

The Winter Season

December 1, 1984—February 28, 1985

NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION

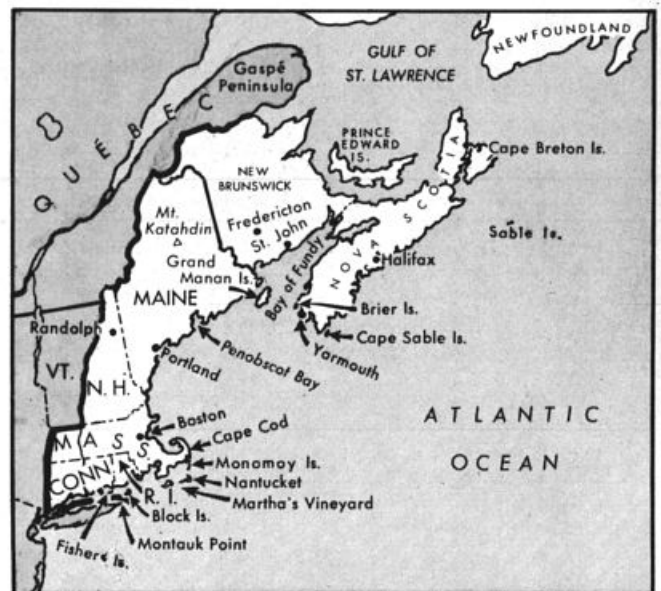
/Richard S. Heil

With the understanding that it is difficult to make general comments concerning the weather, never mind avifaunal trends, in a Region whose diversity is reflected in the stark dissimilarities between places such as the Avalon Peninsula and the coast of Connecticut, the following statements are made: Despite a colder-than-normal January, the physical elements dealt to the winter of 1984-1985 were kind. The exception was Newfoundland, where December especially was "colder and stormier than average." Using Boston statistics as the Regional mean, being the most readily available to this editor, we see that December averaged nearly 6° F above normal and that the temperature reached a staggering 73° on the 29th. A 20-day stretch of cold temperatures January 3-22 nearly offset December's warmth but did not display the extreme cold, with subzero temperatures, evident in some seasons. February started out cold; but warm, spring-like conditions prevailed from about February 10-28. Precipitation was well below average throughout the Region for the entire season, resulting most importantly in greatly reduced snow cover.

Further ameliorating this winter's hardship was a nearly universal abundance of wild food crops. As described by one Christmas Bird Count compiler, Frank Mantlik, referring to the Westport, Connecticut, area, "Everything from pines (white pine especially), hemlocks, oaks (acorns), and most berry-producing plants (winterberry, poison ivy, bayberry) had what seemed to be bumper crops." Likewise in the north country pine and spruce yields were said to be abundant, as were fleshy fruits such as rose and mountain ash. As we shall see, the implications of a mega-berry crop on frugivore numbers was profoundly evident, while the relationship of winter finches to the local cone crop was much less clear.

Again this winter a diverse array and often remarkable quantities of semi-hardies, lingerers, and reverse migrants were reported, clearly responding to the clement weather. The availability of open water seemed to be at the same time both conducive and non-conductive to concentrating waterfowl, depending on species. On the one hand, extensive open water may permit many species to remain widespread and therefore not evident in appreciable numbers, while certain other less hardy members (teal, wigeon, Gadwall, shoveler) are induced to remain in undiminished numbers, perhaps avoiding the rigors of migration.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — The only significant loon gatherings came from the expected locations of Nantucket I. and Martha's Vineyard. The combined totals of the 2 islands' C.B.C.s, both Dec. 30, equaled 289 Red-throated Loons and an above-average 1394 Com. Loons. Arctic Loons were described from Gloucester, Mass., Dec. 16+ (F. Hamlen *et al.*), and Monhegan I., Dec. 27 (C. Duncan). A 3rd Arctic Loon was said to have been "thoroughly and convincingly described" at Lower W. Pubnico, N.S., Jan. 17-19 (*vide PRD*). A few Pied-billed Grebes lingered in interior and n. parts of the Region prior to the January freeze, and one was still at Pleasant L., Yarmouth Co., N.S., Feb. 18. Horned Grebes were present in depressed numbers along



much of the coast, although an anomalous sum of 335 in Buzzards Bay Dec. 15 (C.B.C.) was still below several recent counts for those waters. Small flocks were correctly termed "late" at far-inland locales, including up to 20 at Quabbin Res., Mass., until Jan. 26 (SK). Single Red-necked Grebes were very unusual inland at Fairfield, Conn., Dec. 16 (*vide DV*), at Quabbin Res., Jan. 6, and especially one at Northampton, Mass., Feb. 20 (*vide SK*). The only coastal assemblage worthy of mention was of 140+ off the e. shore of Miquelon I., Jan. 25, building to 263 Feb. 2 (*vide RE*). Three W. Grebes graced the Region: once again in the Georgetown, Me., area, Dec. 15-Jan. 9, at Rowley, Mass., Dec. 21-22 (D. Alexander), and at Nantucket I., Dec. 17-30 (K. Able).

A Greater Shearwater amidst a "seething mass of gannets and gulls" at Nantucket I., Dec. 30 was clearly and convincingly described (P. W. Smith *et al.*). Large numbers of N. Gannets did mass in the waters along Cape Cod and Nantucket I. in December, then moved on as the winter progressed and the local food supply presumably diminished. Totals of 6552 and 8662, respectively, were counted on the Cape Cod and Nantucket C.B.C.s, and 1000+ were seen at S. Monomoy Dec. 23. Five Great Cormorants were surprising well inland along the Kennebec R. at Augusta Dec. 29. At Sakonet Pt., R.I., 3256 Greats Dec. 16 was nearly double last year's record count there on the C.B.C. Double-crested Cormorants are now routinely seen throughout December at choice coastal locations, particularly river mouths, as far n. as Maine. One individual was found at Mahone Bay, N.S., Dec. 19 (ELM), and eight were in the Fredericton area (presumably on the St. Johns R.), in interior New Brunswick, Dec. 16 (*vide DSC*). An astounding 349 were counted on the New London, Conn., C.B.C., Dec. 29, and small numbers continued to be found into January from Massachusetts south. Evidence

of probable overwintering in Rhode Island was revealed by counts of nine at both Galilee Feb. 10 and Edgewood Feb. 27 (*vide* DLE).

Up to six Great Egrets lingered into December, the northernmost at Hazel Hill, N.S., Dec. 2 (*vide* IAM). Others were present at Darien, Conn., Dec. 16; on the Stratford-Milford C.B.C., Dec. 29; at Adamsville, R.I., Dec. 16; at Nantucket I., Dec. 30; and finally one at Orleans, Mass., Dec. 6-16. Snowy Egrets were by comparison scarce, with singles at Hyannis Dec. 22 and at Martha's Vineyard Dec. 30. Green-backed Herons, *sans* details, were reported from both Massachusetts and Connecticut in December. A Glossy Ibis was startlingly behind schedule at Mason's I., Conn., Dec. 29, indicative of that month's relative tepidity (C. Taylor, G. Zepko).

WATERFOWL — Twelve Tundra Swans were "present for several weeks" prior to and on the Martha's Vineyard C.B.C., Dec. 30. The only others reported were from Rhode Island, two at Jamestown Jan. 19 and one at Sachuest Pt., Feb. 13 (*vide* DLE). A freshly-dead Mute Swan, perhaps a bit too erratic in its wanderings, was found at Sable I., N.S., Feb. 19 (*vide* PRD). Small flocks and scattered individual Snow Geese were found throughout s. New England, at interior sites as well as coastal, mostly in December. The biggest flock was of 27 at Plum I., Mass., Dec. 22. Four wintered in the E. Harwich area of Cape Cod (BN), and one was located on the unusual date of Feb. 1 at Saco, Me. (*vide* WCT). Canada Geese and dabbling ducks generally persisted in above-average numbers, having lingered at migratory stopovers at least until the onset of freezing temperatures in early January. In Massachusetts, a sample of elevated counts in this group included: 6344 Canada Geese on the Concord C.B.C., Dec. 30, exemplary of their extraordinary and continued increase in the Region as much as of the weather; telling sums of 351 Green-winged Teal, 74 N. Pintails, and 43 Gadwalls still in the Newburyport area salt marshes, Dec. 22; and 20 N. Shovelers on the ice-free ponds of Monomoy Pt., Dec. 9 (BN). A ♀ Gadwall at St. John's, Nfld., Nov. 15-Dec. 26 provided one of few definite records for the province (BM *et al.*). No fewer than 11 Eur. Wigeons were noted, in Massachusetts (four), Rhode Island (four), and Connecticut (three). The bulk of Regional Canvasbacks traditionally winter on Rhode Island ponds and estuaries, where a total of 3000 were at 2 sites Dec. 8 (*vide* DLE). In w. Newfoundland, Com. Eiders were said to be scarce everywhere except L'anse-aux-Meadows where a flock of 300+ Jan. 20 included only one ad. male (*vide* BMk). One place where eiders were not scarce was within the Nantucket I. C.B.C. circle where 58,270 were tabulated Dec. 30. King Eiders were regular at L'anse-aux-Meadows, 16 there Dec. 23 being the largest flock (BMk). Twenty-two Harlequin Ducks at Sachuest Pt., Dec. 16, most of which remained through January, was believed to be a record high for Rhode Island. Late records of uncommon fall migrants inland included a White-winged Scoter on the Connecticut R. n. of the Wilder Dam on the Vermont border, Dec. 23-24 (W. Ellison), and a Red-breasted Merganser at Holyoke, Mass., Dec. 15. Very rare inland in Massachusetts at any time was a Barrow's Goldeneye at Hatfield Feb. 28 (*vide* SK). Ruddy Ducks were present in good numbers at several s. New England sites, the best count being 230 at s. Monomoy Dec. 9 (BN).

DIURNAL RAPTORS — An impressive roost of 107 Turkey Vultures was located, for the first time in 7 years, within the Old Lyme-Saybrook C.B.C. circle Dec. 30. Five sightings of Turkey Vultures in Rhode Island in December dropped to one in January, while 12 migrants were noted at Alton, R.I., as early as Feb. 26 (*vide* DLE). Lingering Ospreys were found at Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 16 (D. Brown *et al.*); on the Greenwich-Stamford C.B.C., Dec. 16 (M. Pensock); and at Old Lyme, Conn., Dec. 30 (J. Maynard *et al.*). Bald Eagles were seen in good numbers in many areas, 100+ attracted by fish offal, as reported by provincial wildlife officials at Hermitage Bay, Nfld., Feb. 7, being the most outstanding. Other assemblages of merit included 35 in the Wolfville, N.S., area Feb. 2 (*vide* IAM); 17 at the Quabbin Res., Jan. 11 (*vide* SK); and 20 statewide in Connecticut Dec. 15 (*vide* DV). Northern Harriers as well as all 3 Accipiter species were seen in above-average numbers in the Region in general. In w. Massachusetts alone reports totaling 25 Sharp-shinned, 13 Cooper's, and 17 N. Goshawks were all termed high counts (*vide* SK). Rough-legged Hawks were scarce, with the only double-figured count in the entire Region emanating from the Grand Pre, N.S., area, where 14 were present Jan. 28 (*vide* IAM).

Golden Eagles were very well reported, perhaps reflecting increased breeding activity in the northeast, including: an adult Dec. 26 at the Martinique Sanctuary, N.S. (IAM); an immature Jan. 30 at Prospect Harbor, Me. (*vide* WCT); an adult plus two immatures at the Quabbin Res., Jan. 11; an immature wintering at various Rhode Island coastal sites Dec. 29-Feb. 22; and an adult and an immature at Essex, Conn., from mid-December to March (*vide* DV). Merlins were much in evidence at coastal locations from Nova Scotia s., while the five Regional Peregrine Falcons this winter included individuals in Nova Scotia, and in Newfoundland, at Cape St. Marys Dec. 19 (BM). Gyrfalcons were present again in good numbers near St. Anthony and L'anse-aux-Meadows, where Dovekies were feeding abundantly near shore. Most of the 10 Gyrs sighted were of the white phase (*vide* BM). Three Gyrfalcons farther s. were all gray-phase birds, at Grand Pre, N.S., December to February (m.ob.); at Monomoy I., Dec. 9 (BN); and possibly the same bird at Tuckernuck I., Dec. 31 (M. Litchfield *et al.*). The latter bird was seen pursuing and briefly locking talons with a Short-eared Owl.

RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — A Yellow Rail was inadvertently flushed from the Quaise Marsh on Nantucket I., Dec. 31 (O. Komar). Although this one was located in a fresh-water marsh, one wonders if routine, peripheral circuits of salt marshes during especially high tides in the fall or mild early winters might turn up this cryptic, but not necessarily rare, species with greater frequency. A Clapper Rail wintered at Weekapaug, R.I. (*vide* DLE), and another less hardy individual was found freshly dead at S. Wellfleet, Mass., Feb. 5 (*vide* BN). The only King Rail was present at the "usual site along the Connecticut R." at Old Saybrook Dec. 30 (N. Proctor). Two Sandhill Cranes, first discovered at Westerly, R.I., Dec. 22, were relocated at Weekapaug Jan. 13, where they remained until at least Feb. 20, representing a 3rd state record (*vide* DLE).



Common Greenshank at Harbour Grace, Nfld., Jan. 17, 1985. Photo/ Bruce Mactavish.

As in the other groups, the reports of shorebirds this winter were replete with records of lingering migrants that should have long since passed S. Two small "flocks" of Semipalmated Plovers in s. New England included three at New Haven, Conn., throughout December (m.ob.), and five at Tiverton, R.I., Dec. 16 (*vide* DLE). A single bird was also noted at Lower W. Pubnico, N.S., Dec. 14. An Am. Oystercatcher on the Westport, Conn., C.B.C. furnished the latest state record Dec. 16 (F. Mantlik *et al.*). This gaudy species has nested on the nearby Norwalk Is. for the past 3+ years. The now famous Common Greenshank of Harbour Grace, Conception Bay, Nfld., was seen on every visit from Aug. 1, 1984 to Feb. 2, 1985, but could not be located Feb. 27, despite a thorough search (*vide* BM). First discovered in the same spot in December 1983, it is remarkable that the bird apparently survived the winter of 1983-1984, a mild one, locally in the province as it perhaps has done again this year. Greater Yellowlegs persisted throughout December and even into January at several coastal sites while a few, more unusual, winter sightings of Lesser Yellowlegs included one as far n. as Portsmouth, N.H., Dec. 9-15 (R. Stephenson). A late Spotted Sandpiper at Stockbridge provided the 2nd such record for w. Massachusetts (*vide* SK). Lingering calidrids included a W. Sandpiper at Milford Pt., Conn., Dec. 29 (F. Sibley *et al.*), and a White-rumped Sandpiper present up to Dec. 15 at Quincy, Mass. (D. Brown). An interesting report of a Semipalmated Sandpiper on the St.-Pierre & Miquelon Islands C.B.C. was not described to this editor. Observations of dowitchers (sp.) in Massachusetts, most likely pertaining to Long-

billed, consisted of three at Hyannisport Dec. 22 (BN), one at Martha's Vineyard Dec. 30, and two at Nantucket I. in early January (P. Buckley). For the 2nd year in a row small numbers of phalaropes, almost certainly Red Phalaropes, were seen in the Grand Manan Channel in late December.

LARIDS — Ample numbers of Com. Black-headed Gulls were present at several of the usual concentration sites in the maritimes. At least 90 at St. John's in early December diminished to around 50 for the remainder of the winter (BM), while in Nova Scotia 43 were counted at Conrads Beach, Halifax Co., Dec. 23 (ELM *et al.*). Two Mew Gulls were found: an adult that lingered at St. John's until Dec. 9 was one of two that arrived back in September (BM), and a first-winter bird of undetailed race present at W. Haven, Conn., Dec. 23 to mid-January, reportedly photographed, furnished a 3rd state record (N. Curry, *vide DV*). A yellow-legged, dark-mantled ad. Herring Gull seen at St. John's Jan. 16-Feb. 28 was believed to be *L. a. michahellis*, a race of the w. Mediterranean (BM). Reports of Thayer's Gull types included an adult photographed among numerous Iceland Gulls at St. John's Feb. 12-Mar. 6 (BM), and one in first-winter plumage at Nantucket I., Dec. 17 (K. Able). In s. parts of the Region, white-winged gulls were late in arriving and never did so in any appreciable numbers this winter. Iceland Gulls were at least as plentiful as usual in Newfoundland if the Corner Brook C.B.C. is any indication: it recorded 3340 (*vide BMk*). Black-legged Kittiwakes again massed along the outer Cape Cod beaches and around Nantucket, taking advantage of copious doses of sand lance in those waters. The Nantucket I. and Cape Cod C.B.C.s' combined total was nearly 41,000.

Perhaps the most exciting find of the winter was that of an ad. **Ross' Gull**, seen for one day only, Dec. 3 at Newburyport, Mass. (S. Tingley *et al.*). Duly described as possessing "a distinctly wedge-shaped tail," "a conspicuous pinkish blush to the underparts," and "lighter gray underwings than an ad. Little Gull," it was observed in flight and sitting on the water with the aid of a Questar. An imm. Ivory Gull seen by many at Plum I., Mass., Feb. 1-2, was the only one reported s. of Newfoundland. These gulls are regular off the n. tip of Newfoundland but typically stay "out of sight of landlubber birdwatchers" (BM). Twenty Ivory Gulls were present around L'anse-aux-Meadows the latter one-half of December.

Widespread reports of terns included 2 unexpected sightings of Forster's Terns in Nova Scotia, at Ben Eoin Beach Nov. 30-Dec. 1 and at Crescent Beach Dec. 29-30 (*vide RGG*), on the heels of a lackluster fall for this species in the Region. More usual was a Forster's at Acoaxet, Mass., Dec. 16 (DLE *et al.*). Single Com. Terns were noted at Westport, Conn., Dec. 10 (*vide DV*), and at Woods Hole, Mass., Dec. 31 (*vide BN*). About equal odds should be given to the two terns (sp.) observed floating on driftwood at Rockland, Me., Dec. 23 (C.B.C.) in being either of the above species.

ALCIDS —

S.A.

Ideal conditions for a major alcid spectacle at the tip of the n. peninsula of Newfoundland were repeated several times during January. Rare nights of calm, cold air preceded each day in which large movements of alcids ensued. This permitted, *e.g.*, Jan. 2, up to 90% of the ocean to briefly freeze (*vide BM*), and each of these days was followed within 12 hrs by a storm front from the SW or SE (*vide BMk*). Thick-billed Murres "put on a great one-day showing" at a point n. of St. Anthony Jan. 2, when 51,000 were sighted (BMk). The real story, however, involved the Dovekie. Remarkably, the 12,715 counted on the St. Anthony C.B.C., Dec. 31, although easily eclipsing the previous North American C.B.C. high, was only a suggestion of what was yet to be witnessed. Two days later this record was shattered when, with the larger flight of Thick-billed Murres, over 70,000 Dovekies were observed near Quirpon. Then what truly must have been an incredible sight, and perhaps the ultimate alcid experience, was the observation of nearly *one-quarter million* Dovekies flying past Griquet Jan. 20 (BMk *et al.*). "All of the Dovekies and murres were always flying N along the coast in groups of 50-1000 birds." Alcids much farther out, including "large flocks at the limit of vision whose size couldn't even be estimated," were not included in the totals (*vide BMk*).

In New England, alcid sightings were unexceptional, notwithstanding fairly good numbers of Razorbills present along Cape Cod, culminating in 676 there on the C.B.C., Dec. 16. A count of 105 Black Guillemots at Provincetown, Mass., Jan. 31 (BN) was in line with its current status in that area.

DOVES THROUGH SHRIKES — A **White-winged Dove** reportedly visited feeders in the Fundy N.P. area of New Brunswick for almost 3 weeks around Dec. 18 (*vide DSC*). Snowy Owls in general were present at, or slightly below, average numbers this winter. The only reliably reported Great Gray Owl this winter was seen on the Dover-Foxcroft C.B.C., Dec. 28. Although a Long-eared Owl at St. Pierre Feb. 9 (RE) provided a 2nd record for the French islands that lie just off Newfoundland's s. shore, the species is still on Newfoundland's hypothetical list. A Boreal Owl was heard calling on several occasions in mid-February at New Brunswick's Terra Nova N.P. (H. Deichmann). Red-headed Woodpeckers were rather widespread, suggesting a late fall movement into the Region, and included eight in Massachusetts, three in Maine, and three in New Hampshire. Unusually high numbers of N. Flickers wintered throughout s. New England; particularly noticeable this year were many more individuals inland. A Pileated Woodpecker at Hopkinton, R.I. (*vide DLE*) was a rarity on the s.e. coastal plain. Flycatchers are not considered standard fare in northeastern winters, but E. Phoebes were almost common on s. New England C.B.C.s this year, and one survived to at least Jan. 31 at Storrs, Conn. (*vide DV*). Western Kingbirds were almost equally rife, with December lingerers in Nova Scotia (three), Maine (two), Massachusetts (three), and Rhode Island (one). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was very late at Hazel Hill, N.S., Dec. 1 (from November—m.ob.).

A Tree Swallow was surprisingly late, but at a likely location, West-erly, R.I., Jan. 6 (*vide DLE*). The two Nantucket Island **Jackdaws** were present all winter while a single bird remained at Miquelon, seen Dec. 28 and Jan. 23 (*vide RE*), where there had been four previously. Yet another location turned up a Jackdaw; one found at the Fairview Cemetery, Halifax, N.S., Dec. 15 (m.ob.) was still being seen in early March. Boreal Chickadees were apparent in elevated numbers in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, but were said to be down in Maine, and generally absent from s. New England. Favorable comments were elicited from all areas toward Golden-crowned Kinglets, and in Maine they were said to have "replaced Black-capped Chickadee as the common forest bird in some areas this winter" (*vide WCT*). The status of **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** this winter was without precedent. A reverse migration this past fall, that appeared to be singularly unique to gnatcatchers, was followed this winter by reports of 10 in Nova Scotia, 11 in Massachusetts, and two in Connecticut. Did observers in Maine overlook this species or were they just absent from that state for some unknown reason?

American Robins were present in exceptional abundance this season, favorably responding to equally exceptional fruit crops in most of the Region. This was clearly illustrated by the Massachusetts C.B.C. total of 7633 robins. Six Varied Thrushes were reported, including a curious aggregation of three at Florencetown, N.B., Dec. 29 (C.B.C.). The irruptive Bohemian Waxwing experienced a rather poor winter locally, occurring in below-average numbers and producing only a couple of extralimital records n. and s. of their usual range in our Region. Another winter frugivore, Cedar Waxwing, had high numbers virtually everywhere from Connecticut to Nova Scotia. Note especially several very high C.B.C. counts, the best of which was a remarkable 1090 at Buzzards Bay, Mass., Dec. 15. Northern Shrikes were very scarce, this perhaps being one of their poorest seasons in recent years. Single Loggerhead Shrikes were good finds at New Haven, Conn., all December (*vide DV*) and at Kingston, R.I., Dec. 29 (*vide DLE*).

VIREOS, WARBLERS — Late vireos were an imm. White-eyed Vireo at Northampton, Mass., Dec. 16 (*vide SK*), and two Solitary Vireos in Nova Scotia at Dartmouth Dec. 2 and on the Halifax West C.B.C., Dec. 15 (*vide PRD*).

An incredible *seventeen* species of warblers were observed in the Region, one more than last season's total. Such a diversity of parulids would have been unheard of 5 or 10 years ago, notwithstanding the occurrence of a late-season hurricane or other such event. Is this group actually occurring with increasing regularity late in the season due to unknown causes (climatic changes, specific weather patterns, feeders?),

or are there just so many more birdwatchers these days that increased coverage is the culprit? I suspect the latter to be closest to the truth. Many warbler sightings were too numerous to individually delineate but included Nashville: total of six in December, two in Nova Scotia, three in e. Massachusetts, and one in Connecticut; Cape May: three in Nova Scotia, two remaining at W. Pubnico to Jan. 11 (*vide* PRD); **Black-throated Gray Warbler**: one at Halifax, N.S., from November to at least Dec. 15 (C.B.C.); **Yellow-throated Warbler**: one visited a feeder at St. John's Nfld., Dec. 18-28 (*vide* BM); Pine: individuals at St. John's and Cape Race, Nfld., in December for the 3rd and 4th provincial records, up to five at Halifax, and many others in New England; Prairie: two in Massachusetts in December; Black-and-white: two at St. John's, the latest to Jan. 2 (*vide* BM), two in Massachusetts, and one in Connecticut; Am. Redstart: one in Massachusetts in December; Ovenbird: one at St. John's, Dec. 27, was the only one reported; N. Waterthrush: one in Connecticut to Jan. 3; *Oporornis* sp.: one observed during the Quincy, Mass., C.B.C. count period about Dec. 16 (R. Abrams); Wilson's: one in Nova Scotia and one in Connecticut, both in December.

TANAGERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — Single W. Tanagers on Massachusetts C.B.C.s were encountered at Cape Cod Dec. 16, at Millis Dec. 15-30, and at S. Gardner Dec. 11-24. The Dickcissel was a far cry more common than it had been in recent winters, shadowing a strong showing this fall. At least 18 were found in all parts of the Region, several of them lingering all winter at feeders. The first Newfoundland record of Rufous-sided Towhee in over a decade was established by one at Corner Brook Dec. 27-Jan. 3 (*vide* BMk). Many of the ground-foraging sparrows were abetted in their search for food by the reduced snow cover, indeed often barren ground, that existed this winter. Winter populations of towhees, and Chipping, Field, White-throated, and White-crowned sparrows were apparently all above average this season. Likewise the abundance of the Dark-eyed Junco was well illustrated in the comments of J. Williams, compiler of the Westminster, Mass., C.B.C.: "tremendous flocks . . . observed throughout the late fall . . . reflected in our count this year. A total of 1024 is a 500% increase over our previous high." Some of the rarest members of the Emberizinae appearing in our Region this winter included an odd-seasoned **Lark Bunting**, said to provide only a 2nd state record, at Beacon Falls, Conn., Feb. 22-23 (R. Schwartz, DV), a skulking **Le Conte's Sparrow** found in spartina marsh habitat at E. Orleans, Mass., Dec. 16 (RSH *et al.*), and a well-photographed imm. **Golden-crowned Sparrow** representing a first confirmed record for Maine at Cliff I., Jan. 6 to at least Feb. 4 (D. Thompson). Clay-colored Sparrows occurred at Northampton, Mass., Feb. 10-28 (T. Gagnon *et al.*), and for the 2nd year in a row at St. John's to Dec. 26 (R. Burrows *et al.*). Also noteworthy was a total of five Regional Lark Sparrows, and a Lincoln's Sparrow that survived the more trying Newfoundland winter at St. John's, Nov. 11-Mar. 6+ (BM). A well-described, "variant male" Brewer's Blackbird was observed at a Kingston, R.I., feeder Feb. 14 (D. Kraus).

FRINGILLIDS — Regardless of the universally heavy cone crop, the winter finches presented a decidedly mixed picture in the Region. All species were, as expected, more common in the n. country and at higher elevations in w. sections. Pine Grosbeaks were "much more widespread, and in good numbers" in w. Newfoundland (*vide* BMk), "at their lowest levels in a decade" in New Brunswick (*vide* DSC), and almost unknown in all but the northernmost parts of New England. Purple Finches were seen in very good numbers in most areas, and in w. Massachusetts peaked at 135 at Windsor in mid-January (*vide* SK), but were termed "scarce" in Newfoundland. White-winged Crossbill greatly outnumbered Red Crossbill but remained predominantly in n. and w. portions of the Region. For instance, their numbers were "higher than they have been for several years" on New Brunswick C.B.C.s (*vide* DSC), but they were basically absent from e. Massachusetts all winter (*vide* RSH). After some indications of a potential flight of Com. Redpolls late in the fall, they then virtually disappeared and remained very scarce just about everywhere. Pine Siskins occurred in fairly good numbers, although several observers mentioned that they seemed to be ignoring feeders and stayed in the woods this winter. Siskins were "almost totally absent from Newfoundland after 2 years of abundance" (*vide* BM). There was a definite influx of Am. Goldfinches in Maine,



Golden-crowned Sparrow at Cliff Island, Me., Jan. 9, 1985. First confirmed record for Maine. Photo/Donald Thompson.

and probably elsewhere, in mid-December, just in time to elevate C.B.C.s. A single flock of 215 at Georgetown, Me., Dec. 30 was an impressive sight (RSH). Evening Grosbeaks arrived in numbers certainly well below those of the major incursions of the last 2 years, and were very hard to find in many e. sections of New England. Good numbers, however, were noted in several of the maritimes, including 1000+ on the Fredericton, N.B., C.B.C., Dec. 16.

SUB-REGIONAL COMPILERS — Roger G. B. Brown, David S. Christie, Phyllis R. Dobson, David L. Emerson, Roger Etcheberry, Seth Kellog, Bruce Mactavish, Blake Maybank (BMk), Ian A. MacLaren, Eric L. Mills, Blair Nikula, William C. Townsend, Dennis Varza. — **RICHARD S. HEIL, 12 Audette Street, Peabody, MA 01960.**

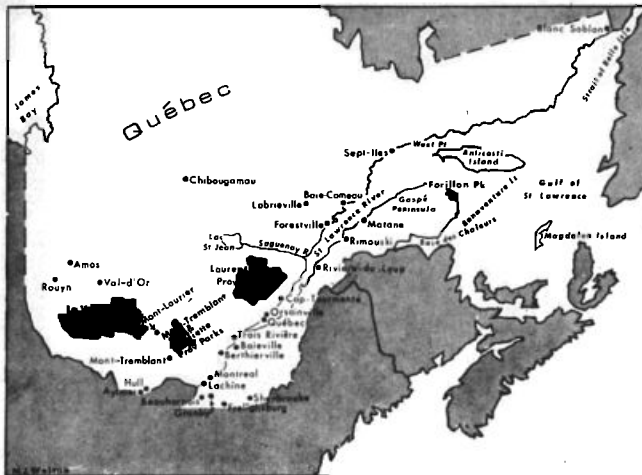
QUEBEC REGION

/Richard Yank and Yves Aubry

December was relatively mild in southern Quebec but averaged as much as 4°C below normal in the north. Precipitation levels were generally higher than usual in the western one-half of the province. The opposite occurred in January as cold, clear weather predominated in the south and mild temperatures with heavy snowfall were recorded in the north. February was mild with light precipitation throughout.

This moderate weather combined with an exceptional wild food crop to entice many passerines to overwinter. These included all the northern finches and others usually found in small numbers, if at all, here in winter: American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Dark-eyed Junco, Purple Finch, and American Goldfinch.

GREBES THROUGH FALCONS — A Horned Grebe observed on L. Memphrémagog Dec. 26 (PL) was late, and one seen at Les Cèdres Feb. 16 (BB) provided the Region's first February record. A Cattle Egret found at Aylmer Dec. 1 (RLD) was the latest ever in Quebec. Surprising for such a late date was a flock of 125+ Canada Geese at Chicoutimi Jan. 4 (BT). A Ruddy Shelduck brightened a group of Mallards on the Richelieu R. near Saint-Jean Dec. 23-27 (MC, LT *et al.*). Although the bird was unbanded and could fly, a local escapee is a distinct possibility in that area. A N. Shoveler on L. Magog Dec. 12 (VL) and four at Longueuil Dec. 18 (RW) established new record departure dates. A Canvasback on L. William, Champlain Co., Dec. 5-13 (AC) was unusual away from the St. Lawrence R., while a lone Ring-necked Duck lingered at Georgeville to Dec. 29 (PL, AL)— only one later sighting is apparently known for Quebec. A Hooded Merganser at



Baie-Comeau Feb. 2 (SM, GCy) provided a 2nd winter record for the N. Shore of the St. Lawrence.

A very late Osprey was sighted at Mirabel Dec. 18 (KR). Bald Eagles again overwintered on the Manicouagan R., with up to three there in January (GCy, GC, DR). Two or more also frequented the mouth of the Saguenay R. throughout the period (AB, EB). A N. Harrier evidently wintered at Saint-Etienne-de-Beauharnois (PB). Accipiters were in evidence on the Gaspé Peninsula: Sharp-shinned Hawks were at Carleton (PF), Bonaventure (SA), and Chandler (*vide* PP); and in Bonaventure County, five N. Goshawks were accidentally caught in rabbit snares (*vide* MAB, PF). A Red-shouldered Hawk was notable at Pierrefonds Jan. 20 (PB) and a well-described Broad-winged Hawk at Sherbrooke Dec. 3 (YM) set a new late departure record. A Rough-legged Hawk at Hébertville Dec. 19-Feb. 19 (AJ *et al.*) provided a first wintering record for the Saguenay. Single ad. Golden Eagles in Gatineau P., Jan. 26 (JD, RB) and Papineau-Labelle Ref., Dec. 17-18 and Feb. 7 & 11 (LB) provided winter records for this species. A Peregrine Falcon at Bergeronnes Feb. 27 (AB) was also exceptional.

PARTRIDGES THROUGH DOVES — Ten Gray Partridges, first noticed at Berthier-sur-Mer last fall, remained throughout the period (JL); this is somewhat beyond the range of this normally sedentary species. Two N. Bobwhites were still present on I. des Soeurs Dec. 16 (*vide* PB—see AB 38:1000). A hunter shot a Com. Moorhen at Beauhar-

S.A.

A pair of Ringed Turtle-Doves apparently nested successfully in Hull last summer, using an old Am. Robin nest. What is even more interesting is the fact that two birds also overwintered there (*vide* JC). Although Roberson may have been semantically right in stating that the Ringed Turtle-Dove has never existed in a wild state (AB 38:882), this dove is a look-alike of the African Collared Dove, from which it stems. It is still unclear, however, whether the Eurasian and African Collared Doves constitute one or 2 species.

In any case, the great similarity between some Ringed Turtle-Doves and Eur. Collared Doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*) could easily lead to the overlooking of a vagrant of the latter in e. North America. These Collared Doves have a well-documented history of westward expansion in Europe, having nested in Iceland for the first time in 1971 (*Brit. Birds* 65:139). Many records of birds alighting on ships in the Atlantic also illustrate the possibility of occurrence in North America (see *Sea Swallow* 22:24B; 28:24; 32:25).

The Ringed Turtle-Dove is only slightly smaller than the Eur. Collared Dove. There is, however, a good way to distinguish between the 2 in the absence of direct comparison: the Ringed Turtle-Dove has white undertail-coverts, concolor with the broad white terminal band under the tail, while the Eur. Collared Dove has gray undertail-coverts, contrasting with the white undertail band.—M. Gosselin

nois Dec. 26 (*vide* GS), almost 3 weeks later than the previous record-late date. Two Black-bellied Plovers were also record-late at Longueuil Dec. 2 (RW). Early February saw several Purple Sandpipers on the Gaspé Peninsula (SA, PP) and Com. Snipes at Beauport (RL *et al.*). A 2nd-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull visited Beauharnois Dec. 2 (BB, MM) and an adult was seen at Sherbrooke Dec. 12 & 16 (JR, BD).

Mourning Doves are attempting to winter farther and farther n.: 20 ± were successful at Bic and Saint-Luce (*vide* DRu), as were five at Bonaventure (BA), but five that tried to winter at Chicoutimi had perished by early March (RT, DT *et al.*).

OWLS THROUGH CORVIDS — Northern owls made but a modest showing. The only significant concentration was a buildup of Snowy Owls at L. Saint-Jean which peaked at 23 birds in late January (*vide* MS). Short-eared Owls made an excellent showing in s.w. Quebec with 33 birds seen Nov. 24-Dec. 30. One remained at Saint-Etienne-de-Beauharnois until at least Feb. 3 (PB). Several N. Saw-whet Owls also overwintered in the Montreal area. A Belted Kingfisher wintered at Hudson (*vide* BM). An ad. Red-headed Woodpecker at Sainte-Foy Dec. 15-Jan. 17 (PPI, m.ob.) and an immature at nearby Charlesbourg Jan. 15-Mar. 2 (SL) were quite surprising, since the only 2 previous winter sightings were from extreme s.w. Quebec. The Region's 12th Red-bellied Woodpecker, discovered at Chelsea Jan. 27, was still there at the end of February (RG, m.ob.).

S.A.

The most outstanding event of the season was the presence, since late November, of some 52 Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*) at Port-Cartier, on the N. Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The presence of these Jackdaws came in the wake of other recent reports in the Northeast (see *Nova Scotia Birds* 27(1):56-57; AB 38:881, 886). Such a string of records may indicate a significant event in population dynamics, resulting from recent westward movements in European Jackdaw populations. Obviously some of the birds involved got lost at sea and may have rallied to any ship or land they could find. For each bird that made it to North America many more probably perished at sea.

Although it is probable that many of the Jackdaws recorded in North America have, at some point, made use of the presence of ships, hundreds of other bird species also owe their range extensions to various human artifacts (see *Birding* 16:156-157 for a discussion on the topic).

Acting on the theory that the Port-Cartier birds had traveled in the hold of a ship (!), and on the belief that they were an unwelcome addition to our avifauna (!), someone in the Quebec Fish & Game Dept. ordered the elimination of this "threat." This action, when exposed, caused some stir as it was based on assertions that were far from proven. Because the species does not appear on its list of protected species, the Canadian Wildlife Service did not voice an objection, and by late March most of the birds had been shot or poisoned.

WRENS THROUGH WOOD WARBLERS — The only Carolina Wren of the season was present from Dec. 9 at Aylmer, found dead Jan. 5 (JD, RH, m.ob.), while a Winter Wren was late at Rimouski Dec. 12 (GG). This was a good winter for fruit-eating species. A Hermit Thrush survived at Hampstead until early March (*vide* MA) and contributors from all regions reported groups of wintering Am. Robins. A Varied Thrush, about the 10th for Quebec, was seen by many at Cushing where it stayed Jan. 6-Feb. 7 (HL, m.ob.). A Gray Catbird at Philipsburg Jan. 6 (PB) provided only the 2nd January record, while a N. Mockingbird overwintered at Rimouski for the 2nd time. Bohemian Waxwings were generally scarce; however, Cedar Waxwings were found in all regions including the N. Shore of the St. Lawrence R. and the Gaspé Peninsula, where they seldom winter.

The record late Black-throated Green Warbler mentioned in the fall report remained at Aylmer until Dec. 16 (JD, m.ob.). Two Pine Warblers that showed up at a feeder in Chandler Dec. 3-20 (PP) were both displaced and very late. Several lingering Com. Yellowthroats were detected, with singles at Hull Nov. 30 (DD), Châteauguay Dec. 15 (PB, FH, PS *et al.*), and I. des Soeurs Dec. 25 (IR)—the latter setting a new record late date.

Wintering Great Cormorants continue to increase in numbers, not only along the coast but along the Hudson R. at Jersey City and even up the Delaware R. as far as the Philadelphia area, where they have become annual. Up to a dozen were at Cinnaminson, *Burlington*, throughout December (GM *et al.*). At the same time, numbers of Double-crested Cormorants are also increasing, as hundreds wintered throughout the Region this season.

With the mild December weather, most of the Regional herons and egrets were found on coastal C.B.C.s, and some of them stayed into January, including a Great Egret that wintered in the Manasquan R., *Ocean*, N.J. (MSu). Most remarkable were single Cattle Egrets on the Lower Bucks Co., Pa., and Elkton, Del., C.B.C.s. Glossy Ibises were found on 6 Regional C.B.C.s, but none was reported after the first of the year.

WATERFOWL — Four **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** were seen coming in for a landing at Silver L., *Sussex*, Del., by Fintel as he was combing the area on the Rehoboth C.B.C., Dec. 22. The birds were seen by several other observers, but were gone the next day. Tundra Swans wintered in moderate numbers in the s. part of the Region, but more noteworthy was a report of six at Mecox Inlet, L.I., Jan. 20 (I. Cantor). With the ever-increasing flocks of Canada Geese, more and more reports of Greater White-fronted Goose are received. Although some of them may be escapes, most records are of orange-billed birds of the Greenland race and are presumably wild. This season's reports came from Round Valley, *Hunterdon*, N.J., Dec. 16 (S. Vayda, S. Jerzewski); Green Lane Res., *Montgomery*, Pa., Dec. 30-31 (GLF, GAF); Allentown, Pa., Feb. 1-3 (BLM, DD); and Round Pond, *Dutchess*, N Y, Feb. 28 (DF).

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Midwinter Waterfowl Survey, conducted during the 2nd week of January, found over 700,000 ducks and geese in the Region, about 13% more than last year and 36% above the 10-year average. While these numbers partially reflected the mild weather conditions prevailing, they also represented a continued increase in the Canada Goose population and a continuing recovery of the Brant from the lows of the late 1970s. The number of Brant wintering along the Atlantic Coast this year was 146,000, more than 3 times the 1979 total; 70% of the total were in this Region, including 92,000 in New Jersey.

Male Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian race were found at Lawrence, *Nassau*, L.I. (RKe), and at Massapequa Preserve, L.I. (JA), Feb. 23. The number of Am. Black Ducks wintering in the Region remained stable, although this species is a source of continuing concern to wildlife biologists. Blue-winged Teal were found on at least 6 Regional C B C.s, but none was seen after that until an early migrant arrived at Cape Henlopen S.P., Del., Feb. 23 (APE). Eurasian Wigeon were scarce, except on Long Island, where a normal complement of about 10 was reported.

Although some of the diving ducks, such as Canvasback and Com. Goldeneye, were late in arriving because of the warm weather, scaup were well-represented by almost 140,000 birds. These included rafts of up to 50,000 in Raritan Bay, N.J.-N.Y., and in Delaware Bay off Fortescue, *Cumberland*, N.J. (RBa, Midwinter Waterfowl Survey). A ♂ Tufted Duck returned to Central P., New York City, for a 3rd winter; he temporarily relocated to the East R. when the park reservoir froze, but returned to the park in late February (m.ob.).

Eiders were found in near-average numbers at the usual locations. Ten Com. Eiders were at Montauk Dec. 1 (JR), but only a few were there later in the winter and just four were reported from New Jersey. King Eider records included a maximum of seven at Montauk, three at Barnegat Light, and up to three at Indian R. Inlet, *Sussex*, Del. Harlequin Ducks were well represented by up to eight at Barnegat Light, six at the s end of Long Beach I., *Ocean*, N.J., Jan. 5 (J. & J. Connor), four at Pt Lookout, *Nassau*, L.I., and up to six at Montauk. The two Barrow's Goldeneyes reported were a female at Lloyd's Neck, *Suffolk*, L I, Jan. 13 (T. O'Connor), and a male at Montauk Feb. 10 (MSo, BB). The Midwinter Waterfowl Survey tallied 7300 Ruddy Ducks on the Delaware R. near Philadelphia, a substantial improvement over the counts of the past few years, but still far below the numbers found 20 years ago.

S.A.

On Jan. 3, 1970, several birders from the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club discovered a drake Barrow's Goldeneye on the Shark R. at Belmar, *Monmouth*, N.J. This bird, a very rare species in New Jersey, remained until mid-March and attracted many birders eager to see it. Over the next 14 winters a ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye, presumably this same individual, returned faithfully to the Shark R. Estuary. During that time it was probably seen by more people than any other member of its species. To hundreds of birdwatchers this was their life Barrow's Goldeneye. For residents of the Hudson-Delaware Region and beyond, the annual winter pilgrimage to see the Barrow's at Shark R. was as much a tradition as a trip to Cape May in the fall.

Throughout the winter of 1984-1985, birders waited anxiously for the rare bird alerts to report the arrival of the Barrow's Goldeneye at Belmar. But, for the first time in 16 years, the report never came. One can hope that he took advantage of the mild winter and decided to stay north, that he will return next year. The odds are, however, that his time had come and that he is no longer with us; he will be sorely missed.

RAPTORS — The burgeoning Regional population of Black Vultures was exemplified by the presence of 71 in a roost near Princeton, N.J., in February, along with almost 500 Turkey Vultures. Warm weather presumably accounted for the appearance of a total of seven Ospreys on 4 C.B.C.s; several of these were well documented, but all reports of winter Ospreys should be thoroughly substantiated. Eighty to 100 Bald Eagles wintered in the Region, continuing the gradual improvement of this species' status. As usual, the biggest numbers (49) were around the *Sullivan* and *Ulster*, N.Y., reservoirs; this area appears to be the most important wintering ground for migrant Bald Eagles in the northeast.

Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk were more conspicuous than usual, perhaps owing to the mild early winter, but N. Goshawk was scarce. For the 2nd year in a row we received an account from an experienced hawk-watcher of an ad. Broad-winged Hawk in February. This year's bird was seen at Warwick, *Orange*, N.Y., Feb. 9 by L. Dumont, whose description appeared to rule out Red-shouldered Hawk. The usual scattering of Golden Eagles included several birds in s. New Jersey, two along the upper Delaware R., N.J.-Pa., and one to two at Rio Res., *Sullivan*, N.Y.

Merlins were widely reported on C.B.C.s, with more than 2 dozen sightings. Some wintered along the coast, including at least seven that returned each evening to a communal roost at Sandy Hook, *Monmouth*, N.J. (JDo, FN). A Peregrine Falcon at Forty Fort, *Luzerne*, Pa., Dec. 8, provided a noteworthy inland sighting (WR). The Gyrfalcon reported from Jones Beach S.P., L.I., in November remained throughout the winter. A 2nd gray Gyr was seen at Holgate, *Ocean*, N.J., Dec. 26 (JDo), but could not be found again.

RAILS THROUGH ALCIDS — A Black Rail was found at Tobay, L.I., Jan. 6, in the same area where two were seen last winter (S. Schiff, A. Wollin). The warm December contributed to unusually high counts of rails on Regional C.B.C.s, including a King Rail and three Soras. In Cape May, a Sandhill Crane, the 2nd in less than a month, was seen Dec. 8 (B & NM).

A good variety of shorebirds took advantage of the mild season to linger in the Region at least through the C.B.C. period. In addition to the usual wintering species, eight Am. Oystercatchers remained at Stone Harbor to the end of January, and another was at Longport, *Atlantic*, N.J., Jan. 30. Forty-five Am. Avocets were still at Bombay Hook Dec 1, but as usual, they departed before the C.B.C. Spotted Sandpipers were found on 3 Regional C.B.C.s, including one that had been at Mercer County P., N.J., for over a month (M & PT), but none was seen after December. A Whimbrel of the Eurasian race was discovered at Holt's Landing, *Sussex*, Del., Dec. 22 (D. Phalen, P. Phalen, M. Tester-Phalen, G. Greenstein, S. Greenstein). The bird remained to at least Jan. 6, and was seen by many observers. A late Pectoral Sandpiper was at the Lincoln Park, N.J., gravel pits Dec. 9 (JBr), but much more unusual was a Curlew Sandpiper at Bombay Hook Jan. 10 (K. Liehr).

Several jaegers hanging around Montauk in mid-December included

at least two Parasitics and one Pomarine (m.ob.). Elsewhere, single Parasitic Jaegers were at Indian R. Inlet, Del., Dec. 22 (GKH, BR) and at Shinnecock Inlet, L.I., Dec. 29 (J. Biderman), and a Pomarine Jaeger made the Cape May C.B.C.

Four Franklin's Gulls were reported by 2 observers at Brig., Jan. 2 (C. Wonderly, SLa), but were not found again. Little Gulls were scarce, except for a few on Long Island. There, three were seen on C.B.C.s, and up to four were at Shinnecock Inlet in January-February (A. Cooley *et al.*). A single bird was at Manasquan Inlet, Pt. Pleasant, N.J., Jan. 12, but there were no reports from Delaware. Four Com. Black-headed Gulls in New Jersey and eight in New York were a bit above par. An ad. Thayer's Gull, a species whose status in this Region is unclear, was reported from Belmar, N.J., Jan. 6, with plausible details by 2 observers familiar with the species (BMo, BSt). Iceland and Glaucous gull numbers were low, reflecting the mild season, but the increasing Lesser Black-backed Gull continued to be much in evidence. More than a dozen individuals were noted, mainly along the coast; but, as noted last year, sightings of this species have become so routine that many observers do not bother to report them.

As usual, Forster's Terns lingered along the coast through December, but a concentration of 500 at Indian R. Inlet, Del., Jan. 10 was a bit out of the ordinary (WWF). They left as soon as the weather turned cold, the last being seen Jan. 19. Alcids were very scarce on shore, and no offshore trips were reported. A Com. Murre was at Montauk Dec. 30 (R. Roth, T. Battaly, C. Hartel); single Thick-billed Murres were on the Sandy Hook and Barnegat C.B.C.s; and a Razorbill was at Shinnecock Inlet Feb. 3 (B. Kolodnick).

OWLS THROUGH RAVENS — Snowy Owls made a modest showing, but with a single exception they were all near the coast. The exception was one found along the Delaware R. in Camden, N.J., in early December that remained throughout the period. Elsewhere there were 3 early reports from s. New Jersey in December, two birds that wintered along the Hudson R. in Bayonne, and about eight found along the s. strip of L.I. from Ft. Tilden to Jones Beach. The other winter owls, Long-eared, Short-eared, and N. Saw-whet, were all in very short supply and missing from some of their usual haunts.

S.A.

Numerous observers have commented over the past few years on the apparent decline in some of the hole-nesting species, but especially Hairy Woodpeckers. Data from the C.B.C.s seem to support this general impression, especially in Pennsylvania, where the number of Hairy Woodpeckers tallied has declined from 0.26/party-hour in 1974 to 0.15/party-hour in 1984. During the same period, the decline in Downies was from 1.24/party-hour to 0.88/party-hour. Similar, but less dramatic, declines are seen for New Jersey C.B.C.s. Stephenson notes that the ratio (calculated as a 10-year moving average) of Downies to Hairies on Perry, Pa., C.B.C.s has increased to over 16 since 1978 after remaining constant at 6-7 for the previous 30 years (OKS). Reid has found a dramatic decline in numbers of the 2 woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch on a Breeding Bird Survey as well as on the C.B.C. in s.e. Bradford, Pa. (WR). He feels that increased cutting of standing dead timber for firewood may be responsible for the decrease of these species in this sparsely-populated area. Similar concerns have been published elsewhere. Whether this trend is general and widespread can probably best be determined from long-term Breeding Bird Census and Survey data; in any event, it is a situation that bears watching.

An Ash-throated Flycatcher discovered at Assunpink W.M.A., Monmouth, N.J., Dec. 9, did not hit the hot-line for 2 weeks. Fortunately it stayed until Jan. 9, was seen by scores of observers, and was well-photographed in color (D. Jenkins, m.ob., ph. SLf). The only other documented account of this species in New Jersey was from Cape May in September 1981 (see AB 36:161), but the black-and-white photo of that bird (back view) is ambiguous. Other flycatchers also lingered in the balmy weather. A well-described Great Crested Flycatcher provided a highlight on the Oceanville, N.J., C.B.C. Numerous W. Kingbirds



Ash-throated Flycatcher at Assunpink W.M.A., N.J., Jan. 5, 1985. Photo/Serge LaFrance.

remained from the big fall influx and were tallied on various C.B.C.s; none was found after the beginning of the year, however. Most remarkable were well-documented E. Kingbirds found on C.B.C.s in s. Nassau, L.I., and s. Lancaster, Pa.; the latter bird was present for over a month prior to the count.

A ♂ Purple Martin at Brig., Jan. 2 was unprecedented (SLa). Whether he was a late fall migrant or an early spring scout, he was 3 months off in his timing. Two Com. Ravens at Slide Mt., Ulster, N.Y., Dec. 1 (FM) were not surprising, as the species is regular there now, but one at Butler Sanctuary, Westchester, N.Y., Dec. 7 was an outstanding find (FN).

CHICKADEES THROUGH SHRIKES — For the first time in many years, not a single Boreal Chickadee was reported. Many more reports of wintering Winter Wrens were received than in the recent past, with a high of six at Trenton Marsh, N.J. (RJB). The mild weather was presumably responsible for the increased presence of this species, which has declined drastically during the past decade. Sedge Wrens were found on 3 New Jersey C.B.C.s, including the Cape May C.B.C., where three were present Dec. 24, the day after the count (RBA, JDo). Two were at Manahawkin W.M.A., N.J., Jan. 13 (JDa). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were present at several spots in December and at least six were tallied on C.B.C.s; an ad. female found dead in Wilmington Jan. 16 is now a specimen in the Delaware Mus. of Natural History (*vide* DMN).

One of the outstanding finds of the season was a ♂ Mountain Bluebird discovered by Wiltraut at Beltzville L., Carbon, Pa., Dec. 16



Male Mountain Bluebird at Beltzville Lake, Pa., Dec. 26, 1984. Second Pennsylvania record. Photo/Rick Wiltraut.



Immature Northern Shrike at Cape May, N.J., Dec. 2, 1984. Photo/Alan Brady.



First-winter male Summer Tanager that wintered at a feeder in Burlington Co., N.J., December 1984 to at least April 1985. Photo/Alan Brady.

during the Wild Creek-Little Gap C.B.C. The bird, only the 2nd ever recorded in Pennsylvania and the 5th in the Region (all since 1974), remained until Jan. 10 and was seen by scores of observers (RW, m.ob., ph. RW, G. Yoder, D. Klem). Three Bohemian Waxwings at Middletown, Orange, N.Y., Feb. 12 were the first in the Region since November 1983 (JPT).

Northern Shrikes were found on about one-half dozen C.B.C.s. One was at Island Beach S.P., N.J., Dec. 1 (T. Koebel, V. Cech) and another was in Nanticoke, Pa., Dec. 22 (MB); wintering birds included one at Cape May Dec. 2 into March (AB, KB), and two at Kingston, Ulster, N.Y., in January and February (FM). A Loggerhead Shrike was at the traditional Rosedale P., Mercer, N.J., spot in early December (M & TS), but did not stay. Another was at Beltzville L., Pa., Dec. 23 for one day only (GAF), and a 3rd was at Marlton, N.J., Jan. 27 (K. Tischner). A Loggerhead wintered at Galeville Airport, Ulster, N.Y., for the 3rd straight year (JPT).

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES — Two White-eyed Vireos and about 16 species of warblers were found on Regional C.B.C.s, but few of them lingered after the count period. Most noteworthy were a ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler at Falls, Wyoming, Pa., Dec. 24 (JPe), a ♂ Cape May Warbler at Beltzville L., Pa., Dec. 26 (AH), and an Ovenbird at Pelham Bay P., New York City, Jan. 20 (J. Morris, *vide* TWB). Most remarkable and apparently unprecedented at this season was the appearance of a first-winter ♂ Summer Tanager at a feeder in Medford Twp., Burlington, N.J. (E. Woodford, m.ob.). The bird arrived Dec. 13 and was still present in April, having partially molted into breeding plumage. The bird was well-photographed, and on Feb. 20 was trapped and banded (H. Spindel, ph. AB). A ♂ W. Tanager frequented a Pitts-town, Hunterdon, N.J., feeder in January (L. & W. Riley).

A ♀ Indigo Bunting on the s. Lancaster, Pa., C.B.C. furnished the first Regional winter report since 1978, while a Dickcissel wintering at a Freehold, N.J., feeder was the only one reported (RDi). Large numbers

of Chipping Sparrows were found on some C.B.C.s, but most disappeared after the first of the year; six visited a Port Elizabeth, Cumberland, N.J., feeder Jan. 16 after a heavy snow, but left when the snow melted (RBa). Two Vesper Sparrows wintered in a field in Lancaster, Pa., but disappeared after heavy snows in February (TA). Two Grasshopper Sparrows at Cape May Dec. 12 were somewhat late (RBa).

Another of the outstanding finds of the season, but surely the most frustrating, was a **Le Conte's Sparrow** discovered by Dowdell at Sandy Hook, N.J., Feb. 3. It was sought in vain for the next week, found again several weeks later, and seen by a small, fortunate fraction of the many birders who trekked the dunes in search of it through the end of March (JDo *et al.*). Lapland Longspurs were more conspicuous than usual, and were reported in numbers from all parts of the Region except Delaware, where only one or two wintered at Bombay Hook.

The Region's five Yellow-headed Blackbirds were all in New Jersey. One was in a mixed blackbird flock at Everittstown, Hunterdon, Jan. 15 (BoJetta Morris); three wintered at a feeder in Pennsville, Salem, N.J. (*vide* JHa); and a 5th was at Cape May from January into the spring (m.ob.). Twenty Brewer's Blackbirds were at 2 traditional sites near Bombay Hook in December, where some have appeared almost every winter for 30 years. More unusual was the report of a pair at W. Cape May Dec. 8 in the same field where three were seen in mid-November (B & NM). Up to 36 Boat-tailed Grackles were found around J.B.W.R. in December (*Queens* C.B.C., HMc), further evidence of the species' continued expansion on Long Island.

This was the worst season in many years for winter finches. There were a few scattered reports of Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak, and Pine Siskin, but none at all for Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, or Com. Redpoll. Red Crossbill sightings were limited to 27 on the s.e. Bradford, Pa., C.B.C.; one on the Great Swamp, N.J., C.B.C.; two at Pound Ridge Reservation, Westchester, N.Y., in early December (FN); and two in Claryville, N.Y., Feb. 23 (SLi, BW).

EXOTICS — Eleven Ringed Turtle-Doves on the Wilmington, Del.,

C.B.C. were part of an increasing population there. In *Sussex*, N.J., a Monk Parakeet and a Black-hooded Conure took up winter residence together in a nest built on a telephone pole, while in *Rockland*, N.Y., five Maroon-bellied Conures continued to reside in Piermont (*vide* RFD).

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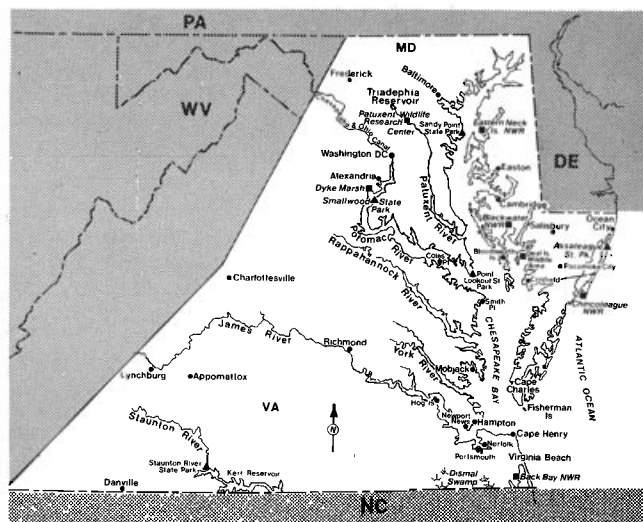
MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

/Henry T. Armistead

This winter was predominantly mild, with wild extremes. December was balmy and dry. January was cold. February was warm. There was little snow or rain in any of the three months. Deviation from normal of temperature: December, +7.6°F; January, -4.0°; February, +1.2°; of precipitation: December, -1.53 inches; January, -0.28 inches; February, +0.20 inches. High temperatures on December 18, 19 and 29 ranged from 73° to 78° throughout the Region. On January 21 the range of lows was from 0° to -10°. Then on February 24 the highs were from 75° to 82°. None of this did much to make the winter interesting for birders. Throughout, there were much lower-than-normal numbers of most herons, waterfowl, some gulls, all northern irruptive species, and most winter sparrows. Add to this a lack of rarities, and the description by Weber that he had "rarely seen such an unexciting season" seems totally appropriate. On the plus side it was a good winter for pelicans, a few waterfowl species, eagles, some gulls, kinglets, and Cedar Waxwing. The warm December did not induce a large number of birds to linger.

ABBREVIATIONS — Balt. = Baltimore; the Bay = Chesapeake Bay; Black. = Blackwater Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Md.; C.B.B.T. = Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, Va.; Chinc. = Chincoteague Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Va.; D.C. = Washington, D.C.; Susq. = lower Susquehanna R., Md., below Conowingo Dam. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — Loons were present in excellent numbers during December but were little noted later on (v.o.). Horned Grebes continue to winter in very low numbers here with no signs of recovery at all yet (v.o.). Single Red-necked Grebes were at Hampton Roads, Va., Dec. 15 (HCI *et al.*) and in D.C., Jan. 2-24 (DC). Only about the 4th for Maryland, a **Western Grebe** was on Loch Raven Res., n. of Balt., Dec. 16 to mid-January (PNo, KHW, RFR *et al.*, ph.). Single Am. White Pelicans were present at Lynnhaven Inlet and Sandbridge in the greater Cape Henry, Va., area during February, probably the same bird (HCI, JW *et al.*), as well as at Chinc. from late December into January (FRS, WS *et al.*), continuing their recent trend of a scarce but regular presence. Brown Pelicans lingered until the end of December in the Cape Charles area but one nearby soaring at great height over



Townsend Feb. 10 was unprecedented as a mid-winter Regional record (HTA, HG). Great Cormorants were reported in usual numbers at their favored locale, C.B.B.T. (such as seven Feb. 18 by DC), but 18 on Lower Machodoc Cr., Va., off the lower Potomac R., provided a fine count for there Feb. 18 (JEJ, SJ).

Schutsky's best heron counts on the Susq. included 151 Great Blues Dec. 5 and 20 Black-crowned Night-Herons through the winter; at Balt., 28 Great Blues and 34 Black-crowns Dec. 22 were considered high, and indicative of the mild December weather, by Ringler. So few herons are usually present in late winter that even such modest counts as three Great Egrets, nine Snowy Egrets, and a Tricolored Heron at Chinc., Feb. 28 were of interest (EMW *et al.*). A dozen Black-crowned Night-Herons overwintered at the National Zoo in D.C., where Czaplak indicated they are increasing. A late Glossy Ibis was at Piscataway Cr., Prince Georges, Md., Dec. 2 (PN). In spite of December's mildness, most observers noted no corresponding high number of lingering herons on the coast.

WATERFOWL — Numbers of most waterfowl were even lower than they were in the previous few winters, especially among the divers and

especially during December. One hopes this was primarily due to mild weather. Back Bay N.W.R. seems to have undergone a particularly bad decline. When an experienced observer can spend most of the day there Feb 18 and see (excluding oceanside birds) only four Tundra Swans, 10 Am Black Ducks, two N. Pintails and five N. Shovelers (zero Canada Geese, zero Snow Geese!), something is very wrong (Wolfe). Yet the next day Perry found 8300 Snow Geese nearby. On Feb. 19-20 he conducted an aerial survey of Snow Geese finding 130,175 from North Carolina to New Jersey, 50,040 of these in New Jersey, with 6450 in the Chinc. area, 135 nearby in coastal Maryland, and 21,450 on the upper E Shore of Maryland Feb. 20. Only 5 days earlier only 11,500 were on the upper E. Shore, indicating the start of a heavy N flight in the interim. Other Feb. 20 counts included 30,550 in North Carolina and 13,250 in Delaware. A similar mid-January count found 188,000 Snows (MCP). To these counts may be added 1012+ Snow and "Blue" geese at Black., Feb 17 (EMW). The best count of "Blues" from the Hopewell, Va., area was 400 Feb. 10 (FRS *et al.*), and 225 were at Black., Feb. 24 (HTA).

Small numbers of Mute Swans continued to appear in areas where known wild populations are unrecognized such as Balt. (RFR), D.C. (EMW), Seneca, Md. (LDB), *Westmoreland*, Va. (EMW), and Ft. Belvoir, Va. (JMA)—more such reports than usual. Greater White-fronted Geese continued to cause something of a stir with records of singles from Black., Jan. 1-2 (JA), *Kent*, Md. (JG), *Harford*, Md., Feb. 28+ (5th straight winter—DLK), Ocean City (CSR), and one adult plus two immatures in the Alexandria, Va.-Accokeek, Md. area late December to February (JMA, PN, RPR *et al.*, ph.). Further reports of hybrid young White-fronts x Canadas from Black. and *Harford* should complicate future goose reports nicely. A Barnacle Goose at Deer Cr., *Harford*, Feb. 24+ should be regarded with suspicion (DLK *et al.*), but an ad **Ross' Goose**, Maryland's 2nd, at Black., Dec. 29-31 was probably a truly wild bird (PO, MO, HK *et al.*). At Piney Run, *Carroll*, Md., a Canada Goose (*hutchinsii*) was seen Dec. 16 and Jan. 1 (RFR).

