

# The Changing Seasons

*A great spring for birds,  
a frustrating spring for birders*

V. Paul Mackenzie and Ron D. Weir

**T**he theme common to all of the Regional Reports received from east of the Rockies was a poor spring migration for passerines. In fact, several Regional Editors were emphatic in their assessment that it was the worst songbird migration in many years. Discouraged and frustrated observers offered various explanations for the nonevents including destruction of habitat in the tropical rain forest. However, not all family groups were as thin on the ground nor did every region experience a lacklustre season. Shorebirds put on a good showing in many regions and migration in Alaska was nothing short of fantastic.

The challenge in writing this has been to weave together the patterns from each region into a continental picture and then to explain events within a limited space. From our analysis, it is clear that weather systems in April and May encouraged songbirds to continue flying rather than to ground *en masse*—just the right conditions needed for an easier migration in terms of energy for them, but a frustrating migration for observers. Unless of course, the observer had access to a radar unit. Sid Gauthreaux on Dauphin Island, off the Alabama coast, was one of the lucky ones to witness on his radar screen many migrants jetting northwards across the Gulf of Mexico while coastal birders saw very little on the ground. Farther north in Quebec, Newfoundland, and at some Great Lakes sites, weather systems did ground impressive numbers. Were weather systems responsible for the displacement of numbers of Snow, Ross' and Great White-fronted geese east of the Mississippi River, and egrets northwards? Why did so many species return on record early dates? To answer these and other questions, we examined the major weather systems that tracked across the continent during the period and prepared the following overview.

At the time of writing (August-September), Regional Reports from the Southern Atlantic Coast, Northern Pacific Coast, and Middle Pacific Coast regions were not available to us.

## The weather systems

**March 1-6** A major coast-to-coast snowstorm moved from Idaho March 2, across the Great Plains March 3, and into the Great Lakes and New York by March 6 and on into Atlantic Canada. Among early migrants swept north were a Great Egret in Ohio, Common Nighthawk in Tennessee, Purple Martin and Cliff Swallow in New Jersey and Pine Warbler in Nova Scotia. Some of these must not have survived the wintry conditions that followed. Greater White-fronted Geese were pushed east and first appeared in Pennsylvania and Ontario March 7-8. Hard on the heels of this storm was a Pacific low March 4-6 that dumped heavy snows on the Sierras.

**March 10-17** A low pressure center developed over the Great Plains March 10-11 and caused snow again from South Dakota to the Great Lakes. Heavy rains fell from Missouri through to the Ohio Valley. Strong southwest to west winds helped displace more geese and bring in early migrants. One flock of Snow Geese numbered 5000 in Illinois and unprecedented numbers of White-fronteds were in Tennessee, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Massachusetts. The Ross' Geese in Indiana constituted only the second state record. Some 10,000 Sandhill Cranes took advantage of the air circulation with this storm system to migrate north at Austin, Texas, March 13. At one Lake Erie site, 100,000 diving ducks were stopped by the storm. Some of the very early migrants drawn north were Lesser Golden-Plover, Least Sandpiper, Cliff and Barn swallows in Illinois and Iowa, and Eared Grebes in South Dakota—all on March 16. The Whip-poor-will in Vermont March 19 was a month early.

**March 24-April 2** This slow-moving storm system from the Pacific produced heavy snow in western mountains and a late March heat wave in advance of its front (32°C at Richmond, Virginia, March 29). Heavy rains fell in Texas-Oklahoma through to the Ohio Valley March 29-30, and snow resulted in Iowa and Minnesota east to New England and Atlantic Canada. The net effect was to

bring 35+ species at early or record-early dates, e.g., Snowy Plover in Utah, loon in Colorado, Baird's Sandpiper in North Dakota, Yellow-throated Warbler in Illinois, Blackpoll Warbler in Michigan, numbers of Caspian Terns in Ontario, Great Egret in upstate New York, Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Virginia, Rough-winged Swallow in Maryland, Eastern Kingbird in Massachusetts and Pectoral Sandpiper in Nova Scotia. Thousands of Snow Geese plus tens of thousands of Canadas migrated through the Northeastern Maritime Region. Spinoff from this intense storm swept 18 Ivory Gulls off the Atlantic Ocean into the harbour at St. John's, Newfoundland, April 3.

