

The Winter Season

December 1, 1986–February 28, 1987

NORTHEASTERN MARITIME REGION

Blair Nikula

Rarely in this Region, one that spans over 10° of latitude, is there extensive uniformity in the weather through a season. This winter was an exception: it was an old-fashioned winter from one end of the Region to the other, a season that was at least as memorable for its weather as its birds. December was innocuous enough; although wet, temperatures were generally above average (+1.8°F in Boston) and only in northernmost areas did snow begin to accumulate. The tide turned in January, however, as temperatures dropped and storm after storm barreled up the coast, each dropping snow progressively farther south until by month's end even extreme southeastern coastal sections were buried under near-record levels of the white stuff. February was very dry, but below-normal temperatures kept the solid snow cover intact and fresh water frozen tight through the end of the period.

While attempts to discern the weather's effects on the wintering avifauna are, inevitably, speculative, the effect on birders was clear: snowshoveling replaced birding as the predominant weekend activity. In Newfoundland, "mountains" of snow reduced birding activity during the last one-half of the season to feeder watching.

The season was not without its avian highlights. Snowy Owls (appropriately) inundated the Region and raptors in general were conspicuous everywhere, perhaps in part owing to the effect of the deep snow in concentrating prey,



or limiting prey availability. Notable, although less impressive, incursions were staged by Northern Shrike, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Siskin, and redpolls. On the down side were virtually all seabirds, in particular those species

that have capitalized on the abundance of sand lance (*Ammodytes* sp.) over the past decade, a prey item that has undergone sharp declines recently off New England. A variety of sparrows normally comprise a significant component of the wintering landbird population from Nova Scotia southward but these ground-feeding species, which likely would have been significantly impacted by the heavy snow cover, were scarce to absent throughout the Region, long before the serious weather arrived.

A diverse array of rarities punctuated the season, particularly in the northern one-half of the Region, including: Tufted Duck, multiple(!) Purple Gallinules, Ross' Gull, Ivory Gulls, Royal Tern, Say's Phoebe, multiple Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, two Townsend's Solitaires, Harris' Sparrow, and Boat-tailed Grackle.

Timely reports were received from all areas except New Hampshire; my thanks to the many observers who sent in their reports promptly. Keep it up! Christmas Bird Count data have not been included in this summary.

ABBREVIATIONS — S.P.M. = The French islands of St. Pierre et Miquelon.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — Pacific (/Arctic) Loons, carefully described, were found in Branch, Nfld., Dec. 21 (†BMT *et al.*) and Plymouth, Mass., Jan. 20–29 (†SD *et al.*). Eared Grebes were seen at New Haven, Conn., Jan. 6 (DS *et al.*) and Guilford, Conn., Feb. 2 (NP). Horned Grebes seem to be recovering slowly from their population ebb in the late 1970s. Good numbers in Maine included a count of 260 in Acadia N.P., Jan. 18 (B. Milardo); a total of 93 reported in Nova Scotia during the period was double last year's total (LPMP); and counts of 32 and 22 at Quabbin, Mass., Dec. 28 and Jan. 15, respectively, were exceptional and late inland totals (T. Gagnon). At least 97 Red-necked Grebes in Nova Scotia were also up over last year, but otherwise the species seemed rather scarce with counts of 60 at Acadia N.P., in February (NF) and 23 at Nantucket, Mass., Dec. 28 (ML) the only reports of any note. The venerable W. Grebe returned to Reid S.P., Me., for the 10th consecutive winter and was last reported Feb. 1 (*vide* WCT).

There were no lingering shearwaters reported and N. Fulmars were virtually unrecorded as well, owing at least in part to a lack of offshore trips during the period. The only pelagic report received was from George's Bank where three fulmars Jan. 17 (RSD'E) seemed a paltry number for that date and location, and the only other sighting for the species was of "a few" from the St. Pierre-Fortune, Nfld., ferry Feb. 2 (AD). Northern Gannets failed to appear in the spectacular concentrations found in recent years; the only numbers of note were on Nantucket where up to 2100 were present during December (ML).

Double-crested Cormorants again were reported well into mid-winter; of 10+ January sightings, the northernmost birds were four in Woods Harbor, N.S., Jan. 3 and one at Yarmouth Harbour, N.S., Jan. 29 (*vide* RGG), and the maximum was 14 in Cambridge, Mass., Jan. 2 (RHS). However, no February reports were received (cf. 18 and 12 in February the last 2 years). Hardy Am. Bitterns were found at Quonochontaug, R.I., Feb. 2 (*vide* DLE) and Stratford, Conn., Feb. 27 (DV). Great Egrets lingered through Dec. 29 in Middletown, R.I. (*vide* DLE) and through Jan. 7 in E. Falmouth, Mass. (S. Wiedeman).

WATERFOWL — A Tundra Swan was in Monroe, Conn., Feb. 22 (NP) and a Greater White-fronted Goose was present through Jan. 3 in Clinton, Mass. (MLY). Six Snow Geese were in R.I., at Wakefield Dec. 11 and Tiverton Dec. 20 (*vide* DLE),

and a single bird was at Clinton, Mass., Dec. 14–27 (MLY). The largest concentrations of Canada Geese came from opposite ends of the Region: 5000+ at Chezzetcook Marsh, N.S., Jan. 17 (*vide* LPMP) and 8000+ in n.w. Connecticut during December (DR).

A total of seven Green-winged Teal and two N. Pintail in Nova Scotia during the period were the northernmost reported. A ♀ Blue-winged Teal was reported, without details, from Wells, Me., Feb. 14 (*vide* WCT). Seven Eur. Wigeon, all in s. New England (three in Massachusetts, two in Rhode Island, and two-plus in Connecticut) were fewer than normal, but 450 Am. Wigeon at Watchemoket Cove, R.I., Jan. 31 and 70 Gadwall in Newport, R.I., Feb. 28 were exceptional winter concentrations. Following several poor years, Redhead numbers seem to be rebounding in s. New England with up to 40 reported in Rhode Island and a maximum of 157 on Nantucket I. (*vide* RHS) this season. A ♀ Tufted Duck was present in Harbour Grace, Nfld., Dec. 16–Jan. 8 (BMT, DS *et al.*).

Common Eider numbers seemed low throughout the Region and even an estimate of 25,000+ off Monomoy I., Dec. 7 (BN) was not exceptional for that locale. King Eiders were scattered at their typical coastal locations from Rhode Island to Nova Scotia, but in low to average numbers. However, a total of 100+ in s.e. Newfoundland during the period was considered about 5 times the normal number. Mactavish reported that there is good evidence that hundreds of King Eiders routinely winter in remote, rarely-birded sections of n.e. Newfoundland.

Harlequin Ducks continued their recent increase at Sachuest Pt., R.I., where a maximum of 60 Dec. 27 (*vide* DLE) was a phenomenal concentration at the s. limit of the species' normal winter range. A peak of nine on Nantucket I. during the period (*vide* RHS) was also noteworthy. A single Harlequin at Fundy N.P. (*vide* DSC) established a first for the park and a rare Bay of Fundy occurrence. Estimates of 500+ Black, 800+ Surf, and 1000+ White-winged scoters in Nantucket Sound Jan. 3 (RHS) were rather typical totals from that traditional wintering location. The center of Barrow's Goldeneye abundance in the Region seems to be on Prince Edward Island, where counts of 40 at West River Dec. 14 and 30 at Cocagne Bridge Feb. 23 (BED) far exceeded any elsewhere, although at the s. edge of the Region 12 on Nantucket Jan. 4 (GWG) were also noteworthy. Inland, two Barrow's were in Northampton, Mass., where one was shot Dec. 5 and one seen Dec. 21 (*vide* SK).

RAPTORS — Small numbers of Turkey Vultures are now wintering regularly in Connecticut and Rhode Island. In the latter state, a total of 27 was reported during December, four to five in January, and eight in February, while 35 were noted at a roost in Voluntown, Conn., Feb. 15 (DLE). The northernmost vultures were singles in S. Portland, Me., Dec. 2 and Bath, Me., Mar. 1 (*vide* WCT). Bald Eagles were widely reported from both interior and coastal locations. In Jonesport, Me., large quantities of dead Atlantic herring discarded by a bait dealer attracted up to 38 eagles (as well as 10,000–15,000 gulls) during the winter (NF) and the annual eagle census in January turned up 43 birds in Massachusetts and 33 in Connecticut.

