

# The Winter Season

## December 1, 1980 — February 28, 1981

### Abbreviations frequently used in Regional Reports

ad.: adult, Am.: American, c.: central, C: Celsius, CBC: Christmas Bird Count, Cr.: Creek, Com. Common, Co.: County, Cos.: Counties, *et al.*: and others, E.: Eastern (bird name), Eur.: European, Eurasian, F: Fahrenheit, *fide*: reported by, F.&W.S.: Fish & Wildlife Service, Ft.: Fort, imm.: immature, I.: Island, Is.: Islands, Isles, Jct.: Junction, juv.: juvenile, L.: Lake, m.ob.: many observers, Mt.: Mountain, Mts.: Mountains, N.F.: National Forest, N.M.: National Monument, N.P.: National Park, N.W.R.: Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, N.: Northern (bird name), Par.: Parish, Pen.: Peninsula, P.P.: Provincial Park, Pt.: Point, not Port, Ref.:

Refuge, Res.: Reservoir, not Reservation, R.: River, S.P.: State Park, sp.: species, spp.: species plural, ssp.: subspecies, Twp.: Township, W.: Western (bird name), W.M.A.: Wildlife Management Area, v.o.: various observers, N,S,W,E.: direction of motion, n., s., w., e.: direction of location, >: more than, <: fewer than, ±: approximately, or estimated number, ♂: male, ♀: female, Ø: imm. or female, \*: specimen, ph.: photographed, †: documented, ft: feet, mi: miles, m: meters, km: kilometers, date with a + (e.g., Mar. 4+): recorded beyond that date. Editors may also abbreviate often-cited locations or organizations.

### NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION

/ Peter D. Vickery

This winter was one of the quietest in recent years. Perhaps that was fortunate for the birds because bitter cold weather arrived in December and remained, unabated through much of January. The Region experienced one of the coldest 30-day periods since weather records have been maintained. Many reporters noted a steady decline in feeder-dependent birds as the unusually large earlier numbers of wintering sparrows gradually succumbed to the severe temperatures. Gratefully, winter ended early and by February temperatures were well above normal, going above 50°F for nearly a week.

Coastal observers considered waterfowl numbers to be below average. Information on Common Eiders appeared contradictory: U.S. Fish and Wildlife aerial surveys censused above-average eider numbers in the Boston harbor area and in Maine but Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) indicated a clear decline. A comparison on ten coastal counts showed a threefold decrease from 59,728 Common Eiders in 1979 - 80 to 19,151 individuals in 1980 - 81. Indeed, the Cape Cod CBC dropped from 22,256 eiders last year to 1103 this winter. However, local ice conditions were largely responsible for this particular decrease. Only the Greater Boston area and Martha's Vineyard counts showed any increase in eiders. Reasons for this apparent general decline remain unknown.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**—The winter's only Arctic Loons, both in Rhode Island, were seen at Pt. Judith Feb. 12 and Narragansett Feb. 14-18 (v.o., *fide* DLE). An Eared Grebe was unique at Race Pt., Provincetown, Mass., Jan. 1 (*fide* RPE). Tube-

noses were scarce or were not adequately reported; 15 N. Fulmar were seen off Rockport, Mass., Feb. 7 (*fide* RPE). Two imm. Great Cormorants were unusual inland along the Agawam - Holyoke stretch on the Connecticut R., Jan. 13-28 (*fide* SK). A Great Egret on the Nantucket CBC Jan. 3 apparently possessed a particularly sturdy constitution as did single Black-crowned Night Herons on the Grand Manan, N.B., CBC and near Agawam, Mass., Jan. 11 (*fide* SK).

**WATERFOWL**—Two Whistling Swans were unique on the Martha's Vineyard CBC. Rhode Island observers noted unusual numbers of Brant wintering all along Narragansett Bay and in the same state 39 Snow Geese was an unusual concentration for the date at Watch Hill Dec. 3 and 20 Snow Geese were equally surprising on the Newport CBC Dec. 20 (v.o., *fide* DLE). European Wigeon were found in Rhode Island at Sachuest Jan. 15 and Watchenoket Feb. 7-27 (*fide* DLE) and on Nantucket (EFA). Waterfowl n. of their usual ranged included: 28 Wood Ducks on the Nantucket CBC and nine on the Greater Boston CBC, a single Wood Duck in Tilton, N.H., Jan. 15 (*fide* KMC) and two Ring-necked Ducks in Hants County, N.S., Jan. 25 (*fide* CRKA). In Rhode Island, Harlequin Ducks wintered in unprecedented numbers at Sachuest Pt., with a maximum count of 18 birds Feb. 15 (v.o., *fide* DLE). Some 18-20 Harlequins, about average, were reported from Massachusetts (*fide* RPE).



**DIURNAL RAPTORS**—In Newfoundland, Goshawks were unusually numerous in Terra Nova N.P., with at least 17 sightings reported this winter (RB). Rare at any season and especially so in winter, a Cooper's Hawk was photographed at Amherst, N.S., Feb. 15 (*fide* FS). Rough-legged Hawks appeared in above-average numbers in s. New England; at least 18 individuals were reported from Rhode Island in January (v.o., *fide* DLE). Interestingly, Rough-legged numbers seemed somewhat below average farther n. in Maine. An early migrant Osprey appeared at Pt. Judith, R.I., on the astonishing date of Feb. 21 (*fide* DLE). Eight Gyrfalcons in New England and the Maritimes was perhaps a bit above average: Maine (3), New Brunswick (3), Nova Scotia (1), Massachusetts (1). Gyrfalcons were not especially numerous around L'Anse-aux-Meadows, Nfld., only eight individuals were noted (BMacT). Wintering Peregrine Falcons were the highest in recent years.

At least 21 were reported, not surprisingly almost all on or near the coast: Conn. (4), R.I. (1), Mass. (8), Maine (1), N.B. (1), N.S. (6).

**RAILS, SHOREBIRDS**—Single King Rails were notable winter discoveries at Weekapaug, R.I., Jan. 1-3 (*vide DLE*) and on the Old Lyme-Saybrook CBC and the Stratford-Milford CBC.

A window-killed Am. Woodcock in Tenant's Harbor, Me., Dec. 31 was very late (*vide MKL*). A Greater Yellowlegs in Orleans, Mass., Feb. 7 & 19 was presumably a hardy local winterer rather than an early migrant (BN *et al.*). A Lesser Yellowlegs at Chatham, Mass., Dec. 21-22 (BN *et al.*) and another in Weekapaug, R.I., Dec. 6 - Jan. 4 (*vide DLE*) were both remarkably late. In recent years small numbers of Long-billed Dowitchers have overwintered in s. New England. Again this year, a single Long-billed Dowitcher had the constitution, if not bad judgment, to survive a bitter winter at Weekapaug, R.I. (*vide DLE*). Other late shorebirds included: a Short-billed Dowitcher on the Stamford, Conn., CBC Dec. 21; the previously reported, remarkable Buff-breasted Sandpiper on Nantucket to Dec. 1 (RRV) and a Wilson's Phalarope on Plum I., Dec. 1 (DWF *et al.*).

**GULLS, TERNS**—Perhaps the severe winter was responsible for the increased number of Iceland Gulls; Massachusetts recorded high counts of 118 at Plum I., Jan. 31, 140 in Gloucester Feb. 22 (RSH) and 111 on the Nantucket CBC. A single Lesser Black-backed Gull was identified in Warren, R.I., Jan. 20 (RAC) while three were reported from s. Connecticut (v.o., *vide TB*). The concentration of 11 - 12 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on Nantucket dispersed in mid-January with no birds seen after that date (RRV). Nearby on Martha's Vineyard, a single Lesser Black-backed was seen Feb. 22 (*vide BN*). A Thayer's Gull on the Nantucket CBC constituted one of few Massachusetts records (RRV *et al.*). New England Black-headed Gulls numbered 20+ individuals. In n. Newfoundland, Ivory Gulls were scarce with only three birds observed at L'Anse-aux-Meadows Jan. 18 (BMacT) and one bird at St. Paul's Inlet Dec. 28 (RB). A **Black Tern** collected on Nantucket Dec. 18 was, by any standards, astonishingly late (RRV *et al.*).

**ALCIDS**—Alcids were again unimpressive this winter. Notable were: two Razorbills passing Pt. Judith Feb. 11 and another at the same locality Feb. 21 (*vide DLE*). Two Doves at Pt. Judith Feb. 2 and another at that locality Feb. 21 were unusual (*vide DLE*). Black Guillemots gathered off Provincetown again this winter; 20 were counted Jan. 20 (*vide RPE*). Thirty-two Black Guillemots was a surprising count at Marblehead Neck, Mass., Feb. 10 (RSH). A **Black Guillemot** seen on the New Haven CBC Dec. 20 was one of few state occurrences.

**PIGEONS, OWLS, WOODPECKERS**—In New Brunswick, a **Band-tailed Pigeon** seen and photographed in Frederickton Feb. 1-15 was a first provincial and a fourth or fifth Regional occurrence (MTP, *vide DSC*, ph.). Also in New Brunswick, a dead and severely emaciated **Barn Owl** was picked up near Portobello Cr., Sunbury Co., Dec. 22 (*vide DSC*,

\*to N B M.) Snowy Owls did not appear in sizable numbers again this winter, however 4-5 individuals on Cape Cod and 1-2 on Martha's Vineyard were considered above average (*vide BN*). In Maine, single Hawk Owls were found in Veazie Jan. 17 - Feb. 14 and nearby in Hampden Feb. 14-19 (v.o., *vide MKL*). No fewer than 22 Long-eared Owls were found roosting together in Lexington, Mass. (*vide RPE*).

Woodpeckers well n. of their usual limits were a Red-bellied in Biddeford, Me., Dec. 21 (DWF *et al.*) and an imm. Red-headed in Albert, N.B., late November - mid-December (*vide DSC*).

**KINGBIRDS THROUGH WAXWINGS**—A W. Kingbird was a hardy fall lingerer in Chatham, Mass., Jan. 2 (*vide RPE*). Boreal Chickadees occurred in moderate numbers in s. New England; some 5-6 birds were recorded in Massachusetts and 2-3 birds were reported from Connecticut. A Carolina Wren was an unusual and probably unsuccessful winterer in Bethel, Me., Oct. 15 - Dec. 26 (*vide MKL*). For the second consecutive year a **Short-billed Marsh Wren** was recorded on an e. Massachusetts CBC, this time on Nantucket Jan. 3 (RRV *et al.*).

Varied Thrushes were conspicuous in the Region; no fewer than eight were reported: Me. (5), N.H. (1), Mass. (1), Conn. (1). A late Swainson's Thrush was reported from Halifax, N.S., Dec. 13 (*vide PRD*) although none was recorded on any New England CBCs (three in '79 - '80). A count-period Wood Thrush photographed in Millis, Mass., was completely unexpected.

Bohemian Waxwings occurred in Maine in the largest numbers ever recorded; 1400-1800 individuals were reported (v.o., *vide MKL*, PDV). New Brunswick also witnessed an excellent flight with a maximum of 253 birds seen on the Concord and Tuckernuck I. CBCs.

**WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS**—Severe December weather was no doubt responsible for the few and routine warblers reported on this winter's CBCs. Of note were four Pine Warblers attempting to overwinter in New Brunswick (*vide DSC*) and 2-3 individuals in Nova Scotia (*vide PRD*). A N. Waterthrush was late in Ipswich, Mass., Dec. 7 (RSH).

Winter Yellow-headed Blackbirds were found in New London, Conn. during count period, Wolfville, N.S., in January and February (*vide PRD*) and Athol, Mass., Feb. 19 (*vide SK*). A Brewer's Blackbird was unique this season and especially notable inland at Hatfield, Mass., Dec. 21-28 (*vide SK*).

**FRINGILLIDS**—A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was unseasonal in Monson, Mass., Dec. 19 (*vide SK*) as was a Blue Grosbeak in Manchester, N.H., Dec. 8-17 (*vide KMC*). Single Black-headed Grosbeaks occurred in Walpole, Mass., through February and in Bath, Me., Dec. 16 - Feb. 28+ (JCr, PDV *et al.*, ph.); the latter for a fourth state record. In Nova Scotia, House Finches increased to at least three individuals (*vide PRD*).

The winter finch flight included moderate numbers of Pine Grosbeaks and Com. Redpolls s. to New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut. Not surprisingly, eight

Hoary Redpolls were reported. N B. (3), N.S. (1), Me. (2), N.H. (1), Mass. (1).

A Grasshopper Sparrow displayed great fortitude in surviving the winter in Ellsworth, Me., Dec. 25 - Feb. 28+ (*vide WCT*) and in the same state a Lark Sparrow was late in Kennebunkport Dec. 1-4 (JF). A Lincoln's Sparrow was also a late lingerer in Economy, N.S., Dec. 13-14 (*vide PRD*). Fox Sparrows were found in extraordinary numbers on three e. Maine CBCs—the Mt. Desert I., Jonesport and Machias Bay counts totalled 116 individuals with 48 on the Machias Bay area count. Presumably many of these birds as well as many other marginal wintering sparrows did not survive the extended January freeze, as many feeders reported reduced numbers as the season progressed.

**ADDENDUM**—Please note that Blackpoll Warblers were found feeding young near Savoy, Mass., July 20, 1980 for a first known state nesting record away from the Mt. Greylock area (*vide BH*).

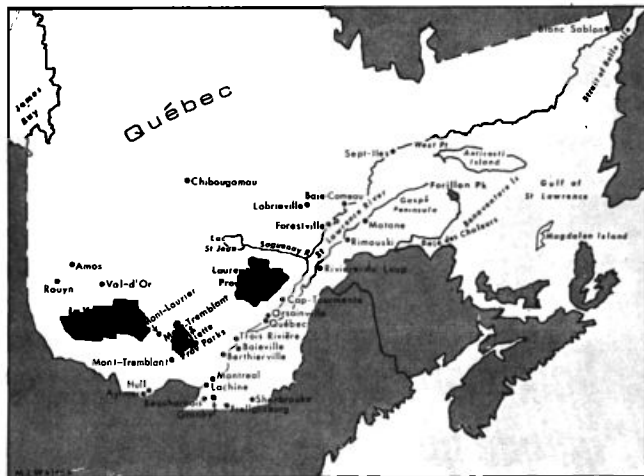
**CORRIGENDA**—Note that the maximum count for Snowy Egrets at Plum I. was not 870 July 30, 1980 but was 985 counted Aug 26, 1978 (RSH). Secondly, 880+ Snowy Egrets were recorded at Plum I., Aug. 23, 1979 (*vide RSH*).

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## QUEBEC REGION /Michel Gosselin and Normand David

In sharp contrast with last year, the winter of 1980-81 began extremely cold, snowy and...quiet. Most winter birds (except some of the northern forest owls) were present in good numbers. The situation completely reversed itself in the last two weeks of February, with an unprecedented mild spell. Insects flying at night into the lightbeams of cars are indeed a rare sight in mid-February north of the 45th parallel.

**GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL**—A Red-necked Grebe discovered at Rapides-des-Joachims Feb. 21 (FB) and another in Aylmer Feb. 23 (BD) were helped by mild weather; undisputed migrants had never been



a Great Cormorant stayed in Magog Jan. 19-Feb. 5 (PBo). A Great Blue Heron sighted at Sainte-Croix Dec. 30 (RA) was the latest ever. For the second consecutive winter Canada Geese were recorded in the Montreal area: an individual (possibly feral) near Dorion Jan. 31 and Feb. 9 (WB,PBa). Migrant flocks also turned up near Saint-Jean, Richelieu Co., Feb. 22 (PBa) and Péribonka Feb. 27 (*vide* NB). Black Ducks were found in all parts of the Province: one in Senneterre Dec. 30 (YA), three in Amos Jan. 31 (PBa *et al.*), six at Cap-des-Rosiers Feb. 27 (BC), 17 at Anse-Pleureuse Jan. 9 and eight Jan. 16 (AD,PPo), ten at Dégelis Jan. 28 and one at Pointe-au-Père Feb. 18 (GG *et al.*). Mallards were also well represented: one in Senneterre Dec. 30 (JHy) and one at Dégelis Jan. 30 (RC *et al.*). Another noteworthy report associated with the warm weather was of an Am. Wigeon at Côte Sainte-Catherine Feb. 28 (DJ). Records of single Buffleheads show that the species can winter in a wide range of localities: Sainte-Luce Jan. 10 (CG), Ile-aux-Allumettes Feb. 8 (MG), Chandler Feb. 19 (RBi) and Grosse-Ile, Madeleine Is. (hereafter, M.I.) Feb. 20 (YA). An interesting inland discovery was that of a ♂ Harlequin Duck at Ile-aux-Allumettes Feb. 8-22 (JC).

#### RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS—

A late Turkey Vulture was described from the Wakefield area Dec. 28 (DC *et al.*) and a Cooper's Hawk from Aylmer Dec. 17-22 (JD,RSc). A Red-tailed Hawk in Sherbrooke Jan. 18 (JPB) and two in Quebec City's harbor Jan. 18-31 (PPE,CSi) added to the few winter records for these areas. The same is true for imm. Bald Eagles at Cap-d'Espoir Jan. 30 (RBi) and Vigneau, M.I., Feb. 25 (YA). Two Marsh Hawks were reported on the early date of Feb. 22, one in Henryville (PBa) and the other in Les Cèdres (BB,MM). As happened last year, many Gyrfalcons turned up in the St. Lawrence valley: one in Aylmer Nov. 25 (BD), two in Montreal Dec. 4+ (*vide* PBa,PC), one in North Hatley Dec. 18 (BG) and Sherbrooke Dec. 21 (VL), one at St-Nicolas de Lévis Jan. 2 (JLD), up to three at Bergeronnes Dec. 29-Feb. 27 (AB) and two at Pointe St-Pierre Feb. 19 (RBi). Single Peregrine Falcons were noted in Sherbrooke Jan. 18 (JPB), Pointe-au-Père Jan. 30 (GG,PJ) and Melocheville Feb. 14 (YA).

Matagami was invaded by Willow Ptarmigans in late December; many observers

also reported the species along the Chibougamau/Label-sur-Quévillon road; in the last-named locality they were present from early October (*vide* PBa). Never before had Killdeers been reported so early: Feb. 21 at Ile Perrot (PC) and Feb. 22 at Les Cèdres (BB,MM). Purple Sandpipers wintered at Pointe St-Pierre (11 on Jan. 25 and two on Feb. 19) and five were present in Percé Jan. 10 (RBi).

#### GULLS THROUGH OWLS—An ad. Lesser

Black-backed Gull visited Sherbrooke Nov. 25-Dec. 8 (VL,RL) and another, Beauharnois Nov. 30-Dec. 6 (PBa). Ring-billed Gulls appeared earlier than ever: Feb. 16 in Aylmer (BD) and Feb. 21 in St-Jean, Richelieu Co. (PBa). The early arrival of Black-legged Kittiwakes was also unprecedented: 150 at Cap-d'Espoir Feb. 27 (BC) and 350 Feb. 28 (RBi,PPo). The outstanding bird of the season was a Forster's Tern at Côte Ste-Catherine Dec. 13 (PBa, BB,MM) which probably represents the latest record for Canada. A Black Guillemot at LaBaie Feb. 27 (*vide* NB) provided a first local record. More unexpected was a Com. Puffin found alive on a Châteauguay street Dec. 30 (*vide* MBo). The bird was brought to the Montreal zoological garden where it died (\*Nat'l. Mus. Can.).

Twenty Mourning Doves were observed at Grande-Entrée, M.I., Dec. 1 (YA), and one at St-Raymond, Portneuf Co., Feb. 23 (GL); the species usually winters in small numbers in s. Quebec. Snowy Owls were noted in good numbers in all areas, including L. St-Jean; there however, they became less numerous in mid-January (*vide* NB). A Long-eared Owl, always rare in winter, was reported from Hull Jan. 21 (DSH) and up to four birds were at Ile Perrot Feb. 14+ (BB,MM,m.ob.). The only Hawk Owls of the season were at Quyon Nov. 30-Dec. 7 (JD), Baie-des-Rochers Dec. 28 (PL) and Ferme-Neuve Feb. 23 (RLD). Great Gray Owls were at Cap-Tourmente Jan. 24 (RSi *et al.*) and intermittently at Aylmer (*vide* BD), and Boreal Owls at St-Nicolas de Lévis Dec. 24 (JLD), Cap-Tourmente Dec. 31 (MD), Courville Jan. 10 (PL) and Grosse-Ile, M.I., Feb. 22 (YA). A Saw-whet Owl was found in a trap Jan. 1 at the s. gate of LaVérendrye P.P. (FM) and two were heard at Ile-aux-Allumettes Feb. 28 (DSH).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH ICTERIDS—Unusual were five Com. Flickers on a single tree near the Montreal harbor Feb. 7 (PBa). An unbelievable early arrival was an E. Phoebe reported from Baie d'Urfé Feb. 16-27 (NMS). Another unique record was of the wintering of three Horned Larks on Havre-Aubert I., M.I. (*vide* YA). A White-breasted Nuthatch wintered in Arvida where it is, even in summer, an unusual visitor (CSa). Rock-Island's Carolina Wren made its last appearance Dec. 24 (SE, *vide* PBo) while the Brown Thrasher of the Hull-Ottawa CBC disappeared Dec. 25 (*vide* BD). Bohemian

Waxwings showed up in fair numbers; three in Chandler Feb. 22 (PD) were noteworthy. An Orange-crowned Warbler at Baie-d'Urfé Dec. 11 (*vide* MM) and a Com. Yellowthroat in Lasalle Dec. 7 (DM) were the latest ever. The E. Meadowlark on the Hull-Ottawa CBC was actually in Aylmer (JHs). A Red-winged Blackbird wintered in Jonquière, a first for this locality (*vide* NB); 5000 of these birds returned to their traditional roost at St-Etienne, Beauharnois Co., Feb. 18, and 10,000 were present Feb. 21 (PBa). A ♂ Red-winged Blackbird even reached St-Valérien, Rimouski Co., Feb. 28 (JL). In Old-Chelsea, a Rusty Blackbird wintered successfully (MBo), as did probably the three Com. Grackles seen at Grande-Vallée Jan. 25 (PD) and the one seen in Hull Feb. 2 (JF). A Com. Grackle at Mont-Laurier Feb. 18 (RLD) and two at Grande-Rivière Feb. 19 (PPo) were, from all evidence, early migrants.

FRINGILLIDS—Two Purple Finches wintered at Percé (RBi) and one probably at Métis Jan. 24 (JRP), outside their regular wintering range. After an absence of almost a month, a ♀ House Finch reappeared at Cowansville Feb. 16 (*vide* YA). As is often the case in years of redpoll abundance, Hoary Redpolls turned up in many localities in late winter; one individual at Grande-Entrée Feb. 20 (YA) was a first for the Madeleine Islands. The Dickcissel of Chicoutimi was not seen after Dec. 10, possibly owing to its winter plumage which made it more difficult to locate among House Sparrows (*vide* NB). A ♀ Rufous-sided Towhee wintered at Sillery (*vide* RBa) and another at Sherbrooke (PM). Many wintering records of White-throated Sparrows were reported from s. Quebec. A Fox Sparrow wintering in Philipsburg was only the second such for the Province. A Lincoln's Sparrow present at a Chicoutimi feeder until Dec. 28 (*vide* NB,YA) would represent the latest record for the species, except for a previously unpublished winter record in 1967-68 (HL). Five Lapland Longspurs in Mont-Laurier Jan. 10 (RLD), 500 at Ile-Perrot Dec. 26-Jan. 18 (BB,MM,m.ob.) and 50 at St-Etienne, Beauharnois Co., Jan. 24 (YA) showed the unusual abundance of the species this winter.

CORRIGENDUM—The correct date for the Am. Oystercatcher reported in AB 34:877 is May 22.

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## HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION /William J. Boyle, Jr., Robert O. Paxton and David A. Cutler

The winter season was characterized by extraordinary weather of several extremes and the effect on bird distribution and populations was pronounced. The severe drought which began last summer continued through the first month of the year, which was the driest January on record in the New York City area. Combined rainfall for December-January was less than 20% of normal. Beginning in mid-December a bitter cold spell brought some of the lowest temperatures in history to the Region, including the coldest Christmas Day ever and a frigid 20°F at Morristown, N.J., January 13. The arctic weather abated after mid-January, and was followed by one of the warmest and wettest Februaries on record.

The effects of the unusual weather were predictable. Most fresh water froze rapidly in mid-December, causing a mass exodus of waterfowl from inland regions. On the coast, the salt water bays and tidal estuaries were largely frozen by New Year's Day, forcing many birds to move to the ocean or farther south. No significant mortality was noted, however, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Waterfowl Trend Survey (hereafter, W.T.S.) for the Atlantic Flyway showed near normal numbers for this Region and significantly higher than average numbers for some states to the south. February's mild weather brought an early surge of northbound migrants and the return of some normally wintering species which had fled the bitter cold.

Most observers felt that the season was rather average, with little in the way of rarities or irruptive species to enliven the local birding. While the hoped-for winter finch invasion fizzled, a major incursion of raptors brought numbers of Snowy Owls and Rough-legged Hawks into the area. There were above-average numbers of late migrants and half-hardy stragglers in December, many of which showed up on Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) during the cold weather. The lack of reports from later in the period, suggests that many of them did not survive until the thaw.

**LOONS THROUGH IBISES**—Loons and grebes all but disappeared after the middle of December, as the cold weather drove them elsewhere, but they gradually returned during February. One Red-throated Loon made the mistake of landing on a frozen stream in Dutchess County, N.Y., Dec. 29, but was captured and released unharmed on the Hudson R. (H. Manson, J. & M. Key). Ten reports of Red-necked Grebe included six from Long Island, one from Delaware, two from coastal New Jersey, and more unusual one inland at the Boonton Res., Parsippany, N.J. (RR). Gannets too were exceedingly rare this

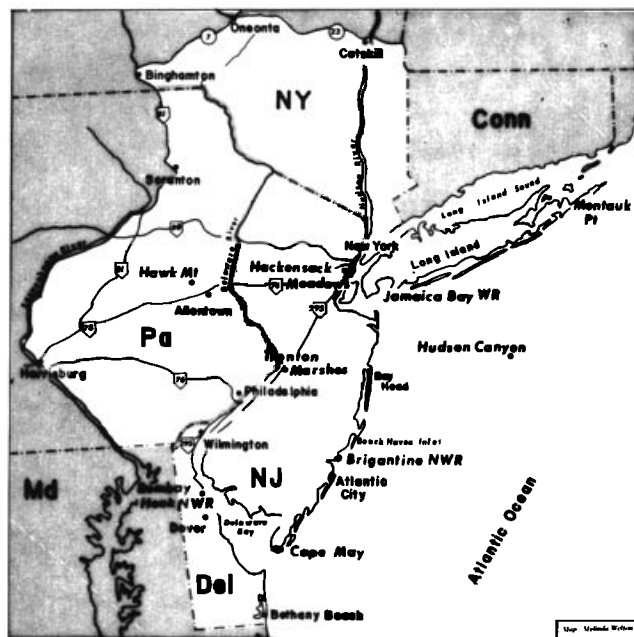
winter, the only reports being a small scattering on some coastal CBCs and 25 seen on a pelagic trip out of Montauk, L.I., Dec. 6 (THD, BJS *et al.*). Under the circumstances, a real surprise was a Brown Pelican picked up in a Millsboro, Del. parking lot. Although it was initially hoped that the bird could be rehabilitated, it had a frozen foot and was eventually placed in a zoo (*vide* WWF). The cold weather brought above-average numbers of Great Cormorants to the New Jersey coast with a maximum of 40 at Barnegat Inlet during January. In w. Long Island Sound, however, numbers were lower than usual (TWB).

About a dozen Double-crested Cormorants stayed around for the CBC period and a few of them overwintered, including one at Shark River Inlet, N.J., Feb. 1 (JD).

The December cold drove most of the herons and egrets from the Region and numbers on CBCs were substantially lower than the past few years. Great Blue Herons gathered at the few available coastal feeding areas, resulting in some impressive concentrations. D. Cutler had a group of 96 on the Bombay Hook CBC Dec. 21, all within 50 yards of each other, while Maurer had 24 in view at one time on the Delaware Bay shore near Goshen, N.J., Jan. 6. Fifteen Cattle Egrets at Arundel, Del., Feb. 27 were very early migrants (BR). Glossy Ibises again lingered late in Delaware with one at Bombay Hook N.W.R. (hereafter, B.H.N.W.R.), Dec. 18, narrowly missing the CBC, and another at nearby Little Creek W.M.A., Dec. 27 (LP).

**WATERFOWL**—Mute Swan numbers continue to mount, with a staggering 968 on the Central Suffolk County, N.Y., CBC and the usual flock of 300-400 wintering on Barnegat Bay near Toms River, N.J. At L. Musconetcong, Morris-Sussex Cos., N.J., where > 180 swans have died over the past 11 years, 13 carcasses were observed on the ice in early January (TH). The cause of this mortality has been identified as a fresh-water fluke, which is transmitted by a snail. Only swans seem to be affected by this parasite, presumably because of feeding habits, and it has not appeared in other fresh-water lakes. Whistling Swans were generally scarce inland, but were well represented in s. New Jersey and Delaware, where many of them have taken to feeding in fields. A flock of 1000 at Elmer, N.J., in early January, was impressive (JHa). By mid-February large flocks were returning N.

Canada Geese were widespread and conspicuous in all parts of the Region. Large flocks wintered inland and fed in cornfields and on lawns left bare by the lack of snow cover. Brant also wintered in excellent numbers as they continue to recover from the



losses of the 1976-77 winter. More than 50,000 were along the New Jersey coast (W.T.S.), and despite the freeze-up of the bays and the severe cold, little mortality was reported. As usual, a few White-fronted Geese appeared. The immature reported in the fall from Jamaica Bay Wildlife Ref. (hereafter, J.B.W.R.) remained to at least Jan. 2, while an adult of uncertain origin appeared Dec. 20-21 at L. Success, Nassau Co., N.Y. At B.H.N.W.R., where the species is now of annual occurrence, two were present Dec. 22 (MG). In contrast to the other geese, Snow Geese were surprisingly scarce particularly after mid-December. Over 70,000 were noted in New Jersey during a December aerial survey by the Division of Fish and Game, but this number had dwindled to 640 by the time of the W.T.S., Jan. 5-9. Twenty-four on the Princeton CBC included 12 of the blue morph.

Good numbers of dabbling ducks were reported throughout the Region, including inland wherever open water could be found. A flock of 8000 Black Ducks plus many Mallards on the Susquehanna R., at Brunner's I., Pa., Jan. 14, benefited from the warm-water outflow of a power plant (CJ). Scattered small numbers of Green-winged Teal included one drake of the Eurasian race on the Sandy Hook CBC at a Rumson, N.J. pond Dec. 20 (G. Wenzelberger, E. Breden), which was still present the next day. About a dozen Blue-winged Teal were reported during December, mostly on CBCs, but none thereafter. The usual quota of Eur. Wigeons included *ca.* five drakes on Long Island (*vide* THD) in January-February and two drakes all winter on the Shark R., N.J. estuary (m.ob.).

Diving ducks were generally plentiful this winter, although the distribution was spotty. A peak of 200 Redheads mingled with a flock estimated at 6000 Greater Scaup at Barnegat Light, N.J., Jan. 12 (RM). The W.T.S. estimated 48,000 scaup wintering in New Jersey, down by 50% from the December totals and reflecting the freeze-up of the bays. Excellent numbers of Ring-necked Ducks were present early in the season and again during February

as inland waters opened up. The perennial ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye returned to the Shark R. estuary for the 12th consecutive winter, appearing Nov. 21 (TV,TK), the second earliest ever, and lingering to mid-February. Two other New Jersey birds were recorded on the Barnegat CBC, while Long Island's three reports were all females, one at Montauk Pt., Dec. 20-Jan. 25 (K. Able, PAB *et al.*), one at Jones Inlet Jan. 19 (BB), and a different bird there Jan. 25 (S. Dempsey, S. Schiff). Common Goldeneye were considered scarce on the coast (*vide* PD), but were well above normal on the rivers. An open patch of water on the largely frozen Delaware R., at Portland, Pa., held 200 Jan. 12 (GH) and 45 at Piermont Pier, Rockland Co., N.Y. was the largest flock there in recent years (VS).

The 16 Harlequin Ducks reported for the season was about normal, but nine of them were at a single location. This group of one male and eight females frequented the Cape May Coast Guard Jetty from early January into March (P. Kosten, m.ob.). Elsewhere in New Jersey, a male was at Avalon Jan. 23 (DW), an imm. male reported in November from Barnegat Light lingered through the period and a one-legged female consorted with handout-seeking Mallards at a bayside dock in Barnegat Light (PD *et al.*). Four reports from Long Island included two of each sex.

Eiders were comparatively scarce. Common Eider reports consisted of 26 on the Montauk CBC, four at Montauk Jan. 10 (GSR) and a rare ad. male at the Cape May Coast Guard Jetty Jan. 18 (PD *et al.*). King Eiders were less common with several on the New Jersey coast and a maximum of seven on the Montauk CBC. Although the W.T.S. reported over 16,000 scoters wintering off the New Jersey coast, they were not much in evidence in the places frequented by area observers, who found them very scarce. The several hundred Ruddy Ducks wintering on the lower Delaware R., near Philadelphia were a pitiful remnant of the huge flocks of tens of thousands of earlier decades. All three species of merganser were present in excellent numbers during at least part of the winter. A raft of 500+ Hooded Mergansers at Brigantine N.W.R. (hereafter, Brig.) was extraordinary (JB,TH *et al.*), while large concentrations of Com. Mergansers included 700 on the S. Lancaster County, Pa. CBC, 800 on the Hudson R., at Stony Point, N.Y., Jan. 19 (RFD) and 400+ on Spruce Run Res., N.J., Feb. 21 (J. Staples).

**RAPTORS**—It was an excellent season for diurnal raptors. The New Jersey Raptor Association's fourth annual Winter Hawk Census Jan. 31 found 2240 vultures and hawks of 15 species, a 55% increase from the previous 2 years with only slightly expanded coverage. Despite the bitter cold weather in December-January, Turkey Vultures remained in the Region in large numbers, disappearing from the n. parts of the area only for a brief span during the coldest period. Over 1000 were at Big Round Top near Gettysburg, Pa., Dec. 13 (CS) and 200+ were along the Delaware R., near Lambertville, N.J.—New Hope, Pa., in early December and again in February (JW). The N.J.R.A. Hawk Census recorded 547. A returning

migrant was at Millbrook School, Dutchess Co., N.Y., Jan. 26 (F. Germond). Black Vultures continue to expand their range in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Large concentrations included 185+ at Big Round Top, 102 on the S. Lancaster County, Pa. CBC and a New Jersey record of 17 at Titusville in early December (JW). One near Easton, Pa., Dec. 15 (L. Mattioli) provided the first winter record for the Lehigh Valley, while a bird at Mt. Airy in Philadelphia Feb. 22 (HC) was believed to be the first record for the city.

#### S.A.

An interesting feature of this season's raptor reports was an increase in the number of birds coming to suet feeders, perhaps occasioned by the unusually cold weather in December-January. At Centerville, Del., an imm. Red-shouldered Hawk was at a feeding station eating suet Jan. 24 (WJW), while at Coatsville, Pa., an ad. Red-shouldered returned for the 4th consecutive year (PLH). A possible first, however, was a Turkey Vulture that came to Centerville, Del., feeder Jan. 2 (WJW). This was followed 2 weeks later by another TV that came to feed on suet at the Coatsville, Pa., feeder for 2 days until it was attacked by a Red-tailed Hawk that drove it off and took the suet (PLH).

All three species of Accipiter were well reported and several dozen wintering Red-shouldered Hawks was an encouraging sign. Comments on Red-tailed Hawk ranged from "abundant" to "very common." There were 91 on the S. Lancaster County CBC, Dec. 21, 35 along the Maurice R., N.J., Jan. 9 (CS) and a record 765 on the N.J.R.A. Hawk Census. Most impressive was the massive invasion of Rough-legged Hawks with far higher than usual numbers reported everywhere, especially along the coast. Thirty birds at Manahawkin, N.J., Dec. 12, mostly in view at the same time, was the peak count for a single location (CS). The 152 on the N.J.R.A. Hawk Census was four times last year's high count. Rough-leggeds occurred in good numbers inland as well, with 11 on the New Bloomfield, Pa. CBC surpassing the cumulative total of eight seen in the previous 31 years!

Eagles, too, were well represented this winter. New York's seven Golden Eagles were mostly in Dutchess and Ulster cos., but one was present at Shelter I., L.I., most of the winter (*vide* GSR). In s. New Jersey, Sutton estimated eight imm. and two ad. Golden Eagles occurring during the winter, the highest total ever for this area (CS). Another was at Washington Crossing S.P., N.J., Jan. 13 (JW). The National Wildlife Federation-sponsored Bald Eagle Census Jan. 9-10 turned up about 42 birds, two-thirds adult, during the worst of the cold spell, but there were many more present during February. In Pennsylvania, a maximum of three immatures and four adults were at a relatively recent wintering area on the lower Susquehanna R., near Michael's Run Jan. 9 (M. Puglisi, RMS). An estimated 16 (10i,6a) were in s. New Jersey during the winter (CS), while the peak count for the upper Delaware R. was eight (6i,2a) Jan. 11 (P. Karner). Delaware had two immatures in addition to the four resident pairs of adults during February (P.

Burns, WWF) Southeastern New York produced only 13 birds for the census, but an aerial count Feb. 18 yielded 40 (16i,24a) mainly on the Sullivan County reservoirs and the adjacent part of the Delaware R. (P. Nye). Up to five were at Iona I., in the Hudson R., Jan. 25 into February (m.ob.), an immature was at Rye L., Jan. 26 (TWB) and another immature wintered at Mill Neck, L I (R. Sabin *et al.*).

Following last fall's spectacular migration Marsh Hawks wintered in excellent numbers in New Jersey. The N.J.R.A. Hawk Census found 236 birds, 100 more than last year's high count. Twenty-five were near Salem Jan. 3 (PB) and there were good numbers inland as well. In Delaware 60 were at B H N.W.R., Dec. 5 (MG), but they were considered uncommon later in the season (MVB). Reports of lingering Ospreys are becoming increasingly regular and this winter was no exception, in spite of the cold weather. One was at Cornwall Bay, on the Hudson R., Dec. 24-28 (BSe) and another made the S. Lancaster County CBC, while one at Beesley's Pt., Great Egg Harbor, N.J., Jan. 11 was fishing in the warm-water outflow of a power plant, the only open water for miles around (RBa).

Rounding out the raptor report, it was also a good season for falcons. Two Gyrfalcons were noted, both of them white-phase birds. One made a brief but well seen visit on the Bethlehem-Easton CBC (R. Mancke, D. DeReamus) while a more obliging immature roamed the marshes from Lawrence to Jones Beach, L.I., Jan. 26-Mar. 6, and was seen by many during February (M. Scheibel, m ob). About a dozen Peregrine Falcons were found, including a locally rare one at Kingston, Pa., Feb. 20 (TBa). Merlins, too, were well represented with 200± birds reported, many apparently wintering. Unusual inland reports were two in Warren County, N.J. in late December (*vide* GH) and one at Lawrenceville, N.J., Feb. 12 (RB1). Large numbers of Am. Kestrels were reported both inland and along the coast with 443 on the N.J.R.A. Hawk Census.

**GROUSE THROUGH CRANES**—Ruffed Grouse were reported in excellent numbers from Dutchess and Rockland cos., N.Y., but Bobwhite were considered scarce over much of the Region where they normally occur. Turkeys, which have been reintroduced into many areas, were considered common and spreading in Dutchess County (R.T.W.B C), n.w. New Jersey (*vide* GH) and n.e. Pennsylvania (WR). An ad. Sandhill Crane was a reward for several die-hard hawk-watchers at Cape May Pt., Dec. 5, and furnished the first record there since 1958, although a winter bird has appeared off and on in neighboring Cumberland County during the past few years (PD *et al.*).

**SHOREBIRDS**—American Oystercatchers leave the Region for only a brief period in mid-winter. Late lingering birds were at Corson's Inlet, N.J., Dec. 9 (RM) and another at Stone Harbor Dec. 12 (JD, RM), but two spring migrants were back at Stone Harbor Feb. 18 (DW) and one was at Savage's Ditch, Del., Feb. 28 (WWF). Good counts of Ruddy Turnstone appeared on several CBCs. One hundred were at Cape Henlopen, Del., all

winter (WWF) but nine at Milton Pt., Rye, N.Y., Dec. 28 were more unusual (TWB *et al.*). An impressive concentration of 60-70 Com. Snipe spent the winter at Trenton Marsh (m.ob.), certainly the best spot in the state for the species at this season. A Spotted Sandpiper at Piermont Pier, Rockland Co., Dec. 10, was very late, but represents the third year in a row with a December record for the Region (VS).

Four Willets were found during December, including a repeat from last year's occurrence on the Montauk CBC Dec. 20 (AJL). Surprisingly, Lesser Yellowlegs were almost as frequently reported as Greater this winter, with six near Goshen Jan. 6 (RM), and an even more unusual one at Trenton Marsh Feb. 7 (RBI, G.Comrie). Possibly without precedent was a report of a Pectoral Sandpiper feeding with snipe along the Maurice R., Cumberland Co., N.J., Jan. 11 (CS), although there have been recent December records. Late Pectorals should be carefully examined because of the possible occurrence of the very similar Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Dowitcher reports included six Long-billeds, four on Long Island and two in s.w. New Jersey. More surprising were four separate Short-billed Dowitchers in s. New Jersey Dec. 13-Jan. 4. Extreme caution should be used in the identification of dowitchers in winter, when the species are inseparable except by call and Long-billed is the one to be expected. A Marbled Godwit lingered at J.B.W.R., to Dec. 29 (PAB), but most extraordinary was a Red Phalarope carefully studied among Sanderslings at Oak Beach, L.I., Jan. 24 (A. Townsend). Twenty-six Am. Avocets were at B.H.N.W.R., Nov. 30 (LP) and one was still there Dec. 20 (DAC).

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS**—It was a better-than-average season for white-winged gulls, although not as good as one might have anticipated from the bitter cold weather and the large numbers in New England. Two dozen Glaucous Gulls included a surprising eight along the Delaware R., from Philadelphia to Trenton. The ca. 28 Iceland Gulls also included numerous inland reports, among them three on the lower Susquehanna R., near Muddy Run (RMS) and one at L. Musconetcong Feb. 21 (TH). Great Black-backed Gulls also moved inland in unprecedented numbers, with 800+ on L. Parsippany, Morris Co., N.J., in mid-February (G. Mahler) and 310 in the Susquehanna R., on the S. Lancaster County CBC. One at Harvey's L., Luzerne Co., Pa. represented only the third local record for the subregional editor in 30 years of birding (WR).

A first-winter **Thayer's Gull** was carefully studied at False Pt., near Montauk Dec. 7, and described in meticulous, convincing detail by two observers, one of whom had substantial previous experience with the species (BJS, P. Snetsinger). There is as yet no photograph or specimen for the Region. New York's five Lesser Black-backed Gulls included two from Westchester County along Long Island Sound (TWB). Two were at N. Arlington, N.J., during January (N. Boyajian) and one was at Penn Manor, Pa., in December. The previously reported California Gull, wintering at Rockland Lake S.P., for the third consecutive winter was noted during December but not thereafter. Only one



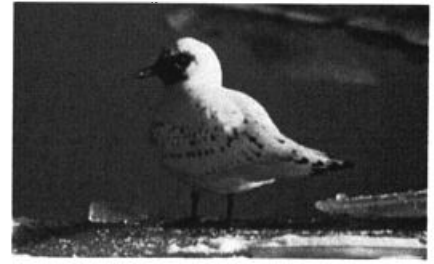
*Ivory Gull, Newburgh, N.Y., Jan. 19, 1981. Photo/Beto Asami.*

Black-headed Gull, an immature was reported from Long Island, but there were up to four adults at Caven Cove, Jersey City during January and an immature at Manasquan Inlet from late January-February (AB *et al.*). The large flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls at Sandy Hook, Barnegat Inlet and Indian R. Inlet in mid-December disappeared completely by early January. The half-dozen Little Gull reports were mostly in December, but a returning adult was at Jones Beach Feb. 28 (GSR).

The gulls of the season were the ad. and imm. **Ivory Gulls** discovered at Newburgh, N.Y., Jan. 11 (B. Schiefer, E. Treacy, BSe). Only the immature was present after that date; it was seen and photographed by many through Jan. 20. Black-legged Kittiwakes were scarce even at Montauk with only 104 on the CBC, and two at Barnegat Light Dec. 5 (PLH) were the only ones mentioned from the New Jersey coast. Three lingering Forster's Terns were at Cape Henlopen Dec. 16 and two Royal Terns were in the same area Dec. 2 (WWF). A late Black Skimmer was at J.B.W.R., Dec. 15 (W. Reilly *et al.*).

Once again alcids were scarce, if slightly more numerous than last year. Six Razorbills included two from Long Island and four along the New Jersey coast. The season's only pelagic trip out of Montauk Dec. 6 listed seven unidentified alcids, three Dovekies and a **Black Guillemot**, the latter seen and photographed near Montauk Pt. (THD, BJS, A. Cooley) and also sighted from shore (M. Cashman). The only other Dovekies were one on the Montauk CBC and one at Manasquan Inlet Dec. 14 (WJB, JB).

**OWLS, WOODPECKERS**—One of the big events of the season was the incursion of Snowy Owls, the first sizable flight since the winter of 1974-75. Delaware had no reports, but five were in Pennsylvania and another five in New Jersey, including two immatures at Island Beach S.P., seen by many and photographed from late November-mid-February. About nine were on Long Island, with a maximum of three at JFK Airport (S. Chevalier), one each in Poughkeepsie and Newburgh and another was seen sitting high atop the Gothic tower of Riverside Church on Manhattan's upper west side Dec. 9 (ROP). Long-eared Owls were reported in somewhat better numbers than last year, but it was still not an invasion year. High counts included five at a roost in Dutchess County (R.T. W.B.C.) and a peak of 12 at Great Swamp N.W.R., during January-February (m.ob.). Short-eared Owls were much more widely reported than last year, although they were curiously missing from some of their usual



*Ivory Gull, Newburgh, N.Y., Jan. 19, 1981. Photo/Frank P. Murphy.*

haunts. Peak numbers were 15 at B.H.N.W.R., Dec. 5 (MG), ten at Manahawkin, N.J., Dec. 7 (CS) and 21 at the Galesville Airport, Ulster Co., N.Y., during February (JT). Saw-whet Owls were about average, but suffered 8-10 road kills along the Jones Beach stretch during the winter (*vide* BJS).

**S.A.**

Two years ago we reported that the southernmost of the Great Gray Owls that staged a massive invasion of the Northeast was the Lloyd Harbor, Long Island bird which stayed for three months. Now comes news that there was another, more southerly, bird that winter but, unfortunately, it was never seen alive. In February 1979, a dead **Great Gray Owl** was found in a melting snow bank near the office at Nockamixon S.P., Bucks Co., Pa., only 30 mi. n. of Philadelphia. The mounted specimen is now on display at Tobyhanna S.P., in the Poconos (F. Haas, *vide* AH).

Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to increase in numbers and to expand slowly to the N. They were very common on all New Jersey and reached new highs on some Pennsylvania counts, including 97 on the S. Lancaster County CBC. Seven on the Dutchess County, N.Y., CBC was a new high; the species was first noted in 1969. There were a few scattered reports of Red-headed Woodpecker, mostly from areas where they are known to breed. Two Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers were reported from Pennsylvania, one on the Reading CBC and another Jan. 14 at Blair's Mill, Huntington Co. (OKS).

**LARKS THROUGH SHRIKES**—It was an exceptionally good season for Horned Larks as observers noted large flocks at many locations, especially inland on freshly manured farm fields. Some Tree Swallows stayed n., including four that braved the bitter cold at Manahawkin on the Barnegat CBC Jan. 4. Two at Holgate Feb. 14 were the first returning migrants (D. Richter). A Black-billed Magpie of dubious origin was at Old Bethpage, L.I., Dec. 31 (AJL). A pair of Com. Ravens can now be considered permanent residents near Red Rock, Luzerne Co., Pa., since they have been found there in each of the past 4 seasons (DG). Another raven was in Perry County, Pa., Jan. 14 (OKS). Despite the cold weather, a number of Fish Crows wintered along the Hudson R., in Dutchess and Orange counties, and the first migrants on the upper Susquehanna R., were at Beach Haven, Luzerne Co., Feb. 18 (DG).

The big flight of Black-capped Chickadees noted in the fall resulted in record numbers on several Long Island CBCs and high counts throughout s. New Jersey. A small invasion reached Delaware early in the season (MVB) and s. Pennsylvania where they outnumbered Carolinas 2.5 to 1 on the S. Lancaster County CBC. Except for the few reports from the fall, only one Boreal Chickadee came S with the Black-cappeds, to the Warren Thomas' feeder in Toms River, N.J., Jan. 18-Feb. 28 + + (M. Cooper, m.ob.). Following the excellent fall flight, modest numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches remained for the winter and were widely reported. Two late House Wrens were detected on CBCs, one near Goshen, N.Y. (R. Robb *et al.*) and one at B.H.N.W.R. (HC). Winter Wrens were thought to be scarce, but Carolina Wrens showed strong signs of recovering from the lows that followed the devastating winter of 1977. The three plus Short-billed Marsh Wrens reported from Brig. in the fall stayed through most of December, but avoided detection on the Oceanville CBC. Three others were found at Dennis Cr., Cape May Co., Feb. 28 (DK,RBa) and one was at Westhampton Beach, L.I., Dec. 26 (*vide* GSR).

A ♀ Varied Thrush was seen briefly in Stokes St. forest, N.J., Dec. 2 (RRy), but an immature male visited a feeder at Pine L., near Medford, N.J., Dec. 17-21 (Mrs. Jo Ann Morris, m.ob.). A Swainson's Thrush was carefully studied at L. Sebago, Rockland Co., N.Y., Jan. 6 (P. Meisner, J. Focht). Most encouraging were the excellent numbers of E. Bluebirds reported, mainly on CBCs, from all parts of the Region, but especially from areas where nesting boxes are provided. Southern Lancaster County was tops with 122, but two New Jersey counts had 30 and 33. One of the rarest species reported this season was a possible Wheatear on the Walnut Valley, N.J., CBC, Dec. 20, reported by two experienced observers who saw the diagnostic tail pattern as the bird circled overhead (O. Heck, D. Adelberg). All confirmed records for the state are from the coast in September-October. New Jersey's first **Townsend's Solitaire**, noted in the fall report, lingered at Sunrise Mt. to at least Dec. 8 (*vide* F. Tetlow).

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was on the Gloucester, N.J., CBC and another was found dead near Townsend, Del., Jan. 5 (L. Broome, *vide* GKH). Kinglets were considered scarce by a number of observers but CBC totals were near average. A flock of 75 Water Pipits near Elmer, N.J., in late January were the only ones reported (JHa). Eight N. Shrikes was a significant improvement over last year, but only one remained for more than one day, an immature at Mutontown, L.I., Jan. 20-23 (K. Stier, W. Patterson). Three Loggerhead Shrikes were found during the winter, one at Rosedale Park, Mercer Co., N.J., Dec. 14-Feb. 28 + (RB1, m.ob.), one at Mickleton, N.J., Dec. 25-Jan. 5 (C. Bresler) and another at JFK Airport Feb. 22 (A&H Richard).

**WARBLERS**—A Black-and-white Warbler was near Suffern, N.Y., Dec. 18 (J. LeMaire). Two Orange-crowned Warblers made the Brooklyn CBC and a count period bird was near Boonton, N.J. Much more

unusual was a Nashville Warbler at Emmaus, Pa., Dec. 14-21 (S. Smith, F. Brock). An excellent find was a ♂ Cape May Warbler at Amity Hall, Perry Co., Pa., Dec. 21 (CJ *et al.*). A ♂ **Townsend's Warbler** was at Sandy Hook, N.J., for several days to Dec. 18 (J. Peachey). This provided the third record in the last 4 years and only the fourth state record, all of which have come in winter. A Pine Warbler was in the Teterboro, N.J., area Dec. 21 (RRy), and two wintered at a feeder at Cedar Run Ref., N.J. (E. Woodford). Nine Palm Warblers were reported, mostly in December. A late Ovenbird was in Central P., Manhattan, mid November-Dec. 4 (P. Tozzi *et al.*) and another was in a small park on 48th St., Dec. 12-16 (H. Tetrault *et al.*). Yet another was at N. Haledon, N.J., Dec. 25, but died soon after (M. Kuhnen). Several Yellow-breasted Chats lingered into the CBC period, but the only later report was at Cape Henlopen Feb. 9 (WWF). Common Yellowthroats were listed on several CBCs, but none thereafter. One of a pair of ♂ Wilson's Warblers seen in Cape May in late November was still present Dec. 6 (JD).

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH SPARROWS**—A flock of 100 E. Meadowlarks at New Egypt, N.J., throughout the season was an excellent count of this regionally declining species (B. Dunne). Five Yellow-headed Blackbirds were a bit above average. A female was at a Paulsboro, N.J., feeder Dec. 23-Jan. 12 (J. McNeill), while two visited a Lawrenceville, N.J., feeder Dec. 27 (J. Marti). A male was near Salem, N.J., Jan. 3 (PBe) and an imm. male was at Bear Mt. Trailside Museum, Harriman S.P., N.Y., for an hour Jan. 13 (M. Reynolds, J. Mead). Northern Orioles were plentiful during CBC period, with 24 ± reports. A W. Tanager was at Cape May Dec. 1 (RM), and another made the Scranton area CBC period.

No *Pheucticus* grosbeaks were reported this winter but an Indigo Bunting, extremely rare at this season, visited a Trenton, N.J., feeder Dec. 23 (BM). The only Dickcissel noted was a male at a Manhasset, L.I., feeder Feb. 4 (P. Billen). The hoped-for winter finch invasion fizzled but Evening Grosbeaks were widespread and locally common. Purple Finches were somewhat more numerous than last year but were not especially common. Many CBC compilers noted that House Finch numbers were high and growing with record counts in several areas. There were 7 reports of small flocks (<10) of Pine Grosbeaks, but none of them was seen more than once. A **Hoary Redpoll** was studied at length at Brookhaven, L.I., as it fed on weed stalks with Song Sparrows Jan. 9-14 (GSR *et al.*). There were numerous scattered small flocks of Com. Redpolls throughout the Region during the period, but there was definitely not a major invasion. Pine Siskins, too, were widespread, but estimates of numbers ranged from low in the s. to common in the n. parts of the Region. Red Crossbills were scarce with four at Shelter Island, L.I., Dec. 29 (GSR), four on the c. Suffolk County CBC, two on the Raritan Estuary, N.J., CBC and one on the Barnegat CBC. The only White-winged Crossbill was at Wyalusing, Pa., Dec. 27 (TBa).

A most unusual find was a Henslow's Sparrow at Corson's Inlet S.P., N.J., Dec. 2

by an observer quite familiar with the species (RBa). Five Vesper Sparrows were all in New York, with three on Long Island CBCs, one at Armonk Dec. 21 (P. Saraceni), and another at Mt. Kisco Dec. 21-22 (T. Carrolan). Two wintering Lark Sparrows included a very rare inland bird at Princeton Dec 14-21 (T. Southerland, m.ob.) and another at a Linwood, N.J., feeder during January (JD). A Dark-eyed Junco showing some of the characteristics of the White-winged race was at a Summit, N.J., feeder for 2 weeks in February (R&J Krebs). After several years of low numbers wintering Tree Sparrows were considered plentiful. A half-dozen Chipping Sparrows were reported away from coastal s. New Jersey where they are not unusual in winter. The northernmost was at Middletown, N.Y., Dec. 20 (W&F Abbott).

An imm. Harris' Sparrow visited an East Islip, L.I. feeder for one hour Jan. 8 but was not seen again (D. House). Following the outstanding fall migration, above average numbers of White-crowned Sparrows remained in the area with a maximum of 93 on the Gloucester CBC and 46 on the Assunpink CBC. About 30 wintered in the Princeton area (RB1) and up to 15 were regular at the Philadelphia airport (CP). Two Lincoln's Sparrows were on New Jersey CBCs, and another was at Hecksher S.P., L.I., Dec. 20 (R. O'Malley). Lapland Longspurs were present in excellent numbers, the peak count being 120 at East Rockaway, L.I., Jan. 4-18 (R. Arbib, THD *et al.*). Also noteworthy were 28 on the Bethlehem-Easton CBC. Snow Buntings were in generally low numbers except for a few favored locations such as Cape Henlopen with 300, December-January (WWF), and Sayreville, N.J. with 60-150 throughout winter (J. Nestel). A flock of 250 was at Stewart Airport, Newburgh, N.Y., Jan. 25 to greet the hostages returning from Iran (K. McDermott). A single bird seen on the pelagic trip 40 mi e. of Montauk Dec 6 was pretty well lost (THD,BJS).

**EXOTICS**—A ♂ White-headed Duck in the Delaware R., at Philadelphia with Ruddy's for several days Nov. 30+ was surely an escape (CP). At least four different Eur Goldfinches were reported at feeders in New Jersey during the winter. These birds are being imported into the state as cage birds both legally and illegally and one or more of the feeder appearances occurred shortly after one pet store owner was fined for possession of this species without a permit (RK,RRy)

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## MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

/Henry T. Armistead

December actually averaged 0.47°F above normal at the six regional weather stations (Baltimore, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Richmond, Wallops Island and Washington D.C.) However, beginning December 20 extremely cold weather began, with all stations reporting the coldest December minimum temperatures on December 26, ranging from 4° to 14°. This cold spell continued until January 18-19 after which temperatures were normal until February when it became very warm—4.2° over the norm. January temperatures averaged 5.6° below normal. Prolonged drought continued, with precipitation averaging below normal for all three months (-2.13 inches for December, -2.28 in January, -0.23 in February). What little there was came as rain. There was hardly any snow all winter. Water levels remained low at reservoirs, streams and lakes as the drought continued almost unabated since late May 1980.

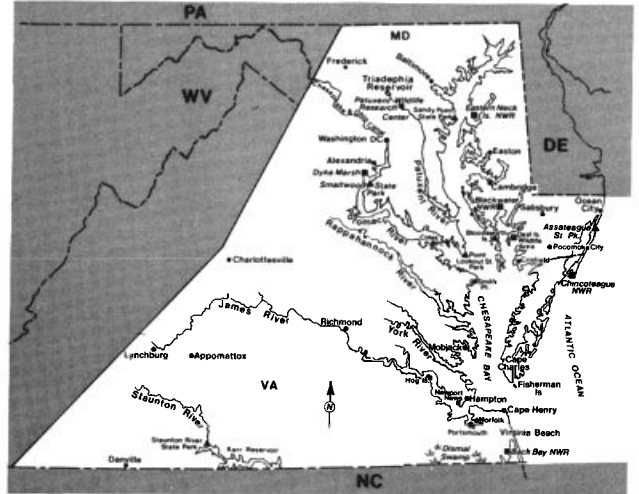
Birding activity was slight, even for winter. A larger than usual proportion of reporting was restricted to yard sightings in spite of the second consecutive poor season for northern species. But many of the best birds were "yard birds." The big turnout to see these and most of the other rarities was more typical of what might be expected in New England. It was not a good winter for half hardy lingerers but die-offs owing to cold were not a feature either. Pelagic birding was nil. The northward intrusion of salt water up Chesapeake Bay attracted more concern from watermen than ornithologists yet surely this drought-caused phenomenon must be affecting birds, in ways we do not yet understand. Scarce this winter were loons, Horned Grebe, herons, most diving ducks, rails, shorebirds, terns and warblers.

**LOONS THROUGH IBISES**—Following migration loons and Horned Grebes became scarce on a scale that may be unprecedented; in the case of loons, some coastal CBCs, either missing them completely or coming perilously close to doing so. At L. Anna in the Virginia Piedmont 11 Com. Loons were seen Jan. 25 (SC *et al.*). Only in extreme s.e. Virginia did loons appear in near normal numbers on CBCs—at Little Creek and Back Bay N.W.R. (hereafter, B.B.N.W.R.). Horned Grebe was absent or uncommon after mid-December, the last sizable counts

being 850 Dec. 5 (FRS, JWD) and 500 Dec. 16 (TRW) at Craney I. Disposal Area (hereafter, C.I.D.A.) Portsmouth, Va. Red-necked Grebes were seen, as usual, infrequently and in scattered localities including singles in Baltimore for the fifth straight year in mid-January, and also on Feb. 28 (JLS; RFR, m.ob.), the latter sighting considered a normal arrival date. Another was at Patuxent Naval Air Station (hereafter, P.N.A.S.) St. Mary's Co., Md., Feb. 23 (JC). Pied-billed Grebe was reported in good numbers with 43 on Swift Creek Res., w. of Richmond Dec. 31 (FRS) and 87 on L. Anna Jan. 25 (SC *et al.*).