Wood Ducks seem to be increasingly able to survive severe cold by taking advantage of food and shelter at zoos, such as 85 at Druid L., Balt., Jan. 25 after a dip to -6°F there Jan. 21, three at D.C. zoo Jan. 19 (DC), and 12 at Little Creek, Va., Jan. 28 where it was -3°F Jan. 21 (HCI). Schwab feels Am. Black Ducks are increasing in winter on the Virginia Piedmont where he saw 800 at Elm Hill W.M.A. near Kerr Dam, this in contrast to their apparent decline elsewhere. He also noted 2500 N. Pintails and 750 Gadwalls at Hog I., *Surry*, Va., Jan. 30, best counts this season. Best counts from Craney I., Portsmouth, Va., in January were of 400 N. Shovelers, 250 Gadwalls, and 200 Am. Wigeon (TRW). At Cape Charles a ♂ Eur. Wigeon was at Fisherman's I., Dec. 31 (ASn, DCo, GD *et al.*) and at Townsend Feb. 9-10 (HTA, HG). Baltimore Harbor continued to be a prime diver site with 1500 Canvasbacks and 2500 Lesser Scaup Feb. 17 (RFR). Excellent totals from D.C. included 32 Oldsquaws Dec. 31, 230 Ring-necked Ducks Jan. 9, two White-winged Scoters Jan. 28, and 10 Redheads Feb. 26 (DC).

At Ocean City a Common and four King eiders and up to seven Harlequin Ducks wintered (MO *et al.*), the Kings being present the longest (DC); C.B.B.T. boasted eight Kings all winter (GRS, TK, PB, HTA *et al.*), plus a Common in January (JEJ, KM) and up to three Harlequins all winter (KHW, DP, HCI). Notable for the Piedmont were 18 Oldsquaws and four White-winged Scoters at Piney Run Dec. 16 (RFR). Three White-winged with 200 Buffleheads on the James R. in Richmond Jan. 26 were also unusual (LGR, *fide* FRS). Among the divers, Com. Goldeneye seemed especially down this winter (v.o.). Often late arrivals, 120 Com. Mergansers were at Hopewell Jan. 14 (FRS), a month after the C.B.C. there that had only six. In contrast to other divers, Red-breasted Mergansers were in high supply, with counts such as 1000+ at Ft. Monroe, Va., Jan. 4 (TK) and 55 inland at Swift Creek Res. near Richmond Dec. 5 (FRS).

RAPTORS THROUGH RAILS — Strange to see were several groups of Turkey Vultures totalling 65 crossing the Bay at C.B.B.T., Dec. 2 (FRS *et al.*). Less strange, as the Region usually has an early Osprey in February, was one at Knotts I., Va., Feb. 15 just over the North Carolina border (GG, VH, *fide* FRS). Bald Eagles continued to do well. A mid-winter count along the James, York and Rappahannock rivers in Virginia found 122, 54% immatures, the best ratio of immatures yet found there (MAB, FRS). A new roost was found near Crisfield, Md.,

with as many as 18 birds (CRV), three immatures were at L Drummond, Dismal Swamp W.M.A., Feb. 23 (DS, CP), six were at Kerr Res., Va., Jan. 11 (TD, JD), and five were at Land's End W.M.A., Va., Jan. 27 (BP), all of these heretofore regarded as minor areas for eagles. Population strongholds in *Dorchester* and *Kent*, Md., continued strong (EMW, RLA, JG *et al.*).

Sharp-shinned Hawks lingered in good numbers during December, some undoubtedly late migrants (v.o.). A Red-shouldered Hawk was nest-building as early as Feb. 11 near Richmond (MS, *fide* FRS). Rough-legged Hawks made a fair influx with the southernmost ones being at Cape Charles Jan. 31 (HG), two at Saxis, Va., Feb. 3 (GMW), and at Curles Neck, *Henrico*, Va., Feb. 17 (FRS *et al.*); seven were in s *Dorchester*, Md., Feb. 24 (HTA). On the Susq., an imm. Golden and 23 Bald eagles were seen in December (RMS), superior records for there Very rare in s. Virginia was an imm. Golden Eagle at Brandon, *Prince George*, Dec. 17 & 20 (EH, FRS). Late winter Merlins were at Cheriton Feb. 9 (HTA), Tappahannock Feb. 10 and Oyster Feb. 11 (DFA), plus Chinc., Feb. 14 (KHW, DP), the only such reported. Rail records, seldom received in winter, consisted of single Kings at Seashore S.P., Va., Jan. 14 (GRS), at Black. (with five Virginia Rails) Feb. 24 (HTA), and at Huntley Meadows P., *Fairfax*, Va., Feb. 26 (CG). American Coot is another waterbird which has declined drastically at Back Bay (PWS).

SHOREBIRDS — At Craney I., Wolfe found two Semipalmated Plovers Jan. 8. Best Am. Oystercatcher totals were 29 at Ocean City, where they have only recently begun to winter, Jan. 5 (MO), 140 at Cape Charles Feb. 9 (HTA), and 250 at Chinc., Feb. 3 (GMW *et al.*). Up to 82 Am. Avocets were at Craney I., Dec. 5 (KHW, DP), but were not seen later (TRW, KHW). A genuine rarity in winter on the Piedmont was a Lesser Yellowlegs at Lilypons, *Frederick*, Md., December to Jan. 9 (MO *et al.*). A bit off their marks were up to eight Marbled Godwits at Fisherman's I., Va., from December to Feb. 10 (MAB, DFA *et al.*); the godwits usually restrict their activities to the Mockhorn I. flats, 4-5 mi to the n.e. and well out of sight of the mainland and the C.B.B.T. highway. Typical winter counts were 30 Ruddy Turnstones at Grand View, Hampton, Va., Feb. 28 (TK) and 50 at Ocean City Jan. 27 (EW). Least Sandpipers again overwintered near Hopewell, where eight were seen Feb. 17, thought to be a different group than the 12 found 8.5 mi away on the Hopewell C.B.C., Dec. 15 (FRS, LGR *et al.*). Just barely on the Piedmont were two Dunlins at Susq., Jan. 27 (MO) and one there Feb. 6 (RMS, EB), most unusual for this inland locality. The best shorebird of the season was a Ruff along Egypt Rd., n. of Black., Jan. 6-7, consorting with 150 Killdeers; this apparently provided the 3rd Regional winter record, the first for Maryland (AH, FH *et al.*). The area around this 6-7 mi road is rapidly being lumbered out and transformed into one big cornfield of thousands of acres. It is something of a bittersweet feeling to realize that it is a very good stretch for field birds. Numerous observers commented on the prevalence of Am. Woodcock courtship displays during the warm December. But as usual, the lion's share of winter shorebirds were recorded on the C.B.C.s (q.v.).

GULLS THROUGH SKIMMER — Unique was an ad. Little Gull at Ocean City Feb. 24 (WK, HLW). Interesting inland records of Bonaparte's Gulls were one at Nokesville, *Prince William*, Va., Jan. 20 (KHB) and 80 at Swift Creek Res., Dec. 5 (FRS), while 45 at Hooper's I., *Dorchester*, Md., Feb. 24 was a high count by local standards (HTA). Most felt that numbers of Herring and Ring-billed gulls were low much of the winter, especially along the coast. Gulls along the Susq. again stole the show with these observations of greatest interest there: six Lesser Black-backed, one Iceland, and one Thayer's Jan. 19 (EB, RMS); four Lesser Black-backed, one Iceland, and one Glaucous Feb. 5 (RMS); 10 Lesser Black-backed (a record Regional count), one Iceland, two Glaucous, one Thayer's, and 14,000 Herrings Feb. 6 (EB, RMS). An Iceland was also seen there Jan. 27 (MO), and one was at C.B.B.T., Feb. 2 (JB). The only other Glaucous record was of one at Hog I., Feb. 12 (DS).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued to be seen at favored localities such as Balt., the greater D.C. area, and C.B.B.T. (v.o.). On the Susq., 500 Great Black-backed Gulls were estimated Jan. 16 in league with 10,000 Herring Gulls (RMS), and at Back Bay, Wolfe found Great Black-backed voraciously feeding on live crabs on the unlikely date of

Feb 18 Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were at C B B T, Dec 25 (DCt) & 31 (DCo, HTA *et al.*), and at Ocean City Dec. 27 (MO). Small numbers of Royal Terns lingered through December at the mouth of the Bay, which does not happen every winter, and four Royal Terns as well as 60 Black Skimmers were seen in the Cape Henry area Dec. 25 (TRW), two of the skimmers lingering until Jan. 12. This was an unprecedented number of skimmers for so late in the year. A late Com. Tern seen at Virginia Beach Dec. 1 was very well-described (FRS, JWD).

PARROTS THROUGH SHRIKES — For the past 4 winters two macaws (sp.) have been found in Virginia Beach (HCI). A Great Horned Owl returned to remnants of the Great Blue Heronry at Deal Island W.M.A., *Somerset*, Md., where it was seen sitting on a nest (old Great Blue nest?) Feb. 17 (DC). Snowy Owls staged a minor invasion, with one at Hart & Miller islands e. of Balt. for most of December (*vide* RFR), one in *Frederick*, Md., Dec. 14 into January (*vide* DHW), the Chinc. bird mentioned in the fall report (CPW), plus unconfirmed reports in D.C. and Laurel Grove, *St. Mary's*, Md., about as good a showing as they ever make here. One hopes they were rewarded with a microtine smorgasbord. The only Long-eared Owl was seen by Bass at Nokesville Dec. 8, where four Short-eared Owls were sighted Feb. 16 (RAA). Other interesting Short-eared Owl records were of three at Greensboro, *Caroline*, Md., Dec. 27 (SW, WR, *vide* AJF), and four at Chinc., Feb. 17 (DC), in both cases surpassing this season's C.B.C.s for those areas.

Red-headed Woodpeckers were in good numbers in Piedmont areas (v.o.) as were Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers throughout. Totally unexpected were two Red-cockaded Woodpeckers near Dare, *York*, Va., n. of the species' usual localities near Wakefield, *Sussex*, Va. These were seen from late winter until at least Mar. 12 (TD, CWH, m.ob.) coming to suet "lifting wings like a mockingbird." In 1978, fewer than 50 were estimated to be in Virginia. Even though no Horned Larks were recorded on the Hopewell C.B.C., 110 were in this area at Curles Neck Jan. 27 (FRS *et al.*). Six to seven Tree Swallows apparently overwintered at Chinc., where they were seen at least Jan. 22-Feb. 17 and later (WS, DC *et al.*). It was another dismal winter for Red-breasted Nuthatch, with only scattered reports of one to three birds, and many birders saw none. White-breasted Nuthatches also failed to mount a flight; in good years they appear in many coastal plain areas where they do not breed.

Literally grotesque was the tale of a Winter Wren that spent much of the winter in cover in the Bobcat cage at the National Zoo in D.C. (DC). Also in the realm of the strange was the extreme scarcity of both marsh wrens and marsh sparrows along the coast this December in spite of the shirtsleeves weather (v.o.). They are often easier to find in extremely cold years than they were before January's hard freeze. Superlatives were in order for both kinglets, which wintered in record numbers in many areas, especially Ruby-crowneds (v.o.). It was only a few years ago that both were in record low numbers. Christmas Bird Counts remain outside of my purview but I cannot resist noting that although I know of at least 21 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers seen on C.B.C.s, virtually none was reported otherwise, surely a misleading situation pointing out the hazards of relying only on non-C.B.C. materials for this column. After their tremendous showing during the past breeding season, Cedar Waxwings were again present in very large numbers through most of the winter (v.o.). Loggerhead Shrikes remain scarce enough here so that observers still report their presence, even in prime areas such as Lilypons where they are almost to be expected.

VIREOS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW — A late Solitary Vireo was at Seashore S.P. at Cape Henry Dec. 1 (FRS, JWD). Notable Orange-crowned Warblers away from favored coastal locales were singles at Harwood Mills Res., Va., Jan. 26 (TK), and another in the National Arboretum in D.C., where an outstandingly late ♀ Black-throated Blue Warbler was also seen, both on Dec. 29 (DC). Other completely unexpected winter warblers, even considering the mild weather, were single N. Parulas at Denton, *Caroline*, Md., Dec. 28 (SW, MWH, *vide* AJF), and a male captured at Jamestown I. near Williamsburg, Va., Jan. 19 which died several days later (*vide* BW), and a Blackburnian Warbler in D.C., Dec. 8 & 15 (DC, BS). The Black-and-white Warbler is more to be expected during winter, especially after

many seen on C B C s this year, and one was at Chippokes Plantation S.P., s.e. of Williamsburg, Jan. 6 (PM, *vide* TK). A Wilson's Warbler was seen near Alexandria, Va., for several days in mid-December (*vide* JMA). Pine Warblers, among the first signs of spring here, were singing as early as Feb. 17 near Hopewell, Va. (FRS *et al.*).

Totally out of season was a Scarlet Tanager at Williamsburg during the first week of December (AS, *vide* BW). With regard to several of these lingering warm-weather birds, observers comment on their preference for pines at this time of year. Following the bitter cold of late January, Droege noted an influx of Am. Tree Sparrows in the Maryland Piedmont in the first week of February, in a sense marking an end of the fall migration. Chipping Sparrows were present in above-average numbers during December, and 44 were noted at Denton Feb. 1 (SW, *vide* AJF). Fox Sparrow numbers were at what was probably an all-time low, virtually abysmal (v.o.). Observers were unanimous that most other sparrows were in very low numbers, especially Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco. This was especially obvious to banders (D & MM, FRS). There was an influx of some, including juncos, after the cold snap of Jan. 20-21 (SD). Up to eight Lapland Longspurs were in *Frederick*, Md., in early December through early January near New Design Rd., in company with 250 ± Horned Larks (BC *et al.*). Snow Buntings were widely scattered in small numbers except for a big group of 150 ± at Hart & Miller Is. in December (RFR).

The only non-C.B.C. N. (Baltimore) Oriole report was of one in *Calvert*, Md., Jan. 8 (RRR). The n. finch flight was nonexistent for yet another winter. Even Purple Finches were almost completely absent, and even as active a bander as Scott banded none for the first time in 30 years. They were as scarce as Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were. But House Finches continued to spread and increase, an indication of their ubiquitousness being 43 found on sand dunes at Grandview Feb. 1 by Portlock. Pine Siskins turned up in small numbers without thyme or reason such as an unusually large number (for an off winter) of 50 at Richmond Dec. 5 (FM, *vide* FRS), eight in Glebe Harbor, *Westmoreland*, Va., Jan. 6 (JEJ), or four in Arlington, Va., Feb. 7 (EMW). American Goldfinches did nothing to alleviate the litany of negativism. Evening Grosbeaks showed up here or there in the manner of siskins, such as a single near Northwest River P., Chesapeake, Va., Jan. 20 (GMW).

To end this report in a suitably bizarre manner, in fact almost triumphantly in the face of the lack of finches, waterfowl, and other big bird groups, as well as rarities, we have this account of how at the National Zoo in D.C., Czaplak watched a Red-billed Magpie "pounce upon, kill and completely devour one unwary House Sparrow. The Derbyan Parakeets and the Pinyon Jay watched, lending an international flavor to the proceedings." They all deserve each other. Next winter has got to be an improvement, complete with northern finches.

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SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION

/Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

Weather in the Region followed a pattern repeated a number of times in recent years—an unseasonably warm December followed by a brutally cold January. February was somewhat milder than usual, but everyone's attention was focused on January. For on the afternoon of January 20, the coldest surge of air ever to hit the Region spread southeastward from the center of the continent. On the morning of January 21, *alltime* lows were recorded nearly everywhere, such as -9°F at Raleigh, North Carolina, and -10°F in far south Midville, Georgia. Fortunately, the "Alberta Clipper's" frigid temperatures remained only two or three days, and little avian mortality from the freeze was mentioned. Snow and ice were rather infrequent this winter, as precipitation was below normal in most areas.

The mild December enabled many species to remain north of their winter ranges through the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, C.B.C.) period, especially waders and small insectivores (warblers, vireos, and gnatcatchers). Of course, waterfowl were in poor numbers until the cold weather appeared, causing many C.B.C. compilers to pray for a cold December 1985. The winter finch flight was dismal, and few rarities (such as tanagers, grosbeaks, or buntings) visited feeders. It was certainly a forgettable season for nearly everyone but a small handful of Georgia birders who turned up several western vagrants, and Dave Lee, whose remarkable pelagic trips in December off Oregon Inlet, encountered birds more likely to be found off the West Indies or Bermuda (presumably) than off North Carolina.



LOONS THROUGH SHEARWATERS — Red-throated Loons are quite rare inland; yet North Carolina had three such records: Dec. 9 at Jordan L. (RD, HL, WI); Dec. 10 at L. Norman (HW, HWh); and Jan. 1 at Roanoke Rapids L. (ML, KL). Several excellent counts of Horned Grebes were made at L. Keowee, S.C., with the best being 79 on Feb. 19 (DM). Lee and others have accumulated a number of late fall and spring records of *Northern Fulmar* for North Carolina; thus, somewhat overdue was the state's first winter record—an individual off Oregon Inlet Feb. 21 (DL, DC). Lee managed 5 pelagic trips (4 in December and one in February) to the Gulf Stream off Oregon Inlet, finding Black-capped Petrels each time; the best counts were of 36 on both Dec. 20 & 28. On his remarkable Dec. 20 trip, he observed a *Bermuda Petrel* off Oregon Inlet. He now has 2 sightings of this very-difficult-to-identify *Pterodroma*, the only such reports for North America (see AB 38:151-163). Obviously, a specimen will be necessary to confirm the species in our waters. On Dec. 12, he also collected a *Greater Shearwater* off that inlet, for the 3rd state winter record but the first confirmed by specimen or photo. Now apparently regular off the Region in winter, Manx Shearwater was reported twice—two off Oregon Inlet Dec. 20 (DL) and three off Jekyll I., Ga., Feb. 9 (A.A.S.). After several "probable" sightings of *Little Shearwater* over the past few years off North

Carolina, including one or two "probables" Feb. 21, Lee observed one off Oregon Inlet Dec. 28 that he is confident in calling. As with extra-limital *Pterodroma* species, a specimen would be highly desirable.

PELICANS THROUGH IBISES — An Am. White Pelican at Hatteras Inlet, N.C., on several dates in winter (D & SD *et al.*) may have been the same bird found there the previous year. Likewise, another at Charleston, S.C., most of the season (DF) may well have been a returning visitor. A Great Cormorant at Middleton Gardens near Charleston Jan. 12 (m.ob.) was most unusual away from the immediate coast; and the Region's most consistent wintering locale, Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., was home to three or four during the season, including an adult Feb. 2 (PN *et al.*). Single Anhingas farther inland than normal were in Forsyth County, Ga., Dec. 2 (JP) and Augusta Dec. 8 & Jan. 19 (AW, VW) and at Martin, S.C., Dec. 15 (SG). The mild December weather allowed a Least Bittern to linger to Dec. 27 at Hatteras, N.C. (RD), as well as a few Great Egrets in December at Norman and Jordan lakes in c. North Carolina (m.ob.). A Green-backed Heron Jan. 8 far inland at Gainesville, Ga. (JP) was quite surprising. Perhaps unprecedented winter season numbers of Glossy Ibises were reported: 38 on the Bodie-Pea Is., N.C., C.B.C., Dec. 28 (*fide* PS) and 100 at Santee Coastal Reserve, S.C., Jan. 26 (m.ob.).

WATERFOWL — As expected, to the anguish of C.B.C. participants, waterfowl numbers were down, particularly in December. Rare in North Carolina was a Fulvous Whistling-Duck near Otway, Carteret Co., Dec. 17 (*fide* TB). That state opened a hunting season on Tundra Swans, a result of burgeoning numbers; and the 26,625 tallied on the Mattamuskeet N.W.R. C.B.C. there, Dec. 30 (*fide* AB) seemed to validate the decision for an open season. A Ross' Goose at Pea I., Jan. 20-26 (CL, RD, HL, KC) was almost expected at that refuge. The lumping of the "Common" Teal with the Green-winged Teal has reduced the searching for and reporting of the former; thus, gratifying was a report of a ♂ "Common" at Bodie I., N.C., Mar. 4 (ACO). Par for the season was the single report of Eur. Wigeon—one at Pea I. in late January (ME, MC). Good inland counts, all in North Carolina, included 85 Canvasbacks Dec. 21 near Vass (TH), eight Greater Scaups Jan. 27-Feb. 16 near Burlington (AB), and 20 Com. Mergansers at Roanoke Rapids L., Jan. 13 (HL, RD, MW, KC). Five reports of Com. Eider might constitute a single season record. The ad. male was noted again this winter at Hatteras Inlet, N.C. (HL, RD); whereas females or immatures appeared in 4 other locales—in North Carolina at Oregon Inlet (CL) and Ft. Macon S.P. (RJH) and in South Carolina at Murrells Inlet (LG, PN) and Huntington Beach S.P. (AW, PJC *et al.*). Very rare for Georgia was a King Eider, an imm. male at Cumberland I., Dec. 30 (PM, TM, HG, BP). A ♀ King wintered in the Morehead City, N.C. area (JF *et al.*) and was joined by an imm. male at nearby Ft. Macon S.P., Feb. 21-22 (RJH).

Slightly more notable than the eiders was the Harlequin Duck: two females at Murrells Inlet Jan. 1-7 (PN, GC, RG), a female at Pine Knoll Shores, N.C., Dec. 16 into January (GM *et al.*), and an ad. male at nearby Ft. Macon Feb. 21-23 (RJH). McNair had an excellent south-bound flight of scoters on the late date of Dec. 2 at Hunting Island S.P., S.C. Essentially all of the 7800 scoters were identified as Blacks, although two White-wingeds were noted. Inland scoters are good finds at any time; noteworthy in Georgia were a Surf Jan. 19-Feb. 17 at Sweetwater Creek S.P. (GS) and a White-winged at L. Lanier Feb. 28 (JP). Very rare for the Atlanta, Ga., area were 3 reports of Com. Mergansers Dec. 1-Jan. 12 (*fide* TM).

OSPREY THROUGH CRANES — Ospreys seldom overwinter in North Carolina, but one apparently did so in e. Carteret County (*fide* NG). Numbers of wintering Bald Eagles appeared to be on the rise, at least in North Carolina. That state had its best ever mid-winter eagle survey (20 birds Jan. 2-16); however, 13 were along the Yadkin-Pee Dee R. system and only two were from the tidewater section (*fide* MW). Although there are numerous winter sight records of *Broad-winged Hawk* for the Region, many or most likely involve misidentifications. Bryan's photo of an imm. bird perched on a telephone wire at Cape Hatteras point, N.C., Dec. 27 (ph. examined by HL) was perhaps the first winter report documented here by photo or specimen. Likewise, any winter report of *Swainson's Hawk* in the east faces a wall of skepticism. Yet, an adult Dec. 27 in Lexington County, S.C. (BM) was

well described by an observer familiar with the species in Texas. This was the state's 3rd or 4th sight record; no photo or specimen exists for the Region. Believable Rough-legged Hawks were reported twice, both in n. North Carolina, near L. Phelps Dec. 29 (ph. AB, LP) and in Halifax County Jan. 16 (FE). The sole Golden Eagle sighting involved an immature at Santee N.W.R., S.C., Dec. 29 and again Feb. 12 (DF *et al.*). Numbers of Am. Kestrels continued to slide, in migration and in winter, both here and elsewhere in the east. Few inland C.B.C.s reported more than one dozen birds, and the warm December weather was likely not to blame for the low numbers. There were 5 inland sightings of Merlins, with each state represented; the 2 inland Peregrine Falcon reports were from South Carolina near Columbia Dec. 9 (BM) and near Pendleton Jan. 19 (CW).

One of the most significant records as a result of the "Alberta Clipper" was an emaciated Yellow Rail picked up on the side of a road near Oriental, N.C., Jan. 23 (DoF). This tidewater town is only 20 mi inland from the Beaufort airport, where large numbers have been seen in previous winters; perhaps Yellow Rails winter away from the immediate coast. Two calling King Rails were of interest near Dublin, Ga., Dec. 24 (TKP) as was another Jan. 1 near Halifax, N.C. (ML, KL). In c. Georgia, late-migrating Sandhill Cranes are almost meeting the early northbound ones; 74 flying N at Marietta Jan. 27 (WD) were very early, but no migration data accompanied the report of 40 in Hall County, Jan. 13 (RS).

SHOREBIRDS — Rare in the Charleston area were three Am. Avocets at Mount Pleasant Feb. 26 (DF), and a peak of 18 was noted during the season at Jekyll I., Ga. (PB, WD). Greater Yellowlegs lingered inland at Durham, N.C., and Atlanta until mid-December, with one near the latter city Dec. 16 (DLA) being a winter first. The mild early winter enabled more Least Sandpipers to linger inland than usual; the best records were of 18 on the Chapel Hill, N.C., C.B.C., Dec. 29 (ACap, EG, DK) and birds in Piedmont Georgia at Clayton County until Jan. 13 (PB) and Forsyth County until Jan. 20 (JP). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** Jan. 19-Feb. 17 in Forsyth County, Ga. (JP) was one of just a few such mid-winter records for the Region. Two Pectorals near Chapel Hill Dec. 29 (AT, *fide* BW) were almost as notable. The Clayton County water treatment plant also hosted a Dunlin all winter and a tardy Long-billed Dowitcher until Dec. 2 (PB). Red Phalaropes winter off our coast, but North Carolina had lacked a February record until 40 were observed off Oregon Inlet Feb. 21 (DC, DL).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — The only post-December jaegers reported were two Parasitics off Jekyll I., Feb. 9 (TM *et al.*) and another at Pine Knoll Shores, N.C., Feb. 23 (JF, LC, BH). However, one December jaeger was definitely worthy of mention; a **Long-tailed Jaeger** off Oregon Inlet Dec. 20 (DL, WI) was carefully studied for the first winter record for the Region and one of just a few for the entire continent. The only Little Gull for the season was, not surprisingly, seen among a large flock of Bonaparte's Gulls at Pea I., Feb. 16 (HL, RD). On the other hand, Com. Black-headed Gull was reported thrice, all in North Carolina—near Swanquarter Dec. 26 (HL *et al.*), near Carolina Beach Jan. 5 (DC, ACar, DL; *N.C.S.M.), and at Hatteras Inlet Jan. 19 (CL). In severely cold weather, the Cape Hatteras-Hatteras Inlet area often teems with gulls. This was again evident when Davis and LeGrand estimated 500,000 gulls (over 95% Ring-billed) in the area Jan. 26 following several days of brutal temperatures. Iceland Gull was removed from the South Carolina hypothetical list when a bird noted Dec. 19 at Mount Pleasant (CB) was collected Jan. 14 (WP; *C.M.); surprisingly, none was reported from North Carolina. The 5 reports of Lesser Black-backed Gull was actually a low total; the better sightings were of five each at Pea I., Dec. 29 (MT, BL) and Cape Hatteras point Feb. 16 (RD *et al.*), and one Feb. 9 off Jekyll I. (TM *et al.*). Post collected a Glaucous Gull Dec. 20 at Mount Pleasant (*C.M.), but the species was detected only 3 other times, all in North Carolina. A few Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed from North Carolina beaches, as usual; likewise, the highest totals were offshore, the best being of 43 off Oregon Inlet Dec. 20 (DL). One kittiwake off Jekyll I., Feb. 9 was rare for Georgia (TM *et al.*). Two **Bridled Terns** off Oregon Inlet Dec. 20 (DL) were most unexpected, as the species is quite rare after September; this is North Carolina's first winter record. A poor winter for alcids was evident by just a single record late in the period—a Dovekie several miles off Oregon Inlet Feb. 21 (DC, DL).

DOVES THROUGH NUTHATCHES — Perhaps just the 2nd Regional record in a decade of **White-winged Dove** was of one seen in flight with Mourning Doves Dec. 23 near Dublin, Ga. (TKP). A major inland concentration of Short-eared Owls was 10+ near Albany, Ga., Feb. 18 (GV), and locally rare was another found shot at Clemson, S.C., Dec. 6 (LW; *C.U.). Although they winter sparingly over most of our area, N. Saw-whet Owls are infrequently reported. Notable was one found injured on a road Dec. 29 near Durham (RJ). Apparently a 2nd state winter record was a **Chuck-will's-widow** seen in a pine grove on Bodie I., N.C., Dec. 28 (RD *et al.*); and Georgia's 2nd ever **Rufous Hummingbird**, reported in the fall, lingered at a Duluth feeder to Jan. 11 (BD, *fide* TM). Western Kingbirds often linger into early winter during mild weather, although several weeks late were individuals in North Carolina at Cape Lookout Dec. 18 (SP), at Hatteras Dec. 27 (BL, KK), at Pea I., Dec. 28 (JW *et al.*), and in South Carolina Jan. 6 along the Waccamaw R. (GC, CM, ZE). Red-breasted Nuthatches were as hard to find this winter as in any for a decade; hardly any C.B.C.s or observers noted the species.

WRENS THROUGH WARBLERS — Marsh Wrens and Sedge Wrens were tallied in excellent numbers on coastal C.B.C.s. Bodie-Pea's 213 Marsh Wrens Dec. 28 (*fide* PS) was truly an amazing total, and the Mattamuskeet N.W.R. C.B.C. had 58 Sedges and 64 Marshes Dec. 30 (*fide* AB). The severe weather in late January likely took a toll on these wrens. Perhaps the Region's most overdue species is **Varied Thrush**. Finally, a first (yet 2nd for Georgia) was one at a feeder in Bogart, near Athens, Dec. 11 (GH); details have been submitted to *The Oriole*. Many passerines that winter essentially in the Coastal Plain remained in the Piedmont through December and early January. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Solitary Vireos, and Black-and-white Warblers were especially widespread on Piedmont C.B.C.s. Among lingering species that do not winter regularly here were a ♂ N. Parula near Martin, S.C., Dec. 15 (SG), a Magnolia Warbler Dec. 1 at Augusta (AW), and a ♀ Black-throated Blue Warbler near Manteo, N.C., Dec. 29 (RD, KC). An Ovenbird at Winston-Salem, N.C., Dec. 29 (JDB, CMat, *fide* RSn) might be the first in the state in winter away from the coast. Surprisingly, Wilson's Warblers were encountered twice—at Gainesville, Ga., Dec. 4 (JP) and near Falls L., N.C., Dec. 22 (JM). Note that no unusual warblers were observed in January or February.

TANAGERS, EMBERIZID FINCHES — A ♂ W. Tanager near Vass, N.C., Dec. 1 (AB, RD) was the only one reported. J. Carter again had success in finding Bachman's Sparrows in w. Ft. Bragg, N.C., he had a peak of three between Dec. 7 and Jan. 19. This site is the n. edge of the winter range. Four Grasshopper Sparrows were tallied Dec. 16 at Clemson (CW), which lies at the n. edge of that species' winter range. Other notable Grasshoppers were one near Wilson, N.C., Dec. 2 (HL, RD) and a *singing* bird Dec. 23 within the winter range near Dublin (TKP). Boundaries of the winter range of Lincoln's Sparrow are still being elucidated, yet the 7 winter records, scattered nearly throughout, continue to make such mapping difficult. The most significant record involved two or three Dec. 29-Feb. 17 near L. Phelps, N.C. (AB, LP, HL, RD), plus another nearby at Swanquarter Dec. 30 (RD). Others were seen during the season near Wilson (HL, RD) and Chapel Hill (ME) in North Carolina, Clemson (CW, SG), and Augusta (AW). Considerably more White-crowned Sparrows winter in n.e. North Carolina than previously believed, as evidenced by 35+ near L. Phelps all winter (AB *et al.*), three on Dec. 30 near L. Mattamuskeet (RD, JW), and five on Currituck Banks near Corolla Feb. 15 (HL, RD). The Conways had quite an array of juncos in their yard at Catawba, S.C. An Oregon race junco was found dead Dec. 25 (*C.M.), and much rarer was a **Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco** banded Dec. 26 but found dead Dec. 29 (wing to C.M.). The "White-winged Junco" has not previously been reported from the Region. Lapland Longspurs appeared in typical numbers and were reported only from established locales, however, 20+ on Mar. 4 near Townville, S.C. (SG *et al.*) was a high total for such a late date. An exciting find was a Snow Bunting along the shore of Jordan L., N.C., Dec. 9 (RD, WI, HL); but, alas, only one was reported from the coast, where much more often found, at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., Jan. 27 (C.B.C.).

BLACKBIRDS, CARDUELINE FINCHES — A ♂ Brewer's Black-

bird Feb. 23 at Townville (CW) might have been a very early migrant, as the species does not normally winter in n.w. South Carolina. Yellow-headed Blackbirds can appear anywhere, anytime, and in most any habitat at this season without raising eyebrows. A female or immature was at a feeder in Atlanta Jan. 11 (HP), whereas an ad. male was with Red-winged Blackbirds at Swanquarter, N.C., Feb. 17 (ph.; PJ). It was a winter nearly without Purple Finches. They were uncommon nearly everywhere; a few C.B.C.s missed them entirely. When Purple Finches are few in number, it is always a great challenge to find Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks. Both did visit the Region in very small numbers, and grosbeaks were very rare, being reported only several times. Naturally, crossbills and redpolls were not found at all.

OBSERVERS — Atlanta Audubon Society, Carroll Belser, Ted Best, J.D. Bottoms, Patrick Brisse, Allen Bryan, Angelo Capparella (ACap), Carolina Bird Club, Ann Carter (ACar), Derb Carter, J.H. Carter III, Charleston Museum, Clemson University, Kay Coburn, Albert & June Conway, Anson Cooke (ACo), Greg Cornwell, Larry Craw-

ford, Mark Crotteau, P J Crutchfield, Ricky Davis, David & Susan Disher, Barbara Dixon, Wally Dreyfoos, Marc Eisendorfer, Frank Enders, Zeke Erskine, Dennis Forsythe, Dorothy Foy (DoF), John Fussell, Eric Garner, Hugh Garrett, Sidney Gauthreaux, Norman Gillikin, Lex Glover, Randy Grover, R.J. Hader, Bob Holmes, Grady Horne, Tom Howard, Wayne Irvin, Peggy Jansen, Ross Jervis, Dan Kaplan, Ken Knapp, Dennis Lacoss (DLA), Dave Lee, Harry LeGrand, Bob Lewis, Karen Lynch, Merrill Lynch, Charlie Lyon, Bruce Mack, Chris Marsh, Clarence Mattox (CMat), Jim McConnell, Douglas McNair, Gil Miller, Peggy Moore, Terry Moore, North Carolina State Museum, Perry Nugent, John Paget, Hunter Patterson, T.K. Patterson, Lance Peacock, Will Post, Skip Prange, Billy Pulliam, Georgann Schmalz, Rod Smith, Ramona Snavely (RSn), Paul Sykes, Mike Tove, Andy Towle, Gregory Valpey-Toussignant, Bill Wagner, Heathy Walker, Linda Wang, Anne Waters, Vernon Waters, Melinda Welton, Harriet Whitsett (HWh), Charlie Wooten, John Wright.—**HARRY E. LEGRAND, JR., 331 Yadkin Dr., Raleigh, N.C. 27609.**

FLORIDA REGION

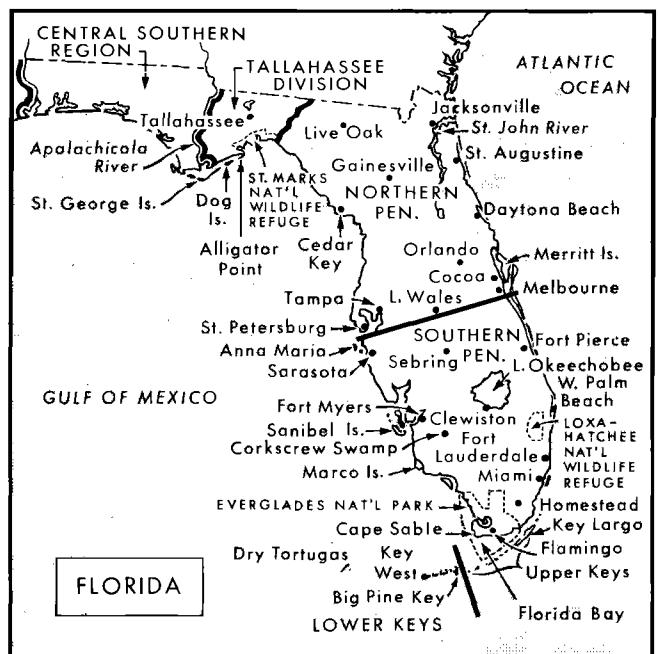
/Wayne Hoffman

This was a quiet season in Florida. Two Caribbean strays were found, a La Sagra's Flycatcher and a Bananaquit, but otherwise the season was characterized by lack of hotline activity. The list of ducks wintering south of their normal range, the list of western birds straying east, the list of wintering warblers, and the extent and variety of the winter finch incursion all were smaller than usual.

The winter weather was characterized by drought and by temperature extremes. Rainfall had been well below normal throughout the Region each month since July. Water levels were low throughout the Region, and winter fires burned hundreds of thousands of acres in southern Florida. December and February were unseasonably warm, each with numerous daily high temperatures in the 80s. Sandwiched between them, however, was a January of severe cold (for Florida) with temperatures dropping into the teens throughout the northern one-half of the peninsula, and a record low of 6°F in Tallahassee on January 24. HMS speculated that temperatures below zero may have been reached in rural areas of the Panhandle. This weather caused extensive damage to the citrus crop and trees for the fourth time in five years. Traditionally, citrus farming in Florida was concentrated on well-drained areas in the center of the peninsula, but it has been expanding onto less well-drained (but drainable) soils in southern Florida. The recent freeze damage in the northern parts of the citrus belt has accelerated this southward shift, with predictable effects on wildlife habitat. New citrus plantings are invading traditional Caracara habitats on the DeSoto Prairie and elsewhere north and west of Lake Okeechobee. In southeastern Florida, citrus growers are competing with developers for the remaining parcels of drainable land, and new citrus plantations are encroaching on the cypress strands of Collier and Lee counties. Proposed plantings in that area can be expected to cause water-flow problems for Corkscrew Swamp, the Fakahatchee Strand, and perhaps much of Big Cypress Preserve in the next few years.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Red-throated Loons were unreported in the Region, for the first time in several years. The only tubenoses reported were three Audubon's Shearwaters off Key Biscayne Dec. 18 (HPL) and the only Great Cormorant was a juvenile at Sebastian Inlet Dec. 25 (WH). A pair of Masked Boobies attempted to breed for the 2nd year on Hospital Key, Dry Tortugas. Again, the nest washed away before hatching. Northern Gannets were in evidence along the Atlantic coast beaches all winter, as usual. The flock of Greater Flamingos living in Florida Bay apparently has dwindled to a single bird (*vide* OLB), perhaps the chronic argument over whether they are (it is) wild or escaped will mercifully become moot.

The count of 2000 Fulvous Whistling-Ducks at Loxahatchee N W R., Jan. 4 was impressive (PWS), and Florida game management personnel were estimating a breeding population for the state in excess



of 20,000 birds. A flock of 17 Tundra Swans was present near St. Marks Light Dec. 1, and one bird remained through the whole period. Eighteen Snow Geese were in the same area Jan. 20 and two were n.e. of Eustis in December (CN). Canada Geese are very rare in s. Florida, so the 14 at Wellington Dec. 2 (RP) were noteworthy. An ad. ♂ Cinnamon Teal wintered near the St. Marks Light, and was last seen Feb. 24 (HMS, m.ob.). Sixty Black Scoters reported flying N off Lantana Beach (HPL, GH) were exceptional for s. Florida. A single White-winged Scoter was at Jensen Beach Dec. 29 (H & WD). A ♂ Com. Goldeneye was photographed in Wildwood in early December (CN) and a ♀ Oldsquaw was seen Jan. 27-Feb. 24 at Wards Bank (BJR). Numbers of Red-breasted Mergansers were high in Collier County, but apparently normal elsewhere (THB).

HAWKS THROUGH CUCKOOS — A Black-shouldered Kite was reported Feb. 1 in s. Marion County (*vide* HMS); fall and winter records are becoming annual in the Region, and eventual recolonization of Florida seems likely. In December and January Snail Kites gathered in large numbers in the Shark Valley area of the Everglades, with a count of 80 Jan. 24 (EH). Water levels continued to fall, and by the end of the period they had disappeared from that area. Look for a discussion of kite dispersal in the next report. Short-tailed Hawk reports in s. Florida were

frequent, as usual (*vide* OLB). Florida's first ever **Ferruginous Hawks** wintered at Zellwood last year, and this year 2 reports were received, one from Homestead (WB) and another from St. Marks Light (JC—details to Fla. Records Comm.). American Kestrels seemed spotty in their distribution this winter. On the central ridge of the peninsula numbers were normal or even high, but in other areas, including Tampa Bay, they were much harder to find than usual. Wintering Merlin numbers may be increasing in Florida, and inland sightings were about as frequent as coastal ones. Peregrine Falcon sightings were about normal. A flock of about 1000 Greater Sandhill Cranes wintering near Eustis included banded birds from Seney N.W.R., Mich., and from Agassiz N.W.R., Minn. (CN).

At least three Solitary Sandpipers wintered at Loxahatchee N.W.R. (HPL *et al.*) and one was seen in December in a freshwater pool at Port St. Lucie (DJD). The European race of Whimbrel was reported from Elliott Key Dec. 18 (OLB, BN). A **Purple Sandpiper** was at Key West from Nov. 27 at least to Jan. 5 (*vide* KS). This may have established the southernmost record ever for the species.

The only jaegers reported were two unidentified ones seen off s. Brevard County Dec. 25 (WH), and a Pomarine in Lower Tampa Bay Feb. 17 (SRP). Since the closing of the Toytown landfill (St. Petersburg), the best-watched dump in Florida has been the St. Lucie City landfill. Four different Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen there during the period (two adults, two immatures), along with three Franklin's Gulls (H & WD). Other Lesser Black-backed Gull sightings included two at Key West Feb. 1 (J & PC), one at Boca Chica Feb. 14 (MB, J & PC), at least two in St. Petersburg, and six at the Pompano Beach landfill. A Franklin's Gull was found Jan. 19 at the lake in Myakka S.P. (BN, m.ob.), and one or two Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen along the beach at Ft. Pierce in December (*vide* H & WD). White-winged Doves continued to spread from their center of abundance in Dade County, with sightings in Key West Feb. 15 (MB), and in Lake Placid (*vide* FL). Ringed Turtle-Doves appear to be established in Key West (MB). The only Groove-billed Ani report this winter was of two birds Dec. 1-18 at St. Marks Light (m.ob.).



Purple Sandpiper at Key West, Fla., November 1984. Photo/Page Brown.

PARROTS THROUGH NIGHTHAWKS — Florida continues to accumulate exotic psittacines at an amazing rate. Because of recent problems with Newcastle's and other diseases, importers are being subjected to closer monitoring than previously. Several incidents have surfaced recently of flocks of birds being released just before arrival of the Feds. The release, in conspecific flocks, of such wild-caught birds provides much better chances for establishment of breeding populations than the occasional escapes of pets. On the other hand, the appearance of the birds in large flocks should not be taken as evidence of breeding. Rumors have surfaced this winter of large releases of Orange-winged Amazons and Red-crowned Amazons, and the flock of 44 Dusky-headed Parakeets in Miami in December may also have come from such a

release. The Monk Parakeet populations in Tampa continue to prosper. In a brief survey of the area around the old and well-known Bearss Ave. nest, 10 of the communal nests were located, and more undoubtedly are present (WH), so a population of 100-200 birds is likely for that neighborhood alone. Monks are breeding in most large Florida cities. Nanday Conures are now widespread in St. Petersburg, although I know of no breeding records. They are also reported from Islamorada and Kendall. Other parrot records received probably are of accidentally lost pets. A pair of Rainbow Lorikeets was observed on Key Largo Jan. 2 (TG, MC-S). The two Blue-crowned Conures at the Dry Tortugas remained through the period (m.ob.) and a Fischer's Lovebird was seen sitting at a Monk Parakeet nest on Miami Beach (BN). The ultimate sighting, however, was of a "bright blue parrot 3 feet long," undoubtedly a Hyacinth Macaw, at the Royal Palm Visitors area, Jan. 7 (JK).

Two Short-eared Owl reports were received; one bird was found dead on the main park road, Everglades N.P., Dec. 30 (A & MC), and the other was flushed from Passage Key, Tampa Bay, Feb. 17 (SRP). Three Com. Nighthawks wintered at a Dade County shopping center (WB)

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS — A **La Sagra's Flycatcher** was photographed and taped at Matheson Hammock Dec. 1-20 (BN, m.ob.). This provided about the 3rd North American record for the species. Numbers of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and W. Kingbirds in the Region were low this winter; a Scissor-tailed at St. Marks Light Dec. 1 was perhaps a late migrant. Numbers of wintering Least Flycatchers in Palm Beach County were also low (HPL). A Vermilion Flycatcher remained at St. Marks Light until about Jan. 1 (HMS). Tree Swallows are abundant in the Florida peninsula in winter and generally form large roosts, but the 250,000+ reported at Savannas Rec. Area, St. Lucie Co (H & WD), seemed exceptional. As usual, a scattering of winter reports of Northern Rough-winged Swallows was received, and 2 reports of apparent wintering Barn Swallows: one from Tallahassee Jan. 29, and three in Palm Beach County (HPL).

An apparent **Bell's Vireo** was glimpsed at Morris Bridge, near Tampa, Jan. 18 (WH); an extensive search of the area over the next week failed to yield the bird, but on Feb. 23 it (or another?) was well seen about ½ mi from the initial sighting (WH). Wintering Solitary Vireos seemed to be in better numbers in the Tampa area than usual, and White-eyed Vireos were also in good numbers. This was an unexceptional year for wintering warblers. The normally abundant species, Palm and Yellow-rumped, both were reported down over much of the area, although a report of 50 Palms near Tallahassee (WBa) was high for that locality. Unusual wintering warblers included a few Cape May Warblers at Flamingo (m.ob.), a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Paradise Key, Everglades N.P., Feb. 6 (JO), a Prothonotary Warbler near Tampa in late January (GEW), and a Swainson's Warbler on Snake Bight Trail Jan. 28 (WB). A Chestnut-sided Warbler wintered at Royal Palm Visitors area, and two each Tennessee and Nashville warblers were reported around the Region. The best warbler of the winter was the **Black-throated Gray Warbler** found on Plantation Key Dec. 27 (GTB). The season's 2nd Caribbean stray was a **Bananaquit** found at Fairchild Tropical Garden Jan. 4-6 (m.ob.).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES — Single Yellow-headed and Brewer's blackbirds were found near Ft. Pierce Dec. 28 and Dec. 6 respectively (H & WD). Northern Orioles wintered in unusual numbers around Jacksonville feeders, and a (Bullock's) N. Oriole was well described at a feeder in Tallahassee (JC). Two W. Tanagers were reported Jan. 24 at Sanibel I. (CL) and another was at Fairchild Gardens Feb. 9 (DL); are Westerns really the most common tanagers wintering in Florida? A **Lark Bunting** was found Feb. 1 at Alligator Pt., and was present through the end of the period (RC—photos and description to Fla. Records Comm.), and a **Snow Bunting** was photographed on St. George I., Jan. 19, for the first record in the Tallahassee Division (*vide* HMS).

American Goldfinch numbers were very low through most of the area although normal in the Tallahassee Division. None at all was found in Palm Beach County (HPL) and they were missing from much of the rest of s. Florida. In the Tampa Bay area few were seen until February, and then numbers were still quite low. No Pine Siskins were reported, and only two Purple Finches, both from Tallahassee (HMS).

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ONTARIO REGION

/Ron D. Weir

The warmer-than-usual December resulted in many inland lakes remaining open well past normal freeze-up; waterfowl stayed on, thereby delaying their influx into the Great Lakes. In most places, winter was not extreme and was of short duration characterized by one of the richest cone and seed crops on record. In the extreme southwest some observers experienced the quietest and least productive winter for birds in many years, but from Sudbury through the east, finches provided excitement and keen Atlassers exploited the irruption by locating nests of Red Crossbills. Both crossbill species were present in the thousands, but even these masses were outnumbered by legions of Purple Finches. Reports were filled with late lingerers and overwintering birds that are normally not present in the period.

Christmas Bird Count records are excluded from the following text unless they are of over-riding importance.

ABBREVIATIONS — A.P.P. = Algonquin Provincial Park; M.I. = Manitoulin Island; Pelee = Point Pelee Nat'l Park; P.E. Pt. = Prince Edward Point. Place names in *italics* denote counties.

LOONS TO HERONS — The nine Red-throated Loons were double the normal number and were consistent with last autumn's impressive flight. Singles lingered at Kettle Pt., Dec. 2 & 15, Sarnia Dec. 13 (AHR, DFR), Wolfe I., Dec. 16 (K.F.N.), Hamilton Dec. 26 (RRi, GW), Toronto Jan. 6 (MPW, HK), and Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 10 (*vide* RFA). Two were at Burlington Jan. 2 (PS). A late Com. Loon was still in A.P.P., Dec. 2 (RSw). The 20 and 56 Red-necked Grebes off M I., Dec. 10 & 15 respectively (JCN) were high numbers for the late dates. Six others were noted Dec. 2-17 at Amherst I., Sarnia, Pembroke, Hamilton, Ipperwash, and Peterborough. An early migrant appeared at Ottawa Feb. 26 (BMD). An ad. Great Cormorant in Humber Bay, Toronto, Feb. 23 was reported without details (JR, MPW) and the year's last Double-crested was seen at Hamilton Dec. 30 (CW). The late Am Bittern near Pembroke in early December was caught and flown to Florida (*vide* JMB) and the Cattle Egret frequenting M.I. was last seen Dec. 2 (CTB). Other late herons were the Green-backed in London Dec. 15 (D & EH) and single Black-crowned Night-Herons in Hamilton Dec. 5-11 (RC) and Ft. Erie Jan. 2-15 (RLS).

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS — Highlights among many late records included the Wood Duck and N. Shoveler that wintered successfully for the 2nd winter at Kitchener (SRK), a ♂ N. Pintail at Manotick Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (*vide* BMD), a ♂ Blue-winged Teal at Hamilton Jan. 6 & 10 (DC, WL) and a Ring-necked Duck at Ottawa Jan. 5 (BMD). A ♀ Ring-necked at Peterborough Jan. 4 was their latest (DCS *et al.*). The warm early winter may have deceived the four ♂ Hooded Mergansers displaying and courting two females in A.P.P., Dec. 13 (RGT).

Several species were in noteworthy concentrations. Some 500 and 1200 Tundra Swans were at Port Glasgow Jan. 2 (GMB) and Ridgeway Jan. 6 (AW) respectively. The 100 Snow Geese near Parham, *Frontenac*, Dec. 10 were S bound (EF) and about 60 Green-winged Teal were still in Hamilton Bay Jan. 5 (AGC *et al.*). Canvasbacks numbered 12,000-15,000 at Sarnia Dec. 13 (DFR) and 2500 off Wolfe I., Dec. 26 (JHE). Some 500 Redheads were at Oakville Dec. 9 (DG) and 5000+ were at Sarnia Dec. 13 (DFR). More than 6000 Com. Goldeneyes congregated near Nanticoke Jan. 16 (TW). About 10,000+ Com. Mergansers fed in Hay Bay near Kingston Dec. 22 (K.F.N.) and 3500 were at the Cornwall dam Feb. 10 (BMD).



Among the rarities was Hamilton's **Tufted Duck**, back again Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (*vide* KMCL). A ♀ **Common Eider** was shot at Amherst I., Dec. 15 by hunters who would not part with the bird as specimen evidence. However, it was examined in hand by a competent observer (FP). Up to three King Eiders wintered at Niagara-on-the-Lake (*vide* RWK) and singles were at Ft. Erie Dec. 2-15 (*vide* RFA) and Wolfe I., Jan. 6 (JHE). The two Harlequin Ducks furnished the lowest winter number since 1980-1981. One imm. male spent December at Burlington (*vide* KMCL) and a male was shot at Presqu'île P.P., Dec. 14 for a 3rd park record (*vide* RDM). Five Barrow's Goldeneyes was an above-average number for the period. Two females were again at Ottawa Dec. 1-Feb. 28, joined by a 3rd Feb. 20 (BMD), and singles were at Red Bay, Bruce, Dec. 22 (TCh) and Niagara Falls Jan. 5 (AGC *et al.*).

Warm maritime air in late February catalyzed waterfowl movement into the s. At Pelee, N. Pintail, Gadwall, Am. Wigeon, Redhead and Ring-necked Duck appeared Feb. 24-26 (AW), while at Presqu'île P.P., Gadwall arrived Feb. 25, Am. Wigeon Feb. 20, Redhead Feb. 17, Ring-necked Duck Feb. 27, and scaup Feb. 26 (RDM). Both scaup species came into Ottawa Feb. 22 (BMD).

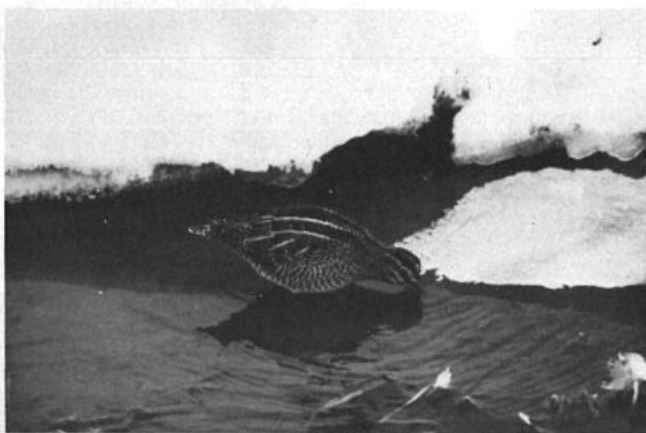
VULTURES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — Late single Turkey Vultures were in w. *Elgin* Dec. 27 (*vide* WRJ), Cayuga Jan. 10 (GMB), and Deseronto Feb. 18 (TW). Bald Eagles continued their strong winter showing in the s., noted since 1978, with 48 sightings excluding 'good numbers' in the Long Point area. Eleven wintering at Ivy Lea was a surprise (K.F.N.). Nine ♂ N. Harriers were seen migrating S through Pelee Jan. 19-20 in response to a cold snap (AW, GTH). In the s., 30 and 29 Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks were tallied respectively, which were above average, but N. Goshawk numbers were lower, as expected. Two Red-tailed Hawks were along Hwy 60 in A.P.P., where very rare in winter, Jan. 1-31 (RGT *et al.*). Rough-leggeds were scarce almost everywhere and only in *Waterloo* were numbers reported (SRK). The six Golden Eagles were average numbers and were in Petroglyphs P.P., Dec. 22 and Feb. 4 (one adult, one immature—DCS), A.P.P.,

Jan. 25 & 28 and Feb. 26 (one adult, two immatures—RGT) and near Bracebridge Feb. 2 (one immature—RLB, NI).

Single Merlins appeared in Thunder Bay Feb. 18-21 (KA, IM) and hunting finches along Hwy 60, A.P.P., Feb. 18-22 (RGT, RDS). Lone Peregrine Falcons were noted at Fraserville near Peterborough Dec. 4 (BC), Wolfe I., Dec. 16 (K.F.N.), Petroglyphs P.P., Dec. 22 (RDM *et al.*), and Vineland Jan. 25 (DBF). A white-phase Gyrfalcon was at Frenchman's Bay near Pickering Dec. 12 (JMS) and what may have been the same bird was at Enniskillen, *Durham*, Jan. 3 (GM). A gray-phase Gyrfalcon was in Sudbury Dec. 22-Jan. 9 (CTB, BFe).

The only N. Bobwhites reported were six at Melbourne (DM) and they were thought to have succumbed by the end of the period (WRJ). One wintering Virginia Rail showed itself in St. Thomas Jan. 30 (RHu) and the Am. Coot at Pelee Feb. 25 was an early arrival (AW).

Warm conditions in December led to a number of very late wader sightings. Two and one Black-bellied Plovers remained at Toronto's e. Headland and Harrow, respectively, Dec. 1 (HK, DP), the same day a Lesser Golden-Plover was at Presqu'île P.P. (RDM *et al.*). One Sanderling tarried there to Dec. 16 (AGC, RSm) as did three in Toronto to Dec. 23 (*vide* GMB). At Turkey Pt., a Least Sandpiper was present Dec. 1-9 as was a Pectoral Dec. 24-Jan. 1 (TW). Another was at Wheatley Dec. 22 (Bfi, AW). Purple Sandpipers, the most probable wader of early winter, were sighted regularly at Niagara Falls to Jan. 13, when four were still present (*vide* RFA), and two were at Erieau Dec. 13 (PAW). The latest of 8 Dunlin reports involved singles at Presqu'île P.P., Dec. 13 (RDM), Port Dover Dec. 31 (TW, AW) and Turkey Pt., Jan. 1 (TW). Unprecedented for the late date was the Long-billed Dowitcher seen along Hamilton Bay Dec. 4 (BJ, JO), a bird identified by both its plumage and calls. A dowitcher at Mountsberg, Morriston, Dec. 10 (RVT) may also have been a Long-billed. Wintering Com. Snipe were again at Kingston, Ottawa, and Cobden, *Renfrew*. Latest-ever Am. Woodcocks were singles at Buckhorn Dec. 15 (AGC) and near Kingston Jan. 13 (PM).



Wintering Common Snipe at Kanata, Ont., Jan. 27, 1985. Photo/B. M. DiLabio.

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS — The Franklin's Gull at Niagara Falls Dec. 29 (HHA *et al.*) may have been the same as the one at Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 5 (PH, PBU). Nine have been reported in the past 22 winters. Little Gulls made a strong showing with 43+, Dec. 1-Jan. 11. There were 17+ at Niagara Falls, 10 in the Pelee area, eight at Long Pt., three at Sarnia, two each at Rondeau and Kingston and one n. to M.I., Dec. 9-10 (CTB, JCN). The Com. Black-headed Gull at Queenston Dec. 2 and the two adults at Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 5 (RFA, AGC *et al.*) raised its numbers to 13 birds in the past 22 winters. From the Pelee area came reports of 17,000 Bonaparte's Dec. 22, declining to 400 by Jan. 11 (AW, Bfi, GMB). Some 5000 Ring-billed Gulls fed voraciously on the Napanee R. near Hay Bay Dec. 22 (K.F.N.) and the 10,000 Herring Gulls at P.E. Pt., Jan. 25 were thought to be retreating S from the advancing cold (RKE). Thirteen Thayer's Gulls were noted Dec. 7-Feb. 24, the immature at the Nepean dump Dec. 3 & 15 being the only one away from the lower Great Lakes (BMD, RAH).

Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers remained high at six or eight (depending upon duplicates) for the 3rd consecutive winter. Single adults were at Pickering Dec. 6 (*vide* MJB), Guelph Dec. 24 (RVT), and Hamilton Jan. 2 (WL *et al.*). A 2nd-winter bird was at Long Pt., Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (DSh) and one in its 3rd winter at Pickering Dec. 7-8 (MJB *et al.*). The individual at Niagara Falls Jan. 5 was in its 2nd year (AGC *et al.*), but age was not reported for the sightings there Dec. 26-Jan. 1 (*vide* RFA). More typical of autumn than winter were 18 Black-legged Kittiwakes. These were 12 at Sarnia Dec. 1-24 (DFR), an adult in Ottawa Dec. 1 (RAB, RAH), one at Wheatley Dec. 9 (AW), three at Pelee Dec. 22 (GTH *et al.*), and an immature above Niagara Falls Feb. 21 (WRJ). Found at the Whirlpool Gorge of the Niagara R. was a single Forster's Tern (WL, KMCL), which may establish the first-ever December record for the province. An ad. **Razorbill** was viewed from Niagara-on-the-Lake swimming in the mouth of the Niagara R., Jan. 2 (HHA, PBe, JBl), while observers looked towards Fort Niagara, N.Y., trying to determine the alcid's position with respect to the international boundary.

DOVES THROUGH OWLS — Mourning Doves were present in greater than usual numbers throughout the s. and provided a steady food supply for accipiters visiting feeders. Atlasers searching during February for E. Screech-Owls found the species present in more squares within *Durham*, *Bruce* and *Waterloo* and in greater density than previously thought. Of the three admitted to the Owl Research and Rehabilitation Foundation at Vineland, two had come down chimneys but both were releasable (KMCK). The Snowy Owl flight was light and birds were distributed uniformly in the s. Three N. Hawk-Owls were s. of their normal range at Ottawa Dec. 14 (RAH), Pembroke Dec. 15-Feb. 28 (DD *et al.*), and Warton-Oliphant Dec. 1-Feb. 26 (JT). In contrast to last winter's historic irruption of Great Grays, only two were reported out of range: at Renfrew Feb. 19-26 (MR, CM) and Alexandria Feb. 17 (GMCK).

About 30 Short-eared Owls wintered on Wolfe I. (K.F.N.), and 25 were at Granton near London Feb. 14 (WS). Those wintering at Toronto's Pearson International Airport caused trouble not only to aircraft, but also to the banders live-trapping the birds for release elsewhere. Nine were admitted to the Owl Research and Rehabilitation Foundation with trapping injuries of which five died (KMCK). A Boreal Owl was killed in an animal trap in the Atikokan area Jan. 13 (*vide* SFP), a reminder of the indiscriminate destruction of rare owls by these traps. An opportunistic N. Saw-whet set up residence at a feeder in Quetico P.P., Jan. 9-Feb. 5 to dine on the visiting mice (SFP) and the species' N movement was underway late in the period. Birds reached Kingston, Ottawa, and Owen Sound Feb. 25-28 (K.F.N., BMD, TRM).

KINGFISHERS THROUGH WRENS — A Belted Kingfisher in A.P.P., Jan. 2 (TCh) was their 3rd ever in winter. Apart from the Christmas Bird Counts, 22 Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported. Extralimital were singles at Thunder Bay Dec. 1-30 (*vide* MJM), Hepworth, *Gray-Bruce*, December to February (JWJ), Wingham Mar. 2 (JBM), Westmeath, *Renfrew*, Jan. 13-Feb. 28 (CT *et al.*), and McDonald's Corner, *Lanark*, Jan. 31-Feb. 28 (P. Hetherington), and two at Peterborough Dec. 1-18 and Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (DCS). Several Yellow-bellied Sapsucker sightings coincided with the first intense cold of winter in s.e. Ontario. Four were noted Jan. 12-19 at Kingston, Frankford, Port Hope, and Woodbridge, where rare in winter. Three-toed Woodpeckers were again not found outside their breeding range. Black-backeds numbered six in Ottawa (BMD) and singles made their way s. to Chaffey's Lock Dec. 19 (RRO, RDW), Kingston Jan. 16 (EB), and Cobourg Jan. 19 (ERM). The 64+ N. Flickers were most unusual numbers for winter. Many remained at feeders for the period and were reported from most counties s. of a line joining Ottawa with the *Bruce* peninsula. Noteworthy was the juv. Horned Lark at Keene, *Peterborough*, Jan. 30, in the spotted fledgling plumage (AGC), leading one to ask if Ontario had been *that* warm in December. Perhaps it was hatched elsewhere.

The last Tree Swallow was at Pelee Dec. 22 (PAW, KJB) and the first arrival was noted at Beaverton in n. *Durham* Feb. 24 (AD). Hamilton's Dundas Marsh hosted a late Barn Swallow until Dec. 4 (RC *et al.*). The *Essex* roost held 89,900+ Am. Crows Jan. 11 (MJo *et al.*). Resourceful Com. Ravens patrolled Hwy 60 in A.P.P. feeding on the many road-killed finches (RGT), and 300+ ravens wintered at the dump in Sault Ste. Marie (TDM). One at Puslinch L., *Waterloo*, Dec. 8 was s. of its

range (BWY). Black-capped Chickadees were scarce everywhere and four Tufted Titmice were noted only in *Elgin* and *Lambton* (WRJ, DFR). Consistent with last autumn's non-flight of Red-breasted Nuthatch, birds wintered in numbers throughout their breeding range often in company with Brown Creepers, whose numbers were also greater than normal. Six Carolina Wrens were located in London, Leamington, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Etobicoke Dec. 15-Feb. 3. Up to four Winter Wrens spent December in the Luther Marsh, last seen Jan. 12 (CEP), and one was in Oshawa Jan. 13 (BWI, CA).

GNATCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS — A very late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Cambridge Dec. 2 & 16 (TCh, BL, PWE). The 52 E. Bluebird sightings were indicative of the warm autumn, and birds wintered successfully at Kingston (K.F.N.) and Washington, *Waterloo-Wellington* (DE *et al.*). Late Swainson's Thrushes were singles at Almonte, *Lanark*, Dec. 13 (BMD) and Ottawa Dec. 16 (RAH, VBL). A hatching-year bird was netted and banded at Long Pt., Dec. 20 (L.P.B.O.). Hundreds of Am. Robins overwintered in areas where normally absent and by February their numbers had declined in Atikokan and Sudbury, presumably as the birds pushed S. Seven Varied Thrushes were found, which is about average since 1978. These were a male in Pembroke Dec. 30-Feb. 28 (A & JC *et al.*), a male in Peterborough Jan. 1 and Feb. 2-28 (DCS *et al.*), a male at Oakville Jan. 1-Feb. 28 (RC *et al.*), a male at Guelph Jan. 24-Feb. 17 (CEP *et al.*), a male at Pickering Feb. 7-20 (MJB *et al.*), one in Granton Feb. 14 (WS), and a male at Pinery P.P., Feb. 26-Mar. 2 (TCr, DFR, AHR). Noteworthy among the 20 reports of N. Mockingbirds were singles at Madawaska in mid-February (SM) and in Sault Ste. Marie all winter (TDM). Single Brown Thrashers spent the winter at Pickering and Peterborough (DB, DCS), and the eight in all were far fewer than last winter's record number, which seemed a contradiction.



