Jan. 7 by several competent observers (*vide* TE). This resident of n.e. Mexico is listed for the United States on the basis of a 1901 specimen credited to Cameron County.

**CRANES, RAILS, SHOREBIRDS** — The winter count of Whooping Cranes at Aransas N.W.R., remained at 68 adult and six first-year birds (SL). Virginia Rails and Soras, usually fairly common, were scarce on the upper coast. Mountain Plover wintered at the New Braunfels airport, and small numbers could be found in the coastal bend. An appreciable number of Red Knots wintered on the c. coast, if a count of 250 in a 3-mi stretch of beach in mid-winter (KM) is any indication. Stilt Sandpipers were unusually common on the upper coast.

**GULLS, TERNS** — An imm. Thayer's Gull was seen at the Brownsville garbage dump Jan. 26 (DH). A Great Black-backed Gull was reported at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., for the third consecutive winter. Bonaparte's Gulls at L. Casa Blanca Jan. 30, and a Forster's Tern at San Ygnacio Feb. 2-3 (B&CY) may be firsts for Webb and Zapata cos.

**DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS** — A **Ruddy Ground Dove** (*Columbina talpa-*

*coti*) was observed with a Com Ground Dove in Brooks County Jan. 21 (AB&MAC). Groove-billed Anis were conspicuous in the Rio Grande Delta through December, then disappeared (SB). Great Horned Owls were "thick" in Karnes County (WS). Several Rufous and Buff-bellied hummingbirds fed on Turk's Cap and shrimp plant around Santa Ana N.W.R. hq. until the January freeze (*vide* SB). The Benns' feeders at Brownsville sustained several buff-bellied Hummingbirds through the winter.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH JAYS** — Common Flickers and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were in below-normal numbers in the Coastal Bend. Tropical Kingbirds wintered in greater-than-usual numbers in the Rio Grande Delta; 4 or 5 sightings per day was average (SB). Three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were observed just s. of Matamoros on the Mexican side of the Delta, Dec. 29 (GB). Kiskadee Flycatchers were "quite numerous" as far n. as Kingsville (KM). An Ash-throated Flycatcher, rare on the upper coast at any season, was seen on Bolivar Pen., Dec. 30 (DTD&TE). Brown Jays were reported occasionally at Rancho Santa Margarita. Two or three Green Jays again frequented a feeder at Dinero, Live Oak Co. (MT, *vide* VG).

**NUTHATCHES THROUGH KINGLETS** — Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce; Brown Creepers uncommon, and House and Winter wrens below normal in most areas. A Brown Thrasher, rare in the Rio Grande Delta, visited a feeder in Brownsville (SB). Two Sage Thrashers were seen in w. Travis County in February (CE). American Robins were reported above normal except in the far s. A southbound flock of about 55 was sighted in Hidalgo County Dec. 15 (GD). A **Varied Thrush** made the season for many birders; it was discovered at Gilchrist, Bolivar Pen., Dec. 27 (DC&DTD), and remained through January. A bird described as an Aztec Thrush (*Ridgwayia pinicola*), "identical" to the male depicted in Peterson and Chalif's *A Field Guide to Mexican Birds*, was observed on a lawn at Port Aransas Jan. 30 (J&SC, WP) — a very unlikely habitat for this bird of high mountain ranges of w. and c. Mexico. Unfortunately it did not remain for study or photography. Its appearance had been preceded by two blustery cold fronts from the w. There is one previous observation of this species for Texas, a juvenile found in Big Bend N.P., August 1977. Hermit Thrushes and E. Bluebirds were below normal on the c. coast and inland. A Mountain Bluebird, rarely found in the Region in recent years, was seen near Zapata Feb. 3 (J&BR, WS). Golden-crowned Kinglets were again very scarce, while Ruby-crowned Kinglets were less common than usual.

**WARBLERS** — The 18 warbler species reported on the upper coast in December indicated a good number of lingerers, but January cold either drove out the birds or drove birders to cover. The action shifted to the Rio Grande Delta where warblers, as well as some other passerines, were more abundant than might normally be expected. Notably common in the Delta were Black-and-white, Orange-crowned, Nashville and Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) warblers — species generally below nor-

mal in other areas. Notable rarities were a ♂ Golden-winged Warbler at Santa Ana N.W.R., Jan. 24 (WM), a ♂ Palm Warbler at Rancho Santa Margarita Feb. 3 (WS), and a Yellow-breasted Chat at Brownsville Jan. 20 (SB). It is interesting to note that both N. and Tropical Parulas were seen at Santa Ana N.W.R., and Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., by a number of observers during the winter, and that two different ♂ Tropical Parulas were seen in Brownsville (SB). A bird well-described as a ♂ Connecticut Warbler was observed at the Sabal Palm Sanctuary near Brownsville Jan. 24 (WM).

**BLACKBIRDS, FRINGILLIDS** — A Rusty Blackbird near Brownsville Dec. 16 (SB) may represent a first for the Rio Grande Delta. Very unusual in winter were Indigo Buntings in Cameron County Dec. 16 (PP) and Jan. 21 (SB); and a Painted Bunting at Falcon Dam Jan. 30 (KW). Purple Finches, Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches were below normal throughout the Region. A few White-collared Seedeaters could be found at San Ygnacio. Lark Buntings arrived early in Karnes County but few of this usually common species remained for the season (RR). Savannah, Vesper, Lark, Chipping, Field, White-crowned, White-throated, Lincoln's and Song sparrows were below normal on the coastal plains. Savannah Sparrows were common in the Rio Grande Delta, Cassin's and Black-throated sparrows were fairly common on dry land e. of Brownsville, and Lincoln's Sparrows were abundant in fields w. of Brownsville (SB).

**CORRIGENDUM** — The supposed Iceland Gull photographed at the Brownsville city dump (AB 32:974, 1030) is now listed as a first year Thayer's Gull, as a result of concerned response and further study.

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## NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION

/Helmut Grünberg

An abnormally heavy snow cover, originating from the November snow falls, protected many life forms throughout the winter. The temperatures were close to normal in December and slightly below normal in January, while February 1979 turned out to be the coldest February on record: Whitehorse had a mean temperature of  $-28^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-18^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) which is  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$  below normal. Dawson and Old Crow registered an incredible  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-40^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) as mean temperature.

Low temperatures combined with deep snow made birdwatching other than from inside a heated room a difficult adventure. Nevertheless, six new species were added to our winter list, and the total number of species observed was 38, two more than during the previous winter season.

**LOONS THROUGH PTARMIGAN** — The first winter record of Com. Loon was received from Teslin L.; 1-3 stayed there until Dec 11, shortly before freeze-up (BS). Two ♀ mergansers were reported from the Yukon R., in Whitehorse (hereafter, Whse.), Dec. 26 (AM). In the same area, one ♀ Com. Merganser was seen Dec. 27-29 (HG). No other waterfowl was reported this winter.

Three Goshawks were seen regularly throughout the winter at the Yukon Game Farm, (hereafter, Y.G.F.), n.w. of Whse. (KS) One was noted at Dawson Jan. 16 (JF) and one was observed at the Upper Sixty Mile R., (hereafter, Upper 60), w.c. Yukon, Jan. 25 - Feb. 28 (RF). An imm. Golden Eagle was noted at Y.G.F., Jan. 24 (KS). Another imm. Golden Eagle survived the low temperatures at Upper 60, and was seen Jan. 27 - Feb. 22 (RF). Gyrfalcons were noted as follows: one, very light phase, at the head of Cowley Cr., Lone Mts., Dec. 3 (DC); one 200 km e. of Burwash in December (KP); two in the Ibez Valley near Whse., Feb. 20 (RA); two along the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 22 (DMo); two at Haekel Hill near Whse., Feb. 27 (MH); and one at Upper 60, Feb. 28 (RF). The observation of a Peregrine Falcon at Surprise L., near Atlin, B.C., Dec. 15 provided the first winter record for our Region (CL).

Spruce Grouse appeared to be abundant, perhaps increasing in numbers. They were seen by 13 observers in all areas. Ruffed Grouse were noted at Graham Inlet, B.C. (RB), near Atlin (DMa), at Teslin (D&PD), at L. Laberge (RC) and at Upper 60 (RF). A Sharp-tailed Grouse was observed at L. Laberge Dec. 24 (RC). Willow Ptarmigan were seen regularly in appropriate habitat. Flocks of up to 150 birds were noted along the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 22 (DMo). Rock Ptarmigan in flocks to 50± were seen near timberline at Upper 60, Jan. 26 - Feb. 28 (RF). Fifty to sixty White-tailed Ptarmigan were observed near Atlin Feb. 3, 12, & 28 (DMa).

**DOVES THROUGH DIPPERS** — Rock Doves were observed in normal numbers in Whse. (HG); 83 individuals were counted Dec 26 (SH,JS). Our most common owl, the Great Horned, was noted by seven observers.

A Snowy Owl was seen at Upper 60, Feb 27 (RF). One Hawk Owl report came from Teslin Feb. 25 (D&PD), and a Boreal Owl was observed near Whse., Dec. 16 (JL).

Hairy and Downy woodpeckers were less common than last winter. One Hairy was seen all winter at a feeder 10 km s. of Whse. (KB), two were noted at Shadow L., s. of Whse., Dec. 27 (D&SR) and a pair appeared daily at a feeder a few km n. of Whse. (D&SS). A Downy was seen for a few days in mid-December and in early January near Graham Inlet (RB). Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers were noted regularly, but less often than during the previous winter.

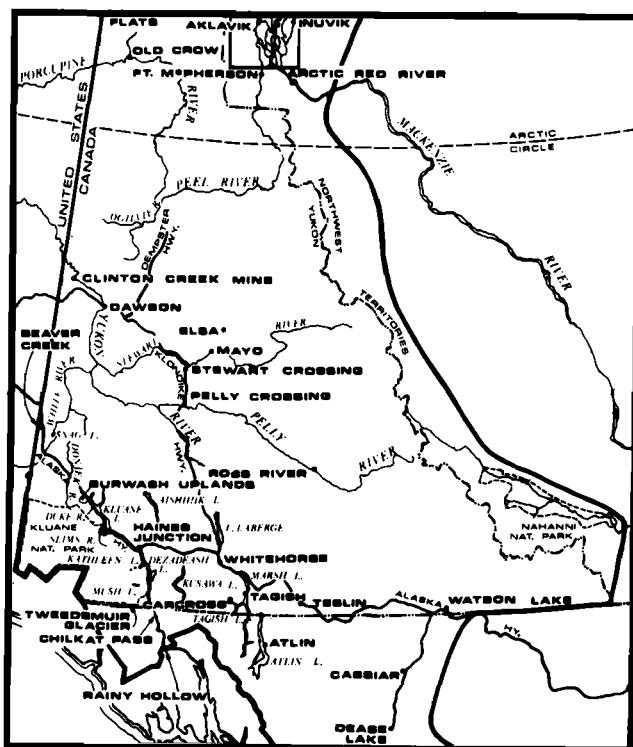
Gray Jays were observed as common from all areas covered. Black-billed Magpies, although less common than the previous species, were reported by most observers. Magpies were not seen in the c. Yukon. Common Ravens were observed in all areas. A maximum number of 453 birds was registered at Whse., Dec. 26 (m.ob.).

Black-capped and Boreal chickadees were drawn to the communities where they appeared in about equal numbers. Two Black-capped Chickadees were seen as far n. as Dawson Dec. 11 (RF). In areas of boreal forest the Boreal Chickadee was more common. One or two Dippers were seen at Casiar (PM), Atlin (DMa) and Whse. (AM). Four were noted along the Dempster Hwy., Feb. 22 (DMo).

**THRUSHES THROUGH SNOW BUNTINGS** — The smallest birds made up the largest number of new winter records. They were found mostly at feeders or searching for food near human habitation.

An Am. Robin was noted in front of the Whse. post office Dec. 25, constituting a new winter record (HG). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet, also establishing a new winter record, was seen near Atlin (DMa). Sixteen Bohemian Waxwings were counted in Whse., Dec. 10 (RC), three were seen in Carcross Dec. 21 and one was noted there Dec. 2 & 8 "at  $-35^{\circ}\text{C}$  and wind" (HW). Three Bohemian Waxwings were still in Whse., Feb. 4 (HG). A N. Shrike was seen at Y.G.F., Dec. 1 (KS). Ten Starlings were sighted in Atlin in early December (CL). One was seen in Mayo, which is one of the coldest spots in the Yukon, for several days before it was caught by dogs Jan. 11 (TN).

Pine Grosbeaks were noted in numbers of up to ten by 16 observers throughout the winter. Few redpolls were observed, with an apparent relative increase of Hoary Redpolls of which 4-5 appeared daily at a feeder in Teslin (D&PD), and 2-4 were seen in Whse., Jan. 6 - Feb. 3 (HG,SH). The 10-40 redpolls



observed in the w.c. Yukon were possibly all Hoaries (RF,ML) while the majority of redpolls in the s. Yukon and n. British Columbia (flocks up to 22 birds) were Com. Redpolls (reported as "Com. Redpoll" or "redpoll sp." by many observers).

The survival of three sparrow species was facilitated by feeders. One Savannah Sparrow, provided a first winter record for the Region, was taken by a cat in Whse., Jan. 8 (RC). A Dark-eyed Junco as well as a White-crowned Sparrow (new winter record) survived at a feeder s. of Whse., throughout December, January and into early February (KB). Three unidentified sparrows were seen at Graham Inlet in late February (RB). Only few Snow Buntings appeared to have wintered. One was seen at Carcross Dec. 8 (HW) and up to 16 were observed in Whse., Dec. 25-26 (HG,SH,JS). Three were noted in Carcross Jan. 11 (HW) and three in Whse., Jan. 17 (JL). In February up to 20 were observed in Whse. (HG,SH).

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## NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN-INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/Thomas H. Rogers

In the words of one reporter, it was a bearcat of a winter with every month experiencing subnormal average temperatures, particularly in January, when Kalispell, Montana reported 14.9°F. below normal. Snow and cold set in by early November in most parts of the Region with continuous snow cover at least into February. Precipitation was generally subnormal but owing to a late thaw it piled up disproportionately. More northerly areas however, had lower than usual depths. Freeze-up came in mid-December and only deeper lakes, fast-flowing streams and warm springs remained open. Thawing began in February. Only the Klamath Basin of southern Oregon had normal conditions.

Frozen water drove most waterfowl out and with them raptors dependent upon them. However Bald Eagles in the Wenatchee area subsisted on American Coot and fish left by otters. In some places they fed on carrion. Snow cover caused hardship to small ground feeders and once crusted made survival difficult for game birds, especially quail, which, with flickers, meadowlarks and Red Crossbills, foraged along roadsides with many becoming traffic casualties. The snow also made hunting difficult for rodent-feeders, particularly Barn Owls. Some birds appeared to be unusually inactive and some died of cold and starvation. Small passerines were scarce or absent in some localities. The Walla Walla area reported higher temperatures in the mountains than in the valleys, which may have caused birds to stay at higher elevations. The "northern finches" were low in numbers. Exceptional concentrations of some species occurred, notably Horned Larks and goldfinches. Food for fruit eaters was generally adequate, barely in some areas. Other areas had fruit but no birds to eat it.



**GREBES THROUGH HERONS** — A lone Red-necked Grebe was on the Columbia R., at Brewster, Wash., in late January (SJ). Swan L., Mont., had a W. Grebe Dec. 2 & 4 and one was on the Flathead R., near Kalispell, Mont., Jan. 20 (E.A.S.). Two Pied-billed Grebes were on the Blitzen R., Malheur N.W.R., Burns, Ore., Dec. 23. The Columbia R. had six White Pelicans in the Hanford area, Feb. 7, and ten on Feb. 24 (GS&TF; RF&RK). A mixed-up Black-crowned Night Heron was at Lewiston, Ida., Jan. 6 (EM). An imm.-plumaged **Green Heron** appeared Dec. 2-4 along the Link R., Klamath Falls, Ore., where it is very uncommon even in summer (SS).

**WATERFOWL** — Mute Swans wintered at Livingston, Mont., and scattered individuals have spread to Yellowstone N.P., causing concern that they may compete with and adversely affect Trumpeter Swans (RS, *vide* PDS). One Mute Swan was on Okanagan L., near Vernon, B.C., Feb. 9 (DG) and three were at Kelowna, B.C., Dec. 30 (JG). They are uncommon in interior British Columbia. Whistling Swans wintered in good numbers around Klamath Falls with 850 Dec. 15 and migrant numbers swelled to 3000 in one area there Feb. 10 (SS). Some may have wintered at Malheur N.W.R. One at Salmon, Ida., Dec. 16 was noteworthy. A swan believed to be a Bewick's was carefully studied at Miller I., near Klamath Falls Feb. 25 and three others may have been hybrid Bewick's × Whistling (SS). Trumpeter Swan numbers at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., Lima, Mont., rose to a peak of 253 adults and 20 cygnets in late February. Two family groups of color-marked birds from Grand Prairie, Alta., wintered there. The Montana-Idaho-Wyoming mid-winter survey found 850± (RRS). More than the usual number wintered at Malheur where 41, including ten imm. birds were seen Jan. 4. Three adults were near Springfield, Ida., Dec. 14 (WHS).

Canada Goose numbers peaked at 9400± Dec. 5 at Deer Flat N.W.R., Nampa, Ida., but the majority left with the freeze-up. McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Wash., had 25,000± in January and at least 30,000± were between Wilson Cr., and Marlin, Wash., Feb. 28. About 6500, over three times last year's number, wintered at Malheur. "Several thousand" wintered in s. Idaho (WHS). Over 800 wintered at Pentiction, B.C., in spite of adverse conditions. The Columbia R., at Brewster had a **Cackling Goose** Jan. 14 - Feb. 1 (SJ). A White-fronted Goose wintered with Canadas near Vernon and one was shot at Malheur Dec. 10. Yakima had one Dec. 31 and one was at Richland Feb. 3 (Y.A.S.; REW). This species and Snow Geese number in the thousands in the Klamath Basin by

February's end Malheur had 3500± over Harney L., Feb. 28; some may have wintered there. A few Ross' Geese appeared with Snow Geese in February in the Klamath area (SS). Mallard numbers reached a high of 287,000± at Deer Flat Dec. 13. Ducks, 90% Mallards, reached an above-normal peak of 57,000± at McNary N.W.R., in January. A peak of 2000± Green-winged Teal was in the Nampa area Dec. 1. A pair of N. Shovelers was on L. Chelan, Wash., the last week of January (SJ). Some 800 Canvasbacks were between Wilson Cr., and Marlin Feb. 28 (RF). Up to 50 Greater Scaup and up to 100 Ruddy Ducks were on the Columbia R., between Brewster and Pateros, Wash., in late January (SJ). Up to four Greater Scaup were at Klamath Falls Dec. 2 - Jan. 14 and the same place had a ♀ Oldsquaw Dec. 16-17 (SS). The only Harlequin Duck reported was a male on Vaseux L., extreme s. British Columbia Dec. 29 (SRC). Single Red-breasted Mergansers appeared at Livingston, Mont., Lewiston, Ida., and Spokane (PDS&CL; EM; JA; THR).

**VULTURES AND HAWKS** — A Turkey Vulture lingered at Deer Flat N.W.R., until Dec. 7 (G.E.A.S.). At least 18 Goshawk sightings were made, mostly in s. British Columbia and n.c. Washington. Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers appeared high but Cooper's Hawks were seldom noted. The latter were in above-normal numbers in the Vernon area, however. Red-tailed Hawks, wintering in unusual numbers in the n. Okanagan of British Columbia, apparently suffered toward winter's end; one was found dead and another, nearly so, apparently from starvation (PJ). The Bald Eagle count sponsored by the Nat'l Wildlife Federation tallied 392 birds in Idaho (JH) and 138 in e. Washington (RK). The Klamath Basin of Oregon - California yielded about 610 (SS). The four Gyrfalcon reports received were all from w. Montana and e. Washington. There were 30 Prairie Falcon sightings but only two of Peregrine Falcons. Many more Merlin sightings than usual may indicate an actual increase in this scarce little raptor.