The Region's by now nearly obligatory White Pelican was one that was seen off-and-on throughout the period in the Sandbridge area n. of B.B.N.W.R. (DH, m.o.b.). Great Cormorant continues to increase with counts of 14 at St. George I., Md., Jan. 1 (Pt. Lookout CBC, *vide* EB), nine from Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (hereafter, C.B.B.T.) Dec. 23 (RLA) and several at C.I.D.A., Dec. 2-Feb. 10 (TRW). Extraordinary was a count of 1150 Double-crested Cormorants on the Little Creek, Va. CBC, Dec. 31, probably a record winter total in s.e. Virginia (PWS *et al.*). Among them were six Great Cormorants.

The very cold weather which started Dec. 20 and lasted one month resulted in record or near-record lows for many herons during the CBCs and insured the continuation of this situation throughout the period. At North-west River P., Chesapeake, Va., a late Green Heron was seen Dec. 4 (GMW). A Cattle Egret was on the B.B.N.W.R. CBC, Jan. 1 (DH, *vide* PWS). A good midwinter Piedmont count was eight Great Blue Herons at Lily Ponds, Frederick Co., Md., Jan. 11 (DHW). Remarkable were a Yellow-crowned Night Heron and White Ibis seen on the Hopewell, Va. CBC, Dec. 20, both immatures (DR; DP, *vide* FRS). But the most unusual Ardeids were Least Bitterns, one recently dead found Jan. 3 near Windyhill, Talbot Co., Md. (DM, *vide* JGR) and another seen at C.I.D.A., Jan. 28 (TS, *vide*



CRB) there being only 2 or 3 winter records for either state. To give an idea of the poor heron showing consider the following totals for CBCs at the Regions's winter heron strongholds, Chincoteague N.W.R. (hereafter, C.N.W.R.) and Cape Charles, respectively Dec. 28 and 27 for four selected species: Little Blue Heron 1,3; Great Egret 7,5; Snowy Egret 8,1; Louisiana Heron 4,15. In 1979 the respective totals were 10,12; 96,31; 30,7; 20,26! To be sure there were the usual few lingering individuals of other species but these could not obscure the fact that the heron presence was almost as evanescent as that of loons and Horned Grebe.

**WATERFOWL**—Most inland areas froze during the cold spell as did the more n. areas of the Chesapeake Bay. This combined with drought water levels made things difficult for waterfowl counters although locally some of the few open areas experienced the concentration of ducks that sometimes accompanies such a widespread freeze. One such spot was the "Falls" of the James R., at Richmond which had record local counts of some species (FRS). Even during warm February C.N.W.R. hosted fewer than 3500 waterfowl, as determined by weekly surveys (DFH). Observers were unanimous in describing this as a very poor winter for divers including scoters. With the thaw in late January many waterfowl dispersed N.

There was a massive flight of Whistling Swans and Canada Geese at Chestertown, Md., Feb. 28 (JG, *vide* FLP). Brant upland slightly inland with 40 at College Cr., James



City Co., Va., Jan. 14 (BW) and 1500 at Hampton Roads during January (WPS). A Barnacle Goose, probably an escape, was 10 mi s. of Annapolis Jan. 9-10 (HW). The last report of the White-fronted Goose at Blackwater N.W.R., was Dec. 7 (PO, *fide* CPW). Snow Geese continue to consolidate their inland tendencies. Witness these reports, all of 10,000± in the interior of the Eastern Shore of Maryland: Dec. 1, Queen Annes County. (EE, AJF), Denton Dec. 10 (MWH, *fide* AJF), Girdletree-Salisbury Dec. 29 (JMA) and Queen Annes County throughout the reporting period (FLP, who states that hunting guides believe they come from the Delaware marshes). These are almost all white birds and considered as Greaters although 50 Blues were near Denton Feb. 13 (RBF). The occurrence of such large numbers of Snows in fields in the Kent-Queen Annes-Caroline Cos. area only goes back a few years. Elsewhere Blue Geese continue to thrive at Blackwater N.W.R., (hereafter, B.N.W.R.) where they usually outnumber white birds, with 1800 Dec. 31 (CSR *et al.*, CBC) and at Presquile N.W.R., near Hopewell, Va., with 250 on several dates (FRS, JWD), both near record counts locally. One near Rockville, Md., Dec. 14 was an anomaly (EMW).

On Virginia's Eastern Shore we are told "summer's cruelty is redeemed by winter's cruelty," by which is meant that soy bean crops unharvested owing to the drought were heavily fed upon by waterfowl, especially Black Ducks, during the winter freeze (GR). Kent County, Md., appears to be the center of abundance of several waterfowl; the CBC there Dec. 21 reporting the highest counts on hand for the period: Whistling Swan 19,000, Canada Goose 221,000, Mallard 21,000, Black Duck 7377 and Pintail 4174 (DB,FLP, JG *et al.*). An oddity was a Cinnamon Teal reported at B.N.W.R., Feb. 16-Mar. 7 (WK, RLK *et al.*), more likely now than at some other times to be a wild bird since captive breeding of them in the Northeast is currently on a down phase (RR, *pers. comm.*). Fifty Wood Ducks at Druid L. in Baltimore Jan. 18 was a fine winter count (RFR).

The high counts of Canvasback were on the Annapolis CBC, Jan. 4 with 9457 (HW *et al.*) and just across the Bay from there on the Chester R., Feb. 15 with 5000 (FLP). Also at Annapolis Dec. 30-Feb. 28 was an odd duck first thought to be a Tufted but on closer examination it was felt to be a hybrid, possibly a Wood X Ring-necked Duck (EB,HW *et al.*). This was a good winter for jetty ducks, highlighted by the appearance of King Eiders at Ocean City (up to 16), Metomkin Inlet, Va., Smith I., Va., C.B.B.T. and C.I.D.A., mostly in late December (WCR,HTA, CP, FRS, TRW *et al.*). At Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach, up to six Harlequin Ducks were found Feb. 1 (RLA) and a single was present all month (TRW,RC, m.ob.) and Ocean City had them present off-and-on Dec. 7-Feb. 28+ (PO,RLK) the peak being five Feb. 5-6 (ES). Common Eiders were less common with one at C.B.B.T., Dec. 26 (WCR,CP *et al.*) and another at Rudee Inlet for the entire period, the climax of which was its ingestion of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich Feb. 28 (MM, *Hampton Roads Bird Club Bull.*, Mar. 13, 1981, p. 8). *De gustibus non est disputandum*. Ruddy Ducks

were very scarce in traditional redoubts in the District of Columbia area, especially along the Potomac R. (JMA,JBB) but were untypically abundant elsewhere, perhaps owing to ice conditions, particularly at C.I.D.A., 1600 Jan. 27 (TRW) and Yorktown, Va., Jan. 15 with at least 15,000 (BW). Good merganser reports were of 181 Hoodeds at Swift Creek Res., Dec. 21 (FRS), 183 on the Hopewell CBC, Dec. 20 (FRS *et al.*), 333 Commons Jan. 24 at Hunting Creek-Dyke Marsh, Va., Jan. 24 (JBB) and 1200 Red-breasteds at B.B.N.W.R., Feb. 15 (RC).

**VULTURES THROUGH RAILS**—Turkey Vultures began migrating at least as early as mid-February. At Sterling, Va., 175 were seen in 20 min Feb. 12 as the edge of a strong high pressure system (31.20+in.) came through (CT). Others were seen in the last week of the month in Annapolis moving NE (WK). At Sandy Pt. S.P. late fall migrants Dec. 1 were one Turkey Vulture, three Red-tailed Hawks, four Red-shouldered Hawks, two Bald Eagles and one Marsh Hawk (HW). In the Bowie, Md., area all common raptors were more abundant than usual in February especially Am. Kestrel, perhaps because of the good supply of small rodents combined with lack of snow (RMP). Parks and Dyke commented on above-average Accipiter numbers on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and 25 Sharp-shinned Hawks Dec. 28 at C.N.W.R. was an excellent but not unprecedented CBC count there (FRS *et al.*). Early spring migrants were a Red-tailed Hawk and Am. Kestrel at Annapolis Feb. 25 (HW). On Feb. 22 Red-shouldered Hawks were seen copulating and adding fresh nest materials at P.N.A.S. (JC). Rough-legged Hawks made a good showing w. of the Bay where they are typically rather uncommon with up to nine present all winter at Dulles Airport w. of District of Columbia (WRS), one Jan. 17 s. of Frederick, Md. (DHW), one at P.N.A.S., early January-Feb. 15 (JC), and one in Culpeper County, Va., Dec. 7 (JBB). Across the Bay the best areas for them continue to be the B.N.W.R. area and Crisfield which had nine and seven respectively on CBCs Dec. 31 & 30 (CSR, CRV *et al.*).

As usual one or two Golden Eagles wintered at the favored localities of B.N.W.R., Eastern Neck N.W.R., and for the fifth straight year, at Remington Farms in Kent Co., Md. (FLP *et al.*). An immature was at Mardela Springs, Md., Feb. 3 (ES). Bald Eagles shifted around a lot due to ice conditions, and on the lower Potomac R., where seven-ten were seen in other years none were found Jan. 11 (MKK). Scott felt the high total of 18 on Hopewell CBC Dec. 20 may have included birds frozen off of the Potomac. In Kent County Parks found 14 in mid-winter, many attracted to feral mallards and crippled geese in the Remington Farms area. The Virginia winter survey located 130 Jan. 2-16 *cf.* 166 in 1980, the big drop indicated by these preliminary figures very likely due to weather which limited coverage. Sixty-five of these eagles were seen along the James R. In Maryland, B.N.W.R., remains the eagle capitol with 30 Balds and 2 Goldens reported on the CBC Dec. 31 (CSR *et al.*). An Osprey was at Williamsburg Feb. 17 (M&DM), about a month early if it was indeed a migrant. Merlins were in good

numbers coastally, Cape Charles reporting five and C.N.W.R., six Dec. 26-27 (CBCs). In addition to the usual reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks lurking around feeders, yard reports were received of an Am. Kestrel killing an Am. Robin in mid-February (RJT) and another kestrel killing a Red-winged Blackbird Dec. 25 and in turn being scared from its kill by a cat which disappeared with the bird into the bushes—these in Virginia Beach (TRW). The Warren, Va. CBC, Dec. 21 had a record 26 Turkeys seen by 6 of 10 parties (CES). Near Cape Charles a Sandhill Crane was seen in early December but lingered only until the 20th (*fide* GR). On the upper Chop-tank R., at Tanyard a Virginia Rail was seen Jan. 3-4 (WE, *fide* AJF) one of the few non-CBC rails reported. The cold weather also made rails hard to find and such prime Clapper Rail areas as Cape Charles and C.N.W.R., tallied only 13 and 6 on respective CBCs. Although lower than last winter's totals there 1045 Am. Coot at L. Anna Dec. 20 was the highest total this season.

**SHOREBIRDS**—Cold weather in December combined with a lack of coastal reports in January and February conspired to consign shorebird records this period to near oblivion. Two exceptions, however, were the CBCs at C.N.W.R., and Cape Charles which reported 16 and 20 species respectively. Most extraordinary were their counts of Am. Woodcock, 89 at C.N.W.R., and 272 at Cape Charles, eclipsing previous high counts for those areas. The previous continental CBC high was 122 in 1968 at Cape Charles but this year four parties had over 50. Other waders of interest at C.N.W.R., were 466 Am. Oystercatchers, whereas Cape Charles had an all-time low of 61 yet 252 were at the Cape (on Fisherman Island N.W.R.) Jan. 24 (RLA). Across the Bay on the Little Creek CBC 22 was a good total locally Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*). Killdeer arrivals or migrants were detected at McKee-Beshers W.M.A., Feb. 16 (PWo) and Rockville Feb. 18 (EMW)—both in Montgomery Co., Md., and a count of 105 at Hunting Creek near District of Columbia, Dec. 12 was excellent (JBB). Displaying Am. Woodcock were noted Feb. 17 at Falls Church, Va. (*fide* CPW), Feb. 18 at Bryans Rd., Charles Co., Md. (PN) and Feb. 21 at McKee-Beshers W.M.A. (PWo).

Unusual was a Whimbrel present throughout the reporting period at Grandview Beach, Hampton, Va. (BW,M&DM *et al.*) but more in line were 12 with 12 Marbled Godwits at their favored winter locality, the Mockhorn I flats, Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27 (DPW,HTA,CP *et al.*). Yellowlegs numbers were rather anemic this winter compared to last with Chincoteague CBC listing 30 Greaters and four Lessers (79 and 66 in 1979) and Cape Charles having 22 and one (vs. 126 and 16 in 1979) respectively. Red Knot, however, which sometimes goes unlisted for the entire winter season, turned up as follows: two at C.B.B.T., Dec. 26 (WCR,HTA,CP), one on the Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27 (CP), four on the Chincoteague CBC Dec. 28 (CRV *et al.*) and 12 on the Ocean City CBC Dec. 29 (WCR *et al.*). In the D.C.-Dyke Marsh-Hunting Creek, Va. area 1-2 Greater Yellowlegs were found through December until Jan 18 (JMA,JBB) and in this same area the Ft. Belvoir CBC had 25 Dunlin, its second record

Jan. 3 (RJA) and one lingered until Jan. 18 nearby at Hunting Creek (JBB). Piping Plover was unreported.

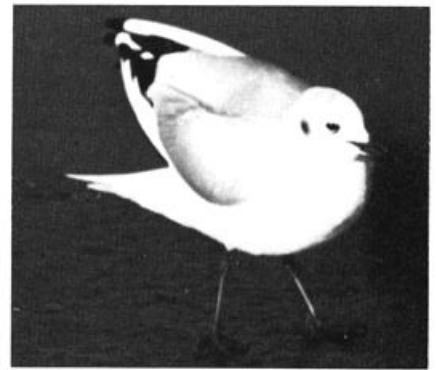
At Ocean City five Marbled Godwits were seen Dec. 7 (RFR,JLS), three lingering until the CBC Dec. 29 (CP,JSD *et al.*). Six Sanderlings were present at Solomons, Calvert Co., Md., Dec. 5-Feb. 5 (WK) and elsewhere on the Bay from one to 27 were reported on CBCs in Kent County, Pt. Lookout, Dorchester Co., and Crisfield (*vide* EB)—indicative of their scarce and scattered presence on the Chesapeake in winter. As surface water disappeared at C.I.D.A., so did Am. Avocets, the last being two on Nov. 18 (TRW) and the only season report was a single on the Little Creek CBC, Dec. 31 nearby (*vide* PWS).

**JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS**—The unique jaeger report was a Parasitic at B.B.N.W.R. CBC, Jan. 1 (*vide* PWS). This winter the huge numbers of gulls were the highlights of the upper Chesapeake Bay as were the good numbers of verified rarer gulls throughout the Region. "The freeze-up in late December produced a massive build-up near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, where a record count of over 30,000 was obtained on the Annapolis CBC, Jan. 4. Simultaneously, the inland landfills were nearly emptied of gulls, but as the ice began melting later in January, they returned in droves. At the Montgomery County landfill near Rockville, I had low counts of 200 in the first 2 weeks of January, but a record high of 12,500 Jan. 28 and another new record of about 15,000 Feb. 27" (HW). Glaucous Gulls were particularly widespread, especially first and second year birds, seen all through the winter with four discrete individuals at Montgomery County, Md. landfill (HW) where three Iceland and four Lesser Black-backed gulls were also present. On Jan. 11 two were at Fairfax County landfill, Va., in company with an Iceland Gull (WSR). In the 4-day period Dec. 26-29 four in three plumages were observed at C.B.B.T., Wallop's I., Va. and Ocean City (WCR,HTA,CP *et al.*). Others were at Baltimore, Liberty Res., n.w. of Baltimore, C.I.D.A., Kingsmill, Va., Salisbury and C.N.W.R. (EM, RFR, *vide* TRW and TA, *vide* CRV,CT). Iceland Gulls were slightly less often seen but were found at Baltimore, Liberty Res., Ocean City, Virginia Beach, C.N.W.R., and District of Columbia (v.o., *vide* EB & CPW).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to be reported widely and in small numbers ranging from 10+ seen through the winter by the Abbots in the Alexandria area, to four in one day on the Baltimore CBC Jan. 3 (RFR *et al.*), to various singles at C.B.B.T., C.N.W.R., Annapolis, Ocean City, Kent County, Md., Berlin, Md. plus two Dec. 26 on the Liberty Res. CBC (*vide* DB). "Becoming a regular, uncommon winter visitor" (JMA). Single first-year Thayer's Gulls were reported from Hunting Creek Feb. 19 and Dyke Marsh Feb. 21 (JMA). At Montgomery County landfill a leucistic Ring-billed Gull was seen Feb. 7 (DC, *vide* CPW). Great Black-backed Gull was described by several as "exploding" with record-breaking totals on several Bay area CBCs, some by a factor of three, as well as big counts along the coast. One of the Region's best chronicled birds was



*Black-headed Gull, Norfolk, Va., Feb. 9, 1981. Photo/R.L. Anderson.*



*Black-headed Gull, Norfolk, Va., Feb. 1, 1981. Photo/John Frary.*

a Black-headed Gull at the Hague in Norfolk seen at the least Jan. 26 through February (DH,m.ob.,ph.) with frequent views as close as 5-6 ft. Others were on the Baltimore (two) and Ocean City (one) CBCs and another was in Baltimore Feb. 21 (PW,LB, *vide* FRF). A Laughing Gull at Solomons Feb. 7 was unique (WK) for mid-winter in Maryland. Good locality counts of Bonaparte's Gulls were 148 on the Hopewell CBC Dec. 20 (FRS *et al.*), 2370 on the Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*); one in Salisbury in late January (HH, *vide* CPW) were singles at Ocean City Dec. 14 & 28 respectively. It was a bleak winter for terns with only Forster's being seen and these in small numbers on several Virginia CBCs. However, 135 were at Ocean City Dec. 7 (RFR,JLS). The only Black Skimmer report on hand is of 20 at C.I.D.A., Feb. 25 (M&DM). Rounding off the list of stray, solo waterbirds were a **Thick-billed Murre** on the B.B.N.W.R. CBC Jan. 1 (NB, *vide* \*PWS) and a Dovekie well seen at Locustville, Va., Dec. 29 (GR, GJH).

**DOVES THROUGH SHRIKES**—Mourning Doves were nest-building as early as Feb. 18 in Frederick, Md. (DHW). At Ft. McHenry in Baltimore a pair of Ringed Turtle Doves had a nest with 2 eggs Feb. 27 (WB, *vide* RFR). Up to six Barn Owls wintered at Gude's Nursery in Rockville and the first two Annapolis migrants were noted Feb. 27 (HW). When **Snowy Owls** appear in the Region they often prefer urban settings. Two such this winter touched off media events: one at Ft. McHenry Dec. 13-Jan. 25 and again on Feb. 23-24 usually appeared at dusk from across Baltimore Harbor (RFR, m.ob.) and another frequented the Justice Dept. building in District of Columbia off-and-on Dec. 9-Mar.3 (PN, m.ob.). Four Long-eared Owls wintered at Piney Run P., Carroll Co., Md. (EB *et al.*, *vide* RFR) and one was at P.N.A.S., Feb. 15 (JC). Short-eared Owls were in average numbers in traditionally favored marshes. Less expected were one in Caroline County, Md., Dec. 16 (JS, *vide* AJF, ph.), two in Baltimore Jan. 3-25 (RFR *et al.*), one between straw bales at a bare dirt construction site in Laytonsville, Md., Jan. 6 (HW), one at Tilghman's I., Md., Dec. 1 (RLK) and one at P.N.A.S., Feb. 15 (JC). Non-CBC Saw-whet Owls were one at McKee-Beshers W.M.A., Jan. 20-Feb. 12 (GD *et al.*), one on Assateague I., Md., Dec. 28 (HW) and three at the Nat'l Arboretum, D.C., Jan. 17 (HW). Because of the resulting

human disturbance one organization has decided to cancel owl trips. All are urged to read Wierenga's comments on this (*Md. Yellowthroat*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Feb/Mar. 1981, p. 1-2) which are excellent.

At College Park, Md., a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was well seen Dec. 3 (RFR). Red-headed Woodpeckers appeared in good numbers in Maryland at Myrtle Grove W.M.A., Feb. 16 (six, WRS) and Emmitsburg Feb. 7 (18, DHW). Good Horned Lark counts were of 170 in n.e. Culpeper County, Va., Dec. 7, 222 in Loudoun County, Va., Jan. 1 (both JBB) and 110 at Oxford, Md., Feb. 6 (JGR,TAn). The first Tree Swallows were at P.N.A.S., Feb. 23 (JC). Mixed reviews were received of the Black-capped Chickadee invasion although most felt it was minor and over by year's end (RFR,JMA) but some in c. Virginia thought it was substantial (CES,CT) and two were banded in Kent County, Md., in December (DM,JG). Red-breasted Nuthatches for the second winter failed to mount a widespread incursion, especially near the coast, but were common in some areas of the Piedmont (v.o.). Carolina Wren numbers were perceived as stable or improving (RFR,CT,PW0). Unusual was a Long-billed Marsh Wren at Lily Pons Feb. 15 (DHW). Maryland's fifth **Varied Thrush** was at a Towson feeder Dec. 4-6 (RFR,JLS *et al.*). A Wood Thrush in the District of Columbia Dec. 13 was well seen (DC). Eastern Bluebirds were reported in excellent numbers with four Maryland Piedmont CBCs recording 100+ while Mathews, Va., had 333 Jan. 4 (MP *et al.*). From Feb. 20-28 a massive influx was witnessed in the Patuxent R. area (RMP). Late Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were at S.P.S.P., Dec. 7 (HW) and on the Hopewell CBC, Dec. 20 (*vide* FRS). Cedar Waxwings were in excellent numbers with 8 Maryland CBCs listing 200+ (*vide* EB) and Mathews, Va., with 1104 (MP) and there were many reports of waxwings and Am. Robins stripping hollies of berries in the greater District of Columbia area in February (*vide* CPW). Concern continues to be expressed for the ailing Loggerhead Shrike (v.o.).

**WARBLERS THROUGH SPARROWS**—It was an utterly featureless winter for warblers, one of the few bright spots being a Wilson's Warbler in Richmond Dec. 17 (CRB). However, even the expected winter warblers were in low numbers, especially Palm Warbler. The Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27, which has recorded 75 or more every year

since 1967, only had eight. Single Orange-crowned Warblers were at Norfolk Feb. 10 (RC) and near Chincoteague Dec. 2 (JHB, banded). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were at Windy Hill, Md., Jan. 1 (DM, *fide* JGR) and Alexandria Jan. 11-12 (*fide* JMA) with a belated report from Kilmarnock, Va., Sept. 10, 1980 (MLW). Northern (Baltimore) Orioles were widely reported in December and January throughout the Region with a high of 15 on the Williamsburg CBC (BW *et al.*). A real rarity was a Northern (Bullock's) Oriole present Dec. 24-Jan. 29± at a Richmond feeder (FRS *et al.*), Virginia's third. A ♂ Brewer's Blackbird was at B.B.N.W.R., Dec. 7 (SC,FRS, m.ob.). At Virginia Beach a Western Tanager was seen by many Feb. 15-28 and on the latter date red was starting to come in on its head (TRW,PGD, RC,M&DM *et al.*). A ♂ Indigo Bunting, still with some blue feathering, was seen on the Warren, Va. CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* CES). Topping off the list of Virginia rarities was a ♂ White-winged Crossbill in Richmond Feb. 22-Mar. 6 seen by at least 64 persons (SM,FRS,JMA,M&DM *et al.*).

The n. finch flight, which seemed so promising in November, died out rather rapidly, although some areas had good local populations, such as s.e. Virginia, where Pine Siskins were common (TRW,MLW) and 101 were on the Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS). Evening Grosbeaks were universally considered as scarce throughout the period and Region. Purple Finches, however, were commoner than usual, especially in the greater District of Columbia area (PWo,MKK,CT). A smattering of Com. Redpolls helped to liven things up with singles at Bethesda Nov. 28, Burtonsville, Va., Dec. 14, Clifton, Va.,

Dec. 15 (all *fide* DPW), Patuxent Wildlife Research Center through late December (*fide* MKK) and Spotsylvania County, Va., Feb. 21 (SC). American Goldfinch was reported to be in good numbers in the District of Columbia area (MKK,CT,PWo). A good single observer count was of 27 White-crowned Sparrows at Lily Pons Dec. 7 (DHW) and 43 were at P.N.A.S., Feb. 15 in company with four Vesper Sparrows (JC *et al.*). Dark-eyed Junco drew little commentary yet 13 of 21 Maryland CBCs had 1000 as they did also for White-throated Sparrow (*fide* EB) but the latter was believed lower than normal (CES,MKK,JBB). At Newport News the Mitchells banded 64 Fox Sparrows this winter and the first arrivals were Feb. 20 at Fairfax, Va. (EDP), Annapolis (HW) and McKeesbushers W.M.A. (PWo), both Feb. 24. Lapland Longspur was seen at C.I.D.A., up to 12 on Dec. 5 (FRS, JW), Culpeper County Dec. 7, five and Loudoun County one on Jan. 1 (both JBB), and one at Hampton, Va., Feb. 22 (BW). Bazuin believes that virtually any big Horned Lark flock in Piedmont Virginia has one or two Lapland Longspurs. The best Snow Bunting flocks were 105 at C.N.W.R., Dec. 28 (*fide* FRS), up to 60 at C.I.D.A., Jan. 20 (RC), 55-60 all winter at Fisherman Island N.W.R. (RLA) and 31 at Ocean City Dec. 7 (RFR,JLS) with singles and small flocks at many other localities.

Patterson's studies of CBC-type censusing continue (*cf.* AB 34:262) featuring this winter a "report on group size productivity test Jan. 24, 1981." One of the objectives is to measure relative census results among groups of one, two, three or more observers in identical areas and times. Results are preliminary but seem to indicate that birders do better

when alone. Perhaps the ideal CBC has but one competent observer/party and most parties should be a party of one as long as one is willing to socialize only at compilations.

**OBSERVERS**—D. F. Abbott, J. M. Abbott, R. J. Abbott, Terry Allen (TAn), R. L. Anderson, Tom Armour, J. B. Bazuin, Warren Bielenberg, C. R. Blem, Eirik Blom, Larry Bonham, Ned Brinkley, J. H. Buckalew, M. A. Byrd, Danny Bystrak, Ray Chandler, Jim Clark, Sam Cooper, Dave Czaplak, George Daniels, J. W. Dillard, P. G. DuMont, S. H. Dyke, J. W. Eike, Ethel Engle, Wilbur Engle, A. J. Fletcher, R. B. Fletcher, John Frary, James Gruber, Hugh Hanson, G. J. Hennessey, M. W. Hewitt, D. F. Holland, David Hughes, R. L. Kleen, M. K. Klimkiewicz, Wayne Klockner, Elwood Martin, Dorothy Mendinhal (DMd), Donald Meritt, Mike & Dorothy Mitchell, Myriam Moore, Sally Moxley, Paul Nistico, Mariana Nuttle, Paul O'Brien, H. C. Olson, F. L. Parks, R. M. Patterson, Elizabeth D. Peacock, Carl Perry, Darrell Peterson, Mary Pulley, J. G. Reese, George Reiger, R. F. Ringler, C. S. Robbins, David Roszell, W. C. Russell, Richard Ryan, Tim Saunders, F. R. Scott, John Scudder, Jay Sheppard (JSd), Eddie Slaughter, W.P. Smith, J. L. Stasz, C. E. Stevens, W. R. Stott, C. B. Swift, P. W. Sykes, R. J. Tripician, Craig Tufts, C. R. Vaughn, D. H. Wallace, M. L. Wass, Pete Webb, Karl Weber, Steve Westre, Hal Wierenga, C. P. Wilds, Bill Williams, G. M. Williamson, E. M. Wilson, T. R. Wolfe, Paul Woodward (PWo).—HENRY T. ARMISTEAD, 28 E. Springfield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19118.

## SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION

/Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

Some birders in the Region considered the winter of 1980-81 a colder-than-normal one, and others commented that the season was relatively mild. Actually, the winter was an alternating hodgepodge of mild weather and bitterly cold weather. Early December was rather mild, as were the periods from mid-January to early February and the last week of February. The very cold period was from December 20 to mid-January, and mid-February also saw cooler-than-usual temperatures. Some ponds and small lakes were frozen over in North Carolina during the first half of January. On the positive side, precipitation was light during the period, and snow and ice were minimal, with much of South Carolina and Georgia avoiding snow entirely.

Birding tended to be better than normal for the season, in part because of a heavy invasion of winter finches. Perhaps never before have so many rare species been reported from this Region during a single winter, and noteworthy sightings at feeders were commonplace, especially involving orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, and buntings. An exceptional number of "firsts" were recorded, in-

cluded two species new to the Region. On the other hand, far northern birds and pelagic species were scarce. The rarer winter finches and sea ducks were few and far between; not a single alcid, jaeger, or kittiwake was reported.

**LOW POPULATIONS AND AN OIL SPILL**—An examination of the results of many Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) revealed a surprising scarcity of a handful of species that infrequently show population crashes. Three species in this category were American Woodcock, Common Snipe, and Common Yellowthroat. These usually numerous wintering species were difficult to find on many counts. It appears likely that the heavy snows of February and March 1980 did considerable damage to these ground-feeding birds. Rails, Seaside Sparrows, and wintering warblers (including Yellow-rumped) were among other birds that still apparently have not returned to "normal" wintering population levels, based on abundances prior to the devastating winter of 1976-77.

Although oiled birds occasionally appear along our coastal beaches, quite unusual for

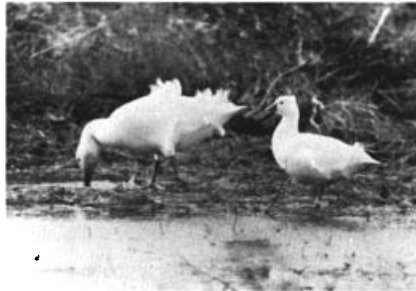


this area was an oil spill off Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in February. At least 1000 birds were noted in oiled condition along the beaches of northern South Carolina; most individuals were loons, and a few Gannets and scoters were also found (*fide* DF).

**LOONS THROUGH IBISES**—There were a number of excellent counts of loons in coastal North Carolina this season, with 2503 Commons on the Morehead City CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* JF), winter peaks of 10,000+ Commons and 1000+ Red-throats in Pamlico

Sound (MT), and 1500+ Red-throated along 3 mi of beach at Ft. Fisher Jan. 24 (JF *et al.*). A total of 15-20 Red-throated Loons was quite high for Georgia at Jekyll I., Feb. 23 (D&AF). The rare Red-necked Grebe was reported 5 times: inland at Roanoke Rapids, N.C., Dec. 29 (ML), and coastally at Masonboro I., N.C., Dec. 6 (AGM), on the McClellanville, S.C., CBC, Dec. 21 (GM,PN *et al.*), at Johns I., S.C., Dec. 23 (two birds—PL), and at St. Marys, Ga., Feb. 21 (SPa). One Eared Grebe sighting, at Pawleys I., S.C., Dec. 30 (SB,TL), was par for the season, but a "dark" phase Western Grebe Feb. 28 near Swanquarter, N.C., produced the first record for the state in 4 years (MT,SG). Several White Pelicans were found in coastal South Carolina, with one at Huntington Beach S.P., Dec. 12 (AGM,PP) and again Dec. 30 (SG,TL), and apparently three individuals during the winter in the Charleston area (*vide DF*). Multiple records of Great Cormorant in winter are now standard fare, with North Carolina birds at Pea I., Cape Hatteras, and Masonboro Inlet, and a most surprising four immatures at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., on the CBC, Dec. 30 (DF,SG *et al.*). Noteworthy inland reports were of a Double-crested Cormorant at Quaker L., Alamance Co., N.C., Dec. 7 (AB), two cormorants on the CBC at Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 20 (HL,ML), two each of Double-crested Cormorants and Anhingas at Augusta, Ga., Dec. 13 - Feb. 28+ (AW), and a pair of Anhingas near Dublin, Ga., Jan. 15 - Feb. 10 (TKP). As usual, a few Am. Bitterns were found on inland CBCs (Raleigh and New Hope in North Carolina and Dublin in Georgia), and a Wood Stork at Thomasville, Ga., Feb. 10 (RLC) provided a first winter record for that town. A count of 23 Glossy Ibises at Santee Coastal Reserve, S.C., Jan. 31 (C.N.H.S.) was excellent for the season.

**WATERFOWL** — Nine Whistling Swans in a field near Cove City, N.C., Feb. 7 were unusual (RJH), and far from the usual range were three at Augusta all winter (AW) and one on L. James, N.C., Dec. 8 (RR). An excellent count of Brants at the s. end of the winter range was of 200 at Morgan I., near Cape Lookout, N.C., Feb. 16 (SP), and the Barnacle Goose at Santee N.W.R., S.C., remained at least to Jan. 22 (SAG,CH,HL,AR). Although the bird was "wild", escapees are frequent enough that the species could be placed on the state's Hypothetical List, no matter the degree of documentation. The always noteworthy White-fronted Goose was reported only from South Carolina refuges: 13 at Santee Dec. 7 (BP,SB) and two at Savannah Jan. 10 & 17 (AW,VW,PN). Single white-phase and blue-phase Snow Geese were observed at Augusta for most of the winter (AW). An ad. Ross' Goose was present at Pea I., Dec. 31 - Jan. 18 (BN,MT,BL,HL *et al.*); this represented the first Regional record in 8 years; all sightings have been restricted to Pea I. A ♂ Green-winged (Com.) Teal at Santee Ref., Dec. 12 (AW,VW), supplied one of the few records for South Carolina and was apparently the Region's first inland. Two Blue-winged Teals were late at Fairburn, Ga., Dec. 11 (D&PB,BM), and the Augusta "Cinnamon" Teal appeared again — this time Dec. 26 & Jan. 11 (VW,AW,CB). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was an exciting find at McClellan-



Ross' Goose with Snow Goose, Pea I., N.C., Dec. 31, 1980. Photo/Michael Tove.

ville, S.C., Dec. 21 (CE), whereas 4000-5000 N. Shovelers at a spoil pond in South Carolina adjacent to Savannah, Ga., Feb. 28 (JB *et al.*) was an excellent Regional count. Tove and Graves had some exceptional totals of waterfowl Feb. 28 in Pamlico Sound, N.C., from the Swanquarter-Ocracoke ferry: 20,000 Canvasback, 200 Greater Scaup, and an unheard-of 5000 Oldsquaw. Inland Greater Scaups were rare at L. Cammack, N.C., Jan. 6-7 (seven on the latter day—AB), Chapel Hill, N.C., Feb. 15 (SG), and Clemson, S.C., Jan. 3-8 (peak of three—HL). No Harlequin Ducks were reported during the winter, and just one eider report was received — two ♀ Kings at Oregon Inlet, N.C., Jan. 11 (SG,MT). Perhaps a record Georgia count of White-winged Scoters was 25+ at Jekyll I., Feb. 23 (D&AF), and rare inland were a White-winged Scoter at Winston-Salem, N.C., Jan. 18-20 (CRH *et al.*) and a Surf Scoter on the Roanoke Rapids CBC, Dec. 29 (ML). Among other unusual waterfowl concentrations were 20,000+ birds, about 95% Ruddy Ducks, Mar. 8-10 on the lower Neuse R., Craven Co., N.C. (BH) and 150,000+ Red-breasted Mergansers seen from the Ocracoke - Cedar I., N.C., ferry Jan. 9 (MT). The best Com. Merganser counts were in inland North Carolina as usual: nine on Kerr Scott Res., near N. Wilkesboro Feb. 5 (JF,MT), seven on L. Cammack Jan. 22 (AB), and five near Raleigh Feb. 14 (SG).

**HAWKS** — Three Rough-legged Hawks for the season were about par: near Cape I., S.C., Dec. 21 (GM,PN), in w. Chatham County, N.C., in mid-January (P&JC), and in e. Chatham Co., at Jordan Res., Feb. 8-20 (SG,MC *et al.*). The always exciting Golden Eagle was reported just once, at L. Marion, S.C., Jan. 31 (CH *et al.*), but Bald Eagle reports were far too numerous to mention in full. The best Bald Eagle total was approximately six birds in the Columbus - Eufaula Ref. portion of s.w. Georgia (*vide SPa*); yet, disappointingly, none was sighted in coastal North Carolina. I received much correspondence concerning the abundance of Marsh Hawks in many parts of the Region this winter, particularly inland. The 98 recorded on the New Hope River CBC, nearly all at Jordan Res., Jan. 4 (*vide BR*) probably represented duplicate counting of individuals, although Lynch observed 56 from one spot in the bed of the reservoir Jan. 25! Single Ospreys were notable inland at Beaverdam Res., N.C., Dec. 22 (RJH) and at Griffin Res., s. of Atlanta Jan. 18 (VJ *et al.*). The usual handful of Peregrine Falcons was noted along the coast during the season, but the on-

ly inland ones were in downtown Atlanta, with one seen mid-January into March (*vide TM*) and an apparently different bird Feb. 19 (HG), and at L. Mattamuskeet, N.C., Feb. 27 (SG,MT). Merlins are rare inland in winter, although several are generally observed each year; this time there were singles at Raleigh Jan. 7 & 18 (GW), near Fayetteville, N.C., Jan. 8 & Feb. 23 (MEW,P&JC), near Crabapple, Ga., Feb. 22 (HO), and near Southern Pines, N.C., Feb. 24 (TH).

**GROUSE THROUGH RAILS** — Several Ruffed Grouse were seen during the winter 5 mi. n.e. of Yanceyville, N.C. (*vide JC*). The species has been reported sparingly in the county to the w., Rockingham, but this is the farthest known extension into the Piedmont of the state. Six late migrant Sandhill Cranes were seen near Marietta, Ga., Dec. 14 (BT,BM), and four were noted on the same date near Charleston (GM *et al.*). One crane spent the entire winter near Dublin, Ga. (TKP), quite an unusual event away from Okefenokee Ref., Ga. Virginia Rails were noted inland during the season near Columbia, S.C. (JP), Roanoke Rapids (HL), and Clemson (HL,AA), with a surprising four heard calling on the CBC at the last-mentioned town Jan. 3. Lucky indeed were the birders who flushed a Yellow Rail from a short-grass salt marsh at Oregon Inlet Jan. 10 (SG,MT); however, this rail probably winters regularly in this area, and likely in the entire coastal portion of the Region.

**SHOREBIRDS** — The South Carolina spoil area near Savannah had 325 Am. Avocets Feb. 28 (JB *et al.*). A Wilson's Plover was late on the Morehead City CBC, Dec. 21 (MT), and a pair was noted at the same spot Feb. 28 (JF *et al.*); thus, one or two birds may have overwintered.

#### S.A.

The first definitive winter sight record of the Hudsonian Godwit for the Region occurred at South Pond at Pea I., Dec. 30; Sykes observed the dark wing linings to distinguish the bird from a Black-tailed Godwit, one of which was present at neighboring Bodie I., a year ago. Obviously, both of these godwits are possible in the Southeast in winter. Although the Black-tailed has a reasonably straight bill as opposed to the slightly upturned one of the Hudsonian, winter godwits should be flushed to observe the underwing linings (dark in Hudsonian and flashing white in Black-tailed) and the white wing stripe (rather narrow and inconspicuous in the Hudsonian and strikingly wide and Willet-like in the Black-tailed).

A Whimbrel near Ft. Fisher Jan. 24 (JF) was a rare mid-winter record for North Carolina. A Greater Yellowlegs near Fayetteville Jan. 9 (P&JC,KM), and another at a different place near that city Jan. 28 (P&JC) were noteworthy. An apparent Spotted Redshank was observed at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., Feb. 21 by a birder from Ireland (MR), now living in Charleston, who is very familiar with the species and with both yellowlegs. His impeccable description mentioned orange-red at the base of the lower mandible, orange or orange-red legs, white

up the back of the bird, spotted secondaries noted in flight, and a "chut" or "chuit" call note. Several other birders saw the shorebird the following day, but one or two of them were not convinced the bird was not a Lesser Yellowlegs. It is hoped that a definitive identification can be reached by all observers, with the help of a detailed study of references and contact with experts on shorebirds. One sighting in coastal North Carolina, without published details, is the only Regional "record" to date. A Spotted Sandpiper at Augusta Jan. 24-31 (AW,VW) was a good find, whereas two at Pendergrass, Ga., Feb. 27 (JV) and one at Fayetteville Feb. 28 (P&JC) were probably just very early migrants. Forsythe mentioned that many Am. Woodcocks were seen in the Charleston area, even in downtown sections, after a mid-January snow there. A group of 15 Long-billed Dowitchers at Swanquarter, N.C., Feb. 28 (SG,MT) was most unusual and was perhaps the farthest inland winter record for the state. Small numbers of inland Least Sandpipers were reported during the season from Raleigh, Clemson, Augusta, and Dublin, and two Dunlins were late stragglers on the New Hope River CBC, Jan. 4 (NB).

**GULLS THROUGH TERNS**—As usual, a handful of imm. Glaucous Gulls were seen along the coast: as many as two at Cedar I., N.C., Jan. 9 - Feb. 14 (MT,SG *et al.*), one at Cape Hatteras Dec. 26 - Jan. 23 (BL,MT,HL), one at Hatteras Inlet, N.C., Jan. 9 (SG,MT), and one at Litchfield Beach, S.C., Dec. 29 (PN). Graves and Tove found imm. Iceland Gulls at Hatteras Inlet Jan. 9 and at Oregon Inlet Jan. 10, and Fussell *et al.* observed an adult of the "Kumlien's" race at Morehead City Feb. 1-21. This adult had more black in the wing tips and more head streaking than did the ad. "Kumlien's" present in the area last winter. An imm. Great Black-backed Gull at Winston-Salem Jan. 20 (RS *et al.*), carefully compared with Herring and Ring-billed gulls, provided one of the very few inland records for the Region. A Regional high of six Lesser Black-backed Gulls was tallied at Cape Hatteras Pt. Dec. 31 (BL,HL,MT), and a few were seen there at least to Feb. 28 (m.ob.). Other records of this definitely increasing species were of one at Pea I., Dec. 26 (BL,AB) and one at Cape Lookout Jan. 30 & Feb. 16 (SP). Two Herring Gulls on L. Allatoona were a first for the Atlanta CBC, Dec. 21 (JG). Ring-billed Gulls were generally present in larger-than-normal numbers on inland lakes during the winter, with noteworthy counts of 300-400 all season at Beaverdam Res., N.C. (RJH,HL,BW), 500+ at Augusta Dec. 27 (AW,VW), and 57 in Laurens County, Ga., Dec. 21 (TKP). The southernmost Atlantic coast record (and a first for the Region) was an ad. Mew Gull of the European race (*Larus c. canus*), studied carefully in a flock of several thousand gulls at Cape Hatteras Pt., Dec. 31 (BL,MT,HL). The bird was picked out from the other gulls by its slate-gray mantle, intermediate in color between that of Ring-billed and Laughing (about the shade of Franklin's). In fact, the mantle color, unmarked greenish-yellow bill with a rather tapered tip, greenish-yellow legs, dark irides, and several other features made the bird look somewhat more like a Lesser Black-backed Gull than a Ring-billed.



*Iceland (Kumlien's) Gull, Morehead City, N.C., February, 1981. Photos/John Fussell.*

Among other good gull sightings were two inland Laughing Gulls at Augusta Dec. 27 (AW), and an ad. Little Gull picked out of a group of 10,000 Bonaparte's Gulls at Pea I., Jan. 25 (AB,MT). Late stragglers included a Com. Tern at Sunset Beach, N.C., Jan. 2 (PJC,KM) and a Sandwich Tern at Wrightsville Beach, N.C., Dec. 6 (AGM); whereas four Caspian Terns were quite early at Morehead City Feb. 22 (JF).

**OWLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**—Certainly unprecedented for inland North Carolina, and possibly for most of the Region, was the remarkable population of Short-eared Owls in the weedy fields and marshes in the lakebed of Jordan Res., in e. Chatham Co., N.C. The owls were seen, mainly at dusk, all winter, with numerous counts in double figures, the peak being 21 on Feb. 8 (SG,MC,ME). Even though no other Short-eareds were reported away from the coast, the species obviously winters inland in greater numbers than previously believed. Single  $\emptyset$  (non-rusty) hummingbirds, probably Ruby-throateds, were seen Dec. 13 at Tryon, N.C. (RM) and at McClellanville, S.C., on the CBC, Dec. 21 (DF). The recent specimen of Black-chinned Hummingbird from Massachusetts (AB 34: 140) and an also recent Black-chinned photo from Florida (AB 34:769), for apparently the fourth state record, have thrown a "wrench" into the assumption that all "non-rusty" hummers (*Archilochus*) in winter in our area are Ruby-throateds. A  $\emptyset$  *Selasphorus* hummingbird, almost certainly a Rufous, was carefully studied at Charleston Jan. 24 (BV). This is the fifth confirmed or probable Rufous record for the Region, but only the second in winter; none have been ad. males.

**SWALLOWS THROUGH VIREOS**—A Tree Swallow at Fayetteville Feb. 20 (P&JC) was 3-4 weeks early, and most unusual and over a month early were single Barn Swallows at Savannah Ref., Feb. 15 (VJ *et al.*) and near Waterlily, Currituck Co., N.C., Feb. 18 (ML). The first "spring arrival" of Purple Martins was noted Jan. 24 at Eufaula L., Ga. (SPA). As expected, a few of both marsh wrens were seen inland during the period, with Long-billeds on the New Hope R. CBC, Jan. 4 (SG,DK) and along the Chattahoochee R., n. of Atlanta November to mid-January (PM,TM); and Short-billeds at two locations in Jordan Res., Jan. 4 & 18 (JOP,EP), at Roanoke Rapids Dec. 29 (HL), near Fayetteville Jan. 6 (P&JC), and at Atlanta Jan. 31 (JG). The Fish Crow now seems to occur year round at L. Hartwell, S.C.: one was found near Townville Jan. 8 and two were there



Feb. 28 (HL). Although this species is now present in moderate numbers in parts of the Piedmont of the Carolinas and n.e. Georgia in the warmer months, the birds, for some unknown reason, depart the Piedmont in winter. Noteworthy for the season in North Carolina were White-eyed Vireos on the Roanoke Rapids CBC, Dec. 29 (HL) and at Sunset Beach Jan. 25 (PJC,KM,DBO).

**WARBLERS**—A first Atlanta CBC record was a Black-and-white Warbler Dec. 21 (SPe). Orange-crowned Warblers were again noted on the Raleigh CBC, with two seen Dec. 20 (KK,FI,WI), and four Feb. 21 in the Congaree Swamp s.e. of Columbia, S.C., was a very good count for the Fall Line (*vide* PH). A Cape May Warbler was very rare at Raleigh Dec. 10 (LD, *vide* RJH), and a  $\emptyset$  Black-throated Blue Warbler at Augusta Dec. 13 (AW,VW) furnished apparently the second winter record for Georgia. Other rarities were a Prairie Warbler in Fayetteville Feb. 23 (P&JC, MCh), an Ovenbird at Columbus, Ga., Dec. 3-15 (TD), and another Ovenbird at Buxton, N.C., Jan. 23 (MT,AB), one of the embarrassingly few winter records for that state. Yellow-breasted Chats were noteworthy at McClellanville, S.C., Dec. 23-24 (JS) and at Fayetteville Dec. 31 - Jan. 8 (P&JC,KM). Simply amazing were three + Wilson's Warblers at Santee Ref., Jan. 25 (PN,SC *et al.*); one of the birds had a trace of a black cap. Even though the above records imply an exciting winter for "warblering", in fact, this family was in quite low numbers in much of the Region during the season, probably a result of the very cold period Dec. 20 to mid-January.

**BLACKBIRDS THROUGH TANAGERS**—For the second consecutive winter a Yellow-headed Blackbird was noted at Decatur, Ga. (four dates in January—FC); possibly the same individual was involved. Very rare for the winter season were Orchard Orioles: a female or imm. male was at a Chapel Hill feeder for several days in mid-February (AF), and an imm. male was observed at Covington, Ga., Dec. 25 (FR). Good counts of Brewer's Blackbirds were 100+ in a pasture near Dublin Dec. 21 - Feb. 28+ (TKP) and 20 at Fayetteville, Ga., Jan. 19 (FM); and a male was seen in a yard in Raleigh on 4 occasions Dec. 27 - Feb. 12 (GW). Reports of this species have been sparse in the last few years, and counts of even ten birds are infrequent. Is Brewer's Blackbird actually declining as a winter resident (in Georgia)? A  $\emptyset$  Boat-tailed Grackle was studied very carefully Jan. 9 at Fayetteville, N.C. (P&JC). The grackle was in a

flock of blackbirds and Starlings in a yard, and it is the first convincingly described occurrence for the state completely removed from the tidewater zone. Three tanagers were noted this winter, all in residential areas/feeder as would be expected: a Western at Fayetteville, N.C., Feb. 15 (P&JC, KM *et al.*), and ♂ Summers at Fayetteville Feb. 9 & 11 (P&JC, HR *et al.*) and near Morehead City Dec. 21 (AM, KB).

**FINCHES**—Although there are no statistics for comparison, certainly more species of finches were observed in the Region this winter than ever before. Four species of buntings were found, and North Carolina had 20 species of sparrows (counting a Harris' in the mountains outside of this Region). An excellent find was a carefully studied ♀ **Black-headed Grosbeak** at a McClellanville feeder Jan. 16-21 (JS *et al.*), and a Blue Grosbeak was notable near Pendleton, S.C., Feb. 15 (HL). The list of out-of-range or out-of-season finches continues, with a ♂ Indigo Bunting seen at a feeder at Thomasville, Ga., Dec. 5-17 (LN), a Painted Bunting (sex not mentioned but apparently a male) observed at a Morehead City feeder all winter (JGri, JF), and especially a feeder-inhabiting ad. ♂ **Lazuli Bunting** at Westminster, S.C., Feb. 11 into March (TS, NS,



Male Lazuli Bunting, Westminster, S.C., Mar. 7, 1981. Photo/Claire Filemyr.

CH, SAG *et al.*). The Lazuli represents a first record for the Region (ph. CF, SAG). Although no one reported a Dickcissel this winter, a belated nesting report of considerable importance was received: at Columbia, S.C., two pairs were seen in late April (JSt), a nest was found soon afterward, and three immatures were noted on several dates during the summer (OB, OL, JB). Evening Grosbeaks were reported from essentially throughout the Region, with large flocks even occurring as far s. as Dublin.

House Finches were as numerous as they were last winter, or perhaps more so, with the extent of occurrence reaching Wilmington, N.C. (three at a feeder Feb. 26-28—AGM), Dublin (three at a feeder Dec. 12 - Feb. 28 + —TKP), and at Perry, Ga. (two Dec. 6—JiS). Purple Finches drew little comment, as their numbers do not fluctuate greatly from winter to winter, but they were fairly common to common in most areas. I had hoped for a big influx of Com. Redpolls as a result of the overall finch invasion and the very cold weather mid-December - mid-January, but only 4 records were submitted: one at a Chapel Hill feeder Jan. 3 & 11 (CHa),

two at a feeder in that town Jan. 3 (C&RM, *vide* BW), one at a feeder in neighboring Raleigh Jan. 4-8 (WI, FI, SG, MT), and six away from feeders at Harkers I., N.C., Jan. 6 (SP). Pine Siskins, as with the Evening Grosbeaks inundated the Region, being common in most places, particularly in the North Carolina Piedmont. Red Crossbills again stayed to the n. of our area, with the only reports being one at Raleigh in late November (JL), three at Wilmington Dec. 9 (AGM), and several in adjacent Brunswick County later in December (RD). Not since the winter of 1973-74 have Red Crossbills occurred in numbers in the Southeast, and (disappointingly) no one saw or heard a White-winged Crossbill or a Pine Grosbeak this season.

Although the scarcity of far northern winter finches was a "downer", rare sparrows were turned up everywhere. Somewhat n. of the winter range were Grasshopper Sparrows at Jordan Res., Jan. 18 (BR) and at Chapel Hill Jan. 24 (SG). Henslow's Sparrows definitely winter as far n.e. as w. Carteret County, N.C.: Fussell *et al.* observed several all season in an open pinewoods, with eight plus present in late February (JF). Two or more were again found in weedy fields near Carolina Beach, N.C., during the winter (AGM, JFP *et al.*). Most winters pass with at best one record of a Le Conte's Sparrow, but five reports (all of single birds) were received for the season—near Pendleton Dec. 7 (SAG, HL) and again Jan. 3 (HL, ET), on the McClellanville CBC, Dec. 21 (PN), on the Litchfield-Pawleys I. CBC, Dec. 30, (m.ob.), at Mt. Pleasant, S.C., Jan. 11 (CE), and near Carolina Beach Jan. 25 (JB, LG, JP). The Carolina Beach sighting was apparently just the second winter occurrence for North Carolina. A Lark Sparrow was a good find at Pine Knoll Shores, on Bogue Banks, N.C., Dec. 21-22 (LC *et al.*). Until a year or two ago, the n. edge of the winter range of Bachman's Sparrow was believed to have been in the Wilmington area, but records from last winter and this season indicated a much more northerly limit. One was seen in w. Carteret County Feb. 1 (JF *et al.*), and an *Aimophila* sparrow Jan. 2 and two Jan. 4, flushed from suitable habitat in the w. section of Ft. Bragg, N.C. (JHC), were almost certainly Bachman's. An excellent discovery was that of a ♀ Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco at Umstead S.P., near Raleigh Dec. 14 (SG, MC). Just one report of Tree Sparrow was received, a poorly described bird on the Raleigh CBC. Despite this species being relatively easy to identify, most reports I receive contain shaky details that fail to eliminate Swamp Sparrow.

**Clay-colored Sparrows** were seen in winter in North Carolina for the first time: one at Pea I., Dec. 6 (BH), one near Carolina Beach Dec. 24 (AGM, MB), and as many as three at Bodie I., Dec. 30 - Feb. 22 ( AB, MT *et al.*; two \* WI, N.C.S.M.). Although regular in fall migration, White-crowned Sparrows seldom winter on the North Carolina coast; thus notable were 3-4 at Bodie I., Dec. 30 -Feb. 22 (AB, MT *et al.*), one at Beaufort Dec. 21 (HL), and two at Buxton Feb. 14 (JF, DC). Lincoln's Sparrows were observed only on Jan. 3 CBCs—Clemson (HL, ET) and Winston-Salem (ZB, DW, P&JC). Lapland Longspurs were noted only at "traditional" sites, with three near Pendleton Dec. 7 (SAG, HL), 13 at two localities on the Roan-

oke Rapids CBC, Dec. 29 (ML, HL, MT), and four at Cape Hatteras Jan. 23 (AB, MT). North Carolina's first documented **Smith's Longspur** was a male seen at Jordan Res., Jan. 11 (JoC, WI, FI) and collected Jan. 15 (\*DL, N.C.S.M.); the two previous reports were sight records, one of which was rejected by the state's Records Committee. Last, but not least, the Snow Bunting staged an excellent irruption into the coastal portion of the Region, with noteworthy totals in North Carolina of 45 on Masonboro I., Feb. 28 (AGM), 32 on Radio I., near Morehead City Dec. 21 (BL), and 36 there Feb. 10 (JF). Quite rare in the other two states were eight on the Litchfield-Pawleys I. CBC, Dec. 30 (m.ob.), one near Charleston Jan. 13 (H&JA), one on the Jekyll I., Ga., CBC, Jan. 3 (JG), and one at the latter place Feb. 23 (D&AF). However, the best Snow Bunting record came from far inland at Roanoke Rapids, with an amazing 14 on the CBC, Dec. 29 (HL, HT, ML); two were still there Jan. 31 (SG, MT).

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## FLORIDA REGION /Henry M. Stevenson

Any report on the weather in this Region for the winter of 1980-81 will necessarily sound like the old refrain, but with slight variations. Again winter came late, and again it was colder than normal. During a 65-day period December 11 through February 13 Tallahassee's U.S. Weather Station records showed an average temperature deficiency of 6.75° F. Only nine of these days averaged normal or above, and temperatures reached the freezing mark or below 35 times. The coldest night, by far, was that of January 12-13, when a reading of 8° F was the lowest of record for January and the second-lowest for any month in the history of the weather station. Other Florida stations were proportionately cold, with far-south Miami reporting 32°F on the 13th. As is usually the case during extreme cold, precipitation was subnormal—at least until February. Two reports mentioned damage to mangroves in the Tampa and Vero Beach areas, but none referred to an effect on birds. However, on the coast of Franklin County January 16, I picked up a Killdeer and a Long-billed Marsh Wren that showed no evidence of injury. The Killdeer seemed emaciated, and the wren (prepared as a museum skin) had no food in its stomach (RLC). Another marsh wren, however, had survived the cold at Lake Jackson until at least January 19; the species winters rather rarely in Leon County.

**POPULATION DECLINES**—Repetitive counts in Leon County and the coastal counties of the Tallahassee Division (two sets of data) in December and January again showed a number of species less abundant than for previous years (1947-79), most by wide margins. When some species were removed from this list because of important changes of habitat in 1975-76, the following were considered significantly low in all four "chances" in these field data: Great Egret, Canada Goose, Snow Goose, Black Duck, Gadwall, Lesser Scaup, Forster's Tern, Red-headed and Red-cockaded woodpeckers, Tree Swallow, Water Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Loggerhead Shrike, Palm Warbler, E. Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Vesper, Chipping, and White-throated sparrows, and Dark-eyed Junco. Several of these are winter residents that may not have moved as far south as usual during the mild fall, but the italicized species have been low for many years. Among the latter group, the Palm Warbler showed a slight recovery in 1980-81. Observers farther south also referred to the very low numbers of Lesser Scaups. With the inception of true winter in late December, Killdeer increased greatly, both in the Tallahassee Division (hereafter, Talla. Div.) and elsewhere.

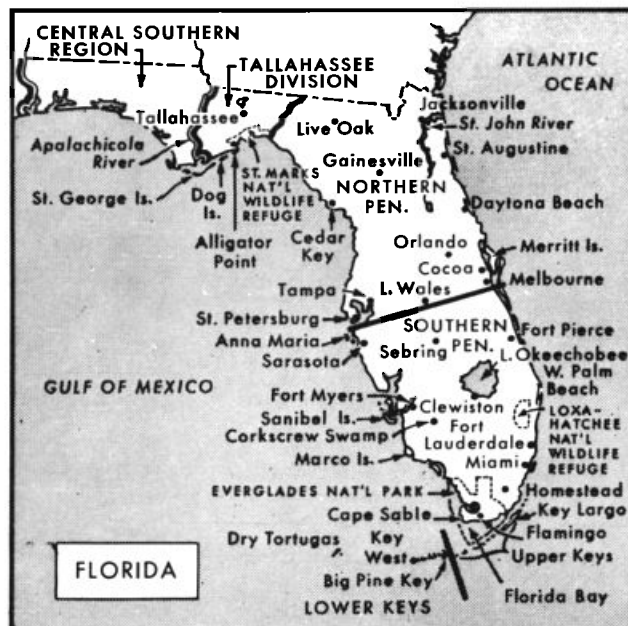
Perhaps never before have Florida birders found so much of interest in their own state. Even omitting the Panhandle (part of the Central Southern Region) no fewer than 20 species of western derivation were found, along with other species from the far north, a few from the Antilles, and a few from Europe. Included were three probable additions to the Florida list—Ross' Goose, Black-tailed Godwit, and Vaux's Swift.

**LOONS AND GREBES**—Red-throated Loons probably were more common in the n. Gulf of Mexico than ever before. A careful count of 52 was obtained at Alligator Pt., Franklin Co., Jan. 25 (BA & LA), and others had counts of 15-20 there Jan. 19 (CT & DR) & 24 (RMC & CE). One of these loons was at St. George I., Franklin Co., Feb. 8 (RMC & CE). A count of 43 Com. Loons at Stuart Jan. 16 (PS) was high. That locality also had a Red-necked Grebe Jan. 3-10 (BD,HD,BH, HL *et al.*), bringing closer to 40 the number of sight records with still no specimen or photograph. An Eared Grebe was at St. George I., on a date near Jan. 4 (JS & HL).

**PELICANS THROUGH ANHINGA**—Although there had been only one previous record just off Key West, White Pelicans invaded the Keys in numbers. On the Upper Keys, Tavernier had 12 and 30 on Jan. 2 & 12 respectively (Karen Sunderland); farther down one was seen at Boca Chica Feb. 23 (MB *et al.*) & 24 (FH). Also Feb. 23 two were at Key West (FH). By late February 400± pairs of Brown Pelicans had nests containing eggs or young at Alafia Banks, Hillsborough Co. (RP). Gannets also reached apparently unprecedented numbers off Cape Canaveral, with estimates exceeding 1000 Jan. 25 & 26, and a count of 518 Feb. 6 (JJ). Great Cormorants were found at 3 localities—Wards Bank at the mouth of St. Johns R., one adult Feb. 15 (JW), an immature at Matanzas Inlet Feb. 27 (JW) and one as far s. as Key Biscayne Nov. 25 & Dec. 4 (RT). Unusual on the Keys, an Anhinga was seen frequently Jan. 17+ on Boca Chica. (MB).