Male Varied Thrush at Pembroke, Ont., Jan. 6, 1985. Photo/B. M. DiLabio.

The Bohemian Waxwing flight in Thunder Bay, Kenora, and Sudbury was fair to good, but very few reached North Bay, Matachewan, and Ottawa. Seventy in Pembroke Feb. 17 was surprising, and may have been spring migrants heading back W (JMB). Cedar Waxwings were in high numbers from Sudbury s. to the Great Lakes including A.P.P., where they are very rare during winter (RGT). The White-eyed Vireo at Pickering Dec. 26 (MMcE, SMcG) was well n. of its range for Boxing Day, and a Solitary Vireo at Long Pt., Dec. 12 (VWF) was also tardy. A N. Waterthrush spent Christmas in Toronto's Glendon Hall Ravine Dec. 23-25 (B. Falls *et al.*), and the ♂ Wilson's Warbler in w. Hamilton Dec. 26-Jan. 7 (DA, ADB, DSh *et al.*) was probably Ontario's first in winter.

CARDINALINES THROUGH FINCHES — Species in the first section of this group produced so many unusually late and overwintering individuals that space precludes dealing with all the details. A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a Sudbury feeder Jan. 31 (R. Reid) provided a first local winter record, as did the Dickcissel in London Dec. 15 (MMacP *et al.*). Overwintering Rufous-sided Towhees were sharply up at 17, the most northerly of which were at feeders at Sault Ste. Marie (TDM), Sudbury (WS, TSh), Collingwood (RSc), and Bancroft (F. Hicks). A Chipping Sparrow stayed at Ottawa Dec. 15-Feb. 28 (BMD *et al.*). One

Field Sparrow was on Wolfe I., Jan. 19 (JHE), one week after a Savannah was there Jan. 12 (PM). Other Savannahs were in Ashton, *Lanark*, Dec. 29 (MR, BMD) and Whitby Jan. 18-Feb. 10 (MJB). Late Vespers were in Ottawa Dec. 26 (MR) and n. of Kingston Jan. 13 (JHE, RDW). The Sharp-tailed Sparrow in the Dundas Marsh Dec. 1-4 was a first for Hamilton in December (RC *et al.*), and was thought to be *A.c. altera*. Eight Fox Sparrows were many more than usual, one of which was at a Brighton feeder Jan. 4-Feb. 10 (HS). One Lincoln's visited a feeder in Baileboro, *Peterborough*, Jan. 8-15 (E. & W. Stone). The most northerly of the 16 White-crowns was at Camden East Jan. 17-24 (PG). The ad. Harris' Sparrow at Kanata Jan. 12-Feb. 28 (ph. PA *et al.*) was Ottawa's 3rd ever. Snow Buntings were abundant in the e. where many became regular feeder visitors at Pickering, Port Hope, Peterborough, and Kingston during February.



Adult Harris' Sparrow at Kanata, Ont., Jan. 20, 1985. Photo/P. Armstrong.

Two ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbirds were in the Leamington-Pelee area Feb. 19-22 (PWA, JBa), and a Brewer's, possibly injured, was at a feeder 100 km n.w. of Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (TDM). Single Com. Grackles wintered successfully at feeders in Matachewan and Whitney (LT, RGT). The N. Oriole at a North Bay feeder Dec. 1-Jan. 6 succumbed (GFC), but another in Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 1-Feb. 28 appeared healthy (TDM). Pine Grosbeaks remained common from Dryden, Thunder Bay to Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and Matachewan. Only occasional individuals were sighted s. of Sudbury-North Bay and these occurrences were without any pattern. Purple Finch numbers in e. Ontario were among the highest on record. From A.P.P., Ottawa to Kingston early in the season, thousands moved SW in late January reaching *Grey-Bruce*, Sarnia, and Long Point.

Red Crossbills were common in s.e. Ontario from A.P.P. and Renfrew to Ottawa, Kingston, *Peterborough*, and Muskoka. Few were seen from Sudbury to Thunder Bay and isolated birds were found at Long Point and Guelph. A number were killed by vehicles along Hwy 60 in A.P.P. as they gathered grit and salt. These birds had been feeding on hemlock cones, and appeared to have smaller bills than the Red Crossbills feeding on pine cones on the e. side of A.P.P. (RGT). As expected in a year of abundant cones, breeding occurred during winter. A nest of Reds was found near Uxbridge, *Durham*, Feb. 16 (RSm, AL), another near Kaladar Mar. 2 (RDW), and adults were feeding fledglings near Flinton, *Lennox & Addington*, Mar. 2 and Actinolite, *Hastings*, Mar. 10 (RDW). All sites were in Red Pine stands. White-winged Crossbills were abundant in s.e. Ontario. Many thousands stayed in A.P.P. until late February when they moved out, which coincided with their sudden appearance at Presqu'ile P.P. (RGT, RDM). About 1000/day were easily found in *Muskoka* and *Perry Sound* (RLB) throughout the period and good numbers were in Sudbury. Although scarce in the s.w., 25 were in Stratford Jan. 11 (MPD) and 35 in Wheatley Feb. 9 (PDP *et al.*). Even though agitated behaviour by mated pairs was noted in suitable habitat at several e. Ontario sites, no nest was confirmed. Common Redpolls pushed through Sudbury-North Bay in February and reached Presqu'ile P.P. and Kingston in numbers Feb. 27-28 (RDM, RDW). Hoary Redpolls were confined mainly to the Moosonee area (KFA) and the Pine Siskin distribution mirrored that of the crossbills. Very few Evening Grosbeaks were s. of a line joining *Muskoka* to A.P.P.

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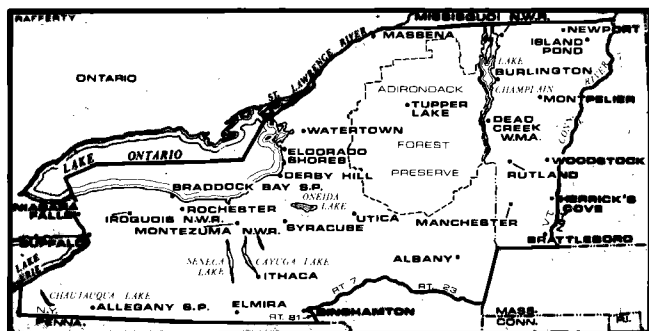
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NIAGARA-CHAMPLAIN REGION /Douglas P. Kibbe and Cheryl M. Boise

Weatherwise at least this winter resembled the past one. December was unseasonably warm with little significant precipitation in any form. January was cold and snowy while late February brought an early, much-appreciated warm spell. This respite unleashed an influx of early migrants. Except for this early movement, the contrast between the winter ornithological picture of 1983-1984 and 1984-1985 was marked.

The key to most of the differences seemed to be the super-abundance of food this winter. Birds stayed away from feeders in droves, but judging from reports half-hardies and winter finches, especially crossbills, were present in record numbers.



LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — In the absence of much exciting to report from the Region's windswept waterfronts we pose the following question. Does a late freeze-up of the major lakes result in smaller waterbird aggregations in mid-winter (since birds remain dispersed and/or continue to wend their way farther S prior to concentrating) or greater numbers (as birds lulled into attempting to overwinter are forced into the remaining patches of open water when the arctic blasts finally strike)? An **Eared Grebe** made it to Button Bay on L. Champlain. Providing Vermont's first record, the bird was present Dec. 14-15 (WS *et al.*). An imm. **Northern Gannet** appeared in a snowy Woodstock, Vt., backyard Dec. 20 (NM *et al.*). Although it was subsequently released on the coast, we wonder if it was worth the energy expenditure. Landfallen marine birds which are too weak to fly frequently are found to have terminal aspergillosis infections. Reflecting their general population increase, Double-crested Cormorants are sighted with increasing frequency during the winter months. Observers should, however, still be alert for the possible occurrence of Great Cormorants which are far harder than Double-crested. Typically the winter heron records are reserved for Am. Bitterns, Great Blues and an occasional Black-crowned Night-Heron. Mild conditions this season induced Green-backed Herons to linger through Dec. 9 and Jan. 1 at Salmon Creek and

Ithaca, N. Y., respectively.

Single Mute Swans (origin ?) were present around Buffalo and Sodus Bay while numbers of Tundra Swans tarried well into January in c. New York. Above-average numbers of less hardy waterfowl took advantage of another mild winter, much to the delight of C.B.C. compilers. Most observations of Harlequin Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneyes and King Eiders were, as usual, restricted to the Great Lakes or St. Lawrence and Niagara rivers. Lake Champlain, however, hosted a variety of rare waterfowl more frequently encountered on the Great Lakes. These included at least three Harlequin Ducks at Charlotte (m.ob.), a Barrow's Goldeneye at N. Hero (RL *et al.*), and a King Eider at Burlington (WE, NM). The latter is inexplicably rare on L. Champlain, being last recorded in 1975.

VULTURES THROUGH GALLIFORMES — Although many areas lacked snow cover until January, Turkey Vultures were not particularly late in departing. They were quick to return in February, however, once S winds prevailed. Could increasing competition for nesting sites be a factor in the trend toward earlier returning dates? Fourteen Bald Eagles along the St. Lawrence R., between Chippewa Pt. and the Morrystown area (GS), was the best of a fine Regional showing. The smaller accipiters, whose abundance is always difficult to assess, seemed more common than usual, perhaps owing to a plethora of prey. No incursion of N. Goshawks was evident and even Rough-legged Hawks were generally scarce. Winter falcon reports included a couple of Merlin sightings near Rochester and the Gyrfalcon at Dead Creek W.M.A., Vt., in addition to the more usual Am. Kestrels. What percentage (if any) of our wintering kestrels are females? No Peregrine Falcons wintered in the Region despite the numbers that have been released

The only Gray Partridge sightings were from Sacketts Harbor and Evans Mills, Jefferson Co., N.Y. (LC), and the vicinity of Moses Saunders Power Dam (JVR). The species' status in Vermont is impossible to discern, given the irregularity with which the small population in the n. end of the L. Champlain valley is reported. Hopefully the advent of a Christmas Bird Count initiated this winter in that area will stimulate more regular coverage of this interesting area. A Chukar at Ferrisburg (J & MD) was interesting, considering claims that the species has not been released in the state. In any event, the Chukar is an unlikely candidate for successful introduction in the Region, a fact that sportsmen seem reluctant to accept. Ring-necked Pheasants, formerly considered successfully introduced in much of w. New York, continue to decline. The Wild Turkey, on the other hand, continues to increase. A flock of 40 near Redwood (LC) was just one example of the species' continued expansion into n. New York. A Sora at Burlington Jan. 13 (WE *et al.*) was particularly surprising since Virginia Rails are typically harder and neither species had been previously recorded in Vermont in mid-winter

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS — Lingering shorebirds included up to five Purple Sandpipers at Niagara Falls through the winter (B.O.S.), 10 Dunlins in the Rochester area in December and one at

Charlotte Jan. 6 (G O S) plus Vermont's first winter record at Burlington Dec. 2 (JM), a scattering of Com. Snipe, and at least one Am. Woodcock (at Jamestown). A *Calidris* sandpiper at Charlotte, N.Y., Dec. 23 (A & DS), was believed to have been a Semipalmated; but Western typically winters farther n. (see AB 29:799), and given the atypical date, even more exotic species may be equally plausible.

Gull watching, normally an exciting pastime in winter, was almost mundane this season. Dunkirk Harbor vied with the usual hot spots, the Niagara R. and Rochester, for top rarity honors with a **Laughing Gull** present Jan. 29 through mid-February. Exceptional at any season inland, this species' midwinter occurrence was unprecedented. The only other noteworthy larids were the Lesser Black-backed Gull at the Adam Beck Hydro Station on the Niagara R. in late December and early January (B.O.S.) and a first-year Thayer's Gull at Moses Saunders Power Dam on the St. Lawrence R. (*vide* KC, GS). A Black-legged Kittiwake at the latter area through December (JVR) was exceptionally tardy. Little Gulls, which should eventually commence breeding in the Region, were well-represented, being present at each of the 3 aforementioned locations. Best numbers, although down slightly from recent years, were again at Rochester, where 22 were tallied in December. Fort Niagara, N.Y., was again the site of a reputed **Razorbill** sighting (*vide* B O S.). Although considered extremely rare in the Region, the species breeds on islands in the mouth of the St. Lawrence R., and could be more frequent on L. Ontario than the few records to date indicate.

OWLS THROUGH SHRIKES — Although a possible Great Gray Owl was reported near W. Swanton, there were no confirmed reports of Great Gray, Hawk, or Boreal owls, and even Snowy Owls put in only a modest showing. The only significant concentration of Short-eared Owls was near Genesee where up to 24 were tallied (J & AF *et al.*). Northern Saw-whet Owls seemed slightly more abundant than usual at this season, perhaps because the berry and seed crops induced many small birds to overwinter. A Red-headed Woodpecker availing itself of the abundant hickory nut crop on Snake Mt. in the Champlain Valley all season (AP) furnished one of the few Vermont winter records ever received not associated with a feeding station. Henderson continued to mark the n. limit of the Red-bellied Woodpecker's distribution in New York. The species is absent in huge areas s. of that point, and a study of factors that restrict its distribution in the north would be of interest.

An extralimital Gray Jay that accompanied Blue Jays to a feeder in Swanton, Vt., was more likely to have originated in New York or Canada than from Vermont's small population, which resides the other side of the Green Mts. Fish Crows persisted at Ithaca, where three were present Jan. 1. This disjunct population has remained ostensibly stable for a decade, although we suspect the total population size is significantly greater than most imagine. A kettle of 33 Com. Ravens over Woodstock in early February (JN) was the best concentration reported. Although this seems late for an aggregation of this magnitude, our understanding of the winter habits of this corvid is obviously in its infancy.

Despite the excellent conifer seed crop, Red-breasted Nuthatches were present in only modest numbers in most areas. Extralimital Carolina Wrens were seen at Elizabethtown, N.Y., and Saxtons R., Vt. Winter Wrens, which have not lived up to their name since the series of severe s.e. winters decimated the breeding population in the late 1970s, were present in better numbers this season. More than one-half dozen Ruby-crowned Kinglets were noted, several of them surviving until at least mid-January. Even more unusual was the Dec. 15 sighting of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Ferrisburg (AP, JW) which, belying its name, must have been surviving on berries. American Robins were widespread in small flocks but the huge roosts of some recent past years were unreported. Predictably, Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers were present on several Christmas Bird Counts and since neither species is prone to visiting feeding stations, many doubtless went undetected. Provision of innovative foodstuffs (*e.g.*, orange halves and raisins) would probably lure more diversity to Regional feeding stations. Although Cedar Waxwings were present in record numbers throughout the Region, very few Bohemians were associated with them. Clearly different factors influence the winter occurrence and abundance of these 2 species in our Region. Northern Shrikes were also apparently unmoved by the abundance of potential prey since they were present in only modest numbers this winter.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES — Although mild weather and plentiful berries might be expected to induce a variety of warblers to tarry, there were almost no convincing reports of unusual members of this group. The exception was an Ovenbird present through Jan. 12 at a feeder on Main St. in White River Jct., Vt. (DC *et al.*), which appeared to have a previous wing injury although it could fly to shelter (under the porch!). Many "Myrtle" Warblers lasted until at least mid-January when conditions became very austere. There were several reports of reduced numbers of N. Cardinals but we suspect this was an illusion induced by the birds that, given a choice, prefer natural foods over the convenience (and associated exposure) of bird feeders. Where had the ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak that appeared Feb. 16 in Rivonia (HM) spent the preceding months? A Dickcissel spent at least a month at a Swanton, Vt., feeder (J & CC), consorting as usual with House Sparrows.

Rufous-sided Towhees were widely reported as were a variety of half-hardy sparrows (even discounting out-of-hand the incredulous report of 10 Vesper, four Field, and six Chipping sparrows by one party on one n C.B.C.). Verification of identifications, an unending problem, is a particularly sticky issue on C.B.C. data since most compilers seem reluctant to offend neophyte observers by questioning sightings. Dark-eyed Juncos overwintered in unprecedented numbers. Many feeders had dozens and C.B.C.s tallied hundreds. Why this seed-eater opted to stay n. in such numbers is unclear. Frugivorous species (*e.g.*, Cedar Waxwings) and cone feeders (*e.g.*, crossbills) were responding to obvious cues, but the junco was the only granivorous species to inundate the Region. Amongst the hordes of Slate-colored were at least a couple of Oregons. Has a specimen of this subspecies been collected yet from New York? Lapland Longspur and Snow Bunting tallies were probably depressed by the absence of snow which causes flocking in manured fields. Best counts were of 350 and 500 birds, respectively.

A **Brewer's Blackbird** injured while hitting a Whallonsburg, N.Y., window apparently succumbed before the local C.B.C. Although we remain skeptical about all Brewer's sight records, the species may well be more regular in the Region in winter than reported since it could easily be misidentified as a Com. Grackle or even a Rusty Blackbird by Christmas Bird Count observers who fail to consider it a possibility. A ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird appeared Jan. 30 in Greece (ML). House Finches—intent on making a mockery of some experts' opinions, expressed a decade ago, that the species had reached its n. tolerance limits in our Region—are still expanding in an explosive manner. Over 200 "overwhelmed" a Henderson, N.Y., feeder and the species was frequently the most abundant finch on Christmas Bird Counts.

S.A.

The extraordinary cone crop lured both Red and White-winged crossbills into the Region and caused considerable excitement on several fronts. First was the question of the Red Crossbills' subspecific status. Was it the w. race *sitkensis* or the expected (?) *pusilla* or *minor*? Or, as appears to have been the case, were several subspecies involved and, if so, were they acting like separate species—because evidence of breeding mounted rapidly as the magnitude of the invasion became apparent. White-winged Crossbills were also caught in the act, both in Vermont, where atlasers had failed to actually confirm breeding during the project, and in several areas in New York. As anyone familiar with these species will attest, the difficulty in confirming breeding makes their actual breeding distribution an issue sure to be contested for years. Fortunately several observers, in New York at least, got caught up in these questions and we hope before the year is out to have, in some localities at least, a much better idea of the breeding of these elusive, irruptive nomads. Already it appears clear that nesting by either is not limited to the Adirondacks, and breeding in any suitable large stand of conifers may be within the realm of possibility.

Although redpolls were clearly not participants in the invasion of the Region this winter, Pine Siskins certainly were and, like crossbills, may have ended up breeding in many areas. Unfortunately, siskins, due to their more regular occurrence at feeders, caused less stir among bird watchers and late winter breeding may have been overlooked in many instances. American Goldfinches and Evening Grosbeaks were present in modest numbers, many feeders hosting only a handful of the latter all winter.

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APPALACHIAN REGION

/George A. Hall

Where were all the birds this year? This was the superficial reaction of many people, particularly those whose observations were concentrated at feeding stations. Indeed, in the almost total absence of the "northern invaders" it did seem as if there were few birds. But after putting together the reports from throughout the Region, it became apparent that it was indeed an interesting and good season overall, even though individual reports may have shown a dull season.

There were three "seasons" this winter. Except for one brief cold spell December was extremely mild, with a temperature excess at Pittsburgh of 242 day-degrees and almost normal rainfall, with no snow. This mild weather continued beyond the first of January, and Christmas Bird Counters were in shirt-sleeves at some places. Winter started at the end of the first week of the new year. There were light snows on almost every day until January 20 when a massive cold front brought snow and sub-zero weather, even as far south as Tennessee. This cold snowy weather continued until mid-February. At Pittsburgh January had a temperature deficiency of -135 day-degrees, but despite the snowfall, precipitation was below normal. In the north, snow remained on the ground for almost a month. At Erie, Pennsylvania, 93 inches of snow fell between January 14 and February 19. East of the mountains, however, there was very little snowfall. Temperatures moderated in late February, although the south got one of its heaviest snowfalls at this time, and the third season ushered in an early and mild spring as the period closed.

The mild weather of December produced an unusual number of very late records, but it also resulted in few concentrations of birds. With adequate food supplies in the wild there were few birds coming to feeders. In mid-January the lakes in the north froze, and with the snows many birds departed. An influx of herons and waterfowl was noted in the south at this time. When the weather broke in late February the waterfowl migration moved a little ahead of time, but most of the landbirds were arriving at normal times.

One always expects that a strong and sudden winter storm such as occurred in mid-January will cause bird mortality, but this is usually difficult to prove. On February 11 after a violent wind and rain storm about 10,000 dead birds were picked up near a large roost of about 1,000,000 blackbirds near Scotland, Pennsylvania (KG). A much smaller kill was reported from North Tazewell, Virginia, where about 20 dead birds were picked up on one lawn after the snow melted (NN).

This was the first winter for many years that was not highlighted by an influx of one or more northern species.

ABBREVIATIONS — B.E.S.P. = Bald Eagle State Park, Pa.; P.I. = Presque Isle Bay or Presque Isle State Park, Pa.; P.N.R. = Powdermill Nature Reserve, Pa. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS, CORMORANTS, AND HERONS — The only Red-throated Loon report came from P.I., Pa., Dec. 30 (JM) & 31 (RSw). Throughout the season Com. Loons were in unusual numbers wherever there was open water. One of the Red-necked Grebes mentioned in the fall report remained at P.I. until Dec. 2 (JM, SS). This species was also seen at Nickajack L., Tenn., Nov. 24 (JPa). Double-crested Cormorants were at P.I. until Jan. 13 (JM), Kyger Cr., O., Feb. 23 (TI), Roane, Tenn., Jan. 18 (WJ), Fort Loudon L., Tenn., Feb. 23 (J & BC), Chickamauga L., Tenn., Jan. 19 (DJ, JS), and Boone L. and Watauga L., Tenn., all season (GE).

Great Blue Herons were unusually numerous and widespread during the mild December, and one remained at State College, Pa., through the



season (TS). In the Knoxville, Tenn., area there was a noticeable influx after the extremely cold weather, presumably driven out of the north (CN). A Black-crowned Night-Heron wintered at Knoxville (AK) and a Green-backed Heron was at East Liverpool, O., in late December (NL).

WATERFOWL — Normally Tundra Swans are seen in the Region only during a rather short migratory period and only in a few favored locations on a narrowly-defined migration path. This seems to be changing as the birds were to be seen in small numbers in Virginia and Tennessee well outside this expected corridor, and indeed throughout the winter season. At the normal places the birds remained very late, and the N migration started in February. There were several records of Mute Swan, previously almost unknown in the Region: Jefferson, Pa., late December (RB); Mosquito L., O., Dec. 16-Feb. 24 (CB); Summers, W.Va., Jan. 15 (JP); and S. Holston L., Tenn., Feb. 3 to end (WC).

Most unusual for this Region were the several reports of Greater White-fronted Geese: L. Arthur, Pa., Dec. 16-29 (DF, MG); Hiwasee I., Tenn., Jan. 13 (DJ *et al.*); Parrott, Va., Feb. 17 (C & MR); and Milton, W.Va., the last 2 weeks of February (LW, TI). There were more records of Snow Geese than usual: Pymatuning L., Pa., Dec. 16-Feb. 24 (RFL, JM); Mosquito L., O., Dec. 16 (CB); Rockingham, Va., all season (R.B.C.); Vienna, W.Va., from mid-February (LR); Boone L., Tenn., Jan. 30-Feb. 22 (GE); Clinton, Tenn., Feb. 8 (CN); and Tellico L., Tenn., Feb. 17 (BS, BF). A concentration of 13,000 Canada Geese at Mosquito L., O., Dec. 16 was somewhat lower than last year (CB). A few Canadas were reported moving N by the end of February.

Duck concentrations were somewhat better than last year. After the freezeup, numbers in e. Tennessee were noticeably larger (CN). There were 10,000 ducks (relatively low), mostly Com. Goldeneyes and Canvasbacks, at P.I. in December but Red-breasted Mergansers were down 50% there (JM). Most interesting were the reports of 1000 Am. Black Ducks at Hiwasee I., Tenn., in January and February (DJ *et al.*) and 1000 Mallards at Blacksburg, Va., Jan. 11 (ES). On the other hand, Blacks were in lower-than-normal numbers at Pymatuning L., Pa. (RFL). There was a report of 50 Greater Scaup on the New R. near

Blacksburg, Va., Feb. 16 (ES) and this species, normally unusual inland, was also reported from McElhattan, Pa., Feb. 12 (PS) and Chickamauga L., Tenn., in mid-February (RR). Of the more unusual species, Oldsquaws and White-winged Scoters were more widely reported than usual. One of the latter was seen as far s. as Boone L., Tenn. (SG *et al.*). Black Scoters were reported from P.I. until Jan. 6 (JM) and at Rosencrans, Pa., Dec. 29 (CH); up to seven Surf Scoters were at P.I. until Jan. 13 (JM).

By the end of February the N flight was well underway for most species.

RAPTORS — About 150 Black Vultures were counted at Nickajack L., Tenn., Feb. 16 (JS *et al.*). Most encouraging were the reports of 43 Bald Eagles (21 adults, 16 immatures and six undesignated) from 13 locations throughout the Region. Sharp-shinned Hawks were in above-normal numbers at many places, as were Cooper's Hawks. Perhaps both species were attracted to bird feeding stations and hence were more evident. Northern Goshawks were reported from State College, Pa., Dec. 15 (MO), Morgantown, W.Va., Jan. 12 (GAH), Ona, W.Va., Jan. 18 (HS), Crawford, Pa., Feb. 3 (TK) & 10 (RFL), Beaver, Pa., Feb. 6 (WFi), and Allegheny, Pa., Feb. 26 (RT); there were 2 sightings in Columbiana, O. (WB). The Red-tailed Hawk was in lower-than-normal numbers, but there were many more records of Red-shouldered Hawks than usual. A Broad-winged Hawk was found in Indiana, Pa., Dec. 12 (DS, FS), and three very early spring arrival dates came from Whitfield, Ga., Feb. 10 (DCr), from Chattanooga Feb. 17 (SK), and from E. Liverpool, O., Feb. 25 (NL). In the n., the Rough-legged Hawk was unusually scarce, but the species occurred far s. of its usual range, with numerous reports from the lower Ohio R., the Great Valley of Virginia, and as far s. as Chattanooga, Tenn. (RR).

A Golden Eagle at Monroeville, Pa., Feb. 13 (DF) was very unusual. This species is wintering more commonly along the main mountain axis, and this year records of seven birds came from Augusta (YL, LT), Bath, Highland, and Shenandoah N.P., Va. (LT), and from Blood Mt. (WF) and Calhoun, Ga. (JMa). Merlins were reported from Indiana, Pa., Dec. 22 (RI) and from 2 locations in Rockingham, Va., Jan. 5 and Feb. 19 (R.B.C.). A Gyrfalcon was found Jan. 29 & 30 and Mar. 1 in the Allegheny N.F. in n. Pennsylvania (*vide* WH).

CRANES THROUGH GULLS — Sandhill Cranes were still in Whitfield, Ga., in early December (m.ob.), and spring arrivals there were Feb. 28 (HD). The first cranes were seen at Signal Mt., Tenn., Feb. 22 (BW) and at Chattanooga Feb. 29 (DJ).

Black-bellied Plovers were seen at Guilford L., O., in the last week of December (WB). Killdeer remained n. in large numbers during the mild December. A Greater Yellowlegs was at Fishersville, Va., on the early date of Feb. 12 (MH) and a Lesser Yellowlegs was at Roanoke, Va., Feb. 23 (MP, MD). Dunlins were reported from B.E.S.P., Dec. 30-Jan. 2 (CS), from P.I. through December and as late as Jan. 6 (JM), and at Douglas L., Tenn., Jan. 19 (AK). A Red Phalarope was at Roanoke Nov. 24-Dec. 28 (m.ob.) and another was at P.I., Jan. 9 (SS, JM).

At P.I., 100,000 gulls of several species were present until mid-January when freeze-up occurred (JM). Other concentrations of gulls were 3500 at Pymatuning L., Pa. (RFL), 1650 at Chickamauga L., Tenn., Jan. 19 (DJ *et al.*), and 1250 at Mosquito L., Dec. 16 (CB). There were more Bonaparte's Gulls than usual in these concentrations. The gull "hotspot" at P.I. produced one or two Little Gulls Dec. 14-15, a Thayer's Gull Feb. 17, three Iceland Gulls Jan. 13 and Feb. 17, three Lesser Black-backed Gulls Dec. 14, Jan. 27, and Feb. 17, and up to four Glaucous Gulls Jan. 6-Feb. 10 (JM, SS). More noteworthy were the Thayer's Gull and the Glaucous Gull found at a landfill 6 mi. s. of L. Erie Dec. 15 (J & CBa), providing the first *Erie* records away from the lake. Also very unusual were the inland records of Glaucous Gulls at Roanoke Jan. 3-5 (m.ob.) and at Chickamauga L., Tenn., Jan. 18-19 (AJ). A Great Black-backed Gull was also seen at Chickamauga L., Jan. 18 (JS).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS — A Ringed Turtle-Dove was seen at Dalton, Ga., Feb. 2 (RMr). A Black-billed Cuckoo in Washington, Pa., Dec. 15 (KB) was most unusual. Common Barn-Owls were more widely reported than usual, but E. Screech-Owls were generally in low numbers early in the season, and may have suffered heavy

losses during the cold, snowy weather in the north. A Snowy Owl photograph appeared in the Erie newspaper Dec. 2, but the bird was not seen by birders. Two Snowy Owls were at Butler, Pa., Dec. 21 (VM), and one was seen in McKean, Pa., Jan. 7-10 (*vide* WH). Long-eared Owls were reported from P.I., Jan. 13 (JM, SS) and from Shenandoah L., Va., Jan. 19, and one was calling near Harrisonburg, Va., through the season (R.B.C.). There were more reports of Short-eared Owls than usual: Roanoke, Dec. 15-Feb. 28 (BK *et al.*); Augusta, Va., through the period (R.B.C., YL); Indiana, Pa., Jan. 24 (DD); P.I., Jan. 24 (JM), and Pulaski, Va., Feb. 16 (*vide* JMu). A N. Saw-whet Owl was calling at Jersey Shore, Pa., Feb. 13 (PS).

A total of 60 Belted Kingfishers was reported in s.w. Pennsylvania during December (PH). Of great interest were the widespread reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers wintering in numbers far exceeding those of any recent year. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to increase N, with 80 tallied in s.w. Pennsylvania in December (PH) and reports as far n. as Erie and Warren. Hairy Woodpeckers were unusually scarce at most places. A "Red-shafted" Flicker showing no characteristics of an intergrade was found at L. Arthur, Pa., Dec. 16 (DF).

Single E. Phoebes were at Wood, W.Va., Dec. 15 (GB) and at Shenandoah N.P., Jan. 11 (DC), and three to four wintered near Elizabethton, Tenn. (GE); the one on the Skyline Drive Feb. 23 (RS) may have been an early migrant.

RAVENS THROUGH THRUSHES — Seven Com. Ravens were seen on Blood Mt., Ga., Dec. 16, and three were at DeSoto Falls, Ga., Dec. 18 (WF). Most observers felt that chickadees and Tufted Titmice were in below-normal numbers. There were a few scattered reports of single Red-breasted Nuthatches but except for the resident birds in the Tennessee mountains this species was essentially absent from the Region this winter. The only report of Brown-headed Nuthatches came from Chickamauga Dam, Tenn., Feb. 4-7 (RR). Brown Creepers were spotty in distribution but quite common at some places.

Carolina Wrens were in excellent numbers in the n. part of the range through the mild December (177 on the Pittsburgh C.B.C., the best since 1975—PH) and there were a few reports from well n. of the normal range, but numbers were greatly decreased after the January freezing spell. This mortality was not general, so the depletion probably was not as severe as that of several years ago. A Bewick's Wren was at Shenandoah L., Va., Jan. 1 (R.B.C.). There were House Wrens reported Dec. 15 from Morgantown, W.Va. (PM) and Vienna, W.Va. (RJ). A Sedge Wren was seen in Fayette, W.Va., Dec. 16 (JP).

Golden-crowned Kinglets were somewhat on the short side, but Ruby-crowned Kinglets were in above-normal numbers for this Region. A real rarity was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Knoxville Jan. 10 (BM).

The E. Bluebird was unusually numerous all winter and the "first" Am. Robins arrived in suburban areas before the January cold spell. On the unusual side were Swainson's Thrushes at P.N.R., Dec. 11 (a previously banded bird that now had a healed wing injury—RCL, RM) and another near Harrisonburg, Va., Dec. 18 (R.B.C.). Hermit Thrushes were moderately common before the freeze-up and after this they occasionally appeared near feeders. A Wood Thrush was seen in a flock of bluebirds near P.N.R., Jan. 14 (RCL *et al.*). A Varied Thrush was seen at North East, Erie, Pa., Jan. 10 (EL).

MIMIDS THROUGH STARLINGS — As usual a few Gray Catbirds remained into the winter: Botetourt, Va., Dec. 15 (T & JKr); State College, Pa., Dec. 15 (CS); Highland, Va., Dec. 1, and Natural Chimneys, Va., Dec. 12 (LT); Chattanooga, Dec. 10 (RR); and Shenandoah N.P., Feb. 8 (DC). Brown Thrashers wintered at Knoxville and Norris, Tenn. (CN). A thrasher was also found at Youngstown, O., Feb. 6 (CK). Water Pipits were moderately common in e. Tennessee and 150 were seen near Blacksburg, Va., Jan. 12 (*vide* JMu). Reports also came from State College, Pa., in February (DM), and Chambersburg, Pa., Feb. 27 (KG).

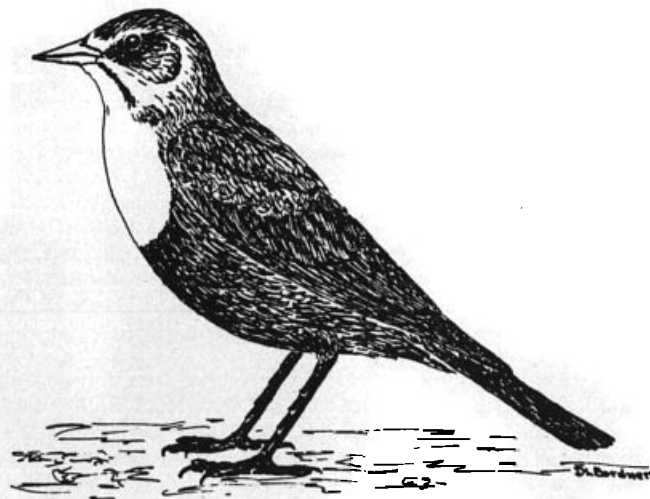
There was a minor incursion of N. Shrikes in w. Pennsylvania: 3 reports from Erie, Dec. 7 (JT), Dec. 8, and late February (SS); Butler, Pa., Dec. 8 (DF); State College, Dec. 15 (MO); Beech Cr., Pa., Dec. 31 (PS); 2 reports from Allegheny, Pa., Dec. 18 (RT) and Jan. 13 (DF), Woodcock L., Pa., Jan. 6 (RFL); and Mosquito L., O., Dec. 16 (CB). The only records for Loggerhead Shrike came from the s., with 12 sightings in the Harrisonburg, Va., area (R.B.C.), one at Weyers Cave,

Va., Jan. 30 (YL), 11 sightings near Chattanooga (RR), the normal three to five at Elizabethton, Tenn. (GE), and one in Murray, Ga., Jan. 10 (HD). There was a roost of 20,000 starlings at Jefferson, Pa., in December, which broke up with the advent of the cold snowy weather (RB).

WARBLERS THROUGH ICTERINES — An Orange-crowned Warbler was at LaFollette, Tenn., Dec. 26 (GM). Numbers of both Yellow-rumped and Pine warblers were higher than in most winters, and Palm Warblers were reported from Waynesboro, Va., Dec. 3 (RS), Jonesboro, Tenn., Dec. 7 (RK), Knoxville Dec. 16 (CN), Daleville, Va., Jan. 12 (BK *et al.*), and LaFollette, Tenn., Feb. 18 (GM). A Yellow-throated Warbler was at Knoxville Dec. 8 (BM). The warbler of the winter was the Com. Yellowthroat with 4 reports: State College, Pa., Dec. 15 (CS), Webster, Va., Dec. 15 (JA), Wintergreen, Va., Dec. 26 (AH), and P.I., Dec. 15 (JBa) & 31 (RSw).

There were few Rufous-sided Towhees wintering in the area, but the various sparrows presented a mixed bag. American Tree Sparrows were again extremely uncommon in the Region. Chipping Sparrows were reported from P.N.R., to Dec. 8 (RCL, RM), Cove L., Tenn., Jan. 13 (CN), Chattanooga Jan. 1 and Feb. 18 (RR), LaFollette, Tenn., Feb. 4 (GM), Johnson City, Tenn., Feb. 12 (MDi), and Erwin, Tenn., Feb. 15 (GS). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** was at a feeder at Charlton, Pa., Dec. 29 (CSa). White-crowned Sparrows were more plentiful than normal, but White-throated Sparrows were not as common as in recent years. Lapland Longspurs were found in Campbell, Tenn., all through the period (GM), but the only other reports came from c. Pennsylvania. Snow Buntings were common in n. and c. Pennsylvania and one was seen in Great Smoky Mountains N.P., Jan. 27, providing the 2nd record for the park (CN).

Two large blackbird roosts were reported: one of about 1,000,000 birds near Scotland, Pa. (KG), and one of about 40,000 birds near Milton, W. Va. (LW). Red-winged Blackbirds were more common than usual. A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found at State College, Pa., Jan. 5 for the first local record (TS). Rusty Blackbirds were unusually numerous in the Ligonier Valley at P.N.R. (RCL, RM). There were two Brewer's Blackbirds among the dead birds found at N. Tazewell, Va. (NN), and this species was found on several days in January in Asheville, N.C. (RRu).



Yellow-headed Blackbird at State College, Pa., Jan. 5, 1985. First local record. Drawn from life by Dorothy L. Bordner.

FINCHES — Purple Finches were unusually scarce at most places, but House Finches continued to increase throughout. It has been noted at several places that as the House Finch has increased the House Sparrow has declined, but at Pittsburgh it is thought that the totals of the 2 species have remained about constant. The Red Crossbill was in moderate numbers at high elevations in Great Smoky Mountains N.P. throughout the period (CN) but the only other report came from Cranberry Glades,



White-winged Crossbill at Chattanooga, Tenn., February 1985. First local record. Photo/Robin Rudd.



White-winged Crossbill (with American Goldfinches) at Chattanooga, Tenn., February 1985. First local record. Photo/Robin Rudd.

W. Va., Feb. 24 (JP). White-winged Crossbills were found on Massanutten Mt., Va., Jan. 8 (R.B.C.) and single White-winged Crossbills were present at feeders in Hixon and Chattanooga, Tenn., in early February, furnishing first local records (*vide* DJ, RR). The only report of Com. Redpoll came from Indiana, Pa. (H & RMa). American Goldfinches were in excellent numbers. Pine Siskins were widespread and most localities reported an occasional small flock, but there certainly was no influx of them, and many places saw none. There were essentially no Evening Grosbeaks in the Region this winter, although there were a few scattered reports of small numbers as far s. as the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia.

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WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

/David J. Powell

The weather this winter was surprisingly consistent throughout the states in the Region. December was mild with relatively little snowfall. Temperatures reached into the 60s in southern Michigan and Wisconsin, and what snow fell, did not last long. January was still mild at the start, except in Michigan, where the temperatures in southern Michigan were just cold enough to produce the worst ice storm in 50 years. Power was out for as long as eight days in places, and the ice remained on the trees for a week. This resulted in some gamebird and resident bird mortality, but not as much as might have been expected. The central and northern part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula received up to a foot of snow. Mid-January brought extremely cold weather to all three states, with temperatures well below zero, and strong winds. Isabella, Minnesota, had a "high" on January 19 of -31° and wind chills of $60-70^{\circ}$ below zero were not uncommon. The weather remained cold into early February, with the first week's temperatures staying well below zero. Snowfall was below normal in Minnesota, except on January 24 when a blizzard hit southern and western Minnesota. However, both Michigan and Wisconsin had ample snowfall. Michigan was hit hardest February 11-15, when 20-25" of snow fell, along with strong winds. The weather improved Regionwide in late February, and by the end of the month there was little snow remaining, even in the north.

Observers in all three states commented on the boredom of the season, with only Minnesota's Duluth and North Shore areas having interesting birding. Of particular interest was the number of fruit-eating birds found in Minnesota's North Shore area, where large numbers of robins, waxwings, and Pine Grosbeaks wintered. There were no truly outstanding discoveries in the Region, with the gulls in Wisconsin and a few western species throughout the Region being the only interesting rarities. The last week of February brought the first returning blackbirds to the Region, hopefully a sign of better birding to come this spring.

In the following account, place names in *italics* are counties. Also, only the most exceptional Christmas Bird Count (C.B.C.) data is included, in an effort to reduce unnecessary duplication.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Common Loons were seen in December in all 3 states, as usual, but midwinter records in Minnesota's *St. Louis* (m.ob.) and Michigan's *Berrien* (RS, WB, KL) were quite unusual. Red-necked Grebes lingered in both Michigan and Minnesota, but one Feb. 27 in *Rice*, Minn. (F & KS) was hard to explain. An Eared Grebe was at *St. Joseph*, *Berrien*, Mich., Dec. 9-10 (RS, MC). Double-crested Cormorants lingered into January in both Michigan and Minnesota. A Green-backed Heron Dec. 30 in *Bay*, Mich. (MW), was very late for the Region. A Great Blue Heron found on the Grand Marais, Minn., C.B.C., Dec. 15 was quite unusual. This species overwintered in small numbers in s. Michigan, as is usual. More unusual were the Black-crowned Night-Herons Dec. 8-17 at the Milwaukee Harbor (*Jl et al*) and Feb. 2 & 9 (three birds) in Michigan's *Bay* (MW, CF), the Michigan birds apparently surviving the winter.

Small flocks of Tundra Swans were found at a surprising number of Wisconsin locales, particularly in the first one-half of December. Mute

Swans continue to expand in the Region, with the majority still in Michigan, where wintering flocks of 30+ are becoming commonplace; however, several (three to five) at Neenah (TZ) and Racine (GD), Wis., represented s. expansion of their wintering range. Snow Geese overwintered in Rochester, Minn., and Green Bay, Wis. The Brant found at New Buffalo, *Berrien*, Mich., last fall, lingered until it was frozen out in mid-January (RS, WB, KL). Canada Geese lingered in unexpected numbers with 121,600 still at Horicon N.W.R., Wis., Dec. 17 (staff) and 60,500 Dec. 15 on the Lac Qui Parle, Minn., C.B.C.



Brant at New Buffalo, Mich., December 1984. Photo/Charles Hovecar.

Wood Ducks wintered at 3 Wisconsin locations. "Very late" was a Blue-winged Teal at Black Dog L., *Dakota*, Minn., Dec. 22 (TT). Greater Scaup lingered in large numbers (12,000) at Milwaukee until the January freeze. Tessen found the only Harlequin Duck of the season Dec. 15 at Milwaukee. Oldsquaw were found away from the Great Lakes Dec. 9-16 at Madison, Wis. (PA), and Three Oaks, *Berrien*, Mich. (CH). All three scoters were found Dec. 1 in *Ozaukee*, Wis. (DT), with two Blacks and one Surf accompanying 62 White-winged. White-winged Scoters also were seen in Michigan and Minnesota, and Black Scoters were seen at New Buffalo, four Jan. 12 (RS, WB, KL) and Holland, Mich., one Jan. 13 (CH). The only Barrow's Goldeneye of the season was found in early December at Black Dog L., Minn. (*vide* RJ). A Hooded Merganser that remained all winter at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. (MP), was n. of normal.

RAPTORS — Bald Eagles were more common than usual in n. Minnesota and in Michigan. Wisconsin observers reported a good number of sightings for all 3 accipiters. A Sharp-shinned Hawk Jan. 15 at Duluth (JN) provided one of the few n. Minnesota midwinter records. Also n. of normal were single Cooper's Hawks Feb. 1 & 2 in Michigan's *Ontonagon* (AM, ED). Unlike Wisconsin, Michigan observers found far fewer N. Goshawks this winter than in the last few winters. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce statewide in Michigan throughout the season, and in Minnesota after mid-January. In Minnesota's *Aitkin*, 39 were present Dec. 29, but only one was there by Feb. 22. A Golden Eagle Feb. 18 in *Wadena*, Minn. (DZ), was n. of usual. Eight individuals wintered at 4 Wisconsin locations, more than normal. Single Merlins were in Michigan and Wisconsin, with at least four and maybe six in Minnesota. One of the five Peregrine Falcons hacked out on a nesting cliff in *Tofte*, *Cook*, Minn., in 1984, successfully overwintered in the Duluth-Superior Harbor. Prairie Falcons have become rare to regular in Minnesota, so this winter's reports were no surprise: late migrants Dec. 9 & 12 in *Wilkin* (S & DM) and an overwintering bird at *Rothsay* W.M.A., *Wilkin* (S & DM), was probably the same individual for the 3rd consecutive winter.

Since the winter of 1979-1980, at least one Gyrfalcon has wintered in the Duluth-Superior Harbor each season. This winter, four different individuals were present at one time or another: a) an immature banded and radio-tagged and present throughout most of January (no signal heard in February); b) an adult seen throughout most of February (This individual was caught by D. Evans, who found the band he had placed on the bird the previous winter. It is not only the first known bird to winter 2 years in a row, but also the first known adult, as all the others there had apparently been immatures.); c) an unbanded immature present from mid-February into March; and d) a white-headed (white-



phase?) bird in March. An abundance of pigeons and a few pheasants in the harbor apparently attracts the Gyrs (along with other raptors, 8 species this winter!), making this perhaps the best place in the lower 48 states to observe this species.

PARTRIDGES THROUGH GULLS — Minnesota observers found both Gray Partridges and Ring-necked Pheasants obviously down in numbers, an effect of the heavy snowfall last winter? An introduced (from the Lower Peninsula) population of Wild Turkeys in Michigan's Dickinson apparently is doing very well, with 200 estimated in the county (FK). Common Moorhens were found Jan. 26 at Muskegon (FD), and throughout the winter at Metrobeach, *Macomb* (*fide* PY), for apparently the first midwinter records for Michigan. A Sandhill Crane was in Wisconsin's Dane Jan. 11 (*fide* KLa). Post-C.B.C. Killdeers were found at Manitowoc and *Sauk*, Wis., and *Berrien*, Mich. Single Dunlins were found Dec. 6-9 in Milwaukee (m.ob.). A Purple Sandpiper was at St. Joseph, *Berrien*, Mich., Dec. 31-Jan. 1 (RS, WB). Common Snipe wintered in surprising numbers in Wisconsin with 16 reported from 5 counties, including one at Ashland (DV), n. of normal. Also n. of normal was a snipe found dead Jan. 13 at Sartell, *Stearns*, Minn. (NH).

Like last winter, gulls were seen in excellent diversity in the Region, with 11 species found. Unlike last winter, however, Wisconsin observers, instead of Michigan observers, found most of the rarities. Little Gulls were found at 2 Wisconsin locations: one Dec. 1 at Harrington Beach S.P. (DT) and five at Milwaukee through Dec. 10 (m.ob.). One of the few Wisconsin sightings of Com. Black-headed Gull was made by Idzikowski Dec. 21 at Milwaukee. Minnesota's first winter sighting of a California Gull was of an adult present at Duluth from late November until Dec. 15 (KE). Thayer's Gulls were found at Black Dog L., Minn., Dec. 2 (m.ob.), six on the Duluth C.B.C., Dec. 15, and four at Milwaukee from mid-December through Jan. 8 (m.ob.). The Milwaukee birds were photographed, placing the Thayer's Gull on the official Wisconsin list. Iceland Gulls were seen at *Berrien*, Mich., Jan. 12 (RS, WB, KL) and two at Milwaukee Jan. 6-12 (m.ob.). Glaucous Gulls were seen in all 3 states, with the only unusual sighting being of three away from the Great Lakes alternating between Madison and the Wisconsin R., at Prairie du Sac. A Great Black-backed Gull was inland at Kensington Metropark, *Oakland*, Mich., Jan. 5 (*fide* BH). Other Great Black-backed Gulls were on both sides of L. Michigan, with one at Muskegon Jan. 4 (GW), an immature at Milwaukee Dec. 21-Jan. 8 (JI *et al.*), and an adult at Harrington Beach S.P., Wis., Jan. 6 (CS, TS, JB). Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen in *Bay*, Mich., Jan. 2 on the Bay City C.B.C. (TW); in Milwaukee, an adult Dec. 21 and an immature Dec. 28-29 (JI *et al.*); and surprisingly, inland at Madison, an immature intermittently Dec. 6-15 (RH).

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — The only Regional report of Com. Barn-Owl was of one found dead Jan. 12 in *Waupaca*, Wis. This individual was banded the previous year in Iowa. Snowy Owls were scarce Regionwide. For the first time in 15 years, there were no N. Hawk-Owls found in Minnesota. After last winter's incredible incursion, Great Gray Owls were relatively scarce in Minnesota this winter, with reports from only 3 counties totaling nine to 13 birds. Inversely, Wisconsin had four individuals this winter, as compared with only one last winter: one in December in Polk (DF) and another all period n. of Medford (m.ob.), both banded by Follen; one very far s. in *Washington* Jan. 2 (NS); and another in *Douglas* Feb. 24 (D & ME). Long-eared Owls were up in Wisconsin, but remain very low in Michigan. Short-eared Owls also were seen in Wisconsin in increased numbers compared to the last few winters. Eight Short-eared Owls were seen Jan. 16-22 at Rothsay W.M.A. (S & DM). On the surface, this does not seem unusual, but no owls were seen before or after those dates, making their occurrence in mid-January difficult to explain. Two Boreal Owls were found, both in Minnesota: one in a garage in *Mahnomen* Feb. 14 (MH) and one on 6 dates at Poplar L., *Cook*, within the species' presumed breeding/permanent resident range. Northern Saw-whet Owls were found at 2 Michigan and one Wisconsin locations, with one of the Michigan birds roosting in a garage in *Ontonagon* all winter (AM, JM).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen in higher numbers in both Michigan and Wisconsin than in the last several winters. They also were n. of normal in Minnesota, with reports into January at 2 Duluth feeders.

Red-bellied Woodpeckers were found n. of their usual range in all 3 states. Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen in 2 Minnesota and one Wisconsin locations, about average for the Region. Black-backed Woodpeckers were found in average numbers in Michigan and Wisconsin, but in above-average numbers in Minnesota, with one s. of normal Jan. 5 in *Stearns* (RJ). All 3 states reported good numbers of wintering N. Flickers, with both Michigan and Minnesota having birds remaining n. of normal.

SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS — For the 2nd winter in a row, a Barn Swallow was found in December at a sewage pond, with one present Dec. 9-16 near Madison (ST *et al.*). Minnesota birders found more Gray Jays than normal in n. Minnesota. Two Black-billed Magpies wintered farther e. than normal at a feeder in *St. Louis*, Minn (SW, MS). Common Ravens continued to increase their numbers in Michigan's n. Lower Peninsula, with birds seen as far s. as *Wexford* (BA). Boreal Chickadees were more common than usual in n. Minnesota, as were Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers. Creepers also were up in n. Michigan. Conversely, Red-breasted Nuthatches were considerably below average in the s. two-thirds of Wisconsin. Tufted Titmice seem to be increasing in Minnesota, with six wintering in Rochester, and several other reports. Golden-crowned Kinglets were quite scarce in Wisconsin, but more common than usual in n. Michigan. Eastern Bluebirds lingered to mid-December in all 3 states, with Michigan having more and later lingering birds. Townsend's Solitaires were found in surprisingly large numbers, with one in Michigan, four in Minnesota, and five in Wisconsin (three overwintering in each state, except Michigan). American Robins presented a contrasting picture in the Region, with Wisconsin observers finding considerably fewer than last year, but Michigan observers and birders on Minnesota's North Shore in *Cook* finding large numbers. In Michigan, 2000 were found Jan. 13 in *Allegan* (TSM, JBa, DS), and several survived as far n. as the Upper Peninsula. Varied Thrushes were found at 4 Minnesota, 5 Michigan, and 8 Wisconsin locations, which was more than normal.

Single Gray Catbirds were found Dec. 1 in *Houston*, Minn (E & MF), Dec. 15 on the Milwaukee C.B.C. (DT), and Feb. 23 in *Leelanau*, Mich. (LG). Northern Mockingbirds were found n. of normal Dec. 7 at Northport, *Leelanau*, Mich. (LG), through December in *Door*, Wis (R & CL), and until Jan. 16 at Rochester, Minn. (m.ob.). Brown Thrashers were reported from 6 Minnesota, 4 Michigan, and 2 Wisconsin locations, about average. Large numbers of Bohemian Waxwings were found across the n. part of the Region (particularly the North Shore area in Minnesota), with flocks of 200 not uncommon. They were as far e. as the middle of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and in good numbers as far s. as s. Minnesota. Cedar Waxwings were down in Wisconsin, but up in Michigan, with many throughout the Lower Peninsula and flocks of 1000+ seen in at least 2 locations. Cedar Waxwings were also up along the North Shore in *Cook*, Minn. Northern Shrikes were average to below average Regionwide, except in Minnesota in February, when they were widespread. The only non-Yellow-rumped Warbler found this winter was a Cape May Warbler that lingered until Dec. 23 at a *Trempealeau*, Wis., suet feeder (TH).

CARDINAL THROUGH FINCHES — Northern Cardinals were n. of normal in Michigan Jan. 3+ in *Ontonagon* (AM), and at 3 Minnesota locations: Dec. 15 on the Fargo-Moorhead C.B.C.; until Dec. 12 at Thief River Falls (S & KS); and Jan. 24+ at Hovland, *Cook* (m.ob.). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak overwintered at a Rochester, Minn., feeder (m.ob.). A ♀ Indigo Bunting was captured, banded and photographed at Niles, Mich., Jan. 13 (CH), providing the first known midwinter occurrence for the state. One of the unfortunate occurrences in birding is when people do not share what they find so that others can have an opportunity to see it. This winter's Green-tailed Towhee was an example of a case in which, if the news had been spread, many people could have seen the bird. This bird appeared at a feeder near Euclid, *Bay*, Mich., in mid-January. It came to the feeder for about several weeks before the owner of the feeder contacted local birders Feb. 23. Coincidentally, this also was the last date on which it was seen, as it was found dead 2 days later. I would encourage anyone who finds an odd bird to contact his or her fellow birders and tell them about it. If you do not know about other birders in your area, contact your state compiler.

More Rufous-sided Towhees than normal lingered into December in

Michigan, including several in the n. part of the Lower Peninsula. American Tree Sparrows were down in numbers in Wisconsin. A Chipping Sparrow lingered until Jan. 1 at Minneapolis (SC). While a Chipping Sparrow in January is uncommon, a Clay-colored Sparrow is unprecedented. A Clay-colored Sparrow survived at a Duluth feeder until Jan. 19, succumbing to the cold (the high on Jan. 19 was -20°) overnight, and was found dead the next morning. Prior to this individual, the latest known Minnesota occurrence was in October. For the 2nd consecutive winter, a Field Sparrow was found on the North Shore. This year's bird survived until Jan. 14 at Grand Marais, Cook (K & MH), for the first county sighting and only the 2nd sighting n. of Duluth. One of Minnesota's few winter records of Vesper Sparrow was of an individual Dec. 29 at Worthington, Nobles (RJ). Fox Sparrows were reported from 4 Minnesota, 3 Michigan and one Wisconsin locations. Overwintering Harris' Sparrows were found near Chippewa Falls, Wis. (m.ob.), and in Leelanau, Mich. (LG). Snow Buntings were seen in large numbers throughout Wisconsin, but especially in the n. and w., and in January and February.

Unusual at Duluth was a W. Meadowlark at Eckert's feeder until early January. This species is rare at Duluth even in summer. Common Grackles seem to be increasing as a wintering species in Michigan's Berrien, with 550 found Feb. 2 at St. Joseph (RS). Otherwise, the blackbirds were not notable Regionwide. The only N. Oriole found this winter was one that lingered just long enough to be counted on the Aurora, Minn., C.B.C. Pine Grosbeaks were found in small numbers in n. Michigan and n. Wisconsin, but in large numbers on Minnesota's North Shore. They were also farther s. than usual in Minnesota, with reports from 5 s. Minnesota locations, including Cottonwood (LF) and Mower (R & RK). It was a Purple Finch winter in Michigan and Wisconsin with large numbers present throughout both states. However, they were in average to below average numbers in Minnesota. As has become the norm, House Finches continue to expand dramatically in Michigan, with reports from 22 counties and a flock of 55 in Berrien Dec. 16 (RA, DP).

Crossbills of both species were seen in large numbers Regionwide, with Reds being somewhat more common than White-wingeds. For the 3rd winter in a row, Com. Redpolls were below average Regionwide, with only n. Wisconsin reporting good numbers. Surprisingly, considering the lack of Com. Redpolls, Hoary Redpolls were found in near record numbers in Minnesota. Normally, the percentage of Hoaries in a redpoll flock is about one percent. This winter, the usual proportion was 10-20%, and a few flocks were seen that consisted of all or mostly Hoaries. Pine Siskins were seen in large numbers in the n. part of the Region, particularly in February. Evening Grosbeaks were very scarce throughout all 3 states, with only the e. Upper Peninsula of Michigan reporting normal numbers.

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MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

/Bruce G. Peterjohn

Following the trends of recent winters, weather patterns this year consisted of contrasting extremes. A snow storm ushered in the first week of December but was quickly replaced by unseasonably warm weather. Record-setting highs in the 60s and 70s were enjoyed by many birders during Christmas Bird Counts. Temperatures briefly returned to normal in early January, only to be succeeded by record-setting cold during the latter one-half of the month. The weekend of January 19-21 was particularly bitter with lows of -16 to -20°F as far south as Kentucky. Below-normal temperatures remained until mid-February when a prolonged warming trend initiated the awaited beginning of spring. Precipitation was fairly uniform, varying from slightly above normal in some states to slightly below normal in others. Most precipitation occurred as snow which covered the ground for a month or longer in many northern locations.

For the most part, it was a fairly dull season. A number of birds lingered with December's mild weather which may also have produced a small northward migration of several species. Most northern winter visitors appeared in modest numbers with very few finches except in Iowa. Regular numbers of the rarer gulls were reported as their distributions within the Region are becoming fairly well established. The only excitement was provided by a few remarkable rarities including Bean Goose in Iowa and Marbled Murrelet in Indiana. However, the prolonged snow cover and extreme cold may have combined to produce excessive mortality of several species during January and February.

ABBREVIATIONS — Spfld. = Springfield, Illinois. To avoid unnecessary repetition, only the most exceptional Christmas Bird Count (C.B.C.) observations were incorporated into this summary. As usual,



all extraordinary sight records must be thoroughly documented at the time of observation; all documented records have been denoted by a dagger (†). *Italicized* place names are counties.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — Migrant loons during December included a Red-throated at L. Lemon, Ind., Dec. 4 (BW, D & BWh), possibly two Arctics at Horseshoe L., Ill. (†RG *et al.*), plus 90 Commons at Lexington Dec. 19 constituting a very large flock for Kentucky (BA). As expected, small numbers of Commons tarried until freeze-up with scattered reports through Jan. 13-27 from all states except Iowa, although three at Baldwin L., Ill., Feb. 17 apparently overwintered (JRo). Wintering Pied-billed Grebes were rather widespread, with reports from all states except Iowa, while the expected small numbers of Horned Grebes wintered n. to L. Erie. The four Red-necked Grebe reports were normal for recent winters and included one Great Lakes

sighting plus inland singles at Carlyle L., Ill., Dec. 2-9 (LH, DJ, †m.ob.), Spfld., Dec. 23 (H), and Ft. Wayne, Ind., Feb. 24-25 (TH, †m.ob.). A fairly late dark-phase W. Grebe was noted at Spfld., Dec. 5-9 (H, m.ob.). While Am. White Pelicans occasionally linger into December, overwintering records are quite rare—such as two spending the entire period at Montrose W.M.A., Mo. (*fide* JW), and one at Iowa City Jan. 6-Feb. 1 (RH). Wintering Double-crested Cormorants are becoming more numerous as their populations continue to increase. Lingering birds were widespread during December but most departed by month's end. Probable wintering birds were noted at 6 locations n. to L. Erie with a maximum of eight in *Taney*, Mo., Jan. 15 (PM).

A flock of 80+ Great Blue Herons on Oregon, O., Feb. 3 was a large wintering concentration (TB, LR). The mild December allowed Great Egrets to linger into the C.B.C. period at 2 locations, and produced a remarkable 5 Cattle Egret sightings, including an injured bird recovered near Iowa City Dec. 9 (JF) and the latest report near Murray, Ky., Dec. 19 (JE, *fide* CP). Wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons were noted from their regular Toledo, O., location while as many as 12 remained at Chicago through Jan. 23 (RB) and at E. St. Louis, Ill., through Jan. 26 (JR), plus a single bird at Spfld., Jan. 26 (H).

WATERFOWL — Good numbers of migrant Tundra Swans continued into December and included a maximum of 1200 along w. Lake Erie, 64-67 at 2 n.e. Illinois locations Dec. 1-2 (JM, JLa), and 15 near Edina, Mo., Dec. 2 (*fide* JW). Wintering swans were much more widely reported than normal, with scattered sightings throughout Ohio plus reports from one Indiana, 2 Kentucky, 2 Illinois, and 4 Missouri locations. Attempts to reestablish Trumpeter Swans in neighboring states were responsible for winter sightings from Iowa and Missouri. Birds originally released in Minnesota wandered to Otter Cr. marsh, Ia., during late December where as many as nine were noted (†T *et al.*). They eventually filtered S into Missouri where one to three appeared in *Cooper*, *Clinton*, *Miller*, and *Duck Creek* W.M.A. after Jan. 15. With increasing populations in adjacent states, Trumpeter Swan may become a regular member of this Region's avifauna. Hence, all wintering swans should be carefully identified, especially in Iowa and Missouri which are closest to the release sites.

S.A.

For the 2nd consecutive winter, an unprecedented Siberian vagrant made an appearance in the Region. A **Bean Goose** was discovered at DeSoto N.W.R., Ia.-Neb., Dec. 29 (†RW, †AG) and was viewed by hundreds of observers through Jan. 7. The bird was identified as one of the Siberian races (probably *middendorffii*) on the basis of its long neck and sloping forehead, giving it a Canvasback-like profile, and long sloping bill with a thin subterminal yellow-orange band. It was also noted to be distinctly larger than adjacent Greater White-fronted Geese with no white at the base of its bill, distinct light edgings to the upperparts, and bright orange legs. There was no visible evidence of captivity and the bird was not tame. Since Siberian races are exceedingly rare in captivity, this goose was considered to be a genuine vagrant and provided the first North American record outside Alaska.

Small numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese passed through Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois during December, while wintering reports were limited to one at Rend L., Ill., Jan. 19 (JR) and an individual of the Greenland race *flavirostris* in Ross, O., Dec. 30-Jan. 6+ (†J, m.ob.). Early spring migrants included four at Atterbury W.M.A., Ind., Feb. 24+ (JW, m.ob.). The only sizable congregation of wintering Snow Geese totalled 8000 at Ballard W.M.A., Ky. The expected small numbers of Ross' Geese appeared in extreme w. Iowa and Missouri while singles in *Cooper*, Mo. (TBk), and *St. Charles*, Mo., Jan. 11 (†CPa) were slightly e. of their normal range. A Brant at Lorain, O., Dec. 6 furnished the only winter report (†JP). Normal numbers of wintering Canada Geese included 130,000 in w. Kentucky and 15,000 along w. Lake Erie.

Wintering duck numbers did not exhibit any consistent trends, being normal in some areas and noticeably reduced in others. Migrants were still widely reported during December and small numbers returned by

late February. A very late Blue-winged Teal remained at Spfld., Jan. 1 (H). Canvasbacks wintered at their traditional Oregon, O., location where 7500+ constituted the only sizable flock reported from the Region. The expected small numbers of Greater Scaup were scattered across inland sites although the unusually large flock of 66 at Louisville Feb. 23 may have included some migrants (LRA). An imm. ♂ King Eider was thoroughly described from Avon Lake, O., Dec. 9 (†TL *et al.*) and may have been the same bird periodically observed along L. Erie into January. Harlequin Ducks were recorded only from Michigan City, Ind., where two wintered (KB, m.ob.).