The proliferation of bird-feeders has benefited not only seed-eaters but seed-eater eaters as well: Sharp-shinned Hawks have increased substantially as winterers throughout the Region. Around St. John's, Nfld., this winter, Sharp-shinned were "the talk of the town," and the species drew comments from many other areas as well. On Cape Cod the vast majority of winter Sharp-shinned are adults—is this true throughout the Region? Northern Goshawks were well-represented also. In St. John's up to 12 could be found hunting rats at dusk at the local dump (BMT) and there were several birds seen in s.e. coastal sections of the Region where the species is normally quite rare.

Red-shouldered Hawks are rare but regular winterers in s. New England and this year seven to eight were reported (cf. 12 last year), one each in Connecticut and Rhode Island and five to six in Massachusetts. Rough-legged Hawks were found

throughout the Region, but only in Rhode Island and Massachusetts were numbers considered above average. The only Golden Eagles were two at Quabbin Res., Mass., during the annual eagle survey Jan. 17, and one in Essex, Conn., Jan. 24–Feb. 28 (NP).

Merlins, once virtually unknown as winterers in the northeast, are now routinely encountered in small numbers along the coast as far n. as Newfoundland; a Regionwide total of 25+ this season is about average by recent standards. A few wintering Peregrine Falcons are now expected also, and this year's total of 14+ Regionwide was the highest in recent history. Gyrfalcons made token, and in most cases brief, appearances from Newfoundland to Rhode Island. In Newfoundland, six or more were present in the L'Anse-aux-meadows/St. Anthony area but the species was unreported from elsewhere in the province (BMt). Farther south, single birds were seen at Grand Pre, N.S., Jan. 1 (*vide IAM*), Mary's Pt., N.B., Feb. 8 (DSC), Acadia N P, Feb. 6 (W. Frazier, *vide WCT*), Monomoy I., Dec. 7 (BN), and Sakonnet Pt., R.I., Dec. 20 and Jan. 10 (RAC, DLE).

RAILS, SHOREBIRDS — A Clapper Rail in S. Dartmouth, Mass., Dec. 20 (T. Raymond) was apparently unique this season.

S.A.

Is there a reasonable explanation for the erratic, often-suicidal wanderings undertaken by Purple Gallinules? Five individuals appeared this winter, all in January. The first two were a bird that struck a window in Halifax, N.S., Jan. 3 (*vide IAM*) and a "near-adult" picked up alive in St. John's, Nfld., Jan. 4 that later died (BMt). A 2nd influx consisted of a bird picked up alive in Cherryfield, Me., Jan. 23 (C. Richmond) that survived, an immature picked up alive in the snow at College Bridge, N.B., Jan. 24 (*vide DSC*), and a dead adult found in Lamoline, Nfld., on an unknown date in late January (*vide BMt*). A similar invasion, involving seven birds, occurred during the winter of 1978–1979 (AB 33:264). Then, as this year, there seemed to be 2 distinct impulses of birds, each immediately following the passage of very strong low-pressure systems of southerly origins. While this may explain the means by which the birds were transported to this area, it fails to answer the question of how or why they were caught up in these mid-winter storms in the first place. Where were they going at this season? Is there some genetic disorder responsible for the chronic, all-seasons vagrancy exhibited by this species? For now, let's just state that it was another "flight year" for Purple Gallinules and leave it at that!

Notably late shorebirds included an Am. Oystercatcher in Madison, Conn., Feb. 8 (*vide DV*), for the Region's first mid-winter record; a Semipalmated Plover in Kingston, R.I., Dec. 27 (*vide DLE*); a Willet in Rockland, Me., Jan. 1 (*vide WCT*); a Red Knot at Mary's Pt., N.S., in early December (DSC, *vide BED*); a Least Sandpiper carefully and closely identified in Wells, Me., Jan. 16 (fj. Lortie); single White-rumped Sandpipers in Acoaxet, Mass., Dec. 6 (WRP) and Harbour Grace, Nfld., Dec. 17 (*vide BMt*); a Pectoral Sandpiper in "weakened condition" at Lower West Pubnico, N.S., Dec. 6–8 (*vide FS*); two Long-billed Dowitchers in Hyannisport, Mass., in early December, one of which remained through Jan. 4 (SC *et al.*); and a dowitcher sp. in Weekapaug, R.I., Jan. 29 (*vide DLE*). A total of six Killdeer in Rhode Island during January had, not surprisingly, dwindled to one vigorous individual in February (*vide DLE*). A Ruddy Turnstone in Charlottetown Harbor, P.E.I., through Dec. 27 was said to furnish a first winter record for the province and to be attributable to the hot water outflow from a power plant (BED).

Seventy-five Sanderlings at The Hawk, N.S., Dec. 28 (*vide FS*) provided a good count at the n. edge of the species' winter range. Most unusual, although not unprecedented at this sea-

son, was a Red Phalarope in Winthrop, Mass., Jan. 16 (SD)

Single jaegers at Pt. Judith, R.I., Dec. 3 & 9 were identified as Pomarine and Parasitic, respectively (*vide DLE*).

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS — No Laughing Gulls were reported, and the only Little Gulls were two in Maine in early December, and January reports of two in Rhode Island and singles in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Numbers of Com Black-headed Gulls were average to somewhat below; a Regionwide total of 146+ included a below-normal 70 or so at the traditional Newfoundland sites (BMt). An ad. Mew Gull wintered again in St. John's, Nfld. (BMt), an adult was at Bellevue Beach, Nfld., Dec. 30 (BMt), and a bird of unspecified age was in Dartmouth, N.S., Feb. 16 (FLL). The only Thayer's Gulls for which details were received were a first-winter bird on Nantucket Jan. 1–4 (ML *et al.*) and another first-winter bird at Jonesport, Me., Feb. 17 (NF). Large concentrations of Iceland Gulls were again noted on the w. coast of Newfoundland with 6000 at Corner Brook Dec. 27 and 5000 at Parson's Pond Dec. 29 (BM), but farther s. in the Region numbers were rather low. Single Lesser Black-backed Gulls, all adults, were reported from 7 locations in Massachusetts. The only others were in Newfoundland where adults were in St. John's through the period (BMt) and Rocky Harbour Dec. 13–31 and Jan. 27; the bird on the latter date was thought to be of the nominate race, *L. f. fuscus* (BM).

Black-legged Kittiwakes, like most fish-eaters, were generally found in numbers far below those of recent years. Although thousands were present off the e. shore of Cape Cod in early-mid December, they disappeared soon thereafter and were virtually absent the remainder of the season, the one exception being a count of 500 in Provincetown, Mass., Jan. 18 (WRP) Offshore, 300+ kittiwakes were estimated on George's Bank Jan. 16 (RSD'E). Some birds were already back on their nesting cliffs at Cape Miquelon, S.P.M., Feb. 22 (AD). A **Ross' Gull**, apparently in first-winter plumage, was seen by several observers at Canso, N.S., Dec. 1–4 (D. Codling *et al.*) but was missed by many others. An Ivory Gull attracted a crowd to Monhegan I., Me., from late December into February (*vide WCT*) and another made a very brief appearance in Portsmouth, N.H., in January. In Newfoundland, Ivory Gulls were reported only from L'Anse-aux-meadows: one Dec. 13, 19 in late December, and 14 Jan. 12 (D. Anderson, *vide BMt*), all seen from the observer's kitchen window(!) during NE gales.

Perhaps the most remarkable record of the winter was of an exhausted, banded **Royal Tern** picked up on the roadside in Middletown, R.I., Jan. 27, following the passage of a strong low pressure system. The bird later expired and was taken to the Norman Bird Sanctuary (*vide DLE*). This apparently was the first winter record for the species in the Region.

Alcids were reported mostly in ones and twos with a very few exceptions. A significant movement of Dovekies was detected on the n.w. corner of St. Pierre Dec. 17, when 5-minute counts of 138 and 150 birds were made; however, no estimate of the total number of birds involved was offered (RE, AD). Twenty-five Dovekies were on Brown's Bank Jan. 15 (RSD'E). Counts of 100+ Thick-billed Murres on Brier I., N.S., Dec. 23 (ELM) and 125 Razorbills in Provincetown, Mass., Jan. 18 (WRP) were the only concentrations noted for those species.

DOVES THROUGH OWLS — Good numbers of Mourning Doves were present in New Brunswick, while in Nova Scotia the species generated mixed impressions. Eleven Monk Parakeets were counted at the colony in Warwick, R.I., Jan. 14 (*vide DLE*).

The Regional stronghold for Com. Barn-Owl is on Martha's Vineyard, where a nest box program undertaken by the Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary over the last few years has led to a substantial increase in the island's population. However, this winter's heavy snows apparently took their toll of the species, as at least eight dead or dying owls were brought in to the sanctuary (*vide R. Prescott*).