**HERONS, EGRETS, AND STORKS**—A Great Blue (white form) Heron wintered as far n. as Anastasia I., St. Johns Co., Dec. 20-Feb. 27 (JW), and a lone Cattle Egret was at Tallahassee Jan. 24 (GM). Yellow-crowned Night Herons are considered much reduced in recent winters on the Lower Keys (FH), although wintering birds are on the increase in Wakulla County; one on Sanibel I., Feb. 7 was atypical in having a "solid black" crown (MS *et al.*). Wood Storks did not begin nesting at Corkscrew until late February, when 2 nests were found (TB); one was unusually far n. at L. Lafayette, Leon Co., Dec. 6 (RMC).

**WATERFOWL**—One of the biggest surprises of the season was an imm. Ross' Goose associating with Snow Geese at Hickory Mound L., Taylor Co., Jan. 1-24 (RMC,CE, m.ob.); observers stressed the small size of the bird and its bill. Photos by BA & LA show these features, but the slide examined by Ned Johnson and Stephen Bailey was otherwise inadequate for confirmation, probably because of the extreme wariness of the bird. Four to nine White-fronted Geese were



near St. Marks Light Jan. 19-Feb. 23 (C.S. Gidden, RMC,CE *et al.*), and five near the lower Myakka R., Manatee Co., (SI & R. Dye) had ventured farther s. than usual, and the lone Canada Goose still remained on the Dry Tortugas, according to a Mr. Burford (see AB 34: 768). Four Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Stock I., Jan. 31 (FH,KM), were the first on the Lower Keys in several years. Other rarities on the Lower Keys included a Gadwall at Key West Dec. 17 (FH) and two Hooded Mergansers on Big Pine Key Dec. 16 (MB *et al.*). An Oldsquaw was at Wards Bank Dec. 20 (JW) and a Com. Goldeneye as far s. as Arcadia (15 mi s.w.) Dec. 10 (B. Neville). Rarities included a ♂ Masked Duck at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Feb. 22 (C. Brownold, J. Brooks & C. Kilmer) and a female there "several days later" (HL), as well as single Com. Mergansers at Wards Bank Jan. 18 (JW) and Hickory Mound L., Jan. 19 (CT & DR).

**DIURNAL RAPTORS**—Although the White-tailed Kite may not have nested in Florida since the early 1900s, sight records of presumed strays have increased in recent years. Two immatures were seen n. of Mahogany Hammock, E.N.P., Dec. 6 (WB *et al.*), and one immature in Polk County near the junction of I-4 and U.S. 27, Dec. 9 (W. Hoffman). As the number of Everglade Kites increased, at least two strayed S of their usual limits: Florida City Jan. 24 (RP) and Taylor Slough, E.N.P., on an unspecified date (OB). A Swallow-tailed Kite was early at the lower Econfinia R., Taylor Co., Feb. 28 (GG). Very rare in n. Florida, a Swainson's Hawk was carefully studied at Wakulla Beach Jan. 3-4 (JC,RMC *et al.*), but the wing pattern was not observed on the bird in n. Leon County Feb. 23 (BH). A dark-phase imm. Short-tailed Hawk at Hickory Mound L., Dec. 30-Jan. 23 (JC,RMC,CE *et al.*), was farther n. than any previous one in winter. Over the years several Red-tailed Hawks apparently of the race *kriderii* have been seen, but no specimen could be obtained until a dying bird was found at U.S. 90 near Monticello Dec. 26 (\*T.T.). Bald Eagles may be having a better

nesting season than usual; three occupied nests were studied on the St. Marks N.W.R. (Joe Reinman), five in the Jacksonville area (M. Davidson), an old nest on Cudjoe Key (MB) and a new one off Key West (DM & KM). An imm. Golden Eagle was at Paynes Prairie, Alachua Co., Feb. 23 (JH). There were several scattered reports of Peregrine Falcons and Merlins—perhaps more than usual.

**CRANES, COOTS AND SHOREBIRDS**—On the late date of Dec. 7 two Sandhill Cranes were flying E at Wakulla Station (RLC, B. Crawford, & J.C. Gayhart) and one at St. Marks Light (RMC). A **Caribbean Coot** was seen at the Eco-pond, E.N.P., Jan. 19-Feb. 4 (OB,PS,BD,HD *et al.*). As in most cold winters, Killdeer moved into the state in large numbers by January, many even reaching the Lower Keys (MB,FH); one flock at Opa-Locka, Dade Co., Jan. 8, was estimated at 500 (JK). Other high numbers were 365 Willets at St. Marks Light Feb. 22 (JDJ) and 48 Marbled Godwits near Cocoa Beach Feb. 27 (HL & TT). The outstanding shorebird record was that of a **Black-tailed Godwit** on Merritt I., Feb. 15-17 (HL,TT,JJ *et al.*; ph. WB to T.T.). Further details to be published elsewhere. An unusual wintering bird in the Talla. Div. was a Spotted Sandpiper at L. Lafayette, Leon Co., Jan. 24 (BA,LA, & HMS).



Little Gull, Titusville, Fla., Feb. 20, 1981. Photo/Brooks Atherton.

**GULLS AND TERNS**—Glaucous Gulls were reported 12 mi off Cape Canaveral Feb. 6 (JJ) and at least four at Wards Bank Jan. 18 & Feb. 15 (JW); also Feb. 15 an Iceland Gull was identified there (JW). Sanitary landfills continued to attract hordes of gulls. Thousands of Herring and Ring-billed gulls visited a new dump near Tallahassee, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull there Jan. 24 (BA & LA) was the first inland record in the Talla. Div. *Nine* of the latter species were at the Toytown Landfill, St. Petersburg (LA), as were a **Thayer's Gull** Jan. 23 & Feb. 9 (LA; ph. to T.T.), and two Franklin's Gulls Dec. 12-20 (LA). A dump at Stock I. attracted 2000± Ring-billed and 3000± Laughing gulls Jan. 31 (FH & KM). Lesser Black-backed Gulls have increased in Florida to the point that detailing records no longer seems necessary; others were seen this season at Wards Bank, Matanzas Inlet, near Crystal L., Broward Co., and at Stock I. A **California Gull** was identified at Port Canaveral Jan. 26, and the observer (JJ) thought one seen a few mi e. the next day was the same bird. Other rare gulls included possibly ten or more Black-legged Kittiwakes from Cape Canaveral to 22 mi

offshore Dec. 8-Feb. 6 (JJ), an immature at Wards Bank Dec. 27-Jan. 25, and an adult there Feb. 15 (JW), as well as a **Little Gull** at Titusville Feb. 20-21 (BA,LA,SI, R. Payne *et al.*). A Gull-billed Tern at Merritt I., Feb. 15-16 (JJ,CT,DF *et al.*) was rather far n. and a Roseate Tern, rarely seen in winter, was at Key West Jan. 14 (FH). Sandwich Terns are increasing in winter at Key West, 350 were estimated there Jan. 26 (FH).



Black-tailed Godwit, Merritt Island, N.W.R., Fla., Feb. 17, 1981. Photo/Wes Biggs.

**PIGEONS THROUGH OWLS**—Extralimital records of White-crowned Pigeons in Dade County included six at Matheson Hammock, an unstated number 5 mi s. of Miami Dec. 10, and one at Greynolds P., Jan. 14 (all JK). A fledgling Mourning Dove at Jacksonville feeder Dec. 8 (V. Markgraf) indicated late nesting. *Five* Mangrove Cuckoos along Rowdy Bend Road, E.N.P., Jan. 21 (OB) may be the highest winter count for the species. Two Short-eared Owls were at Wakulla Beach Dec. 19-29 (FS,JC,HMS), two near Jacksonville Jan. 11 (JW), one at a different locality there Jan. 28 (JW) and three at Paynes Prairie Jan. 8 (S. Nesbitt & M. Welton).

**NIGHTJARS, SWIFTS AND HUMMINGBIRDS**—The first winter specimen of Chuck-will's-widow in the Talla Div., was a road kill 3 mi e. of Carrabelle Jan. 5 (HMS & JS; \*T.T.); there were two previous sight or auditory records. However, a Whip-poor-will found dead on the Lower Keys Dec. 25 (MB & FH) was considered unusual, as Chucks are reported there more often. Two Com. Nighthawks Feb. 22 & Mar. 2 were thought to be early migrants by the observer (JW), and as many as five Lesser Nighthawks were at the E.N.P. Eco-pond Dec. 28—Jan. 10 (OB,PS, m.ob.)—the first record of this species wintering in Florida. On the strength of this, F. Hames considered nighthawk records at Key West Dec. 29 (FH,DM & KM) and on Boca Chica Key Feb. 3 (MB) to be of that species, but there are numerous sight/auditory records of Com. Nighthawks wintering in the state. Gary Graves noticed **Vaux's Swifts** coursing high over Fla. St. Univ., Tallahassee Dec. 4. From that date through Feb. 8 they were seen on late afternoons in numbers ranging as high as 22! (RMC, m.ob.). There are no previous Florida records, but the birds kept well out of camera range. (A note is being prepared for the *Florida Field Naturalist*.) A Ruby-throated Hummingbird remained in a Jacksonville yard from summer to late February (PP), farther n. than it usually winters. Two *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were reported: Jacksonville Dec. 17-Jan. 15 (MR) and Tallahassee

Jan. 6-10 (M. Cook). A photo of the latter was sent off for identification. A previous Jacksonville record of a Rufous Hummingbird Dec. 2-9, 1978 (MR & PP) somehow escaped publication, and singles spent this winter at Naples (T & V Below) and Gainesville (BM & A. Little).

**FLYCATCHERS, LARKS AND SWALLOWS**—An extremely late or winter record of the E. Kingbird that I consider valid was of one on the S. Loop of the Tamiami Trail (w. Dade Co.?) Dec. 15 (PS). Also late was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher near St. Marks Dec. 1 (D. Holle). In the same area the Dowlings carefully studied an *Empidonax* at Newport Jan. 6. The Least Flycatcher is known in n. Florida from a sight record in winter at Tallahassee and a specimen from Franklin County, but the bird in question was green-backed and in the woods. Vermilion Flycatchers were encountered at Southport S.P., Polk Co., Jan. 30 (D. Cohen *et al.*), Orange L., Alachua Co., Dec. 1 (BM; ph. to F.S.M.), and a holdover from fall at L. Harney Dec. 15 (DF, D. Milne). A Horned Lark was seen and heard at close range in flight on Merritt I., Feb. 20 (LA). Barn Swallows, having increased greatly and expanded their breeding range in this state, are also being recorded more frequently in winter and earlier in spring. Three at Loxahatchee N.W.R., Jan. 3 (PS) were probably wintering, but at Jacksonville about 15 were "flying N by ones and twos" Feb. 23 (JW). A **Cave Swallow** carefully studied at Eastpoint Dec. 26 (RMC & CE) provided the first of record in the Talla. Div. Five Purple Martins were early near St. Marks Light Jan. 23 (FS), and others that month were one in n. Leon County Jan. 28 (RLC), one at Hickory Mound L., Jan. 31 (DF), and eight in Leon County Jan. 31 (GM).

**CROWS THROUGH VIREOS**—A Com. Crow calling in a flock of Fish Crows Jan. 29 (HMS) represented the first record for well-studied St. George I. Owing to advent of the Leon County sanitary landfill the Fish Crow has seemingly changed its winter status; once very uncommon or rare, it numbered 75-100 this year (GM,HMS). Farther s. several thousand were seen on an unspecified date at St. Petersburg (JD). Although the invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches NW may have been the greatest in Florida history, the species was not mentioned in reports from other parts of the state after November. A Sprague's Pipit again frequented the St. George I. causeway Dec. 17-Feb. 8 (HMS,JS *et al.*). The **Thick-billed Vireo** remaining along Rowdy Bend Road, E.N.P., Dec. 28-Jan. 21 (HL,OB,PS *et al.*) may be the best documented of the few Florida occurrences.

**WARBLERS**—Always abundant in n. Florida, Yellow-rumped Warblers abounded throughout the state this winter. At Casey Key, Sarasota Co., December-February, the 418 mist-netted included only 14 repeats (AS & SS); a single flock at Opa-Locka Jan. 21 was estimated at 200 (JK); and it was several times its normal abundance at Naples (TB). Among these hordes, a bird found at the Shark Valley Recreation Area, E.N.P., Jan. 5 (C. Krusko) had the yellow throat patch of *auduboni*, a form represented in Florida by a few sight records but no specimen or



photograph The approach of spring was heralded by a large number of N. Parulas migrating across Casey Key Feb. 18 (AS & SS). A Wilson's Warbler on the Univ. of Fla. campus, Gainesville Dec. 21-Feb. 2 (BM,RR) was a rarity, and Ovenbirds were near the n. edge of their winter range at L. Lafayette Jan. 12 (HMS), Jacksonville Dec. 11 (PP), and in n. St. Johns County Jan. 18 (PP). An Am. Redstart at Eastpoint Dec. 16 (JS) was probably exceptionally late rather than wintering.

**ICTERIDS AND TANAGERS**—Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were near the Myakka R., Feb. 17 (D. Mace) and at Orlando Dec. 27-Feb.7 (CT,R. King *et al.*). Single N. (Bullock's) Orioles were at Chiefland Jan. 30 (M.A. Mayan), near Tallahassee Dec. 6 & 24 (RMC), and two or three visited the Stoutamire's feeder periodically. The increasing Brewer's Blackbird was recorded as follows: five at L. Jackson Dec. 7 (RMC & CE) and two there Dec. 13 (GM), one near Panacea Feb. 14 (BH & PS), and ten at S. Venice Dec. 30 (AS,SS *et al.*). Following its recent establishment as a breeding bird in Leon County, the Boat-tailed Grackle remained in to winter for the first time. Two males were at L. Lafayette Dec. 6 (RMC) and four at L. Jackson Jan. 19 (HMS). The only W. Tanager reported was at Port Charlotte Feb. 12 (MS).

**BUNTINGS AND FINCHES**—A Blue Grosbeak at Alligator Pt., Jan. 1 (BA & LA) marked only the third winter record in the Talla. Div., and an Indigo Bunting was unusual at Jacksonville Jan. 24 (J. Cocke). Rarities at Gainesville included a Painted Bunting Dec. 26 (D.Maehr) and a Dickcissel

Jan 28 (JL, *fide* RR) The invasion of n finches brought Evening Grosbeaks to 3 localities in Gainesville ? 28 (BM) and to the Jacksonville area Jan. 12-late February (JW, B. Hogan, C. Cole), with a peak of 21 birds, but they strangely missed Tallahassee. Purple Finches were about normal in abundance, but numbers ranged S to Orlando (GB, R. Payne). Pine Siskins invaded the Talla. Div. in great numbers in fall, but most had passed through by December; more were recorded farther s.: 11 at Altamonte Springs Jan. 31-Feb. 23 (GB), one at Ormond Beach Jan. 24 (RH), and 14 around New Smyrna Beach Jan. 25 (RH). A House Finch at Hollywood Dec. 1-21 (I. Helwig; ph. to T.T.) provided an enigmatic record, as it was in the orange-yellow plumage and there are no other state records of the species even much farther n. The fondness of Cubans for caged birds along with their recent mass exodus to s. Florida, along with the virtual absence of the yellow-plumaged House Finch in the eastern United States population, suggest a strong possibility that the Hollywood bird was an escape.

**SPARROWS**—Le Conte's Sparrow, possibly not rare but rarely seen well enough to identify, was found at 3 localities in Wakulla County. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow on the Lower Wekiva State Preserve, Orange Co., Dec. 13 (CT & DR) may be only the second ever recorded in Florida's interior in winter. Rare near Hypoluxo Jan. 23 were single Clay-colored and Field sparrows (HL); two other Field Sparrows were near Boynton Beach Feb. 2 (BH). White-crowned Sparrows wintered near Tallahassee (GM), but 1-2 w. of Wakulla Station December-January (RMC,

BA,LA,HMS *et al.*) were quite unusual The almost-annual visit of Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting to Wards Bank were realized Feb. 15 for the longspur and Dec. 25-Feb 23 for 1-3 buntings (JW,BD,HD *et al.*), the latter date being the latest for Florida.

**PHOTO WANTED**—The Ruff recorded at Zellwood in July 1966 (AB 20:563) was "photographed on the 24th." However, I have checked with two of the three observers whose initials appear with this record, and neither knows of the photograph. It is needed for Florida's file of photos of rarities.

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## ONTARIO REGION /Clive E. Goodwin

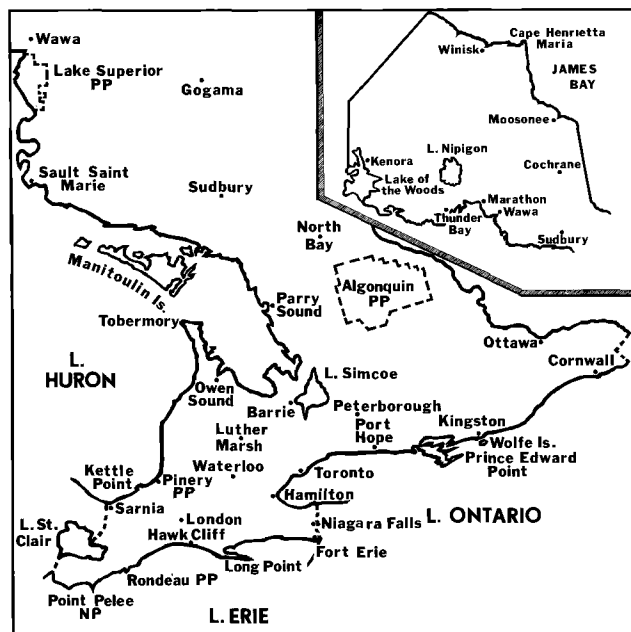
Much of the story of an uneventful winter is summed up in the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) results. Unusual numbers of many species were in the Province in early winter, and many survived throughout the period. Other highlights were a few well-publicized rarities and mild spells in February that stimulated early migration.

It was bitter cold through most of the period. Snowfall was light except in the snowbelt areas—those localities where the prevailing winds pick up moisture from the Great Lakes and where huge snowfalls accumulated. Wiarton had a record 231 cm in December alone. Christmas Day was the coldest this century—at Toronto, since 1872, and the airport there recorded an all-time low of -31.3 C in January.

In spite of this rigorous weather the very high numbers of such species as American Robin and White-throated Sparrow seemed to survive well. The south had an abundance of food, especially in urban areas where plantings of Mountain Ash and other berry-bearing shrubbery attracted large concentrations of birds. Another factor in survival was probably the open winter, allowing birds to forage food successfully without much expenditure of energy on particularly cold days.

Mild spells in February, especially after mid-month, brought in the predictable rush of early migrants. Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle and other regular March migrants appeared two to three weeks early over most of the south. These birds also seemed to survive well, as no severe weather returned up to the time of writing (March 15).

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**—Loon reports away from the lower Great Lakes were of a Common from Algonquin P.P., Dec. 16 (BD), and a Red-throated from Lakefield Dec. 6-14 (FH,m.ob.). There is no acceptable record of a Yellow-billed Loon in Ontario, but a well documented account of a bird at Ottawa last spring, May 19 (IJ,BMD,RAB) may change this. It has been approved by the local Records Committee and is now under



review at the Provincial level. A cormorant at Rondeau P.P., Jan. 5 (PAW) was probably a Double-crested, and the only report of this species after December. Great Blue Heron was one of the species that remained in

numbers but few seemed to survive past late January. Birds were e. to Ottawa Dec. 5 (BMD) and Kingston with 5 records to Dec. 31 (*vide* RDW), and n. to Meaford Jan. 11-17 (JCC). A few Black-crowned Night Herons also lingered in the s.w. through December (*vide* AHK).

**SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS**—Mute Swans continue to increase along the lower Great Lakes, and there were many reports of single birds; however, the January Waterfowl Inventory is probably the best measure of the population on L. Ontario, and a record 51 were counted Jan. 11 (T.O.C.). In the s.w. eight birds were seen over the period. Whistling Swans moved early in numbers, as three were seen at London Feb. 20 (CD) and 150 at Toronto Feb. 28 (m.ob.); and a late bird was at Waterloo Dec. 5 (RD). Two Whooper Swans again appeared at Bronte: these birds are now considered escapees. Two Canada Geese were at Ottawa throughout, probably the first successful winterers there. Snow Geese are also appearing more regularly in winter, and a record five were on the Jan. 11 L. Ontario count (T.O.C.) as well as one at Waterloo to Dec. 14 (JM). The possibility remains that these wintering birds are also from captive stock.

There was the usual scattering of dabbling ducks of several species along the lower Great Lakes, and to some extent elsewhere in the s., e.g., a N. Shoveler at Ingersoll from Dec. 26 (RWS) and a Wood Duck at Ottawa Dec. 26 (BMD). Mallard, Black Duck and Gadwall maintained their high numbers, but poor weather conditions in the January inventory period precluded an accurate assessment of their numbers this year. Twenty Gadwalls e. to Cornwall Dec. 28 (MG, SiG, SiG) were an indication of the continuing spread of this species e. High counts for the e. end of L. Ontario included 850 Redheads at Presqu'île P.P., Jan. 26 (RDM), 7000 Oldsquaw and 75 White-winged Scoters at Prince Edward Pt. (hereafter, P.E.Pt.) Feb. 26 (RKE). Six Ring-necked Ducks at Peterborough Dec. 2 (RDM) were also noteworthy late records for that locality, and other easterly records were of Hooded Mergansers on the Madawaska R., Dec. 1 (RT, DS) and at Arnprior Jan. 2 (MR). A Tufted Duck at Hamilton in late January (KMcl, m.ob.) was the first for the Province, and will now doubtless generate the usual heated debate on its origin. The Ottawa Barrow's Goldeneye was present throughout, and was joined by a female in December with which it apparently paired. A second male there disappeared in January. Elsewhere Barrow's were off Manitoulin I., Dec. 18 (CB) and at Hamilton during the same period the Tufted Duck was present (m.ob.). The Toronto area has traditionally been the best locale for wintering Harlequin Ducks, and birds off Mimico throughout (m.ob.) and at Oakville Dec. 28 (DHa) continued this tradition. The only King Eider reports were from Wolfe I., Dec. 21 (RDW, GV) and Presqu'île P.P., Dec. 1 (RDM). Some of the largest Provincial concentrations of Com. Mergansers have been in the Cornwall area, and this year 2600 were there Dec. 28 (MG, SiG, SiG).

**VULTURES, HAWKS**—One of the early records was a Turkey Vulture at Kingston Feb. 23 (RDU), the earliest-ever there. It was

a fairly average winter for hawks, and *Accipiter* numbers reflect this: Goshawks were in largest numbers at Ottawa as usual—eight there and 15 elsewhere—and there were 14 Sharp-shinned and 17 Cooper's in all (excluding CBCs), also probably about average. Southwestern Ontario seemed to have proportionately higher *Buteo* numbers than the rest of the Province, and recorded 65 Red-taileds and 58 Rough-leggeds. The "moderate" influx of Rough-leggeds mentioned in the fall report continued through December, peaking on Wolfe I., at 162 Dec. 21 (K.F.N.) and there were 13 at Presqu'île P.P., Dec. 16 (RDM), but numbers dropped off in January. Red-tailed Hawks were also in moderate numbers with a bird n. to Algonquin P.P., Jan. 2 (LWr). Some six Red-shouldered were reported in all, again excluding those on CBCs, and three Golden Eagles—at Tweed Dec. 18 (PJ), Pt. Pelee Dec. 13 (JPK, JGH) and Algonquin P.P., Feb. 13 (MK). Bald Eagles were in the best winter numbers in a decade—wintering totals have increased steadily over the past 5 years, and earlier high counts included Algonquin P.P. totals at wolf kills at a time when the wolves there were feeding primarily on white-tailed deer. There were at least 15 birds reported this year, plus an even more encouraging three nesting pairs in the s.w., including a new site at Rondeau P.P. (*vide* AHK). Marsh Hawk was another species wintering in high numbers with large counts on CBCs, and early migration probably explained widespread reports in February—three at Warton Feb. 27 (JWJ) was the northernmost of these. Three Peregrine Falcon and three Merlin reports were more than usual, but *Gyrfalcons* staged probably their largest movement ever when the exceptional fall numbers are included. The winter period yielded 11 reports, including a bird at Pimisi Bay Feb. 14-15 (LdeKL) and one at Whitby from Feb. 1 (m.ob.), and an amazing *six* at Ottawa (*vide* RAB). The highest previous recorded counts were in the winter of 1972-73 when Ottawa again had four out of eight birds reported in all.



*Gyr Falcon (imm., dark-phase), Fraser Dun-tile quarry, Ont., Jan. 5, 1981. Photo/Ian Jones.*

**GROUSE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS**—Those who have sought Spruce Grouse unsuccessfully in Algonquin Park will consider the six seen on the Sprucebog Trail Feb. 14 (RT *et al.*) with mixed feelings—the birds really do exist! Bobwhite continued in very low numbers, while Gray Partridges were at a high—again the CBC results tell the story well. Probably more birders visited Metro Toronto Zoo this winter than since its open-

ing. A Sandhill Crane appeared there around Dec. 24 and remained until February (m.ob.). It spent most of each day around the frozen duck ponds with the army of panhandling Mallards and Black Ducks, and quickly adapted to the supplies handed out by the zoo staff. Late records included a Com. Gallinule at Pt. Pelee Dec. 24 (*vide* PDP), an Am. Coot at Warton to Dec. 23 (JWJ), and a Dunlin at Presqu'île P.P., Dec. 1 (RDM).



*Sandhill Crane, Toronto, Ont., Jan. 10, 1981. Photo/Alan Wormington.*

**GULLS**—Gulls continued in low numbers but the season yielded a bonanza: 13 species in all! The CBCs reflect the continuing trend in the ratios of Herring to Ring-billed gulls in winter—the latter increasing. White-winged gulls were scarce in many localities, but up to 20 Glaucous across the Toronto waterfront was quite a good number, and three Icelanders during the period in the Kitchener-Waterloo area was a record high for this inland locality. Great Black-backed were also scarce, and to 50 birds at Pt. Pelee (m.ob.) were the most reported. Lesser Black-backed at Bronte Jan. 31 (CEG, JEG) and Port Credit in mid-January (DEP, GB) were probably different birds. There is no Ontario record of a California Gull, but a documented bird at Port Credit Jan. 18 (DEP) is suggestive of an adult with traces of immature plumage remaining: the report awaits Record Committee review. There was a large movement of gulls on L. Huron off the Kettle Pt.-Sarnia shoreline on Dec. 14, a day with strong NN-W winds. Denis Rupert at Sarnia counted > 5000 birds in 2.5 hours, while Alf Rider at Kettle Pt. observed the movement as a large band of birds along the lake, with as many as 20,000 in the day. Bonaparte's was the most common species at Sarnia with 3600 but there were two Little Gulls and a Black-legged Kittiwake. Sightings of these species elsewhere included a Bonaparte's at Lakefield Dec. 10 (RDM, CGH), very late at this inland locality, a kittiwake at Mimico Dec. 7 (DEP) and a Little Gull at Pt. Pelee Dec. 6 & 24 (PDP, JPK). Rupert also had a Franklin's Gull, very rare in winter, at Sombra Jan. 24 (DR). An Ivory Gull in the Niagara Gorge Dec. 22 (MG *et al.*) was the second in 1980 and provided the fifth provincial record in the decade for this rare gull.

**OWLS**—It was a mediocre year for owls, with only token showings by the rarer species, and small numbers of the commoner ones. The Snowy Owl flight continued light. Birds wintered n. to Englehart, where two were seen in January (JBW) and Thunder Bay Dec. 22 (DA) and in their usual centre of Wolfe I., peaked at 30 on Dec. 21, with three on neighbouring Amherst I. By Feb. 22 there were only ten on Wolfe I., but 14 on Amherst I. (K.F.N.). One of three Screech Owls that ended up in the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation after having fallen down chimneys was a red-phase bird from Thornhill Jan. 22 (KMCK). Five Screech Owls were reported in Kitchener-Waterloo (*vide* CAC) and 35± in the s.w. (*vide* AHK), considerably more than usual. Barred Owls are rarely mentioned here, mainly because they are too elusive and thinly distributed to yield many reports but too common to warrant individual enumeration. One at Pickering Feb. 22 & 27 (GS,MB) stimulated much searching. The only Hawk Owl seen was at Ottawa in January (IJ) as was one of the two Great Grays (Mrs. Fentiman). Kingston had the other Great Gray Jan. 17-19 (D&JB). Neither Long-eareds nor Short-eareds appeared in any numbers, 12 Long-eareds were scattered about in groups of up to five birds, both species appearing mainly across the s. A Boreal Owl was seen at Vankleek Hill in mid-January (BP) and on the breeding grounds was heard calling at French L., from Feb. 13 (SP). The first migrant Saw-whet Owl was heard in Algonquin P.P., Feb. 17 (DP) and by the end of February > 20 birds could be heard calling around Ottawa (m.ob.). Twelve birds at Arnprior Jan. 21-22 and six Feb. 12 (MR) were unusual concentrations, yet seemed early for migration. Elsewhere there were scattered individuals on scattered dates, mainly along the lower Great Lakes.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH SWALLOWS**—There were 14 Pileated Woodpeckers seen at Chaffey's Locks Dec. 28 (RDW), an exceptional count for this thinly distributed species. The main centre of abundance for Red-bellied Woodpeckers is in the of s. Ontario. Five in the Kitchener-waterloo area and 18± in the 3 counties which usually constitute the s.w. in these reports, indicate this species continues in good numbers, and one was n. to Evansville, Dec. 10 to mid-January (RC,CB *et al.*). A Red-headed Woodpecker was at Arnprior throughout (MR). Three-toed woodpeckers were scarce except in the extreme e.: Black-backed were numerous in Ottawa, and in Algonquin P.P., from January on, and one was w. to Markham Dec. 1 (HS). Northerns followed a similar pattern but apparently moved S of Algonquin after fall, and birds were at London Dec. 20 (TNH) and two at Petroglyphs P.P., Jan. 24 (DCS). An unusually large flock of 250 Horned Larks was in Ottawa Feb. 3 (RAB). London again hosted very late swallows, with a Rough-winged to Dec. 14 (WRJ) and a Barn to Dec. 23 (*vide* JS).

**CROWS THROUGH WRENS**—Gray Jays, established in Petroglyphs P.P., over the last couple of years, were not present this year (DCS). A Black-billed Magpie wintered near Atikokan (TN). Common Ravens continue to prosper, and two birds were s. to

Port Hope Dec. 23 (AS) while farther n. there were 26 at Parry Sound dump Feb. 15 (CAC) and 100 between Calabogie and Mountain Shute Jan. 2 (MR). The wintering numbers of Com. Crows also continue to increase across the s. For example, 37 at Peterborough in January (*vide* DCS), and early migrants reached Algonquin P.P., Feb. 22 (DS) and Pimisi Bay Feb. 25 (LdeKL). Black-capped Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches were widespread in the s., and in Algonquin P.P., Boreal Chickadees were also common. By contrast Red-breasted Nuthatches were in low numbers subsequent to their fall flight. One, and possibly two Brown Creepers at Atikokan Dec. 13, and Jan. 13-Feb. 28 (RB, MW) were the first in winter there. A Tufted Titmouse was at Oshawa Feb. 8 (GS). Ten Carolina Wren reports included two at Ottawa to Dec. 21 (TH,MR,JH) and a Long-billed Marsh Wren at Port Hope Dec. 21-23 (ERM) was the first in winter there.

**MIMIDS, THRUSHES**—Late records in these groups included a robin and a Gray Catbird at Atikokan Nov. 30 (DHE) and another catbird at Guelph Jan. 8 (*vide* CAC). A Brown Thrasher was at Mindemoya to Dec. 17 (KA) and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Bay Ridges Dec. 31 (HJ). The bird of the season was a Fieldfare which spent over 2 months from Jan. 1 roaming a Toronto suburb (BKM,m.ob.) feeding on Mountain Ash. It was seen by thousands of birders and possibly hundreds of others went away frustrated. Varied Thrushes appeared in their largest numbers since 1977; two were seen in Simcoe County (WZ,CGH, *vide* CJM), three in the broader Toronto area (DB,DT,TRS) and others at Buckhorn (W&ES), Sturgeon Falls (*vide* JN) and Parry Sound (HMB). Another species appearing with increasing frequency in the last decade is Townsend's Solitaire, and one was in Pickering Feb. 14 + (m.ob.). Eleven E. Bluebirds at Newburgh Feb. 7 (JR) were early.

**WAXWINGS THROUGH WARBLERS**—One of the heaviest, if not the heaviest-ever Bohemian Waxwing flight developed. The small numbers of fall increased during December, and by the end of the year flocks of 100+ birds were appearing. Relatively small numbers were reported from the n., and in s. Ontario the species was most common, as usual, in the e. where a flock of 350 was seen at Ottawa Jan. 14 (BMD). Birds were w. to Thorndale Jan. 9 (H&SI). Numbers declined from mid-January and there were few after mid-February. Cedar Waxwings were also abundant in the s. By contrast N. Shrikes were very scarce throughout the season. Only a scattering of warblers were reported, most in the s.w. Most noteworthy were a Com. Yellowthroat and a Nashville Warbler at Peterborough Dec. 6 (*vide* DCS), and another Nashville at London Dec. 14 (MSS,DR) with a Pine also there Dec. 16 (H&SI).

**BLACKBIRDS**—Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen at Pt. Pelee Dec. 24 (DR) and Leamington Dec. 7 (PDP), and Pelee had Brewer's Blackbirds Dec. 13 (JPK,JGH) and Feb. 14 (PDP). Northerly Com. Grackle reports were one at Bruce's Mines Jan. 6, and three at Pays Plat and two at Red Rock the next day (RDM). For the second successive

winter a N. Oriole of the Bullock's race appeared, this time at Port Dover Dec. 30-Feb. 26 (CW,SW,MSS).



Northern (Bullock's) Oriole, Port Dover, Ont., Feb. 26, 1981. Photo/Marvin S. Smout.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS**—A Cardinal was n.e. to Arnprior Jan. 1 (MR). The species was scarce in Ottawa while appearing in better numbers in less peripheral parts of its range, for example, the 40+ at Port Hope was the best in 5 years (ERM). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared at Port Britain Dec. 17-19 (FR). House Finches wintered successfully in two of the breeding localities established in 1980. Flocks of up to eight birds were regular at Kingston (HQ *et al.*) and there were 5-10 at St. Thomas (*vide* WRJ). The single Ottawa male survived its second winter (*vide* RAB). The winter finch flight was good but not exceptional, many of the birds apparently having moved through in fall. Purple Finches were virtually absent, but a flock of 100 at Kingston Feb. 25 (MCE) suggested return movement. Evening Grosbeaks appeared in very high numbers at Ottawa in December and moderate numbers elsewhere, and declined in most areas in the New Year. Pine Grosbeaks were widespread, usually in small flocks characteristic of this species although a group of 234 was seen at Oshawa Jan. 17 (DC). Common Redpolls were common throughout with 5000 Whitby Jan. 25-31 (GS) the largest number seen; and Pine Siskins were also widespread but very unevenly distributed, for example scarce in Kingston but the commonest finch at Port Hope. The redpoll flocks included 26 reported Hoaries, and redpoll banding at Ottawa revealed 17 of the *rostrata* race (the former Greater Redpoll) including 16 in a flock of 28 (RMP). Only a few Red Crossbills were seen, and White-winged Crossbills were in good numbers only in the Bruce Pen. (JWJ) and in Algonquin P.P., where they were common but became scarce in February (RT *et al.*). Wintering Rufous-sided Towhees were widespread, n. and e. to Sudbury (GH), Ottawa (*vide* RT,RAB). Tree Sparrows, however, were still scarce or absent in most areas. The largest flocks of Snow Buntings seen were 2000 at Wesleyville Feb. 8 (RJ), 3000+ and 10,000+ in Lambton County in late December (*vide* AHK), and 3000 at Whitby Feb. 14 (GS). Several flocks of 1000 were reported in an excellent movement of buntings, and as usual smaller numbers of Lapland Longspurs were often present as well.

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## NIAGARA - CHAMPLAIN REGION

/Douglas P. Kibbe

Certainly few regions have ever endured the range of environmental extremes exhibited within the boundaries of the Niagara-Champlain Region this winter. Although snowfall was generally lower than average, record low temperatures (to minus 45°F) through the first two thirds of the season left no doubt that winter had arrived. Temperatures soared to the 70s the latter half of February, however, inducing record early major flights of waterfowl, raptors and Icterids. Despite the record cold, half-hardy Mimids and sparrows were relatively abundant, a fact which compensated, in part at least, for the general lack of rarities and invasive species.

**GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL**—A Horned Grebe grounded on ice-covered Cuba L., surprised all by becoming airborne (AnS). The Mute Swan at Oswego may have been wild, although evidence indicates another at Rochester was not. The late February heat wave brought hordes of Whistling Swans and Canada Geese back accompanied by at least one zealous Brant and several Snow Geese. A hybrid duck on Cayuga L., was identified as a Mallard x Gadwall cross (MR). As usual three to four Barrow's Goldeneyes and an equal number of Harlequin Ducks were reported. Eight to 10 King Eiders were identified, more than half of them at Oswego.

**HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS**—A Turkey Vulture well described (LM) at Dead Creek W.M.A., Jan. 29 became Vermont's first totally convincing winter record and preceded an amazing half dozen February reports from New York. Virginia Rails probably attempt to overwinter in the Region far more often than a single record,

again at Mendon Ponds, might indicate. A lingering Red Phalarope at Braddock Bay Dec. 1 (MD) and a Purple Sandpiper at Niagara Falls were the most unusual shorebirds sighted. Common Snipe wintered at several New York localities and Killdeer and Am. Woodcock returned with the rising temperatures in late February.

**GULLS THROUGH PARIDS**—Despite the intense cold, which normally forces white-winged gulls to our latitude, relatively few aggregated at the Region's usual gull hot spots, although Great Black-backed continued to increase. Rarities included a Pomarine Jaeger at Oswego Jan. 10 (MR); Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the Hudson R., Feb. 17 (AG) and at Niagara Falls Jan. 1 (B.O.S.); a Black-headed Gull at Buffalo Dec. 13 & 14 (m.ob.) and on the Genesee R., Feb. 3-15 (MD *et al.*); a single Black-legged Kittiwakes on the St. Lawrence R., Dec. 3 (JVR) and at Iroquois N.W.R., Feb. 21 (AS, *fide* B.O.S.), the latter an inland site making this sighting little short of extraordinary; and Ivory Gulls at Charlotte Jan. 21 (MD *et al.*) and Niagara Falls late December-Jan. 1 (m.ob., *fide* B.O.S.).

The only Barn Owls reported were from Coxsackie and Braddock Bay. Observers and particularly breeding bird atlas workers are urged to contact local farmers to help resolve questions about the true status of this secretive species. Snowy, Long-eared and Saw-whet owls numbers were generally unimpressive while Short-eareds were slightly more in evidence than usual. Vermont's Bear Swamp led all counts with a surprising four Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers while the only N. Three-toed was found near Island Pond. Common Ravens have now been recorded from every Vermont Christmas Bird Count and were sighted in at least 4 extralimital New York localities. Further evidence of the massive Black-capped Chickadee invasion comes from s. Vermont where 3 counts exceeded 1000 birds including a staggering 1650 at Springfield tallied despite sub-zero temperatures.

greater than normal numbers and Am Robins set records in c. New York. Varied Thrushes appeared at Rochester, N.Y (m.ob.) and Westminster, Vt. (CK *et al.*), both birds possibly being returnees that spent previous winters in nearby areas. Although Cedar Waxwings were numerous in w. New York and the L. Champlain Valley, only a handful of Bohemians were reported. In view of their general scarcity, therefore, the return of up to 70 Bohemians to the same patch of trees in Cornwall, Vt., which has hosted them for 5 out of the past 6 years (BP) is amazing. Northern Shrikes were generally scarce. The only noteworthy warbler was a Pine frequenting a Hamburg feeder Dec. 19-22 (*fide* VP).

**ICTERIDS AND FRINGILLIDS**—Mass movements of Icterids spurred on by a record-setting warming trend set many local records in late February. The apparent Boat-tailed Grackle lingered at Greece until Dec. 8 (m.ob.). A ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak appeared at Pierrefont (KC) on this same date. A Eur. Goldfinch, presumably an escapee, caused excitement at a Jamestown feeder in January. Purple Finches and crossbills were very scarce but Pine Grosbeaks staged a modest invasion and Com. Redpolls and Am. Goldfinches were generally abundant, setting numerous local records. A belated report was received of a Com. Redpoll which broke all arrival dates this fall when it appeared at an Underhill, Vt. feeder Sept. 9 with a large flock of purple finches and remained most of that month while molting into adult plumage (KS). Several "Hoary" Redpolls were reported, most from Vermont. Pine Siskins, common early in the season, apparently moved farther S as winter progressed. A Lincoln's, four Savannahs, and numerous Field, Fox, White-crowned and Swamp sparrows were reported along with higher than average numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos, Tree Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows.

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**NUTHATCHES THROUGH WARBLERS**—Red-breasted Nuthatches invaded New York. Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers and Hermit Thrushes wintered in

## APPALACHIAN REGION

/George A. Hall

Most of the individual reporters remarked that it was a dull winter for birds, but from the viewpoint of the compiler who has all the reports before him, it was a very interesting season. Too often the Regional Editor faces a chaotic mass of data, and he struggles vainly to see some patterns. This winter, however, there were patterns aplenty that can easily be summed up, and all this was spiced with a manageable number of exciting rarities.

The dry weather of late summer and fall continued through December and January, with almost all stations reporting rainfall deficiencies. Except in the north there was very little snowfall (Morgantown had a total of only 25 in.), although in the northern half of the Region the ground was snow-covered for most of January and early February. The dry spell broke in February, and most areas had ample rainfall.

Early December had been a continuation of the mild autumn but just after Christmas the weather turned cold, and for January and February most places had well-below normal temperatures. The cold abated in mid-February and the last two weeks of the month saw some springlike weather.

As a result of the mild early season there were the usual number of "half-hardy" species recorded in December, and most places had very good Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC). Many locations sent in long lists of species whose numbers set new CBC records. Despite the cold weather of January many species remained north in unusual numbers. Except for one or two species the promise of a good "northern invader" winter that had been forecast in November did not materialize, but a total of about 15 species that fall into this category was reported.

The early group of spring migrants, particularly the blackbirds, arrived in force in the last week of February.

**LOONS, GREBES AND HERONS**—A Red-throated Loon was at McElhattan, Pa., Dec. 19 (PS). A Red-necked Grebe was at the same place Jan. 30 (PS). Other unusual grebes were two Westerns at Chattanooga L., Tenn., Dec. 20 (LD), and an Eared in Knox County, Tenn., Jan. 9-10 (MA). However, the most spectacular grebe news was of another precipitation of migrant Horned Grebes owing to bad weather. On the night of Dec. 27 a freezing rain caused a "crash" of grebes over an area along the w. edge of the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia for a distance of about 200 mi including 9 counties. At least 200 birds were seen, and many more were involved. As usual there was great mortality among these grounded birds (*vide* KF).

The Great Blue Heron was unusually numerous through most of the winter in the n., but more unusual was the Great Egret at the Hiawasee R. area near Chattanooga Jan. 6 (LD), and the Green Herons on the Knoxville CBC Dec. 21 (BS), and at Roanoke, Va., Feb. 27 (MP).

**WATERFOWL**—Good numbers of waterfowl remained in late December for the CBCs, but most of the ponds and lakes froze up soon thereafter. The N migration began in

late February with the mild weather, but most of the waterfowl were still to arrive by Mar. 1.

There were three reports of Mute Swans: Dec. 30 at Chattanooga (KD), Marietta, O., Jan. 11-Feb. 6 (JS), and Tidioute, Pa., Jan. 20 (JK). A few Whistling Swans remained in the area in December with 150 at Presque Isle S.P. (hereafter, P.I.S.P.) Dec. 28 (RFL & ML) the largest number reported. By early February a few swans had started N, but no great numbers were reported. At Pymatuning L., Pa., the Canada Goose winter population totaled 3500±, down from the normal 5000 (RFL). Perhaps this decrease simply means that geese went elsewhere for the winter, and indeed large numbers were widely reported elsewhere. They wintered in numbers all along the Ohio R., in s. West Virginia at Bluestone Reservoir (JP), Boutetourt (BK) and Rockingham counties, Va. (R.B.C.), and at Warren, Pa. (WH) At the very end of the period the N flight started; several locations reported flocks Feb. 27-28.

Snow Geese were reported from Botetourt County Dec. 2 (first local record—JHu), Bald Eagle S.P., Pa., Feb. 22-27 (MW,PS), Chattanooga Feb. 10 (LD & KD), and two (blue morph) wintered in the Ligonier Valley, Pa. (RCL).

Mallards were unusually common on CBCs, but although the Pittsburgh CBC count of Mallards was well above average, the count of Black Ducks was the poorest in 20 years (PH). Similar reports came from most other places as the Black Duck continues its decline. At Lock Haven, Pa. the high population of Mallards was "decimated" by an oil spill on the Susquehanna R. Of 51 birds rescued and treated only nine survived (PS).

Both Pintails and Gadwall were reported more commonly than is usual for a winter season. Also unusual were the winter reports of Wood Ducks from Lock Haven, Pa., Dec. 27 (PS), Sunbury, Pa., Jan. 27 (SS), and Irvine, Pa., Feb. 3 (WH). Canvasbacks were listed as scarce by those few areas that mentioned them. Perhaps the mild early winter induced the Com. Goldeneyes to remain in the n. They were in low numbers at most places, although they were reported as far s. as Shenandoah L., Va., Dec. 3, where they are uncommon (R.B.C.). There were more reports than usual of Com. Mergansers. Surf Scoters were reported from P.I.S.P., in December (JM), and from L. Arthur, Pa., Dec. 13 (DF), while White-winged Scoters were seen on the Allegany County, Md. CBC, Dec. 20 (JW), Elizabethton, Tenn. CBC, Jan. 3 (GE), and Chattanooga L., Tenn., Jan. 24 (JSI).

**RAPTORS**—It was a great winter for most raptor species. Five areas reported record numbers of Red-tailed Hawks on the CBCs



and several others reported high populations. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were widely reported in good numbers. Probably, in aggregate, more Sharp-shinned Hawks wintered in the area than in any recent year. Marsh Hawks were also unusually numerous. Rough-legged Hawks staged a good S flight and were reported as far s. as Roanoke and Augusta cos., Va., although the numbers were largest in n. Pennsylvania.

These have been the routine species, and the real news comes from the rarer ones. Utterly fantastic was the count of 224 Black Vultures on the Rockingham County, Va. CBC (R.B.C.). Black Vultures were also reported on the CBC at Pipestem S.P., W.Va. (JP), and from Buncombe County, N.C., Dec. 18 (RR). Goshawks were reported from Erie, Pa., through December and January (CZK), on the Clarksville, Pa. CBC, Dec. 27 (RB), Ellenton, Pa., Feb. 26 (CS), from Pymatuning L., Pa., Jan. 31 (RFL & ML), from Warren County, Va., Jan. 20 & Feb. 13 (RSi), and from Buncombe County, N.C., Jan. 1 (JY). Also unusual were Broad-winged Hawks at Blacksburg, Va., Dec. 6 (JMu) and at Newburg, Pa., Jan. 25 (CG). Peregrines were reported from near Sinks Grove, Greenbrier Co., W.Va., through December (DW), from the Chattanooga region in late December (RSt), and from Douglas L., Tenn., Jan. 3 (DE). A real rarity was a Gyrfalcon at P.I.S.P., Pa., Dec. 6-7 (JM).

Finally there are the eagles. There were reports of Golden Eagles from 11 locations: Bald Eagle Mt., Pa. (MW), Pymatuning L., Pa. (RFL & ML), Rector, Pa. (RCL), n. Virginia (RSi), Blacksburg, Va. (JMu), Franklin, W.Va. (KF), Highland County, Va., (R.B.C.), Bath County, Va., (RAn), Rowan County, Ky. (FB), and Woodbury, Tenn. (T.O.S.). It is encouraging that this species is wintering in the s. Appalachians in some numbers but certain conflicts are inevitable. Near Franklin, W.Va., a sheep farmer live-trapped (under permit) two Golden Eagles which were then removed from the area. This was an enlightened farmer, as I fear that most would have used a gun. A total of 50 Bald Eagles was reported from 16 locations ranging from Pymatuning and Warren, Pa., in

the n. to Chattanooga in the s. In the Knoxville area a mid-winter survey listed 18 adults and 7 immatures (LT). Near Franklin, W. Va. (where sheep farming is a major industry) at least one Bald Eagle was shot (CR).

**BOBWHITE, SHOREBIRDS**—Bobwhite are still in very low numbers in the n., e.g. none on the Charleston, W. Va. CBC (GH), but there was a December record from State College, Pa. (MW), and some slight improvement was noted in n.w. Virginia (RSi).

Killdeer wintered in increased numbers at Lock Haven (PS), but were down at Clarksville, Pa. (RB). Early migrants arrived in the last few days of February as did also a few early Am. Woodcock. Common Snipe wintered in good numbers, with the 11 December records near Pittsburgh being the most interesting (PS). Two unusual shorebird records came from Warren County, Va., a Greater Yellowlegs Dec. 8-Jan. 2; on Dec. 20 it was accompanied by a Least Sandpiper (RSi). Near Knoxville a flock of 230 Dunlin was seen Jan. 4 (TK), while at Chattanooga 125 Feb. 6 was the peak number (LD).

**JAEGERS AND GULLS**—An imm. **Pomarine Jaeger** was seen at P.I.S.P., Dec. 20 (JM & SSt). It has become expected that each season will bring some interesting gull records from P.I.S.P., on the L. Erie shore and this year was no exception. In the latter part of December 60,000± gulls were present in that area, but by Jan. 28 *not a single gull* could be found (JM). Besides the usual Great Black-backed, Herrings and Ring-billed a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was seen there on three occasions (JM, SSt, CZK). Iceland Gulls were seen Dec. 26-Jan. 17 with as many as four Jan 10 (JM & SSt) and Jan. 10 an **Iceland (Kumlien's) Gull** was seen (SSt & JM). Even more noteworthy were Glaucous Gulls present Dec. 14-Feb. 7 with a high of 11 on Jan. 17 (SSt).

Elsewhere the Great Black-backed Gull continues to occur "inland" with four records from Sunbury, Pa. (SS) and one at Bald Eagle S.P., Pa. (MW).

**DOVES, OWLS AND WOODPECKERS**—What has triggered the boom in Mourning Doves? Once only a moderately common summering bird, this year it burst out as an abundant winterer even in the n. with reports from as far n. as Warren, Pa. (WH). Typical of the reports that came in were the record 1696 on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH), 550 on the East Liverpool, O., CBC (NL) and 1200 on the Rockingham County, Va CBC (R.B.C.).

It was a moderate invasion year for Snowy Owls. Singles were seen in Erie County Dec. 7-Feb. 14, with three in early January. One owl wintered there feeding on Ring-billed Gulls (JM). There were four reports from w. Pennsylvania including two in urban Pittsburgh, one of which was rescued after becoming trapped in a closed theater (PH). On Dec 5 one was seen in Frederick County, Va., and another in Shenandoah County, Va. (RSi). Long-eared Owls were reported from P I S.P., Dec. 27 (JM & SSt), from Jersey Shore, Pa., Dec. 25 (second record in 14 years—PS) and from four locations in n.w. Virginia (RSi). Short-eared Owls were reported from P.I.S.P., on two occasions

(CZK, DS), Allegheny County, Pa., Dec. 26 (PH), n.w. Virginia Jan. 18-Feb. 28+, Roanoke airport throughout the winter (BK), Wooster, O., Feb. 19 & 21 (JB), and Marietta, O., Jan. 14-Feb. 17 (JS). Saw-whet Owls were seen at P.I.S.P., Jan. 10 (DS), Greenbrier County, W. Va., Feb. 2 (DW), and Tidioute, Pa., in late February (JK). Screech Owls are making a slow comeback from the winter kill a few years ago, as witness the 17 on the Pittsburgh CBC (compared with four last year and a record year of 57), and the same CBC had a record 21 Great Horned Owls (PH). Barn Owls were more widely reported than usual, with a nice count of eight on a CBC in n.w. Virginia (RSi).

The Red-headed Woodpecker has become a marginal species in most of this Region and so the reports of 19 on the Franklin, W. Va. CBC (*vide* KF), and the spectacular 84 on P.I.S.P., Dec. 27 (JM) were welcome indeed. On the other hand only one was listed during the season at Knoxville (LT), but the one at Dalton, Ga. (CBC) was unusual there. Hairy Woodpeckers seemed more common than in recent years and the Clarksville Pa. CBC had a record number (RB) and the Pittsburgh CBC, the third best count (PH). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were generally common. The Red-bellied Woodpecker wintered again in Erie (JM), and was seen at Tidioute, Pa. throughout the winter, both localities n. of the usual limits. In contrast was the record 40 on the Blacksburg, Va., CBC (JMu).

**FLYCATCHERS, LARKS AND SWALLOWS**—A very late E. Phoebe was in Greenbrier County, W. Va., Dec. 28 (DW). Horned Larks were seen in record numbers on the CBCs at Pittsburgh (PH), Knoxville (LT), Chattanooga (RSt), and were in good numbers during the winter at Elizabethton, Tenn. (GE), but were low at State College, Pa. (KJ). a remarkable Tree Swallow was seen in Fauquier County, Va., Feb. 25 (RSi) and the only early report of Purple Martins came from Chattanooga Feb. 23 (JPh).

**CORVIDS, TITMICE AND NUTHATCHES**—A Fish Crow was seen in Botetourt County, Va., Dec. 21 (JA). This represents farther movement S through the Great Valley. Common Raven continue to be numerous in n. Pennsylvania, and several records were made at low elevations near Elizabethton (GE). Blue Jays were more common in the n. than usual as winterers; witness the record 680 on the Pittsburgh CBC.

Black-capped Chickadees staged a S movement in the fall and while this was not very pronounced then, winter numbers were large and the species occurred well s. of its usual range, with records from all Virginia stations, and some records on Roan Mt., Tenn. Dec. 29 (VI & GS) Accompanying this heavy invasion came two reports of Boreal Chickadees, both from n. Pennsylvania: Warren, December-early January (TG), and P.I.S.P., Jan. 31 (DFL). Most reporters in s.w. Pennsylvania and n. West Virginia felt that Tufted Titmice were in lower-than-normal numbers, but the Pittsburgh CBC had its second highest count (PH), and the CBC at Wise, Virginia counted an alltime high (RP).

Even more spectacular than the flight of chickadees was the invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches, which were quite common

throughout (with the expected CBC record counts). Oddly none were found on the breeding grounds on Roan Mt., Tenn. (GE) where there was no cone crop. One can only speculate that a similar food shortage in the n. coniferous forest triggered the great flight Brown-headed Nuthatches were in Buncombe County, N.C. (RR), and once again the remarkably tame Brown-headed Nuthatch showed up near Harrisonburg, Va. (R.B.C.)

**WRENS, MIMIDS AND THRUSHES**—The Carolina Wren has made good progress in its recovery, and most of the n. stations reported a few making it through the winter. Here in Morgantown I could hear the song all through the late winter, but nowhere are populations near those of 5 years ago. Winter Wrens were thought to be in higher-than-normal numbers at Knoxville (LT) and Harrisonburg, Va. (R.B.C.) but were in very low numbers in w. Pennsylvania (PH). Short-billed Marsh Wrens were seen near Knoxville Jan. 9-10 (MA, *vide* SJS), and on the Oak Hill, W. Va. CBC (JP). A Bewick's Wren was at Wise, Va., Dec. 27 (RP).

Gray Catbirds were at P.I.S.P., Jan. 9 (CZK) and on the Great Smoky Mountains N.P. CBC (LT). Four to 6 Brown Thrashers wintered near Elizabethton (GE) and singles were seen at Clarksville, Pa., Dec. 27 (RB) and Ashland County, O., Dec. 28 (JB).

In w. Pennsylvania observers reported that it was "the winter of the robin" as unusual numbers remained all winter. Almost every station in e. Ohio, w. Pennsylvania, and n. West Virginia reported it common, topped by an unbelievable 12,642 on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH) (about two-thirds of these in one large roost). Hermit Thrushes were also unusually numerous. An unusual Gray-cheeked Thrush was reported from Allegheny County, Pa., Dec. 27 (RA). Also from Allegheny County came the only records this year of the Varied Thrush, which has been turning up each winter in recent years: Elizabethton, Jan. 15-Feb. 23 (m.ob.), and Sewickley Heights Feb. 14 (CSc).

**KINGLETS, WAXWINGS AND SHRIKES**—Golden-crowned Kinglets have made a good comeback after the mortality of a few winters ago, and are near to earlier populations. As usual the Cedar Waxwing presented a variable situation, being in record numbers at some places and almost absent at others. There were four records of N. Shrike, all in w. Pennsylvania: Hooverville, Somerset Co., Dec. 21 (GRS), near Clarion Dec. 5 (LJC), Smethport, McKean Co., Feb. 26 (JM), and Pymatuning L., Feb. 28 (FRL & ML).

**WARBLERS AND ICTERIDS**—Besides the usual wintering Yellow-rumped Warblers, which were more numerous than usual in the n., there was a rash of late warbler occurrences: N. Waterthrush, netted at Powdermill Nature Reserve, Pa., Dec. 7 (previously banded but in good condition—RCL), Palm Warbler Chattanooga CBC (CHa), Pine Warbler Knoxville Dec. 16-18 (SJS, BHS) Even more remarkable was the Cape May Warbler that wintered successfully at Parkersburg, W. Va. (GH), the freshly dead Kentucky Warbler found at Pittsburgh Dec. 27, which upon preparation as a scientific speci-

men was found to have fully enlarged testes (KP), and a ♂ Bay-breasted Warbler in full spring plumage Feb. 15 at Morgantown (WW).

Red-winged Blackbirds, Com. Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds all wintered in unusual numbers in the n. Rusty Blackbirds were also much more common than usual, but the real prize of the winter were the Brewer's Blackbirds on the Bethany, W.Va CBC (RRi), and on the Lewisburg, W.Va. CBC (20 counted—CH). There were four winter records of N. Orioles: Weirton, W.Va., Dec. 5 (RRi), Charleston, W.Va. CBC (NG), Allegheny County, Md. CBC, Dec. 20 (JW), and near State College, Pa., where one wintered successfully, feeding on grape jelly (KJ).

**FRINGILLIDS**—It was a fairly good "northern finch" winter. Most abundant was the Pine Siskin whose S flight had been noted in the fall. It was fairly common in e. Tennessee, missing in w. North Carolina, but common to abundant farther n. Along with the siskins were unusual numbers of Am. Goldfinches. Purple Finches were also numerous at most places, being called the most common finch in w. North Carolina (RR). Evening Grosbeaks were found in modest numbers although all reporters commented on the lack of large flocks. This situation has obtained for several winters now, and one might speculate that this is going to be the pattern of the future rather than the great invasional flocks of the 1940s and '60s. The only reports of Pine Grosbeaks came from Butler, Pa., Jan. 11 (GW) and New Kensington, Pa., Jan. 3-5 and Feb. 3-4 (PR).

Common Redpolls were found in small numbers at P.I.S.P. (JM), Warren, Pa. (WH), State College, Pa. (KJ), Jersey Shore, Pa. (PS), south to Hagerstown, Md. (KG), Shenandoah County, Va. (RSi), and Charles-

ton W Va (GH) Along with these were three reports of Hoary Redpolls: P.I.S.P., Dec. 20 (SSt & JM) and Jan. 10 (DS), and Wayne County, O., Feb. 19 (JB). Red Crossbills were reported only from locations near the presumed or actual breeding grounds, Bote-tourt County, Va. (BK), Shenandoah Mt., on the border of West Virginia-Virginia (R.B.C.), Blacksburg, Va. (JMu), Watauga L., Tenn. (RK), and the Chattahoochee N.F., Ga. (HD), while the only report of White-winged Crossbill came from Butler County, Pa., Dec. 21 (MG).

The House Finch continues to swarm at many places, and several localities commented on record CBC numbers. In s. Virginia they disappeared during the winter. The species has finally arrived at Dalton, Ga., in the extreme s. of the Region, (AH) and is gradually increasing in e. Tennessee.

Tree Sparrows were almost completely absent from Morgantown (GAH), and were scarce at Marietta, O. (JS) and in Allegheny County, Pa. (PH), but a CBC at Butler, Pa. listed 1662 (PH). A few were seen s. into Virginia, s. of the normal range. White-throated Sparrows wintered in good numbers with > 1500 on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH). More unusual sparrow records were a Savannah at Stuart's Draft, Va., Feb. 13 (LTe), a Harris' in Buncombe County, N.C., Jan. 5-12 (AHa), and a Lark at Waterford, Pa., Dec. 20-25 (JJS).

Snow Buntings were quite common in n. Pennsylvania, becoming less so in s. Pennsylvania but reported at Roanoke Jan. 17 (JA & NM). Lapland Longspurs were reported from P.I.S.P., Dec. 7 & Jan. 3 (JM), Roxbury, Pa., mid-January (KG), State College, Pa. (KJ), Montour County, Pa. (SSt), Jersey Shore, Pa., Jan. 5 (PS), and, most remarkable, at White Pine, Tenn., Jan. 3-4 (TK).