**April 4-8** Very severe weather accompanied a low over the Great Plains April 4 that moved rapidly to the Great Lakes by April 6 causing tornadoes in Tennessee and Alabama, hail in Indiana and Ohio and fierce winds up to 119 kph in New York and Ontario. Migrants rode the air currents! In North Dakota, the storm downed 450,000 Snow Geese, an impressive concentration, along with 6000 Redheads. Near Ottawa, Ontario, 40,000 Canadas and 10,000 Pintails were grounded. Up to 4800 Sandhill Cranes with nine Whooping Cranes were seen in Colorado. Three color-marked Whooping Cranes left Arkansas April 4 and stopped in Kansas April 6. Thirteen species arrived at record-early dates in Ontario and three arrived in Quebec, among which were nine Glossy Ibises well north in the Gaspé. Also early were a Caspian Tern in Wyoming, White-eyed Vireo in Illinois, Chimney Swifts and Solitary Vireos in Massachusetts and a Red-necked Phalarope in Nova Scotia.

**April 9-15** Record cold pushed southwards April 9 past the Great Lakes to cover most sites east of the Mississippi River. The arctic air lingered to about April 14 and bird movement was slowed. Hardy Lapland Longspurs winging north in North Dakota April 13 numbered 30,000! The White Wagtail in Michigan April 14 provided only the second record for the lower 48 states and the first in spring. Since the species breeds in Alaska and Greenland and returns to the Old World in autumn migration, vagrants appearing farther south in North America are more likely to do so during fall. The Michigan bird could have come south into the United States in autumn 1984, wintered successfully somewhere and was swept north again with the intense weather disturbance of April 4-9.

**April 16-28** Unique is the best way to describe the weather patterns in this period. A Hudson Bay high pressure cell moved southeast to the Atlantic seaboard by April 18 where it was to stay for another week and exert important influences on all weather and bird traffic west to the Rockies. A vast southerly flow of very warm, moist air spread northward over the eastern Great Plains, Mississippi Valley, Appalachia and eventually the Atlantic coast. The tropical air bulged over the Great Lakes to cover southern Canada and reached as far north as Hudson Bay. Vegetation responded and leaves unfolded up to two weeks early making observation of arboreal migrants more difficult. This huge "Bermuda high" stalled and blocked the eastward course of systems in the far west, thereby bringing a return to wintry conditions in areas from Arizona north to Saskatchewan.

In the southeastern states, the Bermuda high induced southeast winds for a lengthy period that extended far inland. Songbirds were propelled right over and several warbler species were carried northwest into states where they are less frequently seen. Cape Mays, Black-throated Blues and Connecticut turned up in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Arkansas. Even Black-whiskered Vireos were whisked into Alabama and Louisiana. Meanwhile, everywhere east of the Mississippi the spring migration was catalyzed by the tropical air mass surging from the south. Weather fronts were not present to impede their movements and passerines came by the millions. Southern herons appeared in Quebec, Ontario and to the Western Great Lake Regions in numbers. A White-faced Ibis was drawn into Saskatchewan April 23, providing their eighth record ever. Hawks put on the biggest spring flight ever recorded in New England. Strong raptor movement April 20-22 was detected through Appalachia, the Middlewestern Prairies, the Middle Atlantic Coast, Hudson-Delaware, and Ontario regions. Up to 100 record-early dates were reported for passerines, many early by as much as 10 days. The regional reports are filled with them.

As is usual when storm fronts are absent, only a few avian concentrations were documented. There were tens of thousands of Long-billed Dowitchers on the upper coast of the South Texas Region in mid-April. Forty Buff-breasted Sandpipers were early in Iowa. On the Atlantic coast April 25-27, loons passed Rhode Island in large numbers, included in which were 265 Red-throateds. In Maryland, 20,000 Blue Jays were winging their way north April 26, while in Arizona, the dramatic return to winter was felt by migrating Marbled Godwits, which were downed in large numbers April 26-28.