Oldsquaw numbers remained low with a maximum of 150 along L. Michigan plus singles at a total of 4 inland locations in Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana Dec. 8-20. Small numbers of Black Scoters remained along the Great Lakes through the first week of January, while two at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Dec. 2 were unusual for s. Illinois (†JR). As many as three Surf Scoters appeared at 4 inland sites in Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois Dec. 2-20 while singles were scattered along L. Erie through Jan. 27. White-winged Scoters were unreported from L. Michigan but were widely noted along L. Erie. The 9 inland reports from all states except Indiana constituted a greater-than-normal number of winter sightings. Common Goldeneyes were generally numerous with a maximum of 1180 along L. Michigan. In contrast, Com. Mergansers were quite scarce on the Great Lakes although sizable concentrations were reported from several inland sites.

HAWKS — Wintering Black Vultures were thought to have increased in Kentucky while small numbers were locally distributed elsewhere in s. portions of the Region. A few Turkey Vultures lingered in n. areas into December, such as one in *Decatur*, Ia., Dec. 12 (DG). Wintering numbers were normal at traditional roosts and the first spring migrants returned to n. locations by late February. The mild early winter weather allowed Ospreys to linger at *Louisa*, Ia., Dec. 1 (P), Kickapoo S.P., Ill., Dec. 12 (JS), and L. Waveland, Ind., Dec. 22 (AB). Wintering Bald Eagles were widespread, but in decreased numbers from last year, with January survey totals of 143 in Kentucky and 758 in Missouri. The same could be said for most other wintering hawks. Northern Harriers were regularly observed but roosts containing 20-24 birds were discovered only in Ohio and Illinois. Wintering Sharp-shinned were widely reported, while Cooper's Hawks continued to increase in several states. Reports of N. Goshawks returned to normal following the invasions of the previous 2 winters. They appeared at 13 Illinois and 2 Indiana locations plus single sites in Ohio and Missouri s. to Busch W.M.A., Mo., Dec. 15+ (JZ *et al.*) and Sam Dale S.P., Ill. (DJ, LH).

Increased Red-shouldered Hawk sightings in several states were encouraging. A casual visitor in Iowa, a Ferruginous Hawk was documented at Otter Cr. marsh Dec. 23 (†T). Rough-legged Hawks were generally scarce with a modest influx reported after mid-January. Golden Eagle reports from 2 locations each in Iowa, Illinois, and Kentucky, plus 8 Missouri sites, constituted normal wintering numbers in those states. They are casual in Indiana, where one appeared at L. Monroe Jan. 6-15 (B & DWh).

A few Merlins lingered through the C.B.C. period although the only well-documented wintering bird was recorded at Busch W.M.A., Mo., Jan. 29+ (†VB, m.ob.). Peregrine Falcons were recorded only from Iowa and Missouri, primarily during the C.B.C. period. A gray-phase Gyrfalcon was briefly observed in Woodford, Ill., Jan. 23 (†K). The 4 Prairie Falcon observations were normal for recent winters, and included singles in w. Missouri and Iowa, plus easterly singles in *St. Charles*, Mo., Dec. 30+ (†JZ, m.ob.), and at the regular *Lawrence*, Ill., location (DJ).

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — This winter's severe weather had mixed effects on gamebird populations. Gray Partridges were thought to have declined in n.w. Iowa. In contrast, Ring-necked Pheasants maintained reasonably high populations, as evidenced by 175 in *DuPage*, Ill., Feb. 10 (JMi), while flocks of Wild Turkeys were regularly encountered. Few N. Bobwhites were observed after mid-January and the combination of snow cover with extremely cold temperatures may have greatly reduced their already low populations. A few rails seem to linger every winter. This year's reports consisted of a wintering Virginia at Akron, O. (LR), and one or more Virginias at Spfld., Dec. 8-Jan. 3 (H). The mild December weather allowed Sandhill Cranes to remain unusually late, and apparent migrants

were still noted over Kentucky through Jan. 5. It might also have been responsible for the relatively large number of wintering cranes, with singles at Atterbury W.M.A., Ind., throughout the period (BG), *Ottawa*, O., Jan. 15+ (MS, m.ob.), and Crab Orchard N.W.R., Ill., Jan. 8-Feb. 25 (†JR), plus four in *Adams*, O., Jan. 30-Feb. 9 (*vide* W). Early spring migrants returned by late February.

Most shorebirds departed on time despite the mild December weather. A Greater Yellowlegs remained into the C.B.C. period in Iowa while a Lesser was noted in *Lucas*, O., Dec. 1 (JP), and a tardy Least Sandpiper lingered through Jan. 6 at C.J. Brown Res., O. (J, JM). One or two Purple Sandpipers at 3 L. Erie locations through Jan. 5 constituted a normal number of late migrants. Dunlins remained through Jan. 2 along L. Erie and into early December in most other states, while a late Long-billed Dowitcher was identified in *Lucas*, O., Dec. 1 (JP). An unusually large number of late Am. Woodcocks was noted through Dec. 8 in *Story*, Ia. (*vide* SD), Dec. 29 in *Daviess*, Ind. (DA) and Ballard W.M.A., Ky. (BP, KC), and Jan. 6 at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Ill. (ABa). One in Westerville, O., Feb. 13+ (JM) probably overwintered since the first migrants were not reported until Feb. 18 in Kentucky and Feb. 23-25 farther n.

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — The only jaeger report was of a Parasitic along L. Erie Dec. 1.

Absolutely enormous gull concentrations appeared along c. Lake Erie through mid-January, with late December estimates of 75,000+ Bonaparte's and 150,000+ Ring-billeds. Most gulls departed during the extreme cold weather and very few could be found along the lake after late January. Elsewhere, movement patterns were normal with a preponderance of Ring-billeds until January's cold weather forced them S and replaced them with Herrings. Herring Gulls were numerous until the February thaw as evidenced by 5000+ estimated in w. Kentucky. As expected, small numbers of the rarer gulls could usually be picked out of these large flocks.

Two Laughing Gulls were thoroughly described from Barkley L., Ky., Dec. 30 (†BP *et al.*), near the location of the only other Regional winter record. As many as three Little Gulls frequented the Chicago area through Dec. 19 while one or two were reported from scattered L. Erie locations through Jan. 15. Single Com. Black-headed Gulls were discovered along L. Erie at Lorain Jan. 12 (†TB) and Ashtabula Feb. 9 (†LR). As observers are becoming more confident with their identification of California Gulls, the species has become known as a rare but regular migrant and winter visitor among the large flocks of Herrings and Ring-billeds. This season's reports consisted of a 2nd-year California at Zion, Ill., Dec. 23 (†RB *et al.*) and an adult at Rend L., Ill., Feb. 24 (†DJ *et al.*).

Thayer's Gulls were scarce along L. Erie while a maximum of five appeared in the Chicago area. The regular inland wintering locations produced maximum counts of 11 at Alton, Mo.-Ill. (CPa, m.ob.) and nine at Kentucky L.-Barkley L., Ky., Feb. 10 (BP, RCa). Two along the Illinois R. in *Grundy*, Ill., Jan. 18-Feb. 6 (†JM) may have been indicative of a migration corridor from L. Michigan to the Mississippi R. and lower Ohio R. wintering areas. Singles also appeared at Spfld., Dec. 4-Jan. 1 (H), and Louisville Jan. 21 (BP), where they are casually observed. Single Iceland Gulls were scattered along the Great Lakes except for two well-documented birds in *Grundy*, Ill., Jan. 27-Feb. 8 (†JM) and one at Alton, Ill., Feb. 5 (†CPa). Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued to increase away from L. Erie, where the expected small numbers of wintering birds were reported. Two were present in the Chicago area Dec. 29-Jan. 5 (†RB, †MBi *et al.*) and one appeared at Pekin, Ill., Feb. 6 (†KR), while Iowa's first Lesser Black-backed Gull was studied at Red Rocks Res., Dec. 1-5 (JB, †m.ob.).

As many as 10 Glaucous Gulls were noted along the Great Lakes while inland birds were widely reported from Illinois and a maximum of four wintered in w. Kentucky. Normal numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls along the Great Lakes included 3 reports from L. Michigan, while inland adults were well-described from Goose Lake Prairie S.P., Ill., Jan. 9-12 (†JM) and Kentucky L., Feb. 10-17 (BP *et al.*, ph.), where there are few previous records. One or two Black-legged Kittiwakes were noted at one L. Michigan and 4 L. Erie sites, with the latest report Jan. 30, while the only inland sighting was of an immature at Kentucky L., Dec. 1-2 (†BP *et al.*). A Marbled Murrelet was thoroughly studied as it swam along L. Michigan between Long Beach and Michigan City,

Ind., Dec. 2 (†MC, †m.ob.). This bird provided Indiana's and the Region's 2nd record, and added to the increasing number of e. sightings of this species.

OWLS THROUGH SWALLOWS — Wintering Com. Barn-Owls were reported from one Missouri location and *Madison*, Ia., Feb. 4 where they are rare during any season (E & EA, DT). Numbers of Snowy Owls were typical for a non-invasion year with a total of 12 reports from all states except Kentucky. They wandered S to *Cooper*, Mo. (*vide* JW). As many as 10 Long-eared Owls were reported from 15+ locations in all states except Kentucky while Short-eareds were widely reported in flocks of four to 16. These wintering numbers were normal, while N. Saw-whet Owls were relatively scarce with only 4 reports from Iowa and single locations in Ohio and Illinois.

Wintering Red-headed Woodpeckers were very scarce in Iowa, Missouri and Illinois, while increased numbers were reported from Kentucky. A few E. Phoebes lingered into the C.B.C. period in the s. states, and a few had returned by late February. The Say's Phoebe at Spfld. was detected through Jan. 13. Horned Larks were generally observed in small numbers except for 10,000+ in *Seneca* and *Sandusky*, O., Feb. 15 (TB). The mild December weather may have produced a reverse migration of Tree Swallows, which were noted in Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois during the C.B.C. period, and a Barn Swallow reported from Ohio.

JAYS THROUGH SHRIKES — Blue Jays were thought to be in reduced numbers in several localities although a concentration of 500+ at Big River S.F., Ill., Dec. 2 was exceptional during winter (MBA). Noteworthy Am. Crow roosts included 10,000 in *Cass*, Ill., Jan. 2 (K), 8300 in *Vermilion*, Ill. (m.ob.), and "thousands" at Saylorville Res., Ia. (BE). Five early Fish Crows returned to Caruthersville, Mo., Feb. 21 (JWi). It was a poor winter for gleaners as there was no detectable movement by Black-capped Chickadees, and very few wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches; even Brown Creepers were generally scarce. January's severe weather produced a noticeable decline in Carolina Wren populations. Extent of this decline remained to be determined, but hopefully it will not be as severe as that experienced during the late 1970s. Wintering Bewick's Wrens are casual in Illinois where singles appeared at Carbondale (SS) and Texico (BH). Winter Wren numbers appeared to be normal. Scattered House, Sedge and Marsh wrens lingered into the C.B.C. period but all disappeared shortly thereafter. Golden-crowned Kinglets were also decidedly scarce after mid-January, suggesting excessive mortality this winter.

Eastern Bluebird populations were excellent during December but also noticeably declined during January's severe weather. A single Mountain Bluebird in *Meade*, Ky., Dec. 22-Jan. 13 provided the first record for Kentucky (†BP, m.ob., ph.), while Iowa's 4th record was reported near Lamoni Dec. 22-Feb. 2 (†JL, m.ob.). Two Townsend's Solitaires were discovered in n.w. Iowa in *O'Brien* and *Cherokee* Feb. 18-24 where they are casual during winter (†MB, †JF). A total of 39 Hermit Thrushes on Kelley's Is., O., Dec. 5 constituted an exceptional early winter concentration for n. Ohio (JP, DC), while one in *Woodbury*, Ia., Feb. 11 provided one of very few winter records for that state (KD). Wintering Am. Robins were unusually abundant in all states



Male Mountain Bluebird in *Meade* Co., Ky., Jan. 13, 1985. First record for Kentucky. Photo/Brainard Palmer-Ball.

except Iowa and Illinois and formed roosts totalling 1000-5500+ in Ohio. Missouri's first **Varied Thrush** frequented a Maryville feeder Jan. 20-Mar. 7 (P & NR, †DE *et al.*). Others were reported from Ottawa, O. (MS, ph., *fide* TB), Tiltonka, Ia., Dec. 5-8 (†CKI), S. Bend, Ind., Dec. 21+ (†MR, m.ob.), Davenport, Ia., Jan. 9+ (†P), and an Iowa C.B.C.

Surprisingly, N. Mockingbirds did not appear to be affected by this winter's severe weather. The latest Water Pipits were noted in *Hancock*, O., Jan. 10 (*fide* TB), and early migrants returned to several states by late February. Bohemian Waxwings staged a small movement into Iowa with sightings from 8 locations. They were first detected in *Dallas* Dec. 24 (RC) but most were observed after Jan. 13 with a maximum of eight in W. Des Moines (SD). Wintering numbers of Cedar Waxwings were quite good. Although small flocks were generally reported, 1600 congregated in Toledo, O., Jan. 6 (ET). A late February influx produced local concentrations such as 550 waxwings in W. Des Moines, Ia., Feb. 24 (SD). It was a normal winter for N. Shrikes with 14+ reports from the n. states; one returned to Atterbury W.M.A., Ind., for the 3rd consecutive winter. The status of Loggerhead Shrikes remained unchanged with only scattered reports from the n. states.

VIREOS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — Surprisingly few vireos, warblers and summer finches lingered into December. Single White-eyed and Solitary vireos were reported from the C.B.C. period in Ohio and Iowa, respectively. The latest of 2 December Orange-crowned Warbler reports was of one at Chicago Dec. 15 (RB). Yellow-rumped Warblers were not particularly numerous except for a remarkable 300+ on Kelley's Is., O., Dec. 5 (JP, DC). An early Pine Warbler returned to Hawn S.P., Mo., Feb. 26 (BR). One Palm Warbler and scattered Com. Yellowthroats remained into the C.B.C. period; most noteworthy was a Com. Yellowthroat at Keokuk, Ia., Dec. 20, providing the latest record for that state (†RCe). Single Indigo Buntings remained at Poplar Bluff, Mo., through Dec. 3 (†VM), Spfld. until Jan. 1 (H), and Carbondale, Ill., through Jan. 4-5 (†MW). The only Dickcissels reported were one at *Champaign*, Ill., Dec. 15 (RCh), and one wintering at L. Jacomo, Mo. (CH).

Most sparrows were thought to be in good numbers at the beginning of winter. However, populations declined appreciably during January, and many were hard to find by the end of the period. An exception was Am. Tree Sparrow which was abundant during all months. A few Vesper Sparrows were reported through Jan. 1, while wintering Savannah Sparrows were more widespread than usual with reports from all states except Iowa. Three Grasshopper Sparrows in *Meade*, Ky., through Dec. 23 (BP *et al.*) were noteworthy for a species that is casually reported from the s. states during winter. Le Conte's Sparrows were detected only at regular wintering sites in Illinois and Missouri.

Seven Fox Sparrows at Ames constituted an unusual winter concentration for Iowa (SD *et al.*). The only Harris' Sparrows reported outside their normal range were two at Rochester, Ill., Jan. 1-8 (H), and four wintering at Atterbury W.M.A., Ind. (m.ob.). Lapland Longspurs were abundant only in Illinois with 2000+ in *Jasper* Feb. 3 (LH) and 3 flocks of 1000+. Small numbers were generally noted in the other states where 100-500 longspurs made up the largest flocks. Smith's Longspurs were restricted to Missouri with one December sighting and a few early migrants during the latter one-half of February. Snow Buntings were also relatively scarce although flocks of 150-600 were scattered across the n. states. Only Indiana observers reported unusually large numbers following January's subzero weather.

Six Yellow-headed Blackbird reports were more than normal for recent winters. In addition to sightings on C.B.C.s and along w. Lake Erie, three or more wintered at Louisville (m.ob.), one appeared at Gladstone, Mo., Jan. 7 (TS), three were photographed at Tiffin, O.,

Jan. 13 (*fide* TB), and one was reported from Lexington, Ky., during late February (*fide* MF). Brewer's Blackbirds were restricted to the w. states. Great-tailed Grackles are proving to be regular early winter visitors as their populations increase; three were noted at Kansas City Dec. 16 (BF) and they remained in s.w. Iowa through Dec. 22. The only N. Orioles appeared at Jacksonville, Ill., Dec. 15-19 (ST), and on a Kentucky C.B.C.

FINCHES — A Pine Grosbeak at Spfld., Feb. 7-24 was very unusual for c. Illinois, especially during a non-invasion year (H, m.ob., ph). The species also appeared in Iowa with two in *Cherokee* Dec. 25 (TJ) and three at Des Moines Feb. 6-25 (†B & MP, m.ob.). Purple Finches were generally scarce although flocks of 20-60 could be found in most states. A concentration of 200 in Fayette, Ia., Feb. 16 was exceptional for this winter (RM). The W movement of House Finches continued unabated. Illinois flocks totalled 29 at Danville, 13 at Champaign, and 12 at Carbondale, while Missouri reports consisted of four at Taum Sauk L., Dec. 22 (†ML), and one in *St. Charles* Jan. 31 (†CPa *et al.*)

Red Crossbills staged a moderate invasion. They were widely reported from Iowa all winter with fewer sightings in Illinois and Missouri, the largest flocks consisted of 30-60 crossbills in these states. Smaller numbers were noted in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, but they disappeared during the first one-half of January. A few White-winged Crossbills accompanied the flocks of Reds in Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois, where all reports consisted of six or fewer birds. Common Redpolls were decidedly scarce with only scattered observations from Ohio, Iowa, and Indiana. Pine Siskins were described as common in Iowa, where flocks of 80+ were reported. They were scarce in all other states, appearing as scattered singles or small flocks. American Goldfinches received mixed reports with good numbers in Ohio, Missouri, and Kentucky but reduced populations in Iowa and Illinois. Evening Grosbeaks were universally scarce with only scattered individuals reported from all states except Illinois.

CORRIGENDA — The Apr. 6, 1984 report of Semipalmated Plover at Louisville (AB 38:917) should be changed to May 6 and the Apr. 7, 1984 Black Tern in *Oldham*, Ky. (AB 38:918) should be amended to May 7.

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CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

/David P. Muth

After a brief cold spell in the northeastern portion of the Region during the first week of December, the rest of that month and January were exceptionally mild. Lingering by many waterbirds, shorebirds, and half-hardy land birds kept the season interesting. When cold struck, however, in the third week of January, its intensity was reminiscent of the Christmas front of 1983. Nashville recorded its coldest temperature ever: -17°F on January 21. Fifteen inches of snowfall accumulated in middle Tennessee, and medium-sized lakes froze over. Record temperatures struck sporadically along the Gulf coast for the third winter in the last four. Many birds disappeared, including hardy species along the coast. Temperatures moderated thereafter, and February was among the mildest ever—"spring" as Joe Neal in Arkansas described it.

Quite simply, there was no boreal invasion, and thus, Harlequin Duck in Tennessee, Varied Thrush in Louisiana, Red Crossbill in Alabama, and Common Redpolls in Arkansas and Tennessee were all the more surprising.

In this report, Christmas Bird Count data are included only when too important to ignore, or when necessary to help demonstrate a broader pattern. Place names in *italics* are parishes or counties.



LOONS TO ANHINGA — An Arctic Loon at Alabama Pt., Ala., Feb. 4 (GDJ) would provide Alabama's 3rd record, and one of very few for the Region. A high 100 Pied-billed Grebes were on a pond in Hancock, Miss., Dec. 11 (JAT, GM). An Eared Grebe in Jefferson, Ala., Feb. 26 (TAI, AM, HW, BJ) was thought to be a spring migrant, part of a recent pattern. A W. Grebe was reported from Pulaski, Ark., Jan. 13 without details or an indication of color morph. A **Masked Booby** at Gulf Is. Nat'l. Seashore Dec. 2 provided n.w. Florida's first winter record (RP, RL). Northern Gannets, frequently observed in the clearer waters of Alabama and Florida, e. of the Mississippi's delta, were seen for the 4th consecutive winter off Louisiana—the earliest were nine found on the Grand Isle C.B.C., Dec. 30; six immatures in the turbid waters of Mississippi Sound off Jackson, Miss., Jan. 3 (JAT, JT, HT) were unusual. One seen 12 mi s. of the Vermillion, La., coast Jan. 11 (RK) was from a little-visited area. Are gannets increasing in the w. Gulf, feeding nearer to shore, or simply being sought more avidly?

An Am. White Pelican in Washington, Ark., Dec. 6 (RS, NM), and one in Franklin, Tenn., Dec. 16 & 29 (RLu, CB, MHe), were lingering in the mild December. Brown Pelicans peaked at 47 on the Mississippi coast Jan. 19 (JAT)—"the highest number in years." A pair of Olivaceous Cormorants in breeding plumage was tending a nest Dec. 15 during the C.B.C. at Sabine N.W.R. (SW, JW). Anhingas, known to winter at several Louisiana localities, were widespread elsewhere: one on the Texarkana, Ark., C.B.C. furnished one of very few winter

records for the state; nine wintered in Jackson, Miss., at cooling ponds (JAT); one, present since Oct. 4, was in Gulf Shores, Ala., until at least Dec. 29 (GDJ); while another, in St. Tammany, La., Jan. 12, continued a pattern of recent sightings (AS, GS).

BITTERNS THROUGH DUCKS — American Bitterns were unexpected at 3 sites in Arkansas during February—in *Prairie*, Feb. 9 (WS, LW); in *Pope*, Feb. 22 (TF); and in *Arkansas*, Feb. 28 (MW). Green-backed Herons were widespread on coastal C.B.C.s, but individuals on 3 Tennessee C.B.C.s were remarkable. A **Wood Stork** seen crossing I-10 in either *St. John* or *St. James*, La., Jan. 27 (KVR) was unprecedented for that season in the Region.

Three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in *Acadia*, La., Jan. 8 (RBH) were rare winterers; a flock of 26 in *Cameron*, La., Feb. 17 (SWC, DLD) were probably early migrants. Tundra Swans continued an admirable invasion begun during the fall. Two reports came from Arkansas, near Grady Jan. 10 (JR, *fide* BBC) and *Jefferson* Feb. 22 & 23 (JS, GH, WJD). Western Tennessee had two birds, variously seen Jan. 26 to Feb. 19, in *Shelby* and *Hardin* (CN, m.ob., *fide* BBC), and middle Tennessee had a total of seven birds, seen in *Rutherford*, *Mauzy*, and *Humphreys*, Dec. 1-Feb. 14 (RMc, AH, AL, CD, *fide* SJS). Louisiana had a rash of unconfirmed sightings last winter, but this season's reports turned into gratifying stakeouts. Three graced a flooded soybean field in *St. Tammany*, Dec. 2 (MM, RDP, DPM, NN), but were present perhaps 3 weeks previously (*fide* landowners—see fall report). After their disappearance in early January, one or two appeared shortly thereafter about 20 mi due n. (*fide* RDP). Six were present in n.e. Louisiana in *Richland* Jan. 26-Feb. 24 (DTK, DL, JM, HHJ, RLL). The species is very rare in the state: for most veteran observers, including the indefatigable RJN, these cooperative birds provided their first satisfactory study. North-



Tundra Swans in St. Tammany Parish, La., December 1984. Photo/R. D. Purrington.

western Florida's swans, present since Nov. 23 (see fall report), remained through at least Dec. 5. Of those described, six were adults and eight immatures. Greater White-fronted Geese were fairly widespread n. and e. of their normal wintering grounds. Perhaps six were present in *Franklin*, *Cheatham*, and *Stewart*, Tenn., Jan. 5-Feb. 20 (HY, TW, PH). One was in *Bienville*, La., Dec. 22 (PD), for n.w. Louisiana's first winter record; the 2nd was in *Caddo*, Dec. 29 (HHJ, PD, CNI). Yazoo N.W.R. in n.w. Mississippi had 350 Jan. 13 (EA, JAT, MH). And, finally, a recent pattern of occurrences in Alabama continued with both interior and coastal reports. A **Ross' Goose** taken by a hunter in *Prairie*, Jan. 19, furnished Arkansas' 3rd acceptable record (*fide* JN).

The status of Am. Black Ducks along the coast is somewhat enigmatic—they are easily lost among the Mottleds. Two in *Jackson*, Miss., Jan. 3 (JAT, JT, HT) furnished a good find. North of the coastal tier of parishes in Louisiana, the presumption is that Black/Mottled types

should be Blacks, and, indeed, three found on the Tunica Hills C.B.C. were reconfirmed as such Jan. 5 (DBC, PMc, RJN). Two more were found in nearby *E. Feliciana*, Feb. 8 (PMc, LH). In middle Tennessee, of course, no such problems exist: 19,000 Am. Blacks were at Tennessee N.W.R., and 11,000 at Cross Creek N.W.R.—this compared to 65,000 and 50,000 Mallards respectively (*vide* SJS). A Garganey (of uncertain origin) seen at Gulf Shores Jan. 6 (C & PBr) was apparently the 2nd for Alabama (*vide* TAI). Seven Blue-winged Teal in middle Tennessee to Jan. 18 were thought to be lingering in the mild winter (*vide* SJS). A pair of rare Cinnamon Teal was in *Cameron*, La., Feb. 17 (SWC, DLD, JVR). Yet another **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Tennessee N.W.R., Dec. 23 (BHS), for about a 7th Tennessee record.

An ad. ♂ **Harlequin Duck** was taken by a hunter in *Cheatham*, Jan. 5 (Doss W. Neal, *vide* MLB), for an extraordinary 3rd Tennessee record, all in the space of one year—two were taken in January 1984 in e. Tennessee (see *AB* 38:317). Oldsquaw numbers were somewhat above average in s. sections of the Region. A Surf Scoter was carefully documented Nov. 27 in *Union*, Ark. (KS, HS, MB, YF). Another was reported from Gulf Islands Nat'l Seashore, Fla., Jan. 1 (CDC, RAD), where it is considered casual. Rare White-winged Scoters were in *Escambia* Dec. 10 (MLM, GG) and *Okaloosa*, Fla., Dec. 22 (RP, LR). One was at Alabama Pt., Ala., Dec. 26 (GDJ). Common Mergansers, uncommon in the n. of the Region and rare in the s., numbered 13 in middle Tennessee (*vide* SJS), but more unusual were eight at *Sardis L.*, Miss., Feb. 13 (MD, GK), and one was a true rarity in *St. Tammany*, La., Jan. 11 to end of period (*vide* JH). Others were found on various C.B.C.s. Twenty Ruddy Ducks lingered in *Williamson*, Tenn., to Jan. 18 (*vide* SJS), while 2780 in *Hancock*, Miss., were remarkable (JAT).

DIURNAL RAPTORS — Forty-five Black Vultures provided a very high number for the Ozarks in *Washington*, Ark., Dec. 15 (TH). A pair was tending 2 eggs in *Claiborne*, La., Feb. 25 (KS, HS, YF). At the *Washington*, Ark., roost Dec. 9 there were 105 Turkey Vultures (JN, TH). Ospreys continued to do well: there were a number of reports from Tennessee and Louisiana, and many observers no longer find the presence of Ospreys in winter noteworthy. Black-shouldered Kites did not seem to have retreated: birds remained in *Hancock*, Miss. (*vide* JAT), and in *Calcasieu*, La., near *Holmwood* (*vide* DB). A Mississippi Kite briefly observed in *Baton Rouge*, La., Dec. 10 (GB) would be by 8 days the latest for the state, and the more remarkable as this species is usually entirely gone by mid-September. Bald Eagles were well-reported from Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi, with 2 accessible Louisiana nests known to have fledged three young. Accipiter numbers were perhaps slightly up to the n., and down near the coast. One imm. N. Goshawk was in *Stewart*, Tenn., Dec. 27 (DWB).

S.A.

The bird of the season was a **Zone-tailed Hawk** found during the New Orleans C.B.C., Dec. 23, in *St. Bernard*, La. (TD). Accurate identification waited for a lifting fog the following morning (NN, SAG, RDP, JaH, JH, PW, CK, CS, GO). The weakened hawk was captured (TD, NLN) and brought to the Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, where x-rays revealed 3 shotgun pellets. After weeks of apparent progress, it died of unknown causes Mar. 15. There was no evidence of previous captivity.

A plan to send this bird to Arizona for eventual release deserves some comment. The practice of blindly mailing birds to some locality within their presumed range strikes this writer as being of dubious value. Whatever the causes of vagrancy, wandering, or lingering, they are unlikely to be resolved in the individual's (or species') favor by completely random human interference.

At least 17 Rough-legged Hawks were reported from middle Tennessee (*vide* SJS). More unexpected were a bird at Guntersville Dam, Ala., Feb. 16 (GDJ, HK), and two at *Sardis L.*, Miss., Feb. 17 (MD). A Golden Eagle was feeding on chicken carcasses with Bald Eagles in *Madison*, Ark., Feb. 14 (JN), and eight were reported from middle Tennessee (*vide* SJS). A gunshot victim was captured in *Escambia*, Fla., Dec. 11 (BM). A Golden Eagle seen by many in *Cameron*, La., in



Zone-tailed Hawk in *St. Bernard Parish*, La., Dec. 24, 1984. Photo/R. D. Purrington.

January and February was a great rarity; another was reported just e. of there Jan. 25 (*vide* DB). Few reports of Merlins and Peregrine Falcons can doubtless be regarded as good news. A Peregrine banded as an adult in the Brooks Range of Alaska June 23, 1984, was found injured and died Dec. 7 in *Lafourche*, La. (*vide* Krista Morgan). A **Prairie Falcon** near Guntersville Dam, Ala., Feb. 16 and thereafter (HK, GDJ, m.ob.) was a first or 2nd for Alabama. Origin?

RAILS THROUGH TERNS — A Sora in *Arkansas*, Ark., Feb. 28 (MW), flushed from a burning prairie. Three Sandhill Cranes at Holla Bend N.W.R. in *Pope*, Ark., Feb. 10-Mar. 16 were local rarities (TF, WS). Fall migration in Tennessee was marked by flocks of 80, 60, and 30 in *Dickett* (RH) Dec. 3, 6, & 7 respectively, and ended Dec. 22 with two in *Davidson* (BC) for a 4th Nashville area record. Spring migration commenced with 27 Feb. 21 and 24 Feb. 28 in *Putnam* (RWS), and 60 Feb. 26 and 40 Feb. 28 in *Overton* (FCB). Four in *Franklin* Jan. 4-16 were probably wintering (CC). Cranes in Louisiana away from the Cheyenneville area are extremely rare. A late report of 12 from *Cameron* (ph., R. Paille) Dec. 26, 1983, involved birds associated with last winter's strongest cold front. This winter, there were three in nearby *Vermillion*, La., Dec. 15 to the end of the period (ph. to L.S.U.M.Z.)—two Lessers and a Greater. Ten were seen in *Jackson* Fla., Dec. 8 (*vide* MG).

Two Am. Oystercatchers in *Hancock*, Miss., Feb. 13 (JAT, DK) may have provided a first county record. Away from its offshore breeding islands, the species is almost unknown in Mississippi and Louisiana. Greater Yellowlegs were unusual away from the coast with four on the Memphis C.B.C. for a first record; up to five in *Shreveport*, La., Dec. 29-Jan. 1 (PL, HHJ, AE) for a first winter record; nine in *Point Coupee* La., Jan. 6 (DG); and one in *Colbert*, Ala., Jan. 19 (NP). Surprisingly, a Lesser Yellowlegs in *Escambia*, Fla., Dec. 15 provided only the 2nd December record: the species is fairly common elsewhere along the coast. A Whimbrel which wintered on Mobile Bay, Ala., was only the 2nd for that locality—a Long-billed Curlew with it was only the 4th (GDJ, DGJ, RAD). A Marbled Godwit, present since October, was late

Dec. 1 in *Harrison*, Miss. (JAT). Thirteen Least Sandpipers were lingering in *Humphreys*, Tenn., Dec. 28 (SJS, PBH), and singles may have been northbound in *Lafayette*, Miss., Feb. 18 (MD, GK), and in *Davidson*, Tenn., Feb. 21 (DV). Dunlins were also n., with six accompanying the Least in Tennessee Dec. 28, and one with the Least in Mississippi Feb. 18. Three and two were in *Lauderdale*, Ala., Dec. 18 and Jan. 13 (NP). Stilt Sandpipers were found on the *Jackson*, Miss., C.B.C. (stakeout), and on the Johnson's Bayou, La., C.B.C. (*).

A **Little Gull** in Grenada, Miss., was an excellent find Dec. 19 (MD, GK), topped only by a **Common Black-headed Gull** there Jan. 6 (MD), which, if accepted, would establish Mississippi's 2nd record and one of very few for the Region. A **Thayer's Gull** was found on the New Orleans C.B.C., Dec. 23. This represented at least the 8th Louisiana record. In order to set the record straight (see *AB* 38:922), it should be noted that two specimens of Thayer's Gull taken in February and March of 1982 are in the L.S.U.M.Z. (See *AB* 36:303, which erroneously implies that both specimens were taken Feb. 28 in New Orleans; in fact, the 2nd was taken Mar. 7 in Chalmette, *St. Bernard*, La.) A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** in *Marshall*, Ala., was the state's 2nd, and first inland (DJa, AM, TAI). Apparently returned for the 3rd winter was a *Harrison*, Miss., **Lesser Black-backed Gull** on station throughout the period (*vide* JAT). Finally, a bird perhaps left over from the fall invasion of *Cameron*, La., beaches was located on the Johnson's Bayou C.B.C. and seen to the end of the period. Depending upon how one counts the fall birds, this would establish Louisiana's 6th or 7th record.



First-winter Glaucous Gull among lesser creatures at Lake Pontchartrain, La., December 1984. Photo/Dan Carroll.

Glaucous Gulls were around—one in *Marshall*, Ala., Feb. 16-Mar. 15 (GDJ, HK) was the 5th and latest for the Tennessee Valley of Alabama. One was on the *Harrison*, Miss., coast Jan. 3-6 (JAT, JT, ph.). Finally, one was on L. Pontchartrain in New Orleans Dec. 2 (GO), and apparently thereafter in the city dump, where it was last seen Jan. 12 (JH, HPa). Louisiana's 6th **Great Black-backed Gull** was in *Lafourche* Jan. 5, a first-winter bird feeding on a Lesser Scaup carcass (RJS, DPM). That dark-mantled, pink-legged, one-footed gull was reported only once, Dec. 8, from Pensacola, Fla. (PJ).

Forster's Terns were n. and late: in *Jefferson*, Ark., two Dec. 22 (DS, ASt) and two in *Chicot* Jan. 5 (DS, CaS); in *Shelby*, Tenn., Dec. 2-16, up to nine (BBC, LCC, JRW) for a first Memphis December record; and, finally, two in *Colbert*, Ala., Dec. 2, for a first December record in the Tennessee Valley of Alabama (NP).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — The Lake Charles, La., Inca Doves discovered last spring remained into the winter, with six there Dec. 15. Incredibly, at least 28 attended another Lake Charles feeder, a flock reported to have grown steadily since a pair appeared there 5 years ago (J. Davis, *vide* DB). A Com. Ground-Dove (ph.) Dec. 13 in Belle Mina, Ala., furnished only the 5th sighting for n. Alabama (CBr, PBr). Great Horned Owls were nesting in *Washington*, Ark., by Jan. 27. A 2nd pair occupied an old Red-tailed Hawk nest Feb. 2 (JN). An amazing six Long-eared Owls were in *Pope*, Ark., Feb. 17 (H & MP). Common Nighthawks in *Williamson* Dec. 11 (BHS) and *Davidson*, Tenn., Dec. 12 (MMa) were, like other species last December,

late. Eight Dec. 17, having dwindled to one Jan. 7, in downtown Birmingham, Ala., were also exceptional (RR, GA). A Chuck-will's-widow in *Cameron*, La., Jan. 24 demonstrated that the species occasionally survives (PMc). One seen Dec. 2 and recovered dead Dec. 9 in *Santa Rosa* (RAD, SD) was n.w. Florida's latest, excepting one Dec. 29, 1979.

A swift entered a living room via a chimney in *Jackson*, Fla., Feb. 11, was examined, and released, only to repeat the performance Feb. 14 (MG). It was thought to be a Chimney Swift. Inasmuch as this species is unknown n. of Brazil in winter, however, such a record would require exhaustive documentation. Based on previous documented records for the Gulf Coast, the bird was in all probability a sooty Vaux's Swift, but the other possibilities are mind-boggling. Observers should be aware that species which winter exclusively in South America are so unlikely to occur in winter as to render sight records virtually worthless. Similar species from the tropics may be as likely to appear.

Hummingbirds once again made news, although for the first time since 1974 no Buff-bellieds appeared in Louisiana, possibly the result of last winter's cold which penetrated to n.e. Mexico. Two Ruby-throateds were confirmed in December in Louisiana, and four Black-chinneds were banded, a relatively low number (*vide* NLN). At long last Arkansas proved the existence of **Rufous Hummingbird** there in winter when a bird, present since mid-November, was found frozen at the home of C. Hawkins in *Jefferson* in mid-January (*L.S.U.M.Z., TFO). Similarly, Mississippi also obtained its first specimen when a bird, present since Dec. 28, was found dead after a freezing rain Jan. 21 in *Harrison* (DK, JAT, JJ, CDC; * M.S.U.). Nearly 25 *Selasphorus* were recorded in Louisiana, of which 14 were banded and confirmed as Rufous (*vide* NLN), while an **Allen's Hummingbird** was collected in Baton Rouge Dec. 3 (PMc), for a 4th Louisiana record. A surprising number of birds survived this January's severe cold: some, like five Rufous in Stein's heated garage, with human help, but many on their own, including several which reappeared after the all-time record low of 9°F that struck Baton Rouge (*vide* RJS, PMc).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS — *Empidonax* flycatchers were found on a number of coastal Louisiana, C.B.C.s; elsewhere, single reports came from *Jackson*, Miss., Dec. 9 (DR), and *Jefferson*, La., Dec. 13 (NLN). Identified birds all were Least Flycatchers. A Vermilion Flycatcher in Memphis Dec. 1 (CCR) furnished the 9th w. Tennessee record. Ash-throated Flycatchers were in *Cameron*, La., Dec. 29 (ph., MJM), New Orleans Jan. 8 (*DPM, JRe), and in *Bienville* Jan. 13 (*PD) for a first n.w. Louisiana record. Western Kingbirds were found on 2 s.w. Louisiana C.B.C.s and at 4 locations in s. Mississippi Dec. 1-Jan. 5 (DR, JAT, DK), and one was at Gulf Shores, Ala., Dec. 25-29 (MF, MH). Regular in fall, though more scarce as one moves e., the species rarely winters. An **Eastern Kingbird** reported from *Okaloosa*, Fla., Dec. 22 (RL, BSt) would provide a first winter record for n.w. Florida. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers are perhaps somewhat more likely in winter than W. Kingbirds. Birds were in *Plaquemines*, La., Dec. 7 (PN), at Dauphin I., Ala., Dec. 8 (MF), at Ft. Morgan, Ala., Jan. 5 (CDC), and in *Lafourche* and *Orleans*, La., Jan. 8 (RK, DPM, JRe).

A Purple Martin in *St. Charles*, La., Jan. 5 (NLN), in ♀ plumage, was presumably wintering. First spring arrivals were five in Laplace, La., Jan. 28 (two of which perished in severe cold, *vide* RJS), and two in *Jackson*, Miss., Feb. 2 (O. West). Northern Rough-winged Swallows, largely absent in recent Louisiana winters, were found on most s. Louisiana C.B.C.s—by Jan. 5, an all-time Regional winter high 200 were feeding in the Bonnet Carre Spillway, *St. Charles* (MWE, RJS). One was in Gulf Shores, Ala., Dec. 6 (RAD), and again Dec. 29 on that C.B.C. A **Barn Swallow** there Dec. 9-Jan. 1 (GDJ, DGJ, CDC) provided Alabama's 2nd winter record.

Perhaps the low numbers of Blue Jays reported in the Memphis, Tenn., area (*vide* BBC) had something to do with the very high numbers seen migrating along the Louisiana coast in the fall. Why would Tufted Titmice migrate in a mild December? The species was widely reported away from resident areas in *Orleans*, and on the coastal chenieres of *Cameron*, La.

House Wrens were in good numbers throughout December in n. portions of the Region, but numbers may have dropped even near the coast after the January cold (*vide* SJS, BBC, TAI, JAT, JMc). One in

Washington, Ark., Jan. 23 was exceptional (TH). Kinglet numbers were low in the n., especially after the first week of January, but relatively high nearer the coast. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers took advantage of the balmy December conditions to winter well n. of the coast: exclusive of C.B.C.s, the records were Dec. 13 & 15, *Lafayette*, Miss. (MD, GK), Dec. 18, *Lauderdale*, Ala. (NP), Jan. 1, *Chicot*, Ark. (DS), and Jan. 5, *Wheeler N.W.R.*, Ala. (TG, DaS, NP). Wood Thrushes were found on 2 s. Louisiana C.B.C.s, but one in *Cameron* Feb. 17 (*SWC, GR, JVR) was a first winter specimen. A **Varied Thrush** found on the Sabine C.B.C., Dec. 15 (CR, MJM, JS, JK) was Louisiana's first—it was relocated Dec. 16 (JVR, 50+ obs.) but not seen thereafter. American Robins were reported as scarce from many coastal areas—no doubt they remained n. Perhaps the same was true of Water Pipits which were absent from traditional spots in New Orleans (MM, RDP). There were few Cedar Waxwings along the coast, but beginning in late February, an old-style invasion was staged, with flocks of hundreds (A & GS, m.ob.).

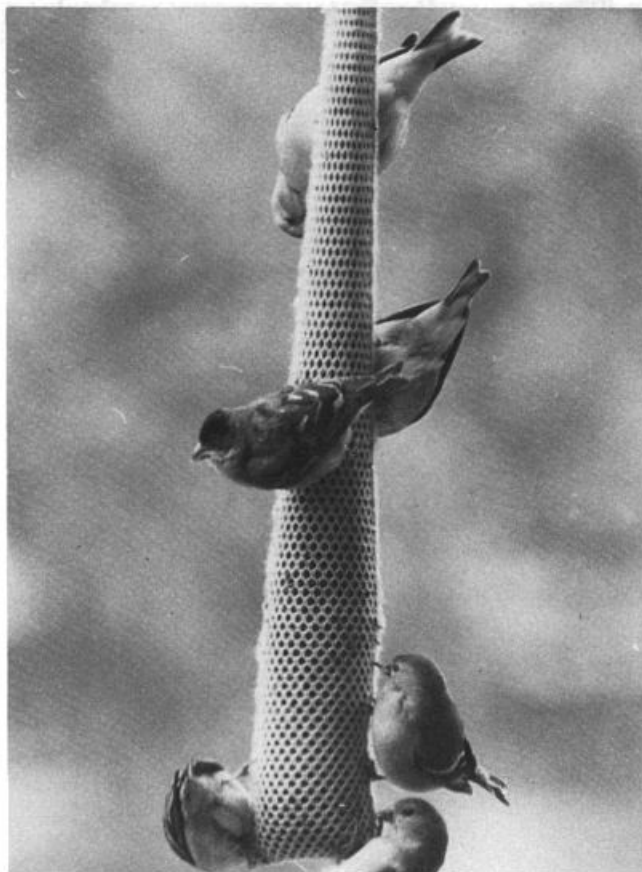
WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES—Despite mild December conditions, warbler variety did not equal that of last winter. Exclusive of C.B.C. birds, the interesting finds were: Orange-crowned Dec. 23, *Humphreys*, Tenn. (BHS); an "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Jan. 18, *Barataria* Unit, *Jean Lafitte Nat'l Historic P.*, *Jefferson*, La. (DPM); Blackburnian Warbler Dec. 9, *Santa Rosa*, Fla. (RAD, SD, SC), which must surely have been an extremely late migrant; Yellow-throated Dec. 11, *Hancock*, Miss. (JAT, GM), and two on the L.S.U. campus in *Baton Rouge*, La., Feb. 2, for a very unusual inland record (KVR, TD, JVR); a *Prairie* in *Cameron*, La., Dec. 21 (PMc); numerous Black-and-whites; a late Am. Redstart Dec. 7-8, *Jefferson*, La. (NLN); an Ovenbird in *Hancock*, Miss., Dec. 6 (JAT, DK, MiB), which provided a first area winter record; two Ovenbirds in *Jean Lafitte Nat'l Historic P.*, which wintered away from the coast in bottomland hardwoods (DPM); three N. Waterthrushes also wintered there in cypress-tupelo swamp (DPM); an extraordinary (if documented) Louisiana Waterthrush in *Point Coupee*, La., Feb. 16 (DG); and, finally, a *Wilson's Warbler* in *Santa Rosa*, Fla., Dec. 9-Feb. 16 (RAD, SD, BM), providing a first February record for that area.

Non-C.B.C. Summer Tanagers were in *St. Charles*, La., Jan. 31 (RIS, MW); *Jefferson*, La., Dec. 24 (NK); at L.S.U. in *Baton Rouge*, La., Mar. 1 (KVR, GR, TD, JVR); in *Jackson*, Miss., Dec. 13 (DR, HC, ChC); and in *Escambia*, Fla., Dec. 15-23 (CLK, JoJ). Somewhat rarer W. Tanagers were in *Natchitoches*, La., Dec. 30-Jan. 10 at a feeder (L. Hall), and in *Okaloosa*, Fla., Jan. 6 to end of period (RP).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in *Maury*, Tenn., Jan. 12-13 (Joh) was visiting a feeder as expected. Indigo Buntings were well reported, with singles in *Davidson*, Tenn., Jan. 5 (JoR, HR) and in *Ouachita*, La., Feb. 4 (DTK, RRI), being the most notable. Dickcissels frequented feeders in *Montgomery*, Tenn., Nov. 27-Jan. 19 (AHH) and *Shelby* Feb. 6 (JW). A Bachman's Sparrow found on the New Orleans C.B.C., 40 mi from suitable habitat, was incredible. An invasion of Am. Tree Sparrows in Arkansas and Tennessee in early February was thought to be due to snow cover farther n. (*vide* SJS, JN). A Chipping Sparrow, rare in Tennessee in winter, visited a feeder in *Montgomery* Jan. 4 to the end of the period (AHH, m.ob.).

An imm. Dark-eyed "Oregon" Junco at L.S.U., Feb. 2 (KVR) was a good find. Junco numbers were generally thought low (RIS, BBC). Despite January's fierce cold, Lapland Longspurs were not much in evidence—the only report, exclusive of C.B.C.s, was from *St. Tammany*, La., Jan. 20 (JH). Eight Smith's Longspurs were in *Prairie*, Ark., Jan. 26 (H & MP), and in *Benton*, Ark., Feb. 9, for the 2nd year in a row (DJ, JN, PBH, LA, TH). A W. Meadowlark, first found on the New Orleans C.B.C., Dec. 23, was relocated Jan. 8 (DPM, JRe, m.ob.)—this represented the first record for s.e. Louisiana in 25 years. Yellow-headed Blackbirds were notable in *Davidson*, Tenn., Dec. 1-Feb. 9 (RC) and in *Sumner* Jan. 27 (D & PC). Blackbird numbers were high Regionwide (*vide* TAI, BO, SJS). An Orchard Oriole at Ft. Morgan, Ala., Jan. 5 (CDC) provided Alabama's 3rd winter record. A **Scott's Oriole** in *Cameron*, La., Feb. 19 (A & GS) was exceptional and followed on the heels of fall reports.

Purple Finches were very scarce Regionwide. House Finches were reported only from Tennessee, with the most unusual a single in *Shelby* Feb. 21 (JL). A **Red Crossbill** in *Lauderdale*, Ala., Feb. 18 (JMo, LN)



Lesser Goldfinch (with American Goldfinches) at Gretna, La., early 1985. Second Louisiana record. Photo/Fred Barry.

established the 2nd area record. Arkansas' 5th record of **Common Redpoll** was furnished by four in *Carroll* Feb. 5 (F & MR), while Tennessee's 10th was in *Stewart* Jan. 21 (DWB). Pine Siskins were generally absent until late February, when some areas enjoyed a modest invasion. Louisiana's (and the Region's) 2nd **Lesser Goldfinch** was in *Gretna*, a suburb of New Orleans, Jan. 19-Feb. 20 (ph. FB, m.ob.). This imm. male, which frequented a thistle feeder in the company of Am. Goldfinches, was the first to be found since one was collected from a flock in *Cameron*, La., 30 years ago. Single reports of Evening Grosbeaks were received from Arkansas and Tennessee but there was clearly no echo of last year's invasion.

CORRIGENDA: The **Purple Sandpiper** (JVR, DBC, PMc, GR, LMc, DPM) reported in *AB* 38:326 should have been boldfaced. The photograph of a possible Thayer's Gull in *AB* 38:327 should have been credited to R.D. Purrington, as noted in the text.

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PRAIRIE PROVINCES REGION

/Wayne C. Harris

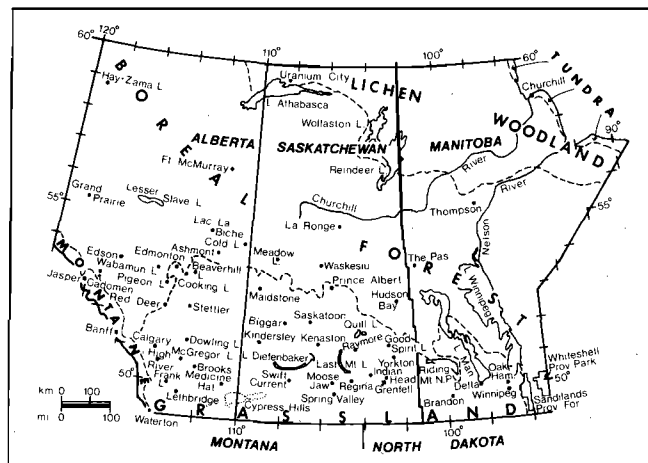
For the first time in a number of years this Region truly had winter. Just in case we should forget what winter was really like, Mother Nature decided to throw a good example for us. Except for southeastern Manitoba and some areas of southeastern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan, snow cover was general and, particularly in central Saskatchewan, substantial by December 1. Temperatures reached -30°C consistently during December and more snow fell adding to that already accumulated. Early January saw a brief warming trend, then more cold temperatures and snow. Total precipitation was near or above normal in the Region except in the southwest areas where less than normal snow was received. The heavy snow cover drove many species farther south than had been the case during the past few years and there were far fewer stragglers surviving the winter than usual.

GREBES THROUGH DUCKS — A single Horned Grebe Jan. 7 near Carburn provided a rare winter record for s. Alberta (OD). There was one Tundra Swan at Saskatoon through to Jan. 4 and two at Gardiner Dam, Sask., to at least Dec. 14, both at artificially-maintained open water near power plants (MDG, CJE, HDL, SJS). Away from the power plants, Weyburn had nine Canada Geese Dec. 12, considered late only because of the early arrival of winter (NP).

The normal populations of waterfowl remained on artificially-maintained open water. Rarities included an Am. Black Duck at Calgary through Feb. 3 (IH, AS, RS, WW) and a Ring-necked Duck at Saskatoon Dec. 1 (CJE, HDL). A ♀ Oldsquaw remained at Calgary until Dec. 7 and three ♀ Buffleheads remained through the winter at Lethbridge (RS, CJ, MO). At Calgary good numbers of Barrow's Goldeneyes spent the winter, the highest count being of 10 on Feb. 3 (LG, DC).

DIURNAL RAPTORS — A N. Harrier Dec. 16 near Caron furnished a rare winter record for Saskatchewan (*vide* EWK). Bald Eagle numbers were down at both Squaw Rapids, Sask., and Calgary where they traditionally winter (WCH, DC). Manitoba's first winter Cooper's Hawk was seen near Kleefield Feb. 23 (DFa). Northern Goshawk numbers remained below normal in the forested areas and above normal to the s. as they presumably moved out of the forest in search of food (WCH, SOJ, DC). Red-tailed Hawks were again reported, with an immature in the Cominco-Carburn, Alta., area Jan. 26-Feb. 3 (DC, RS, LG) and one near Big River, Sask., Mar. 1 (WCH, CD) both well before the return of spring migrants. There were far fewer reports of Rough-legged Hawks than normal; even in the East Baintree, Man., area where an amazing 128 were seen Dec. 1, none remained (GDG, RfK).

An Am. Kestrel near Tribune Dec. 27 provided a rare winter record for Saskatchewan (RM) while in Winnipeg, where they regularly winter, three were present (SH, HC, GDG). Only Manitoba reported Peregrine Falcons, with singles at Oak Bank Feb. 6 and Gunton Feb. 11 (MGS, N. Alexander). A single Prairie Falcon was seen at Blumenort, Man., Feb. 24-28, e. of their normal wintering area (RWN, HC, DFa). Gyrfalcons were in their normal low numbers with 2 sightings in Alberta, 3 in Saskatchewan, and 6 in Manitoba (DC, JS, CJE, PLB, WCH, KAG, CWC, GDG).



GROUSE THROUGH OWLS — Both Spruce and Ruffed grouse numbers remained well below average with Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers being average to slightly above average. Willow Ptarmigan moved S to at least Buffalo Narrows and Jan L. in c. Saskatchewan (WCH, CJE, SJS, HDL). The only Glaucous Gull was one at Saskatoon Dec. 6-9 (MDG, CJE). Two Mourning Doves spent the winter near Bergen, Alta. (*vide* FH).

A rare winter E. Screech-Owl was found near Oxbow Feb. 8 (HP). Great Horned Owl populations remained low, following the cycle of the snowshoe hare. Only at Winnipeg and Rosetown-Kyle, Sask., were Snowy Owls common with the best count at the latter area being 29 Jan 8 (CJE). Elsewhere this species was present in good numbers early in the season but slowly disappeared, apparently moving in search of food. A Barred Owl was found dead in a cattle shed near Wauchope in January

—S.A.—

Great Gray Owl numbers were down throughout the boreal forest. In s.e. Manitoba, R. Nero and H. Copland banded only 26, all in the extreme s.e. corner near the Minnesota border. In Saskatchewan's forest there were 4 scattered sightings, the last being Jan. 23 near Deschambault L. (CJE). During February and early March, coverage of over 5000 km of roads in central Saskatchewan yielded no sightings for the first time in 10 years (WCH). In Alberta the best area seemed to be the Lesser Slave L.-High Level area where seven were seen Feb. 23-Mar. 6 (JP). Where did they all go? Did they move to other areas, as might be suggested by 2 Saskatchewan sightings (Warman, Wauchope) well to the s. of the forest (SJS, W. Nicholson); or did they just stay in the secluded swamps unseen by searchers?

Short-eared Owls were unusually scarce in Saskatchewan where there was only one sighting (Eastend, Dec. 24); yet in s. Manitoba, where they are rarely seen, there were singles at Winnipeg Dec. 15 and Delta Jan. 5 (J. & C. Morgan, CWC). Rarely-reported Boreal Owls were seen

at Sheho in early February, Weyburn Dec. 18, and Water Valley, Alta, Jan. 18 (WN, NP, CH). The usual numbers of N. Saw-whet Owls were reported with singles at White Bear, Sask., late January to Feb. 5, Rock L., Man., Dec. 30, and one found dead at Winnipeg Jan. 1 (SOJ, M. Nelson, H. Burton).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH CORVIDS — A ♂ **Red-bellied Woodpecker** survived through the winter at a feeder s. of Winnipeg (*vide* RFK). Both Downy and Hairy woodpecker numbers were down slightly at most localities, possibly as a result of interspecific predation, as at Oxbow Hazel Paton watched a ♀ Hairy attack a Downy and pull feathers from its back. Both "three-toed" woodpeckers were more common than usual in Saskatchewan and apparently in Manitoba where seven Three-toeds and 23 Black-backed were seen Jan. 5 in a burned forest area in Nopiming P.P. (WCH, RT). Pileated Woodpeckers were reportedly down in both Saskatchewan and Alberta (MS, DC).

During the past few years we have become accustomed to having Horned Larks wintering n. almost to the boreal forest. This winter, however, saw the more traditional wintering population, restricted primarily to s.w. Saskatchewan and s. Alberta. The first migrants outside of this area were reported around Feb. 20. American Crows were reported only in the larger urban centers, as usual (CJE, DC, RE). There was a significant movement of Gray Jays out of the forest region. Calgary reported increased numbers while in Saskatchewan singles were reported from Regina, Good Spirit L., and Round L. (CA, WJA, DFr). Southern Manitoba had numerous reports (*vide* RFK). Forest and forest fringe areas in both Saskatchewan and Alberta reported increased numbers of Blue Jays (MS, FM, CA, WJA, WCH, DC, FH). Common Ravens followed the Gray Jays S (or vice versa) in Saskatchewan. There were at least three in the Saskatoon area (CJE), two each in the Raymore and Wolseley areas (WCH, SML, JDH), and singles at Naicam, Lanigan, Mozart, Lestock, and Round Lake (WCH, DFr).

CREEPER THROUGH JUNCOS — Brown Creepers were more common than last winter in both Edmonton and Calgary (WH, DC). Townsend's Solitaires were, as usual, reported at several scattered localities. There were singles at Eastend Dec. 23, Saskatoon Dec. 4-6, and Regina Dec. 4 (MAG, CJE, BL). The only Varied Thrush reports were from Calgary Dec. 16 and Grosse Ile, Man., Dec. 2 (DC, E. Spurr). Bohemian Waxwings were generally down in numbers due probably to the lack of a substantial berry crop (WJW, WCH). Northern Shrikes were scarce except in s. Manitoba where at least 18 were reported, an increase over last year (GDG, GEH).

The only N. Cardinal report was of a male at Dauphin Dec. 13-15

(*vide* WJW). Manitoba's 2nd winter **Chipping Sparrow** was present in Winnipeg until Jan. 27. Another rare winter species, the **Fox Sparrow**, was reported at Balmoral, Man., Dec. 15 (*vide* C. Thexton). Song Sparrows were reported from Pike L., s. of Saskatoon, Jan. 1 (CJE, HDL) and Millarville, Alta., Dec. 2-Feb. 1 (JM) and there were 5 reports of White-throated Sparrows in s. Manitoba, more than usual (*vide* RFK). One report of Harris' Sparrow would be normal during the winter; this year there were four. One wintered in Saskatoon (CJE) and in s. Manitoba one was seen Dec. 15 at Dauphin (WJW), and singles wintered at Basswood and Winnipeg (Mr. & Mrs. H. Proven, Mrs. A. Swain). Manitoba's 2nd record of a **Dark-eyed (Gray-headed) Junco** was provided by one overwintering at a Winnipeg feeder (RFK, PT, ph.)

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES — There were the usual scattered reports of blackbirds and except for 50+ at Medicine Hat (RG), numbers were normal. Common Grackle reports were up with at least nine in s. Manitoba and singles in Regina and Saskatoon (RFK, CA, CJE). The expected Rosy Finch influx (see fall 1984 report) did not materialize. Pine Grosbeaks were present in the s. in good numbers for the first time in the past 2 years and below normal in the boreal forest. An influx of Red Crossbills and to a lesser extent White-winged Crossbills occurred, with White-wingeds decreasing by mid-January (*vide* RFK, WCH, JG). Both species of redpolls were common in the s., and in s. Saskatchewan some flocks had more than 50% Hoarries (WCH). Both Pine Siskin and Am. Goldfinch are rare winter species in s. Manitoba, thus it was surprising to have excellent numbers of both species including an amazing 297 Pine Siskins on one day in Winnipeg (*vide* RFK). Only in Prince Albert N.P. were Evening Grosbeaks more common than usual (MS); elsewhere this species was scarce.

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NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

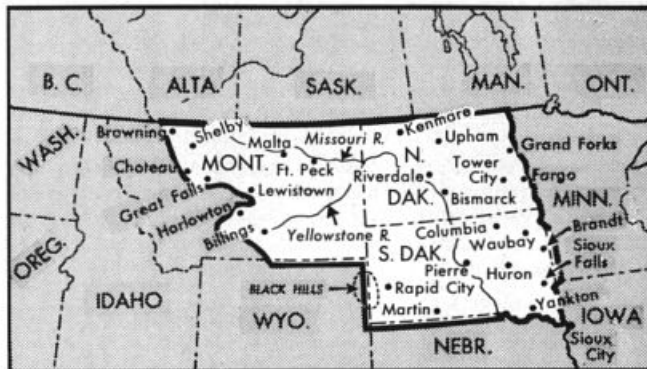
/David O. Lambeth

The abundance and variety of birds present this winter was probably as good as we can ever expect in this Region. An early irruption of finches and other northern species, which was well underway by November 1, accounted for much of the variety. However, there was also a good assortment of semihardy species. Temperatures were below normal in December, especially late in the month, while those in January were near normal. Following early February's siege of protracted, bitter cold, a genuine thaw set in for the remainder of the month, and the below-average snowpack quickly disappeared. By the last week in February, Canada Geese were moving up the Missouri River and had reached the northernmost refuges in North Dakota and Montana. Their arrival, along with crows and prairie Horned Larks, signaled the beginning of migration and the beginning of the end of winter.

In the following text, place names in *italics* are counties.

HERONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Two Great Blue Herons wintered on the Yellowstone R. at Laurel, Mont. (CMC). A flock of 80 Snow Geese in *Turner, S.D.*, at the beginning of the period dwindled to six by Dec. 21 when they were poached (LA). Aerial surveys of Canada Geese along the Yellowstone R. showed they had all but disappeared by

Jan. 11, from a count of 11,000+ in early December (TH). During the same period, Mallards declined from 6700 to 1300 while numbers of Canada and Mallards on the Bighorn R. were stable at 3000+ and 12,000+, respectively. A ♂ **Oldsquaw** wintered below Garrison Dam, N.D. (REM, GBB), and another Oldsquaw was found frozen in the ice at Yankton, S.D., Dec. 6 (WH). Three were on the Yellowstone after-bay Jan. 1 (Y.V.A.S.). A Com. Goldeneye was at Fargo Dec. 12-27 where any duck is very unusual after early December (TD). A ♂ Red-



breasted Merganser was seen at Ft. Randall Dam, S.D., Jan. 26 (D & MS), and two females wintered below Garrison Dam.

RAPTORS — The comment "more than usual" occurred frequently in the state editors' reports, leaving no doubt that this was an unusually good year for raptors. Perhaps this was due partly to the mild, open winter, and partly to better-than-average abundance of prey. Bald Eagles, as usual, wintered in numbers below the mainstem dams of the Missouri R., and along streams which remained open. Five sightings of adults in the Malta, Mont., area were considered unusual there. Each of the 3 accipiters was more numerous than usual in South Dakota (*vide* BKH). Sharp-shinned Hawks, which are considered casual at best during winter in North Dakota, apparently wintered at Arrowwood N.W.R. (RJ) and Bismarck (m.ob.). Additional sightings were at Burlington and Logan in North Dakota (REM, GBB), and at Ft. Peck, Mont. (CMC). Perhaps their presence was related to the finch irruption. Four reports of Cooper's Hawks were received from South Dakota. Northern Goshawks were again more numerous than usual, especially in w. North Dakota and in Montana. They were reported to be preying on Pine Grosbeaks in *Brown*, S.D. (DT), and on pheasants at Salyer Refuge (WW).

The six Ferruginous Hawks reported from South Dakota included four seen on a raptor survey in *Gregory*, Jan. 10-14 (GS). A 60-mi raptor survey in s.w. South Dakota turned up 24 Rough-legged Hawks (RP, AW). Carlson reported that this species was absent from some areas of Montana where it is usually the most common winter raptor; however, it should be noted that migration was exceptionally heavy through the Minot area last fall. With the warmer weather in late February, Rough-leggeds were moving back through North Dakota. Golden Eagles were present in above the usual numbers in w. North Dakota, where wildlife officials indicated a large jackrabbit population was present. Eleven Golden Eagles were seen on the 60-mi survey in s.w. South Dakota Jan. 10 (RP, AW), and a total of 40 was found on the eagle survey in *Gregory*, S.D., Jan. 10-14 (GS, DLL). Merlins seemed to be less common than in recent years, but the 5 sightings at Malta, Mont. (DP *et al.*) were considered unusual. Sightings of Peregrine Falcons included one at Fargo Jan. 3 (MB, CS), one in *Charles Mix*, S.D., Jan. 2 (DS), and up to two near Ft. Peck Dec. 8-Jan. 1 (CMC, LKM). It was a banner year for **Gyrfalcons** in Montana with sightings at Moore (LKM), Danvers (LKM), Malta (JG, DP), and two at Ft. Peck (CMC). Very few hawks winter in e. North Dakota, but Prairie Falcons again wintered at Grand Forks and Fargo. A Prairie Falcon was one of several hawks preying on ducks near Ft. Peck in December (CMC).