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS** — On the whole these birds came through the winter surprisingly well. A small flock of Sharp-tailed Grouse, extremely unusual in the Missoula Valley, was seen along I-90 w. of the city (PLW) and three appeared between Wasa and Ft. Steele, B.C., where they are very scarce (MVW). Eight were "budding" in birch trees e. of Bridgeport, Wash., Feb. 11, and Kamloops B.C., had 12 on Jan. 7. In the Lewiston area California Quail and Chukars appeared to have had a hard time, often gathering along roadways. The latter, seldom reported from the Grand Forks, B.C. area, were sighted there Dec. 26 (JG). Mountain Quail were sighted four times along the highway between Riggins and Weiser, Ida., Dec. 23 & 31; many were road-killed. Three were sighted Jan. 20 near Dworshak Dam, Ahsaka, Ida. (EM). Ring-necked Pheasants were actually present in increased numbers in s. Idaho and in the Bozeman area. A small flock of Turkeys was still surviving at Bozeman Pass e. of Bozeman (SC). The species was also reported at Creston, e. of Kalispell, Mont. (F.A.S.), and seven were sighted in the Mt. Hull area, s.e. of Oroville, Wash. (BH). Fifty were seen at Prairie, Ida., on three occasions (PCo).

**RAILS THROUGH GULLS** — Pentiction

had two Virginia Rails Dec. 26 (SRC) Vaseux L., one on Dec. 29 (JG), and one was along the Snake R., 20 mi w. of Buhl, Ida., Jan. 28 (DT). A Spotted Sandpiper was along the Link R., Klamath Falls area Feb. 25 and one was along the Mallard R., Gooding Co., Ida., Dec. 27 (DT). Single Greater Yellowlegs were sighted Dec. 17 and Jan. 21 at Klamath Falls and a Lesser Yellowlegs was found there Feb. 25 (SS). The Yakima R. delta, near Richland, Wash., had 14 Least Sandpipers Feb. 18 (REW). Dunlins numbered 45 there Dec. 9, disappeared during the freeze and 18 birds returned Feb. 18 (REW). A late Marbled Godwit was on Lower Klamath N.W.R., Dec. 3 and two very late Am. Avocets were on a frozen marsh at Klamath Falls Dec. 7-16 (SS). Single first-year Glaucous Gulls appeared at Coeur d'Alene, Ida., Dec. 26 and at Pasco, Wash., Jan. 30 (JWW). In the Klamath Falls area an ad. Glaucous-winged Gull was sighted at three different locations Dec. 13-27; an ad. Mew Gull was there Dec. 13, and three Bonaparte's Gulls Dec. 7 (SS). A Herring Gull was sighted near Creston, Mont., Jan. 18 (WJ&MS).

**ROADRUNNERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS** — A Roadrunner near Caldwell, Ida., Dec. 9 was presumably an escaped bird (PW). Several Barn Owls found dead in the Nampa area were presumed to have starved (G.E.A.S.). One was sighted near Winchester Wasteway e. of Quincy, Wash., Feb. 24 (PC). At least 17 Snowy Owl sightings were reported, all from e. Washington excepting for two from s. British Columbia and one near Marsing, Ida. A Hawk Owl was observed on several dates in January at Cataldo, Ida. (m.ob.). The most southerly Pygmy Owl sightings ever for s. Idaho were of single birds at Prairie Jan. 13 (PCo) and near St. Anthony (RGo). Two Burrowing Owls entered a burrow surrounded by 5-6 in. of fresh snow near Othello, Wash., Jan. 10 (RF&TF). The only Barred Owl reports were of single sightings at Kalispell, Clarkston, Wash., and Kelowna, B.C. (one appeared to be starving). Great Gray Owl sightings were at Grand Forks, B.C.; Island L., between Libby and Kalispell, Mont.; near Tetonia, Ida., and s. of Bozeman. Short-eared Owl numbers appeared very low



Hawk Owl, Cataldo Mission, Idaho, Jan. 28, 1979. Photo/J. F. Acton.

except for a report of 17 in sage brush e of Withrow, Wash., Dec. 23 and six seen on Jan. 20 by field trip participants in the Walla Walla area. Saw-whet Owl sightings were distinctly up however. An Anna's Hummingbird survived at a Boise feeder at least until Dec. 30 (G.E.A.S.); three were at Wenatchee Dec. 29 but disappeared during the January "deep freeze" (PC), and the Spokane bird was not seen after Dec. 29 when the thermometer dropped to -22°F. (DS).

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH WRENS** — A few Lewis' Woodpeckers apparently wintered at Hamilton, Mont. (CP) and in the Yakima area (Y.A.S.). One was found s.e. of Union, Ore., Dec. 9 (JE) and one was at Brewster, Wash., Jan. 13 (SJ). One was at Rocky Reach Dam n. of Wenatchee Feb. 23 (PC) and Salmon, Ida., had one Dec. 16 (HBR). Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers at Penticton Dec. 26 were most unusual (SRC). A pair of White-headed Woodpeckers was observed s. of Heppner, Ore., at the Wheeler County line (BC,CC&REW). Ten or more each of Black-backed and N. Three-toed Woodpeckers were present in the Pattee Cr. area burn, 2-3 mi s.w. of Missoula (SF). A concentration of 500 Horned Larks was found 6 mi s.e. of La Grande, Ore., Jan. 27 (JE) and one of 5000 was near Moxee, Wash., Jan. 28 (Y.A.S.). A trip from Colfax to Pasco, Wash., Jan. 30 yielded a total of 1895 along the road eating gravel (IOB&JWW). The only Blue Jay reports were of two along the Little Spokane R., n.w. of Spokane Feb. 25 and one at Kimberley, B.C., feeders all winter (MVW). Common Ravens appeared to be on the increase in the Okanogan of s. British Columbia where at least 500 were at a slaughterhouse near Armstrong Dec. 30 and seen frequently through the winter (JG). The raven roost at Malheur L., Ore., was again active; >800 birds frequented it in 1977 (ST). Chestnut-backed Chickadees were reported only from the Kalispell area (F.A.S.) and five reported near Millcreek s.e. of Walla Walla Jan. 6 (DM). The only Bushtit reports were of 35 at La Grande, Ore., Jan. 18 (WCD). Two Wrentits at Upper Klamath L., at Howard's Bay Jan. 21 apparently furnished the most northerly record e. of the Cascades (SS). Vaseux L., s. British Columbia, had a Rock Wren Jan. 12 (SRC).

**THRUSHES THROUGH PIPITS** — Varied Thrushes were found wintering in large numbers in e. Washington. At Wenatchee they were "more common than robins"; at Walla Walla they were "in various yards . . . especially numerous on Whitman Campus"; at Lewiston, "many" were seen in town, and on the Spokane Christmas Bird Count they nearly outnumbered Am. Robins. The n. Okanogan had more reports than usual; several were still up in snow-bound country at 4100 ft, Dec. 26. Walla Walla had a Hermit Thrush Dec. 5 (SM) and Richland had one and two on Dec. 16 & 23 respectively (REW). Two W. Bluebirds wintered at Penticton (SRC). At Malheur N.W.R., nine W. Bluebirds were sighted Jan. 24 (BE) and a good buildup of Mountain Bluebirds was occurring at the end of the period. Flocks of Mountain Bluebirds totaling 200± were reported in Owyhee County, Ida. (PK). Three apparently wintered at Rupert (WHS). Turnbull N.W.R., Cheney, Wash., had a report of three Wheat-eaters; the report "withstood the test of cross

examination" but refuge personnel were unable to find the birds to confirm the sighting (JRR). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was still at Vernon Dec. 4 (MCo) and Parker Heights near Yakima had one Dec. 1 (Y.A.S.). In Idaho the species was noted Feb. 11 at Hagerman fish hatchery and Feb. 18 in the Snake R. canyon n. of Buhl (DT). A Water Pipit was at Hagerman hatchery Jan. 11 (DT) and Nampa had 80 Dec. 9 (G.E.A.S.). One was along the Snake R., near Asotin, Wash., Jan. 27 and 13 were along the Clearwater R., in Lewiston Jan. 30 (EM&RG). A late report was of two **Sprague's Pipits** observed and photographed in an alpine meadow at Wilcox Mt., near the Ice Field Center, Jasper N.P., Aug. 9 (THG).

**WAXWINGS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS** — Bohemian Waxwing numbers seemed about average in most localities. However Spokane reported a flock of 10,000± and Boise had a flock of 400 which is large for that area (LM). Some 2000± arrived at Helena in November but numbers dropped drastically, probably owing to poor food supply, then rose again to 1000± in February. Cedar Waxwings wintered in more than usual numbers. La Grande, Ore., reported 300 Feb. 10 (WCD) and Spokane had occasional flocks of up to 50. Twenty-five were seen Feb. 1 at Malheur; they are considered occasional in s.e. Oregon in winter (ST). An Orange-crowned Warbler was studied from 10 ft along the Link R., at Klamath Falls Dec. 13 & 28 (SS). A Yellow-rumped Warbler was near Kalispell Dec. 13-14 (BR). A few Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintered with other blackbird species in the Klamath Basin (SS) and six were found in Gooding County, Ida., Jan. 18 (DT). A very late male was near Vernon Dec. 2 (JB). Brewer's Blackbirds apparently wintered in the Kalispell area (F.A.S.). A Com. Grackle wintered at a Bozeman feeder (ETH&RAH).

**FINCHES** — The **Brambling** at Swan L., Mont., was seen until Dec. 3 (F.A.S.). Evening Grosbeaks were absent nearly everywhere. Only Kimberley B.C., reported near normal numbers. At Spokane they were virtually absent until late February; 350± appeared along the Little Spokane R., Feb. 25. Cassin's Finch was scarce or absent except in the Okanogan, where they were unusually common. Three House Finches at Salmon, Ida., Dec. 16 were noteworthy (HBR). Bozeman reported no sightings. Pine Grosbeaks were rarely seen and Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were observed only along the Blackfoot R., n.e. of Missoula in January (AB); 50 near Cascade, Ida., Feb. 10 (MC&ZC), and two birds s.w. of Walla Walla Feb. 4 (JO). Common Redpolls were virtually absent. Noteworthy were 3-4 at Kennewick, Wash. feeder in early January (JD). **Pine Siskins** were "superabundant" in Douglas fir stands across s. British Columbia; estimates placed the total population above *one million* (JG). Red Crossbill occurrences were spotty, this perhaps related to their common appearances in s. British Columbia Douglas fir forests. White-winged Crossbills were abundant in subalpine forests of spruce and in hemlock stands of the "wet belt" of s. British Columbia. Singing and courtship feeding were observed at Vernon Jan. 12 (JG). Elsewhere they were reported only in the Pattee Cr. burn, near Missoula; at Swan L., e. of Bigfork, Mont., and at Polebridge Ranger Station, Glacier N.P., Mont.

**SPARROWS** — A flock of 30-40 Tree Sparrows frequented a Hamilton feeder all winter and the Rexburg area had many times their usual numbers. Harris' Sparrow sightings were sparse. One wintered at a feeder near Vernon (JG), as did one at Livingston (CL) and one was at Penticton, B.C., Dec. 27 (SRC). An imm. bird appeared at Imnaha, Ore., Feb. 3 (FC&JE) and one visited a feeder near Spokane Dec. 30 and Jan. 13 (SAS). White-crowned Sparrows were reported for Kalispell, Nampa, Rupert, Ida., and Yakima, Brewster, and Clarkston, Wash. The only Golden-crowned Sparrows were an adult at L. Lowell near Nampa Dec. 21 (DT) and two at Boise Feb. 12 (HR). A White-throated Sparrow wintered at a Livingston feeder (CL) and one wintered at Polebridge Ranger Station, Glacier N.P. (SB; JD&CM). Lewiston had Fox Sparrows Jan. 6 (C.B.) and singles appeared at Yakima Jan. 18 and near Moxee, Wash., Jan. 28 (Y.A.S.). One in Richland Jan. 28 was only Bob Woodley's fourth. A Lincoln's Sparrow

was spotted in mid January near Brewster Wash. (SJ) and one or possibly two wintered along the Link R., near Klamath Falls (SS). Twin Falls County, Ida., had 1-4 Lapland Longspurs in late January and early February (DT). Snow Buntings mostly appeared in small numbers excepting a flock of 70 at Sullivan Meadows 8 mi. s. of Polebridge, Mont. (SB) and one of 500 near Helena Feb. 8 (SM). The birds reached as far s. as Nampa (G.E.A.S.).

**ADDENDA** — A remarkable record was of a **Caracara**, tardily reported, at L. Owyhee, Malheur Co., Ore., about May 3, 1978 (*fide* CHT). Belatedly, a report came in of a **Wheat-ear** observed and photographed at Malheur N.W.R., June 22, 1977 (RFR).

**OBSERVERS CITED** — James Acton, John Baumbrough, Canyon Birders (C.B.), Arnold Bolle, Susan Buchel, I. O. Buss, Steve R. Cannings, (MC) Mel Carlson, Zilda Carlson, (PC) Phil Cheney, (MCo) Mary Collins, Frank Conley, (PCo) Priscilla Cook, Becky &

Craig Corder Sharon Cotterell Jim Davidson William C. Dowdy, Brad Ehlers, Joe Evanich, Flathead Audubon Society (F.A.S.), T. Flint, Ron Friesz, Sid Frissell, (RG) Russ Gebhart, (RGo) Ririe Godfrey, Dorothy Goertz, Golden Eagle Audubon Society (G.E.A.S.), Timothy H. Goldsmith, James Grant, Eve T. & Ray A. Hays, Bill Hebner, James Heckathorn, Wanda Jamieson, Stuart Johnston, Pip Jordan, Pat Knee, Rick Knight, Cary Lund, Ed McVicker, Cindy Mish, Levi Mohler, Dirk Muse, Shirley Muse, John O'Connell, Colleen Powell, James R. Rees, Robert F. Ringler, Hadley B. Roberts, Hazel Roe, Thomas H. Rogers, Betty Rose, Dorothy Sattler, G. Scrivens, W. H. Shillington, Ruth Shea, Richard R. Sjostrom, P. D. Skaar, Mae Sudan, Steve Summers, Dan Taylor, Steve Thompson, Charles H. Trost, Peggy Waterman, John W. Weber, Mildred V. White, Robert E. Woodley, Philip L. Wright and Yakima Audubon Society (Y.A.S.). — **THOMAS H. ROGERS, E. 10820 Maxwell Ave., Spokane, WA 99206.**

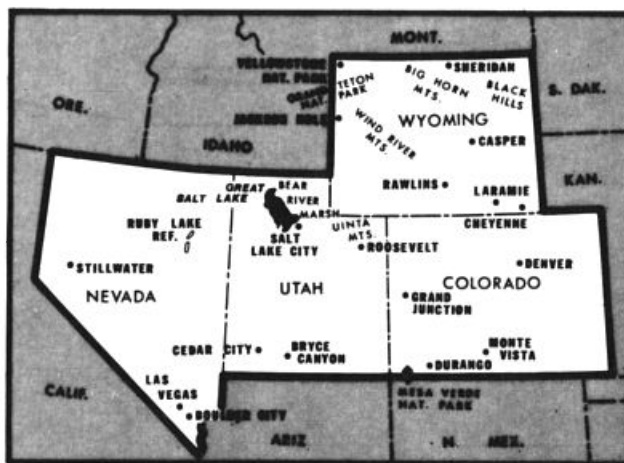
## MOUNTAIN WEST

/Hugh E. Kingery

The combination of heavy snowfall and cold temperatures which hit the Mountain West made 1978-79 the most severe winter on record. Many species normally common during winter either left altogether or stayed in reduced numbers, yet no influx of mountain or northern species filled the gap. Although most severe in Colorado and Wyoming — even the Wind River froze at Dubois, Wyoming — lakes froze as far south as Cedar City, Utah, and Monticello, Utah received 3-4 feet of snow. Moose, Wyoming, reported the lowest temperature -63°F.

Indicative of the reduced numbers of sparrows, juncos, grosbeaks, and meadowlarks which wintered were Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) totals. A party-hour analysis of common birds on CBCs showed all except hawks down from 7-year averages. This applied to woodpeckers, Steller's Jays, magpies, chickadees, House Finches, and sparrows. Midwinter waterfowl counts in Utah dropped 15 per cent below last year and Bear River Refuge had none overwinter. At Grand Junction, Colorado, waterfowl never did develop a regular feeding schedule, so that many were absent from normal concentration areas during waterfowl counts (KG). At Las Vegas, Mowbray missed 21 species which he found last year, and the Foothills Audubon Society reported 14 fewer species at Longmont, Colorado. "A poor pinyon nut and riparian berry crop and low food supplies undoubtedly affected winter bird movements around Ely, Nevada. Few Dark-eyed Juncos, Mountain Chickadees, Piñon Jays were found, and no robins." (PL).

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS** — Arctic Loon reports persisted in Nevada through the winter: at L. Mead single birds on three dates in December and two on Jan. 10, and at Davis Dam, singles Jan. 20 & Feb. 8 (all VM). A Red-necked Grebe surprised observers at Boulder, Colo., Jan. 28 (PM+) and 2 weeks later (MH, *fide* PM). In Nevada Eared Grebe counts declined from 200 Dec. 2 to 1-2 during the rest of the winter; no Nevadans detected



the large numbers of last year, although no one covered L. Mohave. Counts of W. Grebes at L. Mead hit only 2275 Dec. 2, 1500 Jan. 10 — the latter 10% of last winter's peak. A new contributor reported that hundreds of W. Grebes wintered on L. Powell in s.e. Utah, a site not previously covered (CC). Two W. Grebes wintered at Boulder for Colorado's first report of overwintering (PM). Among a flock of 24 Double-crested Cormorants on the Las Vegas CBC, an **Olivaceous Cormorant**, Nevada's first, permitted a leisurely and careful inspection Dec. 16 (†VM; details elsewhere). Many observers saw a Green Heron at St. George, Utah, Dec. 27 - Jan. 29 (MW). Late reports came of a Green Heron at Vernal, Utah, in early October (MP) and another at Paonia, Colo., in mid-November (TC), and of Cattle Egrets — one Nov. 1 at Vernal (MP) and two which spent 5 days in mid-September in a cattle pasture at Delta, Colo. (FW, *fide* TC). The latter supplement last fall's unprecedented Cattle Egret reports (AB 33:199). A Snowy Egret wintered at L. Mead, a rare occurrence (VM). Mid-winter Black-crowned Night Herons appeared at Denver Jan. 1-5 (PE) and Logan, Utah Jan. 20 (RKA).

**WATERFOWL** — About 100 Whistling Swans wintered in Utah, and 12 at Ruby L. At Jackson, Wyo., wintering Trumpeter Swan

counts dropped (BR), while 17 wintered at Fish Springs (GWE), and 20 at Ruby L. (SHB). Most geese cleared out of the Region in December, but about 1500 wintered around Monticello, Utah, an "incredible" number scattered in that desert area (FB). Snow Geese (AB 33:199) continued to migrate through Jackson to Dec. 23, in flocks of 100s. Subsequently the Region reported none until mid-February, the peak 2700 in s.e. Colorado

Feb. 17-18 (JR). Monte Vista reported five Ross' Geese Feb. 27 (MTN).

The cold sharply reduced overwintering waterfowl. Utah D.W.R. counts reported a 15-25% drop, to 14,600 ducks, 1514 Canada Geese, and 1672 coots in late January. It affected the migrations as well: early December and late February U.D.W.R. counts dropped 70% and 50% respectively. At Ruby Lake N.W.R., Nev., <500 ducks wintered (SHB), and Davis Dam, s. of Las Vegas, sported one-third the count of 2 years ago (VM). Monte Vista N.W.R., Colo., reported 9000 ducks, 90% Mallards, wintering — three times last year's population. By the end of February the migration did begin, despite continued cold. Utah's reported 32,320 ducks included 12,835 Green-winged Teal. On Feb. 27, 2000 Pintails flew over Carson City, Nev. (BP).

Cinnamon Teal — sign of spring — first appeared Feb. 19 at Bluff, Utah (FB) & Feb. 24 in the Denver area (D.F.O.) — about 2 weeks later than usual. A Eur. Wigeon stayed at Ft. Collins Jan. 15-17, for Colorado's ninth record (RAR, CCh, CEB). Single Greater Scaups detected in late December (LCB) and Feb. 23 (VT) at Pueblo, Colo., remind us that careful scrutiny can detect rarities among look-alikes. At Great Salt L., 1000 Com. Goldeneyes Dec. 14 (2♀ : 1♂) had disappeared Jan. 6 (JN). Reports of wintering Barrow's

Goldeneyes increased in the s portion of the Region Besides the regular sites at Dubois and Estes P., Colo., they wintered at Logan (5-6 pairs, RKA), Grand L., Colo. (20-30, DJ), Ruby L. (5, SHB), and their now-usual Davis Dam haunt (the usual 30-35, VM). Single observations came from Farmington Bay, Provo, St George, and Hall's Crossing, Utah (MEI, MW,CC). Great Salt L., Dec. 11 (JN) and Glenwood Springs, Colo., Feb. 25-26 (MBo) each had an Oldsquaw. A hunter killed one of two Com. Scoters at Rifle, Colo., Dec. 1, but a birder found the one at Denver Jan. 1-5 (D.F.O.).