**May 1-5; 5-8** A low pressure cell from Missouri finally made its way eastward May 1-2 and brought welcome rains to the drought-stricken Atlantic coast. Its cold front passed Florida by May 5th, to produce their best grounding all season, which mainly consisted of thrushes and warblers. Thousands of warblers occurred in Massachusetts and 9000 robins were forced down in Newfoundland. Another low travelled from the midwest to the Great Lakes by May 6th, and with its cold front, helped produce the Scissor-tailed Flycatchers in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Great-tailed Grackle in Ohio and hundreds of White-throated Sparrows in Massachusetts.

**May 8-18** Double low pressure cells over the prairies, which brought rain east of the Mississippi May 12-13, were connected to another low over Texas. The entire frontal system tracked east to reach the Atlantic coast by May 18th, and caused flooding in parts of Texas. The effects on migration were dramatic with heavy bird falls in the prairies and extreme northeast. About 200 Western Grebes and 750 Red-necked Phalaropes appeared in Saskatchewan and North Dakota respectively. Immense flocks included 14,000 robins and 12,000 Savannah Sparrows grounded in Newfoundland. Observers at Long Point, Ontario, may have needed calculators to keep tallies on totals like the 100,000 Bank Swallows migrating there. This complex weather system, the type normally occurring during April, brought rarities as well. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were in Indiana, Wis-

consin and Manitoba, a Worm-eating Warbler in Nova Scotia, Swainson's Warbler in Pennsylvania, Western Tanager in Minnesota, Painted Bunting in New York, Lark Sparrows in Vermont and Quebec, and Lark Buntings in Quebec and Nova Scotia.

**May 19-22** Another low pressure trough moved across the plains to bring rains east of the Mississippi River and to intercept heavy shorebird migration. In Ontario, flocks of 1000 and 600 Whimbrels were tallied along with 2200 Ruddy Turnstones, 1000 Red Knots and 7000 Dunlin May 20-22. In North Dakota, 500 Wilson's Phalaropes were found May 20. A late migration of both Eastern and Western kingbirds was witnessed along the central coast of south Texas May 21, at the same time the Eastern Kingbirds were arriving in numbers along coastal Nova Scotia.

**Alaska** Record-cold gripped much of the western and central parts of the state during April and the record heavy snow pack over most of Alaska was maintained. The cold spring continued nearly everywhere through May. The southwest area was substantially colder. This adverse weather system over the Alaskan mainland and Bering Sea blocked or delayed movement of migrants from North America and those crossing from Siberia *via* the overland route. The weather systems passing the outer Aleutian Islands, Kamchatka Peninsula of Siberia, and Kurile Islands near Japan, are normally very different. Migrants using this flyway to enter Alaska from Asia were either early or on time during May.

### Displacements and geographical shifts

**T**he finds this spring in Alaska included 33 Old World species, some of which were seen farther east than usual in the Aleutian Islands. These displacements stand by themselves and do not fit neatly within the generalizations that can be made for the rest of North America so that (in the following) we included from Alaska only those North American species known to be displaced from south to north. The Alaska report is intriguing and exciting to read. It was of interest that two Buff-breasted Sandpipers found in Alaska near the end of May probably wintered in Asia or the South Pacific.

**Southern Species North** The egret shift was widespread with two Great Egrets to Newfoundland, many Snowies into the Dakotas and western Great Lakes' states, plus one well north in Saskatchewan. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons irrupted in numbers into Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Brunswick and Ontario. Even a Wood Stork turned up in western New York, May 14, and constituted the only extralimital report. Glossy Ibises exploded northeastward along the coast during the latter half of April coinciding with the push of tropical air of the Bermuda high. The 150 in Rhode Island, 56 in Massachusetts, 145 in Maine and 25 in Maritime Canada were extraordinary numbers. Some 13 reached eastern Quebec but only a few moved into upstate New York and farther west. Black Vultures wandered into Illinois, Quebec and even into New York City. Mississippi Kites were more common in New Jersey and the individual in Ohio provided their second-ever. A Western Kingbird was cer-

tainly off-course in Alaska, for their fourth-ever. The 13 extralimital Scissor-tailed Flycatchers reached New Jersey, Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana and Manitoba in a thrust straight up the center of the continent.