TURKEY THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Game officials continue to transplant Wild (?) Turkeys to many areas in this Region. The turkeys appear to be doing well, thanks in part to the availability of feedlots in winter. An aerial count of 200 was made on sprawling Salyer Refuge, and 42 were reported for the N. Unit of Roosevelt N.P. (SS). Up to eight were seen in a small horse pasture within the city limits of Lewistown, Mont. (LKM), and landowners were feeding those affected by an extensive forest fire near Roundup.

At least two of five Virginia Rails and a Com. Snipe survived through Feb. 18 in a small marsh near Park City, Mont. (BR). Thirty-five Am. Coots were at the Yellowtail Afterbay Feb. 18 (CMC). Gulls at the tailrace below Garrison Dam Dec. 8 included a California, providing the 2nd winter record for North Dakota; 650 Herrings; four first-year and one 2nd-year Thayer's; the same **Iceland Gull** present in November; and three first-year, one 2nd-year, and one ad. Glaucous. The only gull left on Dec. 23 was one of the Thayer's (GBB, REM). An ad. Glaucous Gull in Yankton Dec. 5 may have been the first adult for South Dakota (WH). As usual, observations of Mourning Doves, all in the e. Dakotas, were in December.

Snowy Owls were present in fair numbers. A Barred Owl was in Fargo Jan. 26-Feb. 17 (RK), and a Long-eared Owl remained at Waubay N.W.R. into January (RB). Carlson commented, and many observers would agree, that the numbers of wintering Short-eared Owls have dropped considerably in the past 10 years. However, there was a decided influx at several locations in e. North Dakota with the best count being 25 (possibly more) at Lake Alice Refuge (RS). A calling **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard Feb. 26-28 in *Fall River*, S.D. (RP). Saw-whets were also found at Tewaukon Ref. (DGP), Bowdoin N.W.R. (KS), and Ft. Peck (CMC), making this an exceptional winter

for this species. The fresh remains of four Saw-whet Owls were found in 3 Wood Duck boxes at Salyer Dec. 13-14 (WW). The identity of the predator was not determined.

A Belted Kingfisher survived through Dec. 23 at Garrison Dam, N.D. (REM, GL), n. of the usual range limit in South Dakota. Unusual for winter was a Red-headed Woodpecker Feb. 23 (WH, JW), and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Jan. 19 (WH), both in *Yankton*, S.D. Several N. Flickers wintered in North Dakota.

CORVIDS THROUGH WARBLERS — A **Gray Jay** wintered near Crystal, N.D. (LFM, RBM), and one was in Fargo Jan. 1-6 (JF, NZ). Six Clark's Nutcrackers were seen Feb. 18 in *Custer*, S.D. (RP, MP). Reports of Com. Raven in North Dakota included two at Fargo Dec. 9 (AL). Pygmy Nuthatches are being increasingly reported in the Black Hills where as many as three to four are being recorded per day in *Fall River* (RP). It was considered an exceptional year for Red-breasted Nuthatches in all areas, including some where they rarely winter. In Montana, a Canyon Wren was singing n. of Billings Feb. 19 (CMC *et al.*), and Marsh Wrens were seen Jan. 17 near Park City, Mont. (Y.V.A.S.) and Feb. 14 in *Fall River*, S.D. (RP). Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers are normally in migration throughout December in North Dakota, and none was reported to have wintered.

Five E. Bluebirds were present in mid-winter (Jan. 25) at Yankton (WH). Townsend's Solitaires were present in excellent numbers in the badlands and reports indicated a few were present to the e. limit of the Region, e.g., at Tewaukon (DGP), and in South Dakota in *Beadle* (JJ), *Brookings* (BKH), *Kingsbury* (BKH), and *Brown* (DT). American Robins were by all reports scarcer than usual. Bohemian Waxwings made a strong showing with counts in the few hundred range except in the drought-impacted areas of Montana where food supplies were poor. Cedar Waxwings were irregularly distributed in North Dakota where several counts were in the 30-50 range. Berkey considered it the best year in a decade for N. Shrikes at Minot where daily counts averaged five to six through early January when numbers dropped. A Yellow-rumped Warbler in *Gregory*, S.D., Dec. 1 provided a rare winter-period record for a warbler in this Region (GS).

CARDINAL THROUGH FINCHES — Two ♀ N. Cardinals wintered at a feeder near L. Metigoshe S.P. in the Turtle Mts. where reports have been occasionally received in the past (REM, GBB). Might there be a disjunct breeding population there? A Rufous-sided Towhee presumably perished after Jan. 1 in Burlington, N.D. (*vide* GBB), but one was seen as late as Feb. 10 in *Gregory*, S.D. (GS). A mysterious sparrow at a Billings feeder looked more and more like a Clay-colored as the season progressed (*vide* CMC). Sparrows in the "not supposed to be here" category included a Fox Sparrow at Fargo Dec. 8-Feb. 5 (RK), Song Sparrows at Grand Forks Dec. 2 (GL) and Bismarck from October to Feb. 18 (RNR), and an exceptional number of Harris' Sparrows well n. of the usual range. A Harris' Sparrow which appeared irregularly throughout the period at a Grand Forks feeder had a lower mandible which extended well beyond the upper (P. Ray, DOL). Other successfully wintering Harris' Sparrows were at Minot (D. Fluhrer) and Arrowwood N.W.R. (PV), while mid-winter sightings occurred in Fargo and near Garrison Dam. Unusual sightings of blackbirds included 33 Rusty and one Brewer's Dec. 19 in Lewistown, Mont. (LKM), and a Brown-headed Cowbird at a Sioux Falls feeder Dec. 25-Jan. 13 (MMS).

The irruption of finches noted in the fall report continued unabated through the winter period. Pine Grosbeaks were found as far s. as *Gregory*, S.D., for only the 2nd record there (GS). The irruption was limited to the Dakotas; only one bird was reported in Montana. As noted in the fall report, it was an exceptional season for **Rosy Finches** in the badlands, and they were reported as far e. as *Jackson*, S.D. (KG), and New Town, N.D. (BH). Counts of 200 ± were recorded at 2 *Custer*, S.D., feeders (MP), and at Malone's feeder in Lewistown, Mont., where about 3% were of the Hepburn's race. Purple Finches were relatively scarce everywhere. Cassin's Finches appeared in low numbers at 5 feeders in the Black Hills. The House Finch at Minot was last seen Dec. 18 (*vide* GBB).

Red Crossbills were fewer than normal in Montana, but a strong flight occurred in North Dakota and e. South Dakota, where counts in the 25-50 range were common. At Minot, they appeared to be territorial in late February, when one was also observed carrying grass (REM). White-

winged Crossbills were similarly distributed with counts at some feeders in the five-to-10 range. It was the best flight into South Dakota since 1979-1980 according to Harris. Common Redpolls were indeed common over the Region with counts of 100-200 at many feeding stations. However, they did not begin to move to feeders until mid-December, about 6 weeks after arrival, and numbers steadily increased through February. Whether they prefer natural foods, or it takes time for them to become feeder-wise, is uncertain. Hoary Redpolls irrupted to at least the n. tier of counties in South Dakota (DT, KH) and were also reported in small numbers for Montana. In North Dakota, numbers at feeders were often in the range of five to 10, but one feeder in New Town hosted 25 among the 200 Commons (BH). The race *hornemanni* was well-represented. Pine Siskins were also present in very high numbers as evidenced by a count of 500 in January in Mandan (WB), and some 600 banded in December in Brown, S.D. (DT). A pair at Minot completed a nest by March 1 (REM). American Goldfinches were widely distributed

in low numbers. Evening Grosbeaks were present in good numbers in the w. Dakotas, but virtually absent from the e. halves of those states.

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SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

/Frances C. Williams

December was extremely mild and many migrants and summer residents lingered throughout the month. The most notable trend of the winter was the major invasion of montane or northern species, including Red Crossbills, Cassin's Finches, redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Townsend's Solitaires, and all three bluebird species. The scarcity of Purple Finches and longspurs was an unexplained mystery.

ABBREVIATION — T.C.W.C. = Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection at Texas A & M University. *Italicized* names indicate counties.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — A Red-throated Loon visited L. Hefner, Oklahoma City, Dec. 9-10 (JSh, JGN) and four remained on L. Texoma, Grayson, Tex., Jan. 26-Feb. 28 (KH *et al.*). On all the larger lakes in n. and c. Texas, Com. Loons were numerous. Horned Grebes, normally uncommon in Texas, were present from Tyler (AM) to L. Meredith in the Panhandle (KDS) and L. Balmorhea, Reeves. A Red-necked Grebe provided a first county record in Wyandotte, Kans. (LM). The first W. Grebe in Tyler since 1977 was observed Jan. 26 (AM). Two light-phase birds were in Hudspeth, Tex., Dec. 1 (BZ, DW). An Am. White Pelican wintered at Manhattan, Kans. (TTC). Small groups of Am. White Pelicans were seen in Taylor and Washington, Tex., in February and in Tarrant Dec. 8. The only Am. Bittern reported was at San Angelo, Tex., Feb. 3 (I & CCW). A Great Blue Heron remained in Lancaster, Neb., until Dec. 31 (JT), and 10 were inspecting old nests in a heronry in Washington, Okla., Feb. 24 (ED). Great Egrets lingered at several Texas localities through December, and one was seen in Tarrant Jan. 13. Seven Cattle Egrets in Briscoe Dec. 1 represented one of the few winter sightings in the Texas Panhandle (JR). The probable Glossy Ibis in Tarrant was collected in December, but no further information is available at this time.

WATERFOWL — Tundra Swans were reported in Coffey, Kans., Kenton, Okla., Johnson, El Paso, and Midland, Tex. Trumpeter Swans from the re-introduced flock in Minnesota migrated into the Region. Four spent February in Anderson, Kans. (m.ob.), and four others rested on the Cimarron R. in Payne, Okla. (SL). The Bean Goose discovered during the Christmas Bird Count at DeSoto N.W.R., Neb., remained until Jan. 10 and was admired by approximately 2500 people from 7 states. The facts that it appeared to be of the race *middendorffii* from Siberia and had no bands or other signs of captivity led observers to believe it was a wild bird. Six Snow Geese in Garden, Neb., provided the first winter record there in 12 years (RCR, DJR). Ross' Geese were seen in Barton, Kans., Jan. 7 (SS), Rogers and Osage, Okla., Feb. 17, 21, & 23 (DV), Hagerman N.W.R., Tex., Jan. 1-Feb. 28 (KH, JHB), and Hudspeth, Tex., Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (m.ob.). Unusual winter sightings of Wood Ducks were in Albion, Neb., Feb. 3 (WJM), Washington,



Okla., Jan. 1 & 18 (MG, ED), Abilene, Tex., Dec. 8 (VM), and Waco, Tex., in February (LMB). Two Am. Black Ducks wintered at Manhattan, Kans. (TTC), two were discovered among thousands of Mallards in Rogers, Okla., Feb. 17 (DV), and one was seen at Tulsa Feb. 10 (JWA, JCH). Two Mottled Ducks were observed in Van Zandt, Tex., Dec. 16 and Jan. 6 (RK *et al.*). Blue-winged Teal in Nacogdoches, Tex., Dec. 18-Feb. 15 provided a first winter record (DEW).

Greater Scaup were reported at Bartlesville, Okla., Feb. 5-17 (SM), Tulsa Feb. 8 & 11 (A & FR), Lubbock Dec. 11-Feb. 28 (ML), Kimble, Tex., Feb. 24 (NMJ, DJ), and El Paso Jan. 28 (BZ, JD). Oldsquaws were seen in Lancaster, Neb., Dec. 1 (JG *et al.*) and Oklahoma City Dec. 20 (JGN). A Surf Scoter visited Kimble Dec. 6-12 (NMJ). White-winged Scoters were observed in Keith, Neb., Jan. 13 and Feb. 16 (RCR, DJR), Lancaster, Neb., Dec. 1 (BP *et al.*), Oklahoma City Dec. 3-21 (JSh, WI) and Navarro, Tex., Nov. 28 (TG, FB). In Texas, Com. Goldeneyes were numerous and widespread. One in Albion, Neb., Feb. 3 was unusual for the date (WJM). All mergansers were present in good numbers. High counts included seven Hooded Mergansers in Comal, Tex., Feb. 7, 1000 Com. Mergansers in Rogers, Okla., Feb. 16, and 100 Red-breasted Mergansers in Rains, Tex., Dec. 23.

RAPTORS — Ospreys were reported frequently in n.c. Texas, and one at L. Somerville provided only the 2nd winter record there (T &

CC). Bald Eagles were seen in 20 localities where they have rarely wintered in the past. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission estimated 740 wintering in Nebraska, 300 more than in any previous year. The largest concentration was in the Platte R. basin between L. McCaughy and Harlan County Res. In Carter, Okla., a previously-unreported Bald Eagle wintering ground was found in a valley of large ranches surrounded by mountains. Eight eagles were counted on one ranch (RBF). Fewer than 30 Bald Eagles used the Tulsa eagle roost, a decline from the previous several years' totals of 40-60 birds. The reason for the decline may be the rapid increase in development of the area near the roost and feeding areas, and now the Corps of Engineers has approved construction of a marina nearby (JKe). The pair of Bald Eagles in Grimes, Tex., was back at the nest in late February. The death of the eaglet hatched in this nest in 1984 was reported erroneously—it was alive and well in late May (fide KA).

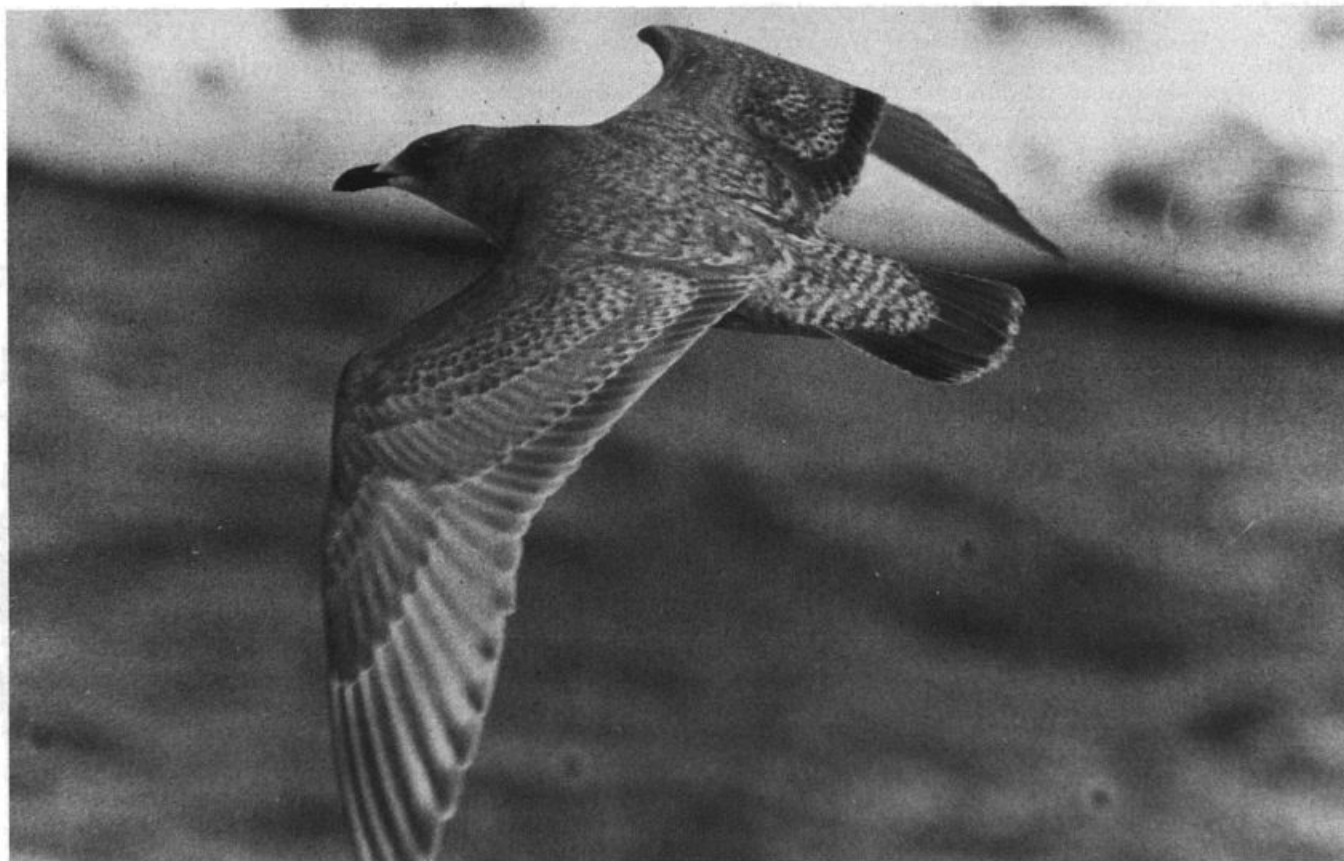
A Mississippi Kite in Grimes Feb. 27 provided the first area record between Oct. 9 and Apr. 1. In Garden, Neb., Feb. 17, two adult and one imm. N. Goshawks harassed a flicker which they eventually caught (RCR, DJR). Two Red-shouldered Hawks in Johnson, Tex., Dec. 19 were the first at that locality since 1971 (CWE). Two were found in Jones, Tex., where there is marginal habitat for the species, Feb. 25 (BH). A well-described White-tailed Hawk was reported in Big Bend N.P., Feb. 3 (KSm). The Muellers of Kerrville, who regularly bird a 7-county area of the Edwards Plateau, reported 34 sightings of Red-tailed Hawks and only four Red-shouldered Hawks. Three Ferruginous Hawks visited Albion, Neb., Dec. 21-Jan. 7 (WJM) and several were seen on the e. edge of their range in Texas. There were a few more reports of Rough-legged Hawks than in the previous 2 winters, but not enough to call it an invasion. A Golden Eagle was sighted in Wyandotte, Kans., Jan. 18 (LM). Five wintered in the Midland area, an unusual number there.

Two Crested Caracaras were sighted in Bosque, Tex., Jan. 18 (CBH). Merlins were reported at only 8 localities. Peregrine Falcons were seen at Omaha Feb. 28 (BW), Swisher, Tex., Jan. 5 (JR), and San Angelo Feb. 17 (I & CCW). Nebraska falconers have seen Gyrfalcons every year since 1979 in the sandhills between Norfolk and Gordon. This

winter they reported 12 birds (GO). A Gyrfalcon in Lancaster, Neb., Feb. 24 represented one of the few records in e. Nebraska (BJR). In Manhattan, Kans., Prairie Falcons were often seen on buildings in the downtown area, and one wintered on the K.S.U. campus, much to the dismay of local pigeons (TTC). In Abilene, Tex., a Prairie Falcon made 30 screaming passes at a just-released rehabilitated Great Horned Owl Feb. 10 (BH).

RAILS THROUGH TERNS — Seven Virginia Rails responded to a tape in Ellis, Okla., Dec. 28. A lone Sandhill Crane wintered near Muskogee, Okla. (JM, JN). In Tom Green, Tex., Mountain Plovers were sighted Feb. 23. An Am. Avocet at El Paso Feb. 11 was a very early migrant (BZ). A Ruddy Turnstone at Kerrville Dec. 20 provided a first area record (E & KM). At Buchanan L., Llano, Tex., late dates for shorebirds included Lesser Yellowlegs Jan. 10, Solitary Sandpiper Dec. 7, and Willet Jan. 10 (E & KM). Common Snipe wintering n. of their usual winter haunts included one in Keith, Neb., Jan. 13 (RCR) and one in a drainage ditch and culvert on the campus of K.S.U. all winter (TTC). American Woodcocks, until very recently unknown in w. Texas, were found in Tom Green Dec. 22-23 (TM *et al.*), Midland Jan. 24 and Feb. 5 (JB, JMe), and El Paso Dec. 27 (T & LC, ph. to T.C.W.C.).

A Bonaparte's Gull remained in Lancaster, Neb., until Dec. 8. At Oklahoma City more than 100 were present in December, but by Jan. 12 only a single bird could be found. A California Gull in Hudspeth, Tex., Jan. 26, Feb. 3 & 21 provided only the 2nd record for the El Paso area (BZ, m.ob.). More Herring Gulls were found near Bartlesville than in the last 5 years combined. Herring Gulls wintered at Buchanan L. and El Paso. One that flew over Guadalupe Mountains N.P., Jan. 31 provided a first record there (JC). A Thayer's Gull photographed in Riley, Kans., Jan. 15-17 provided the first documented state record (TTC). Thayer's Gulls were also seen in Wyandotte, Kans., Jan. 12 (MC) and Tulsa (JWA, JCH). A 3rd-year Lesser Black-backed Gull that visited Oklahoma City Feb. 11-24 was believed to be the same bird that remained Feb. 3-Apr. 2, 1984 (JGN). A Glaucous Gull was observed in Wyandotte, Kans., Jan. 5-12 (MC), and four remained at Oklahoma City Dec. 9-Feb. 19 (JGN). A Black-legged Kittiwake visited Lancaster, Neb.,



Thayer's Gull at Manhattan, Kans., Jan. 15, 1985. First documented record for Kansas. Photo/David Rintoul.

Dec. 1 (JG, LP). Forster's Terns wintered in n.c. Texas.



Lesser Black-backed Gull (probably third-winter) at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma City, Feb. 18, 1985. Photo/John Shackford.

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS — White-winged Doves wintered in Guadalupe Mountains N.P. for the first time. An Inca Dove in *Johnson*, Tex., Jan. 30-Feb. 19 represented only a 2nd county record (CWE). Near New Braunfels, Tex., a Com. Ground-Dove was found Dec. 20 (E & KM). A Groove-billed Ani visited Big Bend N.P., Dec. 12 (RS). A Com. Barn-Owl was seen at Black Gap W.M.A., Brewster, Tex., Feb. 21 (BRM). In Nebraska, Snowy Owls were found in *Rock* Dec. 4 and *Deuel* (no date given). In Kansas, one spent a week at Cheyenne Bottoms in early January (m.ob.) and one was seen in *Sheridan* Mar. 9 (RKO). In Guadalupe Mountains N.P., a N. Pygmy-Owl was heard Dec. 23 (REM). Long-eared Owls provided first records in Guadalupe Mountains N.P., Dec. 20 (REM) and *Tyler*, Tex., Feb. 3 (AM). Short-eared Owls were absent or in very low numbers. A Com. Poorwill in *Somervell*, Tex., Feb. 23 was unusually early. Six White-throated Swifts in *Sterling*, Tex., Jan. 8 provided the only winter record of the species e. of the Pecos R. (JMe). Two Anna's Hummingbirds wintered at El Paso and one was present in Big Bend N.P. until Jan. 5. A Rufous Hummingbird also wintered at El Paso.

A Ringed Kingfisher visited the spillway of Ingram Dam, *Kerr*, Tex., Feb. 21 (E & KM *et al.*). This represented one of the few records of the species away from the Rio Grande. A Lewis' Woodpecker wintered at Midland. A Red-headed Woodpecker in Guadalupe Mountains N.P., Oct. 16-Jan. 23 provided only a 2nd park record. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker of the race *varius* was seen at El Paso Jan. 3 (BJ). A Hammond's Flycatcher at El Paso Dec. 4 was carefully studied (BZ). A Vermilion Flycatcher brightened Midland Dec. 8 and Jan. 28 (RMS, m.ob.). An Ash-throated Flycatcher was found in *Hudspeth* Feb. 11 (BZ, JD). Tree Swallows soared over El Paso Jan. 26, and a Violet-green Swallow was sighted in Guadalupe Mountains N.P., Jan. 30. Early N. Rough-winged Swallows were in El Paso Feb. 19 and *Tarrant*, Tex., Feb. 26. A Barn Swallow was carefully identified at Hagerman N.W.R., Jan. 5 (A & EB).

JAYS THROUGH WARBLERS —

S.A.

A Purplish-backed Jay at an El Paso feeder Feb. 2-7 caused quite a stir among the listers, but Barry Zimmer had this to say about its status: "A Purplish-backed Jay would have to travel across roughly 500 miles of Chihuahuan desert to reach El Paso. The mountains to the south of us are completely unforested. Also, Purplish-backed Jays defend territories all year. For these reasons this species rarely wanders even short distances from its home range. The chances of this bird being wild are almost nil."

Two Plain Titmice in El Paso Dec. 4-Jan. 17 provided a 2nd area record (BZ *et al.*). Red-breasted Nuthatches were unusually abundant throughout w. Texas, as many as 30 being counted in a day. There were few reports elsewhere in the Region. A Pygmy Nuthatch visited El Paso

Dec. 2. A Rock Wren was observed at Waco Dec. 9 (JO). A Canyon Wren was seen in *Bosque*, Tex., Dec. 6 (TG). A Carolina Wren was located in Lincoln Dec. 8 (MBO). Winter Wrens were found in *Sarpy*, Neb., Jan. 5, *Tarrant*, Tex., Jan. 22, and *Taylor*, Tex., Feb. 17. Golden-crowned Kinglets were abundant in e. and n.c. Texas. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers remained in n.c. Texas and Nacogdoches through December, but disappeared when January cold arrived. A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was discovered at Hueco Tanks S.P., Tex., Jan. 9 (BZ, SW).

In Guadalupe Mountains N.P., E. Bluebirds were present Dec. 5-30. Three W. Bluebirds appeared in *Kimble*, Tex., Feb. 24 (NMJ, DJ). Mountain Bluebirds were abundant throughout the w. one-third of Texas. Townsend's Solitaires wintered in Kansas in *Manhattan* (TTC) and *Harper* (SS) and were common in w. Texas. Hermit Thrushes lingered until Jan. 15 at Omaha and in *Washington*, Okla. Gray Catbirds remained at Tulsa Jan. 22 and Nacogdoches Dec. 30. Sage Thrashers were abundant at Midland and San Angelo. Brown Thrashers wintered at Guadalupe Mountains N.P. and Hueco Tanks S.P. Sprague's Pipits were reported only at Tulsa and in *Johnson*, Tex. The only Bohemian Waxwings observed were at Albion, Neb., Feb. 9 (WJM). A Phainopepla graced Midland Dec. 7-14. There was a minor invasion of N. Shrikes from w. Kansas s. to Amarillo. In Nebraska, the species was seen at Lincoln and in *Stanton*.

An Orange-crowned Warbler remained at Muskogee, Okla., Dec. 23-Feb. 28. A Nashville Warbler was discovered in *Tyler*, Tex., Dec. 22 (AM). A Black-throated Green Warbler visited *Hardin*, Tex., Jan. 26 (JK). Pine Warblers were sighted at Bellevue, Neb., Dec. 10-15, *Arlington*, Tex., Jan. 31-Feb. 2, Ft. Worth Dec. 1-Feb. 2, and *Van Zandt*, Tex., Dec. 23. A Palm Warbler in *Tarrant* Jan. 5-27 provided a first winter record for n.c. Texas (CBH, m.ob.), and one in Nacogdoches Dec. 14 furnished only a 2nd winter record there (DEW).

CARDINALINES THROUGH SNOW BUNTINGS — A Lazuli Bunting in *Randall* Dec. 3 provided a first winter record for the Texas Panhandle (KDS). Dickcissels visited feeders in *Lancaster*, Neb., Dec. 1-31 (BM) and *Douglas*, Neb., Jan. 10-17 (EV, BP). A Green-tailed Towhee came Dec. 1-Feb. 6 to the same *Lancaster* feeder that had hosted one in the winter of 1980 (BM, TB). Although Am. Tree Sparrows were scarce in w. Kansas (SS), 200 were banded at Omaha Feb. 24 (BM) and there were many small flocks in n.c. Texas. A Clay-colored Sparrow remained in Palo Duro Canyon S.P., Tex., until Dec. 5 (KDS). A Black-chinned Sparrow was found at Hueco Tanks S.P., Dec. 13 (BZ). A Lark Sparrow in *Polk*, Tex., Feb. 22 provided an unusual record for the Big Thicket (AM). At San Angelo, 25 Le Conte's Sparrows were banded September through December (TM). There were also numerous sightings of this elusive species in n.c. Texas. Fox Sparrows were seen at Bellevue Dec. 29-Feb. 28, Wichita Jan. 22, Guadalupe Mountains N.P., Dec. 12, and *Llano*, Tex., Dec. 7. Thousands of Song Sparrows wintered in the *Lubbock-Crosby* area, Tex., and the species was also common in the Panhandle. A Swamp Sparrow at Black Gap W.M.A., Tex., Dec. 26 provided a first record (BRM). White-throated Sparrows were common at El Paso, Guadalupe Mountains N.P., and the Texas Panhandle. Harris' Sparrows were found s. to San Angelo Jan. 8 and *Llano*, Tex., Jan. 10. Except in 2 widely-separated localities, longspurs were scarce to absent. In *Johnson*, Tex., 1700 McCown's Longspurs were seen Jan. 19 (CWE). In *Pawnee*, Kans., a concentration of Lapland Longspurs Jan. 29 covered an area approximately 5 mi by 2 mi (SS). Fifteen Snow Buntings were counted in *Lancaster* Dec. 1. In Kansas, Snow Buntings were found in *Rush* Dec. 27, *Jefferson* Nov. 23, and *Coffey* Nov. 26-Dec. 20.

ICTERINES THROUGH FINCHES — A Yellow-headed Blackbird wintered at Manhattan (TTC). Other out-of-season individuals were at Bellevue Feb. 8 (CC), Albion Feb. 23 (WJM), and *Tarrant*, Tex., Dec. 1 (PM). Three Rusty Blackbirds in *Hudspeth*, Tex., provided a first El Paso area record (BZ, JD). At least 200 Rusty Blackbirds wintered in *Sarpy*, Neb. Two Great-tailed Grackles in *Rogers*, Okla., Jan. 5 provided an unwelcome first January record there. In Nebraska, Com. Grackles were noted in *Garden* Jan. 13, *Morrill* Feb. 16 (RCR, DJR), and Omaha Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (MW). At least 35 Com. Grackles flocked in El Paso, where the species had been considered "accidental," Jan. 25-27. A "Baltimore" N. Oriole visited Dallas feeders Jan. 21-Feb. 6.



Adult male Lawrence's Goldfinch at Hueco Tanks State Park, Tex., Dec. 7, 1984. First confirmed Texas record. Photo/Raymond Waite.

Pine Grosbeaks were discovered in Kansas in Harper Nov. 21 (WC) and in Hays Jan. 4 (CE, m.ob.). In their usual haunts, Purple Finches were conspicuously scarce, but a few wandered to Lubbock and Midland. As many as 50 Cassin's Finches were counted in Guadalupe Mountains N.P. in December. Previous park records were of single birds. At El Paso, up to 12 Cassin's Finches were present in February; in Midland, at least eight were counted Dec. 23-Jan. 15; one was at Lubbock Dec. 15, and two wandered as far as Kimble, Tex., Dec. 1-5 (NMJ, DJ). In Dawes, Neb., six Cassin's Finches visited feeders Feb. 4 (RCR, DJR). Red Crossbills first appeared in late fall and were still present in many areas Feb. 28. They were reported at 2 locations in Nebraska, 9 in Kansas, 5 in Oklahoma and 6 in Texas. The highest number reported was 200 at Hays, Kans. About 40 were seen at El Paso, Midland and Big Spring, while most other reports comprised fewer than 12 birds. White-winged Crossbills were present at Omaha Jan. 8-Feb. 18, 5 Kansas localities in late November, and at Norman, Okla., Jan. 27. Common Redpolls were observed at Omaha Jan. 16-Feb. 13, Morton, Kans., Nov. 22, Johnson, Kans., Jan. 20-Feb. 20, Muskogee, Okla., Jan. 18, Tulsa Jan. 7 and Feb. 9, and Norman Jan. 21. Pine Siskins were widespread and abundant. A Lawrence's Goldfinch photographed at Hueco Tanks S.P., Tex., Dec. 7 provided a first documented state record, although there had been a sight record at El Paso in 1954 (RW). Small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were in Sarpy and Douglas, Neb., Dec. 1-Feb. 28, and at Hays, Kans., Dec. 5-Feb. 7. At least 20 remained through the period at Amarillo and one wandered as far as Big Bend N.P. Small flocks were seen in Guadalupe Mountains N.P. and El Paso in December.

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SOUTH TEXAS REGION

/Greg W. Lasley and Chuck Sexton

The winter weather patterns got off to a slow start as unseasonably warm weather dominated through December. The result was a bumper crop of late lingering migrants throughout the Region as evidenced on the Christmas Bird Counts. The winter season in fact was compressed primarily into January and the first few days of February when three major snow and ice storms belted the Region. The snowfalls, on January 2-3, January 11-13, and January 31-February 2, provided welcome moisture and did not seem to cause widespread damage to native habitats. The second of these storms was described as one of the largest snowstorms in 100 years. Representative snowfalls included 2 inches at Beeville and Victoria, 4 inches at Austin, 9 inches at Del Rio, 13 inches at San Antonio and an unofficial total of 16 inches near Stockdale. In that storm, ice ¼ inch thick coated tender vegetation in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The third snowstorm was followed by extremely cold weather on February 1-3 with temperatures plunging to single digits in the Austin area. Harper reported that he arrived in the Lower Rio Grande Valley January 30 in 84°F weather; 48 hours later the wind chill factor was 0°. Temperatures moderated rapidly by February 7 and the remainder of the month was mild.

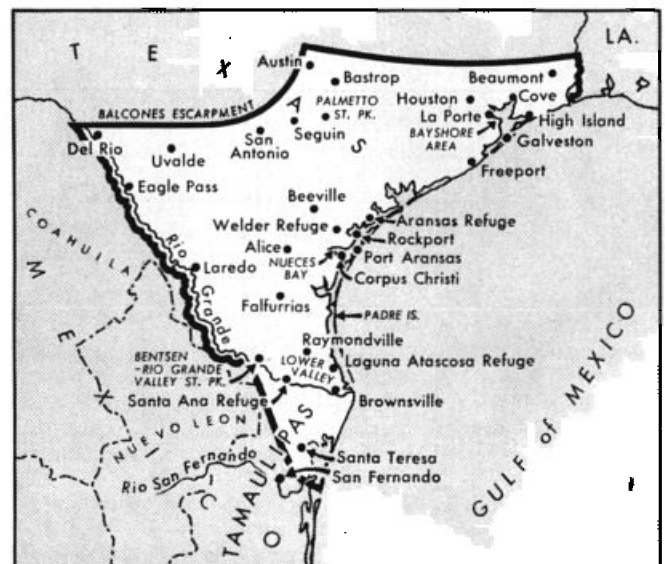
Overall, many observers agreed that the brief winter, although not nearly as severe as that of 1983-1984, was still harsher than normal. Moisture was well above normal for most of the Region. Grassland and marsh habitats on the Upper Texas Coast were described as excellent.

The birding hotspot of the Upper Texas Coast seemed to be Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, particularly for raptors. Raptors in fact were prominent in reports from all over the Region. O'Neill reported up to 12-14 species per day near Encino in December and January. The Lower Rio Grande Valley again shone brightly with Mexican rarities that drew hundreds of birders from around the country.

Some regular species in the Region perplexed observers with patchy distributions or inexplicable movements. Graber remarked: "I wish someone would explain . . . the dynamics of wintering sparrows on the Upper Texas Coast this year." The query would apply equally Region-wide. As another example, American Robin movements were similarly complex and intriguing.

ABBREVIATIONS — Attwater = Attwater Prairie Chicken Nat'l Wildlife Ref.; Bentsen = Bentsen Rio Grande Valley State Park; L.R.G.V. = Lower Rio Grande Valley; Santa Ana = Santa Ana Nat'l Wildlife Ref.; U.T.C. = Upper Texas Coast.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — The Arctic Loon at San Antonio mentioned in the fall report moved from Braunig L. to Calaveras L., a few mi away, where it remained until Jan. 26 (WS, SH). Another Arctic Loon was well described at Rockport during late Febru-



ary (KZ) Single Horned Grebes at Aransas N W R , Dec 26 and San Antonio Feb. 3 were unusual finds (CC, WS). The three W. Grebes at San Antonio reported in the fall remained until Mar. 4. At Braunig L., unusual concentrations of wintering species included 86 Am. White Pelicans Jan. 26 and 3500 Double-crested Cormorants Dec. 23 (WS, ER). A Reddish Egret was notably far upriver at Falcon Dam Feb. 1 (EH). An imm. White Ibis wintered at San Antonio's Mitchell L. (*vide* SH).

S.A.

An imm. **Muscovy Duck** (*Cairina moschata*) described from Rancho Santa Margarita on the Rio Grande Dec. 7 (†VE *et al.*) was particularly intriguing. A report of such an abundant feral species would not normally raise an eyebrow. This particular bird, however, was not only free-flying but was very wary of human approach. The bird showed the typical wild phenotype imm. plumage rarely seen in feral birds. We report this sighting coupled with information that a nest box program for the species sponsored by Ducks Unlimited of Mexico is having increased success in Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon, the 2 Mexican states immediately s. of the South Texas Region (AS, *vide* VE). Muscovy Ducks are now reported to be regular near San Fernando, Tamaulipas, 100 mi s. of Brownsville (VE). Rather than claim a new United States record just yet, we believe it appropriate for observers to begin careful observations of the plumages, behavior and distribution of any wild-acting Muscovies discovered in extreme s. Texas.

A dark-phase Ross' Goose reported at Anahuac N.W.R., Nov. 18 and Feb. 7 was a novel find for the Region (RP *et al.*). All 3 scoters continued to be reported along the Bolivar Pen. into February. Small numbers of Cinnamon Teal wintered as usual in the L.R.G.V., but a dozen wintering at Attwater were unusual (WSh).

RAPTORS, PRAIRIE-CHICKENS — Three Mississippi Kites in Houston Feb. 25 were 3 weeks earlier than the normal arrival date for northbound migrants (LG). Bald Eagles were noteworthy on the King Ranch (SB, N & PP), in San Antonio Dec. 1 (m.ob.), and in Austin (at least 4 December reports). As with the kites, a few early Broad-winged and Swainson's hawks appeared in the last week of February. There were a few earlier reports of Swainson's by veteran observers but whether the birds were "wintering" is problematical given the extended period over which we find straggling migrants of this species both "coming and going." A White-tailed Hawk near Bastrop Feb. 16 (†CA) & 24 (JSu *et al.*) provided a 2nd recent Austin area record. Single Zone-tailed Hawks wintered again at Bastrop and Attwater and another was seen at Sarita Dec. 31 (RF).

Red-tailed Hawks were widely reported as even more abundant than usual in concentration areas such as the U.T.C. and along U.S. 77 s. of Corpus Christi (AO, m.ob.). Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks were both well above normal numbers and widespread with at least a dozen reports of the former and 8 of the latter Regionwide. A Golden Eagle, very rare on the U.T.C., was seen several times at Attwater Feb. 6+ (BG *et al.*), and another apparently wintered at Encino (AO). A Prairie Falcon at Attwater Jan. 6-Mar. 20 (†MA, JM, m.ob.) provided the 3rd refuge record, and another near Sinton Dec. 13 was a very rare find (†LS, PS, *vide* CC).

Three Attwater's (Greater) Prairie-Chickens were still at Dickinson in February despite recent years' efforts to transplant this endangered flock. A total of 206 prairie-chickens was counted on their namesake refuge, Attwater, in late winter—a new high count for the refuge (WSh).

RAILS THROUGH NIGHTHAWKS — A Yellow Rail at Santa Ana Feb. 17 (WM) was the only one reported. A Com. Moorhen near Austin Feb. 16 was a rare find (BB). A Black-bellied Plover in Austin Dec. 30 furnished only the 2nd December area record. A Pectoral Sandpiper at Smith Pt. on Galveston Bay Dec. 23 provided the first U.T.C. record for December. Single Dunlins were noted in Austin Dec. 30 and Feb. 16 (RF, BB); this species is rare inland in winter. A probable Curlew Sandpiper was reported without details at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., Dec. 8 & 18 (CF, CE). American Woodcocks were very numerous on

the U T C in February (63 reported) and were more conspicuous in the Austin area where several birds performed courtship displays w. of town until Feb. 20 (JO *et al.*). Two woodcocks were found Jan. 14 at San Antonio, where they are very rare (SH).

Austin's 2nd jaeger ever (believed to have been a Pomarine) was found Dec. 30 (GP, RF). A Franklin's Gull on the same day at a nearby location was almost certainly a late migrant. The Lesser Black-backed Gull on Mustang Island remained through the period. Other unusual larids included the 2nd Jim Wells County record of a Bonaparte's Gull Feb. 17 (RA), and a Black-legged Kittiwake at San Antonio Jan 26 (TH, SH).

A single Red-billed Pigeon was reported periodically at Laguna Atascosa N.W.R., where the species is accidental (*vide* SRi). Flocks of three to nine Green Parakeets were regularly seen in at least 4 localities in Brownsville, McAllen, and near Bentsen throughout the period (ph. TP, m.ob.). Up to 22 Red-crowned Parrots were seen regularly in Brownsville with smaller numbers reported in Harlingen, Weslaco, McAllen, and Bentsen (*vide* TP). Several other *Amazonas* and other psittacids, all presumed to be escapees, were reported. Common Barn-Owls and Short-eared Owls were both reported in lowered numbers in the Austin area (RF, m.ob.). During a warm spell just prior to the 3rd snowstorm noted above, a Com. Poorwill was heard in Austin Jan. 25 (JeM) and a Lesser Nighthawk was found at Santa Ana Jan. 27 (*vide* SL). Common Nighthawks remained in Austin and Houston into late December.

SWIFTS THROUGH JAYS — An unidentified swift was observed in Baytown Feb. 20 (ER). The ♂ **Broad-billed Hummingbird** in Columbus remained until Jan. 21 (JD). A few Anna's wintered in the Kingsville area (SB, N & PP) and two Broad-tailed wintered in Portland (RL). Among the Region's widely-scattered wintering Rufous Hummingbirds were a few imm. males at inland locations including Austin, Columbus, and Helotes. A remarkable find was a ♀ Elegant Trogon described on the King Ranch in late November (*vide* DDe). The brief details passed on to the editors may be sufficient to document this first occurrence of the species n. of the L.R.G.V. in the Region. The fall invasion of Red-headed Woodpeckers apparently did not reach to the Kingsville area (CC, SB, N & PP). Northern Flickers were reported down in numbers on the U.T.C. (GC).

Great Kiskadees seem to be increasing steadily in the Kingsville area (SB, N & PP). A very rare Couch's/Tropical Kingbird was observed (not heard) in Rockport Dec. 23 (CC). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers stayed late and a few apparently overwintered; one or two birds were seen in the Kingsville/Riviera area Dec. 22-23, in Harlingen Jan. 30, and in Falfurrias Feb. 8 (AO, EH, SB, N & PP). A **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** first observed Dec. 17 at Rio Hondo remained until Jan. 16, becoming the longest-staying Fork-tailed ever in the United States (J & PB, ph. TP, †m.ob.). This was the 8th Regional and state record of the species. Arguments persisted whether the bird had the complete white collar indicative of the n. race *T. s. monachus*, which has thus far *not* been documented in the United States. Photos examined by the editors to date have been inconclusive.

A Purple Martin in Floresville arrived Feb. 3, a little too early for his own good—he was seen feeding on seeds on the ground among patches of snow in the bitter cold (WS). A very rare mid-winter Bank Swallow was well described at Bentsen Jan. 5 (JR). The invading Blue Jays remained through the period but numbers began dwindling in late January. As late as Jan. 24, over 200 were seen near Encino (AO).

TITMICE THROUGH WARBLERS — Titmice and other small resident passerines still appeared to be depressed in numbers in the Kingsville area since the 1983-1984 winter (SB, N & PP). Continuing the fall trend, only 2 reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches were received. House Wrens, in contrast, were almost universally regarded as very numerous this season, as were Golden-crowned Kinglets. One to six Clay-colored Robins were a regular feature at Bentsen through the period and a single bird was reported at Santa Ana Jan. 18 (CE, m.ob.). A Varied Thrush appeared briefly in Georgetown, just n. of Austin, Feb. 3-4 (JH). Two very large flocks of Cedar Waxwings, each totaling 1000+ birds, were noted near Port O'Connor Jan. 10 (D & JW).

Two Bell's Vireos were well described at Santa Ana Feb. 28 (*vide* SL). Two Yellow Warblers at Rio Hondo Jan. 17-18 provided a very rare winter record for the species (†PM). A Black-throated Blue Warbler

near Houston Dec. 20 was very late (*vide* GC) and another was reported (without details) at Santa Ana Dec. 13. A Black-throated Gray spent its 3rd winter at Aransas Pass (D & JW). Black-throated Greens were noteworthy at Victoria Feb. 12 (PR) and at Brazos Bend S.P., Feb. 23. Pine Warblers were common on the U.T.C., and were recorded as far s. and w. as Austin, San Antonio, and San Ygnacio.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES — A ♀ Hepatic Tanager again appeared in January and February in Bastrop S.P. (†JW *et al.*). A single ♂ **Blue Bunting** discovered at Bentsen Dec. 3 (†MAC, RBe) was next relocated Dec. 23 (†MA). After that date, as many as two males and two females were seen regularly for the remainder of the period but proved to be very elusive at times (ph. TP, EH, m.ob.). A bit of confusion was apparent among ill-prepared birders in mid-February as a few Indigo and Lazuli buntings began to show up at the same feeders in the campground. A ♀ Painted Bunting was found in the snow in Austin Jan. 2 (JSu). A brilliant ♂ White-collared Seedeater seen by several observers

Male Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa parellina*) at Bentsen/Rio Grande Valley State Park, Texas, Feb. 14, 1985. Photo/George Wagner.



Female Blue Bunting (*Cyanocompsa parellina*) at Bentsen/Rio Grande Valley State Park, Texas, Feb. 2, 1985. Photo/Ed Harper.

and photographed at Bentsen has been tentatively identified as the "cinnamon-rumped" nominate race (*S. t. torqueola*) of the Pacific coast of Mexico, and would be best considered an escapee. Seedeaters were

again present in small numbers at San Ygnacio through the period. Observers almost unanimously regarded Lark Sparrows as being down in numbers this season. A very rare Baird's Sparrow was well-described from Falfurrias Feb. 10 (†AO). White-crowned Sparrows were generally considered sparse Regionwide but White-throateds were in normal numbers or better. Longspurs were sparse in the Austin area.

Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds were seen in San Antonio and near Winnie in late December and 15 were in Chambers County Feb. 24; conceivably these were simply late and early migrants, respectively. Common Grackle numbers were higher than normal in Kingsville (SB, N & PP) and a single bird was in Falfurrias Jan. 26 (AO). A flock of 35 in McAllen Feb. 17 represented only the 2nd time Arvin had recorded the species in the L.R.G.V. A few "Bullock's" N. Orioles on the U.T.C. were fairly routine but a ♀ "Baltimore" in Austin Jan. 6 was less expected (GP, RF).

We received a late report, with excellent photos, of a Red Crossbill found at a Houston feeder Sept. 2-3 (ph. DWi, *vide* RP); this was the first U.T.C. record of the species in 30 years. Although Pine Siskins "never really made it to the U.T.C." (RP), they were fairly common after Jan. 1 at a few feeders in Austin (CS) and up to eight accompanied Am. Goldfinches as far s. as Falfurrias in January and February (AO). The latter species was particularly abundant in Austin and Falfurrias as well.

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NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION /Helmut Grünberg

This report may be the most important bird report of the year for the people who live in the North because it covers all the resident species. During a day trip in winter (on foot, on skis, or on snowshoes) one may encounter five to seven different bird species, sometimes only one or two (or even none), and on a lucky day, up to ten. Nonetheless, all contributors combined reported a total of 40 bird species this season. Some species that "should" have been seen but remained unreported this season were Rough-legged Hawk and Rock Ptarmigan. Participation of 49 observers was probably a record high for a single report period, a very pleasant record.

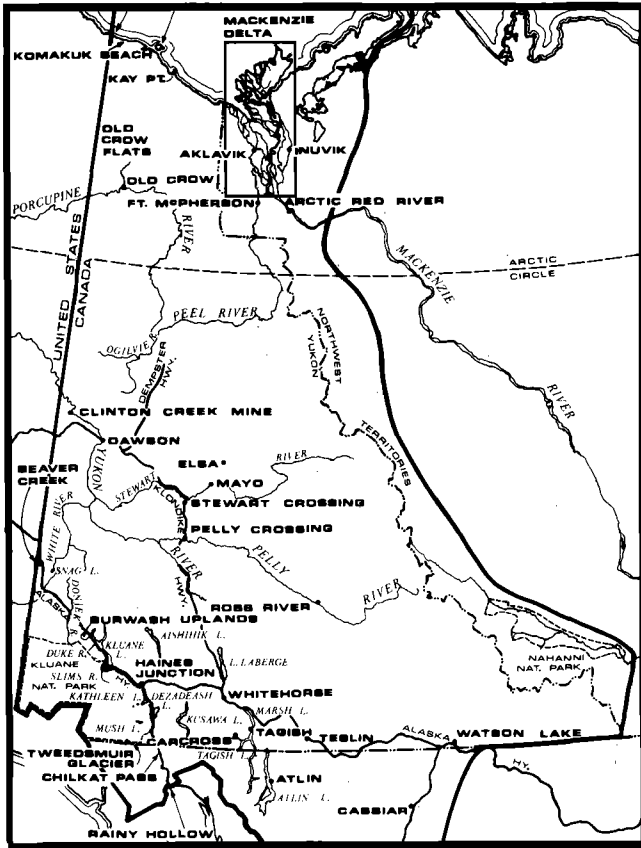
This winter was relatively mild with a lot of snow in the central and northern parts of the Region (extreme northern British Columbia and the Yukon) and mostly dry and cold in southern parts of our area (Fort St. John). December temperatures in Whitehorse were close to normal, and the precipitation as snow was high while Fort St. John had a cool and dry December. January temperatures were an amazing 16.0 degrees Celsius below the long-term average in Whitehorse (minus 4.7 as opposed to

minus 20.7 degrees Celsius), while the precipitation was almost twice as high as normal. Fort St. John had a relatively mild but dry January. February was cooler than normal in Whitehorse, but precipitation was high again. Weather conditions in Fort St. John varied during February.

ABBREVIATIONS — F.S.J. = Fort St. John, British Columbia; Whse. = Whitehorse, Yukon.

DUCKS THROUGH GROUSE — A flock of about 75 Mallards was seen on the Peace R. near Hudson Hope in the F.S.J. area Dec. 24 (JeJ, *vide* CS). The birds were apparently fed by local residents. Two ♂ Com. Goldeneyes were observed on the Yukon R. near Lewes Dam, 10 km w. of Marsh L., Dec. 16 (HG, TMcl). Up to six unidentified goldeneyes were seen on the Tagish R. throughout December (WH), and one to two were noted on the Yukon R. in Whse., Dec. 23 and Jan. 1 (HG, TMcl). One to six Com. Mergansers were observed on the Yukon R. near Lewes Dam and on the Tagish R. throughout the season by 4 observers.

A Bald Eagle was noted at Klwane R. in January (DM). A pair of Bald Eagles was perched together in a nest at the Peace R., near the confluence with the Halfway R., Feb. 24, and an imm. bird was seen at Hudson Hope, F.S.J. area, on the same date (CS). Ten observers report-



ed N. Goshawks from 7 different areas in the Yukon and one in n. British Columbia throughout the season. A Gyrfalcon was seen in Kluane N.P. in early February (RCh).

Spruce Grouse in numbers of one to four were reported from Hay River, N.W.T.; from s., s.w., and c. Yukon; and from n. British Columbia (m.ob.). Six people reported Willow Ptarmigan from 7 areas in the Yukon and from Inuvik, MacKenzie Delta, N.W.T. One to two White-tailed Ptarmigan were observed near Mt. Granger, Fish L. area, s. Yukon in December (HJO), and five "probable" White-tailed Ptarmigan were noted on Montana Mt., near Carcross, s. Yukon, Feb. 10 (PL). Two Ruffed Grouse were reported from the F.S.J. area Jan. 5 (JoJ, *fide* CS), and five were seen there Jan. 13 (CS). In Hay River, two were observed Dec. 29 (B & MG), and one was reported from Whse.-MacPherson Dec. 26 (RHa, *fide* JH). Ruffed Grouse were also noted at Graham Inlet, Tagish L., B.C. (MB). Flocks of six and five Sharp-tailed Grouse were seen in the F.S.J. area Jan. 13 & 20 (CS), while a flock of six to eight was observed at the Donjek R., s.w. Yukon in February (DM).

PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Rock Doves were seen daily in Whse., the highest count having been 64 on Dec. 26 (HG, RMcL). This represented an apparent decline in the population. Fort St. John had up to 62 Rock Doves Dec. 23 (JoJ, CS), while up to 10 were seen in Taylor, s. of F.S.J. (CS). Great Horned Owls were heard in good numbers: one to three in 6 different areas of the s. Yukon (6 observers) and one each in 2 areas near F.S.J. (CS), as well as near Graham Inlet (MB). Single Snowy Owls were seen in two areas of the s.w. Yukon: near St. Elias L., Kluane N.P., about Feb. 10, and at Goatherd Mt., Kluane N.P., Feb. 20 (RCh). Only one N. Hawk-Owl was reported this winter: at Marsh L., Dec. 16 (TMcI). A Boreal Owl was seen at the North Klondike R. by the Dempster Hwy in late January (HJO).

A pair of Downy Woodpeckers was noted at a feeder near F.S.J., Dec. 23 (CS), and three were observed at a feeder in Hay River Dec. 29 (G & LF). A ♂ Downy Woodpecker visited a feeder in Whse. once in December and once in mid-February (AJ, RO), and a ♀ bird was reported in Whse.-Wolf Creek Jan. 28 (HMack). A total of three Hairy Woodpeckers was seen in 2 areas near F.S.J., and one was examining

the sidings of houses in downtown F S J (CS) Harry Woodpecker was also reported from Graham Inlet (MB). An amazing six birds frequented a feeder in Hay River Dec. 29 (G & LF). A ♂ Hairy Woodpecker visited a feeder in Whse.-Wolf Creek daily all winter, and a ♀ bird was seen there daily Feb. 3-18 and was found dead Mar. 3 (JL, PW). Three to five Three-toed Woodpeckers were seen near Marsh L. at km 1414 Alaska Hwy all winter (CO); one was noted 2 or 3 times in Tagish, s. Yukon, in December (WH); one appeared occasionally at a feeder in Whse. (AJ, RO); and one was observed near the Yukon R., 8 km w. of Marsh L., Dec. 16 (DR).

CORVIDS THROUGH STARLINGS — Gray Jays were abundant in all areas (m.ob.). Three Blue Jays were observed at a feeder, and a 4th one was heard nearby at Stoddart Cr., F.S.J. area, Dec. 23; one was noted here also Feb. 3 (CS). Black-billed Magpies were very common in s.w. and s. Yukon as well as in Hay River, N.W.T., and in the F.S.J. area. Common Raven was the most common and most visible bird species during the winter season in all parts of the Region (m.ob.), although Hay River reported a decline over the years. Black-capped and Boreal chickadees were very common in all areas. There were even some Black-capped Chickadees in Dawson (c. Yukon). Up to three Mountain Chickadees were seen at a feeder in Tagish throughout December (WH). At least one Red-breasted Nuthatch overwintered in the F.S.J. area, as one was noted at Stoddart Cr., Dec. 16 and Jan. 5 (CS). American Dippers were seen by 6 observers throughout the season in open creeks and rivers of s., s.w., and c. Yukon from km 66 Dempster Hwy south. Berries in downtown Whse. and Whse.-Takhini attracted up to 25 Bohemian Waxwings in late December, and one was seen as late as Jan. 18 in an area 5 km w. of Marsh L. (MLa). Northern Shrikes were observed twice in the F.S.J. area: an adult was seen several km n. of F.S.J. on Jan. 6, and an immature frequented a F.S.J. suburban neighborhood, attracted by a small flock of House Sparrows at a feeder (CS). A N. Shrike was also observed in Hay River, in late December (A & EC). Up to four Eur. Starlings were noted in downtown F.S.J. throughout the season (CS).

SPARROWS THROUGH OLD WORLD SPARROWS — At Deza-deash Lodge in the s.w. Yukon, an Am. Tree Sparrow was noted Dec 1, one of very few winter records of this species for the Yukon (ND, HG). The observation of a female or imm. Dark-eyed Junco in F.S.J. at a feeder constituted the first winter record for that area. It was seen here about Dec. 1-20 (RAD, *fide* CS). One individual of this species was also reported from Whse.-MacPherson Dec. 26 (RHa), and one male was seen daily from Dec. 9 on in Whse.-Wolf Creek (JL, PW). Snow Buntings were generally uncommon. In the F.S.J. area, they were noted on 6 occasions, the largest flock having been 100 birds Dec. 23 (CS). A flock of 20 birds was observed on the Chilkat Pass, Haines Hwy, n w British Columbia, Feb. 16 (PL). Groups of 10-30 birds were observed on 3 occasions in the s. Yukon by 4 observers in December and February, and one to two birds were noted at Kluane L. in January and February (RHu, DM).

Pine Grosbeaks were commonly observed throughout the season. High counts were 15 at Stoddart Cr., F.S.J. area, all winter (CS), 15 by the Dempster Hwy 40 km s. of the Eagle R., n. Yukon, Jan. 20 (DP), and 22 in downtown Whse., Dec. 26 (HG, RMcL). The Region was virtually devoid of crossbills, completely opposite of the previous winter when crossbills could be seen everywhere, obviously because of a dramatic change in the cone crop this winter. Ten Red Crossbills were seen in Hay River Dec. 29 (LF), and seven White-winged Crossbills were noted here Dec. 29 (A & EC). White-winged Crossbills were seen or heard several times in the Tagish area in December (WH). Redpolls were regularly seen this season from the c. Yukon to the F.S.J. area with the largest flocks near F.S.J. Several flocks or parts of flocks were identified as Com. Redpolls (and in some cases apparently assumed to be this species). Reliable Hoary Redpoll sightings (with description included) were as follows: two mixed with 11 Com. Redpolls and 57 redpoll sp. in downtown Whse., identified by the brilliantly white, unstreaked rump, Dec. 26 (HG, RMcL); two at Marsh L. with "very white rump," Dec. 16 (CO); 300 Hoaries were associated with 30 Commons at Cecil L. near F.S.J., identified by CS on Jan. 20 by the white rump, white undertail coverts, short, stubby bill, and generally

darker color of upperparts; 400 were in a flock with 100 Com. Redpolls n. of F.S.J., Jan. 27 (CS). About 50 Evening Grosbeaks were seen at a feeder in F.S.J. all winter, and a pair was noted at Montney, F.S.J. area, Jan. 27 (CS). In downtown F.S.J., about 100 House Sparrows were seen all winter (CS), and 15 were reported from a feeder in Hay River (A & EC).

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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN-INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/Thomas H. Rogers

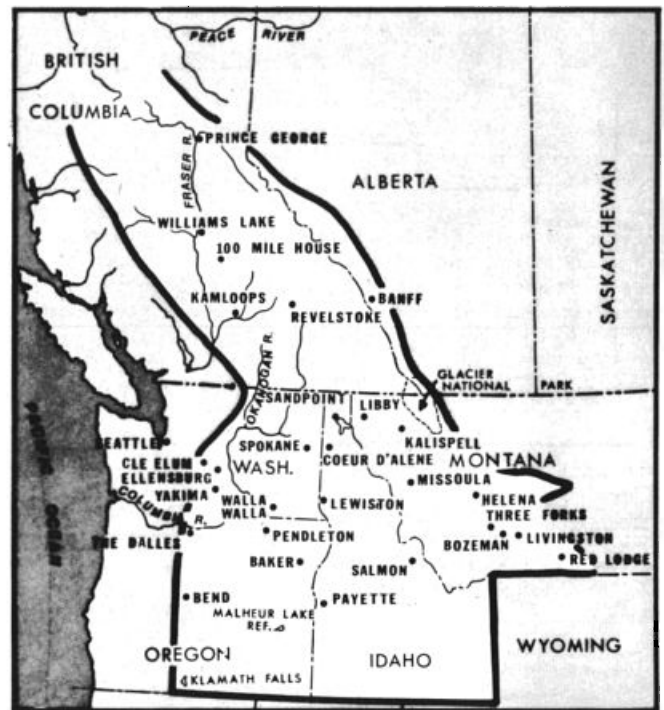
Although most of the Region received precipitation varying from below normal to very little, most of it fell as snow, which, because of temperatures much below normal, persisted throughout the period. Lakes, ponds and even some rivers were frozen over. This, along with deep snows, caused a dearth of birds in more northerly areas. All in all, it was a severe winter over the Region. Although there were some reports of hardship, mainly among raptors, birds appeared to adapt fairly well. Feeders undoubtedly helped. Mountain snowpack was apparently high, promising ample water for summer. At Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Burns, Oregon, the outlook for spring was for lower water levels, thus avoiding the disruptions to bird life that occurred last year.

GREBES THROUGH HERONS — A Horned Grebe appeared on the Snake R. near Grandview, Ida., Feb. 17 (JSM). Single Red-necked Grebes were sighted Feb. 16 at Libby Dam, Lincoln Co., Mont. (D & DH), and on the Snake R. in the Lewiston, Ida.-Clarkston, Wash. vicinity in December and January (MK, LL, CM, OM). The Snake R. also had an Eared Grebe near Clarkston Jan. 9+ (CM, OM). A W. Grebe was at Hagerman, Ida., Jan. 1 (JR).

An Am. White Pelican near Klamath Falls, Ore., Feb. 17 was 2-3 weeks early (MH). Six Double-crested Cormorants wintered at Malheur N.W.R.; Twin Falls, Ida., had one Jan. 19 (JR); and two immatures were on the Clearwater R. at Lewiston Jan. 27 & 31 (C.B., PS). The Yakima R. mouth at Richland, Wash., hosted 16 cormorants Feb. 23, as well as a beige-colored "albino" Black-crowned Night-Heron (along with normally-colored birds) Dec. 1 (REW).

WATERFOWL — Tundra Swan numbers had built up to 4000 in s. Klamath County, Ore., by Feb. 17. A lone bird at Libby Dam, Libby, Mont., was worthy of note (m.ob.). A count in the S. Thompson R. drainage near Kamloops, B.C., Jan. 13 found 685 Tundra Swans; the same area had 16 Trumpeter Swans Dec. 13 (RH). Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., Lima, Mont., counted 241 adult and 26 imm. Trumpeters Feb. 26 (TM). The Pacific Flyway Winter Waterfowl Survey in the Malheur area recorded 51 Trumpeters; at least two of them were shot near Frenchglen in January. Five of the seven Trumpeters that were at Turnbull N.W.R., Cheney, Wash., last summer had returned (JHH). The Klamath Falls vicinity had a green-collared Trumpeter Dec. 16 (SS). An imm. Snow Goose was on the Snake R. at Lewiston Feb. 9-10 (RN, C.B.), one was with Canadas near Pocatello Feb. 1 (JSh), and one wintered in the Malheur Basin (CDL). Columbia N.W.R., Othello, Wash., had up to 6000 wintering Canada Geese, increasing to 40,000 by Feb. 20 (JRR). The winter survey around Malheur counted 5777 Western and 40 Lesser Canadas. Unusually high numbers of the birds appeared in the Helena, Mont., vicinity (GH), but ice-bound waters apparently kept numbers low elsewhere in that area. Lack of open water forced all waterfowl out of Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, Ida., and nearly all out of Turnbull N.W.R. Wintering numbers at Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, Mont., were also below normal and few were found on the Malheur winter survey.

The trout farm near Pocatello, Ida., came up with an Am. Black Duck for Trost's 2nd sighting there. The Helena area had high Mallard num-



bers despite the freezeup, the birds apparently using the Missouri R. and its tributaries. Columbia N.W.R., Othello, Wash., had up to 15,000 Mallards in January, increasing to 40,000 in February. Single Eur. Wigeons appeared at Boise, Ida., Lower Klamath N.W.R., Kamloops, and Richland. A pair showed up in Pioneer P. in Walla Walla, Wash., in mid-December. The Columbia R. from Wenatchee to Orondo, Wash., had 150 Greater Scaup Dec. 27 and Pateros, Wash., had 22 Feb. 16 (EH). Pend Oreille L., near Hope, Ida., had 35 of the species plus an Oldsquaw Feb. 19 (BW). One of the latter was found on the Powder R., e. of Baker, Ore., Feb. 17 (C & MC). Libby Dam had two White-winged Scoters Dec. 4 (D & DH), one was on the Snake R. at Almota, Wash., Dec. 8 (JP), and a male was sighted at Vantage, Wash., Feb. 18 (EH). Two ♀ Buffleheads were observed in Waterton Lakes N.P., Alta., Dec. 9 (TD, CP). A pair of Red-breasted Mergansers was on the Snake R. near Asotin, Wash., Feb. 4 (B & US), and two males frequented the Link R. at Klamath Falls Feb. 3 (SS). One appeared on the Columbia R. near Orondo Dec. 27 (EH). Three females at Sunnyside Jan. 1-20 were Sieracki's first for the Sandpoint, Ida., area.