Snowy Owls staged one of their biggest invasions in many years. It is impossible even to guess the number of individuals involved, for in those locations where they were most numerous, numbers seemed to fluctuate considerably throughout the season. Away from the concentration points, single birds would show up only to disappear a few days later—there were very few “stake-outs”. The most detailed picture came from Logan Airport in Boston, an area that annually seems to host the largest numbers of Snowies in the Region, where Norm Smith has been banding the species for 6 years. From late November through early April he banded 43 individuals, more than the last 5 years combined, and saw several others. Curiously, virtually all of the birds during the first one-half of the winter were immatures, whereas a number of adults passed through from late February on. In Newfoundland, scores of Snowies were present during December but they had largely disappeared by late February, perhaps because the heavy snow cover made their prey scarce or unavailable. The impression one gets is of a highly mobile population of birds continuously drifting S, immatures first, followed by the more northerly wintering adults (see Kerlinger and Lein, 1986, *Ornis Scan.* 17:1-7) toward the end of the period.

Clearly, the factors that determine incursions of Snowy Owls are unrelated to those determining the movements of other n. owls, as the other species were all but absent from the Region this winter. The only N. Hawk-Owls were an obliging individual in Salisbury, N.B., from mid-December through early February (v.o., *fide* DSC) and one reported without details from Atkinson, Me., Jan. 1 (*fide* WCT). No convincing reports of Great Gray Owls were received, although a bird in St. Croix Cove, N.S., Dec. 8 was thought to have been correctly identified as this species (*fide* IAM). A bird “back for the 3rd winter” in Dover, Me. (*fide* WCT) is quite remarkable.

Short-eared Owls were again widely reported in coastal areas from Nova Scotia to Rhode Island, and one in Portugal Cove South, Nfld., Dec. 17 (BMt) furnished a very rare winter occurrence in that province. A total of 12 dead or dying small owls in Newfoundland during the season included four Boreals, two N. Saw-whets, and six unidentified, although most of the latter were identified, by non-birders, as Boreals also (*fide* BMt). A Boreal Owl photographed at Little Deer I., Me., Jan. 18 (L. & B. Billings) was the only one reported s. of Newfoundland. Northern Saw-whet Owls were well reported throughout the Region. On Grand Manan I., five were heard in 15 owling stops Dec. 29 (BED), and up to 10 dead birds were recovered in Maine, primarily late in the period.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH KINGLETS — For the 2nd consecutive winter only one Red-headed Woodpecker was reported, a bird in Connecticut during December. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, on the other hand, continued in good numbers in s. New England, and single birds throughout the period in Machias, Me. (NF), and Halifax, N.S. (*fide* IAM), were among the northernmost ever in the Region. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, now rare but regular winterers in s.w. New England, were found in w. Massachusetts (one), Rhode Island (two), and Connecticut (20+). Both Black-backed and Three-toed woodpeckers apparently stayed home this winter, although several of the latter in New Brunswick were considered more than average (DSC).

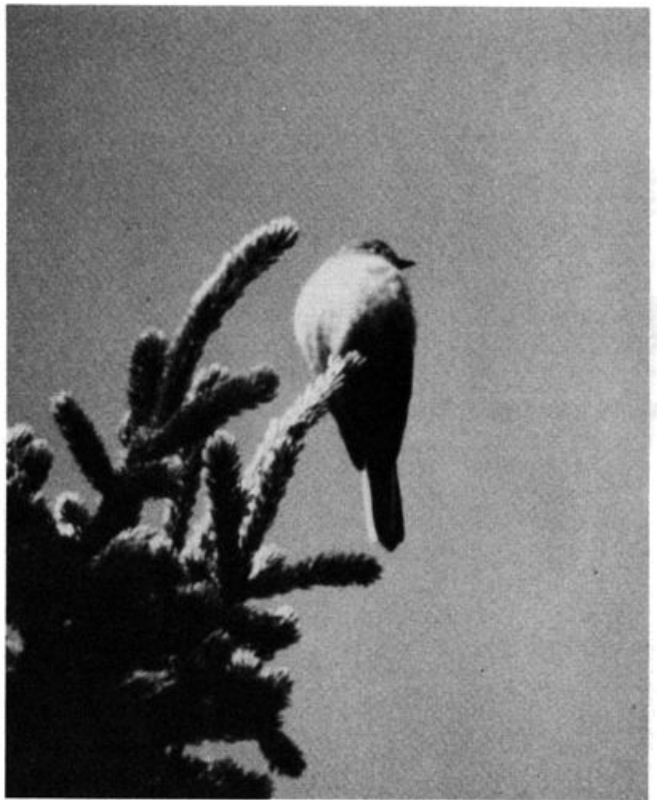
Early winter flycatchers usually consist of an occasional lingering E. Phoebe or W. Kingbird, both of which were lacking this year. However, they were replaced by two rarer species, both most unusual at this season. A **Say's Phoebe** was present in Economy, N.S., Dec. 28–Jan. 9 (SIT et al., *fide* BED) for a 6th provincial record. Four **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** were found,

all holdovers from November: one on Nantucket I. through Dec. 7 (ML), two in Bangor, Me., Dec. 5, one of which remained through Dec. 13 (*fide* WCT), and one on Grand Manan I. through Dec. 5, where two had been present in the latter one-half of November (BED).

Common Ravens continued to increase in s.w. New England; up to 27/day were found in n.w. Connecticut (DR) and a seasonal total of 61+ in w. Massachusetts (SK) was the highest yet in that area. The Eur. Jackdaw was still present on Nantucket Dec. 8 (F. Bouchard). In what was decidedly not a flight year, single Boreal Chickadees in Killingsworth, Conn., Feb. 2 (NP) and Windsor, Mass., Dec. 7–Feb. 28 (H. Allen), and two in Oakham, Mass., in late January (*fide* RAF), were noteworthy. Small numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were scattered throughout the Region.

Carolina Wrens were in near-record numbers in s. New England, the most robust of which visited a feeder in York Harbor, Me., into February (B. Grace, ph.). Historically, this species has been decimated by winters of heavy, persistent snow cover, so it will be interesting to see how the population has fared. Very few lingering Winter Wrens or Marsh Wrens were found, although two of the former species were noted in Agawam, Mass., on the late date of Feb. 1 (*fide* SK). Golden-crowned Kinglets were present in good, although unexceptional, numbers throughout most of the Region.

THRUSHES THROUGH SHRIKES — Single Varied Thrushes were present throughout the period at Mactaquac, N.B. (*fide* DSC), from Dec. 6 through the period at Port Clyde, Me. (*fide* WCT), Jan. 24–Mar. 2 in Dedham, Mass. (*fide* RAF), and Jan. 26–28 in Tewksbury, Mass. (*fide* RAF). Last year's remarkable turdid flight (Eurasian and American) in Newfoundland failed to repeat itself; indeed, Am. Robins were nearly absent in that province this season (BMt) and were in short supply elsewhere in the Region as well. A **Townsend's Solitaire** was in Blauche, N.S., Jan. 10 (*fide* JSC), and another in Port Clyde, Me., on unspecified dates in January (*fide* WCT).



Townsend's Solitaire at Port Clyde, Me., Feb. 2, 1987. Photo/Christopher Lewey.

For some reason, wintering (or at least lingering) Water Pipits are more regular in Nova Scotia than elsewhere. This year, four were in Wolfville Dec. 10, and ten at a traditional site in Lower West Pubnico Dec. 15 had dwindled to one by Feb. 17 (fide JSC). Elsewhere, single pipits were noted on St. Pierre Dec. 24 (AD) and at Westport, Mass., Dec. 6 (WRP), and a total of four was in Rhode Island during December (fide DLE).

It was another big year for Bohemian Waxwings. Around St. John's, Nfld., small numbers were present until early February when an influx, involving several flocks of 40–80 birds each, occurred (BMT). Large numbers were found throughout Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, although in the latter province, where counts of up to 200 birds were reported, the species was thought to have been less numerous than last year (JSC). Bohemians were also widely recorded throughout Maine with up to 700+ estimated in the Bangor area, the traditional nucleus of the species' wintering range in the northeast. Southernmost records were of a flock of seven birds on Cape Cod at Truro Feb. 28 (SC et al.), one in Concord, Mass., Dec. 9 (R. Walton), and a total of 27+ in w. Massachusetts, mostly in February (fide SK). Cedar Waxwing numbers during the winter typically correlate strongly with robin numbers and this season was no exception: they were generally few and far between and were vastly outnumbered by Bohemians from Maine northward.

Northern Shrikes appeared in good numbers, particularly from w. Massachusetts northward (e.g. 26+ reports in Nova Scotia, 41 in Maine, and 18 in w. Massachusetts), while more modest numbers were scattered across s. New England. A Loggerhead Shrike was a very rare find at Fresh Pond, R.I., Dec. 15 (fide DLE).