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## WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

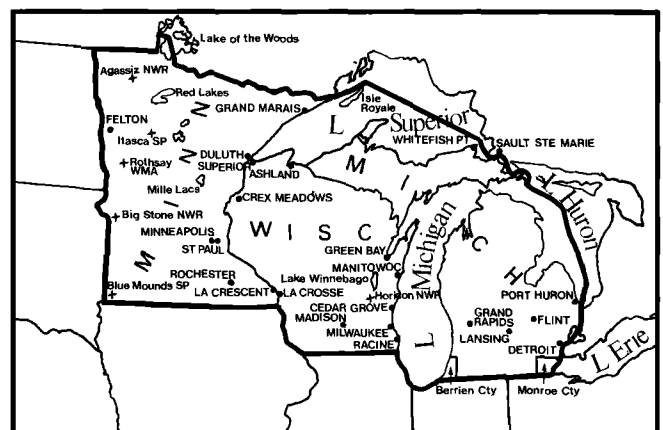
/Kim R. Eckert

With the exception of those who prefer to spend their winters on skis, everyone agreed that this was about as pleasant as a winter can get his far north. Although northern Minnesota was colder than normal through much of December and early January, the southern part of the state was then closer to or a bit above average temperature. But it was the entire state which enjoyed one of the strongest January thaws ever from the 17th to 25th when even northern locations reached the 40s; on the 24th the Twin Cities recorded 57°F, just two degrees short of their all-time January high, and on the same day Redwood Falls reached 68°—some 45° above normal! Wisconsin also reported generally mild conditions during December and January, which were interrupted by cold spells in mid-December, and early and mid-January. This state also enjoyed that late January thaw, but it was apparently not as vigorous as in Minnesota.

The first half of February brought us back

to the reality of typically cold weather with a vengeance. Temperature readings in the -20° range even reached southern portions of the Region. But the rest of the month brought another round of warm weather that was just as remarkable as that in January. The third week of February saw temperatures in the 40s and 50s in northern Minnesota (where average highs are only in the upper teens), in the 50s and 60s at many places throughout Wisconsin and southern Minnesota, and as high as 70° in Redwood Falls on the 17th (again 45° above average).

As might be expected under such conditions, snowfall was generally light. With the exception of northern Wisconsin and Michigan and extreme northeastern Minnesota, the ground was bare for most of the winter. In



Wisconsin, for example, there was only one significant snowfall of the entire winter, and that was not until February 10-11 when about a foot fell (but all this melted within a week) And in almost all of Minnesota the ground was bare until January 31 when 3-4 inches of snow fell—an insignificant total in most winters, but it was the first snowfall of any consequence in most areas up until then, and

it was second only to the 8 inches which fell in eastern Minnesota February 21-23.

Not only was the mild weather pleasant to experience, but so also was the birding. After two consecutive winters with relatively few birds of interest, there were several noteworthy facets of this winter: the mild weather earlier in the winter resulted in several species lingering well past normal departure dates or overwintering successfully; the warm weather during the last half of February brought in a wide array of spring migrants 2-3 weeks early (especially waterfowl, raptors and black-birds); most winter finches staged modest invasions in at least some parts of the Region, resulting in our best finch winter since 1977-78; and more than the usual number of rarities appeared, adding spice to an already exciting season.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**—Overwintering Com. Loons even in s. parts of the Region are unusual, so the one that survived the season at Sault Ste. Marie was most significant (*vide DP*). Several Horned Grebes were reported later than usual, even as late as Jan 24 in Benzie County, Mich. (KW), and at Two Harbors, Minn., Jan. 25 (m.ob.); there was also a Red-necked Grebe at the latter site on the same day (TS). A Pied-billed Grebe at Muskegon, Mich., was late Jan. 13-31 (GW), but the ones in Rock County, Wis., in mid-February and Feb. 28 in Dane County, Wis. (WH) probably were not late, but rather early spring migrants. **Double-crested Cormorants** made unprecedented appearances in Wisconsin and Minnesota: besides late individuals Dec. 4 in Jefferson County (KH) and Dec. 13 in Milwaukee (JI), Wisconsin had its first overwintering record with one at Green Bay (m.ob.); Minnesota's records were on the Hastings-Etter CBC Jan. 18 in St. Paul (F&KB), and Feb. 18 at Becker, Sherburne Co. (EH) —the latter two dates representing the state's first mid-winter records. Several Great Blue Herons also lingered well into January and even February: a maximum of 33 was counted in Monroe County in early February (*vide AK*), Wisconsin had three January records plus another overwintering in Trempealeau County, and Minnesota recorded two in late January in Pine and Scott counties plus one in Mower County Feb. 16 (RJ) and another overwintering at Fergus Falls (G&MO). Most remarkable and obviously unprecedented was a wintering **Great Egret** at Trempealeau N.W.R., Wis (WD), in the company of Great Blue Herons. Also interesting, but by now anticlimactic, were the ten Black-crowned Night Herons Feb. 14 at Gibraltar, Mich. (TC) and the lone immature on the St. Paul CBC.

**CANADA GOOSE**—Evidence of the February thaw was the 9000 geese that returned to Shiawassee N.W.R., Mich., Feb. 28 and the small flocks moving N into Minnesota at several locations about the same time. Many more than usual were seen on Minnesota's CBCs as well: 15,750 at Big Stone N.W.R., 22,000 at Lac Qui Parle W.M.A. (11,000 overwintered), and 25,000 at Rochester.

**DUCKS**—It was a good winter for ducks, with more than the usual number lingering well into the season, overwintering, and migrating N unusually early in February.

#### S.A.

In Wisconsin, the number of wintering geese was described as unprecedented, especially in Dodge and Green Lake counties where at least 20,000 were counted. However, by the end of the season, 3000+ geese here had died as a result of lead poisoning, and another 2000 were predicted to die before it was all over. Geese analyzed at the Wild Animal Disease Center at Colorado State University contained from 5.5 to 35.5 ppm of lead, with 3.0 ppm considered the minimum threshold of lead poisoning. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had recently recommended to the legislature a bill requiring steel shot for waterfowl hunters throughout the state, but at the last minute this bill died. So did a lot of geese.

Some notable examples of lingering/wintering birds include: Blue-winged Teal Jan. 25 in Jefferson County, Wis. (KH); N. Shovelers in Minnesota on the St. Paul CBC, in Nicollet County, Wis. (KH); N. Shovelers in Minnesota on the St. Paul CBC, in Nicollet County Dec. 12 (JF), and at Waseca Jan. 5 (JF); an overwintering Redhead at Virginia in far n. Minnesota (LH); a Ring-necked Duck Dec. 30 at Baraga in the Upper Pen. (ArW); a Greater Scaup Dec. 31-Jan. 5 at Waseca, Minn. (JF); and unusually high numbers of wintering Com. Mergansers throughout Wisconsin. Unusually early February migrants were 200 Pintails Feb. 27 at Shiawassee N.W.R., Mich., a Green-winged Teal Feb. 19 at Chippewa Falls, Wis. (JP), a Blue-winged Teal Feb. 28 in Kalamazoo County (DP), and both Am. Wigeon and N. Shoveler in Rock County, Wis., by mid-February.

Several unusual species also appeared. A ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye was discovered at Black Dog L., Dakota Co., Minn., Feb. 21 (ES), and was later seen by m.ob. into March. Barrow's also appeared at 3 Michigan locations, with a male at Marquette Dec. 5-7 (EL,SB,GBa), a female Dec. 13 at Metrobeach, and as many as three females at Sault Ste. Marie Jan. 11-Feb. 21 (m.ob.). A total of five Harlequin Duck records was also more than usual: one at Sault Ste. Marie in December (TH,TW,LP); in Wisconsin, a male appeared Dec. 14 at Madison and remained throughout the season (m.ob.), another was seen at Two Rivers Jan. 17 (GN), and a male plus two females were found at Sheboygan Jan. 25 (CS); and a pair was seen at the mouth of the Stewart R., Lake Co., Minn., until Dec. 13 (KE). But the best duck of the season was Michigan's fifth **Common Eider**, a female carefully identified at St. Joseph Jan. 4 (WB,RA,DP *et al.*). Single White-winged Scoters were noted from 7 Michigan counties, and another was at Milwaukee Feb. 26-28 (DG), but more noteworthy were the two Surf Scoters Dec. 16 in Kalamazoo County (RA).

**HAWKS**—Turkey Vultures were very late in Michigan on the Petosky CBC and at Metrobeach Dec. 14. Because of the lack of snow cover, an unusual number of Rough-legged Hawks overwintered in n. Minnesota, especially in n. Aitkin County. Golden Eagles

were almost common with at least ten individuals reported from 9 locations; the one Feb. 8 in Pennington County, Minn., was especially far n. (K&SK). Ospreys were very late Dec. 5 in Van Buren County, Mich. (*vide RA*), in December (date unknown) at Sault Ste. Marie, and Dec. 26 on the Mississippi R., in Goodhue County, Minn. (K. Sherck). For the second consecutive winter a Gyrfalcon wintered in the Duluth-Superior harbor (m.ob.); there were also three Michigan reports, from Allendale Jan. 2 (JP,GW,LF), in Benzie County Jan. 1 (CF,SH), and at Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 30-Feb. 7 (m.ob.). A few years ago Prairie Falcon reports in Minnesota would be boldfaced immediately, but so many have been seen in recent years that the three preying on pigeons among the Fargo-Moorhead grain elevators and railroad yards all winter seemed almost routine. But never taken for granted is the Peregrine Falcon, especially in winter, so most interesting were the two Wisconsin reports, one Feb. 7 in Marathon County (DF,K&JL) and another Feb. 25 in Wood County (DF). Merlins continue to be seen in winter more frequently than in previous years, especially in Minnesota where there were six reports; Wisconsin also had one and Michigan two.

**GALLIFORMES THROUGH SHORE-BIRDS**—Both Bobwhite and Ring-necked Pheasant populations were considered healthier than last year in Michigan, but still far below levels in the years before the severe winters of the late 1970s. The usual few Virginia Rails were found in s. Michigan, and an injured Sora was found at Fenton, Shiawassee Co., Dec. 2 (BB). Unless it was an extremely early spring migrant, the Am. Woodcock in Milwaukee County Feb. 19 (JI) defies explanation. Even more surprising, however, was the **Purple Sandpiper** in Milwaukee Dec. 16 (DS,MS). Also from Milwaukee came the latest Wisconsin date on record for a Dunlin, Dec. 13 (JI).

**GULLS**—"Inland" Glaucous Gulls were found on the Mississippi R., Buffalo Co., Wis., Dec. 12 (JP), at Madison Dec. 20-Jan. 21 (m.ob.), on the St. Paul (seven seen) and Bloomington (three) CBCs. It is curious that five Iceland Gulls were reported from Michigan while no Thayer's Gulls were, but the Iceland Gull at Milwaukee Jan. 24 (JI,DT, m.ob.) seems valid since it was a second-year bird and thus impossible to confuse with the imm. Thayer's. (Thayer's Gulls were identified at Milwaukee Jan. 5, on the St. Paul CBC, and at Black Dog L., Dakota Co., Minn., Jan. 2.) Great Black-backed Gulls reached as far as L. Michigan at Traverse City, Mich., Dec. 28-29 (MJ,LG), and at Muskegon, Mich., Jan. 26 (LF). Michigan also reported Black-legged Kittiwakes twice, with three at the Erie power plant, Monroe Co., Dec. 6 (m.ob.), and on the St. Clair R., Jan. 8 (AuW).

**OWLS**—Snowy Owls staged a minor invasion, especially in Minnesota where no fewer than 29 counties reported sightings. At least 25-30 established wintering territories in the Duluth-Superior harbor area, seven were concentrated along a single county road in n. Aitkin County, and in s. Minnesota six were counted on the Lac Qui Parle CBC and four



were on the St. Paul CBC; another concentration of 11 was found Dec. 26 at Rudyard, Chippewa Co., Mich. (TH,TW,LP). It was not a good winter, however, in n. Minnesota for Hawk Owls since the only reports were of one each in Ely and in Lake of the Woods County. The usual number of Great Gray Owls was seen in n. Minnesota, and three made it to Wisconsin with two in Douglas County and another in Ashland County. Many more Short-eared Owls than normal were seen throughout Minnesota, presumably the result of the lack of snow cover. Clearly the most interesting owl of this season was the Saw-whet which was heard calling quite prematurely at five Minnesota locations during the heat wave of late February. One was even heard during the January thaw in Sherburne County Jan. 24 (BJ); this and another Saw-whet heard in Houston County were far s. of the poorly known Minnesota breeding range. Equally curious were the seven heard in Dane County in s. Wisconsin in late February (AS *et al.*). It was one of the poorest Boreal Owl winters in memory in Minnesota—only one was reported and that a roadkill in Lake County in early January.

**HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WRENS**—The hardest bird of the winter was obviously that amazing **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** that survived at a Door County, Wis., feeder through Dec. 19 (R&CL)—one night during its stay the temperature dropped to -2°F. A **Red-headed Woodpecker** overwintered as far n. as Marquette County, Mich. (NI), only the second Marquette area winter record. Also unusual was a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** seen through most of January in Minneapolis (m.ob.). The **N. Three-toed Woodpecker** was its usual elusive self, being seen only near Babbitt and in Cook County, Minn., and on the Anchor Bay, Mich. CBC. Three **Com. Ravens** Feb. 8 at Necedah N.W.R., Wis., were unusually far s. (AS,RH). Michigan's CBC data suggested this winter's populations of **Black-capped Chickadee**, **Tufted Titmouse** and **White-breasted Nuthatch** were the highest in recent years; the same appeared to be true as well in Minnesota for the chickadee and nuthatch. On the other hand, both the **Winter** and **Carolina wrens** continued at the same low population levels in s. Michigan. **Long-billed Marsh Wrens** lingered in Michigan until Dec. 20 at Metrobeach (RB) and Dec. 29 at Pt. Mouillee (JK). A well-documented **Short-billed Marsh Wren** was found Jan. 25 in Mower County, Minn. (R&RK), and represented the state's first winter record (previously there had never been a record later than October).

**MIMIDS THROUGH WAXWINGS**—Three **Mockingbirds** visited feeders in Green Bay and Wrightstown, Wis., and **Gray Catbirds** survived at Green Bay until Dec. 3 (EC,BC) and at Madison until early February (ST); they were also seen on 4 Michigan CBCs. **Brown Thrashers** were almost common in Minnesota, with six reported at 5 locations including two as far n. as Duluth (*vide* KE); two were seen in s. Wisconsin and three were reported in Michigan. The number of wintering **Am. Robins** in Michigan was described as unbelievable, although neither Wisconsin nor Minnesota experienced anything unusual. **Varied Thrushes** were all over

the place this season, making this the most ever recorded in the Region; Minnesota reported 14 individuals, Wisconsin ten, and six made it to Michigan. **Hermit Thrushes** were down in numbers in the Detroit area, although the three in Minnesota was more than usual: Jan. 1 in Ramsey County (RH), Jan. 23 in Fairmong (EB), and all winter in Rochester (m.ob.). The casual **Townsend's Solitaire** was noted on the Adrian, Mich. CBC. Excellent numbers of **Bohemian Waxwings** were scattered throughout the n. half of the Region, and a few individuals reached as far s. as 5 Twin Cities area counties.

**WARBLERS**—While this family did not quite repeat the spectacular showing of last winter, there was still an unusual number of sightings. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was seen until Dec. 13 at Metrobeach (TH,BB), and **Cape May Warblers** were also late on the Ann Arbor, Mich. CBC, and at a feeder at Stoney Pt., St. Louis Co., Minn., until Dec. 2 (*vide* KE); this latter individual survived one night of -15°. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** overwintered at feeders in Escanaba way up in the Upper Pen. (C&BT), in Ozaukee County, Wis. (R&RS), in Wabasha County, Minn. (W&DM), and in Bloomington, Minn. A **Pine Warbler** was found on the Monroe, Mich. CBC, and another survived at a feeder in Manitowoc County, Wis., until mid-January (DA). Very late were the **Palm Warbler** Dec. 2 in Washtenaw County, Mich. (RW) and the **Com. Yellowthroat** on the Monroe CBC.

**ICTERIDS**—The mild winter resulted in large numbers of blackbirds wintering at several locations. The most impressive concentrations were on the La Crosse CBC where 25,000+ **Red-wings** were counted and at Dexter, Mich., where 500 **cowbirds** overwintered (CS). An unprecedented number of **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** lingered and some even overwintered in Minnesota: two were found on the Fergus Falls CBC, no fewer than 20 were counted among the **Red-wings** on the La Crosse CBC, and at Swan L., Nicollet Co., four were present until Dec. 12 with two of these eventually wintering (JF); one was also found in Michigan Jan. 5 in Calhoun County (*vide* RA). Both **meadowlarks** and **blackbirds** were migrating N in good numbers at several locations during the February warm spell, which also induced a **N. Oriole** wintering at a Carver County, Minn. feeder to start singing Feb. 12-14; orioles also survived at feeders until Dec. 18 in Door County, Wis. (R&CL) and until Jan. 15 in Edina, Minn.

**FINCHES**—**Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were exceptionally late in Michigan with records on the Benzie and Traverse City CBCs, and at Kalamazoo until Jan. 13 (*vide* RA). Winter finches generally did well in most cases, but it could hardly be described as an exceptional year overall: **Evening Grosbeak**—good numbers in Wisconsin and Michigan, but decidedly down at most Minnesota locations; **Purple Finch**—generally scarce throughout, especially in Wisconsin; **Pine Grosbeak**—present in excellent numbers, with several birds appearing as far s. as Pope, Sherburne, Anoka, Chisago, Ramsey and Hennepin counties in s. Minnesota, and in

**Berrien County, Mich.**; **Com. Redpoll**—good numbers throughout, with the largest concentration in Muskegon County, Mich., where 3000 were found Jan. 31 (HL,CM *et al.*); **Pine Siskin**—a mixed picture, with only average numbers in Minnesota, excellent numbers in Wisconsin, and good numbers in December and February in Michigan; **Red Crossbill**—once again few were reported, with most of these in s. Minnesota and n. Wisconsin; **White-winged Crossbill**—fair numbers in n. Minnesota with only two s. Minnesota counties having sightings, excellent numbers in c. and n. Wisconsin, and reported from 11 Michigan counties including Berrien County where a flock of 100 was seen Jan. 4 (RS). Minnesota finally recorded its first fully-documented **House Finch** when a male visited a Minnetonka feeder Nov. 21 & Dec. 15 (D. Bruggers). The only previous state record had been a 19th century specimen taken (and later lost) of a bird thought to have been an escape. Wisconsin also recorded a first when a **Gray-crowned Rosy Finch** appeared at a Dunn County feeder Feb. 19 & 21 (JRu). The bird was photographed and later seen by m.ob. when it reappeared in March. A **rosy finch** was also photographed and seen by m.ob. at a Minnetonka feeder Dec. 19 - mid-January (K. Lewis), but this was merely Minnesota's eighth record. More than the usual number of **Rufous-sided Towhees** lingered into December, and two overwintered at feeders in Washington County, Minn. (R. Oehlschlager) and at Allendale, Mich. (JP).



*Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Minnetonka, Minn., Jan. 3, 1981. Photo/Oscar Johnson.*

**SPARROWS THROUGH SNOW BUNTING**—This group was also affected by the mild winter with several species appearing more frequently than usual. One **Savannah** and three **Vesper sparrows** were recorded on Michigan CBCs. Well-documented **Chipping Sparrows** were seen on the Cottonwood and St. Paul Northeast CBCs in Minnesota, but more surprising was one that overwintered at a Crosby feeder in n. Minnesota; another wintered at a feeder in Marinette County, Wis. (HL). The usual few **Harris' Sparrows** were noted in s.w. Minnesota, but more interesting were the ones overwintering at Foley, Minn. (S. Loch) and in Benzie County, Mich. (KW). Good numbers of **White-throated Sparrows** wintered at Wisconsin feeders, and an unusually hardy individual survived the season at an Isabella feeder in n.e. Minnesota (SW). **Late Fox Sparrows** were found Dec. 5 in Nicollet County, Minn. (JF) & Dec. 13 in Ontonagon County up in Michigan's Upper Pen. (JM). Most noteworthy of all was the **Lincoln's Sparrow** which managed to overwinter at a Milwaukee County feeder (DG,

JI). Unusually far n. were a Swamp Sparrow wintering at a Little Marais, Minn. feeder (T. Fenstad) and a Song Sparrow at Grand Marais Jan. 24, apparently independent of any feeding station (JG). Both Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings appeared to be in good numbers in Wisconsin, but were harder to find without snow cover to concentrate them. Michigan also reported large numbers of Snow Buntings, as evidenced by the 5000 in St. Clair County Jan. 13 (DM).

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## MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Bruce G. Peterjohn

The winter season began with a promise of major flights by a number of erratic winter visitors. Unfortunately, these promises were generally unfulfilled. Snowy Owls staged a major invasion in Illinois and Iowa while much smaller numbers were reported elsewhere. At best, the winter finch flight was moderate. Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were widespread and fairly numerous. Other finches were local and restricted to northern localities. Northern species such as Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Shrike were reported in normal numbers. These disappointments were balanced by a number of unusual gull sightings and scattered rarities that provided an interesting season in many areas.

An encouraging sign was increased populations of a number of resident and wintering species. Woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets and many sparrows appeared to be recovering from weather-induced lows of the late 1970s. Other species, particularly Bobwhite, pheasants, wrens, Mockingbird and bluebirds, have exhibited only local recoveries and are still well below normal. Most hawks and owls were well reported this winter, reflecting an abundant supply of rodents and other prey.



Robins, waxwings and other berry-eating species were commonly reported from many areas. Unlike previous years, few southern species attempted to overwinter.

Cold weather arrived suddenly in mid-December, freezing streams and lakes and sending most late migrants and lingering waterbirds towards warmer climes. Below normal temperatures and precipitation was the Regionwide trend into February. Snowfall was short-lived or absent in most states. While several early February fronts brought some badly needed precipitation, many areas remained in drought or near-drought conditions. Hardest hit were Missouri and Iowa where there were low water levels. A significant warming trend began in mid-February and continued through the end of the month. Warm temperatures were accompanied by early migrant waterfowl, woodcock, crows, blackbirds, and other signs of spring.

As usual, all extraordinary sight records must be thoroughly documented at the time of observation. All documented records have been denoted by a dagger (†).

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**—Common Loons left the n. states by Dec. 23. Small numbers lingered in Kentucky into January where the latest were two at Dale Hollow S.P., Jan. 25 (JE). An Arctic Loon remained at Springfield, Ill. (hereafter, Spfld.) through Dec. 9 (H). Single Red-necked Grebes were documented from Fort Wayne, Ind., Jan. 27-29 (†JH *et al.*), Vermilion, O., Feb. 13 (†JP) and Dayton, O., Feb. 21 (†DCh *et al.*). Most Horned Grebes left the Region in December although small numbers wintered as far n. as Fort Wayne, Ind. (MW). A few early spring migrants reappeared in late February. An Eared Grebe lingered through Dec. 24 at Olney, Ill. (LH). Normal numbers of wintering Pied-billed Grebes were reported. Lingering White Pelicans in-

cluded one at Alton, Ill., through Dec. 12 (PS, BR) and two at Squaw Creek N.W.R., Mo. (hereafter, S.C.R.) Dec. 13 (†JW). Most Double-crested Cormorants left the Region by early December although two wintered along the Mississippi R., at Lock 14 in Iowa (T, P). Small numbers of Great Blue Herons managed to survive wherever there was open water. A late Great Egret remained in Woodford County, Ill., through Dec. 6 (RBj). Six Black-crowned Night Herons at Horseshoe L., Ill., Jan. 27 dwindled to one by Feb. 7 (BR, RB). Two were noted at Oregon, O., Jan. 26 (JP). An Am. Bittern was flushed during a prescribed burn of a prairie at Moraine Hills S.P., Ill., Jan. 23 (JVS *et al.*).

**WATERFOWL**—Wintering Whistling Swans included one at Union County Conservation Area, Ill. 3 (K *et al.*) and three in Jasper County, Ill., throughout the period (†LH). The first migrants returned to w. Lake Erie marshes by Feb. 20. Canada Geese wintered farther n. than usual, the peak in s. Illinois and w. Kentucky was only 259,000. Northbound migrants appeared in large numbers during mid-February *e.g.* 12,000 near Spfld., Feb. 21 (H). Wintering White-fronted Geese were reported from Brookville Res., Ind., Dec. 20 (LC), four at Atterbury W.M.A., Ind., Dec. 26 (*vide* BG), four at S.C.R., Jan. 7 (JR) and four at Ottawa N.W.R., O. (hereafter, O.W.R.) Jan. 15-25 (†JP). Eighteen had returned to Willow Slough, Ia., Feb. 27 (BW). At least one imm. Ross' Goose at Mark Twain N.W.R., Ill., Dec. 15-Jan. 2 was joined by an adult Jan. 2 (DJ, †m.ob.). Two were reported from St. Charles County, Mo., Dec. 22 (TBA).

While most ducks left the Region following the mid-December freezeup, all common species managed to overwinter in the remaining open water. Advent of warm weather in mid-February triggered a substantial waterfowl movement in all states. Two Blue-winged Teal in Meade County, Ky., Dec. 27 (†AW) and one at Castalia, O., Feb. 5 (†JP) were unusual. Early migrants had returned as far n. as Decatur, Ind., by Feb. 22 (LP). Largest wintering Canvasback concentrations were 2500 in Sandusky Bay, O., Jan. 26 (JP) and 2000 at Horseshoe L., Ill., Jan. 15-28

(PS). Flocks of 1000 or more were noted at 4 other locations. Small numbers of Greater Scaup were regularly encountered at inland sites. Several large concentrations of Com. Goldeneye were reported and a possible ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye was observed at Michigan City, Ind., Dec. 28-30 (†AB, †TK). Oldsquaw were generally scarce along the Great Lakes except for a maximum of 240 at Chicago in late December (RBI, JL). They were encountered at inland sites in all states where 1-4 were reported from 13 locations. Harlequin Ducks are regular along the Great Lakes. This winter two were seen at Michigan City, Ind., Dec. 20-23 (KB) while singles were noted at Chicago Dec. 23-26 (†JG), Cleveland Jan. 3 (TL) and Great Lakes Naval Base, Ill., Mar. 1 (†JN). The inland bird at Springfield, O., Dec. 27-Jan. 3 (†RMe, m.ob., ph.) was quite unusual. White-winged Scoters were scarce along the Great Lakes; peak was 15 at Wilmette, Ill., Jan. 24 (LA). Up to three were noted at 5 inland locations in Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois. The Louisville Surf Scoters lingered through Dec. 21 while two were at Chicago Jan. 26 (PC, RG). Small numbers of Black Scoters were observed along w. Lake Erie through Jan. 13 (JP). A ♂ Com. Goldeneye X Hooded Merganser hybrid was noted at Michigan City Dec. 31-Jan. 1 (AB, KB).

**DIURNAL RAPTORS**—Only small numbers of Turkey Vultures were reported from traditional wintering areas. A few early migrants had returned by late February. Goshawks staged a minor flight; 13 reports were received from all states except Missouri. Single birds were reported s. to Richland County, Ill., Jan. 25 (DeJ), West Point, Ky., Jan. 10 (†S) and Hueston Woods S.P., O., Feb. 28 (†TP). Wintering hawk populations were encouraging. Sharp-shinned Hawks were frequently encountered and raised havoc at many bird feeders. Cooper's Hawks seem to be recovering in many areas while Red-tailed Hawks were plentiful Regionwide. Red-shouldered Hawks remained scarce although slight improvements were indicated in Kentucky and Ohio. A few wintered as far n. as Porter County, Ind. (KB). Mixed reports about Rough-legged Hawks had no apparent pattern. Five Golden Eagles were reported e. to Brandenburg Ky., Dec. 27 (AW), in addition to 21 reported on coordinated eagle surveys. Wintering Bald Eagles appeared in normal numbers along the Mississippi R., but were down one-third along the Illinois R. Midwinter survey totals included 104 in Kentucky and 900-950 in Missouri. Scattered birds appeared in e. states. Marsh Hawks were much improved in many areas but were scarce in Illinois. An Osprey was reported from Quincy, Ill., Dec. 27 (†AD). Unusual falcons included a dark-phase Gyrfalcon frequenting Magee Marsh W.M.A., O. (hereafter, M.M.W.A.) in late January (†JP *et al.*) while two Prairie Falcons reappeared at Lawrenceville, Ill., Jan. 25-Feb. 28+ (LH) and another was seen briefly in St. Charles County, Mo., Feb. 3 (†PS). Documented Merlins were at Akron, O., Dec. 22-29 (†DSt *et al.*), Quincy, Ill., Dec. 27 (†AD) and Fremont County, Ia., Feb. 20 (†RP *et al.*). Four other reports were not documented. American Kestrels were common in most areas.

**BOBWHITE THROUGH RAILS**—Bobwhite are still scarce to absent in most areas. They have shown a slight improvement only in Kentucky. Ring-necked Pheasants have exhibited local recoveries, e.g., 145 at Maumee Bay S.P., O., in January (JP). Gray Partridge have almost disappeared from the Region, the only report was of eight near Polo, Ill. (BSh). Sandhill Cranes lingered into December at 5 locations and as late as Jan. 7 at Riverton, Ia. (RP). Early migrants returned to n.w. Indiana by Feb. 21. Wintering Virginia Rails were noted at Pokagon S.P., Ind., Dec. 24 (FW), DuPage County, Ill., Jan. 15-Feb. 15 (†JS) and Akron, O., Jan. 31 (DSt).

**SHOREBIRDS**—This group presents a mixed picture of late fall migrants and early spring returnees. Black-bellied Plover lingered through Dec. 6 with seven at S.C.R. (JR), one at Michigan City (KB) and one at Hoover Res., O. (J). American Woodcock returned to Kentucky by Feb. 17 and Regionwide by the end of the month. Two Purple Sandpipers were noted at Chicago through Dec. 7 (†JL *et al.*) while singles were reported from Michigan City Dec. 21-23 (KB) and Cleveland Dec. 27-29 (M *et al.*). A very early Pectoral Sandpiper returned to M.M.W.A., Feb. 28 (JP). Two Least Sandpipers lingered through Jan. 6 at Louisville (ABa). Other late shorebirds included single Sanderlings at Huron, O., Dec. 22 (†TB) and Miller Beach, Ind., Dec. 23 (KB) and two Red Phalaropes at Cleveland Dec. 20 (M).

**GULLS**—As usual, gulls provided some of the more interesting winter records from the Region. For the most part, they were well represented wherever there was open water. The only exception was along L. Erie where offshore open water and predominantly S winds kept the gulls away from observers after mid-January. Glaucous Gulls were frequently noted along the Great Lakes with peaks of 9-12 at L. Calumet, Ill., Dec. 30 (RBI) and 20 in Lorain County, O., Jan. 11 (J). Up to three were regularly noted near St. Louis while 1-2 were reported from 11 other inland locations s. to Spfld. (H) and Akron (LR). Iceland Gulls were noted in smaller numbers: 1-3 in the Cleveland/Lorain area (m.ob.), 1-2 at L. Calumet, Ill., through Jan. 17 (RBI, JL), one at Alton Dam, Ill./Mo., Dec. 12 (†PS *et al.*) and one at Powerton L., Ill., Feb. 21 (†VH, LA). Great Black-backed Gulls peaked with 275 in Lorain County, O., Jan. 11 (J) while 1-3 were noted at 4 L. Michigan locations. Singles wandered inland to E. St. Louis, Ill./M., Dec. 30 (†PS *et al.*) and Spfld., Jan. 11 (†H). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** continued to make news. An immature at E. St. Louis Dec. 30-31 provided Missouri's first and Illinois' second record. Single adults were also noted at Spfld., Dec. 31 (H), Alton, Ill./Mo., Feb. 16 (†RB, †EL) and Raccoon Lake S.P., Ind., Dec. 20-24 (†TK, †m.ob.). Up to three were reported from 3 Lake Erie locations during the period (m.ob.). Thayer's Gulls were widely reported as more observers become familiar with their identification. Largest numbers were seven at L. Calumet through Feb. 22 (RBI, JL), five near St. Louis Dec. 18-Feb. 12 (m.ob.) and four at Lorain, O., Dec. 12-Jan. 13 (†JP). Smaller numbers were reported from 4 other

locations. The only Black-headed Gull was at Lorain Dec. 20-Jan. 2 (JP, J). An imm. Laughing Gull lingered at Spfld., Dec. 13-22 (†H) while a Franklin's Gull was noted there through Dec. 30 (H). Few Little Gulls were observed along L. Erie in December, the peak was only three. A single bird was noted at Zion, Ill., Feb. 14 (JN). The **Heermann's Gull** returned to Lorain Dec. 20 and was seen intermittently during the period (†JP, †M). Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed at 3 L. Erie locations through Jan. 11 (m.ob.). Elsewhere, 1-2 were at Spfld., Dec. 7-13 (†H) and the Dayton, O. bird lingered through Dec. 3 (m.ob., ph.).



*Band-tailed Pigeon, Beverly Shores, Ind., Jan. 25, 1981. Photo/Timothy C. Keller.*

**DOVES, OWLS**—Indiana's first **Band-tailed Pigeon** visited a Beverly Shores feeder Jan. 11-27 (†KB, m.ob., ph.). Many observers mentioned increased numbers of Mourning Doves as this species continues to recover. The only Barn Owl reports were of single birds at Brookville Res., Ind., in late December. (LC) and St. Charles County, Mo., all winter (DJ, JW). Snowy Owls may have staged their largest recorded invasion in Illinois where there was a minimum of 51 reports. They were also common in Iowa where a total of 42 reports included possible duplications. Moderate numbers were reported elsewhere including 17 observations in Ohio, 7 in Indiana and Missouri and one in Kentucky. The maximum report was of 10 wintering in the Chicago area. Single birds wandered S to Louisville Feb. 13 (†DP), Gibson County, Ind., Jan. 3 (†JC) and St. Charles County, Mo., Jan. 28 (DJ). Long-eared Owls were reported from 18 localities in all states except Kentucky. Nine birds was the maximum at any site. Short-eared Owls were uncommon in w. states but very common in Ohio. Most were reported in groups of 12 or less although 38 were seen at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., O., Feb. 7 (BS). Single Saw-whet Owls were noted at 4 Iowa, 2 Ohio and 2 Illinois locations.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH NUT-HATCHES**—Common Flickers wintered in good numbers. Common (Red-shafted) Flickers wandered E to Illinois with single birds at Palos Park (KBa) and Woodstock (DF). Wintering Red-headed Woodpeckers were widespread and abundant in all states except Ohio. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported in improved numbers, wintering as far n. as Chicago and c. Iowa. Wintering E. Phoebes were seen Jan. 3 in Hocking County, O. (JF) and Montauk S.P., Mo. (DH). Small numbers of migrants returned to Missouri in late February. Large concentrations of Horned Larks were not reported. This species was

not conspicuous owing to the lack of prolonged snow cover. A Black-billed Magpie was observed briefly in flight at Franklin County, Mo., Dec. 26 (†LB). Common Crow roosts included 10,000 birds in s.w. Indiana (JC), 5000 in Rockford, Ill., and several 500-2000 bird roosts in Kentucky and Illinois. Black-capped Chickadees exhibited little S movement this winter. In Indiana, Tufted Titmice have recovered to 80 percent of normal levels (CK). Similar recovery is indicated in most areas except the n. fringes of the Region. Many observers noted increased numbers of White-breasted Nuthatches this winter. Red-breasted Nuthatches wintered in moderate numbers Regionwide; 3-10 birds were reported at most locations.

**WRENS THROUGH THRUSHES**—Winter Wrens were scarce again this winter. Small numbers were reported from most states except Illinois where a maximum of three was seen at 11 sites. Single Bewick's Wrens were noted in Missouri at Texas County (DH), Jefferson County (PH) and Montgomery City (RW) during the period. Carolina Wrens are improving in Kentucky and s.w. Ohio but are still well below normal. They are scarce and local elsewhere. Wintering marsh wrens included a Long-billed at Big Lake S.P., Mo., Dec. 27 (†L) and a Short-billed near Springfield, Mo., through Jan. 3 (DaJ,WH). Mockingbirds are slowly increasing in s. Ohio, Kentucky and Missouri but showed little improvement in n. portions of the Region. Five Gray Catbirds were reported n. of their normal range, most in late December although the bird at Shades S.P., Ind., successfully wintered (AB). At least 15 Brown Thrashers wintered in the n. portion of the Region. The **Curve-billed Thrasher** successfully wintered at Solon, Ia. (m.ob.). Incredibly, a second bird appeared in Iowa at Rathbun Res., Jan. 31-Feb. 28+ (†CS,†T, m.ob.). American Robins were more abundant than last winter; flocks of 100-600 were reported from all states. A distinct mid-February influx brought hundreds flocking to ornamental plantings in urban areas. Five Varied Thrushes were reported: Oregon, Ill., Dec. 20 (MS), Waterloo, Ia., all winter (†FM, m.ob.), Parma, O., Dec. 25-Feb. 28+ (†M, TL), Lima, O., in early February (†JF,†BS) and Beverly Shores, Ind., in January and February (ph.,KB). Hermit Thrushes were well reported from n. areas. Swainson's Thrushes were closely examined and thoroughly documented from Cleveland Dec. 20 (†DCr) and Dunes S.P., Ind., Jan. 31 (†KB). Populations of E. Bluebirds are slowly recovering, exhibiting marked increases in Missouri and lesser gains in other s. states. They are still scarce or absent in many n. areas.

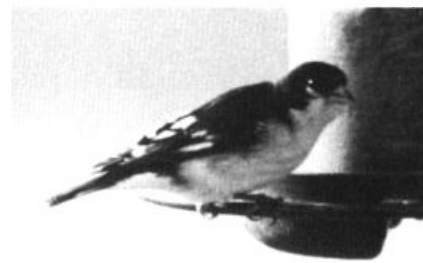
**KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS**—An encouraging number of Golden-crowned Kinglets was reported; maxima were 10-15 at many localities. Ruby-crowned Kinglets remained scarce. The latest Water Pipits were several at Falls of the Ohio, Ky., Dec. 31 (S, BM). Cedar Waxwings were common in most areas, flocks of 100-500 were noted Regionwide. A noticeable influx during late January and February swelled numbers in n. areas. Northern Shrikes remained in the n. states where a total of 16 reports was received. Loggerhead Shrikes declined on Kentucky

CBCs and were generally scarce elsewhere.

Fewer warblers wintered in the Region this year. A Black-and-white Warbler appeared at Ames, Ia., Feb. 19 (†RN). An Orange-crowned Warbler lingered at M.M.W.A., through Dec. 7 (J) while one (or possibly two) Cape May Warblers remained at Chicago Dec. 18-19 (†RBI,†JL). Yellow-rumped Warblers were generally scarce although 40 were seen at Chicago Dec. 18-19 (RBI). A late Chestnut-sided Warbler was noted in St. Louis County, Mo., Nov. 28 (MP). Other wintering warblers included ten Pines at Forsyth, Mo., Feb. 25 (DaJ *et al.*), a Palm at Chicago Dec. 18-20 (†RBI) and Com. Yellowthroats at one Missouri and 4 Ohio locations.

**ICTERIDS**—Eastern Meadowlarks remained scarce to absent in many areas. Western Meadowlarks were also scarce but were reported as far e. as Danville, Ill., Feb. 24 (MC). Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were noted at Mansfield, O., Jan. 17 (†JHe), M.M.W.A., Jan. 24-Feb. 6 (JP) and Waterloo, Ia., Feb. 14 (*vide* RM). A N. Oriole was photographed near Louisville Dec. 18-Jan. 5 (JB,DS) while another was noted at Fairport, Ia., Feb. 14 (†CR). Blackbirds were uncommon in n. areas, the only large roosts were reported from Kentucky. A Bismarck, Mo., feedlot supported a locally large concentration of 150 Brewer's Blackbirds Feb. 14-15 (†WR).

**FRINGILLIDS**—The s. finches did not fare well during the harshest weather. A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found dead at South Bend, Ind., Feb. 20 (SG) while an Indigo Bunting succumbed in Warrick County, Ind., Feb. 14 (JC). The anticipated major flight of winter finches never materialized. However, the "moderate" numbers encountered Regionwide were a noticeable improvement over the past 2 winters. Evening Grosbeaks were widespread in all states. Peak numbers were generally 30-60 although most observers reported < 10. Purple Finches were common everywhere except Ohio. A concentration of 1500-2000 was reported from Lewis County, Mo., Jan. 7 (RD). Several observers mentioned flocks of 200-250 birds while most finches were encountered in flocks of 40 or less. House Finches continued to expand W through the Region. Cincinnati feeders now support 4-15 birds (W). In Kentucky, up to 180 were noted at Eubank (JE) while small numbers were reported from Danville and Louisville. A single bird was documented from an Urbana, Ill., feeder Jan. 4-24 (†RBI). Pine Grosbeaks were widespread in n.w. Indiana after late January with a maximum of 21 at South Bend Feb. 14 (SG *et al.*). Elsewhere, single birds were reported from 5 Iowa, 2 Missouri, one Ohio and one Illinois locations. Most remained in n. areas although they wandered S to St. Joseph, Mo., Dec. 14 (†L). Small flocks of 15-60 Com. Redpolls were reported from all n. states while scattered groups of 1-6 ranged to Columbus (JF,BS) and St. Louis (MP). A possible Hoary Redpoll in Iowa awaits review by the Iowa Records Committee. Pine Siskins were numerous and widely reported from feeders across the Region. Flocks of 50-200 were present in all states. American Goldfinch was common in most areas although specific numbers were seldom men-



*Lesser Goldfinch, Elizabethtown, Ky., Dec. 5-7, 1980. Photo/Herbert L. Clay, Jr.*

tioned. A ♂ **Lesser Goldfinch** visited an Elizabethtown feeder Dec. 5-7, providing the first record for Kentucky (MJ, †m.ob.,ph.). Red Crossbills were scarce. Flocks of 1-8 were reported from 9 locations in Iowa, Ohio and Illinois although 30 were seen at Green R. Conservation Area, Ill., Jan. 11 (BSh). White-winged Crossbills outnumbered the Reds. They were reported from 35 locations Regionwide s. to Lexington, Ky., Jan. 24 (DC) and Jefferson City, Mo., Dec. 29 (JW). Most states reported flocks of 6-20 with a maximum of 36 at Sterling, Ill., Jan. 25-Feb. 7 (BSh).

A Lark Bunting was photographed in Shelby County, Ill., Feb. 9-16 (KF). Wintering Le Conte's Sparrows were reported from 2 Indiana locations where they are rare: one in Warrick County Feb. 8 (JC) and 22 in Gibson County during the period (LH). Small numbers of Vesper Sparrows were reported from all states except Missouri this winter. Dark-eyed Juncos were more abundant than last winter but were only locally common. Tree Sparrows were abundant in n. states but were generally scarce farther s. Single Chipping Sparrows were noted at South Bend Dec. 18 (†SG), and all winter at feeders in Lima, O. (†JF) and Cleveland (ph.,TD). Harris' Sparrows appeared e. to Shades S.P., Ind., Feb. 6-17 (AB,m.ob.) and Findley S.P., O., Jan. 12 (†JP). White-crowned Sparrows were scarce Regionwide while White-throated Sparrows were more abundant than last winter. Fox Sparrows were well reported from areas n. of their normal range. Lincoln's Sparrows wintering in n.w. Missouri were unusual (†DE,L). Lapland Longspurs were not conspicuous, owing to a general absence of snow cover. Most reports were of 60 or fewer although 400 were in Sioux Center, Ia., Jan. 2 (JV) and 1000 at Sterling, Ill., Jan. 15 (BSh). A major movement of Snow Buntings in early January produced large flocks in s. areas including 400 near Dayton (*vide* CM), 100 near Cincinnati (PP *et al.*) and 500 in Johnson County, Ind. (BG). This species was generally plentiful Regionwide. A flock of 2500 at O.W.R., Feb. 15 was probably northbound migrants (TL).

**EXOTICS**—Wintering Mute Swans are becoming regular throughout the Region. Single birds were reported from 2 Indiana locations (KB,MR), 2-4 visited 3 Lake Erie cities in Ohio (m.ob.), five wintered near Springfield, Mo. (CB) and 1-6 were noted at 3 Illinois locations (m.ob.). A Barnacle Goose was reported from Union County Conservation Area, Ill., Jan. 3 (K *et al.*). A single Monk Parakeet was seen in Texas County, Mo., Dec. 22 (DH) while 2-8 were reported from 4 Illinois locations (m.ob.). A well described

bird fitting the description of a ♀ European Siskin was in Urbana, Ill., Jan. 31-Feb. 8 (†RbI,†RC).

**UNCORROBORATED REPORTS**—The following reports were not satisfactorily documented but may be valid: Green Heron at Louisville Feb. 7, Brant at Gibson Res., Ind., in early January, an Ovenbird overwintering at Cincinnati and a Lincoln's Sparrow at a Mills County, Ia. feeder.

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## CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION /Robert B. Hamilton

The winter was very dry throughout the Region and the resulting distribution of surface water profoundly affected the distribution of waterfowl, shorebirds and other water-dependent birds. Temperatures varied from unseasonably warm in Arkansas to colder than normal in late winter in the southern and eastern sections of the Region. Perhaps the economy was responsible for the apparently reduced level of bird-watching activity. In Louisiana, the traditional wintering areas of Sandhill Cranes and Golden Eagles were not checked and many of the interesting records were associated with Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC). Birders who got out were rewarded with interesting observations. This was a relatively good winter for Evening Grosbeaks, Purple Finches and siskins. Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Fox and Field Sparrows seemed especially common. As usual, unexpected rarities were found: Manx Shearwater, Iceland Gull, and Collared Swift in Florida; Arctic Loon in Mississippi; Glaucous Gull in Arkansas; Ferruginous Hawk in Alabama; Audubon's Shearwater and Eurasian Wigeon in Louisiana. There was no apparent pattern to explain the presence of the rarities, but many of the rare birds were pelagic.

**LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL**—The **Arctic Loon** observed at the Pascagoula R. Marsh at Gautier, Jackson Co., Miss., Dec. 21 (BCh) represented the second state record. Red-throated Loons were present in n.w. Florida in February (JMS). Eared Grebes again appeared in numbers in Mississippi with 55 at the Hattiesburg sewage ponds Dec. 18 (TF, DaH); they were common at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. (CV), and were unexpectedly at three different sites in n.w. Florida: one at Pace, Santa Rosa Co., Dec. 19 (BM); one at Bay County Jan. 2 (MC, B&SJS); and two at St. Joe S.P., Gulf Co., Feb. 7 (B&LA, JMS), and five there Feb. 12 (JMS). Western Grebes were found in Louisiana for the fifth time this winter at the Gulf of Mexico near Holly Beach, Cameron Par.: one Feb. 14 (VR, NN *et al.*); two there Feb. 25 (JK, AIS, LH); and one Feb. 22—its apparently had lighter plumage than the

other grebes seen previously (JK). A **Manx Shearwater** was found dead on the beach at Ft. Pickens, Escambia Gulf Is. N. S., Fla., Jan. 17 (C&DB); this provided the first n.w. Florida record (*vide* CK) and only the second I know of from the Gulf Coast. An almost unprecedented six **Audubon Shearwaters** were observed flying E approximately 200 m from shore on Feb. 22 at Holly Beach; a cold front had just passed and there was a strong NW wind. The birds passed one at time approximately every 5 min (JK).

A **Brown Pelican** was found in Jackson County, Miss., Dec. 4 (JT, MH), and a **Great Cormorant** was found on the Gulf Shores, Ala. CBC (HK). Double-crested Cormorants were especially abundant at Clear L., Natchitoches Par., this winter (CV). The **Olivaceous Cormorant** found on the Jackson County CBC (BCh, TF) furnished only the second Mississippi record. Gannets were visible from shore near Holly Beach, Cameron Par., Feb. 14 (2 ad., 5 imm.), Feb. 15 (5 ad. 12 imm.), Feb. 22 (ten) (VR, DuH, PO, MR *et al.*) and more than 100 Feb. 24 & 25 (JK). Two Green Herons were at Marsh Islands Golf Course, Jackson Co., Miss., Dec. 4 (JT, MH) and one was at the sewage lagoons, Gulf Shores, Ala., Jan. 16 (CDC, RWL) and Feb. 2-9 (GJ). Reddish Egrets were regular on the St. Joe Pen. this winter (*vide* HMS). The mild winter probably contributed to the presence of two **Plegadis** ibises at L. Millwood, Hempstead Co., Ark., Dec. 15-21 (CM, H&MP); one was seen well enough to tell that it was a Glossy.

**WATERFOWL**—At Franklin Res., three Whistling Swans wintered Dec. 7-Feb. 22 (HW, CS) for the seventh Nashville area record. Six White-fronted Geese were at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala., Dec. 6 (DMB, RWL, CDC, CAB); there were 900 at Banfield Res., n.e. of McGehee, Desha Co., Ark., Jan. 31 (H&MP, JS, C&JB). On Nov. 22, a **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** was shot by a hunter



from a flock of three at a swamp n. of Sarpy, St. Charles Par. (*vide* RJS). A **Eurasian Wigeon** wintered in New Orleans and was observed regularly Dec. 14-Feb. 22 (RDP, NN, JK, MMY, m.ob.); this represents the first convincing Louisiana record. There were two Black Ducks at L. Millwood, Little River Co., Ark., Jan. 22 (CM). On Dec. 22, five Greater Scaup were identified at the Hattiesburg sewage ponds (TF). Offshore at Jackson County, Miss., Dec. 4 there were approximately 30,000 scaup (JT, MH). There were also large rafts of scaup off the Louisiana coast. The more than 20 Com. Goldeneyes offshore at Hancock County, Miss., Dec. 6 (MH, JT, TF), seemed abundant until 202 were found on the Jackson County CBC. Oldsquaws were found throughout the Region: one at L. Fayetteville, Ark., Feb. 9-Mar. 9 (RR, CWO, JN); one at Radnor L., Nashville Dec. 31-Jan. 12 (MLB, m.ob.); one near Holly Beach Feb. 14 (VR, N&PCN *et al.*); three in the the Tennessee R., s. of Triana, between Madison and Morgan counties, Ala., Jan. 10 (CDC, RWL); one at Hattiesburg sewage ponds Feb. 1 (JF); and several large rafts of 50 or more near Horn I., Miss., Feb. 24 (JAJ). The report of 50 or more near Horn I., Miss., Feb. 24 (JAJ). The report of a ♂ **King Eider** at St. Joe S. P., Gulf Co., Fla., Feb. 7 (JMS, B&LA) and Feb. 8



King Eider, St. Joe S.P., Gulf Co., Fla., Feb. 7, 1981. Photo/Brooks Atherton.

(m.ob.) represents the second n.w. Florida record (*vide* RD).

Single White-winged Scoters were found at Radnor L., Nashville, Jan. 9-10 (CS,AJ); in the Tennessee R., s. of Triana (CDC,RWL); and two were near Holly Beach Feb. 14 (BC, DuH,PO *et al.*). The Surf Scoter reported at Radnor L., last period stayed until Dec. 10 (MLB *et al.*); two were at Bellefontaine Beach, Jackson Co., Miss., Dec. 20 (BCh, TF); one was near Decatur, Ala., Jan. 12-13 (DCH); and seven were near Holly Beach Feb. 14-15 (VR,MR *et al.*). Black Scoters were only reported at two locations: five near Holly Beach Feb. 14 (BC,VR *et al.*), and one near Decatur Dec. 21-Jan. 8 (DCH). Ruddy Ducks were numerous: the 1800 at Robco L., Tenn., Jan. 2 (L&BBC), was the largest number ever seen in Shelby County; there were approximately 1000 at Anderson's, Lonoke Co., Feb. 26 (H&EMH); and 2500 were at Horseshoe and Porter lakes., Crittenden Co., Ark., Dec. 10 (T.O.S.). The 30 Hooded Mergansers at the Hattiesburg sewage ponds Dec. 17 (TF), were considered numerous as were the 37 at L. Millwood, Hempstead Co., Ark., Jan. 11 and the 121 there Jan. 22 (CM); the 11 at L. Maumelle, Pulaski Co., were considered unusual. In the Nashville area a very light movement of Com. Mergansers was reported in late December and early January (N.T.O.S.).

**HAWKS, CRANES AND GALLINULES**—Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were seen regularly this winter; they were reported on the majority of our CBCs; I usually saw one or two on my field trips. They were reported as regular at feeders in the Nashville area (N.T.O.S.). Rough-legged Hawks were found several times in the Nashville area: one Dec. 27 (MD,AC); two Jan. 11-12 (MLB,JM,VP); and one Jan. 13 (D&PC). The only other one reported was at Irish Bayou, Orleans Par., Feb. 8 (NN,DK, CBo). The **Ferruginous Hawk** found on the Hancock County CBC (BCh) represented only the second Mississippi record, but the one found at the Mariculture Center, Gulf Shores Jan. 16-17 (CDC,RWL) was Alabama's first. The Broad-winged Hawk at the Hattiesburg sewage ponds Feb. 25 & 28 (TF,DaH), was probably an early migrant, but the one at Bay County, Fla., Jan. 2 (E&SL) must have been wintering.

The only Golden Eagles reported were from Arkansas and Alabama: an adult and

an immature in Madison and Marshall cos., Ala., Jan. 10 (CDC,RWL); an immature at L. Maumelle, Pulaski Co., Ark., Jan. 30 (H&EMH); and one at Hurricane Lake W.M.A., White Co., Ark., Feb. 11 (BMc). An adult and an imm. Bald Eagle wintered at Clear L., Natchitoches Par. (CV), and an adult was near Wilton, Little R. Co., Ark., Jan. 5 (CM). Two wintering concentrations were reported: 12 (2 ad.) preying on waterfowl at Banfield Res., Desha Co., Ark., Jan. 31 (H&MP,JS,C&JB); and 26 at Guntersville Res., and the Tennessee R. below in early January (CDC,RWL). A nesting pair was observed chasing away an immature at White Kitchen, St. Tammany Par., Feb. 8 (NN, CBo,DK). The 50 Marsh Hawks at coastal Baldwin County, Ala., Jan. 17 were more than usual (CDC,RWL). The only non-CBC Peregrine Falcons reported were one at Perdido Key, Escambia Co., Ala., Feb. 28 (OF) and one at Bay St. Louis, Hancock Co., Miss., Dec. 28 (MH,JT). A Merlin was seen occasionally throughout the winter at the e. campus of the Univ. of New Orleans (JRe).

Sandhill Cranes apparently wintered at and near Holla Bend N.W.R., Yell Co., Ark.: 3-4 were reported by various observers throughout the period. In Louisiana, 13 appeared s. of L. Charles, Cameron Par., Jan. 25 (CW); unfortunately no one checked the Cheneyville area for its usual wintering flock so it is impossible to say if the Cameron Par. birds are a new flock or an offshoot of the Cheneyville flock. The one at Wheeler N.W.R., Dec. 4 (CD,RP), represents the first Alabama Tennessee Valley record (*vide* TI). A Purple Gallinule, always rare in winter, was at Bay County, Fla., Jan. 2 (B,D,&GT).

**SHOREBIRDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**—Killdeer were reported as especially common in n.w. Florida this winter; there were 7.6/party-hour found on their CBCs compared to a previous high in the last 10 years of 3.7/party-hour (*vide* CK). The six Am. Golden Plovers at Anderson's, Lonoke Co., Ark., were a day earlier than the previous first arrival date of Feb. 27 (H&EMH), but the three Black-bellied Plovers at L. Millwood, Hempstead Co., Jan. 3 were 5 days late for Arkansas (CM). A Marbled Godwit was at Pascagoula R. marsh Jan. 6 (JT,MH). The **Whimbrel** at Bay County Jan. 2 represents the first January and second winter record for n.w. Florida. Although Lesser Yellowlegs are uncommon at Natchitoches, one was at Sibley L., Dec. 29 (CV). An Am. Woodcock was observed in courtship flight surprisingly as far s. as New Orleans Feb. 9 (JK). The first arrival reported of the Pectoral Sandpiper was one at the Bonnet Carre Spillway, St. Charles Par., Feb. 28 (MW). The W. Sandpiper at Heloise, on the Mississippi R., Jan. 12, furnished the first Dyer County, Tenn., winter record (WGC). There was a Least Sandpiper at the same place that day. The Dunlin at Percy Priest L., Nashville, Dec. 7 (D&PC), was unexpected.

Two **Parasitic Jaegers** were observed harassing Laughing Gulls at the e. jetty of the Calcasieu R., Cameron Par., Feb. 14 (VR,DuH,PO). The first winter imm. **Glaucois Gull** seen and photographed at L. Millwood, Dec. 6, represented the second Arkansas record. (CM,H&MP). An **Iceland Gull** at Perdido Key, Escambia Co., Fla., Jan. 4

(OF,MF,VF,AS) was the second for n.w. Florida. A Great Black-backed Gull wintered at Destin Pass, Fla., Dec.12-Jan. 14; this is the seventh consecutive year one has wintered there (RD). One was at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola Feb. 28 (MLM *et al.*). A first-year **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was at St. Joe Pen., Jan. 28 (HMS,JMS); two first-year and one second-year birds were there Feb. 14 (JMS). Four Bonaparte's Gulls were at Hattiesburg sewage ponds Feb. 1 (TF), and one was at Sibley L., Natchitoches Par., Jan. 5 (CV). They were especially common in n.w. Florida with 9.4/party-hour on CBCs compared to the previous high in the last 10 years of 5.9/party-hour on (*vide* CK).

The mild winter probably helps to explain the Yellow-billed Cuckoo near Oppelo, Ark., Dec. 4 (JR). The Burrowing Owl that wintered near Holly Beach was last reported Feb. 15 (VR,BC,MR); one was at Gulf Islands N.S., Fla., Jan. 16-31 (RD,m.ob.). The Long-eared Owl found in Poinsett County Dec. 23 (JR), was road-killed and the fifth record for n.e. Arkansas, but the two near Pine City, Monroe Co., Ark., Feb. 14 (FB,WMS), were found alive; many of the records for the Region are of road kills. The Com. Nighthawk at Lynn Haven, Bay Co., Fla., Jan. 2 (EG) was the first January occurrence locally.

A swift was found in Forrest County, Miss., Dec. 18 (TF); it is not known whether the bird was a very late Chimney Swift or the rarely wintering Vaux's Swift. The swift found freshly dead at Vista del Mar, Perdido Key Jan. 25 (JM&SMM), was a **Collared Swift** (*Streptoprocne zonaris*); this is the first specimen for the United States (*vide* CK); the specimen is an ad. female of the Mexican subspecies *mexicana* (JWH).

A Rufous Hummingbird wintered surprisingly far n. at Monroe, La. (DTK). This is only the second record for n.e. Louisiana; the first is of a bird found on Oct. 15, 1980 (*vide* DTK). Ron Stein and Nancy Newfield banded hummingbirds at Ron's feeder in Reserve, St. John the Baptist Par., this winter; they banded 16 Rufous Hummingbirds and Ron estimated that there were at least 30 present. The only Black-chinned Hummingbird reported this winter was banded Jan. 17 at Reserve by them. The three hummingbirds at a feeder in Ocean Springs, Jackson Co., Miss., Nov. 15-Feb. 28+ (MJ, *vide* JT), were unidentified.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH PIPITS**—The Com. Flicker at Coulee Wildlife Ref., Morehouse Par., Dec. 26 (BTK,Mac,RA) was the Red-shafted form. A W. Kingbird was found at Ft. Pickens, Fla., Dec. 28 (L&RSD), and Jan. 14 at Gulf Breeze, Fla. (LD). An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** was reported at Gulf Breeze Jan. 6; there are four previous Florida records—three of them in n.w. Florida (*vide* LD). There was one at Gum Cove, Cameron Par., Jan. 25 (JK,LH). Tree Swallows were found farther n. than usual when 30 were found at Anderson's, Lonoke Co., Ark., Dec. 21 (H&EMH). An apparently wintering Barn Swallow was found at Escatawba Bridge, Jackson Co., Miss., Dec. 20 (TF); the one at Bay County, Fla., Feb. 14 (GT) was the first reported February occurrence there and 22 days earlier than previous spring records. Three Purple Martins (2♂,

1♀) were certainly unexpected at New Iberia, Iberia Par., Dec. 23 (MJM); the earliest spring arrival reported was Jan. 29 at Moselle, James Co., Miss. (TF). A Com. Crow was unexpected in coastal Louisiana on the Johnson's Bayou CBC Dec. 21, (MMY) as was the Fish Crow at Hattiesburg, Miss., Jan. 5 (TF). Carolina Chickadees are also not usually found in coastal Louisiana but six were found at the Hackberry woods on the Sabine N.W.R. CBC Dec. 20 (BC, DBo, VC). This was an invasion year in Louisiana for Red-breasted Nuthatches; there were reports from throughout the state and it was found on most of the CBCs. There were a few around Nashville all winter, but not enough to be considered an invasion (*vide* MLB). Brown Creepers were also present in Louisiana and n.w. Florida in larger-than-usual numbers. The Gray Catbird at Nashville Nov. 22 (J&MDA), if not a migrant, represented one of only a few winter records there and the one at Fayetteville, Washington Co., Ark., Jan. 30 (JN), was unexpected in winter. A Sage Thrasher was found several times in January at Ft. Pickens, Fla.: Jan. 8 (obs. unknown), Jan. 15 (L&RSD, OF), Jan. 31 (CK, RD, MLM, PFC, m.ob.); there is only one previous record for n.w. Florida. (*vide* CK). A Wood Thrush was at New Orleans Dec. 14 (JRe). This was apparently an invasion year in Louisiana for Golden-crowned Kinglet with relatively high numbers throughout. It was also common in Mississippi and Florida. The Florida CBCs found 0.7/party-hour compared to a previous high in the last 10 years of 0.3/party-hour (*vide* CK). Sprague's Pipits were reported from two Alabama locations: two at Decatur, Jan. 12, 13 (DCH) for the third Tennessee Valley record (*vide* TI), and two at Alabama Pt., Jan. 4 (GJ, JAJ).

**WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS**—In addition to the scattered rare warblers reported on the CBCs (16 species in Louisiana), a Black-and-white was reported at Johnson's Bayou, Cameron Par., Feb. 15 (MR, VR, BC), and one was at Baton Rouge Feb. 19 (VR *et al.*). An Orange-crowned Warbler was at Bruins, Crittenden, Co., Ark., Jan. 16 (LC). Single Nashville Warblers were at Grand Isle, Jefferson Par., Dec. 11 (GK), and at Guntersville L., Marshall Co., Ala., Dec. 13 (RWL). The Yellow Warbler at Shepard S.P., Jackson Co., Miss., Dec. 4 (JT, MH) was probably a late migrant. A Prairie Warbler was at Bucktown Marina, Jefferson Par., Dec. 18 (NoN) and one was in Bay County, Fla., Jan. 2 (E&SL); the Florida record represents the first for January in the area and only the third winter record ever. The Ovenbird at Fort Pickens Jan. 11 (C&DB, L, R&RSD), was also the first n.w. Florida January occurrence. A ♂ Hooded Warbler was a window casualty at Elks L., Forrest Co., Miss., Dec. 15 (EM, TF, JF, PK). A Mourning Warbler lingered s. of Sulphur in Calcasieu Par., until Dec. 16 (BMo). Although N. Orioles were not reported on many CBCs, I was impressed with their abundance as three wintered in my yard; a different individual was at a feeder about 0.5 mi distant. Brewer's Blackbirds were reported from several locations; the most interesting record, because of its location, is the one on the Guntersville, Ala. CBC. A Summer Tanager was

at Bucktown Marina, Jefferson Par., Dec. 16 (NoN); the one at Pensacola, Escambia Co., Fla. (P&JD, *vide* BM), in late January and early February provided only the fourth winter record.

**FINCHES**—A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at New Orleans Dec. 23 (NoN) and a Black-headed Grosbeak was photographed at Hattiesburg Feb. 13 (MN, TF, DaH, PK, JF). The Indigo Bunting reported Dec. 22 at Guntersville, Ala. (DMB, CH) represented the first record for the Tennessee Valley region of Alabama (*vide* TI). There are few winter records of Dickcissels in the Nashville area so the one at Ashland City Dec. 20 (CE) was of interest. Evening Grosbeaks were found at scattered locations throughout the Region, but this did not seem to be a major invasion year. In Arkansas they were scattered and mostly confined to the n. (CM). In Memphis the maximum number reported was 26 on Dec. 3 (T.O.S.). Maximum numbers reported were 75 each at Natchitoches and Campti, Natchitoches Par. (CV); many were reported at Starkville, Oktibbeha Co., Miss. (JAJ). They reached as far s. as Baton Rouge (BC) and n.w. Florida (GT, B&MAM, MG). There was a moderate Purple Finch invasion; the maximum I found in my yard was about 85.

The House Finch is continuing its penetration into our Region. This winter there were numerous reports from Alabama and Tennessee. It was at Starkville for the second consecutive winter (JAJ) and reached Memphis for the first time (CAW, LC). The male and female seen and photographed at McGehee, Desha Co., Dec. 31-Jan. 6 (CB, H&MP), furnished the fifth Arkansas record. Maximum numbers recorded were the 32 at Decatur, Ala., Feb. 28 (CAB, DMB), and approximately the same number at some feeders in the Nashville area (N.T.O.S.).

Pine Siskin was a major invasion species in the n. half of our Region but only occurred in moderate numbers in the s. half (see CBCs). It was reported to be the major invader in Tennessee (N.T.O.S.) and Arkansas (CM). Some Nashville-area flocks had 40+ (N.T.O.S.) and there were several flocks of >100 in Arkansas (CM). Unbelievably, one yard in Memphis wintered 1500 and another had 200 (T.O.S.). A Harris' Sparrow was found on President's I., Memphis Jan. 14 (HD, CBU, NS). In Cameron Par., one was found near Johnson's Bayou Dec. 15 (MkH), and one was near Cameron Feb. 14 (VR, MR *et al.*). An immature was near Ft. Morgan, Baldwin Co., Ala., Jan. 10 (RD *et al.*). This was a good year for Fox Sparrows in Louisiana and Mississippi (see CBCs).

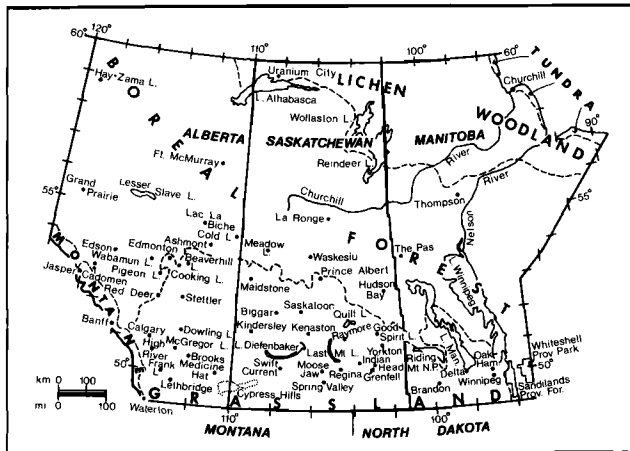
At Percy Priest L., Nashville area, a Snow Bunting was photographed and seen often in the period Dec. 6-Feb. 16 (M&RM, m.ob); this is the second bird known to have spent the winter in the Nashville area and the fourth occurrence there. The only Lapland Longspurs reported were five at Wheeler N.W.R., Ala., Dec. 6 (CAB, DMB, CDC, RWL); eight at Turrell, Crittenden Co., Ark., Jan. 24 (L&BBC); and five at Alabama Pt., Jan. 10 (RD *et al.*).

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## PRAIRIE PROVINCES REGION /Wayne C. Harris

The winter, if it could be called that, was rather lackluster bird-wise. In spite of a season that had almost all of its weather with above normal temperatures and little precipitation, birds were scarce. There were several factors which may have accounted for this. First was the extremely cold weather during the first two weeks of December, which may have killed or forced south many lingering migrants. Second, the very mild weather and general lack of snow cover allowed birds to remain dispersed rather than concentrated at feeders and sheltered areas as they normally are. Third and probably most significant was the poor wild food crop in much of the area, a result of last summer's drought. Finally,



spring migrants began arriving about three weeks earlier than usual and the most outstanding will be dealt with in this report.

#### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL—

The diversity of water-related species was higher only in s. Manitoba with diversity elsewhere, especially in Saskatchewan, much lower than usual. Higher numbers were generally not reported although winter survival was much above normal. A Com. Loon at Pine Falls, Man., Dec. 6 represented that province's first winter record (PT). Grebes attempting to overwinter rarely survive to be reported during the winter season. Three Red-necked Grebes and an Eared survived to at least Dec. 12 at Waterton N.P. (hereafter, Waterton) and a Pied-billed to Jan. 11 at Calgary (TH,PS). At Wabamun L., Alta., four Western and four Pied-billed Grebes were reported, as well as a single Whistling Swan Dec 14 (GRAE,ARS). Canada Geese overwintered at several locations, which is normal. What is not normal, however, was the arrival of spring migrants before mid-March. The first report was from Val Marie, Sask., Feb 23 (SK); followed by Eastend and Webb, Sask., Feb. 25 (MAG,BK), Broadview, White Bear, Indian Head and Foam L., Feb 26 (DF,SOJ,MWS,WN) and Oxbow Feb 28 (JHP). This movement was not merely one or two early stragglers as demonstrated by the 178 present at Eastend by Feb. 28 (MAG). A White-fronted Goose arrived at Regina Feb. 28 (FWL). Mallards were also reported by the end of February from Foam L (WN). Green-winged Teal, rare during winter, were reported from Banff Dec. 14 and at Calgary Feb. 3 (GH,ANW, OD). A ♂ Redhead remained to Dec. 12 at Waterton and another at Gardiner Dam, Sask., to Dec. 15 (TH,GJW). Seven Barrow's Goldeneyes were seen on the Bow R., in Calgary Jan. 11 along with two Bufflehead and a rare ♀ **Harlequin Duck** the same day and location (PS)

**HAWKS, EAGLES, FALCONS**—Goshawk numbers were about average throughout the Region except in the Cumberland House-Hudson Bay, Sask., area where exceptionally high numbers were reported for the second year in a row, and possibly the Victoria Beach-Milner Ridge, Man., area where six were seen Dec. 6 (WCH,RFK). The only Sharp-shinned Hawk reported was one

Jan 2 near Gull L., Sask (BK). Eastend, Sask., and Vimy, Alta., reported single Cooper's Hawks Dec. 9 & Jan. 14 respectively (TD,JL). There were three Red-tailed Hawk sightings from s.e. Manitoba (RFK,NJC). Wintering populations of Rough-legged Hawks were above average in both s.e. Manitoba and s. Alberta but were below average in s. Saskatchewan (HWRC, JS, MAG). The spring movement of Marsh Hawks began well ahead of

normal with several reports during the last week of February in s. Manitoba and one at Wapella, Sask., Feb. 25 (DRMH, DGH). Gyrfalcon reports were similar to last year with eight from s. Manitoba, five from Saskatchewan and three from Alberta, and an additional four from Churchill in n. Manitoba (RFK,SOF, JS,BC). The only Peregrine Falcons reported were from s. Manitoba with a single at Kleefeld in January and two at Zoda Feb. 7 (DFA,HL, NJC, AB). At least six Am. Kestrels overwintered in Winnipeg (HWRC).

**GROUSE THROUGH GULLS**—Virtually no Spruce Grouse reports were received, indicating that numbers remained very low throughout the Region. White-tailed Ptarmigan were reported in their usual small numbers from both Jasper and Waterton (GH, TH). Willow Ptarmigan were reported only from Jasper and not from the c. forested regions indicating that most remained farther n. than usual (RM,WCH). Sage Grouse numbers were down with only two reports: both on CBCs in s.w. Saskatchewan. A **Common Snipe** s. of Saskatoon Jan. 18 was a rare winter sighting (BCH,KMM). Glaucous Gulls were reported again this year and appear now to be a rare but regular part of our late fall and winter avifauna. On Dec. 6 a first-year immature was seen at MacArthur Falls, Man., for the province's first winter record (IAW,PT). At Gardiner Dam, near Cutbank, Sask., two first-year immatures were seen Dec. 15 and at Regina a second-year immature was present Dec. 30-Jan. 3 (GJW,FWL).

**OWLS**—All species of owls (except Snowy) were scarce in s. Manitoba although in normal numbers elsewhere. Screech Owls, rare in Saskatchewan were seen at Moose Jaw Jan. 3 and Lumsden Feb. 17, both singles, while two were heard near Regina Feb. 22 (EWK,BL). Snowy Owls were present in low-to-average numbers, except in s. Manitoba and e.c. Saskatchewan, where they were higher than normal. An amazing 52 were seen Feb. 14 in the Morris-Carman-Starbuck, Man., area (DRMH). Nine Hawk Owls were reported from Alberta, mostly from the foothills, while only single sightings were reported from Saskatchewan and Manitoba (JS,ARS, GH,WCH). Great Gray Owls were most common in s.e. Manitoba as usual with 105 sightings, including a major influx of 78 in February (HWRC,RWN). The only Pygmy Owl report was of two at Canmore Jan. 18

(BF). Short-eared Owl numbers were somewhat higher, after several low years, with a scattering of reports across the s. portion of the Region.

**WOODPECKERS**—A Scattering of Com Flickers was reported from s. Saskatchewan and a ♀ "Red-shafted" was present in Winnipeg Jan. 11 (*vide* RKF). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** are extremely rare in winter in s. Manitoba, thus four at Balmoral was considered exceptional. A N. Three-toed Woodpecker at Churchill Jan. 11 was a rare sighting (BC).

**HORNED LARK AND CORVIDS**—Horned Larks wintered much farther n. than usual and in larger numbers. In Saskatchewan they were quite common n. to Yorkton, Raymore and Saskatoon where they are normally uncommon at best (DGH,WCH,PON). Spring arrivals were also back very early with major influxes occurring during mid-late January in several areas. Gray Jay numbers were up over last year's low in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan (PT,WCH). Blue Jays continued their increase in abundance in this area with several reports remarking specifically on this (DGH). Common Crows were much more common this winter with flocks of up to 14 and 16 overwintering in s. Manitoba and up to 25 in Calgary (HWRC,JS). There were also reports from Edmonton and Grande Cache, Alta., and Assiniboia and Leader, Sask. (LC,JP). Spring migrants began arriving 2-3 weeks earlier than usual with major movements by late February in s. Manitoba and the first stragglers arriving 2-3 weeks earlier than usual with major movements by late February in s. Manitoba and the first stragglers arriving in s. Saskatchewan by the end of February (RFK,BK).

**CHICKADEES, NUTHATCHES, CREEPERS**—Black-capped Chickadees appeared to be somewhat more common in s. areas while Boreals were lower at least in n. Saskatchewan (RK,DGH,WCH). White-breasted Nuthatch numbers were up, particularly in the Edmonton area (PA). Red-breasted Nuthatches conversely were much lower in numbers, undoubtedly due to the poor spruce cone crop. Brown Creepers were very rare, with very few reports.

**DIPPERS THROUGH WAXWINGS**—Dipper numbers were much lower than usual at Waterton. This however, may merely be owing to more extensive open water rather than an actual population decline (TH). Two **Brown Thrashers** overwintered in s. Manitoba, one at Pipestone, the other at Winnipeg (DB,PAH,RFK). At least three Varied Thrushes overwintered in Winnipeg, two imm. males and one ad. male (*vide* FRK). Golden-crowned Kinglets were very scarce with virtually no reports, although the first spring migrants arrived very early Feb. 21 at Waterton (TH). Bohemian Waxwings were generally scarce in Alberta and Saskatchewan (except Regina and Saskatoon) probably owing to the very poor berry crop. Southern Manitoba had more than usual, leading one to speculate that the majority of birds moved E to presumably better food sources. The usual small numbers of Cedar Waxwings were reported.



**SHRIKES, STARLINGS AND BLACKBIRDS**—Northern Shrike numbers were very low except at Edmonton (ARS). A single Starling again attempted to overwinter at Churchill, unsuccessfully (BC). Western Meadowlarks returned very early with all three provinces receiving reports by late February (DRMH, MWS, FH). Red-winged Blackbirds were also back early with Spring Valley reporting singles by Feb. 21 (FB). At least four Com. Grackles overwintered in Winnipeg, three at Balmoral, Man., and one at Altona (CT, AS).

**FRINGILLIDS**—The single ♂ Cardinal seen regularly at Saskatoon for over one year now was still present at the end of February (PON). The winter finches were more common than last year but did not appear in the high numbers that the fall movement suggested they might. Evening Grosbeaks were quite common in Edmonton (PA), while Pine Grosbeaks appeared in exceptional numbers only in s.e. Manitoba where they spent much time feeding in unharvested fields of flax (HWRC). The only reports of Gray-crowned Rosy Finches outside of the Alberta foothills

was 65 on Dec. 29 at Eastend (JEG, MAG). Common Redpolls were common throughout s. Manitoba while smaller numbers were reported elsewhere. The fact that most of the winter finches were seemingly more common in the e. parts of the Region would indicate that, like the waxwings, they may have moved E in search of food. Both crossbill species were generally uncommon throughout the forest and the fact that several localities in s. Saskatchewan found them more common would indicate too they were moving in search of food after the poor cone crop in the forested regions. An ad. ♂ **Rufous-sided Towhee** at Winnipeg became the first ever to successfully spend the winter in s. Manitoba (DRMH). A **Vesper Sparrow** Dec. 7 at Dauphin, Man., was Manitoba's first winter record (L.J. Stephen). Both Dark-eyed Juncos and Tree Sparrows arrived very early with reports of both species by mid-February (DGH, PH, MAG). A single White-crowned Sparrow survived the winter at Balmoral as did a single Fox Sparrow at the same locality (*vide* RFK). The first Lapland Longspurs had arrived by Feb. 21 at Spring Valley and Feb. 22 at Regina (FB, BL) and a general move-

ment over a wide front was reported Feb. 28 in s.w. Manitoba (DRMH).

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## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS

/David O. Lambeth and Craig

A. Faanes

This winter was hardly a winter by usual standards. At Grand Forks six record highs were set in February, a month which averaged 11° F above normal, and a -20° reading was not recorded the entire season for the first time in 50 years. Fort Peck Lake in Montana *finally* iced over February 12, only to begin reopening three days later (CMC). Temperatures reached into the 70s in South Dakota and that state was "powdery dry" as a result of the driest weather in 37 years (EMS, DLB). Across the Region, snow cover was either absent or inconsequential.

Birdwatchers have always been intrigued with the effects of weather on birds and this report will attempt to describe what happened in a winter that comes along once in every 25-50 years. The reader who compares the records below with published sources such as *The Birds of South Dakota* (1978), Skaar's second edition of *Montana Bird Distribution* (1980), and previous issues of *American Birds* will note some unusual wintering records and several spring arrival dates a month or more earlier than those published. Because most of these records seem credible considering the unusual season, and were for common birds familiar to observers in the Region, we have

chosen to include nearly all although documentation was seldom submitted. In future seasons, we ask and encourage the reporters of this Region to submit substantiating notes and/or photos for their more unusual sightings.

Among the surprises in such a mild winter were good numbers and variety of northern finches, and an equally surprising dearth of some passerines which occasionally remain throughout even our harshest winters. Certainly the weather did not drive them southward—perhaps it was the poor food crop resulting from the widespread drought during the previous growing season.

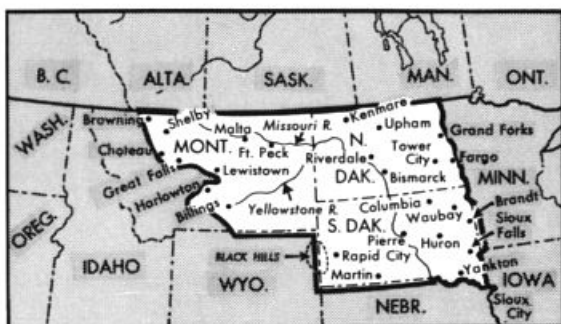
**GREBES THROUGH GEESE**—A Horned Grebe was present Jan. 11 on Canyon L., Rapid City (NRW), and a White Pelican capable of flight *wintered* on Capitol L., Pierre (RLS). Double-crested Cormorants lingered Dec. 14-30 in Yankton County, S.D. (WH), and ten over Rutland, N.D., Feb. 21 (SWB) and one at Spring Creek, Mont., Feb. 25 (MWH) were more than a month early. A Great Blue Heron was seen as late as Jan. 4 in Yankton County (WH). Thousands of Canada Geese and Mallards wintered on the Missouri R., and 5800 Canadas were found Jan. 6-7 on the Yellowstone R., near Billings. The first movements of geese were much earlier than usual and came at the end of a week of record-breaking temperatures. Canadas appeared Feb. 19 at Bowdoin N.W.R., Mont. (TWP), and Feb. 17 at Tewauckon N.W.R., N.D. (DGP). Several sightings of hundreds of Canadas over a wide area the following 4 days attested to the scope of this initial flight. One hundred Snow Geese returned to Clay County, S.D., Feb. 17 (KJH), one was at Tewauckon Feb. 25 (SWB), and two were in Garfield County, Mont., Feb. 23 (TCH).

**DUCKS**—High counts of Mallards included 21,000 Dec. 17 in Yankton County (WH), 13,100 on the Yellowstone R., and 14,700 on the Bighorn R., Mont., Jan. 6-7 (TCH), and 5000 wintering at Ft. Peck (CMC). Because of more open water than usual, Mallards wintered at several locations where normally absent including 2500 at Arrowwood N.W.R., and 600 at Salyer N.W.R., N.D. (WJB, GAE). They first appeared at Tewauckon N.W.R., Feb. 16 and numbers increased steadily thereafter. A Black Duck wintered with Mallards at Garrison Dam, N.D. (TAG, JMF).

Records for other species of ducks included: Gadwall, Pintail, Am. Wigeon, Redhead, and Lesser Scaup on the Bighorn R., Mont., below the Yellowtail Afterbay Dam Jan. 7 (TCH), 10+ Green-winged Teal Dec. 21 & Feb. 16, two N. Shovelers Dec. 6, all on Canyon L., Rapid City (JLB, EMS, LMB), Ring-necked Ducks wintering in Yankton County (WH), and a Canvasback Feb. 4 on Capitol L., Pierre (NRW). By Feb. 25 an influx of several species of ducks into Yankton County, had occurred and included 500+ Redheads (WH).

January counts of Com. Goldeneyes included 3200 on the Bighorn R., and 3140 on the Yellowstone R., between Billings and Fairview (TCH). The latter stretch also had 800 Com. Mergansers. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was present Jan. 2 at Garrison Dam where it is now proving to be regular in winter (†CAF), and a lone male wintered (again!) on Canyon L. (m.ob.). A wintering Bufflehead on Canyon L. (EMS), and two wintering Hooded Mergansers at Pierre (CAS) were considered unusual. The prize duck of the season was a **Common Eider**, classified as accidental in North Dakota, on Spiritwood L., near Jamestown Dec. 1 (†CAF).

**HAWKS AND EAGLES**—Reports of Goshawks were from Hazen, N.D., Dec. 28 (BJD), and Billings Jan. 1 (HWC). Differentiating Cooper's from Sharp-shinned is no



easier in winter than in other seasons and a few of each were reported farther n. than usual. Cooper's were reported near Burke, S D , Dec. 5 (GLS), Sanish, N.D., Dec. 3 (BCP), and Fargo Dec. 15 (GIO). A Sharpshinned was near a Billings feeder Jan. 27 (HWC), and sightings of this species in South Dakota totaled eight with three in Fall River County (LBS, JDM *et al.*). Reported sightings of Rough-legged Hawks totaled 75. Ferruginous Hawks were observed in South Dakota Dec 21 & Feb. 8 in Rapid Valley, Pennington County (EMS, RGR), and Dec. 22 & Jan. 17 in Sully County (RLS).

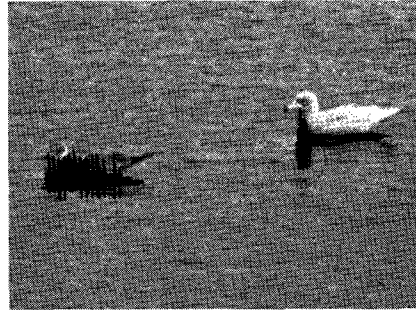
Mid-January surveys of eagles, coordinated in the Dakotas by the state game and fish departments, gave several estimates of numbers wintering in favored areas: 36 ad. and 18 imm. Golden, 287 ad. and 42 imm. Balds along the Missouri R., S.D. (*vide* RLS), 19 ad. and 12 imm. Golden, 17 ad. and 10 imm. Balds, Burke area, S.D. (D. Lengkeek, *vide* GLS), 30 ad. and 3 imm. Golden, 43 ad. and 11 imm. Balds in North Dakota (*vide* S. Kohn), and 75 ad. and 21 imm. Balds on the Yellowstone R., from Billings to Fairview (TCH). A pair of Golden Eagles was already building a nest Feb. 16 in a tree used several years previously in Custer County, S.D. (BMN). Marsh Hawks wintered in each state and the 12 seen Jan. 14 along the Missouri R., near Bismarck were unusual (DGD). The first probable migrant reported was seen Feb. 21 at Grand Forks (SOL). Gyrfalcons reported were singles in Sully County, S.D., Jan 12 (RLS), near Reliance, S.D., Jan. 5 (WCT), Salyer Ref., N.D., Dec. 9 (FGG), St. Xavier, Mont., Jan. 1 (HWC), and Tongue River Res., Mont., Jan. 21 (BAS). A Prairie Falcon at Grand Forks Dec. 13-Jan. 15 preyed on pigeons near the Univ. of North Dakota campus for the second winter in a row, and a Merlin wintered in this same area for the third consecutive year (DOL, GSL). Eight additional sightings of Merlins in North Dakota, many more than usual, included one in the Denbigh Experimental Forest Jan. 18 (GBB).

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS THROUGH SNIPE**—Seventy-seven Greater Prairie Chickens were found Dec. 29 near McLeod, N D (*vide* CAF). Counts in South Dakota were of 50 in Hand County Dec. 7 (RLS), 18 near Loomis in Davidson County Jan. 8 (JDM), and 20 near Burke in Gregory County Dec 15 (GLS). Sage Grouse were strutting on leks near the Spring Cr. Mine in Montana by Feb 25 (CBC) and a covey of Gray Partridge near Grand Forks was breaking up into pairs by Feb. 21 (DOL). A total of 144 Turkeys was counted Dec. 29 along the Sheyenne R., near McLeod, N.D. (CAF), and ten Bobwhite were present near Burke, S.D., Dec. 26 (GLS).

Fifty-five Sandhill Cranes were more than a month early Feb. 24 at Rapid City (B. Stephens, *vide* EMS). Wintering Com. Snipe were again reported in South Dakota in expected areas (GRB, RMH, GGR), but observations of two at Garrison Dam Dec. 23, one there Feb. 22, and still another the same date near Hazen (DNS, BGI), are the first North Dakota records of overwintering snipe.

**GULLS THROUGH OWLS**—Early winter observations of Glaucous Gulls were

again made at Ft Peck (CMC), Garrison Dam, and Oahe Res. (NRW) and are no longer considered surprising. However, one second-year Glaucous Gull and a first-year **Thayer's Gull** seen at Garrison Dam through mid-February are the latest records in winter for gulls in North Dakota. The Thayer's also represented the second state record (TAG, GBB, †CAF). A California Gull was still present Dec. 13 at Ft. Peck (CBC). Mourning Doves rarely survive the winter season in North Dakota but 14 succeeded this year at Jamestown (CAF).



*Thayer's Gull (1st winter) with Glaucous Gull (2nd winter), Garrison Dam, Oliver Co., N.D., Feb. 14, 1981. Photo/T.A. Gatz.*

An owl flushed from a hay loft near Tewaunkon N.W.R., Feb. 8 was positively identified as a **Barn Owl** Mar. 7 (†SWB). The relative abundance of Screech Owls in one wooded valley of this Region was indicated by responses to taped calls at 18 locations along the James R., between Jamestown and LaMoure, N.D., Feb. 2 (CAF). Some 70 reports of Snowy Owls were received including six in a one-mile radius circle in Sully County, S.D., Dec. 22 (RLS). Very few were observed after Jan. 20. A Barred Owl found Feb. 25 at Grand Forks was probably in migration (DOL). Reports of Long-eared Owls included one in December at Fargo (CV), two Feb. 16 near Reliance (WCT), and another Feb. 24 near Burke, S.D. (GLS). Photos of a **Boreal Owl** taken Feb. 7, 1978, near Jamestown were recently sent to us by out-of-stater Frances James. A Saw-whet Owl was seen Dec. 28 at the Beulah Mine Game Management Area, N.D. (DNS, BGI, PHS).

**KINGFISHERS, WOODPECKERS**—The only Belted Kingfisher reported outside of South Dakota where it was described as being "all over the state", was one Feb. 27 near Miles City, Mont. (TCH). Six Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported from s.e. South Dakota where they are expected. Among the 49 Downy Woodpeckers netted in Brookings County, South Dakota were two that had been banded 10 years previously (NJH). Fargo is the one locale in this Region which can be counted on for Pileated Woodpeckers—this winter there were five reports (LLF, PPF *et al.*).

**LARKS THROUGH CREEPERS**—Related to the unusually warm weather, Horned Larks wintered in good numbers across the Region. The first migratory movements were noted in North Dakota during January and two territorial males were observed at Jamestown Feb. 4 (CAF). Eight Gray Jays were reported from Pennington and Custer cos.,

S D , and one was in the Turtle Mts , N D , Jan. 3. Daily means of four and six Blue Jays were reported from Belle Fourche and Sturgis, S.D.; three wintered at Bowdoin N.W.R., and two at Joliet, Mont. Three **Black-billed Magpies** at a Rolla, N.D. feeder Jan. 18 were the first there in 15 years (PCH) Black-capped Chickadees wintered at Kenmare, N.D., where they were absent last year (AMG). Of 33 Black-capped banded at Brookings one was at least 7 years old (NJH) Red-breasted Nuthatches were generally scarce except for 13 daily near Rapid City, and one that wintered in Billings. Pygmy Nuthatches were reported from the Black Hills, including ten in the immediate Rapid City area. One Jan. 12 near Mosby, Mont , was an addition to the fauna of latilong L21 (TCH). Brown Creepers wintered at Fargo, were reported Dec. 16-Feb. 16 at Rapid City, and one at Billings Feb. 1.

**DIPPER THROUGH THRUSHES**—Two Dippers were found during February along Rapid Cr., on the e. slope of the Black Hills An undocumented Long-billed Marsh Wren was found 5 mi w. of Miles City, Mont., Jan 11 (TCH). Nine Cañon Wrens were reported s. of Rapid City, and one was in Meade County, S.D., Jan. 21. Separate Brown Thrashers were reported Dec. 2-21 at Grand Forks (GSL, DOL), and Dec. 20-21 at Jamestown (EKB, *vide* CAF). After a tremendous winter show last year, Am. Robins were generally scarce. One plausible reason was the almost complete lack of seeds on Russian olive and box-elder trees. An undocumented ♀ Varied Thrush was reported Dec. 21 from Farm I., Pierre, S.D. (CAS, RLS). This was rather unusual because most Varied Thrushed in this Region, and the Western Great Lakes are males. A Mountain Bluebird at Little Missouri Bay, L. Sakakawea, N.D., Dec 12 was very late (BCP). Two were reported from South Dakota Feb. 24 in Pennington County and Feb. 25 in Custer County. Townsend's Solitaires peaked at three Jan. 10, w of Rapid City, and seven were reported through the period from the Black Hills.

**KINGLETS THROUGH SHRIKES**—Golden-crowned Kinglets were reported until late December in w. North Dakota and six were found Dec. 21 in e. and c. South Dakota. Bohemian Waxwings occurred only sparingly, largest numbers included 200 through the period in the upper Red River Valley, N.D , 250 Jan. 16 at Rapid City and 300 at Ft Peck. Cedar Waxwings were equally spotty, although they apparently remained in more locations across the Region. Northern Shrikes made a rather dismal showing with 10 outside the CBC period, and only two reported wintering.

**MEADOWLARKS THROUGH FINCHES**—Western Meadowlarks were unreported through December and January, 13 were at Billings Feb. 14, four in South Dakota after Feb. 19 and one at Fargo Feb 21. Two Cardinals through the period at Fargo (CHB, BPC) were encouraging in light of its sporadic occurrence at that location since 1978. Three were reported Dec. 14-Feb 1 at Mitchell, and three males and two females were seen Feb. 10-27 in s.e. Clay County, S.D. (KJH). Evening Grosbeaks

wintered across the Region, although locations were scattered and numbers generally low. Purple Finches apparently wintered in parts of South Dakota and occurred sparingly in e. Montana. A Cassin's Finch was reported Feb. 23 on Argyle Rd., Custer Co., and three were at Hot Springs Feb. 25. This species is considered an uncommon winter visitor in the Black Hills (Pettingill and Whitney, 1965. Cornell Univ. Spec. Publ. No 1). North Dakota's second **House Finch**, a female, was at a Bismarck feeder Nov. 23-Dec. 17 (RNR) (see *AB* 34:285). This species was common at feeders in Billings through the winter. Although reported from only two South Dakota locations, Pine Grosbeaks put in a good show across c. and e. North Dakota. The only reports of Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were of 20 through January in Harding County, S.D. and 20+ at a Havre, Mont. feeder through the period. Hoary Redpolls were reported from at least 5 North Dakota CBCs, but the only ones that wintered were in a Jamestown cemetery (†CAF). Common Redpolls made a major invasion into North Dakota and were considered common in e. Montana after being generally absent the last 2 years. Most observers reported flocks of "thousands" in sunflower fields. Pine Siskins also occurred in tremendous numbers, and like the Com. Redpoll, were abundant in sunflower fields. A general movement of siskins to residential feeders was noted in January. At a Jamestown feeder, 604 were banded in 4 consecutive January days, and 152 were banded in Brookings County Feb. 16-28. One pair of Red Crossbills was suspected of nesting w.of Rapid City Feb. 22. White-winged Crossbills were "the big event of the year" (AMG) at Kenmare with 40-50 regularly at a feeder through the period.

SPARROWS THROUGH SNOW BUNTING—

S.A.

Because of the open winter, Lapland Longspurs wintered throughout the Region. However, several night movements were detected at Jamestown in advance of snowstorms (CAF). During the evening of Jan. 9, the mean number of calling birds/minute was 18 between 9 p.m.-1 a.m., and 15/minute between 5 a.m.-7 a.m. (counts were made for 5 min at 15 min intervals). For the next 2 weeks, all nights were clear and no movements were detected. On the evening of Jan. 23, prior to another snowstorm, calling birds moving S averaged 16/min over a 3-hour period. No movements were detected on subsequent clear nights. Still another S movement was detected in advance of a Feb. 14 snowstorm. Finally, Feb. 21, during a clear evening, northbound longspurs were heard at a rate of 13/min. The Gammels reported an "unforgettable migration" during the evening of Dec. 10, 1952, which was cloudy with a gentle snowfall. They heard longspurs moving at 8:30 p.m. and continuing through 12:20 a.m. without letup. Large numbers were still heard at 7 a.m., Dec. 11 (*AFN* 7:24).

Additional indications of the mild winter were the four Dark-eyed Juncos that wintered at Kenmare, six that wintered at Ft. Peck, and the Tree Sparrows that wintered at Minot, Havre and Ft. Peck. The first migratory movement of this sparrow was noted at Rapid City Feb. 24, and the first migrants reached Salyer Ref., N.D., Feb. 26. Harris' Sparrows wintered at scattered e. South Dakota locations, and one occasionally visited

at a Mandan, N D. feeder Two at Rapid City Dec. 8-Feb. 24, and two near Belle Fourche Dec. 23, were a little w. of their usual wintering and migration areas. Four White-throated Sparrows were at L. Mitchell, S D., Jan. 14-Feb. 13 (JDMc,RGR). One Song Sparrow along Rapid Creek, S.D., Dec 21, three near Belle Fourche Dec. 23, and one Feb. 11 at the CX Ranch, Mont., were the only ones reported.

Snow Buntings apparently stayed farther n. this winter; reports came only from c and e. North Dakota.

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SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS

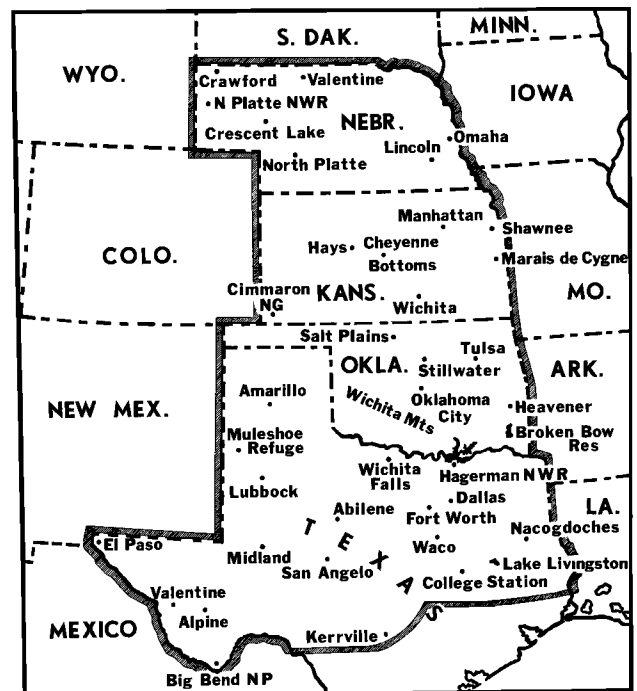
/Frances Williams

Winter was warm and extremely dry. As expected in a warm winter, many migrants lingered late and several species wintered north of their normal cold season range. The previous summer-fall drought left a very poor seed crop. This explains the lack of native sparrows, but don't Purple Finches, goldfinches and Pine Siskins, all common this winter, eat seeds too?

LOONS THROUGH IBISES—One or two Com. Loons may be expected on almost any inland reservoir in the winter, but 17 on Buchanan L., in c. Texas and 89 on Lake O' the Pines in e. Texas were remarkable. Eared Grebes did not depart North Platte N.W.R., Neb., until Dec. 4, a late record. Western Grebes were seen on L. Rayburn in e. Texas on three occasions (DF). Other W. Grebes in the e. were located in Montgomery and Kendall cos., Tex. Single White Pelicans remained through the winter in 7 localities from Kansas s. Double-crested Cormorants wintered at several Oklahoma reservoirs. Three Olivaceous Cormorants were carefully identified in Henderson County, Tex., Feb. 19-20

(DW). At Dallas, several Great Egrets wintered. An imm. Yellow-crowned Night Heron was found in a weakened condition in an Amarillo yard Feb. 13. A Least Bittern was discovered at El Paso Dec. 7 and a White-faced Ibis remained there throughout the period.

SWANS THROUGH MERGANSERS—Trumpeter Swans were covered from Crescent Lake N.W.R., Neb., only Dec. 10-Jan. 27, the shortest period on record. Three Whistling Swans visited Midland Dec. 27-Jan. 24 and one was observed in Randall County, Tex., Feb. 8 (PA). Ducks were northbound in good numbers by mid-February. A Cinnamon Teal at Tulsa Nov. 26 was



noteworthy At Nacogdoches, Tex., 3000 Wood Ducks roosted each night in a wooded pond. They dispersed to river bottoms to feed during the day. Common Goldeneyes were unusually numerous and widespread. Greater Scaup were discovered in Douglas and Keith cos., Neb., and at Tulsa. Four Oldsquaws remained at Nacogdoches Jan. 11-Feb. 1 (*vide DW*). White-winged Scoters were present from mid-January to mid-February, with three at Tulsa, one at Oklahoma City, three in Osage County, Okla., two in Comal County, Tex., and one at Lubbock. A Surf Scoter visited Midland Jan. 3-10. A flock comprised of more than 500 Hooded Mergansers was an impressive sight in Henderson County Feb. 10-20. On Oologah Res., Rogers and Nowata cos., Okla., Com. Mergansers peaked at 5000 Feb. 15.

**VULTURES THROUGH FALCONS**—A Turkey Vulture arrived at Wichita Mt. N.W.R., Okla., on the early date Feb. 16. Goshawks sailed over Alliance, Neb., Morton County, Kans., and Crosby County, Tex. Although there were few reports of Sharpshinned and Cooper's hawks elsewhere, Dec. 20 there were five Sharpies and three Cooper's within the city of Midland (AW). None of these could be found during the CBC 10 days later.

At Tulsa's port in Rogers County, grain is transferred from trucks to barges. Grain which spills from the trucks supports a large rodent population which in turn attracts numbers of Red-tailed Hawks. On Jan. 4, 61 Red-taileds were counted in this small area, while Jan. 10, 80 were found (JCH). Ferruginous Hawks were common in the vicinity of Oklahoma City and in the Texas Panhandle. The population of Harris' Hawks increased near Ft. Stockton, Tex. (GWh). There were above-average numbers of Rough-legged Hawks in n.w. Nebraska and in the Dallas-Ft. Worth Area. There were few reports of Golden Eagles. One w. of Kansas City was found wounded, but it was successfully rehabilitated. Bald Eagles were well distributed throughout the Region, and there were concentrations of 50 at Keystone L., near Tulsa and 55 at Flint Hills N.W.R., Kans. Nearly all Bald Eagles were at large reservoirs, but five wintered in the Davis Mts., Tex., where the only water is found in stock tanks and one very small creek (PE). Ospreys were sighted in Coffey County, Kans., Dec. 26, El Paso Jan. 4 and Comal County Jan. 13. Peregrine Falcons, rare in winter, were observed in Osage County, Okla., Jan. 15, Tulsa Jan. 25, Rush-Pawnee County line, Kans., Dec. 3-Jan. 5, Sarpy County, Neb., Feb. 16-21. Merlins were well distributed throughout the Region.

**PRAIRIE CHICKENS THROUGH GALINULES**—A total of 33 Greater Prairie Chickens in Tulsa County was the highest number in modern times. In Butler County, Kans., 23 Greater Prairie Chickens were counted Feb. 8. Lesser Prairie Chickens were found on the L. Meredith Recreation Area, Tex. Populations of both Bobwhite and Scalded Quail were much reduced by the continuing drought. A flock of 80 wild Turkeys was located in Grady County, Okla., Feb. 16 (JG). Sandhill Cranes arrived in Nebraska on the unprecedented early date of Feb. 16. At

Ft. Worth, a Com. Gallinule could be found all winter (MP) and one was seen at Lubbock Jan. 4 (ML).

**PLOVERS THROUGH TERNS**—Most reservoirs were very low, providing much shorebird habitat. An unusual number of the common shorebirds wintered. A Black-bellied Plover was sighted at L. Rayburn Dec. 29, Jan. 18 & Feb. 25. Another lingered at Hagerman Ref., until Dec. 11. American Woodcocks were found at Norman, Okla., Waco, Tex., Kendall and Montague cos., Tex., and Hagerman Ref. Two to three times the usual number of wintering Greater Yellowlegs were reported by several Texas observers. Two Pectoral Sandpipers at L. Rayburn Feb. 20 arrived very early, as did two Baird's Sandpipers Mar. 4. A Dunlin at North Platte N.W.R., Jan. 6-23 provided the first known Nebraska winter record (SM,FZ). A Sanderling at DeSoto Bend N.W.R., Neb., Feb. 28 was early. Long-billed Dowitchers were seen in Texas in Anderson County Jan. 14, L. Rayburn Dec. 29, Ft. Worth Jan. 5-6, Midland Dec. 20-Jan. 10. An Am. Avocet was discovered in Montgomery County, Tex., Dec. 18-19 (*vide KB*). Ten Wilson's Phalaropes fed in an area below Buchanan Dam, Llano Co., Tex., Jan. 15 (E&KM).

Oklahoma City annually hosts one or two imm. Glaucous Gulls, but this species rarely appears elsewhere in the Region. One was observed in Coffey County, Kans., Mar. 1 (JSc). About 150 Ring-billed Gulls wintered on an Amarillo lake next to a large shopping center where the gulls occupied the "discarded French fried food niche." Four Ring-billed Gulls remained in Keith County until Feb. 3. Franklin's Gulls lingered in n. Texas until late December and returned to Tulsa on the early date of Feb. 21. An amazing 800 Bonaparte's Gulls swarmed over Keystone Res., Dec. 7. This species wintered on lakes near San Angelo, Tex., as did Forster's Terns (TM).

**DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS**—In spite of the mild winter, Mourning Doves were extremely scarce in the Texas Panhandle. Apparently the scarcity of food was responsible. Inca Doves strayed to Ft. Worth Dec. 7 and Lubbock Jan. 25. Three dead Barn Owls which were found near Corsicana, Tex., Feb. 11, had been hit by cars. In Ottawa County, Okla., Paul Wilson erected 15 owl boxes, and Great Horned Owls moved into 5 of them. An incursion of Snowy Owls brought a dozen to Nebraska, eight to Kansas and three to Oklahoma. Customers waiting in line in a drive-through lane at a fast-food emporium in El Paso were astounded to see a Burrowing Owl walk through the lane ahead of them (JDiP). A Burrowing Owl in Morton County, Kans., Jan. 12 was unusual for the date (EB). The only Long-eared Owls reported were at Tulsa and El Paso. At least 20 Short-eared Owls hunted in an overgrown pasture in n. Oklahoma City in late December. There was also a gathering of Short-eared Owls at the grain docks in Rogers County. The species was found in Kansas in Coffey and Cowley counties. Saw-whet Owls were discovered in Pawnee County, Kans., Dec. 21-30 (JSc *et al.*). Goatsuckers, probably Poor-wills, were flushed in Crosby County, Tex., Dec. 28 (KH) and Jan. 3 (ML).

White-throated Swifts wintered in the Franklin and Hueco Mts. of w. Texas. Four Anna's Hummingbirds lingered into January at El Paso.

**WOODPECKERS THROUGH NUTHATCHES**—Pileated Woodpeckers were found in Lyon County Jan. 10 & Mar. 1 and in Cowley County Jan. 10. A Red-bellied Woodpecker wintered at Buffalo Lake N.W.R., Tex. More Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered on the c. Edwards Plateau of Texas than ever before. Three Williamson's Sapsuckers occupied a roadside picnic area in the Davis Mts., Jan. 3 (BR). In Washington County, Okla., a wintering E. Phoebe survived a February blizzard. A Scrub Jay was discovered at Quartz Mt. S.P., Greer Co., Okla., Feb. 4,6,9 (JB). A Green Jay visited a feeder near Keene, Tex., almost daily Dec. 18-Feb. 28+. This locality is over 500 mi n. of the Rio Grande Valley, so local birders assumed the bird was an escaped pet, although it showed no evidence of cage wear (CE).

S.A.

The city of Wichita, Kans., was the site of a Com. Crow roost containing 20,000-50,000 birds. The latter total was reached during a February cold spell. When severe cold arrived, the crows changed from tree roosting to perching on top of buildings, possibly taking advantage of heat escaping from poorly insulated structures. At dusk, the flight of crows approaching the city from all directions provided a spectacular scene (SK).

Black-capped Chickadees wintered for the first time at Crescent Lake N.W.R. At Baldwin, Kans., the number of chickadees was double that of any previous winter. White-breasted Nuthatches staged a minor invasion of w. localities from Crescent L. to Amarillo. It was a major invasion year for Red-breasted Nuthatches in the e. half of the Region. At Baldwin, Katherine Kelley banded four Red-breasted Nuthatches, the first since 1963-64.

**WRENS THROUGH PHAINOPEPLA**—There was a minor incursion of Winter Wrens. Carolina Wrens are still very scarce in Oklahoma and Kansas. Long-billed Marsh Wrens wintered in good numbers in the Texas Panhandle. A Gray Catbird visited Big Bend N.P., Dec. 19-31 (m.ob., ph CSt to T.C.W.C.) Brown Thrashers were seen at Baldwin in December and at Bellevue, Neb., in February. Mockingbirds were observed in Omaha and Benedict, Neb., in December. A Sage Thrasher was found in Hunt County, Tex., Jan. 3 (JNu). In El Paso, Am. Robins were unusually numerous. A Varied Thrush was sighted at Omaha Jan. 5 (*vide MW*). Several contributors noted a marked increase in the population of E. Bluebirds. Mountain Bluebirds appeared in numbers far out on the plains. In Texas, W. Bluebirds were found in Kerr County and in Palo Duro Canyon S.P. Townsend's Solitaires were seen e. to Jones County, Tex., Dec. 10 (BH) and Kendall County, Tex., Feb. 5 (SW). There were several records of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers farther n. in Texas than is normal in winter. Golden-crowned Kinglets were abundant throughout

Ruby-crowned Kinglets wintered as far n as Omaha. A Sprague's Pipit was netted and banded in Canadian County, Okla., Dec. 26 (JSh,JNe). There were hundreds of Cedar Waxwings in Kansas and thousands in Oklahoma and Texas. Bohemian Waxwings were reported only at Baldwin. A Phainopepla was photographed in Howard County, Tex., Jan. 10 (GWa to T.C.W.C.).

**VIREOS THROUGH WARBLERS**—Solitary Vireos were found in Big Bend N.P., and Midland in February. The number and variety of winter warblers was astounding. Black-and-white Warblers were found at Bellevue Jan. 25 (KC *et al.*), and Crosby County in a snowstorm Nov. 25 (KH). A Nashville Warbler was located in El Paso Feb. 24 (PH). In Comal County, Tex., a Yellow Warbler was seen Jan. 13 (E&KM). **Cape May Warblers** were found in Dallas in early January (HH) and in Ft. Worth Jan. 24 (JMS). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** visited a feeder in Omaha Nov. 28-Dec. 24 (JH, m.ob.). One seen in Montgomery County, Tex., Feb. 15 may have been an early migrant (KB). At least seven Pine Warblers were located in Ft. Worth Dec. 15-Feb. 28+. Previously there had been only six reports of this species at Ft. Worth in 40 years (m.ob.). Pine Warblers were also present at two locations in Dallas. At Salt Plains N.W.R., Okla., a Com. Yellowthroat was seen Feb. 7. At Big Bend N.P., an Am. Redstart flitted in a willow tree Feb. 7 & 8 (DWS).

**ICTERIDS**—A Yellow-headed Blackbird with a drooping wing, but a strong flier, came to a feeder at Crescent L., Dec. 9-Feb. 21. An Orchard Oriole was found in Big Bend N.P., Dec. 24. A N. (Baltimore) Oriole fed at a Tulsa suet feeder Dec. 7. A Rusty Blackbird visited a park in College Station, Tex., Jan. 17-Feb. 28. More than one hundred Great-tailed Grackles were at Great Bend, Kans., in January. Sympathy is extended to Paul Wilson of Fairland, Okla., who had 100,000 black-colored birds, including Com. Grackles, Red-winged and Starlings, roosting within 200 yards of his home during February.

**FRINGILLIDS**—A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak came to a feeder in Denton County, Tex., Jan. 11-17 (B&JB *et al.*). Black-headed Grosbeaks were seen in Plattsmouth, Neb., in January (GWO) and Walker County, Tex., Jan. 30-Feb. 28+ (RM). Small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks visited Nacogdoches, n.e. Oklahoma, and n.e. Nebraska. The fewest Evening Grosbeaks of the past 6 winters were seen in n.w. Nebraska (RCR). Purple Finches were everywhere in numbers. There was a mild explosion of House Finches at Hays, Kans., and one visited a feeder at Dallas Jan. 3-Feb. 28+. There was a moderate flight of Com. Redpolls in n.w. Nebraska, but only scattered individuals in e. Nebraska. One visited a feeder at Tulsa Feb. 26-Mar. 1 (EH, m ob.) and another was seen in Oklahoma City Feb. 22 (ES). Pine Siskins were present throughout the e. half of the Region, but in about half the numbers of the 1977-78 invasion. Of the 6767 siskins banded at Baldwin during the 1977-78 season, only one has been subsequently trapped. It was encountered at Great Gull I., N.Y., Oct. 29, 1980. One ♀

White-winged Crossbill spent Christmas day at a thistle feeder in Tulsa (B&WW *et al.*). After their abundance last winter, Green-tailed Towhees were again elusive. Individuals were seen in Llano County, Tex., Jan. 15 and Real County, Tex., Feb. 26.

With few exceptions, wintering populations of native sparrows were very low. A Savannah Sparrow visited a feeder in Johnson County, Kans., during a snowstorm Feb. 10-13, and one was found in Rush County, Kans., Feb. 20. This species was abundant in n.e. Oklahoma. A Grasshopper Sparrow was banded in Bryan, Tex., Jan. 21 (TG). A Baird's Sparrow was located in Crosby County Dec. 14 (ML). Four Le Conte's Sparrows were banded at Bryan, where the species had not been reported in several years. In Oklahoma, Le Conte's were seen in Pawnee and Rogers Counties and at Tulsa. Sage Sparrows were abundant at Hueco Tanks S.P., Tex., and were found e. to Crosby County and Midland. Tree Sparrows came as far s. as n. Texas and the Texas Panhandle. Chipping and Field sparrow populations were normal. At Lawton, Okla., Janet McGee reported that over half her backyard Harris' Sparrows were birds banded in previous years, and the wintering population was low. But this species appeared in higher numbers than usual at College Station. White-crowned Sparrows had never been so scarce in w. Texas. White-throated Sparrows wintering at El Paso and Hueco Tanks were noteworthy. Lincoln's Sparrows were infrequent throughout but the populations of both Swamp and Song sparrows were unusually high.

Very few longspurs appeared in the Region. This was possibly due to the lack of snow in the n. plains, as longspurs normally do not swarm into the s. plains until the former lie under deep snow cover. Four species of longspurs were recorded at Muleshoe N.W.R., Tex., Jan. 17. A dozen McCown's Longspurs in Ector County, Tex., Feb. 28 provided a first record (BE,JCy). The only large flock of longspurs reported comprised 1000 Lapland Longspurs in Sedgwick County, Kans., Jan. 1. Smith's Longspurs were seen as usual in Cushing and Tulsa, Okla., and were also reported in Greenwood County, Kans., Feb. 8 (SK), Coffey County Feb. 14 & Mar. 1 (MS,JSc), Randall County, Tex., Jan. 28 (RR *et al.*). Remarkably, two Smith's Longspurs visited a feeder in Bartlesville, Okla., during a blizzard Feb. 10 (OMc).

Abbreviation: T.C.W.C.—Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collections at Texas A&M University.

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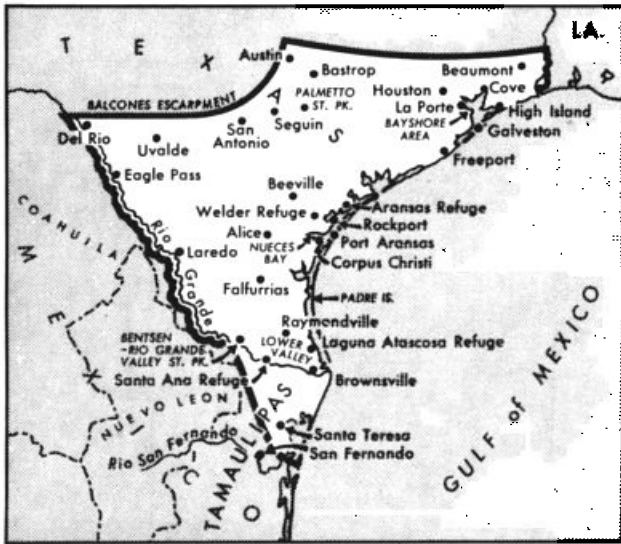
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## SOUTH TEXAS REGION

/Fred S. Webster, Jr.

Winter was unusually mild. Temperatures averaged above normal and cold spells were short-lived. While northern areas had one brief, hard freeze, February 11-12, the Rio Grande Delta escaped killing frost for the second consecutive winter. Vegetation was green and insect populations remained active in deep South Texas except in already drought-stricken areas—particularly Jim Hogg, Starr and Zapata Counties—which missed the heavy rains dumped by hurricane *Allen* on counties eastward to the coast. Cumulative rainfall for the period was below normal in most areas, keeping surface water at sub-normal levels; notable exceptions were the lower coastal prairie and parts of the Delta, where hurricane waters will stand for some months. Food crops were reported to be excellent to fair in areas of adequate moisture, in response to the mild season.

**GREBES THROUGH STORKS**—Two **Red-necked Grebes** were seen in Brazoria County Jan. 24 (LB,LC,AE *et al.*). Eared Grebes were very common on San Antonio area lakes; a combined estimate of 1500 were on Braunig and Calaveras lakes Feb. 15 (SH). Least Grebes were abundant in low-lying areas of Hidalgo County inundated by hurricane *Allen*; downy young were noted frequently in December and January (JCA). A W. Grebe was on Calaveras L., Feb. 15 (SH). A flock of 45 White Pelicans spent several weeks fishing at L. Casa Blanca near Laredo (JB). A Brown Booby was seen at San Luis Pass on the w. end of Galveston I., Dec 22 (RT). An imm. Gannet was seen off San Luis Pass Dec. 23 (BL,J&BR,CS), and two Gannets were reported on Galveston I., Dec 27 (W&JR). A heavily-oiled Gannet was picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard Feb. 6, presumably off Port Aransas, and a lightly-oiled ad Gannet was found dead on the Mustang I beach Feb. 17, (KR, *vide* WP). Coincidentally, a large oil slick of unknown origin began washing up on Mustang I., Feb 26 (WP). Four imm. Gannets were reported off Boca Chica near the mouth of the Rio Grande, Feb. 7 (BL,J&BR,CS). Two Wood Storks were found in Brazoria County Jan 24 (H.A.S.).



**WATERFOWL**—Labuda noted a significant reduction in numbers of waterfowl from past years at Aransas N.W.R., and suggested that coastal lowlands flooded by hurricane *Allen*, particularly that area between Kingsville and Raymondville, were being used instead. It should be noted also that recently expanded grain production in n.e. Mexico is luring hordes of waterfowl onto winter fields. Three imm. Whistling Swans were discovered on a private lake in s. Bexar County in early



Whistling Swans (imm.), San Antonio, Tex., Jan. 31, 1981. Photo/Greg Lasley.

January (H&LM) and were present at least through the month (GL). Two Ross' Geese joined domestic Mallards on a pond outside Austin around Dec. 1 (HF) and were observed as late as Jan. 26 (EBK). A flock of 175 Wood Ducks was seen below Falcon Dam Jan. 31 (CE). Redhead populations were down drastically, according to a meager number of reports received. High one-day counts reported from the upper coast were of 100 in January and only four in February. On the other hand, Canvasbacks numbered 1000 in January and 150 in February. This species was also reported as doing well at Rockport. While the Houston CBC, Dec. 20, listed 35,634 Lesser Scaup, other top counts for the upper coast were of 500 in January and 26 in February!

**HAWKS**—Hook-billed Kites were reported easy to find at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., in January, with as many as seven present. Easley reported trees "loaded" with snails; he watched one kite feed at one spot

for more than an hour. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were unusually abundant at Aransas N.W.R.—perhaps a response to high Blue Jay and Am. Robin populations (SL). A highway count of *Buteo* between Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande Delta indicated a far-above-normal density (TAm)—in keeping with excellent water-bird habitat. Red-tailed Hawks and the rodent population were below normal in a strip between the central coast and San Antonio. A **Zone-tailed Hawk** in the piney woods of Bastrop County Dec. 26 (DS) was incongruous.

Rough-legged Hawks were extremely scarce, but Ferruginous Hawks were scattered throughout the Region. An ad. Gray Hawk was seen over Brownsville Dec. 12 (CE), and immatures were spotted near Mission, Hidalgo Co., Feb. 8 (BL,J&BR,CS), and at Santa Ana N.W.R., Feb. 23 (SH,TH). An ad. **Black Hawk** was seen along the Rio Grande at Rancho Santa Margarita w. of Roma, Starr Co., Dec. 28 (NK,OK *et al.*). A Golden Eagle was observed in Hays County Dec. 27 (BH). Three Bald Eagles wintered on Attwater Prairie Chicken N.W.R. (WAS) and the usual handful could be found in w. Harris County, but an immature seen at Falcon L., Dec. 20, was Arvin's first in 25 years' of observation in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A **Prairie Falcon** was seen overhead at Houston Feb. 20 (SW). An **Aplomado Falcon** was seen in e. Frio County Dec. 18 at the only watering place in the area (DLS).

**CRANES, SHOREBIRDS**—Highest count of Whooping Cranes in the vicinity of Aransas N.W.R., was 72 adults and six juveniles Dec. 16. "During the winter, factors known only to the whoopers have caused an inordinate number of cranes to wander. . ." (SL), compounding normal censusing difficulties. A rare winter Whimbrel was seen on Galveston I., Jan. 5 & 18 (J&JH). A count of 1500 Red Knots on Bolivar Flats Feb. 8 (BF, NP, LR) represented an excellent winter concentration. A Purple Sandpiper discovered at the Freeport jetties on the Dec. 21 CBC (TE) remained through February (TC). Arvin observed that all dowitchers wintering along the Laguna Madre side of S. Padre I., were Short-billed, while inland—including the mainland shores of lower Laguna Madre—all dowitchers were Long-billed; he found no area where the two species met. Stilt Sandpipers wintered commonly in flooded areas of Hidalgo County (JCA). An estimated 2500 Am. Avocets were on Bolivar Flats, Galveston Feb. 8 (BF, NP, LR), a spectacular increase over previous months.

**JAEGERS, GULLS**—A Parasitic Jaeger was seen from the Bolivar-Galveston ferry Jan. 2 (A&RD, SD). Glaucous Gulls were reported from Bolivar Pen., the Corpus Christi garbage dump, and Boca Chica, but these are relatively routine; not so the black-backed

gulls. **Great Black-backed Gulls** were reported from Galveston's e. beach Feb. 8 (BF, NP, LR), an imm. bird from the beach side of San Bernard N.W.R., Dec. 12 (TG), and a second-winter individual was photographed on Mustang I., Jan. 8 (AFA). An ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at the Corpus Christi dump Dec. 30 (CC) and one on Mustang I., Jan. 4 (AFA) may have been the same individual. The ad. bird reported in fall from Brazos I., across from S. Padre I., remained through the winter (JCA); an adult wintered in the same locality last year. An ad. **Western Gull** was reported at the Corpus Christi dump Dec. 30-31 (CC *et al.*). An ad. California Gull was at Corpus Christi Feb. 21 (EP). An imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** discovered at Mitchell L., San Antonio area Dec. 2 (WS) stayed about 10 days, probably moving to Braunig L., where one was seen Jan. 15 (SH).