VULTURES THROUGH GALLINACEOUS BIRDS — Two Turkey Vultures were reported in the lower Yakima Valley, Wash., Feb. 10 (Y.A.S.) Two Ospreys frequented the vicinity of Minidoka N.W.R., Rupert, Ida. (JH). Up to 300 Bald Eagles used the Bear Valley N.W.R. roost s.w. of Klamath Falls in February. Fish killed by turbines at Libby Dam kept at least 56 Bald Eagles there, and 40 at Market Lake W.M.A., Roberts, Ida., possibly were attracted by a fish kill. Their numbers appeared up in the Snake R.-Asotin-Grande Ronde R. area of Asotin Co., Wash. Single Ferruginous Hawks were reported between Irrigon

and Boardman, Ore., Jan. 6 (BC, C & MC) and at Enterprise, Ore., Feb. 16 (TC, HN), and the Klamath Basin had 4 sightings in December and January (SS).

Rough-legged Hawk and Golden Eagle numbers were low in the Idaho Nat'l Engineering Laboratory area, Arco, Ida., because of the jackrabbit population crash (TR). Rough-legged Hawks outnumbered Red-tailed Hawks in the Walla Walla area. The good numbers of both species there were surprising in view of the persistent snow cover. Rough-legged Hawk and N. Harrier numbers were very high at Columbia N.W.R. Numbers of the former species were also high in the Mountain Home and Weiser, Ida., vicinities and in the Klamath Basin. Rough-leggeds wintered in good numbers in the Malheur area but other raptors were relatively scarce there because of food shortages. Raptors brought to the Montana Wildlife Dept. at Helena for nursing were supposedly weakened by lack of food caused by snowy conditions. The cause for abnormal numbers of Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls found dying at Turnbull N.W.R. is being investigated. Two Peregrine Falcon and 8 Gyrfalcon sightings were reported; one Gyrfalcon was a white-phase bird. The deep snow in more northerly areas forced most of the raptors out.

The Wild Turkey flock at Prairie, Ida., numbered 17 in December (KBP), and four birds were sighted s. of Imnaha, Ore. (RA).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH OWLS — Waterton Lakes N.P., Alta., had a lone Killdeer Dec. 9 (TD, CP). A Greater Yellowlegs frequented a pond near Asotin Dec. 2 (RM), and one found Dec. 17 at a hot spring w. of Malheur likely wintered (JLe, MS). A late Lesser Yellowlegs was along the Malheur R. near Riverside, Ore., Dec. 7 (DP). Up to 10 Dunlins were sighted at the Yakima delta on 2 December dates, and one was there Feb. 23 (REW). A Ring-billed Gull was back at Libby Dam Feb. 27. A few hundred Ring-billed and California, over 100 Herring, and one to two Glaucous-winged gulls wintered around Klamath Falls. An imm. Glaucous Gull was identified Jan. 20 on Pend Oreille L. (BW).

Very few Com. Barn-Owls were reported. However, one **Common Barn-Owl** in a barn near Hamilton Jan. 28 was apparently the first ever for w. Montana (CPo *et al.*). Malheur had 3 sightings of single birds. One at Walla Walla was later eaten by a Great Horned Owl. In the Lewiston-Asotin area all Com. Barn-Owl records were of dead ones, mostly piles of feathers and supposedly victims of Great Horned Owls. A bird reported as a Flammulated Owl, mobbed by chickadees and nuthatches, appeared near Newport, Wash., Dec. 5 and Jan. 4 (EJL). A very rare sighting was of a Great Horned Owl of the Arctic race along Hwy 12 w. of Walla Walla (SM *et al.*). A few Snowy Owls appeared in c. Washington and in the Boardman-Irrigon, Ore., areas. The only N. Hawk-Owl reported was one in the Yakima, Wash., area (Y.A.S.). Mountain Home had a Burrowing Owl Jan. 31 (PS). Clarkston's cemetery had a Barred Owl Feb. 10 (C.B.). Single Great Gray Owls were sighted near Vernon and Oliver, B.C. (DR, JM), and near Tonia and Shoshone, Ida. (CHT, TR, JR). A Short-eared Owl at Windermere, B.C., Dec. 16 made a rare sighting (LH), and a pair near Hampton, Ore., was unexpected (TC, CMi). Several emaciated Boreal Owls, either dead or dying, were found in s. interior British Columbia (GD, JW, RH).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH RAVENS — An Anna's Hummingbird was seen at Bend, Ore., during January and February (JS, KC) and one was reported at Spokane, Wash. Belted Kingfishers apparently became casualties of the cold winter in s. interior British Columbia for none was seen after December. A White-headed Woodpecker appeared in Walla Walla Dec. 15 (BH) and two were sighted at Idaho City, Ida., Feb. 16 (PG, ES). A N. Flicker of the Yellow-shafted race was sighted at Bigfork, Mont. (TCI).

Say's Phoebes were returning in February. One near Union, Ore., Feb. 16 was very early and one the next day at Bend was 10 days ahead of schedule. One had reached Osoyoos, B.C., by Feb. 24. Violet-green Swallows arrived at Okanagan Landing, B.C., Feb. 25, an unusually early date there. Single Blue Jays appeared near Invermere, B.C. (LH); s. of Pocatello (CHT); at Mountain Home (KBP); w. of Missoula, Mont. (PM); at Kamiak Butte S.P., Whitman Co., Wash. (JP, C & DG); at Dixie, Wash. (GY, EM); and at Crescent, Ore., for Klamath County's first record (SS). A few Am. Crows wintered in the Libby vicinity and least 300 Com. Ravens frequented the landfill there all winter. Roost site counts of these birds in the Malheur Basin showed at least 1363 in early February.

CHICKADEES THROUGH WARBLERS — Three or four Boreal Chickadees accompanied Chestnut-backed and Mountain chickadees w. of Creston, B.C., Feb. 28 (PRS). Two to three Chestnut-backed visited feeders regularly in Waterton townsite, Alta. (KG, SL, MDO, m.ob.), and a few showed up for the first time in the Clarkston-Asotin valley, Wash. Juniper slopes near Frenchglen, Ore., yielded a count of 195 Bushtits (CDL). A Canyon Wren at Libby Dam made the latilong's first (WH). The species was noted near Vernon and Okanagan Landing, B.C.; it is unusual at any time in the n. Okanagan (PR). Two Bewick's Wrens were again found at Headgate P., s. of Asotin, Wash. (RN), and Malheur had one (MA).

A ♂ W. Bluebird fluttered at a picture window in Oakley Feb. 22 for a rare appearance of the species in s. Idaho (MSP). Two males of the species were sighted on the Snake R. Birds of Prey Natural Area near Murphy, Ida., Feb. 24, for the first record there (JD, JSM). A pair of Mountain Bluebirds was sighted Jan. 12 near Rogersburg, Wash. (PS, OM, MK), and a few wintered at Malheur (CDL). American Robins wintered abundantly in the Walla Walla valley and were common at Spokane. Five wintered at Libby. Large numbers showed up at Mountain Home at the end of January.

The Richland-Pasco area had 2 sightings of N. Mockingbirds in December (REW *et al.*) and one was found at Wawawai, Wash., Dec. 8 and Jan. 5 (JP). A **Brown Thrasher** at Sunriver, Ore., from early December on was the county's first and made e. Oregon's first winter record (BM, DD, TC, CMi). Bohemian Waxwings put in good appearances in e. Washington, s. Idaho, and at Helena. At Twin Falls, Ida., Cedar Waxwing numbers equalled those of Bohemians. A few Loggerhead Shrikes wintered in the Malheur Basin but N. Shrikes outnumbered them. European Starlings wintered in the Windermere, B.C., District for the 2nd year. A Townsend's Warbler near Bend, December to mid-February, made the county's first winter record and one of very few for e. Oregon (TC).

SPARROWS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — An Am. Tree Sparrow, a Song Sparrow and a Harris' Sparrow visited a feeder at Canal Flat, B.C., Jan. 13 (LH). An Am. Tree Sparrow near Klamath Falls Dec. 16 was noteworthy (SS). Single White-throated Sparrows wintered near Missoula, Mont. (PLW), and at Waterton townsite, Alta. (SL, MDO, m.ob.). Richland had a Golden-crowned Sparrow Dec. 23 (REW). One was at Wawawai Jan. 5 (JP) and at least two appeared at Potlatch, Ida., Feb. 22 (EP, OM). White-crowned Sparrows wintered in numbers at Pateros, Wash.; 97 were banded there (GB). One of this species frequented a Waterton feeder Dec. 20-28 (SL). A very few Harris' Sparrows appeared at Kamloops and Vernon; in the Walla Walla area, at Hermiston, Ore.; at Pocatello; and near Livingston and Missoula, Mont. A Windermere feeder hosted a Dark-eyed Junco Dec. 16 (LH). The only Lapland Longspurs reported were one using a Bend feeder Dec. 2 to mid-January (L & BS, TC) and a few around Klamath Falls (SS). Kamloops reported a flock of 600 Snow Buntings, and Douglas Co., Wash., and Red Rock Lakes noted them as common. Sixty at Malheur was a high number there but few were reported elsewhere.

Two Red-winged Blackbirds wintered at a Libby feeder (K.B.C.) and presence of the species at Camas N.W.R., Hamer, Ida., Jan. 12 was unusual (S.R.A.S.). Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds accompanied Red-winged Blackbirds for 2 weeks in late January at Helena (GH). A Rusty Blackbird appeared at a feedlot near Vernon Feb. 9 (PR) and up to four Brown-headed Cowbirds were there through February for the first winter record for the area (JG). A Com. Grackle was sighted near American Falls Dam, s. Ida., about Feb. 28 (DB).

FINCHES — Rosy Finches appeared plentiful in the Kamloops vicinity, in Okanogan, Douglas, and Grant counties, Wash., and in the vicinity of Clarkston, but were scarce or absent elsewhere. One at Trail, B.C., was noteworthy (ME). A widespread incursion of Pine Grosbeaks occurred from s. British Columbia as far s. as Malheur and e. through n. Idaho and into Montana as far e. as Livingston. Purple Finches were identified in the Walla Walla area (SM, RMo, CH, CS) and two females appeared near Orondo, Wash. (EH). Flocks of Red Crossbills were reported at Pocatello and Walla Walla but elsewhere they were seemingly scarce or absent. White-winged Crossbills staged something of an invasion in the Pocatello area (CHT), Mountain Home reported a male (KBP), and Rexburg, Ida., had a pair (DH). A very few were noted in s. British Columbia.

Common Redpolls arrived in force but apparently missed extreme n Idaho and n.w. Montana. A flock of 250 was found near Union, Ore., and 2 smaller flocks were near Baker, Ore. Mann Cr., n. of Weiser, Ida., had a flock of 200, and smaller numbers were sighted in the Pocatello, Rexburg, and Idaho Falls areas. Idaho National Engineering Laboratory had about 50 for the 2nd record there (TRe). The species was common in the s. Okanagan. A flock of 400 plus a bonus of three Hoary Redpolls visited Pearrygin L., Winthrop, Wash. (EH). Another Hoary frequented a Spokane feeder with House Finches for several weeks and was photographed at close range (F & JP, BW, m.ob.). Several reports of Hoary Redpolls came from the Kamloops-Vernon areas (RH, H & JM, JG). Fifty Pine Siskins used a Twin Falls feeder and the birds were abundant at feeders at Malheur. Very few were reported elsewhere. American Goldfinches wintered at feeders at Missoula and Livingston. They were also reported from Walla Walla and from Douglas and Okanogan counties, Wash. Large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks at Walla Walla ran up the bill there for sunflower seeds. Helena had high numbers and they were common at Malheur, but their appearance elsewhere was spotty and generally unimpressive.

CORRIGENDUM — Both Black and Com. Terns were present at American Falls Res., May 3, 1984 (AB 38:938).

ADDENDA — An ad. Cooper's Hawk s.e. of Reedpoint, Mont., June 28, 1984 provided the latilong's first summer record (WEH, SC, AS) Two Virginia Rails were sighted near Belgrade, Mont., in June, 1984 (WEH, JL, SC, M.A.S.). A meticulously described and researched **Temminck's Stint** was sighted near Potholes Res., s. of Moses L., Wash., Sept. 1-2, 1981, for North America's 2nd record outside of Alaska (EH, m.ob.). Apologies, Gene, for neglecting this for so long. Several Com. Poorwills were calling at Reedpoint June 28, 1984 for the latilong's first (WEH, SC, AS). A male and two ♀ Williamson's Sapsuckers were found at Henrys L., Fremont Co., Ida., June 14, 1984 (WEH). Four Chestnut-backed Chickadees that stayed at Coeur d'Alene, Ida., all summer and fall, 1984, presumably nested there (GHa).

Six Bohemian Waxwings found in Kananaskis P.P., Fernie, B.C., strongly suggested breeding there (DFF, R & DL). Two Solitary Vireos were on the Reedpoint Breeding Bird Survey June 20, 1984 for a latilong first (WEH, SSc, AS, SC). A singing ♂ Blackburnian Warbler, first for the latilong and 7th for Montana, was discovered at Kirk Hill Nature Area s. of Bozeman June 28, 1984 (WEH, SC, AS). Three singing Baird's Sparrows n. of Big Timber, Mont., June 20, 1984 made latilong firsts (WEH, SSc).

OBSERVERS CITED (area editors in boldface) — Merle Archie, Richard Arnold, Dave Burrup, Canyon Birders (C.B.), George Brady, Tommi Clark (TCl) Becky Corder, Craig & Marion Corder, Sharon Cotterell, Kathi Crabtree, **Tom Crabtree**, Dave Danley, Gary Davidson, Teresa Dolman, John Doremus, Maurice Ellison, David F. Fraser, Carole & Dale Goble, Ken Goble, **James Grant**, Paul Gurn, Jack H Hagan, Larry Halverson, Gertie Hanson (GHa), W. Edward Harper, William Harryman, Bill Hayes, **Dick & Della Hermsmeyer**, John Hill, **George Holton**, Mike Houck, Chris Howard, Rick Howie, Eugene Hunn, Don Hunter, **Merlene Koliner**, Kootenai Bird Club (K.B.C.), Jim Lane, Earl J. Larrison, Louise LaVoie, Jim Lemos (JLe), Carroll D Littlefield, Robert & Dierdre Love, Simon Lunn, Pat Mandzak, Jeffrey S. Marks, John Mathews, Massachusetts Audubon Society (M.A.S.), Hue & Jo Anne MacKenzie, Bill McDonald, Terry McEneaney, Carole McIntyre, Opal McIntyre, Ed McMackin, Craig Miller (CMi), Rudy Miniutti, Ruth Moorhead (RMo), **Shirley Muse**, Harry Nehls, Ron Neu, **Michael D. O'Shea**, Jeff Palmer, Dave Paullin, Chris Pielou, Frank & June Potter, **Colleen Powell** (CPO), Kerry B. Provance, Eleanor Pruett, Phil Ranson, James R. Rees, Tim Reynolds (TRe), Terry Rich, David Richards, Jeff Ruprecht, Jack Schwartz, Susan Scott (SSc), Lloyd & Barbara Sharp, Bill & Una Shepherd, Connie Sherer, John Shipley (JSh), Paul R. Sieracki, Snake River Audubon Society (S.R.A.S.), Miriam Spencer (MSP), Martin St. Louis (MS), Alison Street, David Sullivan, Steve Summers, Eileen Synnott, **Charles H. Trost**, Bart Whelton, **Robert E. Woodley**, John Woods, **Philip L. Wright**, Yakima Audubon Society (Y.A.S.), Gladys Yaw.—**THOMAS H. ROGERS, E. 10820 Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206.**

MOUNTAIN WEST REGION

/Hugh E. Kingery

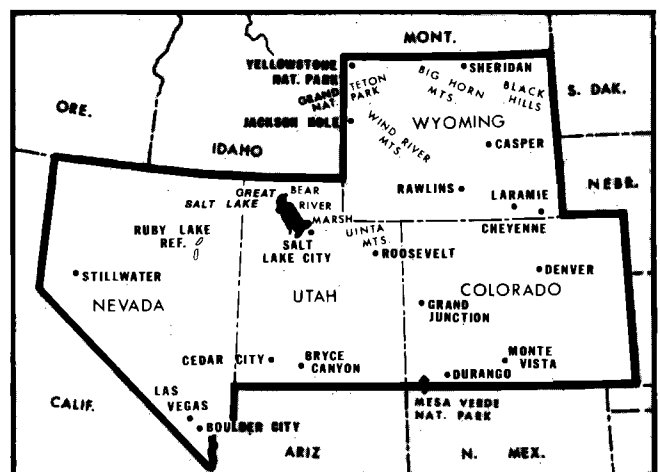
The combination of birds which flocked into the Mountain West this winter included both the typical and the atypical, and both montane and northern species. Three species involved in this mix do not, in this Region, typically engage in invasions: White-winged Crossbills (too rare), Pine Grosbeaks (sedentary in the high mountains), and shrikes (too few). The odd mix also included more typical invaders: Red Crossbills, Common Redpolls, Cassin's Finches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Bohemian Waxwings, Mountain Chickadees (maybe), and Red-tailed and Rough-legged hawks. A few longspurs trickled into southern Utah—including the state's first McCown's. At the same time, several common species wintered in lesser numbers than usual: juncos, White-crowned and American Tree sparrows, and Snow Buntings.

These movements seemed unrelated to weather in the Region, with one specific exception (see Purple Finches at Las Vegas). (Available food, here and elsewhere, may offer a more plausible explanation.) Generally temperatures ran colder than normal, precipitation average. But with the colder temperatures, snow stayed on the ground all winter even in the valley and plains cities where it usually melts during the winter.

REPORT FORMATS — Reports from which this column is derived assume a variety of formats, depending on the kind of data reported. Contributors vary their presentation depending upon whether they report only their own observations or collect data from many observers.

Two Colorado neighbors, Boulder and the Longmont/Lyons/Berthoud/Loveland area, report gross numbers of birds seen. In those two Audubon groups, compilers total all the individual birds of each species

which their members report. Except for very rare species and large flocks which obviously persist in the same place (ducks and some other waterbirds), they do not weed out multiple observations of the same bird(s). In Boulder, the Boulder Audubon Society has compiled its wildlife inventory for about 10 years, with contributions from 15-40 people. (Bob Kaempfer took over the compiler's chore last year.) In the Foothills Audubon Club territory, the records date back far longer, with the card file going from one compiler to the next. (Jean Christensen has this season passed the baton, with 40-50 observers hanging on, to Jim Dennis.) As a scientific census this uncontrolled reporting obviously has dubious accuracy. The Foothills Audubon Club reports provide the



solution to this fallacy: the reports to *American Birds* include the totals from the previous season. In this way they give a rough comparison of abundance from one year to the next.

The genius of these systems lies in the use of data provided by ordinary bird watchers, and the collection of data on ordinary birds. It incorporates their observations into a format with some utility. As the record-keeping continues year after year, the utility increases. I use these reports not as a "complete" census but rather for comparative purposes—the data adds specificity to what often are subjective impressions.

Christmas Bird Counts: The report which follows includes frequencies calculated for several of the commoner species on a party-hour ("ph") basis. The figures exclude Nevada, unless otherwise specified. The averages cover counts from 1972 to 1983.

ABBREVIATIONS — † = written description on file; # = no written description submitted by deadline; L/L/B/L = Longmont/Lyons/Berthoud/Loveland area, Colorado; *1st Lat* = first record for a Latilong.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Las Vegas reported more Arctic Loons (three to four in December) than Com. Loons (one Jan. 16 and one Jan. 12 at Davis Dam, 150 mi to the s.—VM, J & MC). A Com. Loon at Denver found enough open water to winter (D.F.O.). Horned Grebes had returned by Feb. 25—one each at St. George, Utah (DHo, SH) and Denver (WWB), but one appeared in Denver Jan. 3-4 (JR). At Provo, Utah, eight to 10 Eared Grebes wintered (DF); one was at Salt Lake City Jan. 1 (ES). At Las Vegas, W. Grebes peaked Dec. 15 at 375, including five light-phase birds (VM). January 29 saw single W. Grebes at St. George, Utah (SH, JG), and Boulder, Colo. (WWB). One Am. White Pelican was still at Salt Lake City Dec. 15 (ES). Davis Dam attracted one Great Egret Jan. 11 (VM). At Ruby Lake N.W.R., Nev., one to three Snowy Egrets remained through December (CE).

Small numbers of Tundra Swans wintered: 30-40 at Kirch W.M.A., Nev., 20 at Ruby L., and six to 11 at Grand Jct., Colo., the latter unusual (A.S.W.C.). Unusual December observations included six at Cody, Wyo., Dec. 3 (UK), one Dec. 15 at Niwot, Colo., leading a flock of Canada Geese (LH), and one Dec. 22-23 at Evanston, Wyo. (CK). A Greater White-fronted Goose wintered at Grand Jct. (A.S.W.C.), and 60 mi s. at Delta one Jan. 13 provided a *1st Lat* record. For the 2nd year Ross' Geese wintered at Grand Jct.—nine this winter (A.S.W.C.). In addition, Las Vegas had single Ross' Geese Dec. 15 and Jan. 22 (VM), and e. Colorado had one Dec. 23 and three in January (D.F.O., MJ). In e. Colorado in early December, Canada Geese exceeded their 3-year average, with 69,836 cf. a 58,328 average; by Jan. 7 the numbers dropped to 27,451, still over the 3-year average of 22,564 (C.D.W.). Wintering ducks in e. Colorado dropped from the 3-year average: 99,050 cf. the 140,570 average (C.D.W.). Monte Vista N.W.R., Colo., attracted 16,500 wintering Mallards (10,000 last year), and 5000 wintering Canada Geese (4000 last year—MS). The Region's first Cinnamon Teal of the spring arrived at St. George, Utah, Feb. 8 (SH). St.



Subadult Black Scoter in Great Salt Lake, Utah, Dec. 1, 1984. Photo/Ella Sorensen.

George's Eur. Wigeon stayed only until Dec. 28 (SH).

Zion reported surprising numbers of Ring-necked Ducks at the local water hole (the community sewage ponds); the 300 in December outnumbered all ducks except Mallards (JG). Three locations reported Greater Scaups: 27 Dec. 27 at Delta, Colo., which also had a flock last year (MJ); one at Wheat Ridge, Colo., Jan. 3-24 and, 10-15 mi s. in Denver, one Feb. 2 (D.F.O.); plus three at Salt Lake City Feb. 28 (ES). The only Oldsquaw reported was a mid-winter bird at Bonny Res., Colo., Jan. 25 (WL, JR). A Black Scoter joined two Surf Scoters at Great Salt L., Dec. 1-2 (†ES, m.ob.). Barrow's Goldeneyes, as usual, flew all the way s. to Davis Dam, but only four individuals (Jan. 12, J & MC) [However, see Southwest Region (Arizona)—K.K.]. They wintered in the usual places, especially Wyoming, where Back reported on them in Dubois: "I count on the females' orange bills as the first sign of spring, in February; but I saw 2 orange bills on Dec. 11, and on Feb. 2, in a flock of 31, I saw 10 females with orange bills!" More than the usual Hooded Mergansers appeared in s. parts of the Region: one at Las Vegas in January and 15 in s. Utah in January.

HAWKS, EAGLES — Raptor observations increased, particularly in Colorado: up 50% at Grand Jct., up 10% at Monte Vista, unusually abundant at Eagle until they and the local cats "trimmed the mouse population down to a more customary level" (JM), and on a transect near Boulder, Colo., from 10.0/count to 14.2/count (SJ). Bald Eagles dropped 50% in c. Utah and increased in the San Luis Valley, Colo. At Casper, about 80 roosted in the 4 canyons which attract them. On C.B.C.s, N. Harriers dropped to .13/party-hour, half their average. The decrease stems from marsh habitat succumbing to the rising waters of Great Salt L. Of the 3 counts which accounted for 271 of the 412 harriers on last year's C.B.C.s, Bear River (126 last year) did not conduct a count this year, and the combined count at Ogden and Salt Lake City dropped from 145 to 81. The C.B.C. count of .054 accipiters/party-hour, a drop from the last 3 years, equaled the 11-year average. Regional totals of the 3 species for the season also dropped, particularly Cooper's Hawks (76 Sharp-shinned, 20 Cooper's, 34 N. Goshawks). One of the Goshawks, in Sheridan, Wyo., fed on a suet feeder 10 ft from a back door (MC). Utah's 3rd Red-shouldered Hawk, found on the St. George C.B.C., stayed through Jan. 6 (MW, †SH, ES ph.).

The Region enjoyed an abundance of the 3 most common winter buteos. Red-tailed Hawks increased on C.B.C. counts—.21/party-hour against an average of .125. The Boulder transect found 2.8 Red-taileds and 4.6 Ferruginous per count, against 2.3 and 2.7/count last year (SJ). Ferruginous Hawks seemed especially numerous, particularly in the Front Range area from Denver to Cheyenne and east: B.A.S. reported 127 observations over the winter in Boulder County, and L/L/B/L had 22 observations against 7 last year (F.A.C.). Rough-legged Hawks posted the highest-ever C.B.C. count: .22/party-hour (average, .171/ph). Utah C.B.C.s especially counted high numbers (perhaps making up for the missing harriers); Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Logan together counted 178 cf. 78 last year.

GROUSE TO SHOREBIRDS — At Ruby L., Evans reported there were no observations of Chukars in the past year, and that Sage Grouse counts, both on the refuge and on the strutting grounds, evidenced a rapid decline. Observers found winter Soras in 3 places: Zion Dec. 8 (JG), Ruby L., Dec. 13 (CE), and two at Richfield, Utah, Feb. 22 (LW). Webb reported that the Great Salt L. is not the only Utah lake losing habitat: Utah L., a large, natural, fresh-water lake near Provo, has seen loss of habitat for the same reason—rising waters. "Most obviously affected so far has been the Com. Moorhen, which has lost significant amounts of cover and is more susceptible to being shot by duck hunters looking for a target. In s. Utah, the Washington sewage lagoons have been drained, thus wiping out a fairly sizable population of moorhens."

By Feb. 28, 1275 Sandhill Cranes had arrived at Lund, Nev. (CS), and 90% of the Monte Vista spring flock had arrived (MS). A Killdeer at Eagle, Colo., Feb. 1 fed in a spring-fed ditch; when he bobbed up and down his tail hit the water and a small icicle hung from it (JM). Winter shorebirds included 20 peeps and an Am. Avocet at Provo Dec. 3 (DF), a Greater Yellowlegs at Denver Jan. 12 in its traditional winter place (D.F.O.), small numbers of Least Sandpipers at Las Vegas all winter, and a mid-January Dunlin at Las Vegas (J & MC). Common Snipe typically winter along open water courses even in the snow country:

peak count at Eagle was nine Jan. 18 (JM); but one at Jensen, Utah, Feb. 10 was unusual (LF, DC).

GULLS TO HUMMINGBIRDS —

S.A.

Tove and Fischer conducted a survey of gulls in c. Utah, from Provo n. to Farmington; they studied 4 dumps which attracted thousands of gulls through the winter. (They will publish details of their research elsewhere.) They found about 7400 gulls Jan. 2-3 and 14,600 Feb. 26. By mid-winter the gulls established a pattern of roosting on the Great Salt L. and commuting to the various dumps. Ring-billeds maintained steady numbers through the period—5180 Jan. 2-3 and 5800 Feb. 26—but Californias increased from 1400 Jan. 2-3 to 8700 Feb. 26. They reported the following as well: **Mew Gulls**, apparently three different birds—an adult and two different immatures—Dec. 19, Jan. 26-30, and Feb. 4 (these provided Utah's 2nd through 4th records—†MT); 700 Herring Gulls Feb. 2; 15-30 Thayer's Gulls through the winter; three to five different **Glaucous-winged Gulls** Nov. 20-Mar. 18 (the state's first records; see preceding issue); probably six Glaucous Gulls, the maximum at one time three Feb. 26; and hybrids they identified as Glaucous-winged x Western (two birds) and a Glaucous x Herring which they regarded as the same bird seen at Logan in October. Other Utah bird watchers saw some of each species.

Elsewhere in the Region, a Mew Gull sojourned in Denver Jan. 27-Feb. 26 (D.F.O., †LH). California Gulls also made mid-winter visits to Niwot, Colo., Jan. 26 (LH) and Denver Feb. 10+ (D.F.O.). At Las Vegas one to two Thayer's wintered, and at Denver seven did so. About a dozen Glaucous Gulls came into n.e. Colorado. The Spotted Dove population in Salt Lake City has dwindled enough that it probably lacks the status of an established species in Utah (ES). A Burrowing Owl appeared at Las Vegas Jan. 15 and stayed (VM). The only Great Gray Owl report came from its resident stronghold of Yellowstone N.P., Jan. 21 (JZ). An unknown species of hummingbird stayed at Provo Dec. 1-24, apparently coming to a feeder (*vide* MW).

WOODPECKERS TO NUTHATCHES — Christmas Bird Counts tallied an average .17 Downy Woodpeckers/ph and a below-average .08 Hairies/ph (average .106), the latter affected by a drop at Evergreen, Colo., from 63 to 24. Northern Flickers weighed in at .74/party-hour, an average count. Grand Jct. came up with a Say's Phoebe Jan. 14 (A S W.C.). A ♀ Vermilion Flycatcher, formerly regular at several sites in s. Nevada, wintered at Las Vegas for the first occurrence there in several years (J & MC). Tree Swallows began their northward trek early one at Las Vegas Feb. 22 (VM) and one at Stansbury, Utah, Feb. 28 (ES). Las Vegas also had a very early Violet-green Swallow Feb. 26 (VM). The Steller's Jay C.B.C. tally of .57/party-hour equaled the average of the past 6 years, but was much lower than the 12-year average of .83/ph. The Black-billed Magpie's C.B.C. count of 2.79/ph dropped from an average 3.2/ph. Black-capped Chickadees increased on C B C.s, 1.22/ph *cf.* a 1.11 average, yet Grand Jct. and L/L/B/L both reported fewer this winter (the latter counted 150 this winter after 212 last year).

Typically in winter Mountain Chickadees form flocks of 10-50 in the subalpine forests of the high country. This winter, in the Indian Peaks area of w. Boulder Co., Colo., they almost disappeared—with 8 observations of 11 *cf.* 8 observations of 364 last year (DH)—while on the plains in e. Boulder County L/L/B/L counted 141 this winter *cf.* 54 last year (F.A.C.). Mountain Chickadees also increased on C.B.C.s, from a 1.26/ph average to 1.49/ph. These figures suggest that they left the high country in favor of the foothills and plains. The modest numbers in other Front Range cities like Denver, Boulder, and Cheyenne implied that the dispersal was selective, not universal. A Plain Titmouse was at Salt Lake City Dec. 30 (DJ). Small flocks of Red-breasted Nuthatches found hibernacles throughout the Region's piedmont and valley towns. Salt Lake City also had unusual White-breasted Nuthatches (2 observations—DJ) and Pygmy Nuthatches—two at a feeder Dec. 15-Jan. 19, providing the first records since before 1950 (ES).

WRENS TO WARBLERS — A House Wren remained at Zion Dec 17-30 (JG). Grand Jct. reported surprising Blue-gray Gnatcatchers: one Jan. 30, two Feb. 16 (# A.S.W.C.). An E. Bluebird visited Boulder Jan. 14 (BJ). By late February W. Bluebirds had returned to s.w. Utah and s.w. Colorado, while Mountain Bluebirds began their spring return in mid-February at Pueblo, Boulder, and Delta, Colo. Early Mountain Bluebirds appeared at Denver Jan. 15 (D.F.O.) and Yellowstone Feb. 7 (JZ). Casper, Denver, and Durango reported fewer Townsend's Solitaires. In between these cities, L/L/B/L reported a few more than usual. A Hermit Thrush skulked at Zion Jan. 14 (JG). American Robins wintered through much of the Region, as usual, with the n. peak a count of 38 at Story, Wyo., where they fed on chokecherries frozen on the bush (MC). Other peak counts included 200 Jan. 18 at Glenwood Springs, Colo. (RP), 217 at Logan Feb. 2 (KD), and 2000 Feb. 9 in n.e. Colorado (D.F.O.). Observers found six Varied Thrushes: Cedar City, Utah, Dec 17-18 (LR, †SH ph.), Grand Jct., Dec. 15-18 (A.W.S.C.), Boulder Dec. 8-Jan. 7 (B.A.S.), and two different ones Jan. 5 & 18 at Bonny Res., Colo. (WL, DM, †LH).

A surprising variety of mimids graced the Region. Separate Gray Catbirds appeared at Boulder, Dec. 7 and Jan. 6-9 (PW, BJ). A N Mockingbird that wintered at Dayton in n. Wyoming patronized a feeder and roosted in juniper trees (MR). Another mockingbird, attracted especially by a birdbath, wintered at Penrose, Colo., Jan. 2-Feb. 17 (RW) Denver reported them Jan. 4 & 18 (WWB, TM). At snowy Eldora, Colo., a Brown Thrasher wintered (JCh).

Bohemian Waxwings descended in droves over the n. two-thirds of the Region. Flocks of several hundred populated several Wyoming cities (*e.g.*, peaks of 500 at Casper, 400 at Sheridan, 300 at Cheyenne, and 200 at Cody). Similar flocks ranged through Denver and Boulder. Boulder reported total observations of 4885 in January (B.A.S.) while L/L/B/L tallied 3762 for the winter (2000 last year—F.A.C.). The Region's champion flock, estimated at 2000, took 30 seconds to pass over Killpack's yard in Ogden, Utah, Jan. 24—but that was his only observation this winter! They ranged as far s. as Glenwood Springs, Grand Jct., and Provo, and even Nevada had a few—a flock Dec. 13-20 at Ruby L. that peaked Dec. 14 at 55 (CE), and one found dead at Carson City Feb. 24 (BP). Cedar Waxwings also spread over the Region, but in much smaller numbers, and farther s., to places like Lamar, Colo., Durango, and Cedar City (where their numbers were down 50% from usual—SH).

The C.B.C. count of .079 shrikes (both species) per party-hour, highest of the 12 years, compared with a .04 average. Observers in Evergreen and Boulder specifically mentioned high numbers of shrikes present. A Black-throated Blue Warbler, reported late, was found dead Nov. 3 in Golden, Colo. (JB). The few reports of Yellow-rumped Warblers included singles Jan. 13 at Salt Lake City (ES) and Golden Jan. 25 (WF).

TOWHEES TO BLACKBIRDS — A Green-tailed Towhee spent Dec. 16-Jan. 1 at Boulder (LH). Unusual in a Wyoming winter, single Rufous-sided Towhees appeared in Cheyenne Dec. 11 (H.P.A.S.) and Jackson Feb. 5 (J.H.B.C.). The 67 Rufous-crowned Sparrows observed near Zion during the winter exceeded all the previous Utah records combined; Gifford accomplished the count by setting up a feeding station at Pine Cr., a known site for them. The C.B.C. average for Am Tree Sparrows dropped to 2.11/ph from an average 2.32/ph. Two Brewer's Sparrows consorted with a flock of mixed sparrow species at Delta, Colo., Jan. 8-Feb. 23; Janos identified his remarkable find by distinctive behavior as well as field marks. A White-throated Sparrow wintered at Zion for the 2nd winter (JG), and one was at Salt Lake City Dec. 15 and Jan. 13 (K & JT). Denver boasted a Golden-crowned Sparrow Dec. 28-Feb. 24 (†LH, D.F.O.). Christmas Bird Counts found many fewer White-crowned Sparrows—1.71/ph against a 2.3 average. L/L/B/L's total reflected that also—51 *cf.* 184. Dark-eyed Juncos reflected the same trend: 4.94/ph *vs.* 5.8/ph, and 667 at L/L/B/L *vs.* 1156 last year.

The single **McCown's Longspur** Dec. 29 and the two Jan. 5 at St George gave Utah its first verified records (†MW, DF). The three to five Lapland Longspurs found Jan. 5 at St. George had traveled very far S (†MW, DF). Top count of Lapland Longspurs came from Cheyenne, 300 Jan. 20 with a flock of Horned Larks and 300 Snow Buntings (AA). The other large flock of Snow Buntings reported was of 200-300 Dec 19 at Woodruff, Utah (CK). A winter flock of 10,000-20,000 Red-

winged Blackbirds moving to and from a roost provided Longmont, Colo., bird watchers an opportunity to estimate numbers (F.A.C.). One Red-winged wintered at Rock Springs, Wyo. (FL), and they swamped many Logan, Utah, feeders. Cold snowy spells attracted two to 12 Yellow-headed Blackbirds to a Salt Lake City feeder Jan. 3-Feb. 19, and one was at Fairfield, Utah, Jan. 20 (†DJ). In Wyoming Com. Grackles wintered—12 in Sheridan, one to two in Evanston, and one in Laramie (HD, CK, DI).

FINCHES — Hungry Rosy Finches at winter feeders gobble voraciously—probably more voraciously than any other Mountain West species. They descend on the feeders like falling leaves, flush frantically at movement—the shadow of a Steller's or Gray jay or an in-house bird watcher—and consume prodigious amounts of seed. The beauty of their subtle rosy colors, blending with chocolates and blacks, redeems the damage they do to budgets of mountain feeder-operators. Flocks of 100-500 visited all the usual Colorado and Wyoming places as well as Logan and Provo; top counts came of 700 at Rock Springs, 750 at McCoy, Colo., and 1000 Feb. 1-28 at one Sheridan feeder (plus 50-500 all winter at 13 other Sheridan feeders).

Pine Grosbeaks ordinarily stay in their Mountain West subalpine forests all year; this year some visited lower elevations. Flocks of five to 10 appeared in Salt Lake City, Logan, Jackson, Sheridan, Cheyenne, Durango, Boulder, and Ft. Collins; larger flocks made one-time appearances: 20 at Ft. Bridger, Wyo., Jan. 5, 41 at Logan Feb. 2, 50 at Durango in late December. Cassin's Finches made similar extended forays, exemplified by L/L/B/L's tally of 594 cf. 80 last year. Las Vegas had six Purple Finches Feb. 10-16, birds that came when Nevada was situated between a high pressure system to the w. and a low to the e., a condition which produced frigid arctic winds (CL). House Finches provided their 2nd-highest C.B.C. count, 2.53/ph (average, 2.19); Nevada C.B.C.s also reflected this abundance, with 2.88/ph (1.96 average for 5 years).



Rosy Finches on woodpile, Silverthorne, Summit Co., Colo. Winter 1984-1985. Photo/Hugh Kingery.

Red Crossbills spilled into urban settings in Denver, Boulder, Ft. Collins, Casper, Sheridan, Cody, Salt Lake City, and Provo; most remarkable was a flock of 500 at Loveland, Colo., Dec. 5 (JD). The Region had more **White-winged Crossbills** than ever reported in one season. In Utah: Provo, a flock of 18 Dec. 15 and five Feb. 23, none in between (†DF); Salt Lake City, 20-30 Dec. 15-Feb. 16 (DJ, ES, CHo); Logan, five to 17 wintered (KA, KD, MW). In Wyoming: five at Dubois Feb. 20 (EB, TF), six at Cody Feb. 19 (LHr, MM), one to two at Sheridan Feb. 15-20 (GP, MHe), two at Big Horn Jan. 17 (CO), one at Story Feb. 11 (MC). Colorado had comparatively few: Indian Peaks (where they have been present for the past year), one Nov. 28 (DH), Colorado Springs, one Jan. 22 (RB), Ft. Collins, two to three wintered (F.C.A.S.). Probably the most remarkable: one Nov. 21-25 (†JCR) and two Feb. 16-17 (DJo) at Ft. Morgan, on the Colorado plains 75 mi e. of the mountains.

Common Redpolls likewise invaded, with about 600 reported in the Region. Wyoming had good numbers, such as 140 at Rock Springs Feb 5, 75 at Lander Jan. 30, and 100 wintering at the Bar X subdivision in Jackson. Flocks of 10-15 spread throughout the Colorado Front Range s to Rye and e. to Bonny Res., with the peaks being 30-40 daily at an Evergreen feeder. Downing found another Hoary Redpoll at her Sheridan feeder Dec. 16 (she found two in November—see preceding issue) Evening Grosbeaks, nationally better-known than Rosy Finches for their voracious appetites, grab their seeds in a more businesslike manner than the frantic flocks of Rosy Finches. Grosbeaks found welcoming yards all over the Region, w. to Carson City and s. to Las Vegas, St George, Cedar City, and Kanab. L/L/B/L's reliable comparison counted 1083, after only 267 last winter (F.A.C.).

CORRIGENDUM — I received, too late to mention in the Fall Report, a description of Wyoming's first Heermann's Gull more detailed than that referred to in last season's report (OKS).

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SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona, Sonora

/Janet Witzeman and David Stejskal

It was a winter of extremes. Rain in December (nearly three times the December average) contributed to giving the state its fourth-wettest year on record. The record-breaking freeze in early February brought the coldest temperatures in five years and even more highland species to the

lowlands. The record rains of last summer resulted in lush conditions in the floodplains around Prescott and all-over southern Arizona, thus attracting a high density of seed-eaters into those areas.

Waterfowl diversity and density was the highest in 11 years at Prescott, with 3000 to 5000 individuals by mid-January that supported four Bald Eagles, three Merlins, a Peregrine Falcon and a Prairie Falcon through the winter.

The major story of the winter, however, was the invasion of northern and montane species. Not since the winter of 1972-1973, and in some



cases not since the winter of 1950-1951, had the magnitude and variety been so great. And, like those other two winters, this winter had "everything"—woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, nuthatches, bluebirds, robins, a few solitaires, towhees, plus the finches—Purple, Cassin's, Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, goldfinches and Evening Grosbeaks.

There was a nice surprise as well. Arizona is known as the baby state for more reasons than one—to birders it is because every state in the union except Arizona had Common Grackle on its list—until this winter, that is. Yes, it finally happened—Common Grackles in Arizona!

ABBREVIATIONS — L.C.R. = Lower Colorado River.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — An Arctic Loon, rare away from the L.C.R., was at Painted Rock Dam Feb. 9 (CB, JT). Two of the seven Com. Loons at Prescott remained into January (CT). Two half-grown young light-phase W. Grebes were observed begging and being fed by two adults at Topock Marsh on the very early date of Jan. 20 (RN). Western Grebes are uncommon in winter at Prescott where there were three (CT), and in s.e. Arizona where up to four were recorded, at McNeal in December (AM). Four individuals were present during the period at ponds around Phoenix where the species is only occasionally recorded in winter (L. Burge, MC, RN, DT).

An Am. White Pelican, rare in n. Arizona, was on a lake near Heber Dec. 8-9 (C. Lewis, *vide* DT). A late-staying Brown Pelican was at Topock Marsh Jan. 20 (RN). A Double-crested Cormorant, an uncommon visitor to s.e. Arizona, was at McNeal Jan. 6-12 (B. & J. Epler, AM). An Olivaceous Cormorant was observed Feb. 17 at Patagonia L. (JSa, C. Johnson), where the species has often been present in numbers, but has been scarce the past 2 years.

An Am. Bittern, rarely seen in s.e. Arizona, was found at a ranch in Elfrida Dec. 24 (AM). A Least Bittern at Peña Blanca L., Jan. 1 (†B. Brautigan) represented one of only a few winter records for the state and the first for that area; the species is rare at any time of year away from the L.C.R. and the Phoenix area. Great and Snowy egrets were recorded at areas where they are not usually found in winter. From one to two Great Egrets were at McNeal (AM *et al.*), two were in Tucson (m.ob.), and 10 were in Phoenix (RN) during the period. Up to eight Snowy Egrets were at McNeal during the period (AM), one was near Portal Dec. 1 (R. Blondell), one was at Prescott Dec. 15 (CT), and six were at Phoenix Feb. 17 (RN). High numbers of Cattle Egrets (250+) were counted near Gadsden, s.w. Arizona, Jan. 10 (GM) and 50+ were in s.w. Phoenix during the period (PB, RB). A lone individual at the Ajo City P., Jan. 1 (B & SR) was in an odd location. In s.e. Arizona, where the species is less common, there were up to 11 at McNeal, nine at Palominas, up to 13 at Elfrida, one at Douglas (AM *et al.*), and 12 s. of Portal (*vide* SSp). A Cattle Egret at Flagstaff Dec. 30 (T. Britt) and 17 at Young Nov. 22 (D. Carrothers) added to the growing number of reports in n. Arizona this year.

White-faced Ibises are uncommon in winter away from the L.C.R.; 10 were at Picacho Res., Dec. 1 (C. Green) and unprecedented were two at McNeal Dec. 14, one of which remained until Feb. 17 (AM).

WATERFOWL — From seven to 10 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks at Gilbert, s.e. of Phoenix, from mid-January through the period (P. Burch, *vide* DS) represented one of only a few winter records for the state. The only Tundra Swans reported this winter were an adult and an immature at Prescott Dec. 15 into January (CT) and one at Horseshoe Dam Dec. 27 (*vide* DT). Greater White-fronted Goose records away from the L.C.R. were of individuals at Sierra Vista sewage ponds Dec. 8 (AM, DD) and at the Bisbee/Douglas sewage ponds all winter (AM). Individual Ross' Geese were recorded at Benson (JSa), Hereford (AM, DD, TD), Sierra Vista (D. Collazo), Tucson (J. Hoffman), n.w. Phoenix (R. Zook), s.w. Phoenix (MC), and L. Havasu (KR *et al.*) during the winter.

Wood Duck is rare in extreme s.e. Arizona; up to four were at McNeal Jan. 2-Feb. 6 (AM). Of interest elsewhere where they are not common were up to three in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 9-17 (DS *et al.*), two at Chandler Jan. 18 (TC), and one at Gila Bend Feb. 24 (PB *et al.*). Cinnamon Teal usually do not remain through the winter on the L.C.R., so unusual were the 200 that wintered at Cibola N.W.R. (B. Anderson). Also of note were a male at Prescott from mid-December to mid-January, providing the first winter record for that area (CT), and two at McNeal Jan. 1 (FS, JSa). The ♂ Eur. Wigeon returned to Papago P., Phoenix, for the 6th winter (MC); a 2nd male was observed at another pond in Phoenix during February (T. Chew, *vide* PB). A ♀ Greater Scaup was at the Benson sewage ponds Jan. 3-12 (FS *et al.*); two males at Prescott Dec. 7-Jan. 2 (CT) represented the 3rd record for that area; and four were at L. Havasu City Dec. 21 (ph. KR). A ♂ Oldsquaw at the Avondale sewage ponds, s.w. of Phoenix, Dec. 13-19 (RB, ph. GR, m.ob.) represented one of only a few records away from the L.C.R.



White-winged Scoter below Parker Dam, Ariz., Dec. 21, 1984. Photo by Ken Rosenberg.

The White-winged Scoter at Parker Dam since mid-November remained at least to Dec. 23 (ph. KR). Twenty-four Barrow's Goldeneyes were counted below Davis Dam Feb. 25 (GM), and one was below Parker Dam Dec. 22 (KR). Two to three Hooded Mergansers were in Tucson from at least mid-December through the period (m.ob.) and one was in Phoenix Feb. 4+ (*vide* PB). One to two Com. Mergansers, uncommon in s.e. Arizona, were at McNeal Jan. 1-16 (FS, JSa, AM). Eight at a pond in Phoenix Feb. 18 (RN) were unusual as the species is seldom seen away from the rivers and larger bodies of water in the area.

RAPTORS — Two Ospreys were seen interacting at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers Jan. 26 (RN); the species has nested in this area in the past but not since 1951. Up to eight Black-shouldered Kites wintered in the Sulphur Springs Valley, s.e. Arizona (AM *et al.*). In c. Arizona one was near Arlington Dec. 28 (JSh), two were at Painted Rock Dam Feb. 9 (CB, JT), and one was at Paloma, w. of Gila Bend, Feb. 17 (RN). Wintering Bald Eagles were more common than usual in s.e. Arizona again: an immature at McNeal Jan. 28, an adult at Kansas Settlement Feb. 9 (AM *et al.*), two to six near Sonoita during February, and several in the San Rafael Valley in January and February (m.ob.).

Harris' Hawks dispersed (as they occasionally do in winter) to areas out of their normal habitat and where they had not been recorded previously: one at Paloma Dec. 9 (RF), three s. of Roosevelt L., Jan. 3 (J. Poe), and two n. to near the Santa Maria R., Yavapai Co., Feb. 24 (GM). Numbers of Harris' Hawks (up to 12) in the Sulphur Springs

Valley during the winter were much higher than what had been recorded previously. **Red-shouldered Hawk** is an irregular and sparse visitor to s. Arizona with only about one-half dozen records in modern history, so surprising were two individuals during the period: an adult at Paloma Dec. 2 at least to Feb. 24 (CB, JT *et al.*) and one in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 17 (†R. Witzeman). Good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks (as well as Ferruginous) were reported overall, with one Rough-legged Hawk being found as far s. as Cananea, Sonora, Feb. 17 (DD, TD). A high concentration of 10 Golden Eagles was observed feeding on 2 dead sheep carcasses at Elfrida Feb. 1 (AM). One in s.w. Phoenix Feb. 6 was at a lower elevation than usual (J. Burns). A total of 16 Golden Eagles and four Merlins was counted between Bisbee and Sonoita during the Hawk-watch Feb. 2 (AM, DD, TD).

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS — Numbers of Mountain Plovers wintering in the McNeal/Elfrida area have been increasing since the species was first discovered there 7 years ago. The dramatic jump in numbers which occurred there last winter repeated itself this year with a new high of 100 Jan. 30 (AM *et al.*). American Avocets, uncommon in the southeast in winter, were recorded there again this year: up to two were at McNeal at least during December, and four were at Willcox Feb. 9 (AM, TD *et al.*). Also noteworthy for s.e. Arizona were seven Greater Yellowlegs at McNeal Jan. 1 (JSa) and one still there Jan. 29 (BD), 15 Long-billed Curlews n. of Elfrida Feb. 26 (TD), and a Dunlin at McNeal Dec. 4 to at least Jan. 1 (AM, FS). The late Solitary Sandpiper in s.w. Phoenix remained until Dec. 9 (DS) and provided the 2nd winter record for that area. A very late Long-billed Dowitcher at Prescott in mid-December was most unusual.

Seven Bonaparte's Gulls (the same number as last winter!) were at McNeal again Dec. 7 with two still present Dec. 25 (AM); the species is usually uncommon anywhere in the state in winter. More gulls than usual, including a few Californias, were present off and on all winter at Prescott (CT). A first-winter Herring Gull, an uncommon visitor especially away from the L.C.R., was observed at Prescott Feb. 16 (BT, *fide* CT). A Black-legged Kittiwake was discovered at L. Pleasant, n.w. of Phoenix, Dec. 31 (CB, JT); there had been only a dozen or so previous records.

DOVES THROUGH OWLS — White-winged Doves are sometimes locally common far e. at Douglas in winter; a new high of 17 was there Dec. 19, with four still present Feb. 28 (AM). Farther e. still was one at Portal Dec. 1-Jan. 31, and a 2nd individual that arrived late in January (SSp, WS). An Inca Dove was found n. of its usual range at Prescott Dec. 11-Jan. 4 (L. McClelland). The Com. Ground-Dove is an irregular winter visitor to the Sulphur Springs Valley; up to four were seen at a ranch in Elfrida in early December, and two were in Douglas Jan. 27 (AM).

Greater Roadrunners sometimes stray to surprising heights and locations. In n. Arizona, where the species is scarce anytime, one seen Jan. 7 at 7200' on L. Mary—which was frozen and covered with 6" of snow—seemed incredible (JSh).

Three Long-eared Owls, uncommon winter residents, were found at Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 17 (GM), and four were at Elfrida Jan. 1 (H. Hobart, T. Huels).

HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A Violet-crowned Hummingbird returned to the same feeder in Douglas where it (or another) had spent most of last winter; this year it remained Oct. 21-Feb. 14 (B. Smith) and provided the 4th winter record for the state. Five Blue-throated Hummingbirds remained at Portal feeders at least through December and at least three through January (SSp, WS, RM). A late-staying Anna's Hummingbird was at the Southwest Research Station Dec. 31 (JSa).

The Green Kingfisher present at Kino Springs since last summer remained through the period (m.ob.).

Lewis' Woodpeckers continued to be seen at many places in c. and s. Arizona through the winter (m.ob.). Other woodpeckers found at lower than normal elevations were two Acorn Woodpeckers through the period at Tempe and a Williamson's Sapsucker there Feb. 20 (CH), plus a Hairy Woodpecker at Globe Jan. 12 (M & MW).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH NUTHATCHES — A W. Flycatcher, rare in winter, was heard at Bill Williams Delta Dec. 21 (KR, GR *et al.*).

A Tree Swallow, rare in s.e. Arizona in winter, was observed at McNeal Dec. 4-Feb. 9 (AM, TD).

Individual Scrub Jays continued to be seen at scattered lowland locations during the winter (TC, RN, CT). Up to two Clark's Nutcrackers were at Prescott Jan. 5-11 (BT, CT). American Crows at out-of-the-ordinary locales were one at Tucson Dec. 3 (JB), five at Prescott Jan. 14-15 (H & AG, CT), and 26 at Chino Valley, n. of Prescott, Feb. 20+ (H & AG).

A few Mountain Chickadees continued to be seen at lower elevations one banded at Tucson Dec. 16 (K. Burke), two at Catalina S.P., n. of Tucson, Jan. 12-Feb. 24 (RC, RH, GM), one e. of Phoenix along the Verde R., Jan. 26 (RN), and one all winter at Miami (JSp). A small invasion of this species occurred in the valleys around Prescott (CT). Three single Plain Titmice, observed in washes in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mts. during February (RH), were out of their normal habitat, as was one at a Globe feeder Dec. 13-Feb. 5 (M & MW). Bushtits were flocking in exceptional numbers in Prescott after a blizzard Dec. 17; 300+ were counted in one flock and 44 in another (CT). Individual Red-breasted Nuthatches continued to be recorded at scattered lowland areas around Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott, and Miami.

WRENS THROUGH SHRIKES — A Winter Wren, an uncommon winter visitor, was in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 9 at least to Dec. 17 (DS, RN). At least one Am. Dipper, a scarce winter visitor to s. Arizona, was in Madera Canyon Dec. 29-Jan. 17 (m.ob.), an area with few previous records; another individual was above Herb Martyr, Chiricahua Mts., Jan. 26 (R. Plage). Although locally common in a few areas, it was generally a poor winter for Ruby-crowned Kinglets in s. Arizona and around Prescott (GM, CT).

Western Bluebirds were common all winter around Phoenix, the L.C.R., and other lowland areas in s. Arizona; up to eight were in the Sulphur Springs Valley, where the species is more irregular (AM, TD). Mountain Bluebirds were abundant everywhere, even in the Sulphur Springs Valley where they had not been recorded in large numbers before. Thirteen Hermit Thrushes were banded at Tanque Verde Ranch, Tucson, Feb. 7 following the very cold, wet weather system (C. Corchran, P. Walters); the species was scarce this winter prior to that time. American Robins were present in good numbers in early winter and then increased dramatically in early February when thousands were reported around Globe, Tucson and Phoenix: 200 in one Phoenix yard alone. A ♂ Varied Thrush found dead under a window in Tucson Feb. 7 (*Univ. of Ariz.) was the only one reported this winter.

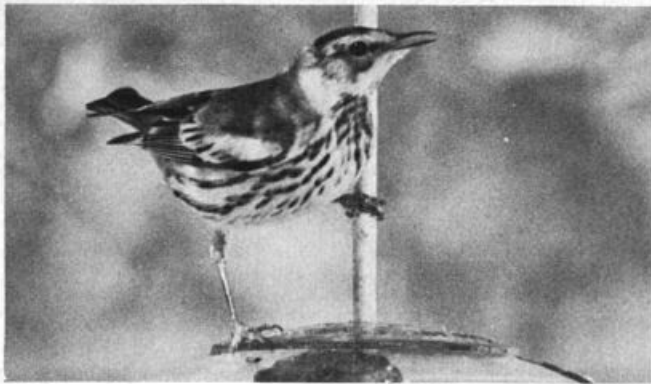
Sage Thrashers, usually uncommon winter visitors, seemed to be everywhere in the Sulphur Springs Valley this year (AM). The only Sprague's Pipit reported was one at the Buenos Aires Ranch, w. of Nogales Dec. 5 (B. Matheny, J. Palting). One adult and one imm. N. Shrike were observed e. of Williams Jan. 10 (TC).

WARBLERS — A late Tennessee Warbler was at Paloma Dec. 15 (CB, JT). A Yellow Warbler was found in the same spot in s.w. Phoenix for the 3rd winter in a row from early November at least to Dec. 17 (DS, RN). Again this winter, Chestnut-sided Warblers were almost as "common" as last year. The one in a Phoenix yard since Nov. 4 remained until Jan. 17 (RB), one at the Phoenix Zoo was present from Dec. 13 until late December (MC), and three individuals were recorded in s.w. Phoenix in mid-December (DS, RN, GR, RF, CB).

A ♂ **Cape May Warbler** was at a feeder in Tucson from Dec. 10 at least through March (ph. BD, ph. R. Bowers, SSu). Another individual was observed at Patagonia Dec. 16 (AM). Half of the 8 state records have been in winter. Two late ♂ Black-throated Blue Warblers were at Ramsey Canyon Dec. 10 and one was still there Dec. 11 before the snow and cold nights that began there Dec. 13 (†A. & F. Hirst).

Black-throated Gray Warblers were present in good numbers throughout s. Arizona this winter; two recorded again at Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 17 (GM) were in an area where considered uncommon. A ♂ Townsend's Warbler at Prescott Dec. 9 (H & AG) and three in the Huachuca Mts. (m.ob.) in mid-December were at higher elevations than usual on these late dates. A Grace's Warbler at Prescott on the exceptionally late date of Dec. 11 (BT) represented the first "winter" record for the state.

The two Black-and-white Warblers in s.w. Phoenix in late fall remained at least to Dec. 14 & 17 respectively (DS *et al.*); one was at



Male Cape May Warbler at Tucson, Ariz., present all winter 1984-1985, photographed Mar. 23, 1985. Photo/Richard K. Bowers.

Ramsey Canyon Dec. 15+ (JSa), and one was at Tubac S.P., Jan. 11-13 (B. Buttery, m.ob.). The only Am. Redstarts reported were on the L.C.R.; in addition to the ones on the Parker and Yuma C.B.C.s, one was found below Imperial Dam Feb. 3 (D. Robinson).

A Louisiana Waterthrush was present Dec. 16+ in the same area of the Patagonia Sanctuary where one resided last winter (†R. Baxter, R. Smith). There are now about a dozen state records. A MacGillivray's Warbler was at Estrella Mt. Park, w. of Phoenix, for several days prior to Feb. 6 (MC *et al.*); only one of the previous few winter records in the state extended past early January. Individual Wilson's Warblers were recorded at Sabino Canyon Dec. 17 (K. Nickey), at the Tucson sewage ponds Feb. 20 (C. Johnson), and in n.w. Tucson Feb. 23 (SSu), plus the ones on the Parker, Phoenix, and Yuma C.B.C.s. Lingering single Painted Redstarts were recorded at Patagonia and Tucson in mid-December, and one was in Baboquivari Canyon Jan. 19 (D. Fischer).

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS — A N. Cardinal, uncommon at Prescott in winter, was at Granite Creek Jan. 4 through the period (CT). Pyrrhuloxias at the edge of their range included one Jan. 2 and Feb. 13 at Skull Valley, w. of Prescott, in the same location as one recorded there 2 other winters recently (CT); one from late January through the period e. of Prescott (CT); and one at Miami Jan. 4-Feb. 4 (JSp). A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak, uncommon in winter, frequented a Phoenix feeder Jan. 3 into March (RN).

Rufous-sided Towhees were noticeably abundant at lower elevations from Phoenix and Globe s. through s. Arizona (m.ob.). The flock of 20+ Am. Tree Sparrows n. of Many Farms remained through the period (B. Jacobs *et al.*). Previously the species was considered to be only a sparse and irregular winter resident in n. Arizona with no more than one to four ever seen at one time.

Several Fox Sparrows were reported: one at a feeder in Prescott all winter (VM), one to four at Patagonia (JB, GM), one at Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 17 (GM), and two in Elfrida Jan. 1 (AM *et al.*). Swamp Sparrow is considered to be only a casual winter visitor to n. Arizona, so noteworthy was one at Arcosanti, s.e. of Prescott, Dec. 26 (BT). Two Golden-crowned Sparrows were at Prescott, one at a feeder from late November through March (VM) and one Dec. 18 (CT). A Harris' Sparrow was at a feeder in Cave Creek n.e. of Phoenix from early January into March (F. Cassanova *et al.*).

Two Yellow-eyed Juncos were in Bisbee, where they had been recorded only once before, Nov. 10-Jan. 5 (DD). McCown's Longspurs were common again in the McNeal/Elfrida area as they were last winter; up to 85 were counted in mid-December and smaller numbers remained through the period (AM, SSu, JB).

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES — After years of waiting and searching for **Common Grackle**, suddenly there were *two* within days of each other, both discovered as a result of Christmas Counting. The first (found while scouting for the L. Pleasant C.B.C.) was heard and then seen with thousands of Brewer's Blackbirds that were coming to roost at L. Pleasant, Dec. 18 at least to Jan. 23 (†TC, ph. GR, m.ob.). The 2nd (found on the Santa Catalina C.B.C.) was e. of Tucson Dec. 23 at least to Jan. 7 (LD, ph. N. Bock, SSu *et al.*), also with large numbers of Brewer's Blackbirds.



Male Cape May Warbler at Tucson, Ariz., Mar. 22, 1985. Photo/Bill Davis.

This winter's Hooded Oriole records were away from feeders: a male e. of Tucson Dec. 23 (LD *et al.*) and a first-year male at a ranch in McNeal Feb. 8 (AM). More unusual were two N. (Bullock's) Orioles — one at a Prescott feeder Dec. 14-29 (E. & R. Backus, *vide* CT) and one at a Camp Verde feeder from late fall through the period (F. Sanford, *vide* CT); these were the first winter records for n. Arizona, and there have been only about a dozen winter records in the state overall.

FINCHES — The invasion of Cassin's Finches into mid and low elevations was the talk of the season—they were everywhere, with the "greatest numbers ever" around Prescott and down into the Verde Valley, at Globe feeders, Tucson, Organ Pipe Cactus N.M., Madera Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Portal feeders where numbers increased to 25+ in January, to Phoenix and even to Parker where 14+ represented one of the few records for the L.C.R. The invasion of Purple Finches was no less spectacular; however, their winter descents into the lowlands have not been as infrequent as those of Cassin's Finches. Small numbers were recorded at Portal, Madera Canyon, Patagonia, Tucson, and farther n. at Globe, Prescott, Camp Verde, Clear Creek, Beaver Creek, Montezuma Castle, Skull Valley and Burro Creek. Numbers in these n. localities "equalled or surpassed any other invasion" (CT). At Parker, at least a dozen were seen together with Cassin's Finches in the same trees (GR, JW, ph. KR).

Red Crossbills, around in lowland areas since the fall, continued to be seen in a few areas around Phoenix, Tempe, and Wickenburg; they were "everywhere" in Tucson (m.ob.), and were in the Verde Valley for the first time (CT). They were also present in the mountains around Prescott, and up to three were near Montezuma's Well Dec. 29-Jan. 10 (CT, S. Hyde). Pine Siskins were abundant at Portal and found in good numbers around Phoenix and other lowland areas. Lawrence's Goldfinches, continuing to have their most successful season since 1973-1974, were recorded from Sedona, Prescott, Verde Valley, Globe, and down to Phoenix, Tucson, Elfrida, Douglas and Parker.

To complete the winter scenario of the flight of the finches, there were Evening Grosbeaks. Small groups of up to 10 were present during the period in Redington Pass (R. Chapin, S. Stoner), Tucson (J. & B. Tweit), Guevavi Ranch (BD), Florida Wash (RC), Portal (SSp), and Nogales. In n. Arizona they were fairly common in Flagstaff, and numbers increased steadily turning into a big movement around Prescott, Verde Valley, W. Clear Creek, and Beaver Creek (CT). Two were found as low as the Verde R., e. of Phoenix, Dec. 25 (CH).

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New Mexico

/John P. Hubbard

ABBREVIATIONS — Bosque Refuge = Bosque del Apache Nat'l Wildlife Refuge; E.B.L. = Elephant Butte Lake; T. or C. = Truth or Consequences. Place names in *italics* are counties.