**RAPTORS** — The Logan raptor survey tallied similar counts of 245 Dec. 2-8 and 240 Jan 20; the per hour counts were 2.4 and 3.1 respectively. Most abundant were Red-taileds (58, 48) and Rough-leggeds (58, 59). Notable shifts from December to January occurred with Marsh Hawks (49 to 17), the January count sharply reduced from last year's January total of 47, and with Short-eared Owls (0 to 15, JGs). CBC counts of hawks, calculated for the e. 3 Mountain West states for 7 years, show a uniform increase. Accipiters have steadily gone up from .016/party-hour in 1972 to .052/party hour in 1978. Marsh Hawks have increased by 25% over the average of the first 5 years, with the 1978 count of .13/party hour the greatest in the 7 years. The 42 Red-tailed Hawks in s. Utah alone accounted for the increase of that species to .12/party hour, the highest since 1972.

A Red-tailed Hawk fed on Virginia Rails and a Sora at a Ridgway, Colo., marsh in December; the Sora, deterred from migrating owing to a broken wing, was picked off Dec. 31 (JRG). Wyoming had fewer than usual Rough-legged Hawks through the winter (HD, BO,SB,BR); the drop on CBC counts in n. Wyoming from 73 to 27 continued through the winter. Observations apparently dropped in Utah, but Nevada reports were equivocal. The Wyoming eagle survey counted 212 Golden Eagles in January (BO). Fifteen wintered between Aspen and Grand L., according to an aerial survey in January (DJ). One adult was "seen in the middle of L. Granby, Colo., on the ice, fighting over a tidbit with two coyotes." (DJ). Statewide surveys of Bald Eagles tallied 418 in Wyoming, 42 in Nevada. Other high counts included 50+ w. of Provo Jan. 13 (MW), 46 at Farmington Bay, Utah, Feb. 1-15 (AK), and 38 around Cedar City Jan. 19 (SH). Wintering Ospreys seem extremely unlikely in the Mountain West, especially the last 2 winters; however the abundance of artificial impoundments could give credence to the reports which persist — one in Jan. 1976, one which reportedly spent January near Ft. Collins last year, and one this winter in n.e. Boulder County, Colo., Dec. 16 (Longmont CBC) and Jan. 6 (MM). Marsh Hawk observations declined — best quantified by the one-month drop between Logan's raptor surveys. A gray-phase ♀ Gyrfalcon wintered at Sheridan apparently one which has returned for 5 years (HD,†EP). Sheridan had reports of two other possible Gyrfalcons, and another report came from Briggsdale, Colo., Jan. 27 (JC,BJ).

**GROUSE, CRANES, SHOREBIRDS** — A Blue Grouse which perched on a car in downtown Jackson, Wyo., Dec. 15, hinted of

the hard winter to come At Guanella Pass, Colo., 98 White-tailed Ptarmigan were identified; with 40% young, they evidenced a good production year (CEB). The increased reports of Sage Grouse included 55-60 on a temporary practice lek that began strutting practice Feb. 12 (SB). "Despite the snow-covered fields and cold weather, the migration of Sandhill Cranes was no later than spring 1978," and 10,000 had arrived in the San Luis Valley, Colo., by Feb. 28 (MTN). Usually some shorebirds linger until January at Bear R., but this year the freeze and snow came early and the refuge had none Nov. 20; last year's CBC had 600 Killdeer; this year it had none (JN). Spring-returning shorebirds began arriving later in February than in most years, except for one very early Least Sandpiper Feb. 25 at Denver (JR).

**GULLS TO ROADRUNNERS** — The dozen Glaucous Gulls reported, all from Colorado, were many fewer than previous winters. The 1-4 Thayer's Gulls at Las Vegas in December (VM) and the 2-3 at Denver in February (PM,D.F.O.) compared favorably to previous years. At Las Vegas, the "trend of almost all (California and Ring-billed) gulls being adults continues" (VM), probably owing to gull control programs at nesting sites (AB 31:204). Zion reported 50-100 Band-tailed Pigeons Feb. 5 (LE). Mourning Doves occurred at Cedar City, Utah, in occasional flocks of up to 20; usually they do not winter in the Region. One at Eureka, Nev., about Dec. 10, before the cold weather, was 2 months later than ever before (JE). A Roadrunner appeared at a Colorado Springs feeder Dec. 10 and stayed through the winter, feeding on ground beef (CLC,MS).

**OWLS THROUGH KINGFISHERS** — Two Barn Owls inhabiting storage buildings at Bear R., succumbed to sub-zero cold and limited food supply (RV). Eight Barn Owls found during February near Provo included two nesting pairs (MW). Rehabilitated and released was a Screech Owl which flew into an open car window on I-80 w. of Salt Lake City (AK). The only Snowy Owl report came from Banner, Wyo., Feb. 16 (GN, *vide* HD). Found dead in Jackson Dec. 17, was a Boreal Owl (MMc, *vide* BR). While the number of White-throated Swifts declined markedly at Las Vegas and Davis Dam (none at Las Vegas after Dec. 16; only 50-70 at Davis Dec. 22 - Jan. 20 — VM), the observation of one flying near St. George Jan. 3, furnished the first winter record for Utah (SH). Hardy Belted Kingfishers appeared at a number of cold places during the winter, the oddest being one seen three times in January at Westcreek, Colo., where all lakes and streams were frozen the entire month (RW).

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH SWALLOWS** — After 6 years of increases on CBCs, Com. Flickers dropped to .66/party-hour, the lowest since 1972. A Red-bellied Woodpecker stayed in a Colorado Springs yard for 15 minutes only Dec. 4 (EW). CBC averages for Hairy and Downy woodpeckers were identical to last year's, below the 7-year average. Before 1973, the Zion area had two records of Ladder-backed Woodpecker; this season it had two on its CBC, three Jan 13, and a female five times (JG). Observers' reports included

very few late lingering birds, one was of a W Kingbird at Genoa, Nev., Dec 19 (BP), another of two Say's Phoeebes at Cedar City Dec. 16 (SH). First spring Say's Phoeebes arrived in late February; one at Pyramid L., Nev., Feb. 25, began defense of a 1978 nest site (DG). Like the swifts, the s. Nevada swallows had a much reduced population, with only 1000 Tree Swallows counted at Davis Dam Jan. 20 (VM). Las Vegas reported the only early migrants; a handful Feb. 17-26 (VM).

**JAYS THROUGH THRASHERS** — Blue Jay observations in Longmont, Colo., increased over last winter's (157 compared with 23) but in new frontiers like Sheridan and Cody, Wyo., none were seen after December (HD,UK), and Logan had only one observation (RKA). The Blue × Steller's hybrid at Grand L., Colo., spent the winter; it appeared to be a back-cross, Blue Jay X hybrid (DJ). Although the Colorado and Utah piedmont towns reported no Steller's Jays, and the CBC count dropped to its lowest in 7 years, .75/party-hour, Jackson, Cedar City, and Zion N.P., did have small influxes. "By January, Scrub Jays were abundant in higher sections of Zion, while Steller's stayed in the lowland — an interesting reversal." (LE). Great Basin observers noted increases of Scrub Jays at Logan, Cedar City, and Verdure, Utah, and Ruby L. CBC counts of Black-billed Magpies dropped to 2.84/party-hour, down from the average by .45/party-hours. Nonetheless, the snow cover made them more conspicuous Ward reported that old-timers around Meeker, Colo., "say increased traffic has increased road kills, and they are amazed at the large flocks of magpies feeding along the road. They don't recall such large numbers in wintertime." On Feb. 26 she saw one perched on the back of a browsing deer. Observers at Grand L., concur with the Meeker old-timers (DJ), but at Eagle, Colo., they did not begin feeding on road kills until the weather improved (JM). From the s. Utah fringe of their range, magpies were reported from Bluff, Blanding, Zion, and Cedar City.

CBC counts of Black-capped Chickadees were average (1.05/party-hour) but Mountains dropped to their lowest level, at .98/party-hour down from the average by .5/party-hour. Two Verdins were found Dec. 29 at St. George and two Jan. 4 at Beaver Dam Wash nearby (SH). Several flocks of Bushtits flitted along the Colorado E. Slope Dec. 15 - Jan. 10, more than the occasional winter flocks. For example, the Denver CBC found five different flocks and a Colorado Springs feeder had 23 observations through the winter of flocks up to 30 in number (RWa). Winter Wrens regularly range to s Utah — this year to Zion and Beaver Dam Wash — but as usual, were not reported from the other Mountain West states except on CBCs. Winter Mockingbird reports came from Zion Dec. 7 (JG), Boulder Dec. 27 (PG), and Carson City Feb. 4 (IH), and Brown Thrashers appeared at Denver Dec. 23 (RF), Colorado Springs Dec. 2-9 (RAF), and Boulder Jan. 25 (RVz). The three Crissal Thrashers at Beaver Dam Wash Jan. 4 were the first winter reports from Utah in some years (SH).

**ROBINS THROUGH PHAINOPEPLAS** — American Robins mostly did not winter, although a few flocks persisted in Glenwood Springs and Longmont. They reappeared in

mid- to late-February, about the normawtime. The first 2 weeks in December saw single Varied Thrushes at Boulder, Salt Lake City, and Pyramid L. (B.A.S., GK, DG). Mountain Bluebirds began returning in mid-February, about 2 weeks later than normal; the first report was of eight at Reno Feb. 4 (IH). Two Water Pipits appeared at Farmington Bay W.M.A., Utah, Jan. 28 (NH). Then Feb. 27, ski tourers found an adventuresome early flock of five Water Pipits vaulting with the winds at 11,500 ft near Vail., Colo., in Krummholz timberline habitat (CGT). Bohemian Waxwings drifted S to Colorado Springs, Cedar City, and Ruby L. In February their numbers burgeoned in n. Utah and Wyoming; most spectacular report was in the Big Horn Basin, n.w. Wyoming, of a 2-day increase from 100 to 20,000, Jan. 28 (TM, *fide* BO). The two Phainopeplas at Beaver Dam Wash Jan. 4 gave Utah one of its few winter records (SH).

**WARBLERS TO BLACKBIRDS** — The four Orange-crowned Warblers reported from s. Nevada were somewhat fewer than for previous winters. Yellow-rumped Warblers largely left the Region. Nevada CBCs found half those of last year; otherwise reporters mentioned only a quarter of the usual scattered 10-20. A very high count of 500 at Davis Dam Dec. 22 (VM), at the S tip of Nevada, evidenced a movement farther S than usual. A late report arrived of a Blackburnian Warbler in Boulder Nov. 19 (B.A.S.). Much reduced in numbers through the middle of winter, some W. Meadowlarks had returned by mid-February. At Las Vegas 15-25 Yellow-headed Blackbirds, more than usual, spent the winter. The only others were at Hall's Crossing, Utah, Feb. 19 (CC). Red-winged Blackbirds, like meadowlarks, mostly gone in mid-winter, did mass for a count of 10,000 near Longmont Jan. 13 (MM) and 2000 at Jackson Res., near Ft. Morgan the same day (MM). The return migration began in mid-February, topped by a huge flock of >100,000 at John Martin Res., near Hasty, Colo., Feb. 18 (JR). During a snowstorm at Silver Plume, Colo., Feb. 27, one stray from the migration on the plains dropped onto the porch of a mountain cabin; "We didn't even have them in summer." (EC). Aside from CBCs, the winter produced only three reports of Rusty Blackbirds, all in n.e. Colorado (B.A.S., MM, D.F.O.). The last week of December saw Com. Grackles at Wheat Ridge (PE), Longmont (F.A.C.), and Westcliffe, Colo. (VR, BA, LCB), the latter a rare summer locale for them. At Sheridan "a flock of grackles winter at a feeder which feeds squirrels and House Sparrows. The numbers reduce as winter progresses and frozen grackle bodies are found now and then until they are reduced to zero, usually by the end of January; however I saw one bird there Feb. 13." (HD). Logan had its first winter Brown-headed Cowbird during Christmas week (RKA) and at Reno five wintered in two yards (JA).

**FINCHES** — The female of a pair of Cardinals wintered at Lafayette, Colo. (*fide* LH). As last year, feeders attracted fewer Evening Grosbeaks. While Sheridan, Boulder, and Longmont had occasional flocks, most usual locations had almost none. Observers identified four Purple Finches at Pueblo Dec. 23 (VT, LCB, DS) and one at Cedar City the first week in December (PH). Valley and plain

towns (except Pueblo) reported good counts of Cassin's Finches in Colorado, n. Utah, and Wyoming. Numbers of rosy finches approximated last year's; Ward found a flock of 25 at Axial, Colo., roosting in Cliff Swallow nests. The only Com. Redpolls were in Sheridan (scattered reports), Jackson (one), and on CBCs, at Pike's Peak (200) and Cedar City (one). Reporters found few Red Crossbills, and only three White-winged Crossbills at Logan Feb. 17 (RKA). The Abert's Towhee at Zion Jan. 5-6 was the first there since the 1930s (JG). Green-tailed Towhees were at Bountiful, Utah, Dec. 3-23 and Farmington Bay, Utah, Jan. 28 (NH). A Green-tailed Towhee at Glenwood Springs Dec. 14-25 got into the house of the local Audubon chairman and roosted in her Christmas tree... (MST).

**SPARROWS** — At Las Vegas, the most significant observation was the lack of sparrows: very low numbers, especially Sage, and no Harris', Chipping, Brewer's, or Larks (VM). The Black-throated Sparrows at Cedar City Dec. 16 (KC) and St. George Jan. 8 (SH) may be Utah's first winter records. The Sage Sparrow count on all Nevada CBCs was only 49 — compared to a 6-year average of 222. Feeders almost uniformly reported fewer juncos than usual, but the CBC count was average. CBC numbers of Tree Sparrows dipped to a new low, 1.86/party-hour, compared to an average of 2.71. Tree Sparrows occasionally range into s. Utah and Nevada; two stayed 2 weeks at Hall's Crossing, Utah, one was at Las Vegas Jaf. 22 (VM), and one called at a Eureka, Nev., feeder in late January (AB). Three Chipping Sparrows traveled with W. Bluebirds Jan. 19 for Zion's first winter record (LE). White-crowned Sparrows, the counts skewed by totals of 2137 and 2286 at Kanab and St. George, Utah, respectively (up from 555 and 831 the previous year), had a party-hour figure of 2.31, up from a 1.29 average. At Las Vegas 1-3 Golden-crowned Sparrows wintered (VM), and Reno had singles Dec. 4-7 & 24 (IH). Fox Sparrows appeared Dec. 11 at a Sheridan feeder (HD) and for Christmas week at Logan (RKA). Although Wyoming observers reported fewer Lapland Longspurs than usual, Colorado had good numbers, including 200-300, Feb. 3, at Raymer (PM), and a good count along the Arkansas R., from Pueblo and Rye e. to Rocky Ford (VT). Rarer on the other side of the Continental Divide, Laplands visited Granby, Axial, Logan, and Bear R. Ref. (30 on Jan. 1 — ES). A pallid echo of last year's Snow Bunting flight brought one all the way s. to Gooseberry Mesa at Zion Jan. 4, for the Park's first record (*LE et al.*). Four were on Antelope I., Great Salt L., Feb. 3, and singles visited urban areas of Boulder and Denver Jaf. 13 & Feb. 27. Pawnee Nat'l Grassland had reports of only three flocks, although one flock Jan. 13 had 125 (MM).

**CORRIGENDA** — Yellowstone Park has several Oldsquaw records from the 1930s, contrary to AB 32:1037. The old reports in Broderick's *Birds of Yellowstone* (1952) were not picked up in Follett's 1976 pamphlet. (*fide* JD). Please disregard the report of the W. Gull (AB 32:1038). The Clay-colored Sparrow (AB 32:1193) was Jackson's third record, not its first (*fide* OKS).

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## SOUTHWEST REGION

/Janet Witzeman, John P. Hubbard and Kenn Kaufman

In the warmer western sectors of the Region, where the two preceding mild winters had lulled us into a false sense of complacency, winter arrived dramatically the first week of December. The major storm that hit then was felt most intensively in southeast Arizona, where sub-zero temperatures numbed areas as low as Nogales. Heavy snowfall on December 7 forced the closing of Interstate 10 between Tucson and the New Mexico state line; and on the following morning, the desert landscape — with snow shrouding the saguaros and ocotillos — made an unforgettable sight. Temperatures remained colder than normal until early February, and another major wind and snowfall hit Arizona at the end of January.

By coincidence, KK birded the San Rafael Grasslands of southeast Arizona both just before and just after the December 7 snowfall. Three days before the storm he found Sprague's Pipits and Savannah, Baird's and Grasshopper sparrows to be present in near-normal numbers. Returning three days after the storm, he tramped for miles across the snowy wastes without flushing a single sparrow of any kind; the only remaining passerines were ravens, Horned Larks, meadowlarks and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, and this picture remained unchanged on subsequent visits through the end of the period.





Some other species reacted to the harsh conditions. Gray Flycatchers (normally the common wintering *Empidonax*) disappeared from the Patagonia area, but a few Hammond's and Dusky flycatchers (normally much less common) survived there, perhaps suggesting that the latter two, both northern-montane breeders, have higher tolerances for cold. Vermilion Flycatcher numbers dropped noticeably after the December storm and declined further following the late January freeze.

The period was also wetter than usual, with flooding in southeastern, southwestern, and south-central New Mexico and parts of central and western Arizona. By late winter, snow packs were 200% or more of their normal depth almost throughout the higher elevations of both states.

**LOONS THROUGH IBIS** — A **Red-throated Loon** at Painted Rock Dam Nov. 26 (†ST,GR) was about the fifth for Arizona. White Pelicans are usually scarce in New Mexico in winter, so the 80+ at Elephant Butte L., Jan. 1 (DM) were notable. A Brown Pelican from last summer's flight remained on the Lower Colorado River (hereafter, L.C.R.), near Yuma through the period, with another (or the same?) seen 50 mi farther n. at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 31 (RD). The Olivaceous Cormorant continues to increase in numbers and regularity of occurrence in far s.w. New Mexico, with up to six at Evans L., Grant Co., Feb. 6-25 (JE) and one at Glenwood Feb. 8 (Roger Skaggs) — a first for Catron County.

The fall surge of Cattle Egrets into New Mexico left a residue of up to ten into December in the Carlsbad area (SW *et al.*), plus two at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Dec. 1 (WS) and two at Las Cruces Dec. 16 (TM *et al.*). Larger numbers than ever wintered in the Phoenix region, with >200 present during the season at various points; a few were also scattered throughout s.e. Arizona. White-faced Ibises seldom winter in Arizona, but this year small numbers were present on Cibola N.W.R., and probably Imperial N.W.R., throughout the season (BMW *et al.*).

**WATERFOWL** — The wintering concentration of geese on Cibola N.W.R., was notable for Arizona in both numbers and variety. Six Ross' Geese and one "Blue" Goose accompanied the large flocks of Snow

Geese Canada numbers peaked at 4000±, and three White-fronteds were also present; the best find at Cibola was the state's eighth (**Black Brant**), with at least one present from Dec. 1 on, and two possibly three seen Feb. 16 (all BMW *et al.*).

**A of European Wigeon** was at Phoenix Jan. 13 - Feb. 25 (P. Marshall *et al.*, ph., (N&CL), for a second or third Arizona record. Common Goldeneyes reached Arizona in exceptional numbers. The wintering concentra-

tion on the L.C.R., was conservatively estimated at 1000± (BMW); Prescott had "more than ever" (CST); record numbers were at Painted Rock Dam, and more than usual reached s.e. Arizona (DSZ *et al.*). Barrow's Goldeneye numbers in the L.C.R., were not above the recent average, but a male at Prescott Feb. 15-21 (CST *et al.*) was the first credible Arizona record away from the Colorado R. A ♀ **Oldsquaw** near Alamogordo Dec. 16 - January (FLM *et al.*) was only the sixth recorded for New Mexico.

**RAPTORS** — An ad. "**Harlan's**" **Red-tailed Hawk**, found entangled in some cording near Cochiti L., N. Mex., Jan. 18 (J. L. Rosetta), was released Feb. 18 after rehabilitation in Santa Fe. Photos established this as the second documented state record; the first dates from the 1850s, and was confirmed by Spencer Baird! An ad. **Broad-winged Hawk** near Tucson was seen only Feb. 6-7 but may have been attempting to winter somewhere nearby (KK *et al.*); there are about a dozen previous Arizona records. A **Zone-tailed Hawk** near Cliff, N. Mex., Feb. 14 (JE) was either very early or a wintering bird.