Black-legged Kittiwake (imm.), Rockport, Tex., Dec. 6, 1980. Photos/Richard L. Ditch.

**HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**—Rufous Hummingbirds took the spotlight this winter, owing more to the scarcity of other species than unusual numbers of the former. Mrs. McCracken's survey conducted through her column in the Corpus Christi *Caller-Times* turned up 35+ Rufous Hummingbirds in South Texas, most of these in the Coastal Bend (central coast). Most birds had departed by late February. Presumably not included in the count were a fair number of birds on the upper coast and at Austin. A suspected *Allen's Hummingbird* was photographed at a Beeville feeder Feb. 19-21 (T&JA, VG, PRu). A Ringed Kingfisher wintered at a Brownsville resaca (CE). Green Kingfishers were on the Medina R., near San Antonio (*vide* SH), and at 2 locations at Austin. Common Flickers were more common than usual on the upper coast and as far w. as Aransas N.W.R. Downy Woodpeckers showed an increase in the Medina R. bottomlands (SH).

**FLYCATCHERS, JAYS, RAVENS**—A Tropical Kingbird was seen at Laredo in mid-January (JB). Two Ash-throated Flycatchers

wintered on Rancho Santa Margarita (JCA) The Blue Jay invasion, accomplished in October, was apparent throughout the season. "Thousands" appeared at Aransas N.W.R., perhaps attracted by "the best acorn crop in ten years" (SL). Jays spread W to Pearsall, Frio Co. (DLS), and S to Encino, Brooks Co., where an individual was observed with resident Green Jays (PRA). A Com. Raven at Braunig L., Feb. 15 (SH) was unusual. White-necked Ravens were more abundant than usual at Laredo, appearing even in densely-populated residential areas to feed on garbage (JB). The Texas population of Brown Jays extends from San Ygnacio, Zapata Co., down the Rio Grande to Roma, and appears to be stable. A small flock can be found in riparian habitat below the Falcon Dam spillway (JCA). Barrett reported a total of 17 jays in two flocks at Roma Feb. 6.

**CHICKADEES THROUGH BLUE-BIRDS**—An apparent Black-capped Chickadee, in company with Carolina Chickadees, visited a feeder at Morgan's Pt., on Galveston Bay late December-January (LS *et al.*). A White-breasted Nuthatch was found in the Medina R. bottoms, first for the San Antonio area in years (*vide* SH). Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers were above normal on the upper coast and w. to San Antonio, but numbers dropped off by late January. A Winter Wren was found at Santa Ana N.W.R., Jan. 15 (CE). Small numbers of Short-billed Marsh Wrens wintered around Mitchell L., the first in several years (SH). In the Rio Grande Delta, where this species is a "very local winter resident at a few areas of acceptable habitat along the immediate coast," 8-12 individuals could be found in a sewage treatment marsh on the Laguna Madre shore of S. Padre I. (JCA). Several Sage Thrashers wintered at Austin, an uncommon occurrence. American Robins were more numerous than usual throughout the Region—even abundant in the Rio Grande Delta for the first time in several years (JCA). A roost in juniper brakes w. of Austin was thought to hold 1.5 million birds. A Clay-colored Robin was at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., in late December and in January. Good roadside counts of E. Bluebirds were made in Brazoria and Matagorda cos. (CE).

**KINGLETS, WAXWINGS**—It was a good year for Golden-crowned Kinglets as far s. and w. as the Coastal Bend, and a few could be found daily in wooded areas along the lower Rio Grande for the first time in several years. Cedar Waxwings were above normal on the upper coast, and at San Antonio and Laredo. They reached salt water at Port Aransas and were common along the Mexican border.

**WARBLERS**—Some warblers which, in winter, are uncommon or scarce along the coast and rare or casual inland, were reported more often than usual. (CBC sightings have been excluded from the following observations.) Single Nashville Warblers were seen at Austin Jan. 31 (J&BR) & Feb. 12 (G&BL), and on the Medina R., s.w. of San Antonio Jan. 26 (SH). In the Rio Grande Delta, where this species can be fairly common in winter, Arvin's Peak daily count was four at Santa Ana N.W.R., Dec. 23. Two Tropical Parulas

wintered in residential Brownsville and one was at Santa Ana N.W.R. (JCA). Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warblers were unusually abundant at Rockport (CK). A Black-throated Green Warbler was sighted at Palmetto S.P., Dec. 6 (G&BL) & Feb. 1 (CK). A scarce Yellow-throated Warbler was found along the Medina R., Jan. 26 (SH). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen at Austin Dec. 11-Jan. 6 (F&MW); this appears to be a first January record for Texas. A **Bay-breasted Warbler** was seen at Austin Dec. 22 (BR). On Jan. 24 an individual appeared about 1/3 mi from the first sighting and remained into April, by which time it had acquired ad. male plumage (F&MW). There appear to be no previous Texas records for the first quarter of the year. Pine Warblers were common at Attwater Prairie Chicken N.W.R., after a 2-year absence (WAS). A movement was noted through Austin in late December and early January, and a few birds turned up in Rockport in late January. The Ovenbird, a rare winter resident along the coast, was seen at Austin Jan. 7 (DM) and at Palmetto S.P., Feb. 1 (CK). Four were at Santa Ana N.W.R., Dec. 23 (JCA). Wilson's Warbler is uncommon to scarce on the coast in winter. A total of 25 was reported on the upper coast in January, four in February. (The Freeport CBC total was 82.) An individual at San Antonio Dec. 19 (SH) was considered casual. Two Am. Redstarts were seen at Galveston Dec. 11 (J&JH). Three wintered in Cameron County (JCA). Considering the number of late migrant warblers noted in November, it seems likely that many of the December birds were part of a late movement and did not stay for the winter. However, until there is a systematic followup on CBC sightings we can only surmise.

**ORIOLES AND BLACKBIRDS**—A Scott's Oriole visited a feeder in San Antonio Nov. 29-Dec. 3 (RC,DC,BL,SH). Another was seen near Floresville, Wilson Co., Feb. 11 (SF). This species is rare in Texas in winter. A N. (Bullock's) Oriole visited a San Antonio feeder throughout January (BL). Boat-tailed Grackles appeared as far s. as the Sea Gun Inn on Lamar Pen. (CC,CK). This coastal species had not been seen in the Rockport area since the mid-1950s, being displaced by the Great-tailed Grackle (DW). Common Grackles invaded Rockport in late December and were conspicuous throughout the period (CC,CK). This species appeared in Falfurrias in early February (AWO) s. of its usual range. Previously hard to find in winter in the Rio Grande Delta, the Bronzed Cowbird was common in flocks of several hundred (JCA).

**FRINGILLIDS**—All seed eaters, including the usually common Pyrrhuloxia and Lark Bunting, were scarce in dry w. counties. Single Black-headed Grosbeaks were seen at Port Aransas Dec. 14-15 (WP), Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., Feb. 4 (G&BL), near Tivoli, Refugio Co., Feb. 14 (CC), and at Corpus Christi Feb. 24 (KM). Purple Finches had a good season, even reaching Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley S.P., where two were seen Feb. 8 (J&BR,WS). White-collared Seed-eaters were absent from localities where itinerant birders could expect to find them a year ago (JCA). Pine Siskins were common in n. parts of the Region but few reached San Antonio

(SH) or the c coast (KM) Most sparrow species were in above normal numbers on the upper coast and w. to Colorado County From Austin to the c. coast and w., most sparrow species were reported less than usual, with short seed crops being blamed. Savannah and Vesper sparrows were particularly abundant on Attwater Prairie Chicken N.W.R. (WAS). Harris' Sparrows were in "unprecedented numbers" from Colorado County e. to the upper coast (JM). White-crowned and White-throated sparrow numbers were generally below normal except on the upper coast. Lincoln's Sparrows were reported short in all areas.

**CORRIGENDUM**—Delete reference to Dusky Flycatcher specimen (AB 34:795)

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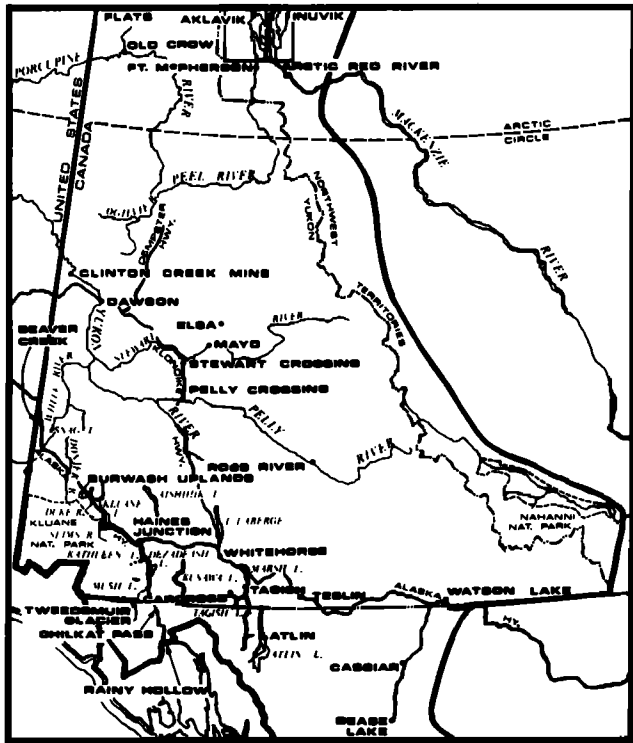
## **NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION**

**/Helmut Grünberg**

The winter season started out with new record low temperatures in many parts of the Region. In Whitehorse, the mean temperature was  $-27.6^{\circ}\text{C}$  during the month of December. This was  $12^{\circ}$  lower than in normal years. The precipitation in December was more than twice the normal amount. By contrast, January and February were very mild and had many days with temperatures above the freezing point. Precipitation was much reduced in January and February.

Forty species were reported by forty-seven observers. Both the number of species and the number of contributors were pleasantly high.

**DUCKS THROUGH PTARMIGANS**—Four Mallards seemed to have survived the winter in an open stretch of water in the



Kluane R., near km 1792, Alaska Hwy., 50 km n.w. of Destruction Bay. They were seen Dec. 26 (WH). Mallards were again observed here Mar. 14 (HG). Unspecified goldeneyes were reported as follows: one male on the Yukon R., 25 km s.e. of Whitehorse (hereafter, Whse.) Dec. 13 (HG), two males in the same area Dec. 21 (HG, KMck), two on the Kluane R., 50 km n.w. of Destruction Bay, six males and one female on the Teslin R., at Johnson's Crossing Dec. 31 (HG). Some of these were suspected of being Barrow's Goldeneyes. A ♂ Com. Goldeneye with two ♀ goldeneyes were seen on the Yukon R., 25 km s.e. of Whse., and 13 males were identified as Com. Goldeneyes at Johnson's Crossing Dec. 31 (HG). Common Mergansers were observed regularly in open water in small numbers by 6 observers.

Goshawks were plentiful this winter, probably mostly due to the high population levels of snowshoe hares, which were at or near their peaks in a 10-year cycle. Ten observers reported Goshawks from the s. and c. Yukon. The first winter report of a **Red-tailed (Harlan's) Hawk** was obtained as it was seen 15 km n.w. of Whse., Jan. 3 (RH). Even Golden Eagles stayed in several areas of the s. and c. Yukon. Up to three birds were reported by 7 observers. A Bald Eagle was noted at Burwash L., Feb. 2 (WH). One Gyrfalcon was seen at Windy Pass, Dempster Hwy., Dec. 5 (CB) and there was a pair in the same general area Feb. 6 (RF). One was observed in the Whse. area Feb. 15 (TM). A suspected observation of a Gyr was reported from Yellowknife Dec. 21 (DNI).

A Blue Grouse was observed in the Whse. area Jan. 12 (RC&NW). Spruce Grouse, not quite as common as usual, were noted by 12 observers in s. and c. Yukon, n. British Columbia and the Fort Smith area of Northwest Territories. Ruffed Grouse in small numbers were seen in Wood Buffalo N.P., Feb. 8 (SO), in the Haines Jct. area in early December (EB), in Whse., Dec. 24 & 27 (HG, SM,

KMcK) and in the lower Dempster Hwy. area every month (RF). Eight Sharp-tailed Grouse were reported from Wood Buffalo N.P., Dec. 5 (SO). Small numbers of this species were also observed in the Dawson and Flat Cr. areas in early-to-mid-December (SC, JF, *vide* RF). Willow Ptarmigan were seen in many areas by 11 observers. Although there is no doubt that Rock and White-tailed ptarmigans were present in many inaccessible areas, there was only one definite observation of a flock of 30 Rock Ptarmigan, at timberline by the Cornwall R., km 450 Dempster Hwy., Feb. 2-3 (RF).

#### DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS—

Rock Doves were seen every day in Whse. (m.ob). Up to 145 individuals were counted (HG). The Great Horned Owl was once again the most commonly observed owl. It was reported from almost all areas visited in the Region, by 13 observers. A Snowy Owl was seen as it was attacked by ravens in the Rat L. area near Yellowknife in early December (KMcl, KS). One was noted at the Dempster Hwy., near the Klondike R. bridge Dec. 7 (CB). Snowy Owls were reported as seen fairly regularly near the Yukon/N.W.T border at the Dempster Hwy., in December and early January (*vide* RF). Two Great Gray Owls were observed in Wood Buffalo N.P., Dec. 30 and one Jan. 30 (SO). Hawk Owls appeared to have been quite common in s. and c. Yukon as well as s. Northwest Territories although they were reported by only 5 observers. Two probable sightings of a Boreal Owl were reported from the lower Dempster Hwy., Dec. 11 & 22 (RF). From January on, Boreal Owls were calling regularly in the lower Dempster Hwy. area (DB, GB, *vide* RF; RF). One was calling at timberline by the Cornwall R., km 450 Dempster Hwy., Feb. 4 (RF). A Boreal Owl was seen 15 km s. of Whse., Jan. 17 as it killed a northern flying squirrel and as it spent the whole night taking it apart and eating it (ph., KO).



*Boreal Owl with northern flying squirrel, near Whitehorse, Y.T., Jan. 17, 1981. Photo/Kate Ostrom.*

A Pileated Woodpecker was observed in Ft. Smith Feb. 5 (SO). One or two Hairy Woodpeckers were seen at the lower Dempster Hwy., Feb. 9+ (RF&JKe). A ♀ Hairy Woodpecker as well as a ♀ Downy Woodpecker were observed at a feeder near Whse., throughout the season (D&LS). The Downy Woodpecker sighting was confirmed Dec. 23 (HG). A Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker was noted near Haines Jct., in December (BL, *vide* RC). Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen in Yellowknife, s. and c. Yukon as well as n. British Columbia by 12 observers.

**PERCHING BIRDS**—Gray Jay and Com. Raven were the most commonly observed species during the winter season (m.ob). Thirteen contributors from the Yukon and n. British Columbia reported sightings of Black-billed Magpies. Black-capped and Boreal chickadees were common throughout the season, the former species having been observed as far n. as the s. Ogilvie Mts. (RF). The first winter report of **Mountain Chickadee** was obtained as two individuals were seen at a feeder near Whse., throughout the season (D&LS) and confirmed Dec. 23, (HG).

Dippers were found in open stretches of water in the s. and c. Yukon by 6 observers. Eight Bohemian Waxwings were seen in downtown Whse., at -40°C Dec. 27 (HG). A flock of 34 birds was observed in Whse., Jan. 10. One bird with a slightly injured wing stayed until Jan. 18 (HG). Up to 35 House Sparrows were noted in Yellowknife throughout the season (DM).

Pine Grosbeaks were common throughout the season. During a cold spell, 74 birds were counted in Whse., Dec. 27 (m.ob.). A Gray-crowned Rosy Finch was seen in Haines Jct., in early December (BL, *vide* RC) and one in Whse. at -40°C in a small flock of Bohemian Waxwings Dec. 27 (HG). Although we are still not quite sure what a "Hoary" and what a "Common" Redpoll is and how we are supposed to classify birds that have plumage colours "in between" the two "species", we can say that generally lighter-coloured birds were observed in the Dawson/Dempster Hwy. area up to km 450 (RF) and in Yellowknife (DM). Redpolls were rare in the s. Yukon until mid-February when apparently the first migrants returned. Only a few were identified as Com. Redpolls (RC). White-winged Crossbills were nearly absent during the season. In Destruction Bay three were seen Dec. 26 and two Feb. 23 (WH). Four males and eight females were noted in Yellowknife Feb. 16 (DM).

Three Snow Buntings were seen in Dawson in mid-to-late December (JF, *vide* RF) and two Dec. 30 (RF), apparently the first winter record of this species in the c. Yukon. Up to 31 birds were seen in Whse. throughout the season (HG, SH, JS). In late February, flocks were reported along the highway near Stewart Crossing (*vide* RF).

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## NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN-INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/Thomas H. Rogers

Weather played an extremely important role in influencing bird activity during the Region's phenomenally mild winter season. Except for some cold weather in December, it was more like spring. Precipitation was generally sparse and fell mostly as rain, even into the lower mountains. Most bodies of water remained unfrozen and the lowlands had little or no snow cover. Birds exploited these conditions, with numerous late lingerers, semi-hardy species wintering, and very early spring arrivals, only the more notable of which can be included here. With much open water and apparently abundant and readily available food supplies, many species tended to remain scattered. Waterfowl wintered abundantly and farther north than normally. The "northern" finches were generally plentiful, taking advantage of an apparently excellent cone crop, which may have been better in the United States portion than in Canada. Most northerly species moved down as usual but there was some evidence that mountain species remained at higher elevations than normally. There is some concern that it will be a hot, dry summer.

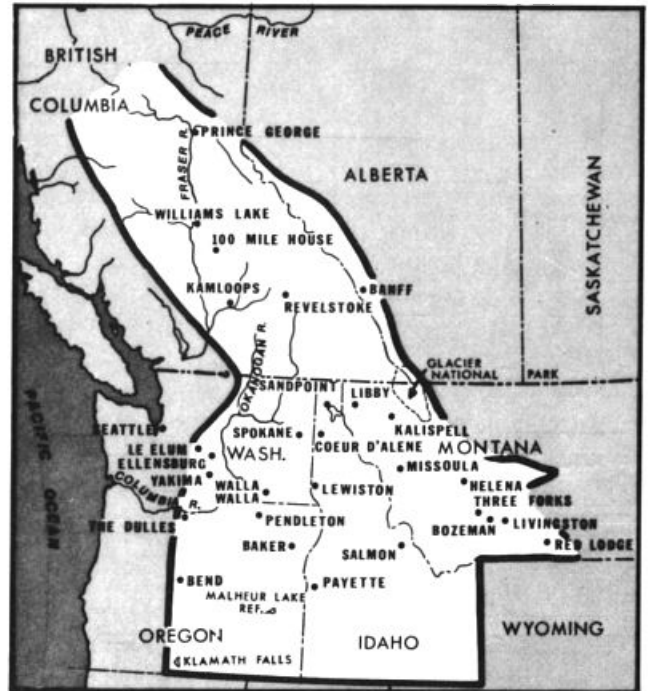
**LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS**—A meager scattering of Com. Loons, Horned and W. grebes wintered in the Region, in addition to the usual Pied-billed Grebes. Four White Pelicans apparently wintered on Am. Falls Res., in s. Idaho, a highly unusual event (CHT) and eight stayed on the Hanford Reach of the Columbia R., near Pasco, Wash., for the third winter (RP). A Double-crested Cormorant was seen flying around the N. Potholes, s.w. of Moses L., Wash., Jan. 8 (DZ). In Idaho one was along the Spokane R., near Post Falls Jan. 10 (SGS & ES) and two imm. birds were at Massacre Rocks S.P., Power Co., Jan. 31 (DT). One wintered at Kelowna, B.C. (JB).

**HERONS AND EGRETS**—British Columbia had four Cattle Egrets at Nakusp Nov. 9 (GD) and two at Oliver Nov. 1 (TF). One was sighted at a pond at the Idaho Nat'l Energy Lab, Arco, Ida., Dec. 4 (HB, *vide* EC) and the bird at Richland, Wash., was last seen that same day (REW). A new locality for the species was St. Regis, Mont., where one bird appeared Nov. 13 (DA, *vide* PLW). A Great Egret sighted at Emmett, Ida., Dec. 6 & Jan. 7 apparently wintered (A&HL). An Am. Bittern was still at Umatilla N.W.R., Umatilla, Ore., Dec. 4 (MC & NB) and one seen Dec. 11 at Malheur N.W.R., Burns, Ore., presumably wintered (ST *et al.*).

**WATERFOWL**—Three Mute Swans win-

tered on L. Okanagan at Vernon, B.C. (JG) and one was with Whistling Swans on the Columbia R., at Brewster, Wash., Dec. 24 (GB). A pair of Whistling Swans wintered at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., Lima, Mont., where up to 317 Trumpeter Swans were counted. The Feb. 10-11 aerial survey in that area revealed a record 1247 swans, up 35% over 1980. Ground checks indicated over 98% were Trumpeters. An excellent production of cygnets in Canada was indicated. Substantial numbers of Whistlers wintered in e. Washington and s. Idaho.

The Columbia Basin Waterfowl Survey in e. Washington-n.c. Oregon flown Feb. 10-11 showed increases over 1979-1980 coverage was not comparable—as follows: ducks up 444%; geese up 320%; and swans up 379%. Canada Goose numbers at Am. Falls Res., peaked at 44,000, the highest ever, and Mallard-Pintail numbers exceeded 100,000. Conversely, waterfowl numbers at Deer Flat N.W.R., Nampa, Ida., were far below normal, Canadas numbering only about 1100 (usually 9-10,000) and Mallards, 71,000 (normally about 0.5 million). Minidoka N.W.R., Rupert, Ida., had peaks of 1500+ Canadas and 20,000+ ducks, mostly Mallards, in January and Idaho's three northernmost counties' midwinter count showed nearly 14,000 ducks, mostly Redheads, and 860 geese. Calispell L., Pend Oreille Co., Wash., had 1400 Canadas Jan. 10. The spring buildup of white geese at Miller I., s. of Klamath Falls, Ore., was early with 6800 Snow Geese and 1200 Ross' (SS). One of the latter accompanied Canadas near Kelowna, B.C., Dec. 20 up to mid-February (JB, m.ob.) and the same area had an Emperor Goose Feb. 23 (BH). About 200 White-fronted Geese appeared at Conley L., e. of La Grande, Ore., Feb. 15 and 12 were with a large flock of Canadas at the Yakima R. mouth, Richland, Wash., Feb. 15. A record number of Mallards, 10,000, wintered in the Helena, Mont. area. The Lower Klamath L. area, Ore., had thousands of Pintail and Am. Wigeon in late February, 2-3 weeks early. By Feb. 20 Malheur N.W.R., had over 70,000 Pintail. A Common (Green-winged) Teal was identified at the mouth of Ladd Cr., Union Co., Ore., Feb. 15 (JE,LT). A very few Eur. Wigeon and White-winged Scoters appeared in e. Washington and a few of the former were in the Lower Klamath Falls area (SS). An unusual con-



centration of up to 38 Wood Ducks was on the Little Spokane R., n. of Spokane, Wash., during the winter (MHa) and ten wintered at Enterprise, Ore. (JE). A ♂ duck on a pond near Pocatello, Ida., was suspected of being a Tufted Duck, although the possibility existed that it might have been a Ring-necked Duck X Lesser Scaup (CHT). On L. Entiat n. of Wenatchee the large flocks of Ring-necked Ducks, normally second only to Ruddy Ducks in winter numbers, moved out about Christmas and were replaced by large flocks of scaup. McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Wash., had "thousands" of Canvasback Feb. 7 (B.M.A.S.).

**VULTURES THROUGH EAGLES**—Fort Simcoe, Wash., had a Turkey Vulture Jan. 24 (Y.A.S.) and one was near Cove, Ore., Feb. 8 (MK). Seven Swainson's Hawks were reported at Market Lake W.M.A., Roberts, Ida., Feb. 28 (EC). Several January and mid-February reports of Swainson's in c. Washington are problematical. They very well may have been Red-tailed Hawks. Washington's mid-winter Bald Eagle count was 3197, up from last year's 2564. Probably 70+ wintered at Am. Falls Res. Northern Idaho from Coeur d'Alene n. counted 169, the highest yet and the Salmon R., above and including the Middle Fork, in Idaho, had 37, compared to seven the 2 previous years. Some 10-15 wintered along the Kootenai R., in Lincoln County, Mont., and a N movement there starting about Feb. 10 produced up to 40 a day. Several appeared along the Kootenay R., near Kimberley, B.C., in late February. Some 40-50 wintered in Wallowa County, Ore., and Malheur N.W.R., had up

to 35 on Feb 20 The mid-winter census in the Klamath Basin totalled 500+. Ice-free conditions and low water levels apparently were mainly responsible for the high eagle numbers, as food in the form of ducks and fish was plentiful.

**GALLINACEOUS BIRDS**—Four White-tailed Ptarmigan in nearly full winter plumage were sighted in the Elk Cr. area of the s. Wallowa Mts., Baker Co., Ore., Nov. 2. The species was introduced into the Eagle Cap Wilderness in 1967 (JE). The only Turkeys reported were 25 near Prairie, Ida., Dec. 1 and Feb 26 (PC).

**CRANES THROUGH RAILS**—A Greater and a Lesser Sandhill Crane wintered at Malheur for the first winter records for healthy cranes there (ST *et al.*). The Wallowa Fish Hatchery, Enterprise, Ore., had two Virginia Rails through the winter (JE) and Washington had single birds Dec. 8 near Beverly and Dec 16 s. of Basin City w. of Mesa (JT). Two Soras lingered near O'Sullivan Dam, s. of Moses L., Wash., until Nov. 6 (JT).

**SHOREBIRDS AND GULLS**—Greater Yellowlegs wintered in unusually high numbers at Klamath Falls and two Spotted Sandpipers remained through December in that area along the Link R. (SS). Two or three of the latter species were along Mill Cr., e. of Walla Walla, Wash., Feb. 28 (DM). The Yakima Delta had two Least Sandpipers and 26 Dunlin Dec. 14 (REW) and one of the latter was at McNary P., Umatilla, Ore., Feb. 11 (MC). A small flock of W. Sandpipers was at Vantage, Wash., Dec. 5 (L&JG). Three first-year Glaucous Gulls appeared at Richland Dec 14 and in Pasco Jan. 10 (REW) and three first-year birds were at the Coeur d'Alene dump Jan. 18 along with an ad. **Thayer's Gull** (JA). A Thayer's was spotted among 2000± gulls on L. Ewauna, Klamath Falls Jan 30 for apparently the first record for the Klamath Basin (SS). A few Ring-billed Gulls stayed through the winter on the Clark Fork R., at Noxon, Mont. (CW) and a single adult and an imm. California or Ring-billed Gull were sighted at Helena in January (SM). Klamath Falls had an ad. **Mew Gull** in December and January, the third consecutive winter for the species there (SS).

**OWLS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS**—Barn Owls apparently wintered at Malheur and one-two were sighted at Nampa during the winter. A road-killed bird was picked up Dec 5 near Stratford, Wash., for a new location (RF) and one was near George, Wash., Nov 6 (L&JG). Eight Barn Owls were found at 8 different barns in the Twin Falls area Dec 14 (JR). Eastern Washington had many reports of Snowy Owls. One was seen repeatedly in the Coeur d'Alene area and single birds were reported for the Libby and Helena, Mont. vicinities. The only Burrowing Owl report was of one 10 mi e. of Moses L., Feb 28 (BW). An imm. Barred Owl was photographed at the Wallowa Fish Hatchery Jan 11 (VC,RA,FC *et al.*) and perhaps the same bird appeared again Feb. 16 & 22 for only the second winter occurrence for Oregon. Vernon, B.C., had one Nov. 15 (JG) Lincoln County, Mont., had several sightings (CW) and one appeared at Kootenai

N W R, Bonners Ferry, Ida., Nov 16 (LDN). An owl found dead near Sandpoint, Ida., Dec. 5 was thought to be a Barred (JM). A Great Gray Owl was reported at Otter L., near Armstrong, B.C., Dec. 21 (RB) and a female had returned to last year's nest site in the Spring Cr. area of w. Union County, Ore., by Feb. 27 (RR). Lincoln County, Mont., had two sightings of single birds in February (CW). The only Saw-whet Owls to show up were one near Selah, Wash., Jan. 31 (Y.A.S.); one found road-killed near Quincy, Wash. (L&JG), and one s. of Walla Walla in December (D&KW,PH).

Helena had an amazing Com. Nighthawk seen at close range Dec. 17 (JC, *vide* SM). A ♀ Anna's Hummingbird frequented a Boise feeder at least until Feb. 1 (A & HL,EY, m.ob.) Four at Vernon feeders disappeared in early December with the onset of colder weather (MP) and one visited a feeder in the Spokane Valley during much of December (JA, WH,THR). A Lewis' Woodpecker was seen along the Fisher R., e. of Libby Feb. 8 (CW) and very late single Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were sighted w. of Nile, Wash., Jan. 1 (Y.A.S.) and near Walla Walla (a "Red-breasted") Dec. 12 (CS). A W. Kingbird was positively identified in Colorado Gulch 8 mi s.w. of Helena Dec. 8 after nighttime temperatures as low as -6°F (GN).

**JAYS THROUGH WRENS**—Only two Blue Jays were reported, one that wintered at Libby (CW) and one sighted at Spokane Dec. 21 (WH). A wandering Steller's Jay showed up at Frenchman Hills Wasteway w. of Potholes Res., 50 mi from any coniferous forest Feb. 20 (GC). A Com. Crow, rare in the Klamath Falls vicinity, appeared there Feb. 25-26 (SS). About 20 stayed through the period in the Wallowa Valley, where they very rarely winter (FC). A 5-hour hike along Frazer Cr., e. of Twisp, Wash., Dec. 15 revealed 75± Clark's Nutcrackers feeding on ponderosa pine seeds (RF) and the species was abundant in Lincoln County, Mont., through the winter (CW). Four Black-capped Chickadees, rare in the Klamath Basin, were sighted along the Wood R., s. of Ft. Klamath Jan. 24 (SS) and one in Richland Jan. 1 was a rare occurrence (REW). Boreal Chickadees appeared at several spots in Lincoln County, Mont. (CW). Two Wrentits were along the s. end of the Link R., Klamath County Jan. 30 for a new locality (SS). At least eight Bewick's Wrens were observed Feb. 7 on McNary W.M.A., at the mouth of the Walla Walla R., near Wallula, Wash., Feb. 7 (B.M.A.S.).

**THRUSHES THROUGH WAXWINGS**—American Robins were common to abundant in the Helena and Bozeman, Mont. vicinities but apparently were scarce elsewhere, perhaps because n. birds did not move down. A ♂ Varied Thrush passed through Pocatello, Ida., Feb. 27 (JJ). A few W. Bluebirds apparently wintered at Spokane, the highest number, nine, Jan. 12. A male was near Imnaha, Ore., Jan. 25 (JE *et al.*) and four were at Pentiction, B.C., Jan. 31 (TW). A group of six Mountain Bluebirds was in sagebrush between Burns, Ore., and Malheur N.W.R., Jan. 5 (DT). Some Ruby-crowned Kinglets wintered in the Troy and Libby areas of Lincoln County, Mont. (CW). The Lower Klamath

L. area had an unexpectedly high count of Water Pipits with 78 Jan. 31 (SS). The species was noted near Leavenworth, Wash., Dec. 3 (L&JG) and was reported at Rupert, Ida. (WHS). In Montana Bohemian Waxwing numbers were high in Lincoln County and at Helena but average at Bozeman. They were scarce in the Spokane area but Walla Walla had large flocks mixed with Cedars and n.e. Oregon had many Bohemians, including a flock of 1300 at Joseph during December. Cedar Waxwing numbers in the latter area and at Wenatchee, Wash., were well above normal. Cedars outnumbered Bohemians in the Rupert area. Small numbers of both species wintered at Pocatello, where Cedars seldom winter.

**WARBLERS AND BLACKBIRDS**—An Orange-crowned Warbler again wintered along the Link R., in the Klamath Falls area (SS) and one appeared in Richland Dec. 14 and 25 (REW). One was sighted at Umatilla N.W.R., Feb. 10 (MC). A Jan. 15 sighting of 300 ± 100 ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbirds in a stubblefield near the N. Potholes Res. was unprecedented. They were mixed in with 4000 ♂ Red-winged Blackbirds (RF). Tricolored Blackbirds were much more numerous than normal in the Klamath Falls area. Besides 810 on the CBC, 750 were found at a different location Jan. 29. The species normally returns in early to mid-February (SS).

**FINCHES**—Evening Grosbeaks appeared in high or at least normal numbers in the Libby-Fortine area, and in n.e. Oregon around Enterprise, around Klamath Falls and at Kimberly but were scarce or absent elsewhere. A Purple Finch visited a Livingston, Mont., feeder Jan. 11 for the only report (PDS,EH,RW,JS). Very few Cassin's Finches were reported except for n.e. Oregon, which had more than usual, and Lincoln County, Mont., where Fortine had its first winter record (WW) and Libby, a few sightings (CW). A small flock of House Finches was around Bozeman all winter (JS). Pine Grosbeak appearances were sparse except in the Libby and Troy areas of Montana and in the Wallowa Mts., Union Co., Ore., which had 5 observations totaling 11 birds (JE). The Grand Coulee-Moses Coulee area of c Washington and the Enterprise, Ore. areas had good numbers of Gray-crowned Rosy Finches and a mixed flock of Gray-crowned and Black rosy finches found shelter among the basalt cliffs along the Boise R., below Lucky Peak Dam in January (A&HL, J&NH,MRC, m.ob.). Common Redpolls made a good showing at Libby, with three believed to be Hoar's (CW); at Waits L., near Valley, Wash.; at Mt. Spokane, and on the Yakima CBC. The species, very rare in Oregon, appeared at Wallowa L., a flock of 40+ Dec. 6 (MH); a flock of 45+ was at Lostine Canyon, Wallowa County Dec. 12, and two were in a flock of Pine Siskins near Catherine Creek S.P., Union Co., Feb. 28 (JE,JJo, BD). Very few appeared elsewhere. Pine Siskins wintered in abundance in the n. part of the Region and in n.e. Oregon and even at Lakeview, Ore. Red Crossbills were in good numbers in the conifer belt from the Okanogan Valley of Washington e. through Spokane into Kootenai County, Ida., into Lin-

coln County, Mont., and the Helena area and also in n.e. Oregon. Up to 20 White-winged Crossbills were sighted at Mt. Spokane in December and January (JA,BW).

**SPARROWS**—Brown Towhees were found at two locations near Klamath Falls Dec. 27 and Jan. 27 for the first winter records there (SS). A Rufous-sided Towhee stayed at Libby until about Feb. 10. The species seldom winters there (CW). Umatilla N.W.R., had two Savannah Sparrows Dec. 14 and one Feb. 10 (MC,NB). A Lark Sparrow visited a Walla Walla feeder Dec. 9 (RM). Dark-eyed Juncos stayed at Libby and Fortine in unusual numbers and were the most abundant bird in riparian habitat in the Columbia Basin of Washington. A flock of eight wintered at Kimberley, B.C. (MVW). Three or more Sage Sparrows were back in the Dodson Road area by the N. Potholes by Feb. 28. Their sagebrush habitat in e. Washington apparently is being rapidly converted to wheatland (BW). Tree Sparrows were reported as quite common in n.e. Oregon especially in Wallowa County (JE) and up to 20 were seen at Umatilla N.W.R., during the winter. Bruneau Dunes S.P., Bruneau, Ida., had a few Jan. 17 and in February (MRC, A&HL, m.ob.) for the only other records except the Chewalah CBC. The only Harris' Sparrows besides the Chewalah CBC bird were three at Vernon most of the period (JQ) and an imm. bird with juncos near Joseph, Ore., Jan. 25 (JE,NB). White-crowned Spar-

rows were abundant in the Yakima vicinity and common at Rupert. In the Nampa area up to 53 were counted Jan. 4 and a few appeared at Spokane. Yakima, Wapato and Glead, Wash., had a few sightings of Golden-crowned Sparrows and the same general area had a few Fox Sparrows (Y.A.S.). A Lincoln's Sparrow appeared near Union, Ore., Feb. 7 (JE,JGi) and species, normally very rare in the Klamath Basin in winter, numbered six on the Klamath Falls CBC. One wintered in Harrison, Mont. (PM). Two **Swamp Sparrows**, well identified by an observer fully familiar with the species, were at L. Lowell near Nampa Dec. 23 (DT).

A ♂ **McCown's Longspur** in winter plumage was studied at length Jan. 31 at Lower Klamath N.W.R. This sighting was preceded by sightings of three on the California side of the state line Jan. 9-14 (SS). The Klamath Basin had normal numbers of wintering Lapland Longspurs with a high count of 110 on Lower Klamath N.W.R., Jan. 31. Flocks of 300-500 were seen on the California side. The Helena Valley had a single sighting of a flock of 25 in early February (SM). "Tremendous numbers" of Snow Buntings were reported in Wallowa County, Ore. A flock of 1200 wintered near Zumwalt and 400 frequented the Imnaha vicinity (JE,FC *et al.*). The Reardan-Davenport, Wash. area had flocks all winter, the largest, 375 Jan. 2 and the last sighting 250 Feb. 21 (JA). A few were in the Libby area in December and January (CW) and three flocks of 20± each were sighted on Mo-

nida Pass, Monita, Mont., Feb. 14 & 16 (GH).

**OBSERVERS CITED**—James Acton, Ralph Anderson, Deborah Anson, Ruth Blattner, Nancy Bock, Blue Mountain Audubon Society (B.M.A.S.), George Brady, Howard Brower, Jim Burbidge, Gretchen Call, Eddie Chew, Vic Coggins, Mark R. Collie, Frank Conley, Priscilla Cook, Craig & Marion Corder, Jim Cornish, Gary Davidson, Bill Dowdy, Joe Evanich, Thelma Forty, Ron Friesz, Jeff Gilligan (JGi), Larry & Jacques Goodhew, James Grant (JG), Warren Hall, Morey Haggin (MHa), Eve Hayes, Mac Huff (MH), James & Naomi Heckathorn, Paul Hoeter, Brian Holman, George Holton, Joe Jeppson (JJ), John Johnson (JJo), Marianne Kaplan, Al & Hilda Larson, Pat McKinney, Jack McNeel, Rose Marsh, Sid Martin, Dirk Muse, Larry D. Napier, Gene Nixon, Mary Paul, Rich Phillips, John Quirk, Thomas H. Rogers, Ron Rohweder, Jeff Rupprecht, Connie Sherer, W.H. Shillington, P.D. Skaar, Jim Sparks, Esther Stewart, Shirley G. Sturts, Steve Summers, Jim Tabor, Dan Taylor, Steve Thompson, Larry Thornburgh, C.H. Trost, Don & Kathy Webster, Ron Weeks, Winton Weydemeyer, Bart Whelton, Mildred V. White, Ted Whiting, Carl Wolf, Robert E. Woodley, Philip L. Wright, Yakima Audubon Society (Y.A.S.), Eric Yensen, Don Ziegler.—**THOMAS H. ROGERS, E. 10820 Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206.**

## MOUNTAIN WEST

/Hugh E. Kingery

Regional observers credit an unprecedentedly mild winter for a lengthy recital of out-of-season records. Except for a snowy belt in northern Utah and northwestern Wyoming, the Region passed the winter season with very little precipitation and very warm temperatures. Mountain snowpacks stood at 20-30% of normal at the end of February; extensive bare slopes, both mountain and plains, provided unusual winter feeding areas. Typical of the Region, Denver had its warmest December since 1933. (In the Salt Lake valley, the weather was chillier because thick clammy fog lay almost continuously from November 19 to January 19.) Many reservoirs remained open through all or most of the season. Denver area reservoirs finally froze, briefly, during a cold spell in early February; some coots and mergansers were actually frozen into the ice at Chatfield Reservoir (F&JJ). The other wintering water birds disappeared.

This extraordinary weather was credited with out-of-season records like lingering loons and grebes, a pelican, night herons, bitterns, and gulls; unusual wintering cormorants, doves, wrens, meadowlarks, sparrows, and large numbers of waterfowl; unseasonal species like Lesser Yellowlegs, gnatcatchers, warblers, Bobolinks, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Savannah Sparrows; Sage Grouse drumming in January; and numerous early returnees. Another manifestation of the

mildness was a lack of incursions from the north by species like waxwings and Snow Buntings (although we report seven Snowy Owls and a front of White-winged Crossbills) and from the mountains by species like Mountain Chickadees, finches, and grosbeaks. Similarly, observations of many normally wintering species decreased, particularly ground feeders which could find abundant natural food on snow-free ground remote from ponds and dwellings. Examples include Horned Larks, juncos, and rosy finches.

**Christmas Bird Counts** (hereafter, CBC): The report which follows includes frequencies calculated for several species on a party-hour basis. The figures exclude Nevada, unless otherwise specified; they cover counts from 1972-1980.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**—Common Loons stayed into December in Sheridan, Wyo., Ruby Lakes N.W.R., Nev., and Grand Jct., Colo., and even to late January at Denver (F&JJ,J&JC). The Denver area also had at least three Arctic Loons in late



December, the last report was of two Jan. 5 (†PP). A Red-throated Loon at Pueblo Jan. 21 (E&MC) possibly was the same one seen on the CBC there. During December L. Mead had 5 species of grebes, headlined by the first Red-necked Grebe photographed in Nevada present Dec. 5-Jan. 3 (VM,CL). Coloradans reported a handful of Horned and W. grebes through the winter. Eared Grebes remained into late December in n. Nevada and around the Great Salt L., which had 1200 Dec. 4 (JN); they returned in mid-February to Carson City, Nev., and Great Salt L. (BP,JAB). Sheridan had a record late W. Grebe Dec. 16 (MC,HD). Near Denver 30 Pied-billed Grebes gathered Jan. 5 (PP). At St. George, a

White Pelican wintered at a golf course, untroubled by the golfers. This gave s. Utah its second winter record—both on golf courses—the other a dead one picked up December 1979 (SH). A Double-crested Cormorant which spent December at Denver was joined by a second Jan. 17; they stayed through Feb. 7 when the reservoir froze (F&JJ *et al.*). Observers noted Am. Bitterns in all 3 months at Ruby L. and Fish Springs N.W.R., and Ogden Bay W.M.A., Utah (SB,LM,JAB).

**WATERFOWL**—In Utah, U.D.W.R. reported roughly twice as many ducks as last year; the low was 78,734 in early January. Green-winged Teal comprised one-half to one-third of the wintering birds. Coloradans noted more species of ducks, but not as high numbers as usual. Monte Vista and Alamosa N.W.R.s wintered 5000 ducks, half the usual; the rest may have dispersed into the valley (JK). Wintering Whistling Swans included 400-600 at Bear River N.W.R., 30 at Ruby L., one at Colorado Spgs. (RB), and two at Carbondale, Colo. (†VZ). Wintering Trumpeter Swans numbered 20-45 at Ruby L., and 90 in n.w. Wyoming. Fort Collins, Colo., a center for Canada Geese in the Front Range, had fewer wintering in the city, probably because so many reservoirs farther e. remained ice-free. A Ross' Goose wintered at the same St. George golf course which harbored the pelican (SH,†JAB), and one was at Grand Jct., in January (BT). The St. George area also wintered 600-1000 Ring-necked Ducks (SH). Both Com. and Barrow's goldeneyes numbers dropped from the usual, presumably because they remained farther n. Five Oldsquaws stayed at Denver Dec. 13-Jan. 17



*Oldsquaw, Chatfield Res., Colo., Jan. 10, 1981. Photo/Jan Justice.*

and one was last seen Feb. 7 (F&JJ *et al.*). Winter scoters included a White-winged at Boulder Dec. 22 (BJ) and one at Antelope I. Causeway in the Great Salt L., Feb. 18-19 (†E&RS,GK), and a Surf at L. Mead Dec. 5-Jan.6 (CL,VM,ph.). A Hooded Merganser at Dubois Jan. 26 & Feb. 9 was the first Wyoming winter report submitted in the last 9 years (MB). The Denver area had 4000 Com. Mergansers in late December (D.F.O.).

**HAWKS, EAGLES**—Raptor averages on CBCs all increased. Accipiters maintained their recent increase; the 0.054/party-hour equaled last year, up from an 8-year average of 0.037/party-hour. Red-taileds and Rough-leggeds increased to 0.15 and 0.19/party-hour, up from 8-year averages of 0.10 and 0.17/party-hour respectively. Marsh Hawks

increased from a 0.10 average to 0.17, the highest rate in 9 years, probably reflecting the mild winter and perhaps a more northerly wintering pattern.

Despite the CBC numbers, observers in n. Wyoming, w. Colorado, and Utah perceived a decline in raptor numbers; the reverse occurred in the e. Colorado plains. Las Vegas observers found four different Red-shouldered Hawks, three of which wintered (VM). Of three Swainson's Hawks reported, observers provided details on one, at Dinosaur Nat'l Mon., Utah, Feb. 21 (E&RS). Reports of Ferruginous Hawks increased in e. Colorado; they were scarce at Cedar City, Utah. The winter survey produced 1761 Bald Eagles in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado (742, 481, and 538 respectively), 30-35% immatures. The totals are about the same as last year, although Utah's population was higher and Colorado's lower. The eagles shifted from traditional territories to new areas, and dispersed more (U.F.O., BO,PGo). On Feb. 28 one roost in n. Utah had 369 Balds, and the Casper roosts had over 200, about an 8:1 ratio of Balds to Golden. Observers' reports on Marsh Hawks reflected the same pattern shown on CBCs, with more birds farther n. than in the usual winter. Gyrfalcons appeared near Sterling, Colo., Jan. 2-4 (†JVR,PG, D.F.O.) and Sheridan Jan. 4-11 (DB,PW).

**GROUSE TO PARROTS**—Sage Grouse began drumming at Jarbidge, Nev., by Jan. 19 (EB). An early Whooping Crane reached Jensen, Utah Feb. 15 (J&CM), the same day Sandhills arrived in numbers in the San Luis Valley, Colo. By the end of February 5000-6000 Sandhills were there, and they had reached Ruby L., Lund, Nev., and Jackson, Wyo. (SB,MC,BR). Only average numbers of Killdeer and Com. Snipe wintered, although the latter included one at Steamboat Spgs., Colo., Feb. 7 feeding on newly-hatched brine flies at a warm spring (CA). Logan, Utah observers found 1-2 Lesser Yellowlegs Jan. 11-Feb. 14 (KA,AG,†RA). Las Vegas' first migrating sandpipers were a Greater Yellowlegs and three Least Sandpipers Feb. 28 (VM). Farmington Bay Ref., Utah had a Glaucous Gull Feb. 15-22 (RM,DSh,JAB); e. Colorado had fewer than usual. A first-year Glaucous-winged Gull stayed at L. Mead Dec. 7-20; 1-2 immatures have been there 7 of the last 10 years. Also at L. Mead the third-year W. Gull, reported last fall, wintered (VM). Denver and Las Vegas reported 1-3 Thayer's Gulls through the winter. California Gulls stayed in e. Colorado through December and had arrived back in White Pine County, Nev., by Feb. 20 (MP). The Mew Gull at L. Mead Dec. 13-Feb. 21 was the first adult seen there since 1978; singles of various ages have occurred in 6 of the last 10 years. The 20 Bonaparte's Gulls at Denver Dec. 7 (JR) gave Colorado its third December record in 5 years. Some of the fall's Black-legged Kittiwakes in e. Colorado stayed into mid-December (BRi,TJ,PG) and several wintered at L. Mead, peaking at 11 immatures Dec. 9. A pair of Monk Parakeets that wintered in a nest along the s. Platte R., in Denver apparently were escapees; one sported a leg band (KH,F&JJ *et al.*).

**OWLS, WOODPECKERS**—Snowy Owls appeared for 3 observations in Wyoming and

4 in e. Colorado. The usual Pygmy Owls included one at Heber City, Utah Feb. 14-22 (E&RS,JAB), the only report we have from n. Utah in 3 years. Saw-whet Owls probably occur more frequently than Mountain West observers find them; during the past 12 months 9 observations of 11 Saw-whets were reported (1 Nevada, 3 Utah, 1 Wyoming, 4 Colorado). An Anna's Hummingbird patronized a Las Vegas feeder until Dec. 14 (CT). Common Flickers held fairly steady on CBCs, with this year's 0.68/party-hour close to the average. Utah observers regard the Lewis' Woodpecker as quite rare today, although it occurred commonly 40 years ago; hence the six seen Jan. 10 and five Feb. 8 near Wallsburg elicited several comments (E&RS, JAB, MW). The mild winter produced more Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers than usual with two in Jackson, Wyo., and 12 in Colorado—including one at Eagle Dec. 7 and 1-3 wintering in Boulder (JM,PC). CBCs showed 0.12 Hairy Woodpeckers/party-hour (average) and 0.19 Downies (up from average).

**FLYCATCHERS TO NUTHATCHES**—A Cassin's Kingbird had reached Overton, Nev., by Feb. 7 (JAB). A burned mesquite grove at Ft. Mohave, Nev., had only one bird Dec. 13—an unusual Ash-throated Flycatcher (VM). Say's Phoebe reached Ouray N.W.R., Utah Feb. 11-12 (MLa) and Delta, Colo., Feb. 27 (MJ). Observers generally saw fewer Horned Larks, possibly because the large flocks did not concentrate along roadsides as much as in snowier winters. Numbers did increase in February, with two different counts in n.e. Colorado Jan. 17 of 5000 and 8100 (F.A.C., JR). Davis Dam, Nev., had very few swallows this winter, with the only one high count of 700 Trees Feb. 28 (VM). Cliff Swallows were building nests at Davis Dam Feb. 28, extremely early (VM). No movements of jays occurred this winter, and fewer called at Regional feeders. The CBC average for Steller's Jays of 0.6/party-hour dropped from the 8-year average of 0.98/party-hour, while Black-billed Magpies occurred at the average 3.2/party-hour. Common Crows have increased their Regional numbers over the past few years. All 4 states reported flocks like the 60 mixed with Piñon Jays at Pioche, Nev., Feb. 12 and various-sized groups at mountain towns like Steamboat Spgs., Grand L., Winter Park and Monte Vista, Colo. Flocks of 200-500 flew over Cedar City 3 times Jan. 28-Feb. 27; "I have seen crows only two times previously here." (SH). CBCs recorded Black-capped Chickadees in average numbers (1.18/party-hour) but fewer Mountain Chickadees (0.91/party-hour *cf.* an average 1.37/party-hour). The latter likely stayed in the high country forests. White-breasted Nuthatch reports increased; the Longmont/Lyons/Berthoud/Loveland area had six mountain birds last year and 32 plains observations this year (JC).

**WRENS TO WAXWINGS**—A House Wren wintered in semi-abandoned buildings in the Oquirrh Mts., s. of the Great Salt L., Oct. 27-Feb. 2 (E&RS). Among the Long-billed Marsh Wrens reported were six at an artesian well in San Juan County, Utah, Jan. 18 (AMc). Nevada reported three Rock Wrens, at Eureka Jan. 31 and Wheeler Peak

and Pioche Feb. 16 & 19 (JE,MC). Single Brown Thrashers apparently wintered at Colorado Spgs., and Lyons, Colo. (RB,MG). Two Sage Thrashers at Las Vegas Jan. 21 were over a month early, as was a possible one at Eureka Feb. 22 (VM,JE). American Robins wintered throughout regional cities in sizable flocks—even in mountain towns like Eagle, Gilman, McCoy, and Eldora, Colo., Jackson, and Cody, Wyo. A Varied Thrush seen at Ft. Collins Dec. 26 did not stay for the CBC the next day (RBr). A few flocks of 15-25 W. Bluebirds wintered at Durango and singles occurred at Lyons and Cañon City, Colo., Jan. 8 & 27 (HL,DMA). Large numbers of Mountain Bluebirds that winter in portions of the Region, began returning to other parts in numbers in February; scattered birds appeared in late January. A remarkable three Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were at Delta, Colo., Jan. 11 flycatching and picking along sagebrush for insects (MJ). Several unusual January Ruby-crowned Kinglets appeared, including two at Glenwood Spgs., Colo. (VZ). A Sprague's Pipit at Ridgway, Colo., Jan. 14 behaved like a Dipper (JRG). Few Bohemian Waxwings visited the Region except in the usual n. Wyoming tier. Southernmost records were at Heber City, Utah, Dec. 21 (J&BM), Ridgway Dec. 5 (JRG), and Alma, Colo., Dec. 29 (CLC).

**WARBLERS, BLACKBIRDS**—St. George, Utah had up to five Orange-crowned Warblers seen/day, compared to the usual winter complement of one/day (SH), but at Davis Dam only one was found during the winter (VM). Single Orange-crowns were at Boulder Dec. 13-16 (RVZ) and Grand Jct., Jan. 13 (MF). A few Yellow-rumped Warblers stayed into the winter, including overwintering birds at Sheridan and Logan, but most occurred in the usual fringe of the winter range. Two Com. Yellowthroats were at St. George Feb. 14 (MW); one was at Colorado Spgs., Feb. 7-28 (RB). One of the winter's amazing aberrations came with the brief stay of three ♂ Bobolinks in nearly full breeding plumage in a farmyard outside Berthoud, Colo., Jan. 28 (†CC). Western Meadowlarks probably wintered at Sheridan and gave Jackson its first winter record Dec. 8-10 (HD,BR). Jackson also had an early Yellow-headed Blackbird Feb. 23 (DK). Red-winged Blackbirds had set up singing posts throughout the Region by mid-February, 2-4 weeks earlier than usual. A Rusty Blackbird wintered at Jackson Dec. 20-Feb. 28+ (BR,ph.). Common Grackles probably wintered at Ft. Collins and Berthoud (RAR,G&WF).



*Rusty Blackbird, Jackson's Hole, Wyo., Dec. 20-Feb. 28+.* Photo/Ellen Winger.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS**—At Berthoud one ♀ Black-headed Grosbeak came to a feeder daily in November and December; a second female joined it in late December and a third arrived in February. By Apr. 8 two remained (†G&WF,CC,IA). Evening Grosbeaks did not winter in notable numbers anywhere, although they did occur throughout the Region. Cassin's Finches also were scarce, although they wintered at Eureka for the first time and at Cedar City in flocks of 100-200, compared with flocks of 20 during a normal winter (AB,SH). House Finches increased in CBC abundance from an average 2.1/party-hour to 2.7/party-hour. On s. Nevada CBCs, they tripled their abundance levels from last year from 1.21 to 3.36/party-hour. Flocks of rosy finches declined at feeders, probably taking advantage of bare ground in the high country. Only a handful of Com. Redpolls visited; high count was 94 at Sheridan Jan. 13 (HD,MC) and southernmost was one at a feeder in Manitou Spgs., Colo., Dec. 6 (RB). Among them in late February in Moose, Wyo., was a reported Hoary Redpoll (SW). Most observers sensed a shortage of Pine Siskins, but they arrived in force in February at Eldora: "Chickadees, nuthatches, and even jays are having trouble getting to feeders. I know of no other year we have had them in such large numbers, or had them return this early." (GS). American Goldfinches remained in n. Wyoming with flocks around Jackson and Sheridan. Four Front Range plains cities—Longmont, Loveland, Ft. Collins and Colorado Spgs., reported White-winged Crossbills Nov. 30-Jan. 2 (B.A.S.†JC,R&BC,B&FK,RB,R&JW). The two Savannah Sparrows near Denver Dec. 28 may provide Colorado its first winter record (†JVR). More Black-throated Sparrows wintered at Las Vegas than usual (VM). Six Sage Sparrows Feb. 18 at Great Salt L., provided a surprising record (†E&RS). CBC counts of juncos plummeted from an 8-year average of 6.0 to 4.51/party-hour; the open winter probably caused them to disperse. CBCs reported an increase in Tree Sparrows over last year, an above-average 2.82/party-hour. CBCs had a threefold increase of White-crowned Sparrows from 1.76 to 5.16/party-hour; although 17 of 22 counts reporting them showed increases, two huge counts accounted for most of the increase. Reports of White-throated Sparrows came from 7 Colorado locations, plus Casper, Logan, and Beaver Dam Wash and Washington County, Utah. Although they surely occurred in Wyoming, the only Snow Buntings reported drifted into Utah as seen

on the Bear River CBC and s. to Provo with 27 on Feb. 7-9 (MW,DSH).

**ADDENDUM**—This report omits a number of out-of-season rarities which would add to the winter's anomalies, but which came in without sufficient details. Most are no doubt good records. They included Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Broad-winged Hawk, Ospreys, Greater Yellowlegs, E. and W. kingbirds, Palm Warbler and W. Tanager.

Also, the volume of unseasonal records has caused me to omit many observer initials which I might otherwise use; the alternative is lines and lines of initials:

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## SOUTHWEST REGION

/Kenneth V. Rosenberg, John P. Hubbard, and Gary H. Rosenberg

Throughout the Region, contributors agreed unanimously that this winter was unusually mild, and most commented on its dryness. At 8000 ft elevation near Flagstaff, Coons described the season as "decidedly pacific", with even the San Francisco peaks

"void of their normal blanket of white for most of the period". Down at 1100 ft, at Phoenix, temperature exceeded 90°F frequently in December, and the "cold" snap usually anticipated by mid-January never came.

The results, as expected, were the opportunistic lingering and attempted wintering by many migratory species. The following report is largely a listing of "rare-in-winter" birds representing nearly every taxonomic group.



Superimposed on this consistency was the occurrence of several northerly species that are unexpected even in a cold year. To summarize the general avian trends of the season; waterfowl were below average in numbers, insectivores of several types were more numerous and widespread than usual, frugivores (e.g., bluebirds) invaded many lowland areas, and in Arizona montane finches were virtually nonexistent and lowland sparrows were scarce in the grasslands but abundant in agricultural areas.

**LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL**—The identification of an imm. **Red-throated Loon** in Albuquerque in January was confirmed by several experts, thus finally substantiating the species in New Mexico (†D. Stahlecker *et al.*, ph., DH, R.L. Teuber). Three species of loons wintered on L. Havasu in the lower Colorado River Valley (hereafter, L.C.V.), with another **Red-throated Loon** present Dec. 23-Feb. 21 (KK *et al.*, ph., JW, MK) representing only the fifth Arizona record.

An unusually large concentration of W. Grebes was 750+ at Elephant Butte L., N. Mex., Dec. 28; of the 375 ± that were identified to color phase, all but one were dark-phase (D&SH). A high count of ten Horned Grebes on L. Havasu Jan. 9 (MK, CR) was exceptional.

Two Red-billed Tropicbirds were off Puerto Peñasco, Sonora Jan. 3 (ph., ST, LT *et al.*); this species breeds on islands in the Gulf of California. White Pelicans do not normally winter in Arizona, so 19 at Painted Rock Dam through January (RB, D. Baker) were



*Red-throated Loon, Tingley Beach, Albuquerque, N.M., Jan. 25, 1981. Photo/Ross L. Teuber.*

noteworthy. Three to four Double-crested Cormorants at Morgan L., N. Mex., Dec. 25-27 and Feb. 28 (AN) represented the first winter records of this species in San Juan County. White-faced Ibis are expected in very small numbers in s. Arizona in such a mild winter, but a flock of 25 at Painted Rock Dam Jan. 10 (RB) was unprecedented.

An adult and two imm. Whistling Swans were discovered on the Salt R., at Phoenix Dec. 23 (AH); the adult and one immature remained until Feb. 28+, despite being periodically shot at

(m.ob., ph., KR, ST). Six Whistling Swans also wintered in the L.C.V., at Parker (MK *et al.*), and up to three were present on the Rio Grande near Española (E. Espinoza *et al.*).

Three small Canada Geese, perhaps of the race *hutchinsii*, were at Zuni Dec. 10 (†JT); this type of goose is rather rare in New Mexico, especially in the w. A White-fronted Goose wintered near Hereford for one of the few s.e. Arizona records (DD). A "Blue" Goose was at Topock, Ariz., with a flock of Snows Dec. 6, as were two Ross' Geese in the same flock (AH, ph., KR). Other single Ross' Geese were at Sun Lakes s. of Phoenix Dec. 9 through January (B. Brouhard, PB *et al.*, ph., ST) Farmington, N. Mex., Feb. 7 (AN) for a second local record, and near Cliff Dec. 4 (R. Drewien, RAF) for a local first.

Phoenix's Eur. Wigeon returned for its third consecutive winter (m.ob.). Up to five probable Greater Scaup were at Zuni Feb. 7 & 21 (†JT); there are few definitive records for New Mexico. As usual, small numbers of this species were found in the L.C.V. (MK *et al.*). An imm. ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneye** was killed by a hunter near Aztec, N. Mex., Dec. 12 (*vide* E.M. Martin); a wing was saved for one of the few verified state records. This species did not appear at Davis Dam this winter but a high count of ten was noted farther s., at Parker Dam Feb. 6 (LA, MK).