GREBES THROUGH HERONS — Northerly Pied-billed Grebes were singles at Heron and El Vado lakes Jan. 9 (WE, WH). One to two Horned Grebes were at E.B.L., Jan. 11 & 25 (KZ). Also notable was a W. Grebe at Evans L., *Grant*, Jan. 5 (RF). Late were 10 Am. White Pelicans at Caballo L., Dec. 9 (RH), while one at Bitter Lake N.W.R. through Jan. 10 was a cripple (KW). A Great Egret at Garfield Dec. 12 (RH) was somewhat unusual, as were two Green-backed Herons in *Grant* at Buckhorn Dec. 1 and one at Mangas Springs Dec. 9 (RF). Cattle Egrets lingered into mid-December, including unexpectedly one near Santa Fe (W. West) and six at Zuni (JT *et al.*); others included four to five near Bosque Refuge (RT) and eight at Evans L. (RF).

WATERFOWL — More than the usual number of presumed Tundra Swans was reported in the state, with a minimum of 20 in the Rio Grande Valley (Albuquerque to Caballo L.) and in the Pecos Valley (Roswell southward) (v.o.); also notable were one at Stubblefield L., *Colfax*, Dec. 10 (DMc) and five at Zuni Dec. 15 (A. Schmierer). Snow Geese were more widespread than usual, including one at Navajo L., Jan. 7, three at Clayton L., Dec. 10, 85 at La Cueva, *Mora*, Dec. 10 and 27 there Jan. 7, three at Conchas L., Jan. 8, one near Tucumcari Dec. 11 (all DMc), and one near Cliff Jan. 5 (RF). Some 2000-3000 Canada Geese near Clayton in the period (MM *et al.*) furnished the highest count ever there, while a flock of 65+ at Caballo L. on Jan. 30 included three or four of the "Cackling" race (JH). A Mandarin Duck at Indian Lakes, *Bernalillo*, Dec. 21 and earlier was obviously an escape, although associated with Wood Ducks (J. Phillips *et al.*). Late were three Cinnamon Teal at Zuni Dec. 13 (JT *et al.*) and up to five near Hobbs Dec. 12 (JS), while early was one at Bosque Refuge Jan. 26 (WH). A ♀ **Greater Scaup** at Caballo Dam Dec. 21 and Jan. 7 (KZ, ph.) was joined by three males Jan. 30 and Feb. 2 (JH); an ad. male was taken near Carlsbad by a hunter Jan. 4 (*vide* E. Martin). Other reports of rare ducks included a **Surf Scoter** shot at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Dec. 1 (KW), plus two ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneyes** at Cochiti L., Jan. 27 (WH). Hooded and Red-breasted mergansers were much more widespread and numerous than usual, with at least 34 of the former recorded in the Rio Grande and Pecos valley areas and near Clayton (m.ob.). The count on Red-breasted was at least 30, these from the above valley areas and near Alamogordo (m.ob.).

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS — A late Osprey was at Bosque Refuge Jan. 1 (RD). Aerial surveys for Bald Eagles in the period Jan. 2-4 & 14 yielded 209 birds, of which 125 were adults (DMc). Northern Goshawks invaded lower elevational areas in moderate numbers, with at least eight recorded from the Pecos Valley w. (v.o.). The state's first verified **Red-shouldered Hawk** was an adult photographed at Corrales Dec. 16 (D. & S. Huntington); as with certain other s.w. records of this species, the question can be raised as to whether this bird reached the area strictly under its own power. A count on the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project area near Farmington yielded 70 Ferruginous Hawks, plus an additional 78 raptors of 6 other species there Jan. 19 (AN). Merlins made a good showing in the state, with at least 13 reported from the Pecos Valley w. (v.o.). The Chukar population at Farmington has dwindled to the point that none was found there during the period (AN *et al.*). Ten Montezuma Quail near Mangas Springs Dec. 23 (RF, H. Parent) were in an area where not recently reported otherwise.

Only 375 Sandhill Cranes were counted Jan. 9 in the Deming-Columbus area (DMc), where shifts in cropping patterns (*e.g.*, to cotton) have diminished food supplies for the species. Up to 29 Whooping Cranes were accounted for in the middle Rio Grande Valley in the period (RD), and by Feb. 8 several were observed migrating N in *Bernalillo* (*vide* RT). A Snowy Plover at Hollomon Lakes, *Otero*, Feb. 23 (J. Donaldson, BZ) provided a local winter first and one of the few winter records for the state. At least 13 Spotted Sandpipers were reported in the period in the lowermost Rio Grande and Pecos valleys (v.o.); also notable was one near Cliff in early January (RF). Very rare in winter, two California

Gulls were at E B L, Jan 11 (KZ) Also notable were a Ring-billed at Santa Fe Dec. 2 (L. Herrmann) and an imm. Thayer's at Caballo L, Dec. 9-Jan. 30 (KZ *et al.*).

DOVES THROUGH FLYCATCHERS — White-winged Doves first became notably urban and then resident in the state some years ago at Las Cruces, and now this twin phenomenon is apparently becoming the case elsewhere—*e.g.*, at Socorro, where up to 17 were present in the period (JS). Other notable occurrences included one to two at T. or C., Jan. 31-Feb. 28 (DM) and two at Alamogordo Dec. 9 (G. Smith) Also notable were an Inca Dove at Socorro Jan. 25-Feb. 23 (JS) and two at T or C., Dec. 23-Feb. 5 (DM), plus two Com. Ground-Doves at Owen's Farm, s. *Dona Ana*, Jan. 24-Feb. 3 (BZ *et al.*). Quite out of the ordinary was a **Spotted Owl** at Lone Butte Jan. 11 (P. Schaafsma), a vagrant to an area of pinyon-juniper savannah in *Santa Fe*. Up to 40 or more Long-eared Owls near Mesilla Dec. 20-Feb. 4 (BZ *et al.*) represented one of the highest counts ever for the state. A Com. Poorwill in the Peloncillo Mts., Feb. 12 (LS) was notable for late winter, and White-throated Swifts were reported more often than usual in the period—including n to the Caballo Mts. (RH).

South of the usual range were a Lewis' Woodpecker at Socorro Jan 29 (RT) and a Downy at Sumner L., Feb. 7 (GH, WH), while quite northerly was a Ladder-backed at Farmington Jan. 16 and Feb 5 (R Pritchard *et al.*). A virtually certain **Hammond's Flycatcher** was near Caballo L., Dec. 21-Jan. 10, probably the same bird that wintered there last year (KZ *et al.*, ph.). Northerly was a Black Phoebe at Cochiti L, Jan. 27 (WH), while also notable were a ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher near Redrock Dec. 11 (JH *et al.*) and three birds at Owen's Farm Dec. 1-Jan 1 (BZ *et al.*).

CORVIDS THROUGH THRUSHES — The sparse lowland invasion of Steller's Jays continued through the period, from the Rio Grande Valley w. and s. to the Mimbres and Gila valleys—and there was even one report from the Peloncillo Mts. (R. Scholes *et al.*). Some Scrub Jays also joined that invasion, including one at Bosque, *Valencia*, Jan 25 (WH) and at least four in the Redrock-Virden area Dec. 10-11 (JH) A notable vagrant was a Blue Jay at Farmington Dec. 25-30 (H. Volkerding *et al.*); also worthy of note were one to two at Clayton Dec. 29-Feb 22 (MM *et al.*), but none could be found where expected at Ft. Sumner Feb. 7 (WH). South of the usual range were 100+ Pinyon Jays e of Caballo L., Dec. 9 (KZ *et al.*), while six to seven Black-billed Magpies at Seneca, *Union* (WC) were easterly. Notable S influxes in the period were up to 130 Am. Crows near Farmington (AN) and 500+ in the Hatch-Radium Springs area (RH).

Southerly Mountain Chickadees included four in the Cliff-Mangas Cr. area Dec. 25 or later (RF) and four-plus in the Caballo Mts., Dec 9 (RH). Winter reports of House Wrens included one to two in the T or C.-Percha Dam area Dec. 24-Jan. 19 (DM), one at San Simon Cienega, *Hidalgo*, in January (LS), and a probable one at Ft. Sumner Feb. 7 (GH, WH). Notable Winter Wren reports were singles at Zuni Dec. 14 (JT) and in Juan Tabo Canyon, Sandia Mts., Jan. 20 (GH, WH). North of the usual range, and providing one of the few recent records for *Socorro*, were two Black-tailed Gnatcatchers at Sevilleta N.W.R., Jan. 22 (T Stans, RT). One to two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and up to seven E Bluebirds were at Percha Dam Dec. 21-Jan. 10 (KZ *et al.*, ph.). Western Bluebirds were numerous in the s.w. lowlands, including in *Grant*, *Luna*, and *Hidalgo* (LS). Mountain Bluebirds were present there and elsewhere in even greater numbers, ranging e. to the Clayton and Pecos Valley areas and s. to the s. border (m.ob.). Townsend's Solitaire numbers were up in several areas, including in the Clayton vicinity and the lower parts of the Rio Grande and Pecos valleys (v.o.).

MIMIDS THROUGH EMBERIZINE FINCHES — The only Brown Thrasher reported was one at Ft. Sumner Feb. 7 (GH, WH), while also notable were one to two Curve-billeds at Santa Fe Dec. 23-Feb. 26 (S Boles, ph.). Cedar Waxwings staged a moderate influx, including s to the Silver City, Las Cruces, and Alamogordo areas (v.o.) Finches s than normal were single N. Shrikes reported near Road Forks, *Hidalgo*, Dec. 29 (S. Suter) and Corona Jan. 26 (P. Steel, RT). Also unusual was a Com. Yellowthroat at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Jan. 5 (KW). Pyrrhuloxia numbers in several n. areas were higher than normal, including three at

Bosque Refuge Jan. 4 (RT) and up to five in the Cliff-Mangas Springs area Dec. 2 and later (RF). Late was a Green-tailed Towhee at Zuni Dec. 7 (T. Rhoades), while another Abert's Towhee was at San Simon Cienega in January (LS). Notable were one to two Cassin's Sparrows w. of Caballo L., Jan. 19, plus one at Jornada, *Dona Ana*, Feb. 2 (RH). Two **Clay-colored Sparrows** wintered at Owen's Farm, and a reddish Fox Sparrow was there Jan. 24 (BZ, ph.). North of the expected range were a Sage and two Savannah sparrows and 13 Chestnut-collared Longspurs near Quemado Feb. 15 (WH). White-throated Sparrows were "unusually common" in s. *Dona Ana* (BZ *et al.*), and up to 17 were counted n. to the Caballo L. area Dec. 21-Jan. 19 (KZ *et al.*). A Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Las Cruces Dec. 6 and another Feb. 1-27 (E. Wootten). Also notable were single Harris' Sparrows at Los Alamos Dec. 25-Jan. 15 (P. Snider) and Socorro Dec. 16 (JS).

ICTERINES THROUGH CARDUELINE FINCHES — Yellow-headed Blackbirds were more in evidence than usual, including one at T. or C., Dec. 10 & 15 (DM), and 25+ at Redrock Dec. 11—along with an even more unusual Com. Grackle (JH *et al.*). Also notable were single Great-tailed Grackles near Cliff in late December and at Silver City Jan. 9 (RF). The only Rosy Finches reported were 35+ in the Taos-Tres Piedras area Jan. 10-11; all but one were of the Brown-capped race, the exception being of the Black form (WE, WH). Cassin's Finch made a good showing in the n. and w. regions, and s. in the Rio Grande Valley (v.o.). Among the more notable counts were scores at Santa Fe Dec. 25-

Feb. 28 (JH *et al.*), up to 100 at Socorro Jan. 11-Feb. 28 (JS), and as many as 350+ in the Caballo L. area Dec. 9-Jan. 26 (RH *et al.*). Quite unusual were reports of Red Crossbills being seen on "numerous occasions in lower *Dona Ana* . . . and near Las Cruces" (BZ); more expected but still worth noting were two-plus at Santa Fe Dec. 15 (JH), one at Zuni Dec. 18 (JT), and 10+ in the Sandia Mts., Feb. 19 (RT). The invasion of the season was that of Evening Grosbeaks, with birds reported e. to Clayton and s. to the Silver City and Las Cruces areas—plus in various uplands (m.ob.). Among the more notable reports were the following: "rather common" at Farmington (AN), up to 10 at Clayton Dec. 5-29 (WC *et al.*), flocks in Albuquerque in December (RT *et al.*), up to 18 in Socorro Jan. 1-12 (JS), and one at T. or C., Dec. 5 (DM).

CORRIGENDUM — The feathers reported as those of a Whiskered Screech-Owl in Skeleton Canyon in the Peloncillo Mts., Sept. 17, 1984 (preceding issue) have been reidentified as those of a W. Screech-Owl (WE).

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ALASKA REGION

/D. D. Gibson

Winter 1984-1985 was mild in Alaska. We enjoyed above-average temperatures in December, January, and half of February (*e.g.*, "From beginning to end, January in Fairbanks turned out to be the envy of many cold-suffering Lower 48 cities. The average . . . temperature of +11.3 [°F] exceeded normal temperatures by 24.1 degrees, making it the third-warmest January since records began, in 1904" (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner). True winter weather caught up with us in February, with minimums in the Interior Feb. 8-24 as cold as the -60s, but no records were set. Precipitation south of the Alaska Range was below normal (*e.g.*, at Anchorage it was the third-lowest ever for the period); north of the Alaska Range there was heavy snow in December, followed by additional accumulation of near-normal snowfall in January and February.

ABBREVIATIONS — C = Central Alaska; SC = Southcoastal Alaska; SE = Southeastern Alaska; W = Western Alaska.

CORMORANTS THROUGH WATERFOWL — A Double-crested Cormorant observed at Zeto Pt., Adak I., c. Aleutians, Dec. 19-28 (CFZ, CA) furnished the westernmost record of the species, about 400 km w. of the known limit of the breeding range. No Cattle Egrets from November's influx (see autumn) were reported to have survived into December (PI). About 70 Trumpeter Swans overwintered on the Eyak L./Eyak R. system, near Cordova (PI), the northernmost and westernmost wintering population of this species. Two Canada Geese, believed to have been examples of *B. c. leucopareia*, were seen at Little Thumb Bay, Adak, Feb. 10 (MW, *vide* CFZ), but not before or after. I believe this was the first suggestion of wintering in this Region by "Aleutian" Canada Geese. Unusual wintering ducks in upper Cook Inlet included a ♂ N. Pintail at Anchorage through the 3rd week of February; a ♀ pintail, with 150+ Mallards, near Cooper Landing, Kenai Pen., Feb. 16; a ♂ Ring-necked Duck at Elmendorf A.F.B., Anchorage, all period, for the 2nd local winter record; and 2 pairs of Buffleheads near Cooper Landing Feb. 16 (TGT *et al.*). Elsewhere, six Tufted Ducks were seen at Adak Feb. 12 (CFZ); one (possibly three) male(s) spent this winter at Cordova, the 8th winter in 9 this species has occurred there. Cordova remains the only Alaska locality on the Pacific coast e. of the Aleutians where it has been found at all.



GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — The first Anchorage-area overwintering records of gulls included high counts of 40 Glaucous-winged and five Glaucous, both Jan. 13 (DWS). **Mourning Doves** coming to feeders at Homer, autumn through February (GVB, TGT *et al.*), and at Seward through Jan. 3 (TGT *et al.*) furnished unprecedented winter records in this Region. An injured W. Screech-Owl found and nursed back to health at Juneau in February (PI, JGK) provided one of very few definite records of this species on the SE mainland. The Snowy Owls involved in autumn 1984's "invasion" (*q.v.*) apparently all moved

on One was seen at Kodiak Jan 9 (TS, *fide* RAM) and one at Craig, Prince of Wales I., SE, Jan. 12 (SB, *fide* TEK), but none thereafter. In the Aleutians, however, Adak reports of this species continued through the period (CFZ). At least three N. Pygmy-Owls were present all season in the Juneau area (RHA, ESD, RJG, JGK), but there were no reports from elsewhere in SE this season. The ♂ Anna's Hummingbird at Auke Bay (see autumn) lasted until about Christmastime; another, also at a sugar-water feeder, was reported in December at Sitka (*fide* PI).

JAYS THROUGH WAXWINGS — Steller's Jays were widely reported in the upper Cook Inlet area this winter, and in higher numbers than previously (GJT), e.g., 21 on Dec. 15 at Anchorage (C.B.C.) and a flock of six or more in Spenard Feb. 28 (TGT). Juneau's Mountain Chickadee (see autumn) was present through the period; it was joined briefly by a 2nd individual in January (*fide* PI). A few Red-breasted Nuthatches were present on the Kenai Pen., at Kasilof and Homer (MAM), and in SE, at Juneau (PI), but the species was not reported at Kodiak. Fairbanks's nuthatch (see autumn) visited the same feeders regularly until late December (GEM), after which it was not seen again. Three Brown Creepers were seen with a flock of 35+ Boreal Chickadees in mixed forest near Fairbanks Dec. 9 (DDG), and a single bird briefly visited a feeder later in the month. There are no records at any season of this bird n. of the Fairbanks area, where it is apparently scarce. A few were reported elsewhere, along the Pacific coast. Golden-crowned Kinglets were exceptionally numerous this winter within their normal, coastal range, e.g., 494 at Kodiak Dec. 29 (C.B.C.) and 460 at Anchorage Dec. 15 (C.B.C.). Ruby-crowned Kinglet, which is only a casual winter visitant anywhere on Alaska's Pacific coast, persisted into late December at Anchorage in high numbers (e.g., eight Dec. 15), and up to three birds were reported throughout the season (TGT). At Kodiak, two were seen Dec. 4, three Dec. 29, and two to three birds frequented peanut-butter/suet feeders in town all winter (RAM, JBA). At the close of the winter season, single *singing* ♂ Ruby-crowned Kinglets were heard on the unparalleled dates of Feb. 26 in Anchorage (RLS) and Feb. 28 at Kodiak (RAM). A lone Water Pipit observed at Homer Feb. 16 (GJT *et al.*) provided the only report during the season. Bohemian Waxwings are usually abundant in Anchorage only as late-autumn visitants in November, so it was unusual that the species remained abundant there (e.g., 4000+ in mid-December) into mid-January, by which time the late-autumn influx has ordinarily been gone for some weeks, and that flocks of five to 20 birds were present near the downtown area through the close of the period (TGT, GJT).

STARLINGS THROUGH SPARROWS — The only winter reports of Eur. Starlings w. of SE were those reported at Anchorage (one at the city dump through Dec. 13, TGT) and at Kodiak (two birds Dec. 4+, RAM). Alaska's first substantiated **Rufous-sided Towhee** (see autumn) patronized an Auke Bay, Juneau, feeder until the last week of 1984 (*fide* PI). There were many wintering records of sparrows along the Alaska Pacific coast. One Am. Tree Sparrow spent the season at an Anchorage feeder (GJT, MMT), and at least five were present this winter at Homer (RLS). One Fox Sparrow was seen at an Anchorage feeder Feb. 13+ (TGT, RLS), and a few Fox Sparrows wintered in the town of Kodiak (RAM). Four or more Lincoln's Sparrows were found: one at an Anchorage feeder from October to March (TGT), another Anchorage bird at another feeder Jan. 26-Feb. 25 (RLS), singles at Kodiak Dec. 4 & 19 (RAM, DWS), and one at a Homer feeder at least Feb. 13-17 (GVB, TGT). A **White-throated Sparrow**, casual in Alaska at any season, was well-described at a Craig feeder Feb. 9 (GS, *fide* TEK), but whether present before or after that date was unknown. Small numbers of Golden-crowned Sparrows were present at Anchorage, Homer, and Kodiak; and small numbers of White-crowned Sparrows at Kodiak and Homer, one at Palmer Dec. 29 (JL), and good numbers (e.g., 11 on Dec. 15) at Anchorage (m.ob.). The Kenai Peninsula Harris' Sparrow at Hope (see autumn) remained the season (WT *et al.*), and one immature overwintered at a Lemon Cr., Juneau feeder (*fide* PI). Dark-eyed Juncos, which regularly winter in small numbers just as far n. as the availability of feeders allows them, were present in substantial numbers at many locations on the Pacific coast (e.g., 16 at Tanses' Anchorage feeder Dec. 1 [but this number had dwindled to one by the end of February, GJT]), and a few as far n. as Fairbanks, as usual.

FINCHES — As many observers attested, winter 1984-1985 was a

'finch' winter in Alaska. A **Brambling** was present at a Petersburg feeder from December to March (†DK), the only report this season of this casual winter visitant in SC or SE Alaska. Pine Grosbeaks were widespread. They were variously described as very few at St. Marys (BJM), in W Alaska; few at Galena (TOO) but fairly common at Fairbanks (DDG *et al.*), in C Alaska; and fairly common at Kodiak (RAM) and abundant at Anchorage (TGT *et al.*), SC Alaska. The species was not so numerous at Juneau as in some prior winters (RHA), and there was no comment on it from elsewhere in SE. A ♂ **Purple Finch** observed at a Homer feeder Feb. 10+ (GVB *et al.*, †TGT, ph. DWS) provided the 2nd SC record. This bird is a poorly-known casual visitant in SE or SC Alaska, fall to spring. Red Crossbills were mentioned only at Kodiak (rare but regular, RAM) and Juneau (scarce, PI). White-winged Crossbills were abundant and ubiquitous in the Palmer-Anchorage area and on the Kenai Pen. this season ("heard or seen everywhere along the highway [from Anchorage] to Homer Feb. 16" [TGT]), and they were fairly common at Kodiak (RAM). They were present but not conspicuous in C Alaska, at Fairbanks, all season (DDG), and a few small flocks were seen as far downriver as St. Marys (BJM), in W Alaska. White-winged were absent from Juneau (PI), but a few flocks were noted in the Craig, Prince of Wales I., area (TEK).

Redpolls were the talk of the winter, at least in Anchorage and Fairbanks. At Anchorage there were more redpolls than in any winter in at least 10 (TGT), with numerous flocks of 30-60 birds daily at feeders from December through February, after which time their numbers grew, to flocks of 80-100 birds daily (GJT), reflecting movements that began at that time. Although numbers were somewhat lower than this at Fairbanks, many flocks of 10-30 redpolls spent the season at feeders throughout the area. They were such constant and insatiable feeder visitors, regularly cleaning out well-stocked seed feeders and moving on to suet or peanut-butter feeders, that at least a few observers came to regard them as pests, "like having mice at the feeders" (RSH). And indeed, on many occasions, listening from within the house to redpolls on the feeders just outside sounded like listening to the scurrying, squabbling, and chattering of many mice. In the smaller communities, however, redpolls were not so numerous as in Anchorage and Fairbanks. There were few this season at Galena (TOO), on the central Yukon R.; and, although very common at St. Marys, on the lower Yukon, in the fall, they were very scarce after early winter there, where none at all was seen after Feb. 10 (BJM). On the Kenai Pen., though, pressure on feeders at Kasilof (MAM), for example, paralleled that in Anchorage, if on a smaller scale, and redpolls were common and seen regularly all winter at Kodiak (RAM). In SE Alaska, redpolls were present all winter at Juneau, but in low numbers until February (PI), after which time they became exceptionally common (RHA).

On the Pacific coast, Pine Siskins were common, but less so than redpolls, at Kodiak (RAM); absent from upper Cook Inlet after late December, but present in small numbers at Seward and at Homer (TGT); scarce at Juneau (PI); but abundant at Craig (TEK), on the outer coast of the Alexander Archipelago. A lone ♀ **Evening Grosbeak** was seen at Pt. Louisa, Juneau, Jan. 6 (MWS), but not again, the first SE report of this casual visitant in several years. Most intriguing was a ♀ Evening Grosbeak observed briefly at a Fairbanks-area feeder, accompanying Pine Grosbeaks, Feb. 1 (CVK ph.)—quite possibly the same female seen 10 km away last October (see autumn), when it provided the first C Alaska record of the species. There were no Fairbanks reports of this distinctive apparition in the intervening November-January, however, nor was the bird seen again after Feb. 1.

CORRIGENDA — Pochards at Adak (AB 38:947) were seen by M Zeillemaker and C. & T. Edgerton, not by CFZ *et al.*; and the only spring 1984 Dusky Thrush (AB 38:948) was at Nizki I., not at Agattu

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NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

/Philip W. Mattocks, Jr.

The entire season was both colder and much drier than usual. The Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C., weather stations averaged 2.7° below normal for the three months. December in Vancouver, B.C., was the coldest on record. January rainfall at the three stations was only 10% of the long-term averages. Cold and dry is so much more pleasant than cold and rainy that actually the winter seemed milder. Exceptions to this were the continuous below-freezing temperatures in Seattle through all daylight hours of December 17-20, December 30-January 1, and February 4, and in Portland through December 18-20.

ABBREVIATIONS — C.B.C. = Christmas Bird Count; V.I. = Vancouver Island, British Columbia.



LOONS THROUGH HERONS — The 13+ Yellow-billed Loons reported was about the same number as last year, and was distinctly more than the average of the preceding 7 winters. One was s. to Siletz Bay, Ore., Feb. 3-4 (JE, BB), and it or another was seen on nearby Yaquina Bay Feb. 17-23 (*vide* HN, EE). All others were in the Puget Sound-Victoria-Vancouver, B.C., area, and were spread through the season. A count of 415 Pied-billed Grebes on Devil's L., Lincoln City, Ore., in late December was a very large concentration (PP). A light-phase W. Grebe at Pony Slough, Ore., Dec. 12 (P. Sullivan) furnished the first Coos County record of this form, and the only report this winter.

A N. Fulmar in Port Angeles, Wash., harbor Jan. 8 (SS), 10 dark shearwaters, either Sooty or Short-tailed, Dec. 28 from the ferry between Port Angeles and Victoria (JS, CH), and a dark shearwater off the Ocean Shores, Wash., jetty Jan. 4 (G & WH) provided the usual few procellariiform reports. Single Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels seen Dec. 28 near Florence, Ore. (†SH, M. Hunter), and Feb. 28 at Newport, Ore. (*vide* BB) were most unusual, and presaged a much more extensive onshore movement in early March.

Cattle Egret numbers dropped steadily through early December. The below-freezing temperatures of Dec. 17-19 marked the latest observations on southern V.I. and in Bellingham, Wash. (*vide* VG, TW). Surprisingly, there were no reports from mainland British Columbia (*vide* DK). A Green-backed Heron was found n. to Pitt L., B.C., Dec. 23 (DP, B. & L. Feltner). Two Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered again at Reifel Ref., near Vancouver, B.C. (DK, BK *et al.*). Likewise,

two wintered on the Skagit flats, Wash. (WWi, E. Smirnov). Larger wintering groups were noted farther s. at Portland, Salem, Newport, Roseburg, and Medford, Ore.

WATERFOWL — An aerial survey Jan. 10 of Ridgefield N.W.R., Wash., found 1300 Tundra Swans (TW). Other high counts during January were 907 at Halsey, Linn Co., Ore., and 397 at the Eugene, Ore., airport (both D. MacManiman, B. Ross, *vide* EE), and 565 on the Skagit flats (WWi *et al.*). A "Bewick's" Tundra Swan was found Dec. 9-21 near Bellingham (J. Duemmel, GG, TW—sketch of bill pattern), for one of very few records for Washington. Groups of several dozen Trumpeter Swans were widely scattered from s.w. British Columbia and V.I., as usual, through to n. Oregon, where they have only recently been found. Twenty Greater White-fronted Geese near Corvallis Dec. 16 (*vide* BB) was the largest flock reported. Groups of one to five were spread through all reporting areas. One of our wandering escapee Barnacle Geese spent January on Chambers L. in Olympia, Wash. (*vide* T. Bock), and another visited several sites in the Willamette Valley of Oregon (R. Gerig, EE *et al.*).

"Eurasian" Green-winged Teal were found on Lulu I. and the Serpentine Fen, B.C., Saanich and N. Saanich, V.I., and Seattle and Vancouver L., Wash. Hybrids with both a vertical and a horizontal white stripe were noted in Saanich, V.I. (DFr) and in Eugene, Ore. (†SH). In addition to the resident population of Am. Black Ducks at Everett, Wash., scattered individuals were found in Victoria and Saanich, V.I., Burnaby and Delta, B.C., and as far away as Eugene, Ore., Dec. 25 (DFi, TL). A hybrid ♂ Am. Black Duck x Mallard was observed Dec. 23 on Westham I., B.C. (†WWe, BK). The 420 Gadwalls on Devil's L., Lincoln City, was a large concentration for coastal Oregon (PP). Eurasian Wigeon were noted in almost every wigeon flock examined, and at least four hybrid Am. x Eur. Wigeon were reported. Other waterfowl hybrids reported included a ♂ N. Pintail x Mallard Dec. 23 at Reifel Ref., B.C. (†BK, WWe), and a probable Hooded Merganser x Com. Goldeneye male Dec. 30 and Jan. 1 at Blackie Spit, s. of Vancouver, B.C. (†BK, RP).

The imm. ♂ Tufted Duck seen Nov. 17-Dec. 2 in C. Saanich was the first for V.I. since 1973 (AM, TZ, M. Shepard). The female found at Stanley P., Vancouver, B.C., in November was joined by at least one more female Jan. 20 (†BK) and one was seen there to the end of the period. In mid-December a ♂ Tufted Duck appeared on Leadbetter Pt., Wash., where one was found last year (R. Widrig). The ♂ King Eider found in Vancouver, B.C., last fall spent the winter in the area, mostly on Deep Cove, N. Vancouver (†MP *et al.*).



Subadult male King Eider at Deep Cove, Vancouver, B.C., Feb. 20, 1985. Photo/Paul Yorke.

VULTURES THROUGH CRANES — Two Turkey Vultures spent the winter again at Corvallis, Ore. (*vide* EE). First arrivals were noted Feb. 22 on Lopez I., Wash. (W. Beecher), and Feb. 28 on southern V.I. (G. Davidson). The count of 31+ Black-shouldered Kites in w. Oregon this winter was roughly the same as the last few years. Current expansion of the species is apparently taking place in Washington, with 11 birds reported this season from 7 localities. However, only the pair found last fall around a large meadow on the shores of Grays Harbor, w. of Hoquiam, was reported regularly through the season. Single Red-shouldered Hawks were noted Jan. 1 along the New R., Curry Co. (JR), and Feb. 18 at Bandon (E.G. White-swift), at the n. edge of the range of this species in s. Oregon. One "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk Dec. 13 on the Lummi flats, w. of Bellingham, Wash., was the only report (K.

Brunner). Rough-legged Hawks were considered to be generally more numerous than usual (TW, DP, HN). There are at present no regularly censused transects, other than the C.B.C.s, to provide more quantitative assessment of raptor populations.

There were a welcome 3 times as many Peregrine Falcon sightings on southern V.I. this season as in recent years (VG). Other reporting areas for which there are consistent histories of sightings indicated about normal numbers. There were 10+ Gyrfalcon sightings, slightly more than in the past 2 years, with six of these found regularly through the season at favored locations in n.w. Washington and southern V.I. (TW, VG). About one-half dozen Prairie Falcons were noted in w. Oregon, with none found n. of the Columbia R. This is the normal winter distribution of large falcons in our area.

The count of 156 California Quail on the Victoria C.B.C. indicated that the population is holding on there following a sharp decline several years ago. The 14 Virginia Rails in Victoria Dec. 15 (C.B.C.) and in Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 16 (C.B.C.) were both high counts, but these censuses preceded the severe weather of late December. At the Montlake fill on the U.W. campus in Seattle the one-half dozen Virginia Rails survived the freeze well, and were singing by late February (ER). Single Soras were seen Dec. 16 on Sea I., near Vancouver, B.C. (†H. & J. MacKenzie), and heard Dec. 30 at the Montlake fill in Seattle (K. Aanerud). Two Sandhill Cranes were unusual in Delta, B.C., Dec. 23 (†M. Schouten *et al.*) and about 90 wintered on Sauvie I., Ore. (HN), and adjacent Batchelor I. (TW). Heavy migration of Sandhill Cranes up the Willamette Valley was noted Feb. 28 (VT, R. Smith).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH GULLS — Three Snowy Plovers lingered at Ft. Stevens S.P., n.w. Oregon, to Dec. 19 (S. Jagers). A flock of 15 Willets, 75 Marbled Godwits and three Long-billed Curlews was present Jan. 17 at their regular wintering area on the mouth of the North R., w. of Raymond, Wash. (G & WH). Single Willets also wintered at Yaquina Bay, Ore. (*vide* HN), and on Ediz Hook, Port Angeles, Wash. (MC, D & SS). Two Wandering Tattlers (J. Olsen) and a Red Knot (DFi *et al.*) were late at Tillamook, Ore., Dec. 15 and furnished the only reports of those species. Five Spotted Sandpipers found on southern V.I. (VG *et al.*) and three in the Vancouver, B.C., area (WWe, MF *et al.*) were near the n. limit of the wintering range of this species. Single Ruddy Turnstones, rare here in winter, were at the Tsawwassen jetty, Delta, B.C., Dec. 23 (†BS), at Metchosin, V.I., Dec. 27 (WC, G. Davidson), and at the mouth of the Capilano R., N. Vancouver, B.C., Jan. 27 (BS). The only W. Sandpiper reported in B.C. was with the Dunlin on the Iona I. ponds throughout the season (BK, MP *et al.*). Small groups of up to 39 Long-billed Dowitchers were widely reported during December. Thereafter, only six Feb. 9 at Finley N.W.R., Ore. (D. Hall, B. Orr), and five Feb. 25 on Reifel I., Delta, B.C. (BK, J. Hudson) were noted. Reports of Black-bellied Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs, and Dunlin indicated that these species wintered in the Region in their normal numbers.

A jaeger of undetermined species was seen Dec. 15 off Gambier I., n.w. of Vancouver, B.C. (†D. Brown) for the only report. This was most likely a lingering fall migrant Parasitic Jaeger, particularly at this location far from the open ocean. A Franklin's Gull Dec. 12 near Salem, Ore. (J. Corbett, T. DeSousa, *vide* BB), and another in first-winter plumage, Feb. 14-16 at Sauvie I., Ore. (B. O'Brien, C. Miller, *vide* HN) were unusual winter visitors. An ad. Little Gull noted Dec. 16 on American L., Tacoma, Wash. (†CC, N. Chappell), but gone the next day, furnished a late fall record of this rare but regular species. Bonaparte's Gulls apparently withdrew from Canadian waters after Dec. 28, with the first returnees noted Feb. 10-12 at River Jordan, on the w. coast of V.I. (B. Hay, M & VG). The 65-100 California Gulls found Jan. 5-Feb. 3 at Trout L., Vancouver, B.C. (BK), and the 73 found Jan. 6 at John Hendry P., Vancouver, B.C. (MF), were high counts for this uncommon wintering species.

The 2000+ Thayer's Gulls Dec. 1 at the Hartland Ave. landfill, Highland Land District, southern V.I., was the high count for this species (KT, TZ, CH). One thousand Thayer's were in Victoria Dec. 15 (C.B.C.) and counts of 200 were made at Iona I. and the Richmond landfill, both near Vancouver, B.C., during the winter (MP, MF). Certainly owing to, in some degree, a more dedicated searching of this regular concentration of Thayer's Gulls, observers at Iona I. found several "Kumlien's" Iceland Gulls. Adults were observed there Nov.



First-winter Iceland Gull on southern Vancouver Island, B.C., Feb. 10, 1985. Photo/Tim Zurowski.



Adult (Kumlien's) Iceland Gull at Iona I., near Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 12, 1984. Photo/Mike Force.



First-winter Iceland Gull (with adult Glaucous-winged Gull) on southern Vancouver Island, B.C., Dec. 23, 1984. Photo/Bruce Whittington.

9-Dec. 24 (†MF ph., †BK *et al.*). From the pattern of gray on the wingtips, and degree of streaking on head and neck, as many as five different birds were believed to have been present (MF, ms. in prep.). A first-winter "Kumlien's" was found Dec. 23 (†KT, †BrW, ph.) and Feb. 10 (KT, R. Williams, TZ, ph.) at the Hartland Ave. landfill for the first record for V.I. Another first-winter bird was seen Jan. 4 on Trout L., Vancouver, B.C. (†BK, MF). About 29 Glaucous Gulls, a usual number, were reported from throughout the Region. Seven of these—an adult, three first-year, and three second-year—were seen Feb. 23 at the Richmond landfill, B.C. (MF, BK). Single, and probably separate, ad. Sabine's Gulls were seen Feb. 11 & 12 in strong winds at River Jordan, Clover Pt., and Sooke Bay, V.I. (VG, KT).

ALCIDS THROUGH OWLS — The 232 Marbled Murrelets around Victoria Dec. 15 (C.B.C.) provided the highest count there since 1965. The high count for the season of Ancient Murrelets was 130 seen Dec. 7

from a boat off Coos County, Ore (M Graybill) This continued the trend noticed last fall of lower-than-usual numbers reported for this species. Eleven Ancients were still off Cattle Pt., San Juan I., Feb. 17 (BaW). Monk Parakeets were reported only from Portland, where 11 returned (from parts unknown) Jan. 28 and began nest-building near the airport (D. Anderson).

In recent years the Christmas Bird Count at Ladner, B.C., has tallied the high count of Snowy Owls for the Region. This year's total there of 40 was the highest since a count of 107 on Dec. 22, 1973. Four of the 11 Snowies reported from Oregon were at the S. jetty of the Columbia R., Jan. 2+ (*vide* HN), and singles were s. to Saim, Eugene, and Medford (*vide* DFi). Numbers began thinning during February. Seven were on the Catala spit at Ocean Shores Jan. 28 (MC), and only three were there Feb. 16 (BaW). The N. Hawk-Owl found Nov. 25 at Pitt Meadows, e. of Vancouver, B.C., stayed to at least Mar. 1 (*vide* DK). Eleven N. Pygmy-Owls were located on 4 Vancouver-area C.B.C.s, three were seen repeatedly in N. Vancouver through January and February (A. Thomas, P. Cortez, MF *et al.*), and there were 3 reports each from Washington and Oregon. This was somewhat more than usual, but reflected the typical winter distribution in this Region. Five Burrowing Owls, a normal number, were found this season in the Willamette Valley of Oregon (*vide* EE). Also as usual, single Barred Owls were noted in Victoria, Saanich, and E. Sooke Regional P., V.I., in Sechelt and N. Vancouver, B.C., and in Seattle and Mercer I., Wash. The only Long-eared Owl report, a rare wintering species, was of one at Pitt Meadows, B.C., Jan. 20 (MF *et al.*).

At least 10 **Great Gray Owls** invaded the Region. As there were only 4 previous records for the Vancouver, B.C., area (*vide* DK), only 2 previous unconfirmed reports for V.I. (*vide* VG), and no confirmed records for w. Washington since 1974, some detail is in order. The first of six in the Vancouver, B.C., area was located Nov. 11 n. of Squamish (K McGregor, D. Dunbar, ph.). Two road-killed were found at Chilliwack Dec. 7 and Jan. 14 (*vide* D. Wilson, *B.C. Prov. Mus.). One was found shot near Sedro Woolley, Wash., Dec. 9 (*Burke Mus., Univ. Wash.) and another road-killed was found at Pitt Meadows Jan. 13 (T Burgess). Individuals were sighted Jan. 1 in Jericho P., Vancouver, B.C. (G. Chalmers, MF *et al.*, ph. C. Siddle), Jan. 4-11 near Bellingham, Wash. (ph. P. DeBruyn), Jan. 19+ on the campus of Simon Fraser Univ., Burnaby (DK *et al.*, ph. E. Sian), Feb. 12+ in Saanich, V.I. (G. Calvert *et al.*, ph. TZ), and Feb. 13-18 near Monroe, Wash (D. Nelson, †SA *et al.*, ph. B. Reichert).

POORWILL TO RAVENS — A very late Com. Poorwill was found dead Nov. 21 along the New R., Ore., for only the 2nd Curry County record (JR, CO). Anna's Hummingbirds were widely reported from urban areas in their usual or somewhat increased numbers. A Costa's Hummingbird was observed Dec. 19-28 in Newport, Ore., for the 13th record for that state (†A & KC).

A "Red-naped" Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was noted Dec. 26 in N. Saanich, V.I., where one wintered last year (B. Holt). The wintering status of this form in the Region is still unclear. Surprisingly, the freeze this December did not result in large numbers of sightings of Red-breasted Sapsuckers in the lowlands. The numerous reports on southern V I were spread evenly throughout the season. Not only are actual winter records of the resident Three-toed Woodpecker very few, due to the difficulty of access to appropriate habitat, but the species is very rare in the Olympic Mts. Thus the sighting of a ♀ Three-toed Jan. 21 on Hurricane Ridge in the Olympics was welcome (MC).

Several Black Phoebes wintered as usual near Medford, Ore., and, for the 4th consecutive winter, one spent the season farther n. at Roseburg (*vide* DFi). A Say's Phoebe found Jan. 13-Feb. 9 at Philomath, near Corvallis, Ore. (R. & J. Krabbe, VS) was n. of the usual wintering grounds, and could well have been a very early migrant. Counts of 65-90+ Eur. Skylarks were made in the fields of C. Saanich, V.I., during December (DS).

The first Tree Swallows noted were not until Feb. 17 near Corvallis, Ore (VS), and Feb. 18 at Ridgefield N.W.R., Wash. (T. McAllister). Reports were widespread by Feb. 23-26. A single Violet-green Swallow had ventured n. to L. Steilacoom, near Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 15 (G. Ramsay). Otherwise, the first arrival date for both V.I. and the Vancouver, B.C., area was Feb. 23 (DS; MF *et al.*), and the species was widespread by Feb. 26-28. A single Barn Swallow Dec. 2-3 in Delta,

B C (BK, RP), was an exception to the generally early departure of last fall.

Could Scrub Jays really be extending their range N? There are available oak groves n. of the Columbia R. valley. Two Scrub Jays were in Tacoma Dec. 15 (C.B.C.) and another was seen in Sequim, Wash., along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Dec. 17 and Jan. 13 (A. Campbell, SA), and was reported to have been present there since March 1984. The Blue Jay found on Sauvie I., Ore., last fall was seen there irregularly all winter (D. Poppe, m.ob.). The high count of 210 Com. Ravens on the Victoria C.B.C. was at least coincident with this season's influx of other large n. species.

CHICKADEES THROUGH WARBLERS — Three Mountain Chickadees, all in the Vancouver, B.C., area, and scattered through the season, furnished the only reports. Thus this occasionally-irruptive species did not join the general movement in this area. Numbers of wintering Marsh Wrens were considered higher than usual around Tacoma (CC), and the Victoria C.B.C. had an all-time high count. A group of W. Bluebirds made a rare wintering attempt in Metchosin Land District, V.I., near a breeding location for this species. Twelve or more were present Dec. 1, five Dec. 24, and three Feb. 14, which is just before the normal arrival for migrants (A. Barber, M & VG). Varied Thrushes were reported to be much more numerous than usual around Coos Bay, Ore. (L. Thornburgh), and Olympia, Bellingham, and San Juan I., Wash. (G & WH, TW, DP), but were "mostly in small numbers" on southern V.I. (VG) and were unmentioned elsewhere. Single N Mockingbirds spent the winter in 2 areas of Portland (VT, J. Gilligan, R. Hatcher) and in Salem (C. Puchy), and were also reported from Albany, Eugene, and Medford. Another was near Stanwood, Wash., Jan. 20-Mar. 3 (m.ob.).

The first-year wagtail found last winter at Crockett L., Whidbey I., Wash., has been identified from excellent photographs taken April 26, 1984 (MC), as a ♀ **White Wagtail** (DP). The bird continued to molt in late April and the photographs and a May 5 description (T. Weir) indicate a completely black chin and throat. As well as can be determined from the literature and from surveys of specimens in several museums (DP) this feature rules out the Black-backed Wagtail. The area was searched this winter several times, but the bird apparently did not return.

Sightings of groups of up to 65 Bohemian Waxwings, an irregular winter visitor, were noted in the Vancouver, B.C., area throughout the season (*vide* DK). Elsewhere, 45 Bohemians were on Anderson I., near Tacoma, Dec. 15, 10 were in Bellingham Dec. 31 (TW), and 10 were in N. Saanich Jan. 5-14 (KT *et al.*, ph. TZ). Northern Shrikes were "unusually abundant" on southern V.I. (VG), with an all-time high count for the Victoria C.B.C., and it was "one of the better years" for the species in w. Oregon (HN). Shrikes were reported in usual numbers elsewhere, except that "very few were present this winter" near Bellingham, Wash. (TW).

Single Orange-crowned Warblers were found n. to Saxe Pt. Park, Esquimalt, V.I., Dec. 15 (M & VG), and Lulu I., near Vancouver, B.C., Dec. 23 (†C. Butt). In Eugene, Ore., seven were found Dec. 30 (C.B.C.), and D. Fix believed that four others were missed. A very late Nashville Warbler was at Ocean Shores, Wash., Dec. 5 (JS, BH) and another was in Tillamook, Ore., Dec. 15 (DFi *et al.*). Single Palm Warblers were found at Ocean Shores, Tillamook, and Coos Bay, as usual, during December. Also single Palms appeared Jan. 5 at the mouth of the Elk R., Curry Co., Ore. (JR, CO), and Feb. 11-26 on Puget I., up the Columbia R. near Cathlamet, Wash. (†A. Richards *et al.*). A ♂ Com. Yellowthroat seen Dec. 2 at Pitt Meadows (†WWe) furnished the 5th winter record for British Columbia, and one found Dec. 16 at the N. jetty of the Columbia R. (DI, J. Hewkin) provided the 3rd winter record for Washington. Two Com. Yellowthroats were still at Fern Ridge Res., near Eugene, Dec. 13 (DFi, SH, TL), and a Wilson's Warbler was late at Corvallis Dec. 19 (A & KC).

TOWHEES THROUGH FINCHES — The **Green-tailed Towhee** discovered Nov. 10 in Comox, V.I., for the first record for British Columbia, was still present at the end of the period (Mrs. E. Bowen, m.ob.). Three Vesper Sparrows at the Wedderburn sewage ponds, Curry Co., Ore., were well n. of their usual wintering range (JR, CO). The Lark Sparrow found at a feeder in Saanich, V.I., Nov. 21-Dec. 3

Monterey, as it fought a gale Dec 12 (†DR). Assuming acceptance by the C.B.R.C., this would be only the 2nd healthy Mottled Petrel seen in California. Monterey boats found one to four Pink-footed Shearwaters/trip after the early December stragglers. Two Flesh-footed Shearwaters Dec 1 (AB, TC, S.J.) and one Dec. 27 (SFB, KLH, S.J.) off Monterey were unexpectedly late. Buller's Shearwaters also tarried to Dec. 1, with two at F.I. and 30 off Monterey (highest count all fall—AB, TC, S.J.). Short-tailed Shearwaters seemed normal, with up to eight/trip off Monterey (S.J., SFB) and *Del Norte* (GSL, RAE). The unprecedented flight of Black-vented Shearwaters continued into winter around Monterey Bay and along *San Mateo*. Peak numbers were 876 feeding at Pigeon Pt., *San Mateo*, Dec. 7 (BS), 200-300 along Pacific Grove shoreline Dec 12 (DR, AB), and 100 off Monterey as late as Feb. 3 (S.J.). Only two to four were there later (S.J.). Twenty-five Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels and two Ashy Storm-Petrels were at Monterey Harbor Jan. 31 (SyH) as the first of a series of storms brought flocks of Fork-tailed to shore. Small numbers occurred there through February, one was ¼ mi w of the Golden Gate Bridge Feb. 3 (StW), and three were off the Klamath R. mouth Feb. 25 (*vide* GSL).

The largest aggregation of Am. White Pelicans was 4000 at S. Wilbur Flood Area, *Kings*, Feb. 4 (BMcA, *vide* BoB). Reversing the trend of the last 3 winters, the exodus of Brown Pelicans was swift and virtually complete. On F.I., 75 remained Dec. 2, but after Dec. 10 only one to three were found on 4 days to Jan. 12. Elsewhere, only 10 individuals were noted after early December. Double-crested Cormorants were reported as scarce at Bodega Harbor, *Sonoma* (NTC), but "up" in the Sacramento area (EH). Three counts at the Badger Cr. roost near Galt, *Sacramento*, ranged from 632 Jan. 21 to 825 Feb. 4 (B & HK).

HERONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — A Great Blue Heron in Yosemite Valley Jan. 11 (JE) provided one of few winter records for the park. The fall's strong irruption ("best ever" according to many) of Cattle Egrets to the coast continued in the expected pattern, peaking in December, then dropping to few by February. Interestingly, the best numbers were from north of S.F. Bay (e.g., 140 Dec. 16, *Del Norte* C.B.C., *vide* RAE, vs. 14 Dec. 28, Monterey Pen. C.B.C., *vide* DR). Numbers in the C.V. were also generally considered high. Most significant was one carrying nest material at L. Merritt, *Alameda*, Feb. 16 (JM), one was noted here last year in the egret colony, but there is still no confirmed breeding for the S.F. Bay area.

Two Trumpeter Swans convincingly reported on the Tule Lake C.B.C., Dec. 23 (RE, MR) were not seen later because of poor weather. Six blue morph Snow Geese (all C.V.) and one blue Ross' Goose (Jan. 21 at Merced N.W.R., RJB) was apparently near average for those forms. Only 13 Brant were reported; one at Sacramento N.W.R., Dec. 12 (*vide* MRH) was among few interior records. A flock of 170 Canada Geese flew S past Palomarin Dec. 24; there seems to be little precedent for so large a flock on the immediate coast s. of *Del Norte*.

State and federal waterfowl population surveys conducted in January and early February revealed a "tremendous decline" in Pacific Flyway duck populations, from 5 million to 2 million, with "the most numerous duck in the state, N. Pintail, down from 2.3 million to 759,000 in one year. At this point the decline is attributed to the continuing drought (4 yrs) on the Canadian prairies. . . the totals this year were the lowest in the 30 years that these counts have been made" (RWL). Three "Eurasian" type Green-winged Teal were found: Jan. 20-27 at Arcata Marsh (B Sapena, *vide* JSt), about Jan. 26-Feb. 9 in *Fresno* (KH, †GP *et al.*), and Feb. 9 e. of *Gustine*, *Merced* (*vide* Gull). As usual the 'spring' migration of Cinnamon Teal was evident in much of the Region by late January, but ± 50 at the Arcata Bottoms, *Humboldt*, Dec. 21 (*vide* JSt) was "an incredible number for mid-winter" there. Reports totalling 46-52 Eur. Wigeons (including five to six reported as females) were perhaps average; one-third were coastward, while 13+ were at Tule Lake N.W.R., Dec. 30-31 (RE, NC, MR). A well-described ♂ Eur. Wigeon x Am. Wigeon was at Limantour Estero, *Marin*, Feb. 17 (†JM) and had little certain precedent for the Region. Most such reports have appeared to pertain to variant Eurasians, which can have green on the face.

Waterfowl population surveys recorded very high numbers of Canvasbacks, scaups and Ruddy Ducks in S.F. Bay, perhaps concentrated by dry conditions statewide, as populations in total were lower. An apparent Ring-necked Duck x scaup (sp.) male was well-described from L. Merritt, Feb. 16 (†JM). The status of Greater Scaup in the interior in

winter is not well-elucidated, they are perhaps very locally regular in small numbers. Among 6 such reports this season, the largest was of "up to 24" at Copco L., *Siskiyou*, Jan. 21 + (CYo, RE, MR), said to be a regular wintering locale. Of 20 Oldsquaws reported, half were in *Del Norte*, while the one interior record was of a female at L. Shastina Dec 15-Jan. 1 (m.ob., *vide* MR). A count of 150+ Black Scoters off Pt. St George, *Del Norte*, Jan. 12 (GSL, RAE *et al.*) may have been the highest ever for the Region.

S.A.

Alarming was the discovery by U.S. Fish & Wildlife personnel of high levels of selenium in Surf Scoters which were collected in 1982 in southern S.F. Bay (*vide* RWL). The origin and extent of this toxicity is unknown, but these levels equal those in dabbling ducks at the now-infamous Kesterton N.W.R. Kesterton served primarily as evaporation ponds for agricultural runoff, which subsequently concentrated naturally-occurring low levels of selenium, causing deformities in scores of waterfowl young and creating much news and controversy. Kesterton was closed to runoff this season, but the larger and impending problem of water pollution in the San Joaquin Valley has yet to be addressed. The potential economic and conservation ramifications are immense.

Barrow's Goldeneyes were widely reported, with at least 21 from 7 locales in the interior and 53+ in S.F. Bay counties. A ♂ Red-breasted Merganser on the American River below Nimbus Dam Feb. 24-25 (ph, †TM, AM) was noteworthy for the interior.

RAPTORS — A Turkey Vulture was s. of Crescent City Dec. 8 (JAR, RAE); they are casual in *Del Norte* as wintering birds. One Jan 21 near Ft. Dick (RT) was felt by RAE to be a first returning bird for *Del Norte*. Twenty-four Ospreys were reported (half of these on the few C.B.C. reports I saw), 10 from the C.V. and periphery, the rest from the S.F. Bay/*Sonoma* area. This species seems to be on the increase in winter but it is not clear what age/sex classes are occurring (see Nat'l Geographic Society field guide, but note that immatures are apparently indistinguishable from adults after mid-winter). Reports of Bald Eagles probably represented at least 234 birds; nearly all reports were of one to six, with a count of 153 (14% imm.) at Tule Lake N.W.R. and Lower Klamath N.W.R., Feb. 9 (B & CY). A subad. Broad-winged Hawk in Pacific Grove Dec. 28 (†JP *et al.*) was seen only on the C.B.C. there. A report of an imm. Swainson's Hawk seen Dec. 8 at Creighton Ranch Preserve, *Tulare*, by a skilled observer (RH) was exciting, although no details are in hand for confirmation. This would be our 3rd December-January record (AB 38:353) and is probably best assumed to have been a late migrant.

Ferruginous Hawks appeared in average to moderately above-average numbers through the Region. Rough-legged Hawks showed a little better in most areas, but the few watchers in our Great Basin areas found them in excellent numbers. Eighty were tallied on a hawk watch in Fall R. Valley, *Shasta*, Jan. 26 (B & CY *et al.*), and 99 was a record for the Honey Lake C.B.C., Dec. 31 (*vide* TM); the Mono Lake C.B.C. also had an all-time high (*vide* DDeS). Merlin reports reached an impressive 71. They were most conspicuously above normal numbers in the *Sonoma/Marin/Napa* area. Noting those he saw in Marin to be dark *F. c suckleyi* from the northwest, Stallcup speculated a causal connection between the crossbill/siskin irruption and that of Merlins. Two *suckleyi* Merlins were also reported away from the northern S.F. Bay, and two of the very pale *richardsonii* were reported, both away from the immediate coast. Caution is urged in making these (and all!) subspecific identifications, as our more common *bendirei* (now usually merged in *F. c columbarius*) can show considerable variation.

GROUSE THROUGH CRANES — A Ruffed Grouse near Ft. Dick, *Del Norte*, in late December (JAR) was on the coastal plain—perhaps the first such noted there.

S.A.

In a 1981-1983 study of Corte Madera Ecological Reserve, *Marin*, JE (along with G. Page) witnessed 2 cases of predation on Black Rails by N. Harriers. A literature check and further study by Evens this November to February at the s. end of Tomales Bay has revealed rail predation by herons (and harriers?) to be routine, at least there: "During 15.1 hours of observation I recorded 28 cases of predation on rails: 17 Black Rails, eight Virginia Rails, three unidentified. Of 17 Black Rail predations, 16 were by Great Egrets, one by a Great Blue Heron. Of 8 Virginia Rail predations, 5 were by Great Blue Herons, 2 by Great Egrets and one by a N. Harrier." He further noted that "Our work at Corte Madera indicates that transitional upland vegetation around the marsh periphery offers refuge to rails during periods of vulnerability (high tides). The Tomales Bay marsh lacks upland cover due to grazing, dredging and diking for agriculture." Black Rails seem to be getting the squeeze play between egrets and man. Foremost among questions JE hopes next to address: "What are the densities of Black Rails at the few locations of known occurrence, and can their continued existence be assured given the dual threats of habitat loss and heavy predation?"

Reports of single "Caribbean Coots" came from Golden Gate P., S.F., Dec. 27 and L. Merritt Feb. 16 (both JM). Such birds are not exceptionally rare in the Region, and it seems more likely we are dealing with only variants of Am. Coot than that we are feeling the effects of either a sloppy Caribbean Coot breeder, or repeated, transcontinental, reverse migration, vagrant coots. *Sonoma's* first Sandhill Crane was flying S high overhead near Sebastopol Dec. 12 (LCB), and one was near Five Brooks, *Marin*, Dec. 29-Jan. 1 (*fide Gull*).

SHOREBIRDS — Black-bellied Plover numbers in the C.V. in winter seem very variable, perhaps due to movements in response to ephemeral habitat. A count of 499 on the Los Banos C.B.C. (Dec. 20, *fide KFC*) was 7 times average, but 400-500 through the period at Lodi sewage ponds (DY) was "about the normal wintering number." Of 33 *fulva* Lesser Golden-Plovers, one was interior—once again at the Lodi sewage ponds (DY). A Semipalmated Plover at the Stockton sewage ponds Dec. 4 (DY) was quite late for the C.V., but singles at Smith R. estuary (Dec. 18, GSL) and L. Earl (Jan. 28, ADB) provided about the 3rd and 4th winter records for *Del Norte*. There are fewer than 10 records of Mountain Plover for *Humboldt*, so two at Mad R. mouth Jan. 12-Feb. 10 (CC, JSt) were of note. A Black Oystercatcher at Castro Rocks, *Contra Costa* Jan. 31 (BR) was at a vicinity where they are probably regular. Two hundred Marbled Godwits at E. Hacienda, *Kings* (RHG), and 126 on the Los Banos C.B.C. (Dec. 20, *fide KFC*; 9 times average) were impressive totals. Two Surfbirds Jan. 2 (Richmond Marina) and one Feb. 5 (old Albany dump) were in S.F. Bay where casual in winter (BR). Rock Sandpipers were absent from *Sonoma*; they had not been missed at Bodega Head in the previous 17 winters.

Ruffs were a female at Merced N.W.R., Nov. 29-Feb. 28 (RJB), and one (possible male) there Feb. 27 to at least Mar. 9 (RJB, *fide Gull*); this was the 5th consecutive winter of central *Merced* records. Poorly-documented or undocumented reports of Short-billed Dowitchers from the interior in winter are occasionally received; this is especially true on C.B.C.s. Observers should be aware that there is *not a single acceptable winter record* for this species from the interior of California (or North America?). Large, even for the C.V., were Long-billed Dowitcher aggregations of 5300 at Sacramento N.W.R., Dec. 3 (MRH) and 3422 on the Los Banos C.B.C. (Dec. 20, *fide KFC*). Wilson's Phalarope records at Lodi sewage ponds Dec. 2-13 (†DY) and Merced N.W.R., Dec. 14 (†RJB) might have represented only one bird. Nineteen Red Phalaropes at Alviso Dec. 16 (R & Mfo) were excellent for the San Jose C.B.C.

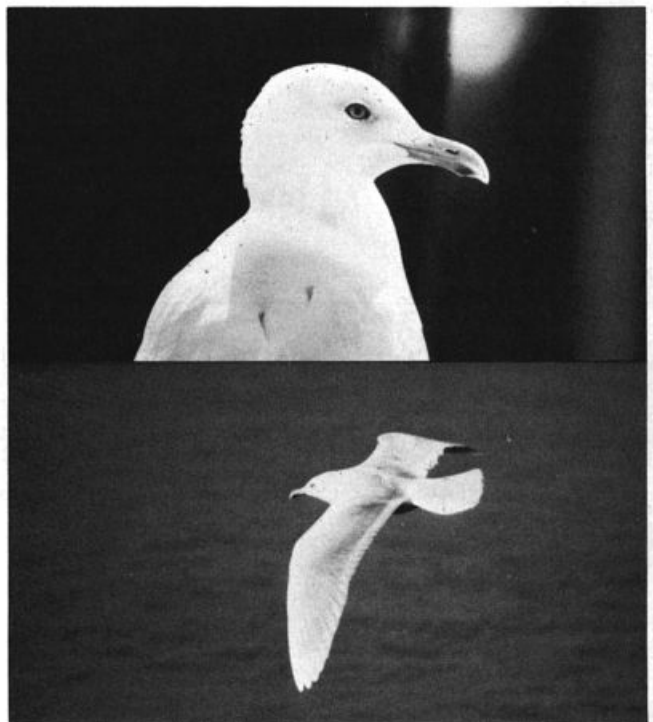
JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — Two S. Polar Skuas off Monterey Dec. 1 were very late (AB, TC, S.J.). The first-year Franklin's Gull, ad. Little Gull, and ad. Com. Black-headed Gull all inhabited the Stockton Sewage Ponds through the period (DY, m.ob.). Another first-year Franklin's Gull visited Napa Valley College Feb. 19-24 (MFR, m.ob.). With the departure of Brown Pelicans, Heermann's Gulls were

quite scarce, especially n. of Monterey Bay. As usual, the Stockton and Lodi sewage pond areas held the largest inland concentrations of Mew Gulls, with 100 at Stockton Jan. 12 the peak (DY). Small numbers wintering in the Sacramento area were expected (m.ob.), but 10 that wintered at the Modesto sewage ponds were believed to provide the first *Stanislaus* record (DY). Farther inland, singles were at a sewage pond near Lake of the Pines Dec. 22 (†JML, ML, LK), Oroville Dec. 2 (BED), Chico Dump Dec. 30 (SAL, MDH), L. Almanor Dec. 27 (†HG), and L. Shastina Jan. 3-6 (CYo, RE, MR). Thousands of California and W. gulls feasted on millions of pelagic red crabs (*Pleuroncodes planipes*) throughout the period along Monterey area shores (AB, m.ob.).

S.A.

As most Bay Area garbage dumps and pig farms close or move inland, Thayer's Gull will bear careful observation. Winter concentrations such as the 300+ near Marshall on Tomales Bay (RS, DDeS *et al.*) presumably depend on herring runs, but these totals cannot account for the many hundreds more that had subsisted on garbage. Dumps extant around the Bay still host many Thayer's Gulls (*e.g.*, 50-125 at ponds beside the Martinez Dump—BR), but counts only up to 10 were reported from dumps, sewage ponds, and salmon runs in *Sacramento*, *Yolo*, *San Joaquin*, and e. *Alameda* (m.ob.). More inland sightings included one at Oroville Dec. 2 (BED), four at Chico Dump Dec. 30 (SAL, MDH), one at Tulare L., Feb. 16 (SAL, MDH), and one at Tule Lake N.W.R., Feb. 24 (CYo, RE). As Thayer's Gulls lose their favored dumps it seems few are successfully switching to natural foods. So far, even fewer have followed dumps inland. Will this species become much less common in California? Some other gulls populations are expected to decrease, but only Thayer's appears really vulnerable.

The season's most popular gull was a white-winged adult at Bodega Harbor, *Sonoma*, seen poorly Dec. 30 and Jan. 5 (KFC *et al.*). Better studies Jan. 6 (†KFC), 10 (†RS), & 12 (DDeS *et al.*) resulted in the word being spread that it was California's first Iceland Gull. This beautiful gull delighted several hundred Californians from Jan. 13 (ph. †m.ob.) until Jan. 18 (ph. RLeB). Most, but by no means all, experts are



Two views of the bird identified as an adult Iceland Gull at Bodega Bay, Cal., Jan. 14, 1985. Photos/Peter M. LaTourrette.

convinced that it was an Iceland Gull (miniature Glaucous Gull would be the alternative). Although the primaries matched those of the Greenland race *glaucoides*, white primaries apparently can occur in *kumlieni*, which is more expected geographically.

Inland Glaucous-winged Gulls were one at the Chico Dump Dec. 30 (SAL, MDH) and three in the Sacramento area (T & AM). Our distribution of credible Glaucous Gulls was fairly typical: two offshore, seven coastal, three to five around San Francisco and San Pablo bays, and three inland. Black-legged Kittiwakes were generally seen in numbers from one to 10, but Monterey boats Jan. 26 and Feb. 3 & 10 found 150-200 (S.J., AB, BB). An ad. Sabine's Gull described from Cypress Pt., Monterey, Dec. 28 (†CCh) was exceptionally late.

Unless some were wintering, two Caspian Terns at L. Success, *Tulare*, Dec. 16 (FRG, BoB) were late and singles at Bethel I., *Contra Costa*, Feb. 19 (BR) and E. Hacienda, *Kings*, Feb. 28 (RHG) were early. Two imm. Com. Terns at the Santa Cruz Wharf Dec. 16 were very tardy (†BB, BLab, TN). Flocks of 10-15 Forster's Terns are now established wintering on Humboldt Bay (JSt *et al.*) and Stockton sewage ponds (DY, JML, EH). They were seasonally unknown inland and in n w California until recently. A Forster's at Los Banos N.W.R., Feb. 25 (RHG) may have been an early migrant.