WARBLERS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — November's chill must have driven most lingering warblers S for, despite the mild conditions in December, very few of this family were found. Four Orange-crowned Warblers in December and three in January were all in Massachusetts. Single Nashville Warblers were in Nahant, Mass., Dec. 6–14 (J. Cumming et al.) and St. John's, Nfld., Dec. 2 (the only warbler in that province during the period—BMT), and a Black-throated Blue Warbler was an unusual find in Lincoln, Mass., Dec. 11 (H. Roddis). Yellow-rumped Warblers were scarcer than they have been in many, many years, a paltry seasonal total of five in Nova Scotia being representative. The northernmost Pine Warblers were two in Fredericton, N.B., through Jan. 31 (DSC) and a single in Halifax, N.S., Dec. 14 (DAC). The most remarkable warbler of the season was an Ovenbird, watched for 15 minutes in Halifax, N.S., Jan. 27 (P. Duval, fide DAC). Very late, and misguided, were two Yellow-breasted Chats reportedly present at Sullivan's Pond, N.S., through at least Jan. 21 (fide DAC), while in Massachusetts, one was found alive in a snowbank in Boston Jan. 19 (B. Zarembo) and one struck a window on Nantucket I., Jan. 20 (L. Loring).

Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported, without details, from Gaspereau, N.S., Feb. 7 and Cherry Hill, N.S., Feb. 10 (fide DAC), and an Indigo Bunting lingered on Grand Manan I. through Dec. 4 (fide BED). The only Dickcissels were found in Dartmouth, N.S., Dec. 4 (fide DAC) and throughout the period in Orleans, Mass. (M. O'Connor et al.).

Following a dismal fall migration, it was not surprising that wintering sparrows were remarkably scarce. The northernmost Chipping Sparrows were in Nova Scotia where there were 5 reports totalling six birds, mostly in December but one that survived at a feeder through Feb. 21 (fide DAC). Vesper Sparrows were again present in Rhode Island where five were found in December, with four still present at Matunuck Jan. 3, and three at Card Pond Feb. 21 (fide DLE). A Lark Sparrow in Westport, Conn., Dec. 18–Jan. 14 (T. Rochovanski) was unique this season. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow photographed at The Hawk, N.S., Jan. 18 appeared to be of the bright midwestern race, *nelsoni* (IAM), a race that seems to be a rare but regular migrant in the northeast.

A Lincoln's Sparrow found in Montague, Mass., Dec. 28 (M. Fairbrother, fide SK) was reported to have survived the winter, although no details were received. Only three Swamp Sparrows in Nova Scotia was a very low total and indicative of that species' paucity throughout the Region. White-throated Sparrows were also conspicuously scarce almost everywhere. White-crowned Sparrows were in Seabright, N.S., in mid-February (fide DAC) and in 4 locations in w. Massachusetts (fide SK). The rarest of this family was the **Harris' Sparrow** on Nantucket I., present from November through the period



Adult Harris' Sparrow on Nantucket I., Mass., December 1986. Photo/Marcia Litchfield.

(ML et al.). Dark-eyed Juncos, normally among the most common of this family during the winter, were perhaps the most striking in their scarcity and were nearly absent from some areas. An "Oregon" Junco was noted in N. Kinston, R.I., Jan. 7–10 (fide DLE).

The Grand Pré area of Nova Scotia had 250 Lapland Longspurs Feb. 7 and up to 1500 Snow Buntings during the same period (fide DAC). Above-average concentrations of Snow Buntings were reported elsewhere as well, particularly in Maine and New Brunswick, and at feeders, perhaps a result of the heavy snows concentrating the birds.

Among the more optimistic E. Meadowlarks were singles found on Grand Manan I., Dec. 29, thought to provide a first winter record for the island (fide BED), at Conrad's Beach, N.S., through early January, and one at a feeder in W. Clifford, N.S., Jan. 22–26 that met its demise in the talons of a Sharp-shinned Hawk (fide DAC). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported from Agawam, Mass., Jan. 17–Feb. 20 (fide SK), and an unspecified location in Connecticut, Feb. 25 (NP). Lingering Rusty Blackbirds included 36+ in Marshfield, Mass., Dec. 19 (J. Hassett), 17 in Sunderland, Mass., Dec. 21 (A. Richards), two in New Hartford, Conn., Dec. 21 & 28 (DR), and six in Clyde River, N.S., Jan. 30 (fide DAC). Boat-tailed Grackles maintained a presence in the Region with two in West Haven, Conn., Jan. 1 (NP). The northernmost N. Orioles were in Nova Scotia at Greenwich, Dec. 10–Jan. 5+, Halifax Dec. 21–Jan. 13, Dartmouth through Jan. 18, and Glace Bay Jan. 16–21 (fide DAC).

FINCHES — Pine Grosbeaks were scattered throughout the Region as far s. as Massachusetts, but only in Maine were they said to have been numerous (WCT). Once again Purple Finches were very scarce everywhere. Single House Finches in St. John and Moncton, N.B., during December were the easternmost yet in the province (BED). Both crossbills were generally few and far between, although a slight influx of Red Crossbills was detected in s. New England during the latter one-half of the season.

In most areas, Com. Redpolls were the most common finches throughout the period. Although numbers were unexceptional in Newfoundland, both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia reported them as numerous with a pronounced increase in late January. In Roque Bluffs, Me., Dec. 3, a remarkable 2000 redpolls were estimated passing in a 45-minute period (fide WCT). Farther s., they were "superabundant" in n. Connecticut (DR), but along the s. coast of New England only small scattered flocks were noted. Hoary Redpolls were widely reported—and, it is hoped, all carefully identified. A total of 16+ individuals was distributed among Newfoundland (two), Nova Scotia (four), New Brunswick (one), Maine (five), and Massachusetts (five-plus), and all but three were after mid-January.

Pine Siskins were found everywhere but in highly variable numbers. They were scarce to absent in Newfoundland but numerous during December and early January from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to n. Connecticut. Curiously, these areas all reported a decline in siskin numbers apparently coin-

cident with an influx of redpolls in late January, and in Maine siskins were most numerous inland while redpolls were found primarily along the coast (WCT), the suggestion being that redpolls were perhaps out-competing siskins. A siskin in the cafeteria of the ferry "Bluenose" several miles off the coast of Nova Scotia Jan. 6 (fide DAC) presumably failed to find thistle on the menu. Although Am. Goldfinches drew few comments, their numbers seemed generally low. Evening Grosbeaks were scattered throughout the Region but it was decidedly an off year for the species.

ADDENDUM — A Com. Barn-Owl was present in Aylesford, N.S., from sometime in September to Nov. 1, 1986 (fide IAM), providing a 6th provincial record.

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QUEBEC REGION

Michel Gosselin, Richard Yank, and Yves Aubry

Following six consecutive months of cold weather, above-normal temperatures returned to the Region during December and January. Only northern Quebec and the Gulf of St. Lawrence continued to record below-normal readings. February was also slightly warmer than the mean, with the exception of extreme southern Quebec. Precipitation was below average in almost all areas this winter.

GREBES THROUGH WATERFOWL — A Pied-billed Grebe seen at Victoriaville Feb. 22+ (fide MBt) was probably a very early migrant, while single Red-necked Grebes at Hull Jan. 6 (BD) and I. des Soeurs Jan. 18 (PBa) were unusually late. A number of Great Blue Herons lingered in s. Quebec; lone birds remained at Campbell's-Bay (TB), Senneville (fide PBa), Sherbrooke (GGr et al.), Trois-Rivières (fide YA), Beauport (SB), Orsainville, and Stoneham (JT) Dec. 27–Jan. 8. The relatively mild temperatures also led to a number of waterfowl sightings notable for their extreme dates. A flock of 30± Snow Geese flew over Sainte-Foy on the early date of Feb. 21 (SC). Outstanding Wood Duck sightings consisted of a female at Dégelis Jan. 2 (JPL), a male at Squatec Feb. 21 (DR, GGe), and a male that wintered on the Châteauguay R. (PBa). Two Mallards wintered at Dégelis (fide DR), a rare occurrence in the Lower St. Lawrence, and a N. Shoveler was late at Châteauguay Dec. 13 (FH). A ♀ Ring-necked Duck off I. Perrot provided the first overwintering record for the province, and also unusual was a Lesser Scaup at the same site until Jan. 24 (PBa). The Gulf of St. Lawrence supports important winter populations of several sea ducks, as illustrated by the 10,000± Com. Eiders and 150± King Eiders counted off I. à la Chasse, Mingan Is., Jan. 10 & 15 respectively (MGU). An imm. Harlequin Duck was present at LaSalle Feb. 1–Mar. 5 (PPe, PBa, m.ob.)—the first in the Montreal area since 1978—and a 2nd bird (ø) showed up at the same location Feb. 19 (FH). Impressive numbers of Barrow's Goldeneyes frequented the St. Lawrence Estuary:



450± were off Baie-des Rochers Dec. 7 (JMC) and 600± remained all winter at Baie-Comeau (fide GCy). Also unusual were single ♂ Hooded Mergansers at the latter site Dec. 6–Jan. 4 (GCy) and at Dégelis throughout the period (fide DR), and three ♂ Ruddy Ducks at Saint-Jean Dec. 7 (PBa).