Combined surveys for the latter half of January showed at least 241 Bald Eagles wintering in New Mexico. This was only about two-thirds of last year's level, and the birds were more spread out this winter than last, especially s. and e. (JPH *et al.*). Single Caracaras outside recent limits were 33 mi e. of Yuma Dec. 5 (VH,DL) and 19 mi n. of Oracle Jct., Jan. 24 (DSZ,SP). An imm. falcon reported as an **Aplomado Falcon** was seen in Hidalgo County, N. Mex., Dec. 28 (†TM); the details supporting the report suggest that a correct identification of this raptor, now very rare in the U.S., was made.

**CRANES THROUGH CUCKOOS** — The experimental flock of Whooping Cranes wintered as expected in the middle Rio Grande Valley, with eight birds present until N migration in February; unexpected was another bird near Janos, n.w. Chihuahua Jan. 17-19, this being a juvenile from 1978's production (Rod Drewien *et al.*). Recently Long-billed Dowitchers have remained in s.e. Arizona through mild winters. The fact that some also remained during this year's harsh winter at Willcox, Nogales, and Tucson, perhaps indicates that this area is now a regular part of the winter range — regardless of whether the

season is mild or harsh (DSZ *et al.*) A very late phalarope, either a Northern or Red, was present at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Dec. 2 (†WS).

A White-winged Dove at Williamsburg Feb. 14 (DM) was early. Single Groove-billed Anis, scarce stragglers from Mexico, were in Guadalupe Canyon, N. Mex., Dec. 5 (C. L. Cadieux) and at Phoenix Dec. 20-21 (DSJ *et al.*); at Arivaca, Ariz., where six were present last fall, one remained at least until Jan. 24 (DSZ).

**OWLS, NIGHTJARS** — A Ferruginous Owl was found n. of Tucson Jan. 28 (DSZ); although there may still be a resident population in this area, the birds are very rarely detected. Despite the cold, a **Lesser Night-hawk** was at Wellton, Ariz., as late as Dec. 25 (G&DR). Three Poor-wills at Carlsbad Caverns N.P., Feb. 19 (RW) were early — or perhaps wintering?

**HUMMINGBIRDS, SWIFTS** — In Ramsey Canyon of the Huachuca Mts., Ariz., hummingbird feeders sustained Anna's, Blue-throateds, Rivoli's, and even Violet-crowned hummingbirds through Dec. 7; however, none persisted there after the heavy snowfall and hard freeze Dec. 8 (DD). At Nogales Dec. 7 was also the last date for a lingering Violet-crowned (RMA). At Portal, farther from the center of the storm, one Rivoli's made it through December; five Blue-throateds survived the storm, with four present through January and at least three through February (W&SS). One and possible two imm. ♂ Rufous at Las Cruces lingered until at least Dec. 16 (TM *et al.*), the latest ever for New Mexico. January records of White-throated Swifts are rare in that state, so the "many" at Rattlesnake Springs in the period Jan. 12-14 (RW) and six in the Alamo Hueco Mts., Jan. 20 (BJH) were notable.

**WOODPECKERS** — The ♀ Red-bellied Woodpecker at Rattlesnake Springs in October was still present through Jan. 28 (RW). Single Gila Woodpeckers near Rodeo Dec. 31 (RS *et al.*) and Glenwood Dec. 29 (JPH) were out of their normal range in New Mexico. Several typically montane species of woodpeckers were present s. of their usual New Mexico range, including a Downy at Alamogordo Dec. 16 (*vide* LM), two Hairies at Roswell Dec. 16 (EP *et al.*) and one at Loving Feb. 11 (SW), and a N. Three-toed near Silver City Jan. 31 (M. Moseley).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH CHICKADEES** — A Black Phoebe at Cochiti L., Jan. 25 (N. Dodd, K. Giezantner) was well n. of the normal winter range. Steller's and Scrub jays were evident in generally small numbers through the period at lower elevations and in the far s. of New Mexico, as their invasion of last autumn continued; most notable were the Steller's at Las Cruces (TM *et al.*) and s. of Alamogordo (LM), while Scrubs were present in the lower Pecos Valley (SW *et al.*) and one was even at Hobbs Dec. 21 (HS). The Blue Jay at Farmington in October, 1978 persisted into February (APN). Common Crows were more numerous than usual at Farmington (AN *et al.*), as well as at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Dec. 30 (CH *et al.*) and near Las Vegas Feb. 20 (JPH). A magpie in the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., Dec. 16 (Jim Karo *et al.*) was s. of its usual range. Mountain Chickadees joined the corvid



invasion including in the southernmost parts of the valleys of the Rio Grande (TM *et al.*) and Pecos rivers (SW *et al.*).

**MIMIDS THROUGH WAXWINGS** — A Bendire's Thrasher, rare in the L.C.R., wintered just n.e. of Yuma (VH *et al.*). American Robins were nearly absent over most of Arizona during early winter. However, about Feb. 1, large numbers appeared almost simultaneously at Tucson, Globe, Phoenix, Flagstaff, and in the L.C.R., the reasons for (and the sources of) this truly massive invasion are unknown. The species was also numerous in February in e. New Mexico, *e.g.*, Portales (JPH) and Hobbs (HS). The season's only Varied Thrush was a female s. of Ehrenberg, Ariz., Dec. 19 (MH). Good numbers of all three bluebird species, especially Westerns, were present locally in s. Arizona foothills early in the winter; their spread into more low-lying and n. areas coincided with the robin movement in early February. Westerns and Mountains also invaded s. New Mexico, especially the latter species which reached the Mexican boundary area and also the e. plains near Tucumari. Easterns were evident in the lower valleys of the Pecos and Rio Grande rivers plus n. to Albuquerque — with three there Jan. 12 (JP *et al.*).

Most records of the rare occurrences of Bohemian Waxwings in Arizona have been in n. Arizona. A new location for the species in the state was in the n.e., at Ganado Feb. 18, when a flock of 40± was seen feeding in cottonwoods there (WL). Another individual was seen at Flagstaff Feb. 9 (C. LaRue, *vide* JC). The only ones reported in New Mexico were flocks in the Farmington area Dec. 14 and later (AN), except for an exceptional vagrant at Silver City Jan. 31 (M. Zimmerman, *vide* RAF).

**SHRIKES THROUGH TANAGERS** — Northern Shrikes were present in lower numbers in New Mexico than in the past two winters, but notable records included singles near Melrose Feb. 20 (JPH), and in Dona Ana County near El Paso Dec. 9 (KZ). A **Cape May Warbler**, representing Arizona's third record for this century, survived the winter at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, which was also



*Cape May Warbler, Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Ariz., Jan. 6, 1979. Photo/Ken V. Rosenberg.*

the site of the second record in Spring 1977 Found Nov. 17 (ST, RG, GR), it was seen by many into March. Photos (JW, KVR *et al.*) provided the first acceptable documentation of the species' occurrence in the state; a 19th-century "Arizona" specimen lacks a precise date or locality.

Other notable winter warblers not on Christmas Bird Counts, included a Hermit Warbler Jan. 11 on the Kofa Game Range, Ariz. (L. Anderson), and a Wilson's Warbler n. of Nogales Jan. 7-21 (DSz, BD *et al.*). For the first time in several years, Scott's Hooded and Northern orioles all wintered at feeders near Tucson; this used to be a regular occurrence in the late 1960s (*vide* DSz). An ad. ♂ Scott's again wintered at Silver City (*vide* RAF), probably the same bird that has done so over three previous winters. Two W. Tanagers, quite rare in winter, were found in Phoenix Feb. 6 (SRD, HL).

**FRINGILLIDS** — The biggest news in this family was the scarcity of most species throughout s. Arizona (which is usually the wintering fringillid capital of the United States). Erratic visitors such as Lawrence's Goldfinch and Pine Siskin were virtually absent, but in addition most wintering sparrows (Savannah, Vespers, Grasshoppers, *Spizellas*, Lincoln's, White-crowneds) were in very low numbers. Exceptions to the general paucity were Rufous-winged and Black-throated sparrows (which evidently enjoyed excellent breeding success in 1978) and Rufous-sided Towhees.

Single ♂ Cardinals at Silver City Jan. 2 (Mary Granger, *vide* RAF) and s. of Hachita, N. Mex., Jan. 21 (BJH) were out-of-range. Among the few Evening Grosbeaks reported in Arizona were up to 12 at Ganado Jan. 1 - Feb. 19 (HR, WL); the species' winter status with us is still poorly understood. A ♀ Purple Finch was at Portal Dec. 1-3 (ph., W&SS); almost all Arizona specimens are of the race *californicus*, which must arrive from the w., so it is odd that the species should occur so frequently at Portal, in the s.e. corner of the state. Unusual for Los Alamos, N. Mex., were 200 rosy finches Feb. 15 and earlier (Burt Lewis *et al.*), these being mainly Brown-capped with a few Gray-crowneds including at least one *littoralis* (Hepburn's). A Grasshopper Sparrow was found Jan. 11 near Poston, Ariz. (JD; \*Arizona St. Univ.); the species is extremely rare in the L.C.R.

Absolutely unprecedented was the down-slope movement of Yellow-eyed Juncos in s. Arizona. The species appeared in numbers in areas where never recorded before: at least four around Tucson (GG, KK *et al.*), several in the Baboquivari, Atascosa, and Patagonia Mts. (*vide* DSz, BH *et al.*), and two in Bisbee (DD); in addition, unusually large numbers occurred at low elevation in the Huachuca and Chiricahua Mts. (DD, W&SS).

An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow at Santa Fe from Dec. 9 - Feb. 28+ (JPH, ph.) was perhaps the 12th specific record for New Mexico. A flood-damaged, unharvested sorghum field near Phoenix produced a bonanza for observers, with 20+ Chestnut-collared Longspurs (quintupling the previous Maricopa County record) and the county's first McCown's Longspur record Feb. 6+ (ST, ph., KVR *et al.*), as well as at least 10,000 each of House Finch and Savannah Sparrow!

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Abbreviations: †, written details on file with New Mexico Ornithological Society (N.M.O.S.) or with Arizona Bird Committee (A.B.C.); \* specimen; ph., photo on file with N.M.O.S. or with A.B.C.; L.C.R., Lower Colorado River. — **JANET WITZEMAN, 4619 E. Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, Ariz. 85018; JOHN P. HUBBARD, 2016 Valle Rio, Santa Fe, N. Mex. 87501; KENN KAUFMAN, 1411 E. Adams, Tucson, Ariz. 85719.**

## ALASKA REGION /D. D. Gibson

December and January were mild, but February was a return to old-fashioned Alaska winters. A cold front held the state for most of that month, producing, for example, the coldest February on record at Fairbanks, where the average temperature for the month was -25.3°F. Minimum temperatures there were -40° or colder on 14 consecutive days, February 3-16, and temperatures in the -50's and -60's were common throughout the Interior during this period; -71°F (-57°C) at Northway on February 9 was coldest temperature recorded in winter 1978-79 and the coldest ever in Alaska in February.

Pacific Coast areas had severe weather during February too. Ambient air temperatures were characteristically higher than those inland, but, for all organisms trying to produce and hold body heat, wind chill factors drove the effective temperatures far below zero.

**GREBES, DUCKS** — At least three W. Grebes were present in the *Cordova* area during the last week of December (MEI). There have been only two prior Southcoastal records (see *AB* 31:362). The five Redheads reported at Kodiak in October-November (see autumn report) were present there at least through



Feb. 18 (RAM). At least three separate ad. ♂ Ring-necked Ducks were seen at Kodiak Feb. 18, a fourth individual was found Feb. 21 and a fifth (all ad. males) Feb. 28 (RAM, WED, v.o.). An ad. ♂ Tufted Duck was found at L. Louise, Kodiak, Jan. 13 (WED, KS). It was joined by a subad. male Feb. 21, and both remained through Feb. 28, when they were observed with two of Kodiak's Ring-necked Ducks (RAM)! None of these three *Aythya* was known at Kodiak before recent years.

**FALCONS THROUGH OWLS** — The Am. Kestrel at L. Rose Tead, where it was a first Kodiak record (see autumn), was present through Dec. 14 (RAM). A Killdeer was observed Jan. 1 at Juneau (FAG, RHA); the species is a very rare winter visitant in Southeastern Alaska. A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Womens Bay, Kodiak, Dec. 19 (RAM, GT) provided a new late record for Alaska, eclipsing a Dec. 3, 1974, individual at the same place (see AB 29:729). Resident owl species (e.g., Great Gray, Hawk, Boreal, Saw-whet) were widely reported within their respective ranges in the Region this winter, perhaps reflecting more observers than in the past, since the records did not seem to reflect concentrations or higher-than-usual numbers anywhere. A poorly-known, apparently irruptive, winter visitant to Southeastern Alaska from Canada (there are no summer records in Alaska and the species is not recorded every winter), *Pygmy Owl* was recorded in the Juneau-Douglas I. area, apparently a half dozen individuals, from at least late December through February (RBW, FAG, RHA, v.o.). A lack of reporters elsewhere in Southeastern left one to wonder how widespread in that region the phenomenon was.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH STARLINGS** — There were two woodpecker records of particular interest. A *Red-shafted Common Flicker* wintered at Wrangell, all January to mid-February, where it fed with robins on Mountain Ash berries (VKG). The only pre-

vious Alaska winter records of this species (also of this form) are also from Wrangell (see *Condor* 52:32-38, 1950). A "Red-breasted" Sapsucker observed at a Kodiak feeder Feb. 15 (WED, RAM) was estimated to be the same bird seen at Kodiak last autumn (see AB 30:755, AB 31:363)! A Lapland Longspur at Narrow Cape Feb. 18 was a second Kodiak winter record (RAM). The species does not winter in Alaska with any regularity. Two *McKay's Buntings* in a flock of Snow Buntings at Womens Bay, Kodiak, Dec. 21+ (RAM, MMM, WED, DB, TOO), marked the first substantial sightings e. of the Bering Sea coast. Two seen 15 mi from Womens Bay Feb. 10 (TOO) could have been different individuals.

**FINCHES, BUNTINGS** — A *Brambling* was observed from late November through February at Bird Cr., near Anchorage (DPF, GJT, JCP, m.ob.), where it regularly accompanied juncos to a feeder. It became the sixth Regional record e. of the Aleutian and Bering Sea islands, three of which have been in Southcoastal Alaska. All but one of these records have been in fall or winter (see *Studies in Avian Biology* 1, 1978; AB 33: autumn 1978). Common Redpolls were present in fair to good numbers (e.g., flock of 100-150 Feb. 18) all wintering at Kasilof (MAM), and the species was fairly common at Anchorage (JLT). There was a general scarcity of redpolls all season in the Cordova area, but small flocks were becoming more frequent at the end of February than earlier (MEI). Common Redpolls were seen at intervals during the period at Juneau, flock maxima of 100 Feb. 5 & 15 (FAG). Redpolls (Hoary, Common and intermediate birds) were fairly common all winter in the Fairbanks area (m.ob.). Pine Siskins continued to be common (e.g., 1064 Dec. 31) at Kodiak (see autumn report), where they were present all winter (RAM, v.o.), and a few scattered flocks were seen about Cordova all period (MEI). A flock of 350 Feb. 5 was the maximum at Juneau, where the species was present throughout the period (FAG). White-winged Crossbills were fairly common all winter at Kodiak (RAM); small flocks were seen all period at Kasilof (MAM) and at Cordova (MEI), and the species was recorded all winter at Juneau (FAG).

Whether a *Dec. 1 Savannah Sparrow* at Kodiak (RAM) was a very late migrant or a winter bird was equivocal; the bird was not seen again. As fall (q.v.) implied, no *Harris' Sparrows* were recorded in Southeastern this winter (RBW), breaking a 14-year chain of occurrences. Juncos and Tree, White-

crowned Golden crowned and Fox sparrows wintered as far n. and w. as Kodiak, the first fairly common and the rest rare (RAM). A *White-throated Sparrow* wintered at a Cordova feeder (CW, MEI, JC, ph.). It was present from at least late December through most of February, the third Southcoastal and second local record, all in fall or winter. And MacIntosh did it again: a *Lincoln's Sparrow* found at Kodiak Dec. 31 provided the third Alaska winter record, all at Kodiak and all by RAM (see AB 30:755, AB 31:363)! A Lapland Longspur at Narrow Cape Feb. 18 was a second Kodiak winter record (RAM). The species does not winter in Alaska with any regularity. Two *McKay's Buntings* in a flock of Snow Buntings at Womens Bay, Kodiak, Dec. 21+ (RAM, MMM, WED, DB, TOO), marked the first substantial sightings e. of the Bering Sea coast. Two seen 15 mi from Womens Bay Feb. 10 (TOO) could have been different individuals.

**CORRIGENDUM** — The *Brown-headed Cowbird* on the Tutakoke R., last September (see autumn report 1978) provided the third, not the second, w. Alaska record of the species.

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## NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Philip W. Mattocks, Jr.

Colder and drier weather than usual for the Region continued through to January. Temperatures at the Seattle, Portland, and Medford stations averaged about 4°F below normal for the two months. Precipitation was about three inches lower per month than usual. From late December to early January the daily maximum stayed at or below freezing. Such an extended period of cold is unusual, and it furthermore included 1.5 inches of rain in the Portland area January 9-11 which coated the landscape with ice. Temperatures warmed thereafter and normal rainfall returned in February.

There were several noticeable effects of the cold weather: a considerable duck mortality at Sauvie's Island near Portland, a dramatic influx of sapsuckers to the lowland and urban areas, a temporary absence of small insectivorous species such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Townsend's Warblers, and a subsequent near absence of resident landbirds from several well studied islands offshore the northwestern Washington coast.



Cessation of morning song and some apparent roosting behavior were widely noted the morning of February 26 during the total solar eclipse.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS** — There were detailed reports this season of seven Yellow-billed Loons in upper Puget Sound and in s. British Columbia, and two others at Prince Rupert, B.C. At least three of these were seen almost weekly throughout the period. Red-necked Grebes were found in greater than usual numbers on the s. Oregon coast, whereas the normally uncommon Eared Grebe was almost absent throughout the Region. Otherwise loon and grebe species were reported in their usual numbers.

On Dec. 14 ca. 200 mi w. of Tillamook, Oreg., SJ found one or two Black-footed Albatrosses and two Laysan Albatrosses. By the next day ca. 50 mi off Grays Harbor, Wash., there were 10 Black-footeds and two Laysans. In the same location there were about five N. Fulmars and a Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel Dec. 15. On Dec. 13, while 350 mi w. of s. Oregon, SJ had two sightings of the Mottled Petrel (†SJ). Another Laysan Albatross, four Black-footed Albatrosses, and a few N. Fulmars were off Oregon Jan. 4 (TW). Another N. Fulmar was over Swiftsure Banks, off Vancouver I., B.C. (hereafter, V.I.), Dec. 16 (SJ). Six small shearwaters, the one seen well a Short-tailed, were in the Strait of Juan de Fuca just s. of Discovery I., V.I., Jan. 17 (WC, *vide* VG).

Fewer Green Herons than usual were found wintering in Washington, and none was reported from British Columbia. The only Cattle Egrets reported were one along the Sixes R., near Port Orford, Oreg., in early December (D&JR, *vide* AC) and three near Longview, Wash., Jan. 3 (GS, *vide* SSa). There were fewer Great Egrets than usual on the Oregon coast, but more than normal in the Willamette Valley. North of the Columbia R., a Great Egret wintered in Olympia, Wash., and one appeared near Vancouver, B.C., Dec.

19 (*vide* A&JG) Single Snowy Egrets at Coos Bay and at Bandon, Oreg., apparently wintered (*vide* AC&DF). The five and eight Black-crowned Night Herons on the Coos Bay and Portland Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC), were usual. The species is much scarcer farther n.; single adults were at Grays Harbor Dec. 16 (CB,ME) and near Carnation, King Co., Wash., Feb. 11 (ME). American Bitterns were widely reported from Oregon and Washington, and n. to Sea I., and Reifel Ref., near Vancouver, B.C., in January (GA, VG).