Overshooting by southern passerines was weaker than usual nearly everywhere east of the Mississippi River. Most of this group normally migrates north during April and apparently it did so under the influence of the Bermuda high. Perhaps the absence of fronts made it easier to minimize overshooting as only a few were found well north. In the east, these included a Swainson's Warbler in Pennsylvania, a Kentucky in Vermont and Quebec, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in New Brunswick, Worm-eating Warbler in Nova Scotia, Painted Bunting on Staten Island, New York, and Lark Sparrows in Vermont, Quebec and Ontario. On the plains, the three Summer Tanagers in North Dakota equal the historical total for that state. Single Sage Thrashers strayed into Saskatchewan and Minnesota. Farther west, Costa's Hummingbird made it to Oregon while two Magnificent Hummingbirds, a Dusky-capped Flycatcher and Hepatic Tanager were in Colorado. The Purple Finch in Alaska was a lesser displacement north than either the Lazuli Bunting or Cassin's Finch also found there.

**Western Species East** The displacement of several species of geese has already been noted within the weather analysis. About 13 Cinnamon Teals were also east of range, a number of which appeared with the Bermuda high in Ontario, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kentucky and the Western Great Lakes Region. The birds may have originated from the southeastern Texas area of their wintering grounds. Nine Swainson's Hawks soared into Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, New York and Ontario caught up in the ideal air circulation during April. New Mexico's third-ever Heermann's Gull strayed inland, presumably from the Gulf of California. The two or three Anna's Hummingbirds in Las Vegas were probably overshoots from the south, while the Black-chinned in coastal Louisiana was well east. Mountain Bluebirds showed up in Minnesota and Ontario, the latter individual paired with an Eastern Bluebird. Seven Western Tanagers were east to Louisiana, Florida, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Green-tailed Towhee in New Jersey may have wintered and individuals of the western race of Rufous-sided Towhee and White-crowned Sparrow somehow arrived in Nova Scotia. At least seven Lark Buntings took the wrong turn in Texas to appear well north and east in Florida, Ontario, New York, Quebec and Nova Scotia. The Chestnut-collared Longspur in Michigan furnished the state's third-ever record.

**Eastern Species West** In general the numbers of displacements to the west were fewer than average. The only reported stray Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Green, Yellow-throated, Cerulean and Mourning warblers were in southern California. The oasis for good finds there was once again the Salton Sea where at least 19 species of eastern warblers turned up. Among the few species in higher numbers were Yellow-throated Vireo in Idaho, New Mexico and southern California, Northern Parula in widespread areas as far as Oregon and Alberta and Kentuckys in

Kansas, Texas, California, Utah, Colorado and Wyoming Warblers noted in below average numbers included Tennessees, Black-and-whites, American Redstarts, Ovenbirds and Northern Waterthrushes. Only in Colorado and southern California were Blackburnian and Prothonotary warblers reported. Worm-eating Warblers were in these two regions as well as in New Mexico. Golden-winged made it to Wyoming, New Mexico and northern California while Blue-winged were seen in Colorado, New Mexico, and Big Bend National Park, Texas. Big Bend hosted several other eastern strays including the only Cape May reported. Hoodeds were widely distributed in Arizona, California, Nevada, Colorado and Saskatchewan. The only vagrant Scarlet Tanagers noted were at Big Bend and in Alberta. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in good numbers in the Mountain West and surrounding states, but fewer than usual were in New Mexico.

### First state and provincial records

Most birders delight in finding firsts and adding to lists. Some devise so many lists that the potential for a first of one type or another exists on every field trip. One can even maintain a list for each window of the house! In this issue, you will find new records for North America, regions, states, provinces, counties, for unsubstantiated and substantiated records, for first spring records, first breeding records and so on.

The Flame-colored Tanager found at Cave Creek Canyon, Arizona, added to the state, United States, and A.B.A. area lists, and then by raising two young, the pair became breeders on these lists. The tanagers comprise a huge family of over 200 species and are confined to the Western Hemisphere. They were represented in the United States by four native breeding species of the genus *Piranga*. The Flame-colored adds a fifth of this genus. In Texas, birders are convinced that Muscovy Ducks appearing on the Rio Grande were wild birds from the Mexican population. If so, and it seems probable, this is another Texas addition to the United States list.