An Oldsquaw was at Parker, Ariz., Dec. 17-20 (BA). Continuing last fall's list of scoter sightings, Arizona's two rarer species wintered in the L.C.V.; two White-winged on L. Havasu Jan. 9-Feb. 25 and an imm. ♂ **Black Scoter** at Parker Dam Jan. 9-Apr. 1 (ph., MK *et al.*). Notable was a **Red-breasted Merganser** at Zuni, N. Mex., Feb. 19-21 and a **Hooded** there Dec. 2 (†JT). There were 17 records of Hooded Merganser in the lower Pecos Valley, N. Mex. (hereafter, L.Pec.V.) during the period (WCH *et al.*), and a flock of 12, including one male, wintered below Parker Dam, Ariz. (MK, CR *et al.*).

**RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS**—A Turkey Vulture at Las Cruces, N. Mex., Dec. 20 (S. Jajola *et al.*) was late. More than the usual number of "Harlan's" Hawks were reported. In New Mexico acceptable records came from the L.Pec.V. (†WCH *et al.*), Cochiti L., near Cliff, and Ft. Sumner (†JPH). In Arizona singles were at Parker (DStj), Phoenix (RB), and Nogales (GHR *et al.*).



*Ross' Goose, Sun Lakes, Ariz., Jan. 12, 1981. Photo/Scott B. Terrill.*



*White-winged Scoters, Lake Havasu, Ariz., Feb. 6, 1981. Photo/Mark Kasperczk.*



*Imm. ♂ Black Scoter, Parker Dam., Ariz., Feb. 6, 1981. Photo/Mark Kasperczk.*

Noteworthy were continued Harris' Hawk sightings between Rodeo and Road Forks, N. Mex., with 2-4 there Dec. 6 & 8 (WS, RM). Also notable were singles at Alamogordo, N. Mex., Dec. 24 (L. Woltering) and near Kingman, Ariz., in December (R. Hall.).

The statewide Bald Eagle count for Jan. 2-26 in New Mexico was 250 ± birds, vs. 150 ± in January 1980. However, coverage was better this year and the increase for areas similarly covered was only 19.5% (JPH *et al.*). Six Ospreys near Yuma Dec. 19 was an excellent winter count. Extralimital Caracara reports included an immature fishing in the Santa Maria R., n. of Wickenburg, Ariz., Jan. 7 (ph., BM, W. Kepner) and an immature at Cibola N.W.R., Dec. 8 (†T. Sodderquist); the latter a first sighting for the L.C.V., in over 50 years. An imm. Peregrine roosted on a skyscraper in downtown Phoenix, making local news.

Sixteen Whooping Cranes were present in the c. Rio Grande Valley Jan. 29, leaving 3-5 unaccounted for (U.S.F. & W.S.). However, one Whooper appeared with Sandhills at Willcox Playa, Ariz., Dec. 21-Feb. 8 (ph., K.

Bahti-Arix. G&F.). This banded individual was a second-year bird that wintered last year at Las Lunas, N. Mex., summered at Kilgot, Ida., and was last observed on migration at Alamosa, Colo., Nov. 15.

Wintering Sandhill Cranes near Cliff, N. Mex., reached 320 Feb. 4 (RAF), which is a high for that area, and nine birds w. of Farmington Jan. 4 (E. Fox) constituted only the second local record. As expected in a mild year, Yuma Clapper Rails wintered in small numbers n. to Imperial Dam.

**SHOREBIRDS AND LARIDS**—Forty Mountain Plovers at Willcox Playa Jan. 10 (KK *et al.*, ph., LT,ST) was only the second report in s.e. Arizona this century. Another flock was n. of Puerto Peñasco, Sonora Jan. 4 (RW *et al.*, ph., ST), where also rare. Several shorebird species that are not normally present in the Region in winter were detected this year. These included two Marbled Godwits near Yuma, Ariz., Jan. 31 (J. Braley), two Long-billed Curlews at L. McMillan, N. Mex., Dec. 3 with 71 near Artesia Dec. 7 (WCH *et al.*), and single Am. Avocets at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Jan. 14, L. McMillan, N. Mex., Dec. 9 (WCH *et al.*) and near Douglas, Ariz., Jan. 2 (AM). Spotted Sandpipers are rare in winter in New Mexico, so notable were singles in the Caballo L.-Percha Dam area Jan. 16 & 24 and Feb. 26 (DM *et al.*), and in the L. Pec. V. (SW *et al.*).

Two Pomarine Jaegers off Puerto Penasco, Sonora Jan. 3 (ST *et al.*, ph., LT) represent one of the few reports from the Gulf of California. An imm. Parasitic Jaeger there was also notable (ST *et al.*). Also at Puerto Peñasco Jan. 3 were two to three Thayer's Gulls and two Glaucous-winged Gulls, both near the s. limit of their winter range (KK,ST *et al.*). An imm. Glaucous Gull at L. McMillan Dec. 9 (†WCH *et al.*) was the second ever reported from New Mexico, whereas a state first was an ad. Mew Gull at the same place Dec. 17 & 21, and Jan. 17 (†WCH *et al.*). Continuing the late fall invasion of Black-legged Kittiwakes, one of two immatures on L. Havasu was collected Dec. 5 (MK *et al.*, \*to A.S.U.), and two other immatures turned up at Parker Dam Dec. 21, remaining at least to Feb. 6 (ph., KR *et al.*). Two Caspian Terns at L. Havasu Feb. 25 were early spring migrants, whereas one at Cibola N.W.R., in early February may have wintered locally (CR).

**PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**—Notable in n. Mexico in winter were two Band-tailed Pigeons in the Sandia Mts., Jan. 5 & 26, and one there Feb. 27 (H. Schwartz). A White-winged Dove wintered in Truth or Consequences, N. Mex., and an influx occurred there Feb. 10-11 (DMi). Inca Doves wandered outside their normal range in new Mexico with one at Truth or Consequences Feb. 15 (DMi) and two at Rodeo Dec. 28 (RS *et al.*). Locally rare Roadrunners were at Farmington all winter (APN), and at Zuni, N.Mex., Jan. 2 (JT).

Screech Owls are rarely reported in n.w. New Mexico, so two at Zuni Jan. 7 were notable (JT). Three or more Elf Owls responded to tapes at Organ Pipe Nat'l Mon., Dec. 31 (†A. Clay *et al.*). Unfortunately, the birds were not seen or taped; there are no winter records for Arizona (or the U.S?). A

minor movement of Spotted Owls apparently occurred, with locally unusual records from Clanton Canyon in the Peloncillo Mts., of s.w. New Mexico Feb. 7 (†JD,KZ); Prescott, Ariz., Dec. 20 (CT), Sabino Canyon near Tucson until Jan. 24 (J. Saba *et al.*), and even in Sonoran Desert at Tucson Jan. 4-6 (R. Perrill captured and ph. with half-eaten Screech Owl in talons!). Of the Spotted Owl, Phillips *et al.* wrote in 1964 (*The Birds of Arizona*): "Its reappearance in the Tucson Valley today is unthinkable." A bird in Galestina Canyon near Zuni Dec. 31 (†JT) was a local first, but the species may be resident in that infrequently visited canyon.

Three Lesser Nighthawks remained at least through Dec. 31 at Organ Pipe Nat'l Mon., Ariz. (J.T. Peters). White-throated Swifts returned earlier than usual to the Grand Canyon Feb. 22 (C. Larue).

Hummingbirds were numerous at feeders in s. Arizona all winter. As expected, a few Rivoli's and Blue-throateds stayed in s.e. Arizona canyons, but a ♂ Rufous at Ramsey Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Dec. 20 (*vide* DD), and a ♂ Broad-tailed at Tucson Dec. 22 (†E. Bresseler) were extremely unusual. The rarest hummingbird was a Calliope reported by several observers from Ramsey Canyon throughout the period, but without supporting details.

Single Com. (Yellow-shafted) Flickers were at Zuni Dec. 30 and Feb. 3 (†JT) and in the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., Dec. 20 (R.L. Teuber *et al.*), where infrequently reported. Red-headed Woodpeckers are rare in New Mexico in winter, so one near Artesia Jan. 20-Feb. 1 (WCH *et al.*) was notable. A Gila Woodpecker at San Simon Cienaga, s.w. N. Mex., Dec. 16 (RM) was somewhat out of range, as was a Lewis' near Cliff through the period (RAF *et al.*).

Two Downy Woodpeckers at Bosque del Apache N.W.R., Dec. 27 (CAH *et al.*) and one at San Lorenzo, Grant Co., Feb. 14 (RAF) were farther s. than usual, and a Hairy Woodpecker at Whitlow Dam, e. of Phoenix Nov. 16 (RD) was one of the few lower Sonoran records in Arizona. An e. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus v. varius*) was at Roswell Jan. 15 (W.Ho), and another was at Ft. Sumner, N. Mex., Jan. 28 (RM). One each of *S. v. varius*, "Red-breasted" Sapsucker (*S. v. ruber*), and the typical "Red-naped" Sapsucker (*S. v. nuchalis*) were in the same tree near Nogales, Ariz., Dec. 27 (GHR)!

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS**—Several kingbirds were reported, although specific identification of most remains questionable. A Tropical Kingbird at Rodeo, N. Mex., Dec. 14-21 (ph., J. Schatz Jr. *et al.*) represents the second state report, and the first confirmed record, but attribution to species will probably be no more definite than *Tyrannus melancholicus/couchii*. Other kingbirds, identified as Westerns, were w. of Nogales, Ariz., Dec. 28 (†T.R. Rehm) and at Sedona, Ariz., Dec. 31 (†E. Finke).

Black Phoebe wintered n. in the Rio Grande valley to Albuquerque with two there Jan. 3 (JK *et al.*) and one Feb. 17-20 (W.Ho). *Empidonax* flycatchers were widely reported in s. Arizona with notable records including a Western at Phoenix Dec. 23 (†JW) and two at Cooks L., San Pedro Valley Jan. 18 (GHR *et*



Tropical Kingbird, Rodeo, N.M., Dec. 14-21, 1980. Photo/J. Schatz, Jr.

*et al.*), and single Dusksies near Ehrenberg Jan. 10 (MK,\*to A.S.U.), at Cooks L., Jan. 18 (KR *et al.*), and Tempe Jan. 27-Feb. 10 (GHR,ST). Unusual was an imm. ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher at 7000 ft elevation near Springerville, Ariz., Dec. 25 (†GHR).

Barn Swallow lingered into the winter season in the L.C.V., with eight at Parker Dec. 14 (ph.,KR), four there Dec. 22 (KK), and one at Yuma Jan. 4 (GRO). The only Blue Jay reports in the Pecos Valley were of two at Ft. Sumner Jan. 28-29 and five at Roswell Jan. 3 (MP *et al.*). Up to six Com. Ravens were in the Roswell area Dec. 2-Feb. 2 (WCH *et al.*). Three-four Com. Crows e. of Artesia Jan. 25 (T. Hildebrandt, RM) were a first for the L.Pec.V., and 120 airline mi s. of the previous s. record for the valley. Aside from the usual flock at Cibola N.W.R., 100+ crows at Topock Marsh Dec. 6 (KR,AH) were further evidence of a second winter roost in the L.C.V.

A Verdin at Three Rivers, Otero Co., Feb. 15 (WCH,SW) was n. of its normal range in the Tularosa Basin, N. Mex. Notable Red-breasted Nuthatches in the lowlands of New Mexico were two-three at Roswell Dec. 4-Feb. 4 (WCH) and one near Cliff Jan. 3 (RAF *et al.*). Two Dippers at Bluewater L., Zuni Mts., N. Mex., Dec. 20 (DAM *et al.*) were migrants in an area where the species is rare.

House Wrens were widely reported, including in n. New Mexico where especially noteworthy in winter; singles were at Española Dec. 28 (W.B. Lewis *et al.*), Santa Fe Dec. 21 (W. West *et al.*), and Corrales Jan. 22 (W.Ho), and five were at Silver City Dec. 20 (RAF *et al.*).

**MIMIDS THROUGH VIREOS**—Unusually late was a singing Gray Catbird along the Little Colorado R., at Eager Dec. 25 (†SStz), for a first Arizona winter record. However, this is the same spot where one lingered to late November in 1977. Brown Thrashers are proving to be regular in the w. part of the Region in winter. Singles were at Glenwood, N. Mex., Dec. 26 (JH), and in Arizona at Parker, Flagstaff, and Superior, and two were at Portal through the period.

A Bendire's Thrasher and one to two Sage Thrashers at Zuni, N. Mex., Dec. 18 (†JT) were late for that area, and a Bendire's n. of Rodeo Feb. 28 (JD,KZ) was also unusual. In Arizona, locally unusual thrashers included two Le Conte's near Parker Dec. 22 (ST) and a Curve-billed n.e. of Yuma throughout the period (GRO).

Eastern Bluebirds occurred this winter at Ft. Sumner, N. Mex., with 22 there Jan. 27-29

(WCH) and nine Feb 19 (JPH), one was also at Sumner L., Dec. 4 (WCH *et al.*). Mountain and W. bluebirds were present in most lowland areas, including the L.Pec.V. (WCH *et al.*), and Mountains were especially numerous across s. Arizona.

Two Black-tailed Gnatcatchers were reported near Rodeo, N. Mex., Dec. 28 (RS *et al.*), where rare. Northern Shrikes were widely reported across n. Arizona, with one pushing S to Phoenix Feb. 10 (†SRD,HL) for a very unusual local record. Numbers in New Mexico were down from recent winters, except perhaps in the L.Pec.V., where two were present as far s. as Artesia-Lake McMillan area in December (WCH,WHO).

A Sprague's Pipit near Rodeo, N. Mex., Dec. 28 (†T.&S. Schaughency) was unusual; the last fall migrants in the L.Pec.V., were seen Dec. 1-5 (WCH *et al.*). Up to five Phainopeplas near Glenwood, N. Mex., Dec. 19-22 (JPH *et al.*) represented a higher-than-normal number from that area.

A Hutton's Vireo at Parker Dec. 22 (KK) was one of very few winter records ever for the L.C.V. A *plumbeus*-type Solitary Vireo at Las Cruces, N. Mex., Dec. 29 (B. Locke *et al.*) was quite unusual there.

#### WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS

—Single Black-and-white Warblers at Sedona Jan 4 (†W. Osborn) and Montezuma Well Feb 28 (R.E. Williams) furnished probably first winter records for n. Arizona. Hundreds of Orange-crowned Warblers and thousands of Yellow-rumped Warblers wintered in lower Sonoran woodlands of s. Arizona. As usual, a few unusual species were detected in these flocks, including another Black-and-white and Tucson Jan. 3, a Tennessee at Phoenix Dec. 23 (†RFe), a N. Parula (SB), two Yellows and a Palm (†SG) at Parker Dec. 22, two more Yellows at Puerto Peñasco, Sonora Jan. 3 (ST,LT), and two Am. Redstarts at Phoenix Dec. 23. "Myrtle" Warblers were also well reported, with 103 records in the L.Pec.V., three at Isleta, N. Mex., Feb. 20, 16 at Phoenix Dec. 23, and 10 at Parker Dec. 22 being representative counts.

Another Olive Warbler near Glenwood, N. Mex., Dec. 26 (R. & K. Skaggs) suggested regular wintering there, and two more were found in oak woodland in Pima Canyon near Tucson Dec. 22 (†DB,†BB).

Single N. Waterthrushes were at Phoenix Dec. 23, and Cooks L., San Pedro valley Jan. 18 (ST). Common Yellowthroats are rarely reported in New Mexico in winter, so individuals at Glenwood Dec. 25-26 (JPH *et al.*), near Roswell Dec. 23 & Jan. 13 (WCH) and near Anthony Jan. 16 (KZ) were notable. Painted Redstarts lingered or wintered in s.e. Arizona canyons more commonly than usual, including the banded individual at Portal that returned for its *eighth* consecutive winter.

The Rusty Blackbird found last fall at Tucson remained through the winter (m.ob.). A second Rusty appeared at a Phoenix sewage pond in December (†RB) and yet a third was found at Cooks L., San Pedro valley Jan. 18 (GHR,LT, ph., ST,KR). In New Mexico, a single Rusty Blackbird at Bitter Lake N W R., Dec. 12 (†WCH) was not unusual, but 19 near Loving Dec. 20 (†WCH) was the highest count ever in the state.

A Com. Grackle at Santa Fe Dec. 15 (JPH) was very late there and 58 at Bosque del

Apache N W R., Dec. 27 (CH *et al.*) were also notable. Great-tailed Grackles also wintered or lingered in unaccustomed places in New Mexico as follows: Farmington in December (AN *et al.*); 14-20 at Grants Dec. 22 (AM); several at Portales Feb. 17 (G. Pfaffenberger); in the Albuquerque area all winter (JK,WHO *et al.*); 18 at Glenwood Dec. 24-26 (JPH), five were at Marble Canyon near Page Nov. 30 (ST *et al.*), and the species was seen frequently around Flagstaff through the season (JC).

**FINCHES AND SPARROWS**—Pyr-ruloxias in unusual New Mexico localities included two at Roswell Jan. 3 (MP *et al.*), one near Cliff Jan. 3 (RAF *et al.*), two at Guadalupe Canyon Feb. 8 (JD,KZ), two at Three Rivers Feb. 14 (WCH,SW), and two at Silver City in January and February (*fide* RAF). A *flock of 22* in an isolated patch of habitat near Willcox, Ariz., Jan. 10 (ph., ST *et al.*) was amazing, both for numbers and locale. A **Black-headed Grosbeak** was reported from Roswell Jan. 3 (†MP *et al.*); there are very few winter records for the Region. An imm. ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Tucson Jan. 16 (ph., L. Grissom) was only slightly less unusual.

Purple Finches staged a minor invasion into the s. lowlands; New Mexico records included singles at Glenwood Dec. 26 (†JPH), Elephant Butte L., Dec. 27 and Percha Dam Dec. 28 (†RR), and Artesia (\*to A.S.W.) Dec. 1, plus two at Roswell Dec. 4 (†WCH *et al.*). In Arizona, reports came from Parker, Prescott, near Tucson, near Gila Bend, Portal, and Cooks L.

Rosy finches periodically visit Sandia Crest, the highest point in the Sandia Mts., N. Mex., in winter. This season, as many as 85 were present in January, the bulk of which were Black and Gray-crowned, with a few Brown-capped and "Hepburn's" (ph. D&SH *et al.*). Lesser Goldfinches are rare in winter in w.-c. New Mexico, so notable were up to 20 at Zuni Dec. 2-Feb. 5 (JT) and eight near Cottonwood Gulch Dec. 20 (DAM). In general, cardueline finches were scarce or absent in highland areas of Arizona.

A Grasshopper Sparrow near Parker Dec. 22 (ST) represented one of the very few winter records for the L.C.V. A late Vesper Sparrow was at Zuni, N. Mex., Dec. 1 (JT). Rare or overlooked in New Mexico are winter Cassin's Sparrows; this year, one was found near Rodeo Dec. 28 (RS *et al.*) and three-four were near Hope Dec. 11, with one-two there Feb. 10-12 (WCH). Two Rufous-crowned Sparrows at Bottomless Lakes S.P., Dec. 6 (WHO *et al.*) were a local first (\*to A.S.U.) a first for the L.Pec.V.

A Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco e. of Roswell Dec. 8 (WCH) was the southernmost ever reported for New Mexico. First winter records at Zuni included a Tree Sparrow Dec. 1, 1-4 Lincoln's and a Swamp Sparrow Dec. 2-Jan. 8 and a Golden-crowned Sparrow Jan. 5 (all †JT). Another Swamp was at nearby Cottonwood Gulch, McKinley Co., Dec. 20 (DAM *et al.*).

A probable Tree Sparrow was reasonably well described at Gadsden, Ariz., s.w. of Yuma Jan. 20 (†J. Braley). Besides being only the third L.C.V. report, this location is on the border of Mexico, for which there may be no records. A Clay-colored Sparrow was

far w at Phoenix Feb. 28 (ST) Fox Sparrows seemed more numerous than usual, with 15+ reports from s. Arizona, including six at Phoenix Dec. 23 (GHR *et al.*).

A flock of 30± McCown's Longspurs at Willcox Jan. 10 (ST *et al.*) were among very few such sights in s.e. Arizona in recent years. A Lapland Longspur visited the L.C.V. again, this time near Parker Dec. 22 (ST).

**CORRIGENDUM**—The Least Grebe reported at San Simon Cienega Dec. 2 and probably Nov. 29, 1979, and the two Abert's Towhees there Jan. 2, 1980 (Robert Morse) (AB 34: 296-297, 1980), should actually be 1978 and 1979 respectively.

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#### ALASKA REGION /D.D. Gibson

The weather pattern of the last five or six years continued into winter 1980-1981, but it was carried to extremes this season. December was cold (the coldest and driest December on record at Anchorage), but the weather broke right before the first of the year, and unseasonably warm weather continued through January and February. The entire months of January and February had above-average temperatures at Anchorage, where precipitation fell as rain, not snow. At Fairbanks, January's average temperature was 30 degrees above normal (+50°F on January 15, an all-time high for the month, was 55 degrees above normal), temperatures were above normal *every* day of the month, and it was warmer than any previous December, January, or February on record there. There was very little precipitation at all in the Interior.



Predictably in such a winter, many species that normally winter only peripherally along the North Gulf Coast of Alaska did so in greater abundance this season, and a number of species that normally winter a bit farther south occurred here all winter in small numbers. North of the Pacific coast, however, the cold December kept the rest of the winter in perspective (e.g., an adult White-crowned Sparrow that attempted to overwinter at a feeder near Fairbanks would certainly have been able to survive January and February, but the bird disappeared in mid-December's -40°F lows).

**GREBES, ALBATROSSES**—A Western Grebe well-described at Adak I., c. Aleutians Dec. 20 (TJE & HAC) was amazing—the first record w. of Prince William Sound, where the species is a casual fall/winter visitant. Single Laysan Albatrosses seen Jan. 8-9 & 11 in the Bering Sea n.w. of the Pribilofs (ML) were of particular interest because there are few mid-winter records at the n. end of the species' range.

**WATERFOWL**—Two Brant at Craig Jan. 25 (TK) were of interest; although the species has wintered in that area before, there have been few winter records for the Region as a whole. A ♂ Redhead present at Kodiak Dec. 21+ (RAM *et al.*) was thought to have been one of the same birds that have frequented the same area each winter since 1977-1978. Three Tufted Ducks at Eyak L., Cordova were not seen after early January (MEI), probably a result of widespread open water allowing such birds to disperse to areas normally closed to them at that season. A flock of 25 Ring-necked Ducks at Klawock Jan. 6 (TK) provided an all-time winter maximum count in the state.

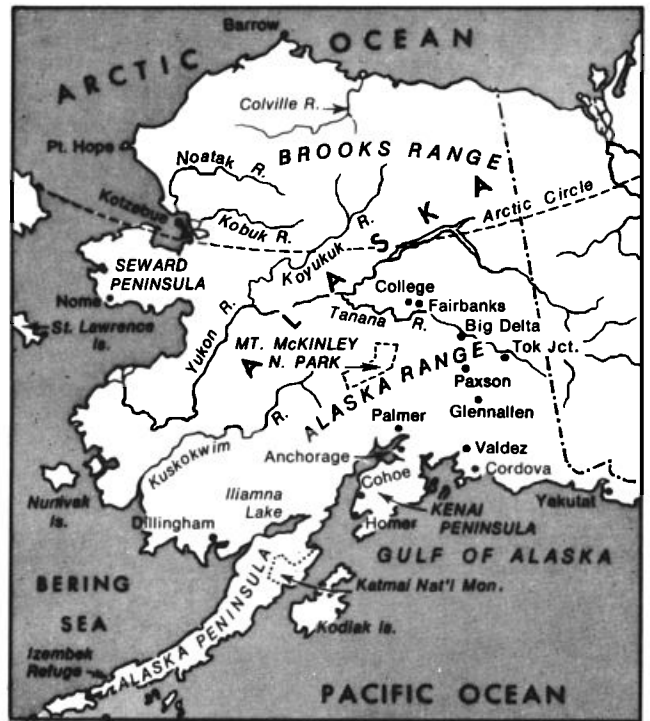
**RAPTORS**—There were at least 5 sightings of Sharp-shinned Hawks this season at Kodiak, where the species is more numerous in winter than at any other season (RAM). A Rough-legged Hawk at Narrow Cape Dec. 6 (RAM *et al.*) provided a first Kodiak winter record. There were three Gyrfalcon sightings at Kodiak (WED, RAM *et al.*), where it is not regular in winter; one was present as far e. and s. as Juneau, from late January on (JGK & MEI). An Am. Kestrel reported at Auke Bay, Juneau Feb. 21 (RBW), was unusual; the species is a casual winter visitant anywhere on the Alaska Pacific coast.

**SHOREBIRDS, GULLS, OWLS**—An Am. Golden Plover at Salmon Cr., Juneau Dec. 8 (RBW) was, by almost 2 weeks, the latest record ever in Alaska. Up to two ad. Slaty-backed Gulls were reported at Homer Jan. 14-17 (DE & DWS); neither was seen subsequently. At least three Pygmy Owls were observed in the Petersburg area (on Mitkof and Kupreanof islands) in January and February (JD), but there were no reports from elsewhere in Southeastern this winter.

**NUTCHATCHES, CREEPERS**—At least five Red-breasted Nuthatches were present at Bird Cr., near Anchorage in February (TGT), but the species was not reported anywhere else in the State. Brown Creepers were observed in small numbers in the Anchorage area all winter (TGT, JLT).

**THRUSHES THROUGH WOOD WARBLERS**—A Townsend's Solitaire was observed in Juneau from Jan. 17 on (RHA & KG & MEI); there have been few Alaska winter records, all in recent years. Varied Thrushes were abundant this winter at Kodiak (RAM); two were present at least through early January at Anchor Point, Kenai Pen. (JB, *fide* MAM); two were heard at Seward in early February (DDG & TGT); and individuals were seen at intervals all winter at Juneau (RBW). At least two Am. Robins present at Anchorage Dec. 1-9 and Jan. 1-31 (MG *et al.*, *fide* RLA) and one at Kodiak Dec. 3 (RAM) were unusual; small flocks of up to a half dozen birds were seen at Juneau all winter (RBW). Golden-crowned Kinglets were more abundant than usual this fall and early winter at Kodiak (RAM): 573 were seen on the Jan. 3 CBC, and maximum flock size that month was 110+ Jan. 17 (TGT); numbers appeared to decrease there in February (RAM). Two Water Pipits were seen at Kodiak Jan. 3 (GJT & MMT), one at Sitka Jan. 17 (*fide* RHA). This species is a casual winter visitant anywhere on Alaska's Pacific coast. A Starling seen at Kodiak Jan. 2 & 4 (GJT, RAM) was probably the same bird seen pursued there by a Peregrine Falcon Jan. 25 (JBA)! One Starling at Campbell L., Anchorage Dec. 3-Jan. 9 (ED, *fide* RLA) furnished the first local record of a Starling not at a dump; at least five were present at the Anchorage dump through Dec. 19 (TGT). A "large" flock of Starlings was present during the period at the Juneau dump where they have been known for years (RBW). A Yellow-rumped Warbler reported at Eagle R., near Anchorage, Dec. 7-13 (JD & PP, *fide* RLA) provided an unparalleled late record in the State.

**FINCHES**—Pine Grosbeaks and redpolls were present at Fairbanks and Anchorage throughout the period. Redpolls were fairly common all winter in those areas, but they were not mentioned at Juneau, where Pine Grosbeaks occurred all season. Pine Siskins were common all winter at Kodiak (RAM), and they became very common, in large flocks, at Cordova by the end of the period (MEI). They were seen irregularly at Anchorage (JLT), and a few were noted at Seward in early February (DDG & TGT). White-winged Crossbills were not in evidence in the Interior this winter, but they were present in small flocks all winter at Anchorage, where they were much less conspicuous after late November than before (TGT). White-winged Crossbills were common all winter at Kodiak (RAM); hundreds were seen, including many singing males at Seward in early February (DDG & TGT); and they were fairly common



in large flocks at Cordova throughout the period (MEI). They were seen occasionally, in small numbers, throughout the winter at Kasilof (MAM).

**BUNTINGS, SPARROWS**—Thirty-40 Snow Buntings at the Mendenhall estuary, Juneau Jan. 17 (RBW) provided the only report this winter e. of s.w. Alaska, where the species is resident. Fox Sparrows were more numerous at Kodiak this winter than usual; none was *P. i. zaboria* (RAM), which widespread race has been seen there in winters past in company with the dark coastal birds. There were two Lincoln's Sparrow records at Kodiak, probably not of the same bird: Dec. 4 (RAM) and Jan. 3 (SW). A Harris' Sparrow that overwintered at Homer November on (DE *et al.*) provided the fourth Southcoastal Alaska record, three of which have been in fall/winter; one bird banded Nov. 9 at Juneau was present throughout the period (RBW). Small numbers of White-crowned Sparrows wintered along the coast, from Kodiak (RAM), Cohoe (MH, *fide* MAM), and Cordova (*fide* MEI) to Juneau (RBW); one was present at Anchorage at least through Dec. 13 (RC, *fide* RLA). Golden-crowned Sparrows wintered at Kodiak (RAM) and Juneau (RBW) in small numbers; two at Eagle R., near Anchorage Jan. 20 (LH, *fide* RLA) were very unusual that far from the coast. Dark-eyed Juncos were more common than usual at Kodiak (RAM); they were locally common in the Anchorage area all winter (TGT & LJO), e.g., 17+ at observers' feeders and flock of 12+ at Bird Cr., Feb. 15; the species wintered at Cohoe (MH, *fide* MAM) and as far n. as Fairbanks, where at least two birds made it through the season at their respective feeders (DDG, FB). Five or six Tree Sparrows were present at Juneau throughout the period (RBW). Five or six birds at Anchorage Jan. 11 (SK, *fide* RLA) were very unusual there in mid-winter.

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**NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION**

/Philip W. Mattocks, Jr. and Eugene S. Hunn

Several more inches of rain than usual fell in December on the Seattle and Portland weather stations, with two thirds of this between December 20-30. Many choice Christmas Bird Count locales were found flooded. Thereafter rainfall was below normal with both January and February being relatively balmy and dry. The Medford area had less rain than usual throughout the winter, although perhaps slightly more fog, and all three stations averaged just over 3°F warmer than the long term averages.

First state or provincial records were established (subject to approval by the appropriate Records Committees) for the King Eider and Spotted Redshank in Oregon, the Smew in Washington, and the Temminck's Stint in British Columbia.

**LOONS THROUGH HERONS**—There were only seven reports of Yellow-billed Loon this season, which is slightly fewer than normal. Arctic Loons were apparently absent along the Oregon coast (JG *et al.*). In contrast, several s. British Columbia Christmas Bird Counts (hereafter, CBC) had all-time high counts of Common and Arctic loons (*fide* WW). On Jan. 13 two rafts of 15,000 W. Grebes each were observed (M&VG) in Sannich Inlet and Satellite Channel off s. Vancouver Island (hereafter, V.I.). A few dead N. Fulmar were found on coastal Ore-

gon beaches through December (HN). Otherwise no shearwaters or petrels were reported.

A Green Heron was n. to the Reifel Ref. on Westham I., near Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 28-Jan. 10 (JTo, †JS, †BK). The usual few wintered in w. Washington and w. Oregon. Few Cattle Egrets from last fall's invasion appear to have survived. One stayed along Cowichan Bay, near Duncan, V.I., until Jan. 31 (†VG, BHy, JC). Others were in Delta Jan. 10 (WC) and in Pitt Meadows Feb. 10-12 (Tbu, *fide* WW). Both locations are near Vancouver, B.C. Apparently a few stayed through the winter at Coos Bay and Nehalem meadows, Oreg. (AC, JO, HN). The 91 Great Egrets on w. Oregon CBCs, and the one at Olympia, Wash, throughout the season (G&WH), were about normal for recent years. Also as usual two Snowy Egrets wintered at Coos Bay (AMc). Black-crowned Night Herons appear to be increasing as a wintering bird in w. Oregon. Twenty-eight at their regular roost along the Columbia R., in Portland Jan. 3 compares with two there last winter and eight the year before. Thirteen on the Roseburg CBC follow the report of 14 there last October. Also two ad. and two imm. Black-crowns were in Olympia, Wash., Feb. 20-27 (J&AD, BHT, G&WH), where two adults wintered last year.

**WATERFOWL**—Mute Swans were in their normal numbers on V.I. (VG). The 127 in the Duncan-Cowichan Bay area Dec. 31 was the high count (VG). The Whistling Swan tally for the w. Oregon CBCs was only three quarters that of the last 2 years. Trumpeter Swan reports were widespread in their usual numbers in w. Washington and s. British Columbia. Reports of one to four White-fronted Geese were widespread n. to Vancouver, B.C. (*fide* WW) and Duncan, V.I. (JC, M&VG). The first migrants arrived on Sauvie I., near Portland, in late February (JG, HN).

Record high counts of Mallards were set on 3 CBCs in s.w. mainland British Columbia, and on the Victoria CBC. The new high count for Canada of 23,637 Pintail on the Ladner CBC and the highest ever local count of 861 Gadwall on the Seattle CBC were by far the largest concentrations reported of these species. The 11 ♂ (Eur.) Green-winged Teal reported is over twice as many as in any of the past few winters. The two at the Montlake

fill in Seattle had distinct plumage patterns identical to the two there last winter (†EH). A ♂ Cinnamon Teal was on Burnaby L., Jan. 24 & Feb. 28 (MP, *fide* WW), both near Vancouver, B.C. Two ♂ Blue-winged Teal were in Saanich, V.I., Dec. 20 (MMc, *fide* VG). About 300 N. Shoveler on Pony Slough at Coos Bay, Oreg., Jan. 10 was an unusual concentration there (AMc).



King Eiders, Seaside, Ore., January 1981, Photo/Owen Schmidt.

Greater Scaup continued scarce on s. Vancouver Island. Numbers there this winter were considered to be only about 10% of former levels (VG). A ♂ Tufted Duck was at American L., in Tacoma, Wash., Nov. 26-Dec. 15 (WW). This bird had slightly whiter sides and a longer tuft than the male at that lake last December. Another ♂ Tufted Duck was at the Maplewood Flats, N. Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 13 (†DJ). Two Oldsquaws were present at Tillamook during January and February (JG, TC *et al.*) and another wintered on Yaquina Bay, Oreg. (HN, R&JK, *fide* E&EE). This species is scarce on the outer coast. A first-year ♂ King Eider found off Seaside, Oreg., Feb. 16 (TWi, *fide* HN) was joined by another young male Feb. 21 (*fide* JG). The two were seen through at least March 7 (m.ob., ph. TC & OSc) for the first undisputed records of live birds of this species for Oregon. Earlier reports are of a male found dead on the beach in s.w. Oregon last November, and a female seen on Tillamook Bay Mar. 10-20, 1976 (AB, 30:756). Earlier this season a first-year ♂ King Eider was seen off Restoration Pt., near Seattle Jan. 3 & 4 (†DP, MMo, RT) and a clearly marked female was seen at 30 m off Rosario Beach, near Anacortes, Wash., Feb. 3 (H&MF). These were the 11th and 12th Washington records. The 493 Black Scoters on the Ladner CBC was almost twice the previous local high and was by far the largest concentration reported in this season.

Two ♂ Smew were seen Feb. 22 at 30-100 m from the Friday Harbor ferry dock, San Juan I., Wash. (†PI, KGa). The thorough description made careful comparison with nearby Oldsquaws, and the thin dark bill, black eye patch, dark back, and fine black



lines on the otherwise white sides, breast, and head were well noted. This is the first record for Washington and only the fourth for the West Coast s. of Alaska. The three earlier reports are all from s.w. British Columbia and two of those were during February and March (Roberson, *Rare Birds of the West Coast*, p. 93-95).

**RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS**—On Dec. 6 a Turkey Vulture was in Burnaby, B.C. (Whe), and another, marked by broken feathers in its left wing, in Stanley P., Vancouver, B.C. (BK). The Stanley P. individual was seen the next day about 30 mi n. at the mouth of the Squamish R. (DC, *vide* WW). Two late Turkey Vultures were also in Whatcom County, Wash., in early December (PD, *vide* TW). The species returned by Feb. 2 to Coos Bay (AMc), and by Feb. 7 to Malahat Summit, w. of Saanich (JTa, *vide* VG). There were three other February records for s. Vancouver Island, all very early. Last year's thorough search for White-tailed Kites in w. Oregon by DF & TL was not repeated this season. Thus the report of about 20 kites, for 40% of last year's total, in that state this winter could be owing to either a decreased population or to the reduced search effort. However, none was seen at the once regular roosting area near Fern Ridge Res., at Eugene (TL, *vide* CW & DF). Farther n., the White-tailed Kite at Willapa Bay, Wash., last fall was seen again there Dec. 9 (SSa). An immature was at Ocean Shores Nov. 22 & Jan. 9 (G&WH), and an adult was near the Toledo, Wash., airport Jan. 31 (†R&Jry, B&Dwo).

For the third winter in a row a Red-shouldered Hawk was found near Eugene. One stayed around the Fern Ridge Res., until at least Dec. 21 (AP, *vide* CW). The numbers of Rough-legged Hawks reported in w. Oregon remained at last year's very low levels, much below those of just a few years ago. Ospreys were reported over L. Sammamish near Seattle Dec. 12 (Mrs. H. Smith) over N. Seattle Dec. 25 (EP), in Olympia Feb. 5 & 23 (J&AD, BHT), and on the Salem, Oreg. CBC.

Single gray-phase Gyrfalcons were found in C. Saanich almost daily throughout the period (*vide* VG), in Skagit County, Wash., in early December (TW), between Westham I. and Delta, B.C., Dec. 19 through February (BK, †Iro, BD, *vide* WW), at the Victoria airport Feb. 28 (DD, *vide* VG), and at Finley N.W.R., near Corvallis, Oreg., Feb. 24 (†P1, BB). This latter individual was observed and photographed as it killed and ate an imm. Canada Goose. Five different Prairie Falcons were noted Jan. 17 on a raptor census in the Medford area (*vide* OSw). Elsewhere the only reports were Jan. 3 & 10 at Leadbetter Pt., Wash. (TRW) and Jan. 18 at Lynden, Wash. (PD, *vide* TW). About 36 Peregrines were reported, which is the usual number for the past few winters. One Jan. 4 near the Tacoma bank building used last winter (*vide* TBo) and two others Feb. 2 & 3 over Tatoosh I., Wash. (BP) were in interesting locations.

The count of 111 California Quail Dec. 20 on the Victoria CBC was a new low for the census. A population decline apparently began in nearby Duncan, V.I., in the fall of 1979 and only one was seen there during January 1981 (JC). Four Sandhill Cranes wintered well n. of their usual Sauvie I. locale at

Delta, B.C. (†MSc, RB, *vide* WW), and one seen Feb. 24 near Sedro Woolley, Wash., had apparently wintered there (JW, *vide* TW). The 13 Virginia Rails on the Vancouver CBC and the 10 on the Seattle CBC were the high counts. There were also reports after the CBC season, particularly from V.I. Two Soras at Yarrow Bay, Bellevue, Wash., Jan. 3 (PM) and one on the Sauvie I. CBC were the only ones reported.

**SHOREBIRDS**—Seven Semipalmated Plovers returned early at the S.J.C.R., Feb. 17+ (HN, JG). Nine Snowy Plovers stayed at Leadbetter Pt., until Dec. 20 (RW), and a flock of about 35 Snowies was on the Bayoccean Pen., at Tillamook Feb. 7 (LP, *vide* HN). Five Long-billed Curlews were on Leadbetter Pt., Jan. 25 (RW). Five Whimbrel were n. to Ediz Hook, near Port Angeles, Wash., Jan. 10 (LK, HC), and one was in Saanich Feb. 3 (CS, *vide* VG).

#### S.A.

The excitement of the season was generated by the first Oregon and third and fourth Regional records of the **Spotted Redshank**. The first was found at the S.J.C.R., Feb. 21 (DHo, MCo), relocated there Feb. 23 (E&EE, R&JK), and then seen daily (m.ob., ph. TC & JG) until 8:30 a.m., Mar. 1 (CW). At 11:30 a.m. Mar. 1 it or another Spotted Redshank was found at Reifel Ref., near Vancouver, B.C. (RF). Comparison of the close range photos of both birds has not yet been made, and the argument continues as to whether a 200 mi flight, if direct over the Olympic Mts., in three hours is too much for even one of these strong flyers.



*Spotted Redshank, South Jetty, Columbia River, Ore., Feb. 24, 1981. Photo/Tom Crabtree.*

Two Lesser Yellowlegs were reported Dec. 1 & 8 in Oak Bay, V.I. (LR, *vide* VG). A few Willets wintered as usual at Coos Bay and Yaquina Bay, Oreg., and around Willapa Bay, Wash. (RW, G&WH).

Single Red Knots, unusual in winter, were seen on Dungeness Spit, Wash., Dec. 7 and at nearby Port Angeles Feb. 3 (both WS). Another Red Knot was well described from Delta, B.C., Jan. 25 (†BK). A yellow-legged peep, larger than adjacent Least, with a dull gray back, the feathers of which had narrow dull gray edgings and were without distinct black centers, a gray brown head and nape with no supercilium, a dull gray pectoral band, and very white tail edges was seen Dec. 14 on Blackie Spit, s.e. of Vancouver, B.C., by †BK and considered to be a **Temminck's Stint**. This is the first report for British Columbia. Four Least Sandpipers and one W.

Sandpiper lingered at Blackie Spit through Dec. 27 (BK, *vide* WW). Two other Westerns were near Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 4 (MSc, *vide* WW) and nine Least were on Reifel I., B.C., Dec. 31 (BK, *vide* WW). Nine Marbled Godwits at Leadbetter Pt., Dec. 20 (CBC) and 29 at the nearby North R. mouth Jan. 16 (G&WH) were the only reports. Two Am. Avocets were found Dec. 12 at the North Slough in Coos Bay (LT, *vide* AMc), but were absent the next day.

**GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS**—The 16+ Glaucous Gull reports were two-thirds those of the past 2 winters, and were concentrated about Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. The Regional CBCs tallied some 130,000 Glaucous-winged Gulls. Western Gulls outnumbered Glaucous-wingeds only on 3 s. coastal Oregon counts: Gold Beach, Coos Bay, and Port Orford. This reflects a s. shift during winter of about 250 mi in the Glaucous-winged/Western transition zone. The 2000+ Thayer's Gulls wintering at Duncan, V.I. (JC), was the largest concentration reported by a wide margin. There were 20,000 Mew Gulls at Tillamook Bay Dec. 28 (DI, HN), and an estimated 50,000 feeding along the 60 mi of the Columbia R., between Astoria and Longview Feb. 26 coincident with the smelt (*Thaleichthys pacificus*) run (EH, AR). A Franklin's Gull at Bellingham, Wash., Dec. 27 (MCh, *vide* TW) was very late. A total of one Black-legged Kittiwake at the Columbia R. mouth Dec. 21 (CBC) increased to a dozen by the end of February (EH, AR, DF), for the only ones reported.

As is usual Ancient Murrelets wintered in good numbers only in the Straits of Juan de Fuca between Victoria, where 640 were counted Dec. 20 (CBC), and Port Townsend, Wash., where DP noted "hundreds" Jan. 2. A Horned Puffin washed up dead Jan. 27 near Newport, Oreg. (BL, *vide* HN), and two Tufted Puffins were seen just off Newport Jan. 24 by a whale-watching crew (R&JK, *vide* E&EE).

**OWLS THROUGH PHOEBES**—Snowy Owls were nowhere in large numbers, but were widely scattered s. to the S.J.C.R., where one was noted throughout December (m.ob., *vide* HN). At least 25 individuals were reported, nearly three times last year's total. The **Hawk Owl** discovered in Pitt Meadows, e. of Vancouver, B.C., in late November was regularly noted through at least Feb. 4 by an army of observers. Vancouver area observers also reported Pygmy Owls in above-normal numbers, with at least eight seen Dec. 21-Jan. 31 (*vide* WW). A **Great Gray Owl** on the Pitt Meadows CBC, Dec. 27 (RRO, VT, *vide* WW) was one of fewer than 10 Vancouver area records. Four Burrowing Owls in the Rogue R. valley may represent a corner of their normal winter range. The individual found shot Jan. 4 near Halsey, s.e. of Corvallis, had wintered at that outpost for several years (DMe, HT, *vide* E&EE). Two Barred Owls in Seattle city parks this January is now commonplace (DHu, DSi), as was the single in Saanich, V.I., Jan. 19 (MSh, *vide* VG). An injured Spotted Owl was rescued Dec. 18 near Monroe, Wash., and scheduled for rehabilitation (DSi). Seven Spotted were counted on the Alma, Oakridge, and Upper Nestucca CBCs

in Oregon Three Long-eared Owls were reported, one Dec. 28 at the Reifel Ref., B.C. (JS, *vide* WW), and the other two Dec. 31, one at Saanich (BA, *vide* VG) and the other at L. Tennant n. of Bellingham, Wash. (HC, BHa, *vide* TW). These were noteworthy as this species has not been proven to winter regularly in the Region. A record 56 Short-eared Owls on the Ladner CBC Dec. 28 was heartening.

Rufous Hummingbirds reached Coos Bay, Oreg., by Feb. 21 (*vide* AMc) and were numerous at Olympia, Wash., by Feb. 28 (SC, *vide* IA). Lewis' Woodpeckers wintered in small numbers as usual in the Rogue R. valley (MM, OSw). One Lewis' n. as far as Rickreall, near Salem, was described as "the first in a long time" there (A&DM, *vide* E&EE). Seven Black Phoebes were reported in Curry and Jackson Cos., Oreg., at the n. limit of the species' range (Gold Beach CBC, MM, EWS). Two vagrant Say's Phoebes which appeared Feb. 23-28 at Coos Bay (RL, *vide* AMc) and another at Gaston, w. of Portland, Feb. 25 (JGa *et al.*, *vide* HN), were likely displaced spring migrants, as this species normally arrives on territory e. of the Cascades in February (see also Sage Sparrow below).

**SWALLOWS THROUGH WAXWINGS**—The first Tree Swallows reported were a flock Feb. 18 at Eugene, Oreg. (TF, *vide* HN). By Feb. 21 they were N to Washington and British Columbia (GR, RP). Violet-greens arrived Feb. 21 at Coos Bay (AMc), Feb. 22 near Corvallis (R&JK), and Feb. 21 at Victoria (JTa, AMa, *vide* VG) and Langley B.C. (RP, *vide* WW). These are normal dates for the spring vanguard. A laggard Barn Swallow was still in Seattle Dec. 5 (WB). A single Blue Jay appeared Dec. 2 at a Bellingham, Wash. feeder (Mrs. R. Odell, *vide* TW). A Scrub Jay was noted Feb. 26 as far w. along the Columbia R. as Cathlamet, Wash. (EH, AR). The usual few Black-billed Magpies wintered: a single all season at Langley, B.C. (KC ph., *vide* WW), one Dec. 18 at Oak Bay, V.I. (Mrs. J. Galbraith, *vide* VG), and one Jan. 24 just w. of Newhalem, Whatcom Co., Wash. (FK). A Clark's Nutcracker was noted Dec. 26 at 800 ft on Larch Mt., e. of Portland in the Columbia R. gorge (LA, *vide* HN).

Bushtits were in record numbers on many CBCs throughout the Region. There were 366 at Pitt Meadows, 459 at Ladner, a Canadian record of 534 at White Rock, 1157 at Seattle, and 666 in Salem, Oreg. Long-billed Marsh Wren numbers were high on s. V.I. (*vide* VG) and on the Vancouver, B.C., CBC. A single Mockingbird Dec. 23 at Coos Bay (BG, *vide* AMc) was the only report. The only W. Bluebirds reported n. of Oregon were three at Saanich, V.I., Jan. 30 (RWa, *vide* VG) and four at Metchosin, V.I., Feb. 25 (M&VG). This Blue-listed species was noted on 9 w. Oregon CBCs n. to s. Tillamook County. The total of 447 individuals compares with 553 last year and 426 the year before on these same counts. Three Mountain Bluebirds noted in January and February in the Medford area (MM) were the only reports. Single Townsend's Solitaires were on the Sauvie I. CBC and on Dungeness Spit, Wash., Dec. 18 (D&SSm). Up to 35 Bohemian Waxwings were found at Pitt Meadows, B.C., in De-

cember (TW; WR, JM, *vide* WW), and a few stayed until mid-January in the Bellingham area (TW). Twelve on the Tacoma, Wash., CBC Jan. 4 were the southernmost.

**WARBLERS THROUGH SPARROWS**—A **Black-and-white Warbler** in N. Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 3 was well described (†CB) for about the fifth Vancouver area record (*vide* WW). Orange-crowned Warblers were found n. to N. Vancouver Feb. 3 (†WW), and Saanich, V.I., Dec. 20-Jan. 17 (RMG, *vide* VG). A Black-throated Gray Warbler was in Portland Jan. 3 (DI, DF), and a **Hermit Warbler** was present there Dec. 1-Jan. 10 (HN, TC *et al.*). Another Hermit Warbler was seen in Salem Jan. 11 (TC). Both Hermits were with small flocks of Townsend's Warblers. Six Palm Warblers, a normal number, were noted from Coos Bay n. to Grays Harbor. All were probably wintering, although the latest reported was one at Leadbetter Pt., Feb. 6 (RW). A Com. Yellowthroat, rare in winter here, was seen on Sauvie I., Jan. 25 (LP, MCa, *vide* HN). Eight w. Oregon CBCs recorded 254 Townsend's Warblers. This compares to 52 on the same 8 counts last year and 39 the year before. Flocks of several dozen were encountered by several observers, and the species was widely described as more prevalent than normal. North of the Columbia R., Townsend's are usually rare in winter, although they may be regularly found in favored localities. This winter the species was found in better-than-average numbers n. to Puget Sound and s. V.I.

Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds Dec. 28 on the Ladner, B.C., CBC were only the second occurrence ever for that count (*vide* WW). Three were reported from s. V.I., Dec. 11 & 13 (EM, MMc, *vide* VG). Rusty Blackbirds were noted in the Vancouver, B.C., area, with four on the Pitt Meadows CBC Dec. 27 (†DB, MW, *vide* WW) and two at Maple Ridge Jan. 8 (GA, *vide* WW). A **Blue Grosbeak** seen at Fern Ridge Res., near Eugene represented the second record for Oregon. It was a carefully described (†AC) female-plumaged individual. The first state record was also of a female-plumaged bird, at a feeder in Corvallis Jan. 4-17, 1975 (M. Eltzroth, R. Jarvis, see AB 29:734). Evening Grosbeaks were reported as scarce from several well birded localities around Puget Sound and in w. Oregon (TW, EH, G&WH, HN, JG). Purple Finches were noted as very scarce in King County, Wash. (EH). Pine Grosbeaks were found only at the Squamish R. mouth, n. of Vancouver, B.C. Seven were there Dec. 7 (DC, *vide* WW). A single Gray-crowned Rosy Finch at Victoria Dec. 7-8 (RS, *vide* VG) and three Dec. 27 at Pitt L., e. of Vancouver, B.C. (SR, AB, *vide* WW) represent the pattern of normal occurrence. The flock in early December on Mary's Peak in the Oregon Coast Range w. of Corvallis was well w. of the usual rosy finch winter haunts (TMO, DPi, *vide* CW & E&EE). A single Com. Redpoll with siskins at Woodinville, n.e. of Seattle Dec. 13 was the only one reported (†MEg). Pine Siskins were reported as "scattered and scarce" in Oregon (*vide* HN) and "in very low numbers" in the Bellingham area all winter (TW). Lesser Goldfinches were at the n. limit of their normal range at Portland throughout the period (DF; MK, *vide* HN). Fifteen there Feb. 27 was the high count

(MK, *vide* JG). In keeping with this winter's dearth of finches, Red Crossbills were everywhere reported absent or in small numbers. The White-winged Crossbill was noted twice. A single was on the Squamish, B.C., CBC Jan. 3, and three were at Leadbetter Pt., Jan. 25 (RW). Coastal records this far s. are unusual even in irruptive winters.

A **Sage Sparrow** Feb. 22 at the S.J.C.R. (JG, TF, HN) matched arrival dates for this species on its breeding grounds e. of the Cascades. An odd junco seen often throughout the winter at a Metchosin, V.I., feeder was judged intermediate between Pink-sided and Gray-headed forms (†M&VG). Tree sparrows were noted in numbers up to four s. to Dungeness, the Skagit flats, and Seattle, Wash. Oregon's sixth **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found Jan. 17-25 on Sauvie I. (TM *et al.*, ph. OSc). Six Harris' and 24 White-throated sparrows were reported. All but two White-throateds were in Oregon. The exceptions were in Olympia, Wash., Jan. 15 (G&WH) and Saanich, V.I., Dec. 1-19 (Mrs. I. McTaggart-Cowen, *vide* VG). This concentration of White-throated Sparrows in w. Oregon has been a consistent pattern for the last several years. A **Swamp Sparrow** found Dec. 31 on Samish I., Skagit Co., Wash. (†MD, MEi *et al.*) provided the sixth state record. The bird was seen often through Feb. 8 (†TW, †WW *et al.*). A Swamp Sparrow reported Feb. 14 on the Skagit R. delta 15 mi s. of Samish I. (BHa, *vide* TW) could have been the same individual. In sharp contrast to last year, none were found this season in w. Oregon.

**CITED OBSERVERS and ABBREVIATIONS**, with Sub-Regional Editors in bold-face. Ilse Allen, Loraine Anderson, Bill Anker, Gerry Ansell, Ann Bailey, Ward Beecher, Thais Bock (TBo), Bob Bromley, Doug Brown, Tom Burgess (TBU), Rob Butler, Colin Butt, Kay Cairns, Wayne Campbell, Dick Cannings, Mike Carmody (MCa), Stan Cecil, Mary Chapman (MCh), Howard Cockerham, Mark Colwell (MCo), John Comer, Alan Contreras, Tom Crabtree, Herbert Curl, Brian Davies, Jack & Ada Davis, Paul DeBruyn, Dick Decker, Michael Donahue, Mark Eisdorfer (MEi), Mark Egger (MEg), Elzie & Elsie Eltzroth, Tad Finnell, **David Fix**, Roger Foxall, Hal & Martha Fray, John Gatchett (JGa), Jeff Gilligan (JG), Margaret & **Vic Goodwill**, Kate Graham (KGa), Barbara Griffin, Karl Gruebel (KGu), Bob Hamlin (BHa), **Bill Harrington-Tweit** (BHT), Bob Hay (BHy), Werner Hesse (WHe), Dave Hoffman (DHo), Glen & Wanda Hoge (G&WH), Dave Hutchinson (DHu), David Irons, Pete Isleib, Dale Jensen, Brian Kautesk, Lois Killewich, Mark Koninendyke, Rick & Jan Krabbe, Fayette Krause, Rob Lawrence, Bob Loeffel, Tom Lund, Rob Mackenzie-Grieve (RMG), Alan MacLeod (AMa), Jack Major, Arnie & Debbie Martin (A&DM), Alan McGie (AMc), Mike McNall (MMc), Don Menefee (DMe), Marjorie Moore (MM), Mike Moore (MMo), Terry Morgan (TM), Tom Morgan (TMO), E. Munde, **Harry Nehls**, Jim Olson, Bob Paine, Leonard Paul, **Dennis Paulson** (DP), Evelyn Peaslee, Roy Phillips, Dave Pikula (DPi), Michael Price, Al Prigge, Georgia Ramsay, Alan Richards, Leila Roberts, Ian Robertson (IRO), Robin Robinson (RRo), Steve Robinson, Wilma Robin-

son, Ronnie & Ivy Ryno (R&IRy), Ron Satterfield, Susan Saul (SSa), Jean-Pierre Savard (JS), Owen Schmidt (OSc), Madelon Schouton (MSc), Chris Shepard, Michael Shepard (MSh), Dorothy Siewers (DSi), Dory & Stan Smith (D&SSm), Wally Sumner, Otis Swisher (OSw), Vern Tamke, Jeremy Tatum

(JTa), Howard Taylor, Larry Thornburgh, John Toochin (JTo), Ron Toonen, Jamie Wahl, Terry Wahl (TW), Ruben Ware (RWa), Clarice Watson, Wayne Weber (WW), E. White-Swift (EWS), Ralph Widrig (RW), Wally Wilkins (WWi), Doug Wilson (DWi), Tom Winter (TWi), Brad & Debra

Wood (B&Dwo), Margaret Wyborn (†) = written description on file, S.J.C.R. = South jetty of the Columbia R., Oreg.—**PHILIP W. MATTOCKS, JR.**, Dept of Zoology, Univ. of Washington, Seattle, Wash. 98195, and **EUGENE W. HUNN**, 1816 N. 57th St., Seattle, Wash. 98103,

## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Ron LeValley and Jules Evens

The winter was characterized by warm, mild weather. Not until February were any major storm fronts able to penetrate the persistent high pressure area along the Pacific Coast. As a consequence, many feared the return of a drought, waterfowl wandered widely in search of water, and many fall migrants successfully wintered in the Region, including some that are considered vagrants in the West. Ocean surface temperatures remained 1-2° C above normal as a result of the lack of winter storms.

Last fall's report emphasized the effect of local weather conditions on migrants; this winter's weather pattern also revealed localized effects on over-wintering birds. While most areas enjoyed mild climates, the San Francisco Bay Area, particularly Point Reyes, was caught by a cold snap in early December which lasted through the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) period. As a result, while observers in the Monterey-Santa Cruz area had one of "the best winters in years" for vagrants and over-wintering summer birds, and the north coast and interior hosted a variety of first winter records, Bay Area birders bemoaned the lack of diversity there.

At the Palomarin Field Station, where the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (hereafter, P.R.B.O.) conducts ongoing studies, "a very productive summer of 1980 and one of the heaviest fall migrations on record produced very high population levels of the common winter birds. December birds/100 net hours were the highest in at least 5 years. January and February totals were still above average, but some major mortality seemed to occur in late January, associated with bad weather. Especially numerous this winter were: Bush-tits, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, *pugetensis* White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Fox sparrows".

**LOONS THROUGH STORM-PETRELS**—Two Yellow-billed Loons were reported: one at Bodega Bay Dec. 6 (JW *et al.*) and one photographed in s. Humboldt Bay Jan. 1 (†RLeV,LD). Arctic Loons winter predominantly s. of our Region, many were still moving S during December, 417 flew past Pt. Reyes in 10 min Dec. 13 (DS) and 1180 were estimated passing Bodega Bay Dec. 28 (LCB). The only inland report was of one at L. Almanor, Plumas Co., Dec. 29 (SAL). Over 600 Red-throated Loons were concentrated at the mouth of Tomales Bay, Marin Co., Jan. 31 during the herring spawning sea-

son (DS); none was found inland.

Twenty Black-footed Albatrosses in Monterey Bay was a high count for such an early date (SFB). Northern Fulmar numbers were at or below "normal" levels in the offshore waters this winter. A Flesh-footed Shearwater, always rare in our Region, was recorded in Monterey Bay Feb. 22 (DRo). Short-tailed Shearwaters were found in Monterey Bay with one Jan. 17 (JLu) and three Feb. 22 (DRo). Despite the warm sea surface temperatures, only two reports of Manx Shearwaters were received, two off Bodega Bay Dec. 28 (LCB, BDP) and three in Monterey Bay Jan. 17 (JLu). Two Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels in Monterey Bay Dec. 7 provided our first winter records since 1976 (SFB, A. Baldrige).

**PELICANS THROUGH HERONS**—Undoubtedly the most spectacular waterbird sighting of the season was of a well-described ad. **Blue-footed Booby** flying S (!) past Pt. St. George, Del Norte Co., Jan. 16 (†RAE, SS). Fall 1980 was not an invasion year for boobies in s. California and this record is approximately 3 months later than any other Regional record, so this occurrence must be considered truly abnormal. Only a September 1935 Washington State record (Larrison, E. 1945. *Murrelet* 26:45) is from a more n. locale. A concentration of 130+ Brandt's Cormorants at Pt. St. George Dec. 3 (RAE) was surprising since winter reports in our Region are rare n. of Bodega Bay.

Cattle Egrets were reported in lower numbers than we have come to expect in most localities, but 450 at Mendota W.M.A., Fresno Co., Jan. 24 (RH, CP, JG) was the largest concentration ever recorded in the Region. A Least Bittern at the Palo Alto Flood Control Basin Dec. 11 (*vide* WB) was in an area from which there are few previous records. Eight Am. Bitterns at Abbot's Lagoon, Marin Co., Dec. 15 was a very high count for the immediate coast (DS). The first Lake County White-faced Ibis was discovered Jan. 2 at Anderson Marsh and later seen Feb. 5 at Lower Lake (JMa). This species is very rare in our Region in winter outside of the Los Banos, Merced Co. area, where this winter's population numbered a low 40-50 (F.A.S.)