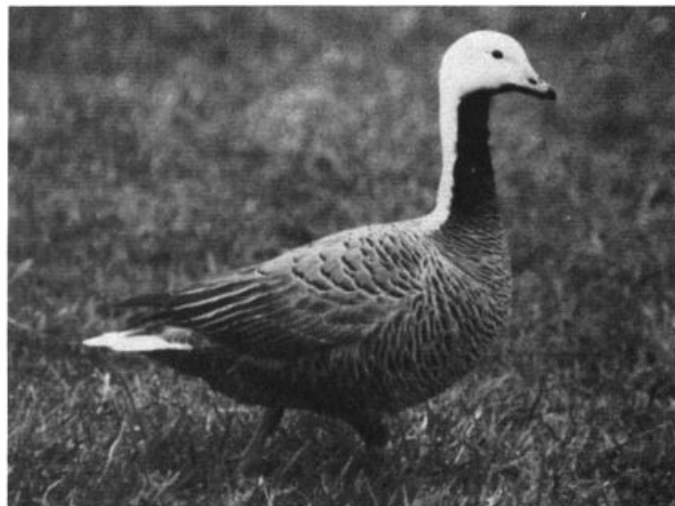
**SWANS, GEESE, AND DUCKS** — Several thousand Whistling Swans wintered in the Willamette Valley of Oregon this season, a much higher than usual population level. About 250 were on the Skagit flats, Wash. (DP,TW), and several dozen were in mixed flocks with Trumpeters in s. British Columbia. Trumpeter Swans were in their usual numbers and locations, with 200± near Mt. Vernon, Wash., scattered smaller flocks in n.w. Washington and s. British Columbia, and one or two with Whistling Swans on Sauvie's I., near Portland.

Three Emperor Geese were reported: one Dec. 2 & Feb. 22 at Sauvie's I. (JGi, *vide* HN; B&DJu, *vide* SSa), one at Nehalem Oct. 15 - Feb. 28+ (m.ob., JGi, ph.), and one at Leadbetter Pt., Wash., from Feb. 20 on (SA, DN, ph.; RW). White-fronted Geese were found at four localities in s. British Columbia with the flock of 19 at Somenos flats, Duncan, V.I., Dec. 20-30 (JC *et al.*) the largest noted. Farther s., the only reports were of three near Sequim, Wash., Dec. 17 (DSm) and one in Eugene, Oreg., through the period (SG,AC).

An imm "Blue" Goose wintered with a few Snow Geese near Tacoma (†CC) for only the second w. Washington record. An ad. **Ross' Goose** was observed from the Sea I. jetty, near Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 30 (WC, *vide* VB).

Five individuals of the introduced Black Duck population near Everett, Wash., were found in that area during January. Small groups of up to 14 Gadwall wintered in a few localities on s. V.I. (*vide* VG) through January. In February, 24-44 were present at the same locations, and two males were found farther n., at Cowichan Bay, V.I., Feb. 10 (JC), indicating an early spring movement. In addition to a few Cinnamon Teal found on CBCs, there was a pair near Seattle Feb. 4, with several other blue-winged type teal (EH,BME). Migrant Cinnamon Teal appeared on schedule in s.w. Oregon in mid-February (*vide* AC) and at Sauvie's I., in late February (HN). Four ♂ Blue-winged Teal were at Forest Grove, Oreg., Dec. 3 (GW, *vide* HN). Five Eur. Green-winged Teal were noted: two in the Vancouver area Jan. 7 - Feb. 5 (JI,BS,DK), two on s. V.I., Jan. 9 & 20 (VG,RSa) and one on Sauvie's I., Feb. 14 (MS, *vide* HN). All but a very few of the reports of this form for the Region are after mid-December. A ♂ **Falcated Teal** was shot Jan. 3 at Willapa Bay, Wash. (KG, *vide* JWE). The specimen was mounted and photographed and represents the first Washington state record, pending Record Committee assessment of possible escapee origin. The usual numbers of Eur. Wigeons were found. The high counts were 14, Sauvie's I., Dec. 24, at Portland Dec. 30, and on the Samish flats, Wash., Feb. 17-25 (MM,DP), and 13 in Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 19 (*vide* GA).

The regular winter concentration of Red-heads at Coos Bay numbered 375 Dec. 16 (DF *et al.*), elsewhere no more than eight were reported at any of a dozen localities. As last year, the main Canvasback concentration was the 1500 at Yaquina Bay (DF; BO, *vide* HN). A ♂ **Tufted Duck**, with just the beginning of a tuft, was at the Everett sewage ponds Feb. 18-27 (†EH,DP,B&PE *et al.*). Several hundred Barrow's Goldeneyes again stayed on Capitol L., Olympia during December (G&WH). A young ♂ **King Elder** was seen at Pt. Roberts, Wash., Jan. 1 & 15 (V&HH, *vide* GA; †DP, TW,KW) for about the seventh record for Washington. More Black Scoters than usual



Emperor Goose, Nehalem, Oreg., Oct. 15, 1978 - Feb. 28+, 1979. Photo/Jeff Gilligan.

were reported from coastal Oregon this winter (AC,DF,HN)

**RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS** — An imm. Turkey Vulture attempted to winter at Roseburg, Ore., but died during the January freeze, despite supplemental feeding by a farmer (*vide* FP). Another immature was seen several times in Ladner, B.C., Dec. 23 - Feb. 1 (DW,KF *et al.*). Apparent migrants at Duncan, V.I., Jan. 28 (JC,JWo) and at Reedsport, Ore., Feb. 8 (EWS) were both considered very early. The overall count of wintering White-tailed Kites in Oregon remained near last year's levels, although pairs were found in several new areas. About 20 White-tailed Kites utilized an evening roost at Fern Ridge Res., through the winter (AC,HN). Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were widely reported in good numbers. There were also nine Goshawk sightings.

An ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk** near the Eugene airport Jan. 1-22 (SGr,AC *et al.*) was well n. of its usual range to n.-c. California. Also an imm. Red-shouldered was hit by a car near Langlois, Curry Co., Ore., Jan. 28, and recovered live (DR, ph.). These records, which possibly document a natural range expansion, are seriously clouded, however, by the release this fall of three Red-shouldered Hawks in Grants Pass, Ore., by DSi (*vide* AC). Red-tailed Hawks wintered in good numbers, with 368 on the Dallas, Ore. CBC, more than doubling the high CBC tally for the state. Single Harlan's Red-tailed Hawks wintered on the Skagit flats (MM,AN) and on Sauvie's I. (HN *et al.*). Others were found during December on the Nisqually N.W.R. (BHT) and the Lummi flats w. of Bellingham (PD, *vide* TW). Observers throughout the Region commented on the reduced numbers or absence of Rough-legged Hawks.

#### S.A.

During Jan. 13-27, RK of the Wash. Dept. of Game coordinated several hundred observers in conducting a survey of all known Bald Eagle wintering areas in Washington. A similar census was compiled in s. British Columbia by A&JG and in Oregon (*vide* HN). A count of 4200± Bald Eagles was totaled. The 1214 around Squamish, B.C., was the high concentration, and 814 were at Harrison Bay, B.C. The combined total of these two localities is triple that of last year. Allowing for duplication, 988 were found in w. Washington, with 381 along the Skagit R., and 107 along the Nooksack R., and 900± were found in w. Oregon. Reports of ones and twos were very widespread.

An Osprey was at Nisqually N.W.R., Jan. 4 & Feb. 4 (CC,RK,AD) and another was in Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 6 (BL, *vide* A&JG). The increase in Peregrine reports continued from fall into winter, with 34 scattered throughout the Region. Three Gyrfalcons were reported, one each in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon during December. Merlins, kestrels, and Marsh Hawks were noted in normal numbers.

A few Virginia Rails wintered as usual, and the several January records indicate that most survived the late December freeze. Four at

Seattle Dec. 30 was the highest count, and one was out of place on Tatoosh I., off Cape Flattery, Wash., Dec. 28 (DB).

**SHOREBIRDS** — Several Semipalmated Plovers were still at Grays Harbor, Wash., and Coos Bay and Siletz Bay, Ore., in mid-December. Singles were in Seattle Jan. 6 (EH) and near Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 6-8 (JI, *vide* GA) for very late records. About 30 Snowy Plovers were at Coos Bay through the season (AM). One to three Ruddy Turnstones, wintered n. to V.I., Vancouver, B.C., and the Lummi flats, Wash. (TW,†MD). A dozen Long-billed Curlews at Tokeland, Wash., Feb. 15 were most surprising (BHT,JB). Groups of 2-3 Whimbrels wintered at Coos Bay and Yaquina Bay as usual, also n. to Grays Harbor and along the Straits of Juan de Fuca (GVV, SSm), with two off Saanich Feb. 8 (KT, *vide* VG). A flock of 30± Willets was again at the North R., on Willapa Bay during February (G&WH *et al.*), and about 12 were in Newport, Ore., also in February (SG,RL). A Wandering Tattler was late at Seal Rock, Ore., Dec. 20 (DF,DI,JE), as were single Red Knots at Ocean Shores Dec. 16 (DP) and at Oak Bay, V.I., Dec. 19 (†LR, *vide* VG).

Least Sandpipers stayed through the season to at least mid-February: one was in Victoria Feb. 2-3 (RSA, M&VG), three were in Port Angeles, Wash., Feb. 14 (KK), and 25 were on the Skagit flats Feb. 17 (DP *et al.*). Western Sandpipers were well represented as usual on the Washington and Oregon CBCs, with fewer seen thereafter.

Two short-billed, gray-backed peep found Jan. 1-8 at C. Saanich, V.I. (JiW,MB,VG,RSA; †JT) are considered unidentifiable. There are only two winter records of W. Sandpiper on V.I. (VG), and none for the entire Region of Semipalmated.

All dowitchers identified to species were Long-billed, with most reports in December. The 116 Long-billeds at Westport Dec. 10-16 (BHT) was the high count, and two were in Oak Bay, V.I., Feb. 7 (WC,HC, *vide* VG). Marbled Godwits wintered unusually far n., and in high numbers: 30 at the North R., Dec. 22 (EP), 53 at Tokeland Feb. 15 (BHT,JB), and two throughout the period at Cadboro Bay, Saanich (*vide* VG). Greater Yellowlegs, Rock Sandpiper, and Dunlin wintered throughout and in their usual numbers.

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS** — There were reports of about 24 Glaucous Gulls this season, which is a few more than last year, despite their absence from several of their usual Puget Sound dump locales. As usual, very few of these were adults, and a first-year bird at Florence, Ore., Feb. 19 (HN) and a second-year bird inland at Eugene Jan. 21 & Feb. 9 (†SG) were the farthest s. The single W. Gulls seen on three occasions in the Vancouver area (JI,G&WA,BS) were the most northerly reported. Hybrid Glaucous-winged X Western Gulls continue to be noted; 33 were counted at Grays Harbor Dec. 16 (BHT,DP, EH,G&WH), 16 were in Seattle Dec. 30 (DP), and several were in Eugene Jan. 1 (TL). Whenever in Puget Sound that Thayer's and Herring gulls are carefully identified, Thayer's is found to be the predominant wintering species. For example, the careful reports by VG this season showed 640± Thayer's Gulls to 40± Herring on s. V.I. On the outer coast,

however, the Herring Gull is more numerous (BHT,EH) The 4060 California Gulls at Portland Dec. 30 was double the previous statewide high count for CBCs. As last winter very few Bonaparte's Gulls were reported except around s. V.I., where 6000± moved N off Saanich Dec. 27 (VG) and several hundred were present Dec. 10 & Jan. 27 (RSA, *vide* VG). An imm. Sabine's Gull was seen off Cape Arago, Ore., Dec. 17 (†AC). About ten Black-legged Kittiwakes were 75 mi w. of Grays Harbor Dec. 15 (SJ) and in Westport Feb. 9 (G&WH), smaller numbers were seen throughout the Region during December and February.

Hundreds of Ancient Murrelets were seen off s. V.I. through the season (*vide* VG), and flocks of up to 50 were around the San Juan I., and in n. Puget Sound (TW,DP *et al.*) A single Tufted Puffin was 200 mi w. of Tillamook, Ore., Dec. 14 (SJ) and about six Tufted Puffins and one **Horned Puffin** were seen 75 mi w. of Grays Harbor Dec. 15 (SJ). Another Horned Puffin was found dead on the beach at Dungeness spit, Wash., Jan. 28 (KK). There are less than a dozen records of the Horned Puffin for Washington, and very few winter records of the Tufted Puffin.

**OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — Relatively few Snowy Owls were present this winter. The 22 on the Ladner CBC, Dec. 17 was the high count, and one at the S.J.C.R., through the period was the only reported from Oregon (DF,HN). A Spotted Owl was found in s.w. Mt. Rainier N.P., Feb. 5 (RT). Single Barrowing Owls were at Gold Beach, Ore., Jan. 1 (D&JR, *vide* HN) and at the Eugene airport from late January on (AC *et al.*). A Barred Owl was located in Campbell River P., S. Langley, B.C., Dec. 30 (TH,KB, *vide* GA), and another was seen and heard Feb. 18 & 25 at the established site on Bacus Hill, e. of Sedro Woolley, Wash. (EH *et al.*).

Several *Selasphorus* sp. hummingbirds were found very late; singles were in Seattle Dec. 12 (MK,ES, ph.), and at Tillamook Dec. 16 (*vide* HN), and two were in Salem Dec. 30 (*vide* SG). A ♂ Rufous Hummingbird arrived in Seattle by Feb. 11 (B&GRE), a slightly early date. Anna's Hummingbirds continue to be found in new localities, and a female was collecting nest material in Langford, V.I., Feb. 21 (G&TBr, *vide* VG).

The "Red-breasted" Yellow-bellied Sapsucker staged a remarkable influx into lowland areas of the Region Dec. 29 - Jan. 1. Normally very sparsely reported, there were 58 on the Eugene CBC, Jan. 1, 25 on the Seattle CBC, Dec. 30, 23 at Ocean Shores, Wash., seen by two observers (DP,SD) Jan. 1, and up to a dozen in a day were reported then from Stanley P., Vancouver, B.C., Sequim, Wash., and Cottage Grove, Ore. The influx followed several unusually cold days during which the temperature did not rise above freezing. After a warming trend in early January, a few single sapsuckers were seen through mid-January, and then the species returned to its usual obscurity.

A Williamson's Sapsucker was brought in by a housecat Dec. 30 near Battleground, Clark Co., Wash., for the first winter record for the state (SSI, *vide* HN\*).

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH PIPITS** — A pair of Black Phoebes was at the Denman Game Management Area just n. of Medford,

Oreg Jan 27 (OS) for a new location for this species in the Region. A Horned Lark spent the season at Clover Pt., Victoria (*vide* VG), and a flock of 50 found at the Eugene airport Feb. 5 (TL,DF) was unusual. Very early Violet-green Swallows were near Aldergrove, B.C., Jan. 14 (GRy, *vide* A&JG) and in Seattle Feb. 17 (SH). Otherwise both Tree and Violet-green swallows arrived on schedule in late February. No Blue Jays were found in the Region this winter. The Scrub Jay found last year in Seattle was still present this winter. A Boreal Chickadee was found in a flock of Chestnut-backed Jan. 22 in Cypress P.P., near Vancouver (BS), for one of very few winter records for the area. During the early January cold a flock of Bushtits moved into a garage at night in Newberg, Oreg. (CR). Two White-breasted Nuthatches wintered at Scatter Cr. Ref., s. of Olympia, Wash. (CC). Five pair of Dippers were seen along the Rogue R., Oreg., Feb. 11, one of which was already actively nest-building (OS).

Wrentits continued their residence in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, n. at least to Finley N.W.R., near Corvallis (AC,GG). Single Mockingbirds were noted at Tillamook Dec. 16 (*vide* HN) and at Salem, Oreg., Jan. 14 (TC). More than usual Hermit Thrushes were found this winter on the Oregon coast (DF) and numbers on V.I., were threefold those of last winter (VG). Eleven W. Bluebirds at Coos Bay Dec. 17 (AM) were the first ever for the CBC there, but only 25 were counted on the Medford CBC, down from last year and far below counts during the early 1970s. Several flocks of from 30 to several hundred Water Pipits were reported, and many smaller groups were scattered throughout the Region n. to Cowichan Bay (JC).

#### WAXWINGS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

— As last winter, Cedar Waxwings were scarce or absent, except in the Willamette Valley, where several hundred were counted in the Eugene and Roseburg areas (AC,FP). A Bohemian Waxwing at North Bend, Oreg., Jan. 1, was most unusual (BG, *vide* AM). There was a coincidence of other reports of this species for Jan. 25-26; 300± were found at Terrace, B.C. (WC, *vide* VG), seven in w. Vancouver, B.C. (BS), and one near Vancouver, Wash. (DJo). A **Loggerhead Shrike** wintered at Sea I., near Vancouver, B.C. (GA *et al.*). Northern Shrikes were somewhat scarcer than usual this season in s. British Columbia and w. Washington and almost absent from w. Oregon.

Single Orange-crowned Warblers wintered n. to Sequim (WS) and Bellingham, Wash. (TW). A late Black-throated Gray Warbler was in the Coos Bay area Dec. 17 (*vide* HN). There were many reports of Townsend's Warblers during December, several in the Vancouver area and on s. V.I., with 10 on the Grays Harbor CBC, being the high count. During January there were only two reports; seven in Discovery P., Seattle Jan. 14 (NW,SH), and one in Eugene in late January (AC). Three Palm Warblers were reported: one Dec. 10 at Westport (BHT), one Dec. 17 at Ocean Shores, Wash. (EH), and two Dec. 25 in Saanich, V.I. (DSt, *vide* VG). A **Northern Waterthrush** flew against a window e. of Seattle Dec. 30 (C&CF,TBo,\*U.W.) for only the fourth record for w. Washington, all in winter. Are rare birds killed preferentially against the windows of the relatively few Audubon Society

members or are we missing a significant source of information?

A ♂ **Yellow-headed Blackbird** wintered in Saanich (*vide* VG), a female was s.w. of Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 14 (G&WA) & Feb. 18 (JWi), and a male was on Sauvie's I., Feb. 20 (RSm, *vide* HN). Two **Rusty Blackbirds** were picked out, one Dec. 23 in Duncan, V.I. (JC) and one Dec. 31 near Bellingham, Wash. (EH). A ♀ **Hooded Oriole** stayed around a Eugene feeder Dec. 24 - Feb. 28+ (LMA,AC; LMc, photos showing decurved bill and extensive yellow underparts).

**FINCHES AND SPARROWS** — A flock of 82 **Gray-crowned Rosy Finches** at Surrey, B.C., Jan. 1 (GRy, *vide* GA) was the only report for that species, as was the group of five redpolls on Samish I., Wash., Feb. 24 (TW). Only scattered small flocks of **Pine Siskins** were noted, with many locations reporting their near absence. **Red Crossbills** were well reported only from s. V.I. Elsewhere there were only two each at Coos Bay Dec. 17 (AM), Bellingham Dec. 31 (*vide* TW), and Sequim, Wash., Feb. 21 (KK).

A **Vesper Sparrow** attended a feeder in Portland from early February into March (JL,HN) for a very unusual winter record. There were eight **Tree Sparrows** reported; four at Sea I., B.C. (GA) and one s. to Portland Dec. 30 (*vide* HN). One **Chipping Sparrow** wintered in Eugene (AC) and two were on the Sauvie's I. CBC, Dec. 24 (DI). **Single Harris' Sparrows** were found throughout the season at Sea I., B.C., on the Skagit flats and in Seattle, Wash., and at feeders in Forest Grove and Roseburg, Oreg. There were reports of 14± wintering **White-throated Sparrows**, which is near normal for the Region. Several Oregon observers commented on the high numbers of **Fox Sparrows** present this winter, and the 441 in Eugene Jan. 1, was a new statewide CBC high count by 85%. Three **Lincoln's Sparrows** wintered at Duncan, V.I. (JC). A **Swamp Sparrow** Jan. 1 at the Fern Ridge Res., near Eugene, was Oregon's ninth record (*vide* LMc). Small groups of **Lapland Longspurs** were scattered in the Region; the 27 at Grays Harbor Dec. 16 (*vide* BHT) was the high

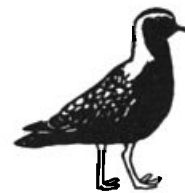


*McKay's Bunting with flock of Snow Buntings, Ocean Shores, Wash., Jan. 9, 1979. Photo/P. W. Mattocks, Jr.*

count A **Snow Bunting** at the Eugene airport Feb. 4 (TL,DF) was only the second local record and the farthest s. this winter. Several wintered at Tillamook and the S.J.C.R., and a flock of 35± wintered at Ocean Shores, Wash.

The birds of the season were the two **McKay's Buntings** found Dec. 16 at Ocean Shores (G&WH; EP,SP). One still in perfect breeding plumage was found alone at the base of the jetty Dec. 16-18 (AR,BMc). The other had some traces of winter rust and was seen with the **Snow Bunting** flock by dozens of observers through March 3. There was no evidence of prior captivity, and several photographs (DP,ES,PM) and excellent feather-by-feather written descriptions are on file (†EH,†MM,†DE). This is of course the first record for Washington, and probably also for anywhere away from the Bering Sea.