VULTURES THROUGH ALCIDS — A Turkey Vulture wandered to Barachois Dec. 5 (FA, fide PPO). Approximately 2 dozen Bald Eagle sightings were submitted this season; half of these came from the N. Shore, and may indicate more accurately the size of the wintering population now that there is better coverage of that area. Exceptional winter Accipiter reports included an ad. Sharp-shinned Hawk at Rimouski Jan. 17 (MGo), and ad. ♀ Cooper's Hawks studied at a Chicoutimi feeder Dec. 4 (MBu), Victoriaville Jan. 10 (BB, MM et al.), and Sherbrooke Feb. 7 (FS). Noteworthy were five Red-tailed Hawks

at Chicoutimi until Jan. 30 (*fide* CC), as no mid-winter records previously existed for this species in the Saguenay. Thirteen Gyrfalcons were reported this season, the best showing in several years for this raptor.

Two Gray Partridges were beyond the e. limit of their known range at Saint-Louis-de-Kamouraska Feb. 8 (JPO, ML), and Wild Turkeys continued to be found in the vicinity of Hemmingford, where 20± were encountered Jan. 18 (MGr, *fide* PBa), while a lone male spent the winter near Huntingdon (GCa, *fide* PBa). A Com. Moorhen survived the winter at a waterfowl feeding station in Léry (AL, m.ob.)—an unprecedented event for the province. Less surprising were the one to five Purple Sandpipers found on the Mingan Is., Dec. 22–Feb. 20 (MGU), and a Com. Snipe that again overwintered at Beauport (CV).

Single Com. Black-headed Gulls, rare but regular in w. Quebec, turned up at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Dec. 13 (RY) and Aylmer Dec. 20 and Jan. 2 (IJ, JD), while an ad. **Mew Gull** was described at Beauharnois Dec. 7 (PPE) to provide Quebec's 6th record. Notable was a Ring-billed Gull that was seen at L'Isle-Verte during the first week of February (JPO, ML), as past wintering records were all from the Montreal area. The first-winter Thayer's Gull previously reported at Rimouski in November was sighted again Feb. 3 (GGe, DR), an adult seen at Baie-Comeau Feb. 8 (SM, GCy, AG) may have been the same bird found at nearby Hauterive in November, and another adult was identified at Beauharnois Jan. 17 (BB, MM).



First-winter Thayer's Gull at Rimouski, Que., December 1986. Photo/G. Gendron.

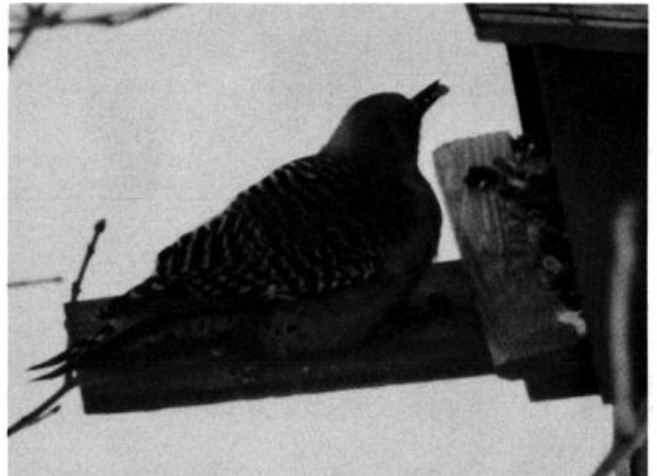
S.A.

The 1986 edition (see page 336 this issue) of *The Birds of Canada* (Godfrey, Nat. Mus. Can.) is the first among the recent textbooks to consider Thayer's Gull as conspecific with Iceland Gull—giving in to the idea that the highly variable Kumlien's Gull is but a hybrid swarm between the two. The situation is far from being fully understood, however, and for field purposes the three taxa (Thayer's, Kumlien's, and Iceland) remain useful labels. Their usefulness can only stem from the care that goes into correct field identification. Knowing the exact distribution pattern of the phenotypes is essential to understanding the nature and current evolution of the relationship involved. The attention devoted to Thayer's Gull in recent years needs to be maintained, and it would be worthwhile to pay similar attention to the presence of nominate Iceland Gull in our Regions. Iceland Gull is a relatively sedentary Greenland form, while Thayer's Gull, a larger, darker bird, seems better adapted to long-distance migrations (and the bleaching effect of California beaches). Kumlien's Gull, being intermediate in all aspects, is a medium-range migrant.

Magog was visited by two Lesser Black-backed Gulls: a 3rd-year bird Nov. 30 and an adult Dec. 7 (PBo). Record late by 8 days was a Black-legged Kittiwake at Pointe-au-Père Jan. 10 (GGe, DR), but truly astonishing were the 2500± tallied there

the previous day. Crossings aboard the Matane ferry produced 30± Dovekies and at least three Thick-billed Murres Dec. 6–7 (ET, JPO et al.), and a displaced Razorbill was a surprising find off Dorval, Montreal I., Feb. 1–2 (BB, MM), providing the first February record for the Region.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Twelve Mourning Doves successfully overwintered at a Rimouski feeder (RP), while substantial numbers were again present in s. Quebec this winter. Reports from the N. Shore suggested a local movement of Great Horned Owls, which may correlate with low rodent populations. In addition to four birds found injured or dead, one chased a cat in Forestville and another was shot after having attacked two residents of Franquelin (*fide* GCy). Snowy Owls wintered across s. Quebec in above-average numbers, again suggesting a shortage of prey farther north. Other owls found s. of their breeding range included N. Hawk-Owls at Rigaud (RS, WG), Les Cèdres (JLC), Aylmer (JD), and Jonquière (NB et al.), a Great Gray Owl at Aylmer Jan. 17 (DSH, JLM), and Boreal Owls at I. des Soeurs (FH), Matane (LR), La Malbaie (JMC, LM), and Forestville (JFi). A Belted Kingfisher at Magog Feb. 7 (ISP, EC, GD) furnished a rare mid-winter record. Adult Red-headed Woodpeckers were found at Varannes Dec. 21 (JFa) and Cap Tourmente Feb. 19+ (*fide* SL), while a ♂ Red-bellied Woodpecker wintered at L. Saint-Joseph, Portneuf Co. (DB, m.ob.). The Red-bellied Woodpeckers recorded last fall at Buckingham (MD) and Chicoutimi (RI) apparently wintered with success.



Female Red-bellied Woodpecker at its source of support at Chicoutimi, Que., February 1987. Photo/C. Couture-Imbeau.

WRENS THROUGH FINCHES — A Carolina Wren spent the season at Aylmer (HK), adding to the numerous sightings of last fall. Quebec's 11th **Townsend's Solitaire** ventured to Rimouski Jan. 7 (RP). The Gaspé Peninsula was the only area to report Am. Robins in good numbers (*fide* LD), and worthy of mention were single N. Mockingbirds at Rimouski until Jan. 24 (DR, GGe) and Chicoutimi Jan. 17–30 (RD, CT et al.). The only warbler to be reported this season was an imm. Yellow-rumped Warbler at Rimouski Jan. 1–5 (DR, GGe). Extralimital emberizines included a ♂ N. Cardinal that successfully wintered at Deschambeault (*fide* PC), ♂ Rufous-sided Towhees of the e. race at Caplan Nov. 11–13 (LP) and Baie-Comeau until Jan. 25 (LG, GCy), and, finally, a Field Sparrow that frequented a feeder in Rivière-du-Loup until Jan. 5 (YT). An imm. Sharp-tailed Sparrow was present at Rimouski until Dec. 25 (GGe), shattering the previous late departure record by more than 2 months. An ad. White-throated Sparrow overwintered at Saint-Narcisse-de-Rimouski (RB).