**WATERFOWL**—The

warm dry winter apparently caused swans and geese to wander in search of suitable habitat. Many observers commented on the higher-than-normal numbers of large Anseriformes along the outer coast, while others thought that geese numbers in the Central Valley (hereafter, C.V.) were lower than normal. At least 30 Canada Geese were reported from 9 coastal locations. Two Brant were with a flock of Aleutian Canada Geese in the Butte Sink area, Butte Co., Dec. 1 (SU); these were probably the same individuals seen with the Aleutians during the fall at Crescent City, Del Norte Co. There were 56 coastal White-fronted Geese reported from 5 locations, only one or two would be found on the coast during an average winter. Similarly 27 Snow Geese were found at 11 coastal locations when an average winter might yield two coastal reports. Ross' Geese also made a good showing on the coast where they are extremely rare; six "probables" were flying over Limantour Estero Dec. 8 (JE), three were near Bodega, Sonoma Co., Jan. 1 (WB), one was at Sea Ranch, Sonoma Co., Jan. 2 (RJ); one was at the Bolinas Sewage Pond Jan. 12-15 (DDeS), two were in Bodega Bay Jan. 18 (LCB, BDP) with one remaining Jan. 21 (DE) and one was in the Arcata Bottoms Jan. 27 (JSt). A blue phase **Ross' Goose** at Gray Lodge N.W.R., Feb. 7 (RS *et al.*) has few precedents *anywhere*. Interested readers are referred to *Auk* 96:544-550 and *Continental Birdlife* 1:112-115 for a thorough discussion of the complexities surrounding this intriguing morph.

Only one Green-winged (Eur.) Teal was



reported this winter, a male at Elkhorn Slough, Monterey Co., Jan. 20 (GT,BE). It is unfortunate that a decline in reports of this form coincides with the lumping of the Green-winged Teals by the A.O.U. We will probably never know whether this decline is a result of fewer numbers of this Asiatic straggler in our Region or just diminishing interest in this form by birdwatchers. Field observers should be aware that the biological importance of these "lumped" forms did not disappear with the loss of their status as full species (see also Yellow-rumped Warblers). Five Tufted Ducks were reported as follows: two males at Muddy Hollow, Point Reyes National Seashore (hereafter, P.R.N.S.) Dec. 12 (JE,DS), one male at the Tiburon Ponds Jan. 3 (BDP), an immature or female (probably female) at Abbot's Lagoon, P.R.N.S., Jan. 14 (DS) and a male at the Berkeley Aquatic Park Feb. 5 (JRI). A Barrow's Goldeneye at Bass L., Madera Co., Feb. 15 (VJ) provided one of the few records for that county. A female at the Auburn Stabilization Ponds, Placer Co., Jan. 6 (BBa) was also at an unusual locality. An impressive 19 Oldsquaws were tabulated this season, four at Pt. Reyes Jan. 12 (DS) and three at Moss Landing Dec. 31-Jan. 11 (m.ob.) were the largest concentrations, while a single bird was inland, where they are very rare, at the Stockton Sewage Ponds Dec. 5 (DE). A total of 150+ Black Scoters in the vicinity of Pt. Reyes Jan. 13 (JRI) was a large concentration for our Region. Four Red-breasted Mergansers, always rare in the C.V., were in the San Joaquin R., n. of Fresno Jan. 16 (RH,KH).

**RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS**—White-tailed Kites continued to appear in good numbers in many localities this season. Five Goshawks were about average for a winter, but our other two Accipiters were less conspicuous than average. Only 14 Sharp-shinned Hawks and an alarmingly low five Cooper's Hawks were reported. An albino Red-tailed Hawk at Squaw Valley, Fresno Co., Feb. 15 was probably the same individual sighted there in spring 1975 (RH,GS). Three "Harlan's" Hawks were reported as follows: w. of Santa Rosa Dec. 21 (LCB), near Davis, Yolo Co., Jan. 27 (TBe) and in the Panoche Valley, San Benitos Co., Feb. 7 (*vide* WB). A surprising ten Red-shouldered Hawks were in the Smith R. bottoms, Del Norte Co., Jan. 14 near the n. limit of their range (RAE). If Red-shouldered Hawks are resident in n. California, as it seems they are, where do our fall migrants come from? Rough-legged Hawks were conspicuous by their relative absence this winter, but Ferruginous Hawks were present in above-average numbers. Eagles of both species were reported in average numbers except that Bald Eagles were scarce along the n. coast rivers, undoubtedly owing to the poor salmon runs this fall and winter (RLeV). Peregrine Falcons are continuing their apparent recovery with an estimated six birds in the Pt. Reyes area (DDeS,JE *et al.*), and scattered sightings throughout the remainder of the Region (m.ob.). At least 37 Merlins wintered in our Region, causing many observers to comment on their increased numbers.

Ruffed Grouse continue to be detected in the n w. corner of the Region. This winter five were reported: one seen regularly n. of

Orick, Humboldt Co (*vide* RAE), one n of Somes Bar, Siskiyou Co., Nov. 26 (RLeV), one along the Aw-Poh Rd., in n. Humboldt County Dec. 20 (*vide* RAE), one n. of Hawkins Bar, Trinity Co., Dec. 30 (RLeV) and one along Alder Camp Rd., in s. Del Norte Co., Feb. 14 (*vide* RAE). A concentration of 5000 Sandhill Cranes at Merced N.W.R., Feb. 28 was the largest such concentration in many years (DDeS). A healthy population of at least 43 Clapper Rails wintered along Alameda South Shore (ER). A Sora in Willow Cr., Humboldt Co., Feb. 27 (MRa) was in an area where there are few winter records. Black Rails were again reported at regular localities as follows: three at Corte Madera Marsh, Marin Co., Dec. 21 (RLeV,LD) and Jan. 19 (DS), three at Benicia State Recreation Area, Solano Co., Dec. 28 (JRI), and at least 23 at Port Chicago Marsh, Contra Costa Co., Feb. 17-18 (DE). Common Gallinules were found in higher-than-expected numbers in the n. C.V., with concentrations of 18+ at Lone Tree Pond e. of Cottonwood, Shasta Co., Dec. 12 (SAL) and 11 in Red Bluff Dec. 20 (KVV,KC).

**SHOREBIRDS**—A pair of Am. Oystercatchers described from Tomales Pt., P.R.N.S., Feb. 25 (R. Fowler, K. Lathrop) would provide the second Regional and most n. Pacific coast record if accepted by the California Records Committee. The Mountain Plovers discovered along Clifton Court Rd., near Byron, Contra Costa Co., last fall remained through the winter with a maximum of 33 seen Feb. 8 (B. Richmond). Elsewhere 2-3 were seen in Panoche Valley Feb. 7 (*vide* WB). A total of 21 Am. Golden Plovers, mostly of the Asiatic race *fulva*, wintered at 6 coastal locations (m.ob.).

A concentration of 107 Greater Yellowlegs at Mendota W.M.A., Fresno Co., Feb. 1 (RH,CP,LM) was a large number for a winter season. Lesser Yellowlegs were reported in good numbers, 16 in 11 localities were highlighted by five near Loleta, Humboldt Co., Jan. 3 (RAE). A Wandering Tattler at the Moffet Field Naval Air Station Dec. 22 established the first Santa Clara County record (*vide* WB,CB). A flock of 51 Ruddy Turnstones at Bodega Harbor Jan. 18 (BDP) was a notable winter concentration. Up to 20 W. Sandpipers wintered at Merced N.W.R., as in past years (RBe), this species is rare in the C.V., during the winter.

**JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS**—A few Pomarine Jaegers were found in Monterey Bay this winter with a maximum of three Jan. 10 (JB). No fewer than 12 Glaucous Gulls were reported along the coast this winter (m.ob.). A careful census of large gulls along the coast also revealed at least four "white" gulls that were probably Glaucous x Glaucous-winged and Glaucous x Herring hybrids (†LSp), underlining the fact that in our Region not all large white gulls are automatically Glaucous Gulls. Glaucous-winged Gulls were inland at Victoria I., San Joaquin Co., Jan. 9 (KCam) and Sacramento Dec. 6 (VN). Notable inland records of Mew Gulls were 24 near Sacramento Dec. 6 (VN), one near Sacramento Dec. 25 (JML) and one at Clearlake Highlands, Lake Co., Feb. 17 (JMa). An ad. **Black-headed Gull** was well-described among a flock of 650+

Bonaparte's Gulls in the Crescent City Harbor, Del Norte Co., Dec. 12 (†RAE). This represents only the seventh Regional record. A Franklin's Gull was photographed at L Almanor Dec. 28-30 (MG,NC) establishing the first Plumas County record for this species. The **Little Gull** remained at the Stockton Sewage Pond at least through Feb 16 (BRI). A very late Com. Tern was at Pajaro Dunes, Monterey Co., Dec. 9 (J&RW). Caspian Terns began moving N very early, one was at the e. end of the Dumbarton Bridge, Alameda Co., Feb. 19 (PJM,CSw), two were at the San Mateo Bridge, San Mateo Co., Feb. 16 (AE) and one was at Pajaro Dunes Feb. 21 (J&RW).

Twelve Pigeon Guillemots near the mouth of Tomales Bay, Marin Co., Jan. 31 (DS) constitute a large winter concentration of this species in the Region. Elsewhere four were in Monterey Bay Feb. 21 (JML) and one was in Trinidad Harbor, Humboldt Co., Jan. 11 (JS). The winter whereabouts of most of the world's Pigeon Guillemots is apparently still unknown! A **Craveri's Murrelet** seen on Monterey Bay Jan. 3 (TC) and Jan. 10 (GPo,RH) established the first winter record for this species in our Region, and is probably attributable to the warm water temperatures

**PIGEONS, DOVES, OWLS**—Band-tailed Pigeons, considered "low" in areas where they commonly winter (m.ob.), were well reported from n. counties where they are usually rare in winter. Flocks of 30+ were recorded in the e. Humboldt County-w. Trinity County mountains (RLeV) with smaller numbers in coastal Del Norte County (RAE). Equally rare along the north coast in winter were seven Mourning Doves at Loleta Bottoms Jan. 1 (RLeV). Barn Owls, well reported during the fall, received little mention during winter, however 109 on the Sacramento CBC was an impressive all-time high (*vide* EH). A continued decline of Screech Owls in the vicinity of Davis in the C.V., is perhaps attributable to orchard spraying (TL). Forty Pygmy Owls were reported, 35 by one observer (DE), all from locations of known occurrence. Spotted Owls continue to be found in new locations as increased interest, expertise and coverage penetrates seldom "owled" drainages. The following records are thought to represent new sites: *five* at Greenwood Cr Canyon, Mendocino Co., Dec. 20 (DE), one at Los Alamos Rd., Sonoma Co. (DE), one-two in the Terwer Valley n.w. of Klamath Glen, Del Norte Co., throughout the period (RAE) and one at 6100 ft on the N. Fork of the American R. (TBe). Unprecedented was a report of *ten* from Willow Cr., Sonoma Co (DE). Scattered reports of both "eared" owls were received, but the only significant concentrations were of Short-eareds: of 45 on the Sacramento CBC, 30 were concentrated at the Davis Hawk and Owl Ref. (EH); they were "common all winter" at Suisun Marsh in N. San Francisco Bay (BED); 12 were at Andrus I., Sacramento Co., Jan. 24 (DE). Saw-whet Owls were found at traditional places in coastal counties, but one in Cobb Valley on the Clear Lake CBC in early January (JMa *et al.*) provided the first Lake County record. Also considered unusual were two at Putah Cr., Dec. 21 (TBe *et al.*) and one at Folsom Dec. 29 (*vide* EH), although our understanding of their distribution is poor,

especially in the foothills surrounding the C.V., where they may prove regular in winter. Mild temperatures must have been responsible for active Poor-wills e. of Red Bluff Feb. 29 (SAL, N. Shubert) and on Rock Ridge, Marin Co., Feb. 22 (IT).

**SWIFTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**—The presence of a flock of 38+ **Vaux's Swifts** over the Terwer Valley n.w. of Klamath Glen Jan. 30 (GL,RAE) with smaller numbers there the next 2 days, but not thereafter (RAE), has few winter precedents. White-throated Swifts seem to be on the increase in the C.V., with new high counts on many CBCs, especially in the Sacramento area (BED,EH), although this winter's balmy weather may be more responsible than any long term build-up. A very early Allen's Hummingbird was in Alamo, Contra Costa Co., Jan. 12 (JRI), but elsewhere arrival dates were about average. A *Selasphorus* sp. (thought to be an Allen's) was in Santa Cruz Jan. 10 (SG). Despite the mild climate, Anna's Hummingbirds failed to winter in Siskiyou County where there were no January observations (RE,MRO); the first sighting there was at Somes Bar Feb. 7 (MRO). They did winter near the coast in Del Norte County, however, and male courtship flights were noted throughout February n.w. of Klamath Glen, where breeding has yet to be confirmed (RAE). A Belted Kingfisher at 7000 ft at Huntington L., Fresno Co., Jan. 13 was high for midwinter (RH,HR). Encouraging numbers of Pileated Woodpeckers were found at L. Hennessey, Napa Co. (BDP) and Yosemite Valley (CB); one at 7600 ft between Badger Pass and Bridalveil Campground in late February (CB) was high for midwinter. Lewis' Woodpeckers were well reported from various locations, but for the first time in 10 years *none* were found in e. Alameda County where Starlings are suspected of monopolizing roosting and nesting holes (AE).

A ♂ "Red-naped" Sapsucker (*S. v. nuchalis*) found Dec. 30 at Janesville, Lassen Co. (DAA, R. Harris) was found again and well described the following day (†DS). Because of hybridization between the various races, detailed descriptions of extralimital records are essential. Concern was expressed for the population of "Red-breasted" Sapsuckers in e. Humboldt-w. Trinity cos. where "this form seems much rarer than it was 5 years ago" (RLeV). A Williamson's Sapsucker at Chester, Plumas Co., Jan. 16 was at a low elevation and about 10 mi from the nearest likely breeding habitat (DAA). Any winter sightings of this species with accompanying habitat description would be valuable since its distribution is poorly understood; it is generally considered a year-round resident in its breeding habitat, but winter reports are scant. Downy Woodpecker numbers continue to decline on the Peace Valley CBC (vicinity of the Sutter Buttes, C.V.). The population of this species may indeed be suffering a long-term decline; contributors are encouraged to carefully assess numbers in their areas. In contrast to the decline of Downies, Nuttall's Woodpeckers seem to be doing well in the C.V., with CBC totals increasing yearly.

**FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS**—Again, the mild climate this winter

predictably enticed some insectivorous species to overwinter. Unfortunately, several reports of wintering Tyrannids (notably Ash-throated Flycatchers) were submitted unaccompanied by supporting details. Below are those reports confirmed by descriptions. A **Western Kingbird** at Putah Cr. Dec. 21 (†EH,TL *et al.*) provided only the third winter record for the Region, the second for the C.V. Well described was a **Cassin's Kingbird** Feb. 1-4 at Pt. Pinos, Pacific Grove (†LCB, DRo). This species has not been recorded in the Region for over 10 years, and the interest of this record is augmented by the November bird in s.e. Monterey County as reported in the fall. The Region's second **Olivaceous Flycatcher** was found in Santa Cruz Dec. 7 (†EM,AM, m.ob.), the same date as the first record from the Carmel R., in 1975. This year's bird was last seen Jan. 24 (JLu); the 1975 bird remained until Apr. 11, 1976. Two E. Phoebes were discovered: one at Pacific Grove Dec. 30 (LCB *et al.*) remained until late February (*fide* Dro), another was at El Estero Cemetery in Monterey early December-Feb. 16 (DB,BDP, †EH, †RS, m.ob.). Say's Phoebes were considered more common than usual in the C.V. (TBe) and on the coast (P.R.B.O., JE). They failed to winter in Siskiyou County despite the mild weather; the first migrant was noted at Tulelake N.W.R., Feb. 15 (MRO,RE). One at 4500 ft in Chester, Plumas Co., Feb. 20-28 was also a migrant, but in atypical montane habitat (C. Buell, DAA), and one at Ft. Funston Feb. 22 was unusual for San Francisco (DM). An *Empidonax* sp. at Centerville, Fresno Co., Dec. 7 was "not a Gray, by tail wag" (MMY).

The **Skylark**, present at Pt. Reyes since Oct. 25 and for the third consecutive year, was last seen Feb. 21 (JM). Horned Larks are rare on the coast n. of Humboldt Bay, so one at the Klamath R. mouth Feb. 21-22 (LSp, GL, RAE) was noteworthy. No Violet-green Swallows were reported in January, and the first migrants, at Limantour, P.R.N.S., Feb. 12, were flying SE along the beach (LS, JE). Major movement began Feb. 19-22 (m.ob.). Tree Swallows were encountered in sizable numbers in December with a high of 150 at the Davis Sewage Ponds Dec. 28 (EH, J. Lane), but the only January reports were in Marin County with three at Olema Marsh Jan. 23 and one at Bolinas Jan. 28 (DDeS). The first significant numbers were 120 at Mendota N.W.R., Feb. 1 (RH,CP,LM). Rough-winged, Barn and Cliff swallows are extremely rare in "winter", so complete descriptions should accompany any extratemporal reports. The following records are thought to be valid, although no details were submitted: single Rough-winged at San Jose Dec. 21 (B. Roadcap, *fide* WB) and n.e. of Fresno Dec. 27 and Jan. 1 (KH); two Barns at Pt. Reyes Dec. 20 (DB, PC). Cliff Swallows returned very early to Fresno County with one at Mendota N.W.R., Feb. 1 (RH, CP, LM) and one at Riverdale Feb. 3 (HM, *fide* RH).

**CORVIDS THROUGH STARLINGS**—Slightly extralimital Yellow-billed Magpie reports were of two at Mendota, Fresno Co., Jan. 18 (T&GB) and one n. of SR-4, e. Contra Costa Co. (JRI). A small population continues to reside just n. of L. Berryessa, Napa Co., separated from the C.V. population by

several miles of inner-coast range (BDP) A single Chestnut-backed Chickadee at Chico Dec. 7 (KVV) was the first lowland sighting for Butte County. Plain Titmice and Bushtits were found in exceptional numbers on CBCs in the Sacramento Valley; Bushtits were also present in excellent numbers on the coast at Palomarin (P.R.B.O.). Bushtits remained at high winter elevations in the s. Sierra with six in a whitethorn/manzanita thicket at 7000 ft near Huntington L., Jan. 12 and >two in yellow pine at 5600 ft at Glen Meadow Jan. 13, both locations in Fresno Co. (RH, HR) A single White-breasted Nuthatch wintered in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco (hereafter, G.G.P. and S.F. respectively), for the first time (DM). Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce everywhere this winter (m.ob.), however some were in G.G.P., Jan. 24 through the period (DM). Brown Creepers were scarce on the coast at Palomarin.

Six Dippers were reported from unusual wintering spots in the lowlands of the C.V.; five in the Sacramento Valley, one in the San Joaquin, a House Wren in the Smith R. Bottoms, Del Norte Co., Jan. 18 (RAE) was n. of the species' usual wintering grounds A Long-billed Marsh Wren at St. Helena Jan. 1 provided the first record for the Napa Valley floor (JSt). A Mockingbird in Whitmore Feb. 12-17 was only the second known occurrence for the immediate area (BK). A Sage Thrasher at Arcata Bottoms Jan. 14-15 (D Laursen *et al.*) provided the first winter record for the n. coast.

Irrupective frugivores were present along the c. coast, but in smaller numbers than last year (P.R.B.O., DS). American Robins and Hermit Thrushes increased there noticeably in early January, coincident with the ripening of the toyon berry crop (JE). On the n. coast in Humboldt County the annual influx of robins and Varied Thrushes during mid-February occurred as expected with no concurrent decline of inland numbers (both species were "almost abundant" in w. Humboldt-e. Trinity cos.), indicating a different source for the incursive population (RLeV). In Surprise Valley, in the northeasternmost reaches of the Region, one orchard hosted 300+ robins and 400 Cedar Waxwings Dec. 29 (DS). American Robins were below normal in the Sacramento Valley and absent from the Great Basin CBCs (EH). "A poor crop of juniper berries in the Great Basin may account for lack of sightings there. The dry conditions in the n. may account for the low numbers reported" (EH). Hermit Thrushes, however, were well-reported on several Sacramento Valley CBCs.

Encouraging numbers of W. Bluebirds were found on the Springville CBC, providing that count with its 10-year high. Mountain Bluebirds wintered in agricultural areas near Live Oak in the C.V. (BED). The highest concentration reported was 70 in one field Jan. 2 at Mendota N.W.R., Fresno Co. (KVV, KC). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Ferndale Bottoms Jan. 15 (JSt *et al.*) provided the first true winter record for the n. coast; five others were reported along the coast from the Carmel R., to Pt. Reyes Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglets continued their fall trend and remained in high numbers through winter (m.ob.) A single Ruby-crowned remained until Feb. 2 on F.I., where the species is extremely rare in

winter Cedar Waxwings were generally considered "low", none were found on the Honey Lake CBC in the Great Basin. Starlings filled the sky and fields in "flocks like locusts" Dec. 21 just n. of Cloverdale—"I wouldn't be surprised if there were a million." (RAE).

**FRINGILLIDS**—Single Black-headed Grosbeaks were at Pacific Grove Jan. 30 (†LCB) and San Rafael Feb. 5-15 (GF). Substantial numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were encountered in Alpine County in the Sierra Jan. 4 (EH) and one at Three Rivers, Tulare Co., Feb. 3 was at a low elevation (RH). The only Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were 20-30 at S. Dunsmuir near Mt. Shasta (CSt). Pine Siskins were widespread and fairly numerous in the C.V., and the Sierran foothills (EH) and "good numbers" were on the coast of Palomarin. Red Crossbills had a good year in the Sierra (EH,SAL,BO,B&CY) and moved downslope in either direction to be found on C.V., and Great Basin CBCs in substantial numbers (m.ob.). On the w. slopes, a bumper crop of Ponderosa pine cones was thought to be responsible, and flocks were noted at the lower limits of the tree's distribution (BO). In keeping with the fall trend, high numbers of Savannah Sparrows were reported on C.V. CBCs. Two Sharp-tailed Sparrows remained at Bolinas at least until Jan. 20 (DS) and one was at the Palo Alto dump Dec. 22 (E. Gustafson, *vide* DH). February 15 for a Vesper Sparrow at Hall Ranch, P.R.N.S., (JH) was a most unusual date for coastal Marin. It was considered a good year for Rufous-crowned Sparrows in e. Napa County where the inner coast range meets the Sacramento Valley, with 17 birds sighted at L. Hennessey Jan. 1 (BDP). High numbers were also reported from Sweetwater Cr., near Folsom and at Putah Cr. (JML).

Very rare in the C.V., a Black-throated Sparrow was found at the s.w. edge of the Sutter Buttes Dec. 22 (WA) and remained into mid-February (m.ob.), providing the first Sutter County record. Tree Sparrows were reported from Tulelake N.W.R., where 12 wintered until Feb. 1 (SS,RE,MRO), and Sugarloaf Mt., e. Humboldt Co., Jan. 12 (†RLeV). A Chipping Sparrow, occasional near the coast in winter, was seen near Palo Alto Jan. 17 in the same spot as last winter (B. Pulliam, *vide* WB). A Harris' Sparrow at Honey L., Dec. 31 (TM, DS *et al.*) remained through the period. More unusual was one in residential Sacramento Dec. 15-Feb. 28 and another in Kerman, Fresno Co., throughout the period (J. Seay, *vide* RH). Sixteen White-throated Sparrows were reported; one at Weaverville Jan. 2 was in the same bush as last year (SAL) and one in Fresno Feb. 1 was the only one reported from the s. C.V. (LM). As in the fall, numbers of Lincoln's Sparrows seemed high (m.ob.), but at Pt. Reyes local numbers declined by the end of the period (JE) Twenty-five Swamp Sparrows reported coastally was quite high; >ten were in Olema Marsh in December (RS) and the numbers reported from the n. coast were higher than in the past with ten in Humboldt and Del Norte cos. The only inland report was from Sacramento N.W.R., Feb. 28 (JH). As many as 15 Lapland Longspurs were found through mid-January at the Hall Ranch, P.R.N.S. (m.ob.) with numbers decreasing to seven by Jan. 28

(DS), then sharply to one in early February with the last report of one Feb. 21 (JM). It is generally thought that Lapland Longspurs are very rare and irregular on the coast after December; observations like the ones above suggest that this species may be rare but regular and local, until early February (DS). Elsewhere, three were found along the Eel R. Bottoms Jan. 3 (RAE, TS) and one was at Hayward Landing, Alameda Co., Jan. 13 (CSw). Three McCown's Longspurs were found in a large flock of Laplands at Lower Klamath N.W.R. in mid-January. A single bird was found Jan. 9 (SS), a different individual the next day (SS, MRO) and a third Jan. 11 (SS, MRO, RE). On Jan. 14 all three were seen together (RE).

**VIREOS AND WARBLERS**—A Hutton's Vireo in Moore Canyon, Sutter Buttes (JLu) furnished the first winter record there. Elsewhere in the C.V., the Sacramento and Folsom CBCs had high counts for this species whose numbers have been strong since fall. Three single Solitary Vireos were reported (presumably all *cassini*) as follows: Arcata Jan. 15 (JSt, RAE), Pacific Grove Dec. 30-Jan. 3 (DRo, DD) and Springville (KH, K. Luthy). Sixteen Black-and-white Warblers more than tripled the usual winter number; inland reports were from Red Bluff, Tehama Co., Dec. 27 (†J. Barbour, †L. Hanks) and the American R., Sacramento Feb. 7 (BOs). Seven Tennessee Warblers were found on the coast (2.2 is the winter average) with one at the Smith R., Dec. 5-Feb. 17 providing the first Del Norte County record (RAE,GS,GL). Orange-crowned Warblers made an impressive showing with many CBCs tallying all-time highs. Twelve Nashville Warblers were reported, six from the Monterey-Santa Cruz area, six from Humboldt-Del Norte cos. One Lucy's Warbler was at Pacific Grove Dec. 30 (LCB *et al.*). A Northern Parula at Ferndale Bottoms, Humboldt Co., Jan. 4-15 (†JSt, †RAE) was only the Region's second winter record. Two Yellow Warblers were discovered: one at the Pajaro R., early December—at least Jan. 1 (DRo, SG), another inland at Gray Lodge N.W.R., Dec. 21-Feb. 8 (BED *et al.*). Six overwintering Black-throated Grays (two coastal, six inland) was about twice average; the one at Klamath Glen Dec. 20-Jan. 6 (GL *et al.*) represented the first winter record for Del Norte County; there is only one previous winter record for Humboldt County. Palm Warblers are regularly found along the coast in winter in small numbers with 5-15 reported yearly. This winter 36 were discovered with an unprecedented *six inland*, as follows: Willow Cr., Humboldt Co., Dec. 4 (†RAE, RLeV *et al.*), Ukiah Sewage Pond, Mendocino Co., Dec. 31-Mar. 5 (RAE), Petaluma Sewage Ponds, Sonoma Co., Jan. 4 (†JE *et al.*), Coyote Cr., San Jose Dec. 21 (*vide* WB), Gray Lodge N.W.R., Dec. 21-Feb. 28 (RS, BED *et al.*) and Mines Rd., Alameda Co., Feb. 22 (GF). Previously, the Region had only two inland records. A single N. Waterthrush was present in S.F. sporadically Dec. 21-Jan. 24 (NB) for the Region's fifth winter record. A MacGillivray's Warbler at Neary's Lagoon, Santa Cruz Dec. 21 (SG, BRE) had only two winter precedents, one of which was in the same area last year. The first overwintering Com. Yellowthroat for Del Norte

County was at Klamath Glen Jan. 31-Feb. 28 (GL,RAE). Single wintering Wilson's Warblers were at Loleta Bottoms, Humboldt Co., Jan. 3 (RAE,TS) and at Smith R. Bottoms Del Norte Co., Jan. 14 (RAE,SS,GL).

**ICTERIDS THROUGH TANAGERS**—The only Hooded Oriole report was of one male at Dinuba, Tulare Co., Feb. 16 (RG) Although suspected of wintering regularly by some observers, records indicate that this species is still scarce in winter. About seven N. Orioles wintered coastally; four at Monterey, one at Duncan Mills, Sonoma Co., Dec. 28 (DE, JH *et al.*) and two ad males at Eureka Jan. 30-31 (JSt). A Great-tailed Grackle arrived in Davis Dec. 27 and remained into the first week of January (†JBr,TBe *et al.*). Since the Region's first record at S.F., in 1978, the only records away from there have been three C.V. birds, all males and all November-January. After several months unreported, a male appeared in S.F., Feb. 1 (PW) with a female found a few days later (*vide* The Gull). Brown-headed Cowbirds overwintered in the Smith R. Bottoms and at Crescent City (RAE). High counts for Marin County in winter were 200+ at Novato Jan. 4 (DS,SC,IT) and 80+ at Pt. Reyes Station Feb. 18 (DS). Six W. Tanagers were reported coastally from Monterey to S.F., more than usual, this species being very rare in winter. A ♀ Summer Tanager at Pacific Grove Jan. 6-early February (DRo) was one of more than a dozen Regional winter appearances, most coastal.

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## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Guy McCaskie

The dry conditions of the fall continued through the winter, leaving the Region with below average rainfall for the period, and accompanied by warm temperatures resulting in an exceptionally mild winter. The temperate weather did not, however, produce a rash of unexpected overwintering birds. In fact, the season was somewhat uneventful with virtually no surprising discoveries and none of the sporadic visitors from the north. The presence of both Black-headed and Little gulls highlighted the waterbird picture. The most unusual landbirds, a Whip-poor-will near Los Angeles and a Grace's Warbler in Santa Barbara, had both spent the previous winter in California and it is becoming evident that many of the out-of-range landbirds found overwintering here in s. California return to the same locations year after year.

**LOONS, GREBES**—Six Com. Loons on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co., throughout the period (LB) and two on L. Palmdale, Los Angeles Co., Feb. 19 (JD) were the only ones found away from the coast. An Arctic Loon, rare inland, was on Atascadero L., San Luis Obispo Co., Feb. 11 (JR). A Red-necked Grebe near San Pedro, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 3 (GSS), one in Santa Monica, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 4-16 (H&NS, ph., S.D.N.H.M.), another in Redondo Beach, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 25 (H&NS, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) and a fourth at Playa del Rey, Los Angeles Co., Feb. 4 (BSh) were all exceptionally far s. A Horned Grebe at Furnace Cr. Ranch in Death Valley Dec. 29 (LLN) and another on the Salton Sea Dec. 14 (JO) were the only ones reported from inland localities.

**SHEARWATERS, STORM-PETRELS**—A Short-tailed Shearwater was identified off Goleta, Santa Barbara Co., Jan. 16 (LB); the status of this species off s. California is poorly understood. Exceptional was a Leach's Storm-Petrel inside the breakwater at Playa del Rey Jan. 23 (JS) since there are few winter records for the Region and the species is normally highly pelagic.

**HERONS, STORKS**—An imm. Little Blue Heron in San Diego Feb. 26+ (SDo) was the only one found this winter. The imm. Reddish Egret found at Seal Beach/Bolsa Chica, Orange Co., Nov. 8 remained through the period (SJR, ph., S.D.N.H.M.). One or two Louisiana Herons remained around San Diego all winter (EC); the one found at Seal Beach/Bolsa Chica Nov. 28 was still present Feb. 22 (CM, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) and another was at Playa del Rey Jan. 20-27 (BB). Two Wood Storks on L. San Jacinto, Riverside Co., Mar. 7 (EAC) are believed to have wintered locally.

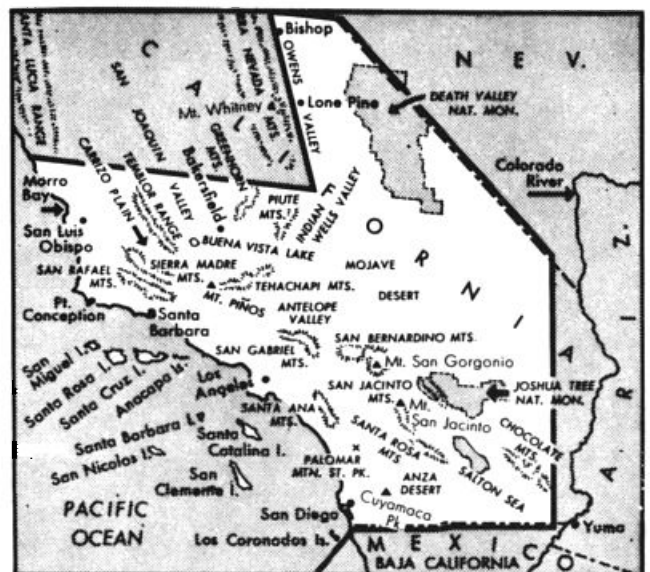
**SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS**—Whistling Swans were exceptionally scarce with eight at the Santa Clara R. estuary, Ventura Co., (hereafter, S.C.R.E.) Dec. 15-16 (MS) and two near Lancaster, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 2 (HaF) being the southernmost. A Cackling Goose (*Branta canadensis minima*), rare in s. California, was at the s. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, S.E.S.S.) Feb. 8 (GMcC) and three more were at L. San Jacinto Feb. 4 (JD). A white-bellied Brant (*Branta bernicla hrota*), a casual straggler to California, was at Malibu, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 31-Feb. 1 (KLG). A flock of 750 White-fronted Geese on L. San Jacinto Feb. 4 (JD) was exceptional, this species having become quite scarce in this Region. Up to three Ross' Geese were present near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara Co., Nov. 22-Dec. 28 (PEL), one was in the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles Co., Jan. 11 (BD), two were near Oceanside, San Diego Co., Dec. 28-Jan. 10 (DP), three were on L. Hodges, San Diego Co., Jan. 17-18 (KW) and one was on L. Henshaw, San Diego Co., Dec. 26 (RH); any sighting of this species away from the Salton Sea is of interest. Blue-winged Teal appeared commoner than usual along the coast with 55± reported including up to 25 in the Seal Beach/Bolsa Chica area (SJR). At least ten Eur. Wigeon were present along the coast. Thirty Wood Ducks on El Capitan Res., near San Diego Jan. 10 (JOZ) was a large number for this far s. A ♂ Tufted Duck was on Lopez L., San Luis Obispo Co., Feb. 17-28 (CM) and another was at Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., Feb. 7-28 (REW); one or two have been found in s. California each winter in recent years. Only five Oldsquaws were reported with one in Ventura all winter (DS), one at Pt. Mugu Jan. 1 (JM), another at Playa del Rey throughout the period (BSh) and two on San Diego Bay Dec. 20+ (JO). The ♂ Harlequin Duck initially found in Carlsbad, San Diego Co., Dec. 31, 1977, was still present at the end of the period (EC). Black Scoters were scarcer than usual with only seven reported, one being as far s. as San Diego Dec. 17 (EC). A Surf Scoter near Salton City Feb. 8 (DP) was inland.

**HAWKS**—A White-tailed Kite at Big Bear L., in the San Bernardino Mts., Dec. 7 (KLG) was at an unusually high altitude. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk in San Diego Feb. 25 (REW) was the only one found this winter. An ad. Zone-tailed Hawk was well seen at Corte Madera L., San Diego Co., Jan. 10 (SM).

Rough-legged Hawks were scarce this winter with only five reported including one as far s. as S.E.S.S., Dec. 7-Jan. 24 (JO, BD). A Merlin in Goleta Jan. 2-Feb. 6 (PEL) was clearly a blackish bird, *F.c. suckleyi*, from the n.w.

**CRANES, RAILS**—Totally unexpected were 210 Sandhill Cranes near Santa Maria Jan. 4-5 (LB) and one in flight over Seal Beach Jan. 25 (DD) as this species is considered casual anywhere along the coast. A Clapper Rail at Pt. Mugu Feb. 28 (DD) was only the second seen in this area in recent years but gave hope that a small population may exist in this suitable marsh.

**SHOREBIRDS**—a Black Oystercatcher at Ventura Dec. 3 (SSu), another at nearby Port Hueneme Dec. 3 (SSu), five near San Pedro Dec. 2 (BD) and two on Pt. Loma, San Diego Co., all winter (EC) were all outside the species' breeding range. The Piping Plover found at Morro Bay Oct. 1 was last seen Dec. 15 (BD). A flock of 120 Mountain Plovers in Irvine all winter (SJR) were the only ones reported from along the coast. As usual a few Am. Golden Plovers wintered along the coast with up to 22 near Santa Maria all winter (PEL), one at Pt. Mugu Jan. 17 (REW), one at Playa del Rey Nov. 23-Mar. 8 (BB), 12 in Seal Beach during January and February (SJR), two at Imperial Beach Nov. 22-Jan. 17 (DP) and 17 on San Clemente I., Feb. 18 (HoF); all were identified as the Asiatic race *fulva*. Up to five Red Knots at Salton City Dec. 26-Jan. 6 (REW, JD) were the first to be found inland in winter. As is apparently normal, a few Sanderlings wintered on the Salton Sea with a high count of 12 at Salton City Dec. 26 (GMcC). Two Stilt Sandpipers at S.E.S.S., Feb. 15 (DP) were the only ones found this winter. The two Ruffs found near Santa Maria in October were still present Mar. 1 (PEL) and another was inland at



**GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMERS**—A Glaucous Gull, rare in s. California, was at the Santa Ynez R. mouth, Santa Barbara Co., Mar. 9 (LS), another was at Huntington Beach, Orange Co., Mar. 12 (LS) and a third was near Imperial Beach Feb. 13-Mar. 7 (LS, ph., S.D.N.H.M.); all were in first-winter plumage, as expected. A Glaucous-winged Gull at Salton City Dec. 14 (GMcC) and another at S.E.S.S., Dec. 27-Feb. 15 (KLG,EC) were far inland. Two different Yellow-footed Gulls (*Larus livens*) [presently yellow-footed W. Gulls, *L. o. livens*—Ed.] were present near Imperial Beach Feb. 13-28 (LS,JO, ph., S.D.N.H.M.); there were only 3 previous records for the coast of California. A Herring Gull near Lancaster, Los Angeles Co., Feb. 19 (JD) was one of very few ever found inland away from the Colorado R., and Salton Sea. A Thayer's Gull at Salton City Dec. 14 (GMcC), two there Jan. 6 (JD) and another at S.E.S.S., Jan. 1-Feb. 8 (JO) were far inland. The only Mew Gulls found away from the coast were an adult at Salton City Dec. 26 (PEL) and two there Jan. 6 (JD). A first-winter **Black-headed Gull** at S.C.R.E., Dec. 6 (GG), then at Pt. Mugu Dec. 13-18 (REW) and finally in Redondo Beach Jan. 1+ (SD, ph., S.D.N.H.M.) had a distinctive tail pattern permitting it to be identified as the same individual, and the adult found at Huntington Beach Nov. 21 was still present Feb. 25 (REW); there was only one previous record of this species in s. California.

A first-winter Laughing Gull in San Diego Feb. 3-13 (BC) was one of very few recorded on the coast of California, and an adult at S E S S., Dec. 7-Feb. 8 (GMcC) was the first to have wintered on the Salton Sea. A Franklin's Gull in Santa Barbara Dec. 15 (JD), another at Playa del Rey Dec. 25 (JS) and a third in Huntington Beach Dec. 7 (H&NS) were all believed to be late fall migrants. The ad **Little Gull** found in Huntington Beach Nov. 22 was last seen Dec. 21 (SJR) and an immature was at the same location Jan. 24 (EC, ph., S.D.N.H.M.). The first-winter Heermann's Gull found at S.E.S.S., Nov. 22 was still present Feb. 15 (EC) establishing the first winter record for the interior of California. One of the two Black-legged Kittiwakes found at the n. end of the Salton Sea (hereafter, N.E.S.S.) remained to at least Jan. 6 (EC) and another was found on L. Henshaw Jan. 15 (RH). Two Com. Terns still present at N.E.S.S., Dec. 14 (GMcC) were exceptionally late fall migrants but one at Bolsa Chica Jan. 25 (PEL) was probably wintering locally. A Black Skimmer at S.E.S.S., Dec. 27-Feb. 8 (JO) was the first known to winter on the Salton Sea but up to 80 were present on San Diego Bay throughout the period (EC).

**OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS**—A Pygmy Owl was seen on Mt. Palomar, San Diego Co., Jan. 24 (RH); this species is rarely found in the s. portion of this Region. A Long-eared Owl on Mt. Palomar Dec. 31-Jan. 8 (RH) was somewhat unexpected since few are recorded in the mountains; 14 roosting at Harper Dry L., San Bernardino Co., all winter (EAC) were at a more typical locality. Most interesting was a **Whip-poor-will** in Pacific Palisades, Los Angeles Co.,

Mar. 6-Apr. 1, 1980, and Dec. 3-Feb. 23 (Bernard Wilets, *vide* KLG), a clear tape recording of the call shows the bird to be of the w. race *arizonae*, previously recorded wintering no farther n. than c. Mexico. A ♂ Black-chinned Hummingbird was well studied in Long Beach Dec. 15-25 (BD) and a female remained in San Diego Dec. 20-Jan. 18 (PEL); there are fewer than half a dozen documented winter records for California. A ♀ hummingbird, initially thought to be a Black-chinned, at Bolsa Chica Jan. 11-28 (LJ) proved to be a Black-chinned X Anna's hybrid. A Costa's Hummingbird in Goleta Jan. 3-25 (DB) and another there Jan. 30 (LB) were quite far n. for the time of year. A ♂ Broad-billed Hummingbird was present in San Diego Nov. 30-Jan. 14 (DP) and a second male was seen there Dec. 14 (EC); one or two of these birds are found in s. California most winters. An ad. ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Silverado Canyon, Orange Co., Dec. 20+ (AFP) exhibited all the characters of the nominate race *varius*, a rare stray from the e. A ♂ Williamson's Sapsucker in the Cuyamaca Mts., San Diego Co., Dec. 26 (CGE) was quite far s. A Ladder-backed Woodpecker at Furnace Cr. Ranch in Death Valley Feb. 16 (LLN) was away from areas of normal occurrence.

**FLYCATCHERS**—A Tropical Kingbird, rare in California in winter, was in Goleta Nov. 30+ (PEL). An Ash-throated Flycatcher, casual along the coast in winter, was seen near Imperial Beach Jan. 17 (EC). The only E. Phoebes found this winter were one at Pt. Mugu Nov. 30+ (LRB) and another in Huntington Beach Dec. 21+ (SJR). A Gray Flycatcher spent the winter in Arcadia, Los Angeles Co. (GSS), another was near Ocean-side Nov. 30+ (DP) and a third was near San Diego Dec. 20-Jan. 12 (JO); this species is apparently rarer as a winter visitor in s. California today than 50 years ago. Most interesting were five W. Flycatchers in the Santa Barbara area along with one in Long Beach Dec. 23-Jan. 14 (BD) and another on Pt. Loma Dec. 20-21 (CGE) as the species was unrecorded wintering in California 30 years ago. The Coues' Flycatcher found in Los Angeles Nov. 1 was still present Feb. 23 (SSa). An Olive-sided Flycatcher in Los Angeles Jan. 11-Feb. 23 (SSa) appears to be the same individual found wintering here a year ago. Only six Vermilion Flycatchers were found wintering along the coast, a far cry from what could be found 20 years ago.

**TITMICE THROUGH KINGLETS**—A Mountain Chickadee in Palm Springs Feb. 14 (CM) was a straggler from the fall flight into the desert. Winter Wrens were considered relatively common in the Santa Barbara area with 23 found during the period (PEL) but the species was virtually unrecorded s. of there. A Sage Thrasher near Morro Bay Feb. 21 (FRT) was somewhat out of range. Varied Thrushes were exceptionally scarce but one did venture as far s. as Mt. Palomar Feb. 1 (RH). A Mountain Bluebird on Anacapa I., Feb. 1 (REW) was unexpected, few having been recorded on the Channel Is. Large numbers (30-40 easily found any day) of Townsend's Solitaires around Big Bear L., all winter were apparently attracted by the bumper crop of juniper berries (KLG). Up to seven Golden-crowned Kinglets on Mt.

Palomar throughout the period (RH) were near the s. limit of the species' range.

**VIREOS, WOOD WARBLERS**—A Bell's Vireo, casual during the winter anywhere in California, was present in Goleta Jan. 22-Mar. 8 (REW). The gray form of Solitary Vireo, *plumbeus*, is apparently on the increase as a winter visitor to s. California with six reported: single birds in Santa Barbara Dec. 30-Jan. 17 (JEL), Huntington Beach Dec. 28 (DRW), near Victorville Jan. 24 (DRW), near Escondido Jan. 17 (KW), in San Diego Feb. 22+ (JO) and near Imperial Beach Dec. 19-Jan. 17 (REW). This race was unrecorded in California prior to 1960 (*Condor* 65:534, 1963). In addition, at least six Solitary Vireos of the expected w. form, *cassinii*, were found along the coast in Santa Barbara and San Diego counties and a bird believed to be of the e. form, *solitarius*, was seen in Santa Barbara Jan. 7 (PEL).

As usual a few Black-and-white Warblers wintered along the coast with eight found between Santa Barbara and San Diego. Most interesting is the number of Tennessee Warblers found wintering along the coast in recent years, with 20 reported between Santa Barbara and San Diego this winter along with an additional six during December that could have been late fall migrants. Twelve Nashville Warblers along the coast would appear normal for winter. A Virginia's Warbler in Newport Beach Nov. 23+ (SJR) is believed to be the same bird found wintering there a year ago. A Lucy's Warbler, extremely rare in winter, was in Goleta Dec. 9-Jan. 9 (LB). Yellow Warblers were certainly more numerous than usual along the coast with 30± found between Morro Bay and San Diego. Most unusual was a ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler at 5800 ft in the San Jacinto Mts., Jan. 26-27 (KB); there were only two definite winter records for California. Eighteen Black-throated Gray Warblers were found around Santa Barbara during the period but away from there one in Huntington Beach Dec. 25+ (DRW), two in San Diego Feb. 28 (JO) and two more on Mt. Palomar through the winter (RH) were the only ones reported.

A ♀ Black-throated Green Warbler near Imperial Beach Nov. 27-Feb. 15 (DP) was undoubtedly the same bird present here during the past 2 winters. Four Hermit Warblers around Santa Barbara all winter (PEL) and one in San Diego Feb. 25+ (REW) were along the coast where small numbers are found each winter but one at 7500 ft near Big Bear L., Feb. 24 (KLG) was certainly out of place. A ♂ **Grace's Warbler** in Santa Barbara Nov. 4+ (PEL) was the same bird found wintering here a year ago. Only eight Palm Warblers were found along the coast which is fewer than customary. A N. Waterthrush at Morro Bay Jan. 11-Feb. 7 (CM), one at S.C.R.E., Dec. 21 (GG), another in San Diego Feb. 28+ (DP) and a sixth near Imperial Beach Oct. 18+ (EC) gave us more than usual for the winter. A MacGillivray's Warbler, rare in winter, was in Goleta Jan. 15-Mar. 10 (PEL) and another was in Huntington Beach Dec. 25-Jan. 11 (DRW). Thirty-three Wilson's Warblers along the coast was more than expected. An Am. Redstart at S.C.R.E., Dec. 20-Feb. 16 (JM) was the only one found away from the Salton Sea. A Painted Redstart, rare anytime in Califor-

nia, was in San Diego Feb. 22+ (JO).

**ORIOLES, BLACKBIRDS, TANAGER**  
—A ♂ Orchard Oriole in Ventura Jan. 1-Feb. 1 (REW) was the only one reported this winter. A Hooded Oriole, rare in winter, was in Goleta Oct. 30-Dec. 24 (NSC), another was in Santa Barbara Jan. 7 (REW) and a third was in San Diego Dec. 20-21 (EC). Scott's Orioles appeared to be more numerous than normal along the coast with five found in Santa Barbara Jan. 4-Feb. 21 (PEL), four near O'Neil P., Orange Co., throughout the winter (SJR), another in nearby Caspers P., Jan. 12 (DB), seven together in Escondido Jan. 24 (KW) and another in Pio Pico P., San Diego Co., Dec. 30 (DWP). Twelve N. (Baltimore) Orioles were found along the coast along with 60± N. (Bullock's) Orioles virtually all associated with flowering eucalyptus. The only Rusty Blackbirds found this winter were two females near Imperial Beach Feb. 11-28 (PU, ph., S.D.N.H.M.). As usual a few W. Tanagers remained to winter along the coast in the flowering eucalyptus with 40± reported between San Luis Obispo and San Diego. A ♂ Hepatic Tanager in Oceanside Dec. 15± (EC) was undoubtedly the same bird present during the past 3 winters. Only three Summer Tanagers were reported with a female in Carpinteria Dec. 5+ (PEL), another female near Anaheim Feb. 1-24 (DRW) and a male in Orange Feb. 21+ (SJR).

**FINCHES, SPARROWS, LONGSPURS**  
—Four Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found with one in Morro Bay Dec. 6 (FRT), single birds in Santa Barbara Dec. 13-Feb. 2 (AF) and Jan. 12-29 (PEL) and the fourth in Coronado Dec. 15-30 (JO); this species is more numerous in California in winter than its w. counterpart the Black-headed Grosbeak. Most unusual was a ♂ Indigo Bunting in Ojai, Ventura Co., Feb. 16-18 (DS) there be-

ing fewer than 10 winter records for s. California. Two Red Crossbills near Mt. Pinos Feb. 20 (JG) were the only ones reported. A Green-tailed Towhee in Malibu Jan. 24 (KLG) was relatively far n. for this time of the year. Three Lark Buntings in Niland, Imperial Co., Dec. 27-Feb. 7 (PEL) were the only ones found this winter. The three Sharp-tailed Sparrows found in Imperial Beach Nov. 22 were still present Jan. 7 (EC) and undoubtedly remained through the winter. At least 15 Gray-headed Juncos were found in the s. half of the Region including five together on Mt. Palomar Feb. 6 (RH). The only Harris' Sparrow reported was one at a feeder in Corona, Riverside Co., all winter (EAC). Ten White-throated Sparrows would appear low. Twenty Swamp Sparrows along the coast would appear to be about normal.

Up to six McCown's Longspurs were present near S.E.S.S., Jan. 6-24 (JD, BD); small numbers are probably present in this area every winter but are difficult to locate in the thousands of acres of suitable habitat. A Lapland Longspur remaining near Santa Maria through Dec. 23 (PEL) was the last of the fall birds to leave the coast but up to ten near S.E.S.S., Jan. 6-25 (JD, BD) were undoubtedly wintering locally. A flock of up to 25 Chestnut-collared Longspurs near O'Neil P., all winter (DRW) supports the theory that small numbers may regularly winter in open grasslands of the coastal lowlands.

**CORRIGENDA**—The two pairs of Heermann's Gulls attempted to nest on Shell Beach Rocks, San Luis Obispo Co., not off Vandenberg A.F.B. as reported (*AB* 34:930, 1980). The wintering Clay-colored Sparrow remained to Apr. 12 in Anaheim, not Irvine as reported (*AB* 34:817, 1980).

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## HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION /C. John Ralph and Robert L. Pyle

Pitifully little rainfall and the virtual absence of the normally persistent trade winds characterized most of the winter. Near drought conditions became especially severe in parts of Maui and Hawaii Islands, but eased a bit when the trades and some showers returned during the last ten days of February. Nevertheless, the state's rainfall deficit, accumulated over the past three years, is still enormous.

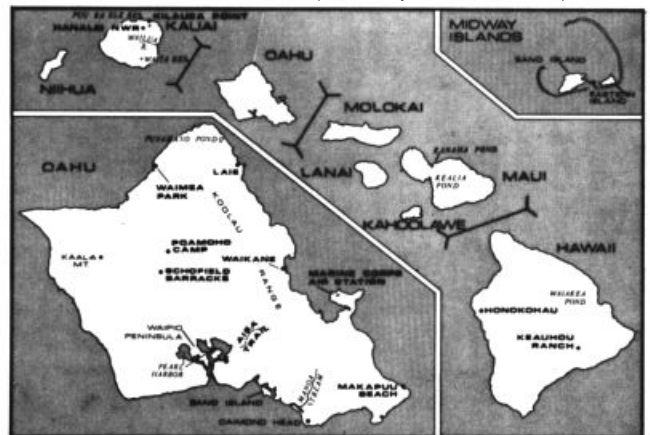
**ABBREVIATIONS**—H. (Hawaii I.), K. (Kauai I.), M. (Maui I.), and O. (Oahu I.).

**ALBATROSSES THROUGH HERONS**  
—The Laysan Albatross colony at Barking Sands, K., comprised 5 active nests by Feb. 12, each containing either an egg or single young (MM). A flight of 30 Cattle Egrets over Kalamaula, Molokai I., Dec. 16, suggested that this species is now probably firmly established on this island (JA). Previously, it was unusual to see more than two or three on the island, but they have steadily increased during the past year. Cattle Egret populations

have also rocketed in the past year on Hawaii I. The roost on a lone Norfolk Island pine, reported previously in *AB*, has turned into a year-round colony (PP), with a high count on the pond of 400 birds Feb. 13. Thirty nests were active in the tree in November, producing 54+ young, and at least that number were active again in February and March (PP). Two very rare Snowy Egrets turned up at Kanaha Pond, M., and were seen off-and-on during the season (CK). They represent only the third and fourth records for the state. Clearly, the most spectacular bird of the season was a **Green Heron** seen and photographed at Lokoaku Pond, H., (PP, LM). It was first sighted Dec. 18, and seen several times through at least February. This is a first state record, but the bird eluded many observers, preferring to come out into view usually at early morning high tides. Further details on this observa-

tion will appear elsewhere.

**BRANT THROUGH OSPREY**—The (Black) Brant on Lokoaku Pond, H., remained throughout the season to the delight of many observers (PP). An additional Brant turned up on a Kauai I. pond Jan. 1, staying on after being sighted on the Lihue CBC (CY). A very unusual winter visitor was the White-fronted Goose at the Lowe Aquafarm (a prawn hatchery) near Kahuku (Kii), O., from early January to mid-March (RC, RS,



VB, DW, DP) There are probably fewer than 6 records for this species in the islands. Six well-described Blue-winged Teal, a rather unusual visitor to the islands, were on the Honokohau Pond, H., Feb. 8 (PP,LM). A Redhead graced the Kii Unit of the James Campbell N.W.R., O., Jan. 16 (PB), and a Canvasback was seen at Kealia Pond, M., about Dec. 25 (GY). An Osprey at Kealia Pond, M., put in a brief appearance Jan. 25 (CK) This species has been rather regular recently, with at least one individual turning up almost every year.

**PLOVERS THROUGH TERNS**—It was a good season at Ft. Kamehameha Flats, at the entrance to Pearl Harbor, O., for Black-bellied Plovers. Two of this normally uncommon species were there Jan. 7 and six Feb. 2 (MJ) Shorebird habitat is rare on the island of Hawaii, so the opening of the irrigation water settling basins of the Puna Sugar Mill near Hilo promised some "goodies," as similar ponds have on the Waipio Pen., O. True to its promise, the three extremely rare Killdeer seen Dec. 6 (PP) were topped on a field trip Jan. 24, when four were found at

the same place. A well-described Dunlin on the rocky tidepools at Honokahau, H., was unusual for that island (PP). Midway I. turned up two gull species of interest. A Glaucous-winged Gull was on Sand I., sporadically Dec. 6-29 in first-winter plumage (GG). Most exciting were two **Black-legged Kittiwakes**. Emaciated and oiled, the winter-plumaged birds were captured by hand Jan. 20 & Feb. 26, on Sand I. Both died the day following capture, and the specimens will be deposited at the U.S. Nat'l Museum. Other probable Glaucous-winged Gulls were sighted in Waipio Valley, H., Dec. 21 (OB) and at Kaa, Lanai I., Dec. 6 (PC). A Com. Tern at Lokoaku pond, H., was well described and present during the entire season (PP). The species is extremely rare here, and there are certainly fewer than 10 records for the state. Unusual for Tern I., French Frigate Shoals, was a Blue-gray Noddy Feb. 12 (BS); the few previous records have been in mid-summer.

**SWIFTLETS THROUGH SPARROWS**—The Gray Swiftlet, rediscovered 3 years ago, maintains itself in a small area of the Koolau Mts., O., with a sighting Feb. 15 in N. Hala-

wa Valley (PD) Four of the larger Kauai I thrushes (the Kamao) were seen in early February in the Alakai Swamp, K. (MM, TB, TT). This species may be holding on despite very low numbers in this, its last stronghold. U.S. Forest Service researchers have reported it in much lower numbers than reported only 10 years ago (MC *et al.*). The Java Sparrow has continued its explosive increase on Oahu, with reports of a large flock since midwinter frequenting a feeder (AC, *fide* HD) in Salt L., although none have yet been recorded on the Waipio CBC.

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## WEST INDIES REGION

/Robert L. Norton

Average temperatures in the eastern Greater Antilles were cooler and precipitation was about 13% below normal for December and February and above normal by the same amount for January.

**SHEARWATERS THROUGH FALCONS**—Audubon's Shearwater was found incubating at Saba Cay, St. Thomas (hereafter, St. T.) Feb. 16. Peak nesting of Red-billed Tropicbirds at Cockroach Cay, St. T. was Feb. 27, with 30+ nests located, many with chicks near fledging. Blue-faced Boobies numbered 121 Jan. 2 at Cockroach and Feb. 27, 40 nests were counted in two of three colonies. The last Double-crested Cormorant of the period was seen Feb. 28 (*fide* RD) continuing a 3.5-month visit by as many as nine to Congo Cay, St. John (hereafter, St. J.), where they were occasionally observed roosting in unused pelican nests. A **Double-crested Cormorant** was recorded for the first time on St. Croix (hereafter, St. C.) Jan. 1 (MH, JY). Green-winged Teal were surprisingly numerous with seven Dec. 21. Peregrine Falcons were noted Dec. 2 on Cockroach; Jan. 2 on Dutchcap, St. T., harassing Red-footed Boobies at their nests; and finally Feb. 16 on Saba, suggesting winter residence in the Virgin Islands.

**OYSTERCATCHERS THROUGH TERNS**—American Oystercatchers were scarce during the winter months with two seen Dec. 23. Limited habitat in St. J., during this dry winter sustained 12 Semipalmated Plovers in Coral Bay Jan. 4 (PF). Common Snipe were particularly numerous this season despite less than average rainfall with 16 counted Dec. 21 on St. T., and ten recorded Jan. 30 on St. J. (PF). Of interest was the Solitary Sandpiper Dec. 21 (GW, RN) on St. T., marking the first occurrence on a CBC

and during winter. No Larids were noted from the Virgin Islands during the winter season, but terns usually pelagic at this time were reported. Twenty Noddy Terns were seen well offshore of the n. Virgin Islands (JL) during the CBC period and five Sooty Terns were noted off Martinique Dec. 25 (PC) in the Lesser Antilles.

**PIGEONS THROUGH SWALLOWS**—White-crowned Pigeons remained in small numbers during the season on St. T., but on St. J., a relatively large group of 17 at Lameshur Bay Dec. 27 (LH) indicates a thriving colony even in winter.

### S.A.

The most remarkable report during the winter was the sighting of an owl sp. on St. J. (W&FL) Dec. 27. Several researchers have tried to locate *Otus nudipes newtoni*, the Virgin Islands' subspecies of the Puerto Rican Screech Owl, on St. J., for many years. A momentary visit of the owl during the light of dawn atop a telephone pole on the driest side of St. J., suggests that it was a vagrant Short-eared Owl or perhaps even a *nudipes* from Puerto Rico.

Lambe (1959) reported 12 pairs of Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*C. p. bairdii*) near La Melba, Cuba where now one pair (*fide* EM) is said to remain. Two Stolid Flycatchers continued to be present during the winter period on St. J., particularly at Reef Bay Dec. 27. Among the large groups of Barn Swallows that pass through the Region, close examination frequently produces other species overlooked in the past and subsequently considered accidental. A **Rough-winged Swallow** was carefully studied in the company of ad. and imm. Barn Swallows Dec. 24, Coral Bay, St. J. A flock of 15 Barn Swallows appeared to have other species (M&ST) with them Dec. 27 at Mary Pt., St. J. Three **Cliff Swallows** were noted at Cruz Bay,

St. J., Dec. 3.

**VIREOS THROUGH GROSBEAKS**—An anomalous situation is developing with regard to migrant vireos in this region of the Puerto Rican Bank. Yellow-throated Vireos have been recorded during the last three CBCs from either St. T. or St. J., with two noted this year from St. T., Dec. 21. However, two singing **White-eyed Vireos** at St. J., Dec. 27 were quite unexpected (RN). The frequency and numbers of these migrant vireos have not been recorded from the neighboring Greater Antilles. Resident Black-whiskered Vireos are present but do not vocalize until late February. Shiny Cowbirds continue to increase in the Virgin Islands as evidenced by the last three CBCs from St. J., with 20 observed Dec. 27. Twice that number was noted a few days prior at Coral Harbor. Some notes on host species would be worthwhile. Another indication of a significant fall and winter migration was the presence of the rarely recorded Rose-breasted Grosbeak on St. J., Dec. 27.

**ADDENDA**—The West Indies Region may have lost another endemic species as EM reports that the Zapata Wren has yet to be rediscovered, as concluded from a November, 1980 expedition. No observations of Bachman's Warbler were reported from that island (EM). Another local Cuban endemic, the Zapata Sparrow, is extant (250) and occupies two differing habitats (EM) which may help to insure its survival.

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