**CITED OBSERVERS**, and abbreviations, with sub-regional editors in boldface. Gerry and Wendy Ansell, Scott Atkinson, Kevin Bell, Mike Bentley, Thais Bock (TBo), Dee Boersma, Cathy Bolles, Gwen and Tom Briggs (G&TBr), John Bulger, Wayne Campbell, H. R. Carter, Chris Chappell, John Comer, **Alan Contreras**, Tom Crabtree, Susan Dallum, Paul DeBruyn, Michael Donahue, Alison Duryee, Marc Eisdorfer, Joe Evanich, Bob and Pat Evans, Cal and Charlotte Fanders, David Fix, Kathleen Fry, Jeff Gilligan (JGi), Greg Gillson, Margaret and **Vic Goodwill**, Steve Gordon (SG), Al and Jude Grass (A&JG), Ken Greenfield, Sayre Greenfield (SGr), Barbara Griffin, Terry Hammell, **Bill Harrington-Tweit** (BHT), V. and H. Hesse, Sue Hills, Glen and Wanda Hoge, **Eugene Hunn**, Bob Hutchison, John Ireland, David Irons, Stuart Johnston, Don Jole (DJo), Brian and Doris Justus (B&DJu), Meredith Kangley, Rick Knight, Ken Knittle, Robert Lucas, Brian Luck, Tom Lund, Jim Lyons, Bruce MacDonald (BMc), Lela Mays (LMA), Alan McGie, Larry McQueen (LMc), Brien Meilleur (BMe), Mike Moore, **Harry Nehls**, Darryl Nelson, Audrey Newman, Bob Olson, Fred Parker, **Dennis Paulson**, Evelyn Peaslee, Susan Peaslee, Bill and Geness Reichert (B&GRe), Alan Richards, Craig Roberts, Leila Roberts, Dennis and Jim Rogers, Glen Ryder (GRy), Ron Satterfield (RSa), Susan Saul (SSa), Barry Sauppe, Mike Shiral, Dave Sidden (DSi), Susan Signor (SSi), Dory and Stan Smith (D&SSm), Richard Smith (RSm), Ernie Spragg, Dave Stirling (DSt), Gary Suhadolnik, Wally Sumner, Otis Swisher, Jeremy Tatum, Keith Taylor, Ron Toonen, Gus Van Vliet (GVV), **Terry Wahl**, Glenn Walthall, Joe Welch (JWe), E. G. White-swift (EWS), Nat Wheelwright, Ralph Widrig, Jack Williams (JWi), Doug Wilson, Jim Wilson (JiW), Ken Wilson, Joe Woodcock (JWo), (†) = written description on file, (S.J.C.R.) = South jetty of the Columbia R., Oreg., (V.I.) = Vancouver I., B.C. — **PHILIP W. MATTOCKS, JR.**, Dept. of Zoology, Univ. of Washington, Seattle, Wash. 98195.



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## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Jon Winter and Stephen A. Laymon

The winter season commenced very cold and dry, with apprehension of a returning drought. Mid-January however, brought needed relief as storm after storm crossed the Region, bringing the rainfall and temperatures back to normal, where they remained for the rest of the period.

Waterfowl stayed in the Central Valley (hereafter, C.V.) refuges and along the coast until heavy rains arrived, at which time they spread out into flooded areas. The most exciting bird of the winter was a Greater Shearwater on Monterey Bay, but the discovery of a suspected Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*?) created much more discussion (see S.A.).

This report will be the last for the senior co-regional editor. More time is needed for research and meeting other demands of a very busy schedule. Being an *American Birds* regional editor is both a rewarding and, at times, quite frustrating job, but it is nonetheless educational. I have enjoyed my tenure, and I wish to thank contributors throughout the Region for their observations. Through the cooperation of our large and very active community of observers, the Middle Pacific Coast Region consistently manages to produce very interesting reports. They are always a challenge. Steve Laymon will carry on with, as yet, an unchosen co-editor.

**LOONS THROUGH TUBENOSES** — Late migrant Arctic Loons were noted along the coast with 1500± moving S off Pt. Reyes Dec. 16 (DE) and 50 off Humboldt Bay Dec. 30 (DE *et al.*). A Red-throated Loon at L. Hennessy, Napa Co., Dec. 9 (WS), and one at Rio Vista, Sacramento Co., Feb. 8 (DE) were unusual inland. Horned Grebes were found in smaller-than-normal numbers on inland lakes. Eared Grebes numbers also appeared down inland, so 2000± on Don Pedro Res., Tuolumne Co., Feb. 7 (PD) was a bit surprising.

A few Black-footed Albatrosses were found on off-shore trips which is normal. Northern Fulmars staged a minor invasion early in winter with 10-50 being seen on pelagic trips to mid-January (m.ob.), but the species was mostly gone by the end of January (RS). Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen on pelagic trips in small numbers (m.ob.) as in the past few winters. Two Flesh-footed Shearwaters were on the Cordelle Banks Jan. 13 (W.F.O.) providing the sixth Regional winter record.

The most exciting pelagic bird of the season was a well described **Greater Shearwater** 10 mi w. of Moss Landing Feb. 24 (†K. Garrett, †L. Norris, †J. Dunn *et al.*). This is the first sighting for California and on the Pacific Ocean. The species is normally confined to the Atlantic Ocean. The sighting details, once reviewed by the California Records Committee will be published elsewhere. A New Zealand Shearwater at the Cordelle Banks Jan. 13 (W.F.O.) established only the third winter record for California. Short-tailed Shearwaters were back to their normal few after last winter's invasion. Manx Shearwaters were again well represented with a peak of 28 at Pt. Reyes Dec. 28 (RS,BSa); latest were five on Monterey Bay Feb. 11 (SFB *et al.*). This matches last winter's pattern perfectly. No petrels were reported.



**CORMORANTS THROUGH HERONS** — More than 100 Double-crested Cormorants were at Indian Valley Res., Lake Co., Jan. 19 (SAL). Trees left standing when this lake filled several years ago are ideal habitat for this species. Cattle Egrets were again reported in high numbers, with 115 found inland and nine on the coast. Out-of-place Great Egrets were two at Willow Cr., Humboldt Co., Dec. 23 (DA), and one at Lewiston Dam, Trinity Co., Dec. 29 (DA, SAL). Four Snowy Egrets were at the Ukiah Sewer Ponds, Mendocino Co., Jan. 28 (OJK). The only White-faced Ibis were at Los Banos State Waterfowl Management Area (hereafter, S.W.M.A.) with a peak of 160 Feb. 3 (SFB).

**WATERFOWL** — Scattered sightings of Whistling Swans were reported from along the coast in greater-than-normal numbers (m.ob.). Twenty thousand swans near Oroville Jan. 17 (SAL *et al.*) represented a sizable proportion of the state's wintering population. An ad. Trumpeter Swan was with six Whistlings at Tule L., Lake Co., Feb. 25 (†SAL *et al.*). This is probably the first record for Lake County. Two additional sightings, probably of the same bird, were at Lower Klamath N.W.R., in late January (S. Summers) & Feb. 4 (C. Stromsness, *vide* †MT).

More than the average numbers of Canada Geese were reported from coastal locations. A real surprise were seven of the endangered Aleutian subspecies at the Salinas R. S.W.M.A., in late December (BE). Unfortunately one was shot by a hunter. Quite unusual were 50 (Black) Brant at the Fish Docks on Pt. Reyes Jan. 21 (LCB). Out-of-range Ross' Geese were: one at Crespi Pond, Monterey Co., Dec. 28 - Feb. 25 (RS *et al.*) and four at Elkhorn Slough-Jan. 1 (TB, PM).

Gadwall were reported in exceptional numbers from Gray Lodge S.W.M.A., with 16,000± there Dec. 20 (BED). An apparent Pintail X Green-winged Teal was at Gray Lodge Jan. 31 - Feb. 8 (BED). Impressive flocks of Wood Ducks consisted of 160 at Santa Rosa Dec. 9 (BDP, JP), and 58 at Crystal Springs Res., Feb. 23 (PM).

A high count of 289 Canvasbacks was tal-

ied Dec. 23 at old Alameda Cr., in s. San Francisco Bay (hereafter, S.F. Bay) where 700-800 were regular 15 years ago (HLC). A few Greater Scaup are expected from inland locations, but 49 with 12 Lessers at Borax L., Lake Co., Jan. 21 (SAL) and 30 at Copco Res., Siskiyou Co., Feb. 4 (*vide* MT) were surprising. Four ♂ Tufted Ducks were found; one each at L. Merritt Dec. 2 - Jan. 13 (JM); Muddy Hollow, Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 - Feb. 25 (JE *et al.*); an adult at Tiburon Jan. 14 (RS *et al.*); and an immature there Jan. 19 (RS *et al.*).

One hundred eighteen Barrow's Goldeneyes were reported, a record number; 55 of them at L. Merritt Feb. 2 (SFB), 22 at Kuttras P., Red-ding Dec. 30 (SAL), and 15 at Oroville Jan. 1 (SAL). Hooded Mergansers appeared in normal numbers except for a flock of 35 at Foster City, San Mateo Co., Dec. 29 (PM). Exceptionally large concentrations of Com. Mergansers were 1950 at L. Almanor Dec. 27 (SAL), and 2000+ at Copco Res., Siskiyou Co., Feb. 2 (PD). Inland Red-breasted Mergansers were at Oroville Jan. 16-24 (KVV, m.ob.) and Friant, Fresno Co., Jan. 19 (KH *et al.*).

**RAPTORS, RAILS** — Information on the decline of White-tailed Kite populations continues to mount. State Fish and Game mid-winter raptor surveys showed a 65%-90% decline (*vide* J. Snowden) and the Moss Landing Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC), has experienced a 90% drop in the past 4 years — from 50 to 5 (DP). On the positive side, the Chico CBC was only 30% below its 7-year average. One at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Feb. 14 (D. Fix) was out of the normal range.

An imm. Goshawk at Gray Lodge S.W.M.A., Dec. 7 (BED) was the only one reported. Three Broad-winged Hawks were found; one each at the Carmel R., Dec. 3 (EM *et al.*); Inverness Dec. 14-20 (RS *et al.*); and West Pittsburgh Dec. 9 - Feb. 23 (A. Gille, SFB, †DE). This is the most that have ever wintered in the Region.

Rough-legged Hawks were at or near normal levels only in Great Basin locations. Ferruginous Hawk was at its lowest level in recent years with only ten reported. The first annual statewide Bald Eagle survey held Jan. 19-20, yielded a total of 820; 48.5% of which were immatures; 50% were recorded in the Klamath Basin and the rest scattered throughout the state, primarily in the n.; Shasta, Butte, and Tuolumne cos., each recording >20. It is estimated that only 25% of these eagles nest in California (PD). Peregrine Falcons were reported down 60-70% from the average of the past few years, while Merlins were at or above normal levels.

A Clapper Rail was at Elkhorn Slough for the first time in several years, and was seen throughout the period (BE, EM). Two Soras



were near Weed Dec 16 and three were near Grenada, Siskiyou Co., Jan 2 (*vide* MT) This is an unusual winter location. The only Black Rail reported was one calling at Kehoe Marsh, Marin Co., Dec. 16 (RS). At least 13 Com. Gallinules were found in the Clear L. Basin where they were previously thought to be rare (SAL), and one was at L. Hennessey, Napa Co., Dec. 9 - Jan. 19, where they are unusual (WS,BDP,JP). Estimated reduction of coots at Bolinas Lagoon was approximately 90% of pre-drought numbers (GP); the same percentage reduction was also noted on the Sacramento R., at Red Bluff (SAL).

**SHOREBIRDS** — Black-necked Stilt wintering populations have been increasing at coastal locations over the past 10 years, but this winter they reached an all time high with 400± at the e. end of Dumbarton Bridge Dec. 11 (SFB,DE); 210 at old Alameda Cr., Dec. 23 (HLC); one at Pt. Reyes Dec. 18 (JE *et al.*); and up to six at Bodega Bay Jan. 1-6 (WS,DS, S. Yaninck *et al.*). Up to three Semipalmated Plovers were at Stafford L., Marin Co., Dec. 12 - Jan. 3 (DS). The species is rare away from coastal mud flats in winter. Mountain Plovers made news this winter with two near Drakes Beach, Pt. Reyes Dec. 16-29 (†DE,RS *et al.*), and one at Pajaro Dunes, Monterey Co., Dec. 23-25 (J&RW). These seem to be the first winter records for the coast. Fifty at Arbuckle, Colusa Co., Jan. 27 were n. of their normal winter range in the C.V. Three to four Am. Golden Plovers wintered on Pt. Reyes (m.ob.); one seen there Jan. 28 was noted as very yellow in color, and may have been of the Siberian race, *fulva* (AE).

Marbled Godwits were considered unusually common in the Vallejo-Martinez area (DE,FKB), but on the Hayward shore a maximum of 1100± was found Feb. 2, where 4000± were regular 12 years ago (HLC). A late January and February movement of Lesser Yellowlegs was noted in the C.V., with four at Holland Tract, Contra Costa Co., Jan. 18 (DE,DW); five at Merced N.W.R., Feb. 4 (RH,KH *et al.*); and four at Sacramento N.W.R., Feb. 11 (KVV) being the largest groups.

Up to three N. Phalaropes, including a breeding-plumaged female were at the Fremont Salt Ponds Jan. 10 - Feb. 7 (†SFB,DE). There are very few winter records for the Region and most are from salt dehydrator ponds. The only Red Phalaropes reported were 15 on the Cordelle Banks Jan. 21 (W.F.O.), and 30 at Pt. Pinos Jan. 19 (RS *et al.*) Red Knots were found in high numbers in S.F. Bay with 300± at Coyote Pt., Dec. 28 (PM), and 162 at Hayward Landing Jan. 31 (CS). One was at Napa Jan. 2 (KVV) where they are rare. A Ruff was at Bodega Head Dec 18 (L. Stenzel *et al.*).

**JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS** — Seven Parasitic Jaeger reports were again higher than normal for the period (m.ob.). Ten Glaucous Gulls were reported, nine from coastal locations and, most notable, an adult at Victoria I., San Joaquin Co., Jan. 30 (DE *et al.*). Mew Gull was the most common gull at Stockton Feb. 8 (DE) with 325+ present. An immature was at Oroville Jan. 1 (SAL) providing only the third Butte County record. An imm. Laughing Gull was at Moss Landing Jan. 22 - Feb. 19 (L. Spear, †m.ob.). This represents the first Regional winter record and the first

immature ever reported in the Region A Franklin's Gull was at Pajaro Dunes Jan 10 (J&RW). An incredible concentration of 1500+ Bonaparte's Gulls wintered on Clear L. (SAL). One imm. Sabine's Gull seen several miles off Humboldt Bay Jan. 4-5 (B. Sizoo) and another in Monterey Bay Feb. 18 (S. Terrill, GMcC) provided two of very few winter records.

Elegant Terns at the Pajaro R., Dec. 6-18 (J&RW) were very late. More Marbled Murrelets were recorded than is normal, with 88 seen from Humboldt Bay to Santa Cruz. Most intriguing were ten birds flying over Big Basin S.P., at dawn on three January dates (DP), indicating that this species may roost inland throughout the year. Xantus' Murrelets were again found on Monterey Bay with a maximum of two on Feb. 18 (LCB). Exceptional concentrations of Cassin's Auklets were found. A raft of 5000± on Monterey Bay Jan. 6 and 3500± at Cordelle Banks Jan. 13 & 21 (W.F.O.) are noteworthy. Rhinoceros Auklets were reported as abundant with 5000± on Monterey Bay Feb. 18 (W.F.O.) and 1000± on the Cordelle Banks Jan. 21 (W.F.O.). One ad. Tufted Puffin was at the Cordelle Banks Jan. 21 (W.F.O.) and another at Pt. Pinos Dec. 28 (RS, BSa).

**PIGEONS THROUGH OWLS** — The surprising scarcity of Band-tailed Pigeons throughout the period was widely noted. The population dynamics of this species are, at times, most unusual, especially in view of the large numbers of birds seen last winter. The presence of a Great Horned Owl in late February at the Hall Natural Area, (hereafter, H.N.A.), Mono Co., at 10,000 ft provides one with some food for thought about adaptability and prey availability under such conditions (DDeS). Eighteen Pygmy Owls, reported mostly from inland locations, was about normal for this species in winter. Eight Spotted Owls were reported from the coast which, Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) notwithstanding, is a better-than-average number. A single Burrowing Owl wintered just s. of St. Helena, Napa Co., and was the only one reported (KVV,BDP *et al.*). A wintering Long-eared Owl present Dec. 14-26 apparently succumbed to a Great Horned Owl in Muddy Hollow, Marin Co. (JE, DS *et al.*). Some 15 wintering Saw-whet Owls, all reported from the coast, was a much better-than-average showing.

**GOATSUCKERS THROUGH FLY-CATCHERS** — A single ♀ *Selasphorus* hummingbird (possibly Allen's) was found trying to winter Dec. 23 - Jan. 16 at Bodega Bay (m.ob.). An ad. ♂ Costa's Hummingbird was observed Jan. 15 in Sacramento (*vide* BK), and a female was at Cape Mendocino Dec. 28 (*vide* DE), but no details were submitted.

Nine Pileated Woodpecker reports (one inland from Alpine County) mostly from the coast was normal. Lewis' Woodpeckers appeared in several coastal areas over the period, but the largest concentration was found on the Peace Valley CBC, Dec. 29 where 148 were tallied (BED). A ♀ Williamson's Sapsucker was found at Del Valle Regional P., Alameda Co., Jan. 20 - Feb. 1 (AE,DE,JM, m.ob.) was most unusual as it is rarely found away from montane habitat. Finding a Hairy Woodpecker at 10,000 ft on the H.N.A., Jan. 1 was most surprising (DDeS). It appears that a

number of Sierran species winter at rather high elevations in spite of the harsh conditions

Two Black Phoebes were found wintering in Siskiyou County where they are exceptional at this time of year (*vide* MT). Say's Phoebe numbers were noted by many observers as being conspicuously low.

#### S.A.

On Dec. 16 Dick Erickson found a strange bird among a large flock of Horned Larks in a cattle pasture at Point Reyes After much initial confusion L. C. Binford finally proved that it was a species of lark A consensus among many observers is that it was a *Skylark*, *Alauda arvensis*. It was last seen Feb. 19. Many photographs were taken by A. Ghorso *et al.* These have been sent to authorities in Victoria, B.C., for comparison with their introduced population of Skylarks, *A. a. arvensis* and to the British Museum.

A preliminary comparison of photos of this bird and British Columbia Skylarks indicate that the Point Reyes Skylark was much more brightly colored with a somewhat smaller bill. These photographs were also compared directly with series of specimens of various asiatic races at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology in Berkeley. The Point Reyes bird differed in several ways from the specimens of *A. a. pekinensis*; e.g., all the specimens of that race showed heavily streaked throats while the Point Reyes individual had an unstreaked throat. The specimens of *A. a. kibortii* more closely resembled the photographs, but no specimen of any race showed the rich rusty coloration of the Point Reyes bird. Individual rather than taxonomic variation may account for much of this, and it would be very dangerous to assign this bird to any distant race regardless of its resemblance.

Some observers feel that the Oriental Skylark, *A. gulgula*, has not been completely eliminated. Only one race of Oriental Skylark is considered migratory, *A. g. inopinata*, from the Himalayas. There is virtually no chance that this species could occur naturally in California. Deliberate introduction is a possibility, but importation of Skylarks is expressly forbidden by state law and no exceptions have been authorized within the last five years. Our Skylark differed from specimens of *A. gulgula* in several respects but the significance of these differences is disputed and we await opinion from authorities at the British Museum.

—Joe Morlan

**LARKS THROUGH THRUSHES** — A single Horned Lark found atop the Trinity Dam on the Lewiston CBC, Dec. 29 (PD,DA) was quite unexpected and may have been the first recorded in Trinity County. A surprising number of swallows was found throughout the Region this winter. Some 300 Tree Swallows were found at the Pajaro R. mouth Jan. 21 (J&RW,DP) and another 125 were at Elkhorn Slough Dec. 31 - Jan. 1 (EM). A Rough-winged Swallow was seen here Jan. 2 (TB,PM) A Cliff Swallow found at P.R.B.O.-Palomarín Dec. 12 was the first recorded in the Region



Skylark, Pt. Reyes, Calif., Dec. 16, 1978. Photo/Mike Wihler.

during December (DDeS). Gray Jays were noted as "abundant" between 5-6000 ft, on Mt. Shasta all winter (MT). A single Black-capped Chickadee seen several times over the winter at Greenhorn P., Yreka was the only one reported (MT). A report of Mountain Chickadees being common at the H.N.A., elevation >10,000 ft, Dec. 30 (DDeS) is interesting. The observation of two White-breasted Nuthatches there Dec. 31 is even more remarkable (DDeS)! Red-breasted Nuthatches were noted markedly absent all winter . . . where were they? What could a Brown Creeper find to eat on the H.N.A., in late February (DDeS)? Dippers appear to stay at high elevations in the Sierra as long as there is open water. A single bird was found along the upper reaches of Lee Vining Cr., Mono Co., Jan. 1 at 9700 ft (DDeS). Four House Wrens wintered in the Region, a better-than-average number. The Bendire's Thrasher at the Parker's feeder in Courtland was still present Feb. 28+. Two wintering Sage Thrasher reports were received; seven birds found at Lava Beds Nat'l Mon., Jan. 28 (fide MT) and two were found on the Butte Valley CBC, Dec. 23 (fide MT). Two other February reports were undoubtedly of early migrants. Many of the Region's most active observers reported that robin and Varied Thrush numbers were "way down"; as much as 97% in some areas as compared to last winter. A high count of 125± Mountain Bluebirds were reported from San Benito County Jan. 27. One-half of them were present Feb. 17 (AE *et al.*).

**GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WOOD WARBLERS** — Cold weather appears to have affected the winter populations of Ruby-crowned Kinglets at Dog I., Tehama Co. (SAL). Some 57 birds were found there Nov. 29, but dropped to 12 by Jan. 31, after a prolonged cold spell. A flock of 100± Bohemian Waxwings was found wintering near S. Taylor Cr., in the Tahoe Basin Jan. 4 - Mar. 11 (fide SL). This flock is odd, since the species was reported from nowhere else in the Region. Cedar Waxwings were absent or found in only marginal numbers throughout. The same was true of N. Shrikes. Only two were reported; singles at Sacramento Jan. 2 (fide BK) and at Grey Lodge N.W.R., Feb. 10-22 (BED). The

biggest disappointment of the period was the discovery of 50,000+ Starlings at Patterson Pass Road, Alameda Co., Feb. 28 (DE).

Nine Black-and-white Warblers appeared to have wintered Dec. 31 - Feb. 28 from Sonoma County to the Carmel R. (m.ob.). Only one Tennessee Warbler was reported; a very bright, well marked individual Dec. 31 at Bodega Bay that may have been the same bird reported in late November there (JW,RS *et al.*). Orange-crowned Warblers were practically nonexistent all winter, but at least four Nashvilles were found from Ukiah to the Carmel R., Dec. 10 - Feb. 18 (LCB,OJK,EM,DHE). Only two Yellow Warblers found observers; at Monterey Feb. 18 (LCB) and at Golden Gate P., Jan. 24 (PM). The latter present from November and may have also wintered there last year. One of the most interesting *Parulid* discoveries was of a ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler in Auburn Dec. 12, frequenting a feeder and still present Mar. 3 (fide BK, m.ob.). This marks only our second winter record. Three Black-throated Gray Warblers from Butte County Jan. 25 - Feb. 15 (KVV,SAL) and one from Lake County Mar. 3 (BDP) represented a good showing for this species. Unusual were three Hermit Warblers at Año Nuevo Jan. 10 (TB). Single Palm Warblers at Bodega Bay Jan. 15 (DS) and at Pt. Reyes Station Dec. 7 (RS,JE) and 3-4 birds at Neary's Lagoon, Santa Cruz Dec. 22 (TB) represented average wintering numbers of this species. A N. Waterthrush found along the Pajaro R., Santa Cruz Co., Dec. 31, remained until Mar. 11 (†C. Frederickson, TB,RM) and another was found at Five Brooks, Marin Co., Feb. 10 - Mar. 5 (D. Ellis, JM, m.ob.). Most unusual was a wintering MacGillivray's Warbler found at the Pajaro R., Santa Cruz Co., Dec. 21 - Mar. 12 (EM,†TB *et al.*) that provided the Region with its fourth winter record. The Hooded Warbler seen last fall in Muir Woods was last seen Dec. 7 (DE). Five Wilson's Warblers were reported from Santa Cruz to Monterey cos., Dec. 3 - Jan. 4, and at least four ♂ Am. Redstarts were found in the same area Nov. 26 - Feb. 19, one of which returned to Watsonville Sewage Plant for its third consecutive winter (TB,PM).

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES** — A single "Bullock's" Oriole seen at Dog I., Tehama Co., Dec. 16, was the only oriole reported for the period (SAL). The Great-tailed Grackle found in San Francisco remained throughout winter, having been first discovered in June, 1978. A single ♀ Western found at Ukiah Feb. 10 was the only tanager reported (OJK).

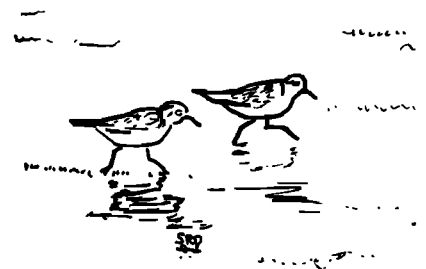
A young male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found frequenting a feeder in El Cerrito Jan. 20 (KVV, m.ob.). A good description of an ad. male Cassin's Finch was received of a bird seen at Bodega Bay Jan. 15 (†DS). It provides Sonoma County with its first record of this species. Interesting was the discovery of 30± Pine Grosbeaks on the H.N.A., at 10,000 ft, Dec. 30 (DDeS). This species does not seem to drift altitudinally during winter as do so many other Sierran species. A single Gray-crowned Rosy Finch was seen here Dec. 31 (DDeS). Also found the same day on the H.N.A., were three Red Crossbills and another seen there in late February that appeared to be carrying nesting material (DDeS)! At least three Lark Buntings were found along Little Panoche

Road, Fresno Co., Feb. 4 17 (JM,AE *et al.*) Three more Sharp-tailed Sparrows joined the bird seen at the mouth of New Pine Cr., Bolinas Lagoon Feb. 24 (fide DDeS). Two more were seen Jan. 10-27 on the Dumbarton boardwalk, San Francisco Bay N.W.R. (DE,SFB) and still another seen at the Palo Alto Baylands Jan. 25 - Feb. 24 (JM, m.ob.). These numbers for the winter period are unprecedented.

Ten Vesper Sparrows at L. Solano Feb. 10 (DS) was the high count for the period. A Gray-headed Junco, with "Pink-sided" genes, was unexpected at Pt. Reyes Dec. 29 (JM). Two Clay-colored Sparrows were found wintering in a yard Dec. 24 - Jan. 22 in Ferndale (†DA). Only two Harris' Sparrows were reported for the period; one at Shasta Valley was last seen Jan. 3 (fide MT) and another returned to Palo Alto for the third consecutive winter Jan. 14 (EM). White-throated Sparrows were found in surprisingly low numbers with only three reported. Longspurs rarely overwinter along the coast, but both Lapland and Chestnut-collared longspurs were tallied on coastal CBCs. At least 800± Laplands birds were found Regionwide; inland the high count at Honey L., was 492 on Dec. 21 (SAL) and along the coast at least 100 were found at Cape Mendocino Dec. 29 (DE,BC). Two Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found on the Pt. Reyes CBC, Dec. 16 (DE *et al.*); the first ever recorded on that count.

**CORRIGENDA** — In AB 30:1001 the Ovenbird found at DeChambeau Cr., was seen June 22 not June 6. In AB 30:763 the "Bullock's" Oriole found in Golden Gate Park should be Feb. 7, not Feb. 2.

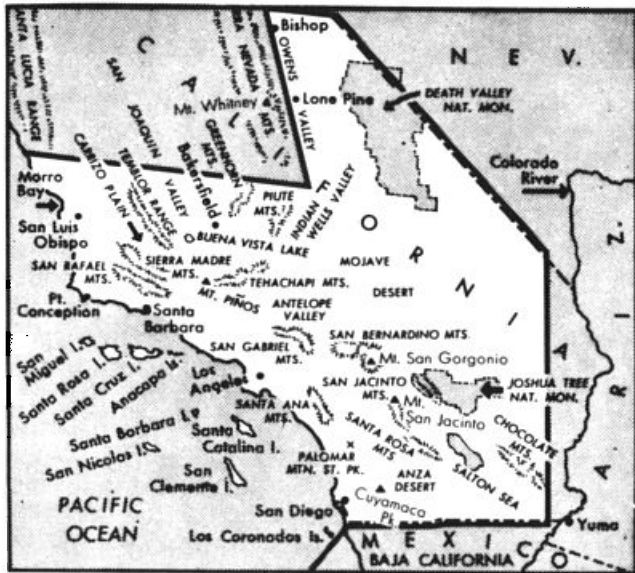
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## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Guy McCaskie

We again experienced another wet winter, with exceptionally heavy rainfall occurring in December and January, along with a record-breaking cold spell in January. Bird distribution was also somewhat unusual, with most of our commonly occurring winter landbird visitors apparently scarcer than normal, while vir-



tually all those more northern species which sporadically invade the Region were conspicuously absent. Mountain species, such as Mountain Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost nonexistent in the lowlands. Berry-eaters, such as American Robins, Hermit Thrushes, Cedar Waxwings and Purple Finches were scarce throughout the Region, and Pine Siskins were unreported from many areas. Only Lewis' Woodpeckers showed any signs of a movement into the Region, and those were somewhat localized.

Among the waterbirds we had an apparent influx of Greater Scaup and White-winged Scoters along the coast, with some of the former occurring inland. In addition, Common Goldeneye, accompanied by a few Barrow's, appeared in above-average numbers. Black-legged Kittiwakes were scarce and N. Fulmars were all but unrecorded.

An exceptional number of birds normally considered summer visitors to southern California were present this winter, with some of the wood warblers (e.g., Yellow and Black-throated Gray) and Northern Orioles being the most evident. In addition, this winter produced records of Least Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Prothonotary and Black-throated Green warblers, all previously unrecorded in California at this time of year, as well as a Snow Bunting far south of its normal range.

**LOONS, GREBES** — Up to 12 Com. Loons on L. Cachuma near Santa Barbara all winter (PL), up to 10 on L. Palmdale in the Antelope Valley Dec. 4 - Jan. 27 (JD) and one on L. Henshaw in the mountains of San Diego County Feb. 26 (RH) were the only ones found inland

away from the Colorado R. The two Arctic Loons on L. Palmdale were present to Dec. 4 (JD), and another was near Imperial Dam Feb. 27 (EC). A Red-necked Grebe at McGrath S.P., near Ventura Feb. 27 (REW) was the only one reported. As usual a few Horned Grebes were found inland with two on L. Palmdale Dec. 4 - Jan. 27 (JD), one on L. Hemet in the San Jacinto Mts., Dec. 15 (JD) and another on L. Henshaw Feb. 20-26 (RH); small numbers occur regularly on our larger inland bodies of water.

**FULMARS, SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS** — Northern Fulmars were scarce with 15 off Morro Bay Jan. 7 (JD) being the largest number reported. Two Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen off Morro Bay Jan. 7 (JD); this species is proving to be regular off our coast in winter. Manx Shearwaters appeared more numerous than usual with 50 as far n. as Morro Bay Jan. 7 (JD). An Ashy Storm-Petrel off Morro Bay Jan. 28 (EVJ) was unexpected, as few have been reported in winter.

**PELICANS, ANHINGA** — A Brown Pelican at Imperial Dam all winter (BMW) had been present since Aug. 8, and is the first to have successfully wintered at an inland locality in the Southwest. The *Anhinga* first found at Sweetwater Res., near San Diego Feb. 4, 1977, was still present Jan. 20 (CGE).

**HERONS** — Cattle Egrets continued to increase in numbers with concentrations up to 30 around San Luis Obispo all winter (FRT), 45 in the Santa Ynez Valley of Santa Barbara Co., Dec. 11 (GSS), 500 around Chino, near San Bernardino all winter (EAC), 200 along the Colorado R., s. of Blythe throughout the period (BMW) and 325 near Imperial Beach, San Diego Co., Jan. 20 (GMcC), along with the "thousands" around the Salton Sea. A Reddish Egret at Imperial Dam Feb. 11 - Mar. 3 (SG) is only the fifth to be found along the Colorado R. Two or three Louisiana Herons around San Diego all winter (GMcC), along with one at San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego Co., Feb. 23+ (AF), were the only ones along the coast; however, another was inland at the south end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, S.E.S.S.) Feb. 19-27 (BT,EC). A Least Bittern at San Elijo Lagoon Jan. 17 (AF) was the only one reported away from the Salton Sea.

**SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS** — A few Whistling Swans were scattered along the coast, with one on Newport Bay Dec. 10 (BT) and two near Pala, San Diego Co., Feb. 11-24 (AF), being the southernmost; in addition, groups of up to 44 were seen in Inyo County, one was at Baker, San Bernardino Co., Jan. 11 (SC) and a flock of 11 was seen in flight near

Palo Verde on the Colorado R., Dec. 9 (BMW). A migrant flock of 600 White-fronted Geese at L. San Jacinto, Riverside Co., Feb. 10 (ASE) was an impressive number for anywhere in s. California.

A ♂ (Eur.) Green-winged Teal, a casual straggler, was well seen on L. Cuyamaca in the mountains of San Diego County Mar. 11 (EC). As usual small numbers of Blue-winged Teal were found along the coast with the largest number, 15, around Goleta; a male at S.E.S.S., Dec. 13 (JD) was the only one found inland. European Wigeon may have been more numerous than usual with eight along the coast as well as 1-2 on L. Henshaw Dec. 29 - Feb. 25 (RH) and another at S.E.S.S., Feb. 18 (REW). A Wood Duck near Pala Feb. 11 (AF) was quite far s. and another at Baker Dec. 10-12 (SC) was at an unusual locality. Greater Scaup appeared more numerous than usual along the coast with eight as far s. as San Diego Jan. 25 (CGE); inland six were on Quail L., Los Angeles Co., Jan. 27-28 (JD) and a concentration of 60 was at S.E.S.S., Feb. 27 (JD). A ♂ Tufted Duck on Quail L., Dec. 4 - Feb. 26 (JD) was the fourth recorded in this Region. Besides the 10-12 Barrow's Goldeneyes at Parker Dam throughout the winter (BMW), three were near Imperial Dam Feb. 17 (REW), one was at Baker Dec. 22 (SC, \*S.B.C.M.), one was at the north end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, N.E.S.S.) Dec. 10 (EAC), another was at Salton City Jan. 21 (GMcC), and a single bird was seen near Imperial Beach Jan. 7 (GMcC) and Mar. 9 (EC), giving us an unprecedented number of records. The only Oldsquaws were up to five on San Diego Bay during January (CGE) and one at Venice, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 29+ (H&PB). A ♂ Harlequin Duck at Carlsbad, San Diego Co., Jan. 21 - Feb. 15 (CGE) was at the s. extreme of the species' winter range. White-winged Scoters were more numerous along the coast than in recent winters, but not as numerous as 15 years ago. A Surf Scoter at Salton City Dec. 14 (JD) was the only one found inland. A few Black Scoters were found along the coast, with flocks of up to 14 seen along the coast of San Luis Obispo County, and up to three together being seen on San Diego Bay Nov. 4+ (EC). Three Hooded Mergansers near Imperial Dam Feb. 17 (REW) were quite far s. A group of 40 Red-breasted Mergansers at Salton City Dec. 14 (JD) was a large number for that area in winter.

**HAWKS** — Two White-tailed Kites at Harper Dry Lake, San Bernardino Co., Feb. 10 (EAC) were e. of the species' range in California. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk in Santa Barbara Dec. 30 - Feb. 4 (MP) was the only one found this winter. An ad. Zone-tailed Hawk, a rare straggler to California, was well seen near Oceanside Jan. 13 (MT). Rough-legged Hawks were decidedly scarce with <15 individuals reported. Only five Peregrine Falcons were reported away from Morro Bay, indicating the species' continued decline.

**CRANES** — Over 4000 Sandhill Cranes on the Carrizo Plain in January (EMcM) and 75± near Brawley all winter (GMcC) are the only flocks now wintering in s. California.

**SHOREBIRDS** — An American Oystercatcher was at Pt. Fermin, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 23 - Jan. 14 (DH); this is only the third to

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be found on the mainland of s. California in this century. Up to six Black Oystercatchers were at Pt. Fermin all winter (BB) and one or two were on Pt. Loma in San Diego during the same period (CGE); this species is rare on the mainland s. of San Luis Obispo County. The only Am. Golden Plovers reported were a flock of up to 21 near Santa Maria all winter (PL), one in Goleta throughout the period (LRB) and another at Playa del Rey all winter (H&PB); small numbers are present each win-

ter, but groups of more than five are exceptional. A group of 12± Stilt Sandpipers at S.E.S.S., Feb. 27 - Mar. 3 (JD) had undoubtedly wintered locally. A Ruff, a rare straggler to s. California, was at the Santa Maria R. mouth Dec. 24 (PL). A few Red Phalaropes were off the coast this winter as indicated by five off San Diego Jan. 19 (EC), one at the Santa Maria R. mouth Jan. 20 (REW), 100± off Avila Beach and Morro Bay Jan. 21 (EVJ,REW) and one at Pt. Dume Feb. 8 (JD). Approximately 20 N. Phalaropes were at Imperial Beach all winter (GMcC); small numbers are found on the salt evaporation ponds here each winter.

Tern at McGrath S.P., Jan. 13 (REW) was unusual, the last of the fall stragglers are normally gone by late December. Up to 24 Black Skimmers were on San Diego Bay throughout the period (CGE) and it appears the species is now established here as a permanent resident.

**MURRELETS** — Two Marbled Murrelets off Avila Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., Jan. 21 (NS) establishes one of the few acceptable records of this species in the Region, but it may prove to be regular in this area since nesting is suspected at Big Sur S.P., a short distance n. The only Xantus' Murrelets reported were three off Morro Bay Jan. 7 (JD); the winter status/distribution is poorly known. The only Ancient Murrelets reported were off the coast of San Luis Obispo County with 15 off Morro Bay Jan. 7 (JD) and one off Avila Beach Jan. 21 (EVJ).

**DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS** — A flock of 1500± Band-tailed Pigeons in Riverside Jan. 2 (ASE) was a remarkable concentration for a lowland locality. As now appears normal, small numbers of White-winged Doves remain throughout the winter at isolated springs in the Anza Borrego Desert of e. San Diego County; one in Santa Barbara Mar. 2 (PL) was the only one reported on the coast. A ground dove at Bouquet Canyon Res., Dec. 16-26 (LLI) appears to be only the third found in Los Angeles County. A Lesser Nighthawk was near Imperial Beach Jan. 6 (EC) and another was at nearby Sweetwater Res., Jan. 20 (CGE); winter records from along the coast are few indeed. The presence of 12 Vaux's Swifts near Oceanside Jan. 18 (EC) and 15 there Jan. 24 (AF) indicates this species once again wintered in that area. A Costa's Hummingbird in Santa Barbara Jan. 25-26 (JD) was somewhat n. for this time of the year. The ♂ Broad-billed Hummingbird at a feeder in w. Los Angeles remained to Dec. 30 (JD), another was in Riverside Jan. 12+ (JDeB) and a third appeared in Spring Valley near San Diego Mar. 8-10 (MT); this species has become a regular wanderer to California in recent years.

The presence of three Acorn Woodpeckers at the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery near Big Pine in the Owens Valley Feb. 7 (KG) is most interesting. This locality is outside the species' known range, but supports oak trees, and may also support a small population of Acorn Woodpeckers, considering the frequency of reports from the area. A few resident Acorn Woodpeckers near Honey L. (*Condor* 62:297,

**GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS** — Five Glaucous Gulls were reported with two on San Miguel I., Mar. 15 (JRJ), one at the Santa Maria R. mouth Dec. 24 (PL), another at McGrath S.P., Feb. 5 (REW) and the fifth on Newport Bay Feb. 16 (JAJ); small numbers reach s. California every year. A Glaucous-winged Gull, rare any distance inland, was at Salton City Dec. 14 (JD), another was at S.E.S.S., Feb. 18 - Mar. 3 (REW) and two were in Colton near San Bernardino Feb. 3 (SC). Single yellow-legged W. Gulls were at Salton City Feb. 1 (GMcC) & 11 (JD); this distinct form is now being found on the Salton Sea every winter. Unexpected were a yellow-legged W. Gull near Imperial Beach Dec. 7 (EC) and another, possibly the same bird Jan. 19 (EC); there is but one documented occurrence of this form for the coast of California. Three or four Thayer's Gulls in the San Bernardino/Riverside area all winter (SC) were an appreciable distance inland. Four Mew Gulls were found in the vicinity of the Salton Sea with two near Brawley Dec. 11 (BMW), one at Salton City Dec. 14 (JD) and another at Finney L., Jan. 27 (SC); two near Chino Feb. 3 (REW) were also far inland. An imm. Laughing Gull at N.E.S.S., Jan. 2 (ASE) was exceptionally late; there are only two other January records for the Salton Sea. A Franklin's Gull on Newport Bay Dec. 8 (JMCD) was probably a late fall migrant, but another at Pitas Pt., Ventura Co., Feb. 11 (REW) must have been wintering locally. A Sabine's Gull at McGrath S.P., Dec. 2 (LS) establishes one of the latest dates of occurrence in s. California.