Among wintering blackbirds were single Red-winged Blackbirds at Caplan Dec. 20–Feb. 17 (LP), Rouyn (JL), and Sainte-Blandine (*fide* DR). Vagrant Yellow-headed Blackbirds again

appeared at Saint-Etienne-de Beauharnois with a male there Dec. 1 (GM) and a female Dec 12–Jan 11 (PBA, m. ob.). In addition, a pair was seen at nearby Léry with the male successfully wintering (AL). Quebec's first substantiated record of **Brewer's Blackbird** was finally provided by a female that came to a Victoriaville feeder Dec. 28–Mar. 17 (JP, m. ob., ph.). Less remarkably, a total of eight Com. Grackles overwintered in the Rimouski area (*fide* DR) and at least one at Rouyn (JL). A ♀ N. Oriole at Montreal Dec. 25–Jan. 15 (KT, ET) was exceptional, as few January records exist for the Region.

Feeders sustained pairs of House Finches in Quebec City (BA, m. ob.) and Rivière-du-Loup (YT) throughout the season, at the n. edge of the species' range. The n. finch invasion was essentially a repeat of last winter. Pine Grosbeaks arrived in good numbers, but Purple Finches were almost absent. Red Crossbills were reported more often than White-winged, and Com. Redpolls were again numerous. Pine Siskins and Am. Goldfinches were abundant in s. Quebec, while Evening Grosbeaks made a poor showing.

S.A.

In a series of recent papers, Dickerman (*Kingbird* 36: 73–78, 127–134, *American Birds* this issue, page 188) has pointed out that the nesting Red Crossbills of the Northeast belong to clearly different subspecies: one group of subspecies (*neogaea* and *percna*) has females that are grayer, especially on the throat, while in the small-billed subspecies *minor*, females are yellow-green all over. Stray birds of other subspecies could also occur, but seem to be very rare. It must be noted that three full species of "red" crossbills are now recognized in Europe (*curvirostra*, *scotica*, and *pytyopsittacus*). Although it is much too soon to advocate full species status for some of the North American "subspecies", it would be useful if observers could differentiate between them in their reports (securing road-killed specimens is an excellent way to do this). As far as specimen evidence is concerned, the two forms seem to be widely distributed in s. Quebec, but much remains to be learned regarding their behavior and ecology. This is an area where *American Birds* can clearly lead the way, with its capacity for continent-wide follow-up of crossbill movements.

EXOTICS — A Monk Parakeet was seen at Saint-Robert until Jan 1 (*fide* PM) and another was at Laval in mid-winter (*fide* PG). At least two Eur. Goldfinches visited Montreal area feeders (at Cartierville and Repentigny) during the period (*fide* ND).

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HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

William J. Boyle, Jr., Robert O. Paxton,
and David A. Cutler

A warm, wet December was the only deviation from otherwise normal winter weather for the Region as a whole. Observers in the southern part would surely argue with that evaluation, however, as they got the brunt of the winter snowfall. Delaware and southern New Jersey had four major storms in January and February that dumped a total of 54 inches on Cumberland County, New Jersey, which averages only 18 inches a year; eastern Long Island also got more than its usual allotment.

Subregional compiler Blicharz characterized the season as a "Silent Winter," and many observers shared those views. Except for an influx of siskins and redpolls, passerines were mostly in short supply—hardly enough to feed the Sharp-shinned Hawks that haunted so many feeders. Perhaps, as Blicharz suggests, the lack of strong northwest

winds and west to east weather patterns from late September into December contributed to the dearth of birds emanating from Canada and the northwest. Nevertheless, there were quite a few noteworthy strays and vagrants, the most unusual being an Azure Gallinule of uncertain provenance and the Region's second Hammond's Flycatcher.

ABBREVIATIONS — Bombay Hook = Bombay Hook Nat'l Wildlife Ref., near Smyrna, Del.; Brig = Brigantine Unit, Edwin B. Forsythe Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Atlantic Co., N.J.; J.B.W.R. = Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, New York City; L.I. = Long Island, N.Y.; CBC = Christmas Bird Count. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — Numbers of Red-throated Loons were forced down by ice storms in w. New Jersey Dec 3–4 and again in e. Pennsylvania Dec. 11, when one attacked a man in Palmerton, Carbon, who thought it was a duck and



Common Loon at Manasquan Inlet, N.J., Jan. 25, 1987. This bird apparently survived the season despite its extreme bill deformity. Photo/Serge Lafrance.

tried to pick it up. Loons were well represented on coastal CBCs, but thinned out thereafter. Pied-billed Grebes were generally scarce away from the New York City area, but six at Augustine Creek, Kent, Del., Jan. 4 were thought to have benefitted from a phragmites control program (APE, JF).

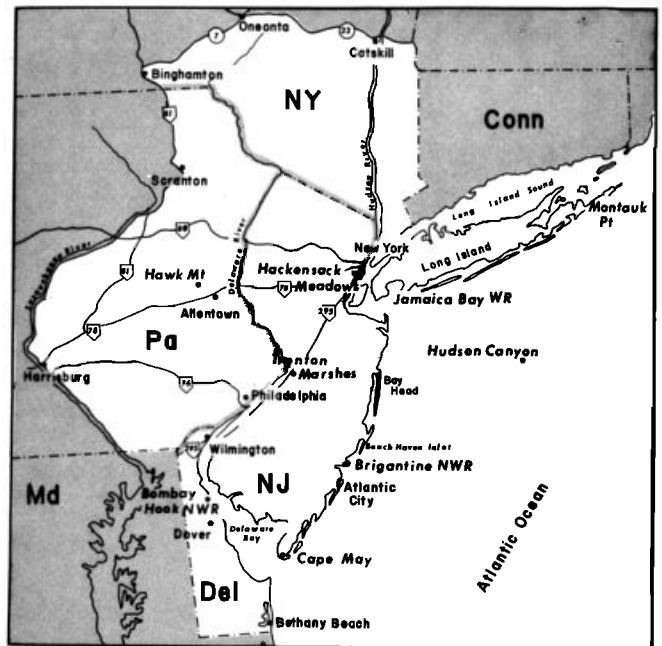
Virtually all of the 30 or so Red-necked Grebes encountered were found in December; one at Belvidere, Warren, N.J., Feb. 3 (FT), and four at Indian River Inlet, Del., Feb. 4 (WWF) were exceptions. The only Eared Grebe of the season was at Jones Inlet, L.I., Feb. 13 (SW). A Greater Shearwater found dead at Jones Beach, L.I., Dec. 15 (JRe) provided a record late date for the species in New York.

The expanding Great Cormorant population was well represented as far s. as Cape Henlopen, Del., where 2 dozen wintered (WWF), and up the Delaware R. at Philadelphia, with 10 present Feb. 14 (P. & P. Weiricks); more unusual was an immature inland at Mercer County Park, N.J., to Dec. 19 (RJB, SH). The ever-increasing numbers of wintering Double-crested Cormorants were reflected by a count of 31 on the Rockland, N.Y., CBC, with two still present in January (PDe).

Eleven reports of American Bittern from coastal New Jersey during the season were well above recent winters, but no other individuals of this seriously declining species were detected elsewhere. Great Blue Herons were abundant and widespread, but the big February snow in Delaware caused numerous casualties; some hunger-stressed birds reacted slowly and were struck by cars, while others starved. A Cattle Egret in Salem, N.J., showed up on 2 different CBCs.

WATERFOWL, RAPTORS — Tundra Swans took advantage of much open water to winter in good numbers; flocks numbering in the hundreds were reported from several sites in the s. one-half of the Region, while the main wintering flock of Snow Geese was again at Bombay Hook with ca. 65,000. The two Greater White-fronted Geese noted in the fall at Moorestown, N.J., were seen again on New Years Day (W. Dasey), and a Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian subspecies found on the S. Nassau County CBC (Long Island), Jan. 4, remained for at least a week. Eurasian Wigeon were about on a par with recent winters: three in New Jersey, one in Westchester, N.Y., and about 10 on Long Island.

The ♂ Tufted Duck returned for a 5th year to the Central Park Res., New York City, Dec. 2 (SSa et al.), but was not seen there after the Lower Hudson CBC; it reportedly moved to the East River. Eiders were again plentiful at Montauk, L.I., with maxima of 185 Commons Jan. 19 and 14 Kings Dec. 6. Only a few were reported in December and January from traditional spots farther s. in New Jersey, and none in Delaware. Harlequin



Ducks were at their usual locations such as Montauk (10), Orient Pt., L.I. (nine), and Barnegat Light (up to eight), plus a few scattered sites on Long Island.