But consider what happened in Alaska in May 1985. Four species were added to the North American avifauna in a month. Little did the Soviets realize the ornithological ramifications of selling Alaska where literally east meets west. The place where east meets west most often, bird-wise, is the outer Aleutian Islands, where all four of these additions were found. The most unlikely, the Oriental Pratincole—a new family for North America—was well northeast of its usual breeding range in China. The three new passerines were Siberian Blue Robin, Brown Flycatcher and Mugimaki Flycatcher. They have a breeding range that reaches the east coast of the Soviet Union west of the Aleutians. There remain quite a number of passerines with that breeding range that have the potential of crossing to the Aleutians. We expect further excitement in the years to come.

A number of first records were reported for other states and provinces. They are listed in the accompanying table. Some could be expected as birds already recorded in adjacent areas, but others seem surprising, such as Williamson's Sapsucker in Illinois and White Wagtail in

Michigan. All these first records, although reported here, require confirmation which may or may not validate them.

### First records for northern North America—Spring 1985

Muscovy Duck	Texas	March 4
Oriental Pratincole	Alaska	May 19
Siberian Blue Robin	Alaska	May 21
Mugimaki Flycatcher	Alaska	May 24
Brown Flycatcher	Alaska	May 25
Flame-colored Flycatcher	Arizona	April 11

### First records for states or provinces—Spring 1985

Eared Grebe	Quebec	May 3
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	Mississippi	May 8
Garganey	Texas	April 11
Common Black Hawk	California	April 13
Long-tailed Jaeger	Hawaii	May 5
Gull-billed Tern	Ontario	May 22
White-winged Tern	Quebec	May 30
Western Screech-Owl	Kansas	May 11
Acorn Woodpecker	Utah	May 8
Williamson's Sapsucker	Illinois	April 17
Stonechat*	Alaska	June 5
White Wagtail	Michigan	April 14
Yellow-throated Vireo	Idaho	May 18
Golden-winged Warbler	Wyoming	May 18
Worm-eating Warbler	New Hampshire	May 24
Kentucky Warbler	Utah	no date
Kentucky Warbler	Wyoming	May 17
Hooded Warbler	Saskatchewan	May 26
Lazuli Bunting	Alaska	June 6
Great-tailed Grackle	Idaho	May 5
Great-tailed Grackle	Ohio	May 6

\*first substantiated record.

### Trends in distribution and numbers

Sometimes comments about an increase or decrease in a species in one season appear as isolated observations that could be harbingers of its changing status, but more likely represent random fluctuations in its occurrence. As the regional reports are woven together, some consistent patterns emerge, particularly in the east. Most of these are continuations of trends already recognized. It is one of the values of *American Birds* to document these trends.

Human intervention in breeding bird biology continues to increase in an effort to partially overcome the deleterious effects mankind has had on fauna. Examples cited in the reports include nestbox programmes for ducks, owls and bluebirds, egg substitutions for cranes and release of captive-reared birds like buteos and falcons. Regional Editors have noted habitat losses. Areas mentioned are the West Indies, coastal Virginia where Anhingas are affected, Mountain West where White-faced Ibis, Common Moorhen and Burrowing Owls are in trouble and the Prairie Provinces where more Burrowing Owl habitat has gone under to the farmer's plough. At Barren Island, Maryland, natural erosion is predicted to

eradicate the colonial sites of the nesting terns. Disturbances by man during the nesting season were noted along coastal Alabama where the Corps of Engineers operated draglines in or near seabird colonies and in Wyoming where recreational pressure from RVs drastically reduced numbers of Sage Grouse at their leks. Winter mortality has reduced the population of Eastern Screech-Owls and Carolina Wrens in Appalachia. In the Middlewestern Prairies, Bachman's Sparrows are losing their last stronghold, presumably owing to habitat changes. At one Idaho site, Snowy Egret and Black-crowned Night-Heron numbers fell and DDT is suspected as the culprit.