With few exceptions, alcids were all scarce (AB, S.J., m.ob.). This was especially true for Com. Murre and other species most susceptible to gill net mortality. From *Monterey* to *Sonoma* murre counts were less than 10% of normal numbers. One was found dead w. of Coyote Hills, *Alameda*, Dec. 23 (JL). A Marbled Murrelet strayed s. to Monterey Dec. 23 (AB). Rarely found in winter, an ad. Tufted Puffin was off *Marin*, 6 mi s.w. of Bodega Harbor, Jan. 26 and Feb. 10 (KFC).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — A White-winged Dove at Bodega Harbor Dec. 1 (†JML *et al.*) gave us our 3rd winter period record. A cooperative imm. Spotted Owl at Merced N.W.R., Feb. 3 to at least Mar. 23 (S. Finnegan, P. Rostron, ph.; m.ob.) was apparently only the 2nd for the C.V. floor (the other Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 1975, Chico, SAL *et al.*), but note last winter's comments on dispersal. Long-eared Owls were in typical numbers, judging from reports of 19, but 13 locales is easily the most ever for one season. A strong showing of Short-eared Owls was well-documented toward the coast: 130+ individuals *Del Norte* through *Alameda*, with the 23 reports averaging four individuals, aside from the 66 carefully counted on Grizzley I., *Solano*, Dec. 19 (BDP). Elsewhere numbers were clearly average or below, even with the steady Regional decline. Intriguing was a well-documented report, by a careful (and hardy!) listener, of a calling owl at Echo Summit (7300 ft), *El Dorado*, the night of Jan. 21-22 (†MG). The well-heard voice and circumstances both indicated Boreal Owl, a species unrecorded in California (but note a specimen Mar. 21, 1902, Ft. Klamath, Ore.). A N. Saw-whet Owl at Davis Dec. 5 and Jan. 6 (M. Halterman, SAL) was exceptional on the C.V. floor.

Of nine to 10 Com. Poorwills noted Dec. 19-Feb. 22, five to six were in *Marin*, four in the foothills of the C.V.; a good showing. Two Vaux's Swifts were said to have been "well seen" over Calaveras Res., *Santa Clara*, Jan. 19 (*fide Gull*); one was over Carson Ridge, *Marin*, Feb. 5 (†JE). The species has now been seen 5 winters in succession (often in flocks), with few seasonal records previously. Three Costa's Hummingbirds wintered: males at Salinas Feb. 13-18 (JB) and near Folsom L., *Placer*, Dec. 27 into January (JaW *et al.*), and a female Jan. 27 at Corral Hollow, *San Joaquin* (†DY). They were perhaps related to last spring and summer's irruption, as we had had but 10 records in 10 previous winters. The first Rufous Hummingbird was an ad. male Feb. 24 at Coyote Hills (JL). Timing of spring arrival of *Selasphorus* is clouded by occasional overwintering (when Rufous is more common?) and difficult identification (even in hand at this time of year); suspected Rufous Hummingbirds before mid-February or Allen's before Jan. 15 would best be documented. The first Allen's noted was Jan. 18 at Alamo, *Contra Costa* (JR), perhaps a few days early.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH DIPPER — Lewis' Woodpeckers returned to a normal scattered few after last winter's modest irruption, with 48 (apparently average) on the Mt. Hamilton C.B.C., Dec. 19 (*fide* DSc) the only large number specified. Immature *varius* **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were at Pacific Grove Dec. 28 (†JSt, LCB) and near Nicasio, *Marin*, Dec. 29-Feb. 9 (ph. RS, LCB, m.ob.)—these apparently

provided the 8th and 9th Regional records of this form, all have been Dec. 10-Mar. 29, and 7 of the 9 have been coastal. Five of the "Red-naped" form (*S. v. nuchalis*) were reported (a good showing) with a male Feb. 20 n. of Crescent City (ADB) the latest, and a first for the species in *Del Norte*. An apparent hybrid *nuchalis* Yellow-bellied Sapsucker x Red-breasted Sapsucker was described from Sunol Regional Wilderness, *Alameda*, Feb. 2 (†ALE, BR). Mixed pairs have been reported from Great Basin portions of our Region, but I know of only one other such hybrid report (January-February 1972, *San Mateo*) away from those areas.

The Region's 3rd **Greater Pewee** was located Dec. 23 at Union City, *Alameda*, by J. Edgar and remained until at least Mar. 7 (†JM, †RAE, †KLH, †JML, m.ob.). Three W. Flycatchers graced the Region: two in Carmel Mission P., Dec. 1, one of which remained through Dec. 28 at least (RS, WR), and one in Sacramento Dec. 23 (DY). Although this is our most expected winter *Empidonax*, we average fewer than one in this season. An *Empidonax* at Sutter Buttes Feb. 17 (†DSc) was not a Willow or Gray flycatcher. Say's Phoebe sightings at Arcata Bottoms Dec. 7, Feb. 12 & 19 (JSt, SH *et al.*) were assumed to be of one wintering bird (they are rare on the n. coast), but more likely referred to one late straggler and one or two early-to-normally-timed "spring" migrants, based on Regional movements. There is perhaps no other species with as many unacceptable winter records for the Region as Ash-throated Flycatcher. Thus it was satisfying that *two* (both from C.B.C.s) were well-described this season: Santa Clara Univ., *Santa Clara*, Dec. 16 (†BH *et al.*) and O'Neill Forebay Wildlife Area, *Merced* (†CB, †KFC *et al.*). A 3rd bird in Oakland Dec. 14-Jan. 13 (MP, m.ob.) was reportedly well-described (*fide* JM), but no documentation is in hand. A Tropical Kingbird at the Carmel R. mouth tarried through Dec. 9 (DR).

The **Eurasian Skylark** on its 7th annual winter visit to outer Pt Reyes was last seen Feb. 17 (JM). A cursory examination of longstanding C.B.C.s with significant Horned Lark populations indicates this species is on a serious decline through much of the Region. Observers are urged to take note of the presence and absence of larks in their local areas, both as wintering and as breeding birds. Very large concentrations of Violet-green Swallows were 250 at Pescadero Marsh Dec. 29 (PJM) and 175 w. of Santa Rosa Dec. 16 (BDP). Two Barn Swallows were at Lodi's sewage ponds Dec. 13 (†DY) and another was at Grizzley I., *Solano*, Jan. 9 (*fide Gull*). Out-of-place Scrub Jays were one in Chester, *Plumas*, Dec. 27 (†MG) and another n. of Crescent City, thus on the coastal plain of *Del Norte*, Feb. 2 (ADB). "A few" Clark's Nutcrackers were low at 3000 ft elevation near Trimmer, *Fresno*, Jan. 13 (RA), but more than a few were the 191+ counted at Chester Feb. 20 alone (DAA); an amazing 500-750 total were thought present throughout the period there. JLo reported that Yellow-billed Magpies are "apparently moving S in *Solano*," and that "they are now regularly seen around Fairfield, but are still quite rare s. of there." Thus 11 he noted in Lynch Canyon between Fairfield and Vallejo Dec. 24 were noteworthy, as was one at L. Herman, n. of Benicia, Feb. 18 (PeG, *fide* JLo).

There was no consensus on Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers; apparently they were in excellent numbers at least at some locales (*e.g.*, Palomarin; all time highs on 5 greater S.F. Bay area C.B.C.s). Exceptional Winter Wren counts for their respective locales were 21 at Palomarin Feb. 21 and five in *San Joaquin* on the C.V. floor during the period (DY), although the latter reporter speculated that "they are perhaps more common there than previously expected." One on the Los Banos C.B.C., Dec. 20 (†KH) apparently provided a first *Merced* record. Fifteen Am. Dippers reported from S.F. Bay counties seemed startlingly good, and included *six* on Arroyo Hondo at Smith's Cr., *Santa Clara*, Jan. 26 (J. Yurchenko, A. Lauterbach, *fide* WGB).

KINGLETS THROUGH VIREOS — The comments made on Golden-crowned Kinglets at Palomarin seemed generally accurate for the whole Region: "Numbers greater than most years, and more actually than last year. Decrease noted only at the very end of February. Very little mortality." It was clearly an excellent year for Mountain Bluebirds with many reports of birds from *Colusa* through *Tulare*, the largest being easily a new high count for the Region: 450 along Little Panoche Rd., *San Benito*, Jan. 27 (*fide Gull*). Yet there were only 2 clearly extralimital records: three at Sunol Regional Wilderness Jan. 4 (BR) and a male on Estero Lane, *Sonoma* in early December (RLeB). A total of 15 Townsend's Solitaires on Mt. St. Helena Feb. 16 (BDP, KFC, LCB)

was high for the southernmost regular wintering locale coastwardly, three singles were on the periphery of the C.V. As always, quantitative data on Am. Robin movements was sparse, but coastally numbers seemed to rise to average winter levels through November, then a 2nd influx late December to early January (through the Region?) brought numbers well above average, where they stayed until mid-February. Checked C.B.C.s mostly recorded average numbers; a dawn flock of 20,000 ± in San Rafael on the Marin County (S.) C.B.C. (KFC *et al.*) was the only major roost noted. Thousands moving N through Rohnert Park; *Sonoma*, mid-January to mid-February (KFC, LCB) were presumably departing. Varied Thrushes were clearly irruptive coastally but average or less in the C.V. Note that wintering coastal and interior birds are of different races. Wrentits on the C.V. floor are sparse at best, so 10 ± at Lodi along the Mokelumne R., Feb. 9 & 21 (DY), formed a noteworthy concentration.

A N. Mockingbird at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Jan. 8 (CSt) was the first for the refuge, and still one of few for the Klamath Basin (*fide* MR). Displaced Sage Thrashers were ones at Corral Hollow Jan. 30 (†DY) and W. Butte Rd., *Sutter*, Dec. 1 (*fide* Gull). Bohemian Waxwings were not seen outside n. Great Basin locales, but Cedar Waxwings were clearly in very good shape, with flocks of 500-600 in *Tulare* and *San Joaquin* (RHG, DY) and a high count of 40 at Smith R., *Del Norte*, Jan. 19-24+ (RAE) being good numbers. Twenty Phainopeplas on the Mt. Hamilton C.B.C., Dec. 19 (*fide* DSc), was an excellent total; two were far w. near Clear L., Dec. 18-Jan. 2 (KT). In one of their best-ever showings, at least 24 N. Shrikes were noted (including C.B.C. birds reported to me): 15 on the n. coast, six reported from Great Basin areas (probably more seen), and three well s. The latter were immatures at Yolo Bypass, *Yolo*, Jan. 1-26 (HJ, m.ob.) and Bay Farm I., *Alameda*, Dec. 16-Feb. 4 (DJ, m.ob.), and an adult at Año Nuevo State Reserve Dec. 7 (*fide* Gull). For the bad news, a swarm of Eur. Starlings passing over Stockton Dec. 14 was estimated at 10,000,000 ± (DY, KH, RA), dwarfing all of our previous reports. "The poor cash year in grapes causing farmers not to pick over 50% of their crops is considered the cause" (DY).

A *Bell's Vireo* at Pt. Reyes Station Dec. 13-Jan. 8 (ph. RS, m.ob.) gave us a first Regional winter record; it was referable to one of the gray, w. races. An amazing six Solitary Vireos were reported (all as *cassinii*): three in *Humboldt* Dec. 7-15 (RLeV, JSt), two in *Marin* Dec. 10-17 (RS) & 23 (*fide* Gull), and one in the interior at Stockton Feb. 7 to the end of February (†DY). Unprecedented were 23 ± Hutton's Vireos on the C.V. floor, *Sacramento* through *Fresno*, where generally quite rare.

WARBLERS THROUGH TANAGERS — Six Tennessee Warblers (all coastal) was an average number; 33 Nashville Warblers (also all coastal) was above the recent average, but note that 2 new coastal C.B.C.s (S.F., which started last winter, and Arcata this winter) together produced 11 of our records. A Lucy's Warbler was documented from Pacific Grove Dec. 28-29 (†JP, LCB). Nine Yellow Warblers were found, with records from the Carmel R. mouth to Smith R., *Del Norte*, nearly matching last year's unprecedented 10. With the apparently low insectivore mortality, the fact that only three were reported for any extended period is mostly an indication of birder behavior and not Yellow Warbler movement. A Chestnut-sided Warbler on the Mad R., Dec. 7 (RLeV), was probably a late migrant; we have but one record of a wintering bird. Black-throated Gray Warblers had their best showing yet with 20 records; 9 were coastal, with 11 in the C.V. Four Townsend's Warblers were away from the coast: three in *San Joaquin* (HR, KM) and an ad. male s. of Lake of the Pines Dec. 22 (†JML *et al.*) in the low Sierran foothills. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** in Olema, *Marin*, Dec. 12-Jan. 12 (RS, †JE, m.ob.) was of the *D. d. dominica/stoddardi* form, as indicated by long bill and yellow lores and chin. It was the first of this form identified for our Region (2nd for the state), and provided a first Regional winter record for the species.

Palm Warblers were reported in unsurprising numbers (30 ±); all were coastal (25 from the n. coast), and only two to five were noted after December. At 6 records, Black-and-white Warblers were in only half the recent-average numbers. Only one was non-coastal: a 7th Yosemite area record (first for October-April) was an ad. male at 2100 ft in El Portal, *Mariposa* (†PD). A N. Waterthrush was said to have wintered in Santa Cruz (*fide* Gull); we have 10 ± previous records of birds apparently wintering. Eight Wilson's Warblers was high (but our recent average

is now five to six) with all in coastal counties, only the northernmost was shown to stay past the C.B.C.s: Nov. 29-Feb. 5 near Ft. Dick, *Del Norte* (RT *et al.*). A Ø Summer Tanager at Bolinas Jan. 23 (RS *et al.*) furnished our 6th winter report in 5 years, all but one of which was from the S.F. Bay area. Winter W. Tanager records are considerably more widespread, but this year's 4 (near average) were all in the S.F. Bay/*Sonoma* area.

GROSBEAKS THROUGH ORIOLES — Our only *Pheucticus* grosbeak was an imm. ♂ Black-headed in the Carmel Valley, *Monterey* (DR), which at Dec. 1 only was perhaps straggling, not wintering. A Ø Dickcissel at Smith R., Dec. 16-Jan. 12 (RT, †RAE) gave us a 2nd winter record, and only our 10th mainland record in 15 years, with an equal number from F.I. in that time. A Green-tailed Towhee at Kaweah Oaks Preserve, *Tulare*, Dec. 30 (L. Wilson, *fide* RH) was probably the one that wintered there last year. After a year of searching appropriate habitat, birders in *Shasta* discovered a singing Rufous-crowned Sparrow Feb. 23, 3 mi e. of Coleman Fish Hatchery, ½ mi n. of Battle Cr. (BV). This extended the known range n. in the Region (and the world) by 37 miles. Breeding confirmation was anticipated. Four Vesper Sparrow reports were of birds away from regular locales: singles at Stafford L., *Marin*, late December-Feb. 4 (RS), Concord Ave. at Briones Rd., *Contra Costa* (JR), and s. of Los Banos Dec. 20 (KH, †KH), and five on Ave. 12, *Madera*, Jan. 9 (KH, KH).

Two Sage Sparrows just n. of Volta on the Los Banos C.B.C., Dec. 20 (†JMA) were at the northernmost known locale for *A. b. canescens* (see AB 36:1014). Enigmatic were two Sage Sparrows on the shore of S.F. Bay: a definite *A. b. belli* on the Emeryville Marina Dec. 9-Jan. 29 (JG, m.ob.), and probably another *belli* on Robert's Landing (†HG). A Grasshopper Sparrow at Arcata Marsh Dec. 15-25 was possibly wintering (MH). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Pine Gulch Cr. mouth, *Marin*, Dec. 9 (†JM) was at an annually productive locale for the species. Three other reports were undocumented. Two reports of 'eastern' (*P. i. iliaca/zaboria* type) Fox Sparrows near Ft. Dick were the first such for *Del Norte*; singles Dec. 16 and Jan. 7-12 (RAE) were 2 mi apart and probably best interpreted as one record. Swamp Sparrows were noted the length of the coast (at least 16) and at 4 inland locales (singles). Only 29 White-throated Sparrows were reported, a poor but not awful showing; White-crowned Sparrow numbers on C.B.C.s might best be described in stock market jargon: slightly down in mixed trading. Amazing were reports totalling 71+ Lapland Longspurs; 7 sites were in coastal counties, 2 sites in n. Great Basin areas.

A ♀ Tricolored Blackbird at F.I., Feb. 28 was but 7 days earlier than last spring's female there, and exceptional for the island. Sixth and 7th Regional records for **Great-tailed Grackle** were males at Pescadero, *San Mateo*, Dec. 29 (†PJM) and Martinez Marina, *Contra Costa*, Jan. 10-11 (BR, JR); a male and female together still inhabited S.F. through the period, as they have since June 1978 (♂) and September 1979 (♀). A Ø Orchard Oriole in Smith R., Dec. 16-Mar. 19 (RLeV, †RAE) provided a 2nd *Del Norte* record, while a report of one from *Humboldt* lacked details. Four reports of Hooded Orioles were all away from the immediate coast. Details for only one were submitted, and they fit Streak-backed Oriole (a potential vagrant to our Region—see the Southern Pacific Coast report) as well as they did Hooded (*e.g.*, "subtle streaked back"). Even more critical is the question whether Orchard Oriole is ruled out in cases of suspected displaced Hooded Orioles (and vice versa). I have heard rumors of opinions that Hooded Oriole is regular in winter; observers holding such opinions are strongly encouraged to substantiate them; I remain open-minded. Two of 12 N. Orioles were "Baltimore" types: female, Golden Gate P., Dec. 19-Mar. 2 (LCB, m.ob.), male, Millbrae, Dec. 22 (*fide* Gull). The rest were all "Bullock's."

FRINGILLIDS — Purple Finches were in flight-year numbers in some areas (*Sacramento*, *Marin*) but apparently not all. More unusual was a widely-scattered irruption of Cassin's Finches. They are rarely noted in lower w. Sierra foothills, so reports of many small flocks *Mariposa* through *Fresno*, Jan. 20 on (JLo, KH, VJ) were impressive. Yet less expected were a report of four on the C.V. floor at Stockton Feb. 7 through the end of February (†DY), and 5 coastward reports: a flock of 35 Dec. 22 for the 2nd Clear Lake C.B.C. record (*fide* KT), one Jan. 9 and another Jan. 25 on Sonoma Mt. (RMe; †KFC—2nd & 3rd

Sonoma records), two or more Feb. 1 at Alpine L., *Marin* (RS), and one Feb. 10 at Inverness (RS). The only Great Basin report was from *Siskiyou*: "large numbers . . . present in towns at lower elevations in the county" (MR). Red Crossbills continued their Regionwide explosion with no clear change in abundance, August through February. With few areas untouched, they were still clearly most abundant in *Marin* (e.g., 2834 on 2 C.B.C.s there). A flock there on Limantour Rd., Feb. 17 was noted by JM to consist of "250 ± small-billed birds and 50 medium-billed. The different bill types give different call notes. . . . It is possible that more than one species is involved, observers are urged to pay attention to vocalizations and bill size when possible." Note the illustration of the 3 bill-size types in the Nat'l Geographic Society field guide (three right-most birds). There have still been no signs of breeding reported. Pine Siskins as well were abundant, with thousands seen coastally (9116 on Dec. 30, W. Sonoma C.B.C., *vide* DSI, being the highest number seen). Their presence was also conspicuous in the C.V., where normally very scarce; many observations were of 10-50. Our *only* reported locale for Lawrence's Goldfinch, after last spring and summer's invasion, was at and near Napa R. Ecological Preserve; 25 were noted Jan. 1 and "over 50" Feb. 7 (*vide* Gull). There were no reports of large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks, but there *were* many reports of small flocks. Two near Ft. Dick Dec. 19 (RAE) furnished the only *Del Norte* sighting, but there were dozens of sightings *Sacramento* through *Fresno*, and small numbers were on many central coast C.B.C.s.

ADDENDA — Acceptable documentation is now on file for the following records: Cape May Warbler, Pacific Grove, Jan. 31, 1980 (AB 34:304); Costa's Hummingbirds: San Rafael Dec. 3-31, 1983 (AB 38:354), and see AB 38:430 for photo; Los Banos Dec. 26, 1983 (AB 38:354).

CORRIGENDUM — For AB 37:335, the Black-and-white Warbler

was near Pt. Arena, not Ft. Arena.

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SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

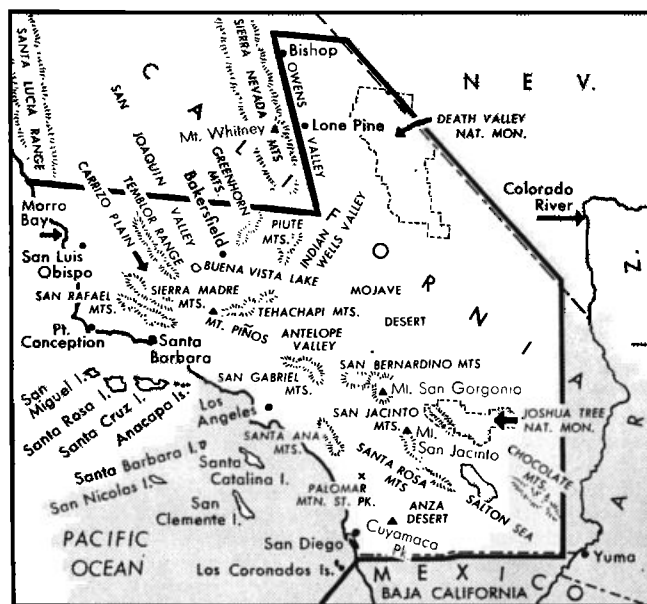
/Guy McCaskie

December was wetter than normal, but the remainder of the winter was dry and mild. Finches, especially Red Crossbills, remained conspicuously numerous and widespread after the fall influx, and Mountain Bluebirds invaded the coast during December. Other highlights of the winter included the Region's first Lesser Black-backed Gull on the Salton Sea and a cooperative Streak-backed Oriole in San Diego.

ABBREVIATIONS — N.E.S.S. = north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.; S.D.N.H.M. = San Diego Natural History Museum; S.E.S.S. = south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County. As virtually all rarities found in s. California are seen by numerous observers, only the observer initially identifying the bird is included. Documentation is on file for all rarities listed in the report.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — All 3 of the normally-occurring loons appeared scarcer than usual along the coast. A Horned Grebe on Wiest L. near S.E.S.S., Feb. 7 (GEW) was at an unusual location. Red-necked Grebes appear to have been more numerous than normal with 10 reported; one on Newport Bay Jan. 26 (LRH) and another in Santee, San Diego Co., Dec. 30-Jan. 6 (D & NK) were s. of Los Angeles.

Northern Fulmars remained in s. California waters throughout the period as indicated by 20 off Santa Barbara Mar. 1 (LB). Three Short-tailed Shearwaters, rare late fall and winter visitors to s. California waters, were 5 mi off Goleta Jan. 3 (LB) and another was 8 mi off Santa Barbara Mar. 1 (LB). Black-vented Shearwaters were present throughout the period as indicated by 275 off Goleta Jan. 3 (LB), 120 off San Diego Feb. 16 (CGE), 50 off Newport Bay Feb. 17 (SG), and five off Santa Barbara Mar. 1 (LB). Most unusual was an imm. Magnificent Frigatebird at Bolsa Chica Jan. 19 (GT0), only the 2nd ever to have been found in s. California during January.



A Least Bittern, now rare along the coast in winter, was in Santa Barbara Dec. 29-Feb. 9 (HM). Two ad. Little Blue Herons throughout the period (EC) around s. San Diego Bay, where this species now appears to be resident, were the only ones reported. Up to three Tricolored Herons remained around s. San Diego Bay throughout the period (EC), but the species was unreported elsewhere. The imm. Reddish Egret found on s. San Diego Bay Oct. 28 was seen regularly through Dec. 31 (EC), and what was undoubtedly this bird was found long dead in the same area in late February (*S.D.N.H.M.), and an adult was present there Dec. 12-Mar. 3 (AME).

WATERFOWL — A Tundra Swan near Brawley Feb. 23 (RMck) was only the 2nd to have been found in Imperial County in the past 10 years. A flock of 40 Greater White-fronted Geese in flight over downtown Los Angeles Feb. 8 (KLG) was an unexpected sight, but this is the time of year that numbers are moving N from wintering grounds in Mexico. A flock of 100 Wood Ducks on L. Cachuma Feb. 2 (TW) was an exceptional number for anywhere in s. California. A ♂ Eur. Green-winged Teal in Goleta Nov. 3-Mar. 1 (CDB) was evidently the same bird known to have spent the past 3 winters at this location. At least 16 Eur. Wigeon at 10 different locations was about average. A ♂ Eur. Wigeon x Am. Wigeon was well seen near Lakeview Dec. 16 (GMcC) and another was on L. Henshaw Feb. 24 (GMcC); this hybrid may not be as unusual as it is currently thought to be, and observers are encouraged to report all sightings.

Up to two Tufted Ducks at Saticoy Feb. 16-Mar. 17 (PEL) were the only ones reported this winter. Two Harlequin Ducks near San Simeon, San Luis Obispo Co., Dec. 8-Jan. 24 (CM) were in an area where one or two probably occur each year, but an imm. male in Long Beach Dec. 17-Jan. 13 (CTC) and another at Bolsa Chica Dec. 28-Mar. 6 (SJR) were both very far south. Ten Oldsquaws along the coast were more than expected, and one on Apollo L. near Lancaster Nov. 22 (A & JC) was inland. Two Surf Scoters at Santa Maria Dec. 14 (PEL) and three on L. Castaic, Los Angeles Co., Feb. 18-23 (KLG) were inland, as were two White-winged Scoters on L. Cachuma Jan. 2-Feb. 19 (RAH) and another near Orange Nov. 20-Mar. 12 (DRW), and the latter species was noticeably more numerous along the coast than in recent years. A Barrow's Goldeneye, decidedly rare throughout most of s. California, was near Irvine Dec. 8-Feb. 17 (GTo) and another was at S.E.S.S., Jan. 26 (REW).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — Black-shouldered Kites continued to be found outside their normal range with two along the Colorado R. near Bard Feb. 21 (BED), four at widely separated localities in the Imperial Valley s. of the Salton Sea between Dec. 1 and Jan. 26 (JLD, REW), and one on San Miguel I., Jan. 15-31 (GMF) being the farthest out of range. A Red-shouldered Hawk, casual in s.e. California, was in Brawley Dec. 20-Feb. 2 (DRW). A Swainson's Hawk near Mettler, Kern Co., Dec. 6 (PHB) was exceptionally late for a fall migrant. The ad. Zone-tailed Hawk present near Vista since Oct. 19 was present through at least Jan. 1 (AE). A Ferruginous Hawk in Carpinteria Dec. 21 (TW), up to three in Santa Barbara Dec. 29-Mar. 9 (LB), and another at nearby El Capitan State Beach Jan. 3 (TW) were all in an area where considered rare. Rough-legged Hawks were more numerous and widespread than in recent years with some being found along the immediate coast such as one at San Simeon Nov. 24-Dec. 8 (RSto), one at Bolsa Chica Dec. 23-Jan. 11 (SG), and another in Del Mar Dec. 12 (LS). A Peregrine Falcon at S.E.S.S., Dec. 30 (CGE) was the only one found inland.

Up to 18 Lesser Golden-Plovers near Santa Maria throughout the winter (LB) and three at Seal Beach during the same period (SG) were all believed to be of the Asiatic race *fulva*, the only race documented to occur in California in winter. A Snowy Plover on L. Isabella, Kern Co., Jan. 25 (MH) was at an unusual location for that time of year. A Mountain Plover on the beach in Goleta Dec. 8-9 (MH) was certainly unexpected. A Ruddy Turnstone at Salton City Feb. 22-Mar. 10 (KRa) was only the 2nd ever found inland in the Region in winter. About 15 Sanderlings spent the winter inland on the Salton Sea at Salton City. Up to 15 Stilt Sandpipers at S.E.S.S., Jan. 26-Feb. 16 (REW) and up to 65 near Brawley Feb. 16-Mar. 2 (BED) undoubtedly wintered locally. The ♂ Ruff found on s. San Diego Bay July 15 was present through Mar. 17 (GMcC) and was unquestionably the same bird known to have spent the past 2 winters here. Two Wilson's Phalaropes, casual in winter, on s. San Diego Bay Feb. 14-23 (GMcC) and one near Brawley Feb. 16-Mar. 2 (BED) had undoubtedly spent the entire season in the Region. Three Red-necked Phalaropes on s. San Diego Bay Feb. 14+ (GMcC) had undoubtedly wintered locally, but a breeding-plumaged bird in Santa Barbara Jan. 27 (JLD) defied categorizing.

GULLS, TERNS, SKIMMER — A Franklin's Gull in Lake Forrest, Orange Co., Nov. 24-Dec. 16 (DRW) is best considered to have been a late fall migrant. A first-winter Little Gull at Salton City Jan. 17-31 (REM) was the 4th to have been found on the Salton Sea, and was

associating with up to 200 Bonaparte's Gulls, an exceptionally large number for this locality at this time of year. An ad. Mew Gull on L. Perris, Riverside Co., Jan. 13 (BWK), a 2nd-winter bird at Salton City Jan. 26-Feb. 3 (REW), and two to three at S.E.S.S., Dec. 18-Jan. 26 (PEL, JLD) were all well inland. Up to 75 Thayer's Gulls around Lompoc, Santa Barbara Co., Jan. 26-Feb. 8 (JLD) was a large concentration for s. California. An ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at S.E.S.S., Dec. 18-Jan. 5 (JLD) was the 2nd ever to have been found in California, the first having been in Monterey Jan. 14, 1978 (*W. Birds* 9:141-150). Up to five Glaucous Gulls at Lompoc Jan. 26-Mar. 3 (PEL) was an exceptional number for one location; elsewhere, single first-winter birds were in Santa Maria Jan. 3 (KZ), at Salton City Jan. 26-Mar. 2 (GMcC), and at S.E.S.S., Dec. 18-20 (GMcC). Black-legged Kittiwakes were very scarce with only seven reported, all during February.

Up to seven Elegant Terns on Morro Bay Dec. 9-15 (LD) were exceptionally late stragglers; most are normally gone from California by early November. Black Skimmers were more numerous and widespread along the coast than in previous winters with up to 42 at Bolsa Chica throughout the period (FGB), one at Malibu Feb. 23 (GH), and six at Pt Mugu all winter (PEL) all being n. of San Diego County; one at S.E.S.S., Dec. 19 (BED) was inland.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Eight White-winged Doves at Palm Spring, e. San Diego Co., Feb. 10 (GEW) and another in nearby Tarote Canyon Feb. 11 (GEW) were in an area where small numbers appear to winter each year; however, one at Morro Bay Jan. 12 (JM), another in nearby Los Osos Jan. 17 (MW), and up to five in Goleta Oct. 13-Mar. 30 (GTi, KB) were along the coast where very rare in winter. Common Ground-Doves still appear to be pushing N up the coast as indicated by the presence of one to three near L. Casitas all winter (DS) and up to four in Carpinteria Nov. 30-Jan. 9 (TW). The presence during February of at least nine calling N. Saw-whet Owls between 5500' and 7000' in the San Gabriel Mts. (KLG), where one previous occurrence is known, probably reflects increased observer efforts. A Lesser Nighthawk near Calexico Feb. 8 (JC) was in an area where small numbers may prove to winter regularly; however, one in Irvine Nov. 9-Feb. 24 (DRW) and another near Imperial Beach Dec. 15-Jan. 1 (GMcC) were along the coast where considered casual in winter. Again Vaux's Swifts were found wintering along the coast with up to 40 at Malibu Dec. 2-Jan. 1 (KLG), up to 25 in Whittier, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 8-Jan. 7 (BWK), three on the Palos Verdes Pen., Dec. 24 (CTC), up to 40 over downtown Los Angeles Dec. 30-Jan. 3 (BVM), three in Fullerton Jan. 13 (SG), and 30-40 around Oceanside all winter (MJ). A ♀ Black-chinned Hummingbird, casual to accidental in California in winter, was in Long Beach Jan. 8-25 (BED).

Lewis' Woodpeckers remained more widely distributed than normal through the winter, with more than usual in coastal lowlands. With the possible "splitting" of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker into 2 species (Johnson and Zink, 1983, *Auk* 100:871-884; and 1985, *Auk* 102:1-15), observers are clearly paying more attention to the identification of these birds, hence an increase in the numbers of the e. birds *varius* being reported; this winter an immature was in Bakersfield Dec. 16-31 (MOC), a female was in Santa Ana Mar. 13-17 (LRH), a male was in Fallbrook, San Diego Co., Dec. 1-Feb. 17 (RH), and another male was at Finney L. near S.E.S.S., Feb. 8 (GEW). Single Yellow-bellied (Red-naped) Sapsuckers on the Carrizo Plain Feb. 17 (RSto), in Goleta Oct. 27-Jan. 1 (TW), in Santa Barbara Dec. 22-23 (RAH), and in Fillmore Dec. 30 (JLD) were all noteworthy. Single Williamson's Sapsuckers on Mt. Palomar Feb. 17 (REW) and Mt. Laguna Jan. 5 (DK) were a little s of the species' normal winter range, one at Valyermo, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 1 (BS) was at a rather low elevation, and another in Fullerton Dec. 23-Mar. 14 (DRW) was in the coastal lowlands. A Nuttall's Woodpecker on San Miguel I., Jan. 15-31 (GMF) was apparently the first ever found on any of the Channel Islands.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — An Olive-sided Flycatcher in Santa Barbara Feb. 9-19 (LB) was one of fewer than one-half dozen ever found in California in winter. The Greater Pewee found in Santa Barbara Nov. 10 was still present Mar. 10 (JLD) and the other found in San Diego Nov. 10 was still present at the end of the period (REW). A Hammond's Flycatcher at L. Ming near Bakersfield Jan. 14 (MH) was one of very few ever reported in winter. Four Gray Flycatchers were

found along the s coast along with three more on the s e desert, indicating small numbers continue to winter in the Region. Eight W. Flycatchers along the coast would appear about normal. A ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher in Los Osos Dec. 1-Feb. 19 (TME) was apparently the same bird first found here during the winter of 1981-1982, and considered exceptionally far north. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher in La Jolla Mar. 8 (LB) was the first to be found in San Diego County. Three Ash-throated Flycatchers were found along the coast, with one in Huntington Beach Dec. 2-Mar. 9 (SG), another in nearby Corona del Mar Feb. 14 (LRH), and the 3rd near Imperial Beach Jan. 19 (EC), and at least eight were seen between Dec. 29 and Feb. 23 (PU, REM, GEW) in the s.e. portion of the Region where small numbers evidently winter each year. The Thick-billed Kingbird found near Tustin Nov. 8 was still present at the end of the period (DRW) and the other in Claremont Nov. 3 was still present Mar. 17 (MB). One or two N. Rough-winged Swallows in Irvine Nov. 22-Dec. 30 (DRW) were most unusual since few indeed have been found along the coast at this time of year. A Cliff Swallow in Oceanside Dec. 23 (GMcC) was one of fewer than one-half dozen to have been found in s. California at this time of year. Two Barn Swallows in Irvine Dec. 25-Jan. 5 (DRW) were clearly wintering locally.

CORVIDS THROUGH VIREOS — A Clark's Nutcracker near Julian Jan. 21 (RH) was one of only a few ever to reach San Diego County. A flock of 200 Am. Crows near Palo Verde Feb. 20 (BED) was along the Colorado R. where similar-sized flocks occur every winter. Six Bushtits along the Colorado R. near Vidal Feb. 20 (BED) were at an unusual locality. Up to 10 Red-breasted Nuthatches in Brawley throughout the period appear to have been the first ever known to winter in this area. A Winter Wren in Irvine Dec. 25-Feb. 10 (DRW) was one of a very few to have been found in Orange County. Mountain Bluebirds were more numerous and widespread than usual throughout the interior of the Region with many occurring along the coast, where normally absent, as indicated by such reports as 20 near San Luis Obispo Dec. 12-Feb. 10 (GPS), 10 near Lompoc Dec. 15 (KS), up to 50 in Goleta Nov. 16-Mar. 5 (PEL), 30 around L. Casitas during December and January (BD), one at Playa del Rey Feb. 4 (WC), 110 near Corona del Mar Jan. 6 (SJR), and 40 near Penasquitos Lagoon Dec. 2 (D & MH); they also reached the Channel Is., as indicated by 40 on Santa Rosa I., Feb. 4 (KRi). A Townsend's Solitaire in Ventura Jan. 24 (JLD) was along the coast where rare, and single birds in Brawley Dec. 1 (GMcC) and Feb. 2 (REW) were at an unusual locality. A Sage Thrasher in Ventura Jan. 17-18 (PEL) was outside the species' normal range. The only Brown Thrasher reported was the one in Hart P. in Bakersfield Nov. 17-Jan. 26 (MH). A Bendire's Thrasher, a casual winter visitor to the coast of s. California, was in Goleta Dec. 21-Jan. 23 (RAH), another was in Coronado Jan. 28-Mar. 3 (JC) and a 3rd was on nearby Otay Mesa Feb. 16-Mar. 16 (MO), a 4th was inland at L. Perris Dec. 9-Jan. 26 (AMC), and another was near Lakeview Jan. 26-Mar. 22 (AMC). A **Sprague's Pipit** near Lakeview Mar. 2-17 (DMM) undoubtedly wintered locally and was one of a very few ever to have been found in California.

A Bell's Vireo, exceptionally rare in winter, was in Coronado Jan. 19-Mar. 3 (DRW). Ten Solitary Vireos were found along the coast along with three more inland, and the fact that all but three of the coastal birds were of the gray interior form *plumbeus* is significant considering how rare this form was considered to be in California as recently as 10 years ago. A Hutton's Vireo near Victorville Feb. 18 (DRW) was outside the species' normal range. A Warbling Vireo, casual in winter, was in Santa Barbara Feb. 2-9 (PEL) and another was in San Diego Feb. 11 (REW).

WOOD WARBLERS THROUGH LONGSPURS — Tennessee Warblers were scarcer than in recent winters with only eight reported from along the coast, but one in Niland Dec. 18-21 (JLD) was the first ever to have been found in the true interior at this time of year. Seven Nashville Warblers along the coast appeared about normal. A Virginia's Warbler in Santa Barbara Dec. 29-Feb. 13 (KLG) was probably the same bird present at this location during the winter of 1982-1983. A Lucy's Warbler, most unusual in winter, was at Dana Point, Orange Co., Dec. 15 (W & VG). Twenty Yellow Warblers along the coast were more than expected. A ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler in San Luis Obispo Dec. 1-15 (CM) was apparently a late fall migrant. Twenty Black-throated Gray Warblers were found along the coast and two more

were inland in Brawley throughout the period. The only Hermit Warblers reported were one in Oceano Dec. 14-Feb. 3 (PEL) and two more in Santa Barbara all winter. A ♂ Grace's Warbler returned to Santa Barbara for its 6th winter, being present Oct. 7-Mar. 23 (TW), and was joined by a 2nd Dec. 21-Feb. 25 (PEL), with a 3rd in Ventura Dec. 30-Mar. 3 (JG). A ♀ Pine Warbler in Coronado Dec. 15-Mar. 3 (EC) was the 5th to have been found in California in winter. Only five Palm Warblers were reported from along the coast. Eight Black-and-white Warblers along the coast appeared about normal, but 10 Am. Redstarts in the same area was a little above average. A Worm-eating Warbler at Nojoqui Falls P. near Santa Barbara Dec. 1 (OC) was undoubtedly a late fall migrant. Two N. Waterthrushes spent the winter in the Oceano/Pismo Beach area and four more were found wintering in the San Diego area. A MacGillivray's Warbler in San Diego Dec. 1-23 (DP) was evidently attempting to winter locally. Ten wintering Wilson's Warblers were fewer than expected.

A ♂ Hepatic Tanager in Santa Barbara Feb. 27 (PWC) was evidently the same bird known to have spent the past 2 winters at this location, a female in Irvine Dec. 17-Jan. 15 (DRW) was the first to be found in Orange County, and a male on Pt. Loma in San Diego Mar. 24+ (MO) was undoubtedly the same bird seen Oct. 29, 1984, having spent its 2nd winter in this area. Five wintering Summer Tanagers were found along the coast and another was seen inland in Brawley Jan. 21 (JO). At least 100 wintering W. Tanagers were reported along the coast, indicating just how common this species is becoming at this time of year. Six Rose-breasted Grosbeaks along the coast were considered about average, as were four Black-headed Grosbeaks in the same area; however, a ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak at Hurley Cr. Campground at 4500 ft. in the San Jacinto Mts., Jan. 31 (BED) was most unusual. A Blue Grosbeak at Morro Bay Dec. 12-Jan. 8 (GPS) was only the 6th ever found in s. California in winter.

A Green-tailed Towhee at Newport Bay Jan. 26-Feb. 15 (EM) was the only one found along the coast. Three Large-billed Savannah Sparrows (*A. s. rostratus*), now alarmingly scarce, were at S.E.S.S., Jan. 5 (PU). Only four Swamp Sparrows were found this winter, but one was inland at California City Jan. 12-21 (MH). A Harris' Sparrow in Ventura Dec. 25+ (J & PS) and another in Fallbrook Dec. 16+ (LB) were the only ones reported. Six McCown's Longspurs, rare in California, were near Lakeview Dec. 16-Jan. 27 (GMcC). The only Lapland Longspurs found were one along the coast in Goleta Dec. 22 (PEL), two at Buena Vista L., Kern Co., Dec. 21 (SAL), two near Lakeview Feb. 23-Mar. 2 (BWK) and one to two at S.E.S.S., Dec. 1-Jan. 31 (GMcC). One Chestnut-collared Longspur, normally the most numerous longspur in s. California, near Lakeview Jan. 31 (BED) was the only one found.

ORIOLES, FINCHES — Seven Orchard Orioles were found with up to four in Goleta Dec. 27-Mar. 31 (CDB), one in Carpinteria Dec. 2-Jan. 9 (LRB), an ad. male in Pacific Beach Jan. 6 (SZ), and a female in Coronado Dec. 15-Mar. 4 (LB). Six Hooded Orioles along the coast were more than usual, and single males in Brawley Feb. 16 (REW) and in Bard Feb. 21 (BED) were inland. An imm. ♂ **Streak-backed Oriole** at the home of Richard Eppley in La Jolla Dec. 10+ (REW) was the 7th to have been found in California. Nine N. (Baltimore) Orioles were among 75 ± N. Orioles wintering along the coast, and a N. (Bullock's) Oriole in Brawley Jan. 21-Feb. 16 (JO) was the only one inland. A Scott's Oriole near Claremont Dec. 11 (JB) was the only one found away from the w. edge of the s. desert where small numbers regularly winter.

Purple Finches appeared more numerous and widespread than normal, with numbers reaching the s.e. portion of the Region, as indicated by up to 80 in Brawley throughout the winter. As well as being more numerous than usual in the s. mountains, Cassin's Finches moved into the s.e. portions of the Region as indicated by such reports as 15 at L. Hughes, Los Angeles Co., Feb. 18 (KLG), six near Parker Dam Dec. 21 (KR0), two at N.E.S.S., Feb. 16 (TW), up to 25 in Brawley Jan. 26-Mar. 2 (REW), and one in Calexico Jan. 27 (CGE). Red Crossbills remained much more numerous and widespread than usual throughout the period, possibly increasing in numbers toward the end of the period, they were found in all of the coastal counties, with the largest numbers being 25 in Goleta Feb. 13 (PEL), seven in Ventura Jan. 20 (J & PS), 40-50 in Long Beach Jan. 18+ (BED), up to seven in Fullerton Dec. 23-Mar. 3 (JLD), and three in Del Mar Jan. 20 (EC); they were found

throughout all mountain areas, with 50 in the Garner Valley of the San Jacinto Mts., Jan. 31 (BED) being one of the largest concentrations, and were also scattered about the interior lowlands as indicated by 18 in Bakersfield Jan. 27-Feb. 16 (RSa) and three in Brawley Feb. 21 (BED). Pine Siskins were noticeably more numerous and widespread than usual with exceptional numbers along the coast. A few Evening Grosbeaks were evidently caught up in the finch influx as indicated by seven in California City Dec. 31 (MH), two in Ventura Dec. 27 (JG), 13 on Mt. Palomar Dec. 12-13 (RH), and two in San Diego Feb. 13 (REW).

ADDENDA — Two reports that should have been included in the fall migration report, but which were not received in time, were of a juv. Ruff on San Nicholas I., Sept. 26 (RD), and a ♂ Hooded Warbler on the same island in late August (TM).

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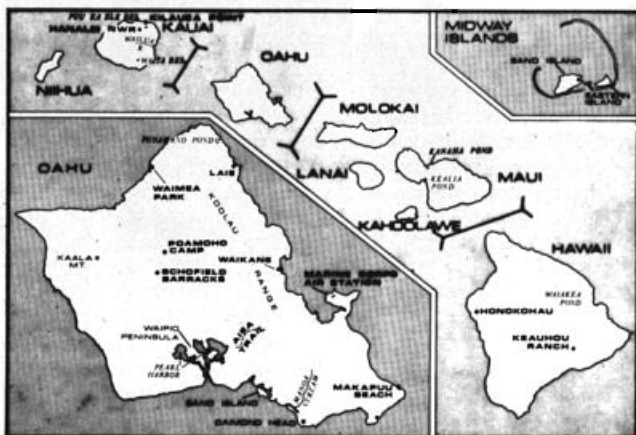
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

/Robert L. Pyle

Rainfall which finally broke the long drought last fall continued at a normal pace through the winter, even causing some brief flooding at a few localities. The Pacific high pressure center north of the islands remained stronger than normal causing unusually strong easterly trade winds through the late winter and early spring. This would not likely have brought in more shorebird migrants from the south and southwest, but might have influenced some to remain longer in Hawaii before heading on toward North America.

ABBREVIATIONS — F.F.S. = French Frigate Shoals; H. = Hawaii I.; K. = Kauai I.; M. = Maui I.; O. = Oahu I.; J.C.N.W.R. = James Campbell Nat'l Wildlife Ref. on Oahu; K.M.C.A.S. = Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station on Oahu; P.H.N.W.R. = Pearl Harbor Nat'l Wildlife Ref. on Oahu.

ALBATROSSES — The perennial banded ad. **Short-tailed Albatross** failed to return to Midway last winter or this winter after 11 consecutive winters there. However, one in subad. plumage did appear at Midway Dec. 15 this year and remained at least until Feb. 21. It, too, had been banded: one of 22 banded at the nesting island in March 1979. It will be interesting to see if this bird will return to Midway in future winters in a pattern approaching the longevity record established by its predecessor. The earlier bird also was in subad. plumage when it was first reported at Midway in its 8th winter. This year's bird came in its 6th winter.



Laysan Albatrosses returned to Kauai this winter in increased numbers despite the heavy predation by dogs reported last year. Ten active nests were progressing by the end of February, although dogs did kill four adults or subadults resulting in the death of two chicks (TT). Also, the state wildlife biologist was called to pick up "prospecting" albatrosses at various locations along the s. coast of Kauai. The birds had been cornered and were unable to get airborne or were threatened by dogs. He (TT) fears real problems in the future if increasing numbers of Laysans return to explore what may have been prehistoric nesting grounds and run afoul of man's drastic alterations.

The trend was matched on Oahu, too, as nine Laysans were first seen Feb. 5 flying in the Kahuku area where a few spent last winter (JB). This was too late for nesting, but some at least remained through month's end.

BOOBIES THROUGH WATERFOWL — A Brown Booby was seen Feb. 24 on a buoy in Kawaihae harbor on the n.w. coast of Hawaii I. (RD), where occasional reports in recent years indicate this species may now be a regular visitor to this island. A ♂ **Lesser Frigatebird** was



Subadult Short-tailed Albatross at Sand I., Midway, Hawaii, Jan. 12, 1985. Photo/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

found in a nesting colony of Great Frigatebirds at Tern I., F.F.S., Feb. 5 (BE), where a Lesser has been reported in past years. Also at Tern I., three Cattle Egrets were seen daily from Dec. 31 through the end of February (BE *et al.*).

One Brant found Feb. 14 on a pond in the Sheraton Hotel complex at the dry w. end of Molokai I. (GY) furnished an interesting locality record. A flock of 10 Koloa (Hawaiian Duck—Endangered) at a previously-unexplored farm pond in Waimanalo, O., Dec. 16 (RLP) further demonstrated successful wild breeding of this endemic duck that the state has been attempting to re-introduce to Oahu.

Several uncommon and casual ducks were found among the flocks of N. Pintails and N. Shovelers in the state this winter. Up to six Green-winged and six Blue-winged teal were found at favored wetlands on Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii. An eclipse ♂ Garganey was at Kii Pond, J.C.N.W.R., Jan. 5 (MO), and two females with a good-plumaged male were there Feb. 17 (PD). An unprecedented six **Gadwall**s (3 pr.) were reported at Kakahaia N.W.R. on Molokai Feb. 16 (GY). Two ♂ Eur. Wigeon were at Kii Pond, J.C.N.W.R., Jan. 15 (PD) and Feb. 17 (RLP). GY also found two males at Kakahaia N.W.R., Feb. 16 and, after flying to Kauai, found two more there on the Wailua R. near Kapaa the same day. Eight Am. Wigeon at Aimakapa Pond, H., throughout December and January (RD) was an unusually high number. Also wintering at Aimakapa were a Canvasback and a ♂ Ring-necked Duck (RD, MM), while another Canvasback turned up at Kii Pond, J.C.N.W.R., Jan. 15 (PD) and Feb. 17 (RLP). Up to 16 Lesser Scaup wintered at Kii Pond and six at Aimakapa Pond, with one female reported at Kanaha Pond, M., Feb. 10-14 (CK, GY).

RAPTORS AND PHEASANTS — Oahu's 1984-1985 Osprey was observed several times at Waiawa Unit, P.H.N.W.R., during the winter (PD), and another was reported at Kalihiwai Res., K., Jan. 15 (DM, *fide* TT)

S.A.

Two interesting observations of vagrant falcons on Kauai were reported this winter by separate experienced birders on short visits to Hawaii. One bird watched for 10 minutes as it soared above Waimea Canyon Dec. 28 was identified as a ♀ kestrel. It was well-described, including size and plumage differentiation from Peregrine Falcon, but unfortunately it was not seen well enough to identify it as the American or the Eurasian species (CH *et al.*). The only prior report of a kestrel in Hawaii was of a very tame and apparently injured individual found 15 years ago on a military base in Honolulu.

The other falcon was seen Dec. 16 on the opposite side of the island at Kilauea Pt. It was described as a large falcon, presumably a Peregrine, watched on and off for an hour as it harassed a nesting colony of Red-footed Boobies. It was seen twice to stoop on individual boobies, and at times it put most of the roosting birds into the air at once (Mr. & Mrs. JA). Peregrines are rare stragglers to Hawaii, but with more frequent reports in the past several years.

No one else has seen these birds, and the visiting observers have long since gone home without opportunity to compare notes. This type of circumstance has frequently plagued the avifaunal record for Hawaii, yet it seems worthy to report such observations with their limitations rather than relegate them to archival obscurity.

An Erckel's Francolin was spotted at the 700 ft. level on Makakilo Drive in the Ewa area of Oahu Dec. 31 (BJ). At least six Ring-necked Pheasants in a large field at Kailua Dec. 16 (PB, RLP) was an unusually large concentration for Oahu.

SHOREBIRDS — More unusual shorebird species were reported during this winter than we have had in recent years. Quite a few were first seen in mid-February at localities well-observed during preceding weeks, suggesting a possible influx at that time of early spring migrants from somewhere, presumably to the south. The very rare (for Hawaii) species included a **Greater Yellowlegs** at Kealia Pond, M., Feb. 16

(GY), a **Willet** at Hana, M., Dec. 26 (EM), a **Whimbrel** (American) at Amorient Aquafarm, O., Feb. 17 (PD, RLP) & 22 (SB), and a **Red-necked Phalarope** at Waipio, O., at the end of February (PD, RLP). Two Bristle-thighed Curlews reported at Keahole Pt. near Kailua-Kona, H., Feb. 24 (*fide* RD) provided an unusual out-of-season record. Two Least Sandpipers and a Baird's Sandpiper were seen through the winter at Waipio (PD); a single Pectoral and a single Sharp-tailed Sandpiper were also there Dec. 16 (MO, RLP). Another Pectoral was found at Kanaha Pond, M., Feb. 10 (RD), and a Sharp-tailed at Kealia Pond on the same island Jan. 20 (CK). Other species more expectable in winter but still not common included one to three Lesser Yellowlegs at Kealia (CK, GY), two Dunlin each at Waipio and K.M.C.A.S. on Oahu, Ruffs at Waipio and Aimakapa Pond, up to five dowitchers (at least some Long-billed by call) at Waipio through the winter and one at Kealia Pond Jan. 20 (CK), and finally a snipe of undetermined species flushed from Kii Pond Feb. 22 (PD). A Ruff up the chain at Tern I., F.F.S., Jan. 22 (BE) was especially notable although not the first for that island.

GULLS THROUGH PASSERINES — A few straggling gulls turned up at various locations in the islands this winter. One to two subad Laughing Gulls were seen at Kanaha Pond, M., regularly beginning Feb. 10 (CK, RD, GY), and one was at Ft. Kamehameha, O., Jan. 17 (JK, RLP). A Bonaparte's Gull was also at Kanaha Feb. 10 (CK, RD), and one wintered at Amorient Aquafarm, O. A gull in 2nd-winter plumage described as probably Ring-billed (possibly California) was seen near Haena, K., Dec. 15 & 20 (JA). And up the chain at Tern I., F.F.S., a Glaucous-winged Gull put in an appearance Dec. 24 (SF, *fide* BE). Two Caspian Terns were seen at Kii Pond and Amorient Aquafarm, O., Dec. 10 (JK) and Jan. 29-Feb. 17 (PB *et al.*). Two were seen also at Kealia Pond, M., Jan. 2-12 (RC) and at K.M.C.A.S., O., Feb. 22 (SB). All these could have been the same two birds.

Fourteen Rose-ringed Parakeets were watched flying about in apparent courtship ritual at the Hanapepe Valley overlook, K., Feb. 17 (GY). Despite lack of direct evidence of breeding, a flock has persisted for some years in this part of Kauai. They have been causing sufficient damage in the Valley by feeding on corn tassels that a seed corn grower recently obtained a permit to control them (TT). Three to six Com Barn-Owls were found in Kipapa Gulch, O., before dawn Feb. 3 (PD). Two Pueo, the Hawaiian race of Short-eared Owl, were seen together several times this winter at Waipio (MO, PD *et al.*). A vagrant Short-eared Owl at Tern I., F.F.S., Dec. 17-Jan. 12 (SF, *fide* BE) could have been the Hawaiian race, or possibly the Asiatic race which has been collected in winter farther out in the chain at Kure Atoll. Ten Red-billed Leiothrix, an unprecedented number for Oahu in recent years, were seen in a flock along Old Waimanalo Rd., O., Dec. 16 (PB, RLP), and five to six were squeaked up at the same locality Jan. 31 (PD). Two 'Omao (Hawaiian Thrush) and five 'I'iwi were found in one large ohia tree along Saddle Rd., H., Feb. 18; 5 days later one 'Omao, more than eight 'I'iwi and many 'Apapane were seen again in the same tree (RD).

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WEST INDIES REGION

/Robert L. Norton

Average precipitation in the Virgin Islands was -15% for December, -60% for January and +25% for February yielding a net -20% for the period. This followed on the heels of a 46% above average net for the fall season. A late-season, short-lived hurricane appeared northeast of the Antilles and proceeded southwesterly, threatening a double whammy after the devastating results of Hurricane *Klaus*. However, *Lily* swerved to the northwest and dissipated by mid to late December. In its wake were some remarkable anad and larid records, from the Bahamas to Trinidad, not usually reported here. Both groups were underreported from Bermuda this year. Wingate explained it as a result of fewer fronts from the continent. But the late-season hurricane, only the third this century, sweeping out of the tropical north Atlantic toward the Antilles, apparently deposited Bermuda's usual complement of ducks and gulls into the Bahamas and Greater Antilles. Some uncommon shorebirds were also noted from the Bahamas due to the aberrant winds.

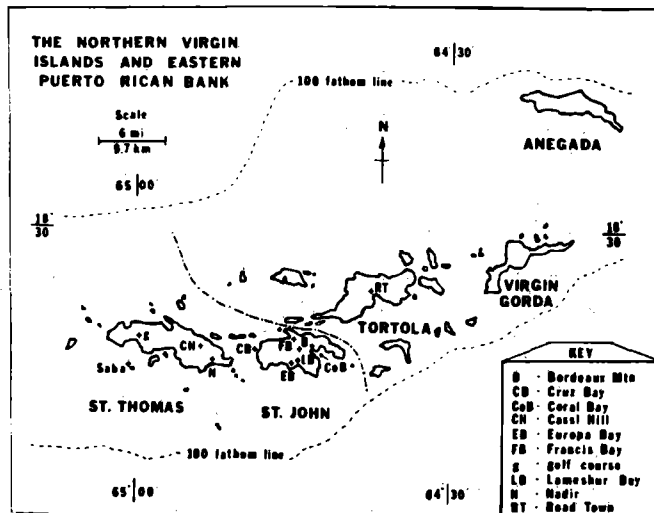
ABBREVIATIONS — Ba. = Bahamas; G.T. = Grand Turk (in the Turks & Caicos); P.R. = Puerto Rico; St. C. = St. Croix; St. T. = St. Thomas; V.I. = Virgin Islands.

GREBES THROUGH DUCKS — Pied-billed Grebes were found nesting in January and February at St. C., V.I. (FS). Audubon's Shearwaters began nesting at the Saba Cay, St. T. colony Feb. 14 (RLN). Brown Pelicans were found nesting at Buck I., St. C. on Mar. 2 (FR).

S.A.

Records of rare ardeids from the Region are continuing and becoming confusing. PWS observed two **Western Reef-Herons** (adult and immature) Jan. 31 at St. Lucia. DS reported an imm. W. Reef-Heron Feb. 18, 1984 at the same location—Vieux Fort. Recall that PWS and MBH observed two reef-herons at Barbados Feb. 20, 1984. That is three (one adult, two immatures) within days and separated by 128 km of open ocean. Now for another twist. PWS also reported three **Little Egrets** in the company of three Snowy Egrets, an imm. Little Blue Heron, and W. Reef-Heron, all Jan. 31 at Vieux Fort. The details are well described. DW also reported a possible Little Egret from Bermuda until Dec. 26 (remember Hurricane *Lily* now). By the way, Little Egrets have been recorded from Barbados in April, 1954 and Martinique in October, 1962 (Bond 1979). Hancock and Kushlan (1984) described the confusing relationship of these 2 species or races and concluded that they form a single polymorphic species. And some authorities believe Snowy and Little egrets form a superspecies (AOU 1983). So, if Snowy = Little, and Little = Reef-Heron, then Snowy = Reef-Heron?

Sladen reported the 2nd Glossy Ibis in 4 years at St. C. on Jan. 13. An impressive flight of geese and ducks was also recorded. New additions



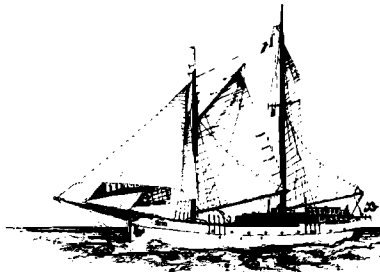
to the Region since the September influx include Snow Goose (four blue-phase) from Trinidad Dec. 30 (Rff *et al.*), representing only the 2nd occurrence there, and a Canada Goose at Bermuda (DW *et al.*) Dec 28. A N. Pintail was noted at G.T., Jan. 5-12, for an uncommon occurrence in the s. Bahamas. Northern Shovelers were reported from Abaco, Ba. (one female), Feb. 5 (DP), two Dec. 15-Jan. 12 (RSL) at G.T., and Dec. 2-Feb. 14 (female and male) from St. C. (FS). A ♀ **Greater Scaup** was carefully observed at St. C. (FS, ER, RLN) Dec 23 and various dates until Feb. 17. Bond (1979) recorded one definite 1971 record from the Ba. and some questionable reports from the Ba. and Cuba. Lesser Scaup are reported far more commonly in the Region including two at G.T. (RSL) Jan. 13, and 15 seen at Cabo Rojo, P R, Dec. 15 (CJ *et al.*). Close examination or collecting of Lesser Scaup may result in an occasional Greater. A Hooded Merganser was noted at G.T. (RSL), for one of the few records there, Dec. 12-Jan. 13. No ducks were reported from St. Lucia Jan. 27-Feb. 3 (PWS) or Feb. 17-24 (GB)

OSPREY THROUGH TERNS — Two Ospreys (*ridgwayii*) have been reported from Providenciales, Turks and Caicos, Dec. 15-Feb 26 (BA). The St. Lucia population of Broad-winged Hawks is reported to be common and widespread (PWS, GB). A Peregrine Falcon was seen at N. Caicos (RSL) Dec. 23 and one was noted at Mangrove Lagoon, St T., Feb. 1 (RLN). A small group of **Black Rails** seen in late December was reported by ASD from the Dominican Republic. (Details are expected elsewhere.) Caribbean and Am. coots were observed in February at St. C., in what FS considers to be mixed pairs, apparently based on their behavior. No nests were located, however. Mixed pairs and nests have been found at St. John in February (RLN). FS reported a Lesser Golden-Plover at St. C. in early December as his first for this month in 4 years. Sladen noted small numbers of Whimbrels in December with increasing numbers into February when 20 were seen. On Jan. 20 RSL noted 10 Whimbrels at G.T. Red Knots were also noted at St. C. (FS)

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with sustained numbers (20 in January) throughout the period, providing what FS considered the first wintering group in 4 years. RSL noted Red Knots at G.T., Jan. 13. Four **Dunlins** were noted Dec. 2 at St. C. (FS) and six were at Providenciales Dec. 18 (BA). A **Ruff** was seen at G.T., Jan. 11 (RSL) providing one of the few records for the Region in winter and perhaps the first for the Turks and Caicos.

A large complement of larids was observed at Abaco, Ba. (DP), including 33 Ring-billed and 12 Herring gulls, one **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and two **Great Black-backed Gulls**, all on Feb. 6. Ring-billed Gulls were also seen Dec. 2-Jan. 26 (one) at G.T. (RSL) and at St. C. (FS) in December (two). A Herring Gull was noted at G.T., Jan. 5-12 (RSL). Two Gull-billed Terns were seen Dec. 17 at G.T. (RSL). DP noted a **Common Tern** at Abaco, Ba., Feb. 6 and two Forster's Terns Feb. 5.

PARROTS THROUGH FINCHES — Cuban Parrots (16) were recorded at Abaco, Ba. (DP), Feb. 4. This species is resident only at Abaco and Great Inagua in the Ba., although formerly at several other islands there. Three Puerto Rican Parrots were noted by TW and KN on Feb. 25 at El Yunque, P.R. PWS reported that a St. Lucia Nightjar was not observed or confirmed there Jan. 26-Feb. 4, probably because of season or weather. TW observed or heard 10 Puerto Rican Nightjars Feb. 28 at Guanica Forest, to which it is almost entirely restricted. Two West Indian Woodpeckers were noted Feb. 4 at Abaco, Ba. (DP). La Sagra's Flycatcher is common at Abaco (DP). Formerly considered part of the Stolid Flycatcher complex in the West Indies, it now is one of 4

species and found principally in Ba., Cuba and Grand Cayman. Caribbean Martins returned to the V.I. by Feb. 1 (RLN, FS). Two Tree Swallows were noted at G.T., Dec. 25 (RSL), and three were at Hato Rey, P.R., Jan. 27-29 after a "cold spell" (TI), if that is possible in P.R. RSL noted 10 Cuban Crows at G.T., Dec. 8. PWS missed the endemic House Wren at St. Lucia; it is much reduced and highly localized. Aldridge observed a Gray-cheeked Thrush at Providenciales Dec. 1 for one of the few records from the southern Ba. PWS managed to see St. Lucia Black Finch Jan. 27 & 30.

ADDENDUM — RPP-J informs me that a record of Least Bittern seen October 1982 predated that of ARK's "first" in Lesser Antilles —AB 37: 916-917.

CORRIGENDUM — One thing much lamented is retracting an interesting observation which lacked confirmation before publication (*Casmerodius a. melanorynchos* Great Egret, AB 38: 361, which should read *Egretta rufescens*, *fide* RP). However, this change does not appreciably detract from the premise of environmental effects on ardeid dispersal.

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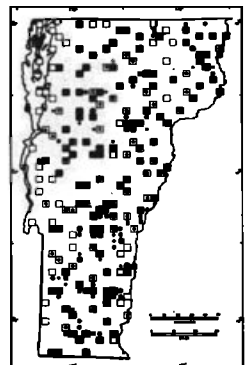
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