A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye was at L. Montauk, L.I., Dec. 6 (JRe), but most interesting was the appearance of two drakes in New Jersey on the same day, Feb. 22. One (HR) was at the traditional Shark R. Estuary site, where a ♂ Barrow's wintered for 15 years from 1970-1984; could it be the same bird returning after a 2-year absence, or just a new one joining its cousins at what is obviously a very hospitable spot for goldeneyes. The 2nd Barrow's was located 20 mi farther s. on Barnegat Bay (AB); neither was seen again during the period, although the Shark River bird put in a brief appearance in mid-March. Some spectacular concentrations of Com. Mergansers were highlighted by tallies of 4000 at Old Tappan Res., Bergen, N.J., Dec. 10 (KK), and an incredible 12,000 on the S. Lancaster County, Pa., CBC Dec. 21 (RMS). Equally impressive were the 15,000 Red-breasted Mergansers at Montauk Dec. 11 (JRe).

Five December reports of Osprey (4 with excellent details) probably reflected the mild fall weather and the recovering population; the latest was at a reservoir along the Passaic R. in Short Hills, Essex, N.J., Dec. 27 (RR). Bald Eagle reports were again too many to enumerate, and came from all parts of the Region; a pair all season at Wanaque Res., Passaic, N.J., was in a new wintering area. Most of the wintering hawks and falcons were also well represented, especially the Accipiters. Many compilers again noted the abundance of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks and even a few N. Goshawks (two in Delaware) raiding bird feeders. In noting how common and persistent the Sharp-shinned are, contributor Hartmann expressed the suspicions of many in asking, "Are we inadvertently increasing their population by keeping alive those who would normally not make it, if it were not for the concentration of prey at our feeders."

A detailed description of a Buteo seen hunting near Hummelstown, Dauphin, Pa., Feb. 10 strongly suggests imm. Ferruginous Hawk (G. Wertz); unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated later for confirmation. Golden Eagle reports included several in s. New York, six in New Jersey, and one wintering near Kempton, Berks, Pa. (LG). A gray-phase Gyr-falcon was seen for about 10 minutes perched on a post in Cape May Feb. 28 (RBa), but the raptor highlight of the season was the Gyr found at Pine Plains, Dutchess, N.Y., Jan. 9 (N. Pell, m.ob.). This cooperative individual was seen perched and

hunting the fields of the surrounding farmland for 2 months. Birders who searched for it saw many other raptors, including Golden Eagle.

RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — A Yellow Rail picked up dead at Jakes Landing, Cape May, Jan. 26 (J. Garrison) must have been wintering; like the equally elusive Black Rail, which has also been found in the Region at this season, its wintering range is incompletely known.

— S.A. —

The season's most unusual and controversial visitor was not seen alive by anyone except, perhaps, T.C. the cat (New York Times, Feb. 13, 1987). It was an **Azure Gallinule** found dead in a Ft. Salonga, Long Island, backyard by T.C.'s owner, Angela Wright (who protests the cat's innocence). Although the *Rallidae* are well known for their wandering tendencies, this species has no previous record of straying from its normal range in n. South America. Hopefully, an investigation by the N.Y. State Avian Records Committee will provide more information (* to Am. Mus. of Natural History).

An imm. Purple Gallinule was found dead in Cape May Jan. 24 (J & DD), and an adult wandered around the basement of a Brooklyn factory for a few days until being caught Jan. 27 (fide H. Richard). The color-banded Sandhill Crane noted at Cape May in the fall stayed until Jan. 20; it was feared to be a victim of the heavy snowstorm of Jan. 22, but was later seen in Maryland. It had been banded in March 1985, and came from the upper midwest breeding population. Another, un-banded, Sandhill Crane was at Mannington Marsh, Salem, Jan. 22 (OJ, EM); it reappeared in March and stayed for weeks.

Semipalmated Plovers, ordinarily very rare in winter, were noted at 5 different spots. A total of five birds appeared on 3 CBCs (2 in New Jersey, one in Queens), but more surprising were individuals at Shinnecock Inlet, L.I., Jan. 9 (PGi) and Cape May Jan. 25 (J & DD). American Oystercatchers again wintered on coastal Long Island and New Jersey, and two W. Sandpipers remained at Pt. Lookout, L.I., throughout the season (SW). A crippled ad. Hudsonian Godwit remained at Rye, N.Y., for about 4 weeks to Dec. 21, but could not be located on the CBC. An oiled Red Phalarope at Cape Henlopen Dec. 26 was an unusual seasonal and Delaware find (PL, S. Finnegan).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — Little Gulls were scarce again, but somewhat increased over last year. Shinnecock Inlet had one to two in early December, while another was at Pt. Lookout Jan. 25 (fide TWB). In New Jersey, one was in the Liberty State Park area for the Lower Hudson CBC and on Jan. 1 (DF), and the last of the season was in Cape May Jan. 17 (fide PS). The 9 reports of Com. Black-headed Gull came from Long Island (1), New York City (2), and coastal New Jersey (6), as usual.

White-winged gulls were scarce, again reflecting the situation to the north of us, although a late February influx of birds returning N brought a flurry of reports to the New Jersey coast. Lesser Black-backed Gull, on the other hand, was everywhere, with at least 30 individuals reported and many others unreported from Sussex, Del., to Rye, N.Y. A remarkable 12 on the Lower Bucks County, Pa., CBC was the only concentration other than a few at the Hackensack Meadowlands, N.J.

The gull of the season, however, was the 2nd-winter **Ross' Gull** at L. Montauk for 30 minutes Dec. 11 (JRe). Unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated and this single-observer sighting will not qualify for the official New York State list, but the careful and thoroughly detailed description is completely convincing.

A Thick-billed Murre was picked up in the median strip of U S 1 near Bethany Beach, Del., Mar. 2 by a Mr. Putre and taken to a rehabilitation center. Although it appeared to be healthy, an attempt to release it the next day proved fruitless when the bird swam out 100 yards, then headed for shore. It was recaptured and taken to the Delaware Museum. This was the state's first on-shore record for the species. A Black Guillemot was at Montauk Dec. 7 (Great S. Bay Audubon), where there have been a few records in recent years, but much more remarkable was one observed under excellent conditions in Manasquan Inlet, Ocean, N.J., Dec. 27 (J. Springer, N. Eickman). This bird, for which there are fewer than one-half dozen reliable reports for the state, was described in impeccable details right down to the orange-red feet, which were visible as it dove repeatedly at 40 yards.

OWLS THROUGH RAVENS — It was an excellent winter for owls of all usual species, with the ever-popular Snowy Owl topping the list of attractions. Other than one dozen Snowies in New Jersey and about eight on Long Island, there were a couple of brief sightings in Pennsylvania, and a cooperative individual that spent the entire winter near the entrance to Bombay Hook, to the delight of hundreds of birders. Long-eared and Short-eared owls were reported in numbers from a variety of locations, and even N. Saw-whet Owls were easier to come by than in recent years. A maximum of seven different Saw-whets was found in the Thorofare, Gloucester, N.J., groves this winter (EM); one at J.B.W.R., however, was disturbed by an inconsiderate photographer cutting branches for a better picture and never returned. Reflecting the variety of the season, Freed found six species of owls practically in his backyard at Green Lane Res., Montgomery, Pa. (GLF).

— S.A. —

An *Empidonax* flycatcher found on the Bombay Hook CBC in Delaware Dec. 21 was observed at length by Keith Russell *et al.* as it fed on flying insects. After careful consideration of its field marks, including tail-flicking habits, they decided it was probably a **Hammond's Flycatcher**. Mark Robbins of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences searched the area on the 24th and succeeded in relocating the bird in the rain and cold. He heard the bird call and observed its wing- and tail-flicking habits. Although it had appeared healthy on the first occasion, Robbins found it moribund and on the verge of starving. Because of this he was able to capture it and preserve the specimen. Comparison with museum skins confirmed the identification as a Hammond's Flycatcher, the 2nd specimen for the Region and apparently the 3rd in the northeast (KR, D. & B. Cadbury, T. Serrano; * to Delaware Museum of Natural History). In addition, an *Empidonax* flycatcher at Assunpink W.M.A., N.J., in December 1983 was tentatively identified (probably correctly) as a Hammond's.

Although E. Phoebes are regularly reported on a few CBCs, they seldom make it into the new year. Consequently, one at Waterloo, Sussex, N.J., Jan. 18 (JZ), one at Mannington Marsh, Salem, N.J., Jan. 25 (C & PS), and even more remarkable ones in Dutchess, N.Y., Jan. 25 (J & KM) and Northampton, Pa., Feb. 21 (SB) were noteworthy. A W. Kingbird at Higbee Beach, Cape May, Jan. 4-11 was similarly unexpected (BMo, PG *et al.*) Common Ravens continue to be detected outside their expanding breeding range. One at Hawk Mt., Pa., in December (LG) and singles along the upper Susquehanna in Wyoming and Bradford counties (WR) were not unexpected, but one at Polkville, Warren, N.J., Dec. 31 (WW) and two at Pine Plains, N.Y., discovered by a Gyrfalcon watcher (D. Rosgen), were farther afield.