**Grebes to Storks** — Least Grebes were easier than is usual to find in ponds along the Rio Grande in south Texas. The Western (Clark's) Grebe, which is now split from Western Grebe, was reported in small numbers from Saskatchewan and the Great Plains where the populations are mainly the dark-phase Western Grebe. Great Cormorants were in greater numbers and stayed later along the southern edge of their Atlantic Coast range, including Delaware and Virginia. Double-crested Cormorants continued to increase in many regions east of the Mississippi River, and readers ought to know of the vandalism in their breeding colony on Little Galloo Island, New York, during 1984 (see Weseloh and Struger, *Kingbird* 35 (2):98-104, 1985). Great Blue Herons are doing well in the east with new colonies in Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, while Cattle Egrets are spreading in Utah and Arizona. The Wood Stork, on the Federal Endangered List, appeared to have had some modest breeding success in Florida.

**Waterfowl** — Wetlands in the Canadian prairies were more extensive this May than in 1984, but in Alaska, coastal production of waterfowl was not expected to fare well. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were plentiful in Texas. One Wood Duck project in Maryland sheltered 252 young, while in Hawaii, the Endangered Laysan Ducks raised several broods. Cinnamon Teal invaded Saskatchewan and 15 birds appeared in the east. Eurasian Wigeons are sufficiently uncommon that most sightings are reported. About 50 birds were found, most were singles spread out in a curiously uniform pattern across the continent. Are they too few to be gregarious, and how did they develop such an isolated pattern?

**Raptors** — Black Vultures are increasing at the northern edge of their range with nesting farther north in Pennsylvania. Their range appears to be expanding and birds showed up in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Quebec. Turkey Vultures continue to do well. Increases were reported from the Northeastern Maritimes and Northern Great Plains. Above average numbers of Ospreys migrated in the Central Southern, Ontario and Northeastern Maritime regions. Osprey nesting platforms have been successful in Maryland and Ontario. The drought in Florida caused the Snail Kites to disperse from their breeding areas, but Bald Eagles seem likely to have had a good nesting season: counts included 17 in Appalachia, 19 in Indiana, 10 at Grimsby, Ontario, 20 in Nebraska, 63 in eastern Montana. Fledged birds numbered 80 in Virginia and 22 in the Arizona desert popula-

tion. The 443 Golden Eagles counted migrating through New Mexico was an encouraging number, but elsewhere their numbers were modest with 11 in Michigan, 12 in Ontario and nine in the midwest. White-tailed Eagles did not breed at Attu this year. Common Black Hawks returned to New Mexico, Utah and numerous Arizona locations and appeared for the first time in California. The reintroduction of Harris' Hawks along the lower Colorado River has begun to pay off after six years. This year for the first time two young were fledged in the wild. Guarded optimism over the future of the Peregrine Falcon is giving way to a more confident view of its fortunes as its numbers continue to increase in the east. Counts included 43 in the Northeastern Maritime, 25+ in Ontario, 17 in Michigan and 15-20 in Minnesota. A new aerie was located in Utah and the first in many years in Vermont.

**Grouse to Shorebirds** — A colony of Sage Grouse was burned out in Washington and another reduced in Wyoming. The habitat of this spectacular bird needs protection. The count of 47 Black Rails on Elliot Island in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region was the highest in years. In Idaho, 30 Whooping Cranes were hatched from eggs deposited in the nests of Sandhills as their slow recovery progresses. Piping Plover, which is already on the Endangered Species List for Canada, may soon be added to the United States list as well. People and plovers compete for the fine sand beaches and the plovers are ending up as the losers. In several regions where the species occurs, editors have flagged their ongoing low numbers and the decreased number of sites. The highest number reported was 34 at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia, April 18. Black-necked Stilts were reported in increased numbers especially in Utah and Nevada. Among the Old World waders, Curlew Sandpipers totaled 14, not all of which were confined to the Atlantic seaboard. They were found in Ohio, Florida, Texas and Alaska. Ruffs and Reeves were reported over 40 times in at least eleven regions. Inland they seem partial to sewage ponds. These Eurasian littorals seem too widespread and numerous to be all fresh explorers in the New World. Somewhere in our Arctic, do they have a rendezvous?