Two Gull-billed Terns at N.E.S.S., Jan. 20 (LS) were either exceptionally late stragglers or were attempting to winter locally; there is no previous record of the species in California during January and February. An Elegant



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1960) are the only ones known in California e of the Sierra Nevada; hence, additional check- ing near Big Pine is encouraged. Lewis' Woodpeckers were evidently concentrated on the desert slopes of the San Bernardino Mts., and throughout the Laguna Mts., in San Diego County with 30 counted around Pio- neertown Dec. 23 (ASE) and 18 near Mesa Grande Dec. 2 (CGE). The ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*S. v. varius*) remained at Refugio S.P., to Dec. 9 (JG). A Red-naped Sapsucker (*S. v. nuchalis*), rare on the coast n. of Los Angeles, was in Malibu Dec. 3 (KG) and another was in Goleta Mar. 2-7 (PL).

**FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS** — A Tropical Kingbird in Huntington Beach Jan. 1-6 (D&BH) was the only one reported this winter. More than the average number of E. Phoebes were reported with one at Pt. Mugu Feb. 24 - Mar. 11 (REW), one in Pasadena Dec. 26 - Mar. 1 (BC), another in Riverside Mar. 3 (LDF), one at L. Henshaw Feb. 6-20 (RH) and a fifth at L. Hodges Nov. 27 - Mar. 10 (PU). Unprecedented was a **Least Flycatcher** at Fillmore, Venture Co., Nov. 5 - Mar. 3 (REW) and another at Brock Ranch, Imperial Co., Nov. 26 - Feb. 17 (JD); this species is a rare fall vagrant, previously unrecorded in California during the winter. A Gray Flycatcher was at Twentynine Palms Oct. 12 - Dec. 28 (SC); small numbers formerly wintered in s. California, but the species is rarely reported at this time of year today. A W. Flycatcher, rare in winter, was in Carpinteria Jan. 28-29 (MP), another was in San Pedro Dec. 30 - Mar. 1 (LH) and a third remained in Pasadena Jan. 7 - Mar. 1 (BC). A Coues' Flycatcher near Parker Dam on the Colorado R., Nov. 25 - Feb. 1 (BMW) was undoubtedly the same bird found wintering at this spot last year. Vermilion Flycatchers appear to be on the decline as wintering birds along the coast, but three were as far n. as Fillmore throughout the period (REW). Although small numbers of Rough-winged Swallows regularly winter along the Colorado R., and in the vicinity of the Salton Sea they are rarely found elsewhere at this time of the year, hence, one at Huntington Beach Jan. 1 (D&BH) is of interest.

**JAYS THROUGH THRASHERS** — A Scrub Jay near Earp on the Colorado R., Jan. 20 (JD) and another at Laguna Dam Jan. 19 - Mar. 3 (JD) were outside the species' normal range in California. A Plain Titmouse at Yaqui Wells in the Anza Borrego Desert was a little e. of its normal range in California. Five Dippers in the Santa Barbara area during the winter (MP) and another in the lower portions of the Santa Monica Mts., Dec. 3 - Jan. 8 (DPo) deserve note, and indicate this species will move into areas supporting streams running only during wet years. As usual a few Winter Wrens were present in the coastal lowlands and foothills with one near Ramona, San Diego Co., Dec. 12 (HAW) being the southernmost. A Brown Thrasher at Brock Ranch Dec. 12 - Feb. 17 (JD,REW) was the only one reported this winter. A Bendire's Thrasher remained near Imperial Beach Dec. 17 - Mar. 10 (EC); there are very few winter records for California. A Curve-billed Thrasher, rare in s.e. California, was seen at Laguna Dam Dec. 12 and Jan. 19 (JD).

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**South Texas Workshop:** March 26-31, 1980  
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**Grand Texas Tours:** April 19-May 3, 1980  
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**SE Arizona Tours:**  
 May 9-18, 1980  
 May 18-27, 1980  
 May 31-June 9, 1980  
 July 20-29, 1980  
 August 1-10, 1980  
**Florida Workshop:**  
 May 14-18, 1980  
 extension: May 18-22  
**Alaska:** June 8-21, 1980  
**Churchill:** June 20-29, 1980  
**Colorado:** June 6-15, 1980  
**Nova Scotia:** June 29-July 13, 1980  
**Pacific NW:** Aug. 14-23, 1980  
**California:** Aug. 23-Sep. 2, 1980

## AFRICA TOURS

**Kenya:** Nov. 1-19, 1979  
**Camerouns:** March 29-April 20, 1980  
**Southern Africa:** Sep. 11-Oct. 1, 1980  
 Botswana extension: Oct. 1-10



## CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN TOURS

**West Mexico:** Nov. 9-19, 1979; Feb. 15-25, 1980  
**Northeastern Mexico:** Nov. 30-Dec. 10, 1979  
**Guatemala Highlands:** Nov. 23-30, 1979  
**Tikal Workshop:** Nov. 30-Dec. 9, 1979  
**Eastern Mexico:** Dec. 26-Jan. 6, 1980  
 pre-trip extension: Dec. 22-26



**Palenque/Yucatan:** March 1-16, 1980  
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**Panama Tours:** Jan. 11-27, 1980  
 Jan. 18-Feb. 3, 1980 (two spaces left)  
 Feb. 8-24, 1980  
 Feb. 9-24, 1980 (two spaces left)  
**Jamaica/Hispanola:** Jan. 25-Feb. 4, 1980  
**Venezuela:** March 6-19, 1980  
**Surinam:** March 14-30, 1980  
**Costa Rica:** March 15-30, 1980  
**Colombia:** May 31-June 15, 1980  
**Ecuador/Galapagos:** July 13-Aug. 3, 1980  
**Brazil:** Sep. 29-Oct. 12, 1979  
**Bolivia:** Oct. 13-29, 1979  
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**KINGLETS THROUGH VIREOS** — Only small numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets were present along the coast with one or two near Imperial Beach during December and January (EC) being the southernmost. A Bohemian Waxwing in Tecopa, Inyo Co., Dec. 10 (JT) was the only one reported. Similarly, a N. Shrike at Harper's Dry Lake, San Bernardino Co., Dec. 26 (EAC) was the only one seen. A Bell's Vireo, extremely rare in winter, was near Imperial Beach Jan. 6 (GMc). Four Solitary Vireos were found with one in Riverside Dec. 17 - Jan. 30 (AS), one near Imperial Beach Dec. 3 - Mar. 1 (EC), another at L. Henshaw Feb. 20 (RH) and the fourth at Laguna Dam throughout the period (BMW); all were of the gray race, *plumbeus*, except for the one at L. Henshaw which was *cassinii*. Remarkable was a **Philadelphia Vireo** in San Pedro Dec. 30 - Jan. 12 (LH); this species is a casual fall straggler to California, with no previous record later than Nov. 9, and was not anticipated to occur in winter. A Warbling Vireo, casual in winter, was in Griffith P., Los Angeles Feb. 17 (JR).

**WOOD WARBLERS** — Nine Black-and-white Warblers were found with five in the Santa Barbara area during the period (PL), one at Pt. Mugu S.P., throughout the winter (REW), another in Riverside Dec. 17 - Jan. 29 (D&BH), one in Oceanside Jan. 1 - Mar. 3 (PL) and the ninth near Imperial Beach Nov. 4 - Feb. 12 (PU). Unprecedented was a **Prothonotary Warbler** in Santa Barbara Dec. 30 - Mar. 10 (KG, PL, ph. S.D.N.H.M.) since winter records from anywhere in the United States are limited, and California is far outside the

species' range at any time of the year. Nine Tennessee Warblers were found in the Santa Barbara area between Dec. 6 and the end of the period, but three of these were seen only in December and may well have been late fall migrants, leaving six wintering; one in Riverside Dec. 30 - Feb. 24 (SC) was the only other one found in the Region. Seven Nashville Warblers found along the coast would appear to be close to an average number for a winter period. A N. Parula near Niland Dec. 13-28 (JD) and another near Imperial Beach Dec. 16-24 (GMcC) may both have been exceptionally late fall migrants or individuals attempting to winter locally. Fifteen Yellow Warblers were found along the coast, along with three around S.E.S.S., and one more near Earp on the Colorado R., Nov. 25 - Jan. 20 (JD), giving us an exceptional number of sightings for the winter period. A Magnolia Warbler, only the third to have wintered in California, was in Riverside Nov. 17 - Feb. 26 (SC). Nearly 20 Black-throated Gray Warblers were reported, but 12 of these were in the Santa Barbara area with the rest being found elsewhere along the coast except for one at Brock Ranch Feb. 17 (REW). **Black-throated Green Warblers** frequently occur late in the fall, but one near Imperial Beach Dec. 16 - Jan. 6 (GMcC) may have been wintering locally, and another in Goleta Dec. 22 - Feb. 24 (PL, ph. S.D.N.H.M.) was definitely wintering locally; there are no previous winter records for California. Four Hermit Warblers spent the winter in Santa Barbara (PL); small numbers occur along the coast of c. California every winter, with most being found in areas supporting Townsend's Warblers, and Santa Barbara may prove to be

within this species' normal area of winter occurrence. As usual a few Palm Warblers wintered along the coast with one at the Santa Maria R. mouth Jan. 6 (JD), eight individuals found around Santa Barbara during the period (PL), one at Newport Feb. 24 (TC) and another near Imperial Beach Dec. 16+ (EC). A N. Waterthrush was in Griffith P., Los Angeles Nov. 25 (JR) and one or two were near Imperial Beach during December and January (EC); small numbers evidently winter along the coast each year. A MacGillivray's Warbler, very rare in winter, was in Griffith P., Jan. 26 (JR). Only eight Wilson's Warblers were reported, all coastal, illustrating just how scarce this species is in winter. An Am. Redstart in Goleta Oct. 2+ (PL), another in Fillmore Nov. 5 - Jan. 13 (REW) and a third near Oxnard Feb. 4 (REW) were on the coast where it is rare in winter; three around S.E.S.S., were in an area of regular winter occurrence.

**BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES, TANAGERS** — Two Orchard Orioles remained in Santa Barbara Jan. 20+ (PL), another was in nearby Goleta Mar. 12 (BS) and a fourth was in Riverside Jan. 2-26 (AS); one or two of these birds are found every winter. A ♂ Scott's Oriole, very rare in winter, was in Santa Barbara Feb. 10 (PL) and another was near Palm Springs Feb. 26 (SG). As usual a few "Baltimore" Orioles were reported with four in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area (PL), one in Ventura Jan. 24 (GG), another in Oceanside Feb. 3 (CGE) and a seventh in San Diego Dec. 16 (EC). "Bullock's" Orioles were present along the coast in small numbers, as is normal, with the largest numbers (24 different individuals) found around Goleta/Santa Barbara, two at Brock Ranch Feb. 11 (EC) were the only ones reported from an inland locality. A Rusty Blackbird in Santa Barbara Jan. 22-29 (LRB) was the only one found this winter. A Great-tailed Grackle in San Pedro Feb. 25 (JJ) could well be the same bird present on Pt. Fermin last September. A few W. Tanagers were found along the coast, as is normal, with eight in the Goleta/Santa Barbara area (PL), two in Pasadena Jan. 12 (KG) and six around San Diego (CGE). Two Hepatic Tanagers remained together in Oceanside Nov. 27 - Mar. 1 (PU); one has spent the past two winters at this same locality. Three Summer Tanagers were reported with one in Santa Barbara Mar. 2 (SJR), another in Riverside Dec. 17 - Jan. 26 (D&BH) and the third near Oceanside Jan. 2 - Mar. 10 (AF); one or two are found every winter.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS, LONGSPURS** — A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Goleta Dec. 2 (PL) was undoubtedly a late fall migrant, but one or two in Santa Barbara Nov. 29 - Jan. 14 (PL) and another there Feb. 10 (PL) probably wintered locally. A Black-headed Grosbeak, always scarcer than Rose-breasteds in winter, was in San Diego Feb. 4 (EC). A group of up to five Evening Grosbeaks on Mt. Palomar Dec. 2-4 (RH) was the only one reported this winter. A Lark Bunting, exceptionally scarce this winter, was in Ojai, Ventura Co., Jan. 13 - Feb. 17 (DS) and another was in Griffith P., Los Angeles Dec. 26 (JR). As usual a few Gray-headed Juncos wintered in the s. portion of the Region with one or two near Malibu Dec. 16 - Mar. 2 (H&PB) being the northwest-ernmost. A Clay-colored Sparrow, casual in winter, was in Pasadena Oct. 8 - Dec. 30 (BC)

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and another was in Newport Mar 5 (D&BH) A Black-chinned Sparrow at Camarillo, Ventura Co., Feb. 25 (REW) was one of the very few found in California in winter. The only Harris' Sparrows reported this winter were one in Kelso Dec. 12 (SC) and another in Goleta Dec. 25 - Feb. 2 (PL). White-throated Sparrows were also scarce with but six reported. Six Swamp Sparrows were found along the coast, with up to three in Fillmore all winter (REW), one at L. Sherwood Jan. 13 (REW) one in Malibu Dec. 3 - Jan. 14 (JD) and the other at L. Hodges Mar. 3-10 (GMC); in addition one was in the mountains at L. Henshaw Feb. 20 (RH). Two or three McCown's Longspurs were around S.E.S.S., Dec. 28 - Feb. 18 (JD,REW) where small numbers occasionally winter, but five at Harper's Dry Lake near Barstow Dec. 26 (EAC) were the first to be recorded from that area. The only Lapland Longspurs reported were two on the Carrizo Plain all winter (EMcM) and one was at S.E.S.S., Feb. 18 (REW). Remarkable was a **Snow Bunting** in Kelso Valley near Mojave Dec. 23-27 (KA) since there are only two previous records of this species in s. California; this establishes the southernmost occurrence in California.

**ADDENDUM and CORRIGENDUM** — A Prairie Warbler, exceptionally rare inland, was in Rialto, San Bernardino Co., Oct. 5, 1978 (SC). The Lawrence's Goldfinches (AB 32:1210, 1978) nested near Blythe, not Bard. To avoid unnecessary duplication, all birds seen and reported only on Christmas Bird Counts have been omitted. 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.

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the end of the period — **GUY McCASKIE**, San Diego Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, P.O. Box 1390, San Diego, California 92112.

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Cool weather just before the January storm kept mid-day temperatures at record lows on Kauai, Oahu, and Hawaii. Daily highs were only 60-69°F. — not low enough to ice up the ponds, but still rather chilly for Hawaii.

**GREBES THROUGH DUCKS** — The two Pied-billed Grebes near Hilo, island of Hawaii (hereafter, H.), reported last season, remained through the winter (JMS,CJR,CPR). Two

more also visited near Ku Pond, Oahu (here after, O.) from Dec. 19 (GB) until at least Feb. 23 (RL,BB,DS). The Dark-rumped Petrel (EnSp) is known to breed only in extremely small numbers on Maui and H. Is. It was encouraging to receive the report of three just-fledged birds at widely scattered elevations and locations on Kauai Nov. 23 - Dec. 2, indicating at least a small nesting population on this island (GVB). Two Blue-faced Boobies on Moku Manu I., O., Feb. 18, provided an interesting winter record (RLP,MO,RS, H.A.S.). The last of the inhabited main Hawaiian Islands was finally known to be colonized by Cattle Egrets when nine were seen during an aerial survey on Nihoa I., Jan. 20 (TT,GVB). The occasional Canada Goose is reported in most years; this season there was one on Kii Pond, O., Dec. 5 - Feb. 28+ (GB,BB). Another graced Kealie Pond, Maui (hereafter, M.), in December (CBK). The Garganey near Hilo, H., remained through the season (CJR,CPR,JMS). American Wigeon wintered in extraordinarily high numbers with 32 on Kii Pond, O., Jan. 1 (RL); 23 at Waipio O., Nov. 18 (RLP); and smaller numbers at other locations throughout the winter. The rather rare Eur. Wigeon was sighted at Waipio O., Jan. 28 (MO,RLP). A ♀ Redhead, rare in the state, was present for almost a month after Jan. 27 at Waiakea Pond, Hilo, H. (CJR, PP,LM), and two males were at Kakahaia N.W.R., Molokai I., Jan. 23 (CBK). A ♀ Red-breasted Merganser, the only recorded since 1893, when two were shot, also enlivened Kakahaia Pond Jan. 23 (CBK,RM).

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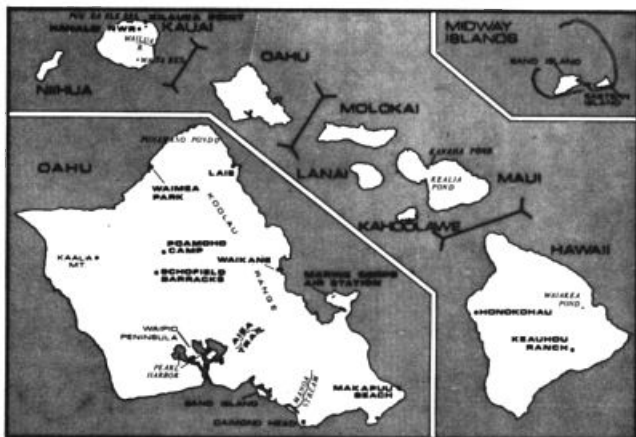
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**OSPREY THROUGH TERNS** — An Osprey turned up at Waiawa Unit, Pearl Harbor N.W.R., O., Feb. 11-12 (BB,GB) and again Feb. 22 (EK).

S.A.

Perhaps owing to the wet winter, Hawaiian Coots (EnSp) and Hawaiian Stilts (EnSp) left their usual haunts at Hanalei N.W.R., Kauai (hereafter, K.), where populations were only one-quarter of the fall figures (GVB). The stilts have probably in part moved to Niihau I., 65 km to the s.w., where >100 were seen from the air (TT,GVB) in January. (No birders have been allowed on this privately-owned island in 25 years.) However, the whereabouts of the coots is a mystery; they may have dispersed to newly wet areas that appeared after the winter rains. Or, irregular influxes of migrants from the mainland might conceivably account for the large fluctuations that are observed occasionally in coot populations, but not in other wetland breeding species.

The Com. Snipe decidedly is not common, being seen only occasionally in the islands. So it was exciting to have *five* at Waipio, O., Jan. 7 (MO,RLP). More exciting were two of the Asiatic race (*Capella g. gallinago*) which were carefully studied (GVB) at Hanalei N.W.R., K., Dec. 6-10. This subspecies is readily identifiable in good light (see D. Gibson, 1978, *'Elepaio* 39:8). Two Greater Yellowlegs were seen; one at Kealia Pond, M.

(CBK) Dec. 23, and another at Mana Pond, K., Jan. 16 (TT,GVB). The odd scattering of gulls continued over the winter. Prominent among them was a W. Gull at Paiko Lagoon, O., from late December into spring (m.ob.). Also seen in several areas were Laughing, Bonaparte's and Herring gulls (CBK,RLP *et al.*). The highlight of the season was a **Caspian Tern**, a first for the state, seen Jan. 3 at the remnants of Salt Lake, O. (RL). The bird then apparently took an island tour, appearing at Waipio Pen., through early February (m.ob.) and was at Kaneohe MCAS Mar. 5 (TB).

**LAUGHING-THRUSHES THROUGH HONEYCREEPERS** — The presence of a flock of 12-15 Greater Necklaced Laughing-Thrushes at Hanalei N.W.R., K., indicates that the species is still established there, although it apparently is not spreading (GVB). An 'Amakihī, the reasonably common insect-eating honeycreeper, was found (CJR,CPR) singing and feeding regularly Feb. 7-28+, at an extremely low elevation of *ca.* 100 m, in a residential area in Manoa Valley, O. The Palila, (EnSp) the finch-billed honeycreeper of

Mauna Kea, H., was sighted just off the Saddle Road at Puu Huluhulu, a few kilometers s. of its normal range Dec. 29 (LS). The winter rains apparently resulted in unusually heavy blooms of mamane (*Sophora*) on the drier slopes of Mauna Kea, auguring well for the Palila, which depends upon it for food. On the w. slopes of the mountain, the bloom attracted unprecedented (CvR) numbers of the nectar-eating 'I'iwi; >50 were seen in just 2 hours at Puu Laau Jan. 31 (CJR,HR,CPR,JH).

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