WRENS THROUGH FINCHES — Single Sedge Wrens were found on the Cape May and Marmora CBCs, and a pair was at Turkey Pt., Cumberland, N.J., Jan. 9 (RM). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Cinnaminson, Burlington, N.J., Dec. 9 was seen again in early January (J. Taylor); others were on the C. Suffolk, L I , and S. Lancaster County, Pa., CBCs. Two Varied Thrushes, both apparently first-winter males, were found in New Jersey; the first visited an Absecon, Atlantic, feeder for 2 weeks from Jan 26 (K. Tompkins, m.ob., ph. SLA), while the 2nd was seen for only a few minutes at Whittingham W.M.A., Sussex (ph TH).

It was another good winter for N. Shrikes, with at least five in New York, seven in New Jersey, and two in Pennsylvania. Loggerhead Shrikes were found on one Pennsylvania and 2 New Jersey CBCs, but the only other report was of an individual at Bonhamtown, Middlesex, N.J., Feb. 16 (RD).

A Solitary Vireo at Rogers Refuge, Princeton, Dec. 1 was very late (R. Wright), but even more so was one on the Cape May CBC. In spite of a mid-December cold snap, there was an interesting variety of late warblers, some lingering well into the new year. There was the usual scattering of Orange-crowned Warblers on Long Island and coastal New Jersey CBCs, but totally without precedent was the presence of three Cape May Warblers in New Jersey in late December and January. One Cape May hit a window at Grover's Mill, Mercer, Dec. 27, but recovered after 20 minutes and flew off (M & PT); another was well seen on the Barnegat CBC, but most remarkable was one that frequented a yard in Magnolia, Burlington, from mid-December to the end of January, feeding on the sap of a maple tree (A. Neville, JKM). Equally unusual, a ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler spent the entire day of December 24 in a Roosevelt, Monmouth, N.J., yard, but was not seen thereafter (M. Berlinrut).

Among the numerous Pine Warblers located on CBCs, the most unusual was at S.E. Bradford, Pa., Dec. 26 (H. Barnes, L. Hoefner); one wintered at a Vincentown, Burlington, N.J., feeder for the 2nd year in a row (D. Jones). An Ovenbird, possibly injured, discovered in Riverside Park, Manhattan, on the Lower Hudson CBC, remained for over a week.

A bright yellow Dickcissel at Lum's Pond S.P., Del., Jan. 4 was the only report of the season. A Lark Sparrow was at Pine Water Farm, Rehoboth, Del., Dec. 27–Jan. 10, and another visited an Eastport, L.I., feeder from Jan. 27 to the end of the period (S. Vakay, *vide* JJR). The Cape May CBC produced a well-described **Le Conte's Sparrow** at Reeds Beach, Dec. 28, which was relocated 2 days later (fRBa); this was only about the 4th state record. A Lincoln's Sparrow was discovered at Woodbine, Cape May, Jan. 26 (PK, KW).

Four Yellow-headed Blackbirds were attracted to feeders in February, mostly after snowstorms, one each in Daretown, Salem, N.J. (D. Skinner), Riverhead, L.I. (*vide* JJR), Newport, Del (A. Bailey), and Dublin, Del. (A. Summers). Seven Brewer's Blackbirds were at the traditional site on the Bombay Hook CBC, while individual males were at Trap Pond, Sussex, Del., Dec 20 (R. West) and a Chester, Pa., feeder Feb. 15 (PH). An impressive 1000 Boat-tailed Grackles at Absecon, N.J., Feb. 19 reflected the growing population (S. Harty). A ♀ N. Oriole of the Bullock's subspecies was studied by a group at Prospect Park, Brooklyn, Jan. 24 (J. & M. Yrizarry *et al.*).

Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin staged a major invasion of the Region this season, but other winter finches were poorly represented. Single Red Crossbills on 3 New Jersey CBCs were the only ones noted, while White-winged Crossbill reports consisted of 22 at Hawk Mt., Dec. 1 (LG), one on the S. Nassau, L I , CBC, and 2 unconfirmed sightings in Cape May in January. Common Redpolls were abundant and widespread in the n. one-half of the Region and even reached Delaware in numbers for the first time since 1977, including one at a Lewes, Sussex, feeder all February (WWF). Feeder watchers searching through the flocks spotted apparent Hoary Redpolls at Kendall, Middlesex, N.J., Feb. 14 (CL), and two at Lake Hauto, Carbon, Pa., also in February (B. Schaffer). A **Hoary Redpoll**, conspicuous

for its considerably larger (than Common's) size and overall whitish aspect, was present in Amenia, Northeast Township, N.Y., Jan. 24–Feb. 7 (Les Line, Marshall Case). Evening Grosbeaks were locally common in some areas and missing in others.

EXOTICS — Among the alien visitors that were most likely not genuine vagrants were a Greylag Goose at Cape Henlopen (WWF), a Yellow-headed Parrot on the Cumberland, N.J., CBC, and a Desert Finch (*Rhodopechys obsoleta*) at a Woodbine, N.J., feeder in February (PK, KW).

OBSERVERS (Subregional compilers in boldface) — **Peter Bacinski** (PBA) (coastal NJ: 511 Prospect Place, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071), Robert Barber (RBA), M.V. Barnhill, **Irving Black** (n.e. NJ Eagle Rock Village, Bldg. 26, Apt. 8B, Budd Lake, NJ 07828), Mark Blauer, **R.J. Blicharz** (n.c. NJ: 827 Pennsylvania Ave., Trenton, NJ 08638), Steve Boyce, Alan Brady, Jim Brett, Paul Buckley, **T.W. Burke** (s.e. NY: 234 Highland Ave., Rye, NY 10580), Jack Connor, Dale Dancis, **Peter Derven** (PDe, Rockland, NY: 70 Third Ave., Nyack, NY 10960), Joe DiCostanzo, Rich Ditch, Jim & Debbie Dowdell, Peter Dunne, John Ebner, **A.P. Ednie** (New Castle and Kent, DE: 21 N. Wells Ave., Glenolden, PA 19036), Bill & Sally Fintel, G.A. Franchois, **W.W. Frech** (Sussex, DE: Carr. Rt. 3, Box 1144, Lewes, DE 19958), G.L. Freed, David Freeland, John Freiberg, Paul Gillen (PGI), Laurie Goodrich, Ron Grubb, Paul Guris, Jerry Haag, Saul Hait, Tom Halliwell, **Greg Hanisek** (n.w. NJ: RD 3, Box 263, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865), David Harrison, Dorothy Hartmann, Otto Heck, G.K. Hess, Phyllis Hurlock, Oscar Joyce, Rich Kane, Dale & Kevin Karlson, Paul Kosten, Serge LaFrance (SLA), Steve Lawrence, Charles Leck, Paul Lehman, **Tony Leukering** (L.I., NY: American Birds, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022), Ken Little, Edward Manners, Robert Maurer, J. & K. McDermott, **J.K. Meritt** (s.w. NJ 809 Saratoga Terrace, Turnersville, NJ 08012), Brad Merritt, Arthur Morris, **B.L. Morris** (e. PA: 825 Muhlenberg St., Allentown, PA 18104), Brian Moscatello (BMO), Bill & Naomi Murphy, D.M. Niles, Michael O'Brien, Ed Patten, Jack Peachey, Eleanor Pink, Paul Quintas, Jack Reddall (JRe), **William Reid** (n.e. PA: 73 W. Ross St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702), Hart Rufe, J.J. Ruscica, J.W. Russell, Keith Russell, Richard Ryan, Starr Saphir (SSa), R.M. Schutsky, Brad Silfies, Jana Skolnicki, Steve Smith, Steve Sobosinski, Esther & Stan Speck, Joe Swertinski, Clay & Pat Sutton, M. & P. Taylor, Fred Tetlow, **J.P. Tramontano** (Orange and Sullivan, NY: Orange Co Community College, Middletown, NY 10940), Marion Van Wagner, **John Walsh** (L.I., NY: c/o American Birds), Steve Walter, Wade Wander, Dave Ward, **R.T. Waterman Bird Club** (Dutchess, NY), W.J. Wayne, David Weesner, Karen Williams, Rick Wiltraut, Jim Zamos. — **WILLIAM J. BOYLE, JR.**, 12 Glenwood Rd., Denville, NJ 07834; **ROBERT O. PAXTON**, 460 Riverside Dr., Apt. 72, New York, NY 10027; and **DAVID A. CUTLER**, 1110 Rock Creek Dr., Wyncote, PA 19095