**Parrots to Nutcracker** — Parrots continue to attract attention in Florida and Texas. Dade County, Florida, with 14 species, must sound like an outdoor aviary. There are suspicions the Green Parakeets and Red-crowned Parrots in Texas may derive from troubled Mexican populations. Of course, urban parrots should be assumed to be derived from escapees until proven otherwise. Nine pairs of Common Barn-Owls in Massachusetts and 11 pairs of Barreds in Nova Scotia took advantage of nest boxes provided. Chuck-will's-widows seem to have retreated in the Northeastern Maritime Region, but turned up at four new sites in Illinois. The uncommon Buff-colored Nightjar was located along the heavily birded Madeira Canyon Road, Arizona. The seven colonies of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers reported near Palm Beach, Florida, furnished welcome news. Buff-breasted Flycatchers have extended into the Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona, as Cave Swallows expand their range in Texas using culverts, over-passes and even a picnic shelter. Blue Jays,

which irrupted into southern Texas last winter, lingered on to nest in some areas. The Clark's Nutcracker feeding young in North Dakota April 29 provided the first state breeding record.

**Crows to Grackles**— Fish Crows appear to be expanding in all directions: northwards in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and a first nesting record in Maine; southwards in Florida to Homestead; inland in Arkansas, Alabama, Illinois and spreading along the upper Texas coast. Ravens are also spreading in the east in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Appalachia. Nesting has occurred farther south in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Black-capped Gnatcatchers have been found in new locations in Sycamore Canyon, Arizona, and Big Bend National Park, Texas. Eastern Bluebirds appeared to be doing very well and increasing in the Hudson-Delaware, Appalachian and Quebec regions. During late April, one pair of Clay-colored Robins nested at Bentsen Rio Grande State Park, Texas. Loggerhead Shrikes were again scarce in the northeast. Alarming low numbers were reported from New England, Great Lakes and Middle Atlantic Coast areas. However, in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, some 40 adults and 17 nests were found. The Yellow-throated Warbler is expanding its range in Virginia and Pennsylvania and nesting in Michigan. Both Summer Tanager and Blue Grosbeak are expanding northwards. Great-tailed Grackles continued to move north in northwest Arkansas, Nebraska and Utah, while Bronzed Cowbirds creep east in New Mexico.

**Finches**— Several species stayed late in the lowlands of the Southern Great Plains, Mountain West, Arizona and New Mexico following last winter's irruption. Among the lingerers were Rosy and Cassin's finches, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak, along with some non-finches such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee and Clark's Nutcracker, also forced out of the mountains by food shortages. House Finches are still spreading all over their eastern range from the Maritimes and Maine west to Ontario, Michigan and Illinois, south to Iowa,

Tennessee and Alabama. Red Crossbills bred widely from Ontario and Quebec west through Great Lakes' states into the Dakotas as well as New Hampshire and Vermont. They were numerous in Iowa and Idaho and accompanied the other finches irrupting from the western mountains. In California they descended the coast almost to Mexico. White-winged also irrupted, moving in April as far south as Virginia, frequently with Red Crossbills, but in lesser numbers. North Dakota recorded its first White-winged breeding. The redpoll flight extended over the Prairies into the Great Plains, western Great Lakes states to eastern Ontario and the Northern Rocky Mountain states. Pine Siskins also irrupted and bred in the Northeastern Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, Niagara-Champlain and the Northern and Southern Great Plains regions.

### Some final comments

The following regional reports are laced with interesting and informative reading. Not always did we know how to handle some of the data as in the case of Jackdaws that were seen in Massachusetts, Ontario, Pennsylvania and St. Pierre and Miquelon. The species is omitted from our table of first records. Recently it has been admitted to the A.O.U. Checklist. The regionals contain humorous anecdotes like the Greater Roadrunner in Big Bend National Park, Texas, that saw a roadrunner's nest displayed in a window of the visitors' center. The bird, failing to gain access to the nest to try it out as it window shopped, did the next best thing. It laid an egg on the windowsill and flew away. Then there is the rail at the Florida motel and the Purple Gallinule atop a Florida bridge—not the kind of habitat on which Records Committees look favorably! But then *satis verborum*—enough of words. Read on and enjoy.

—P.O. Box 84, R. R. #1, Kingston, Ontario K7L 4V1,  
Canada (Mackenzie). 294 Elmwood Street, Kingston,  
Ontario K7M 2Y8, Canada (Weir).

---

### Abbreviations Frequently Used in Regional Reports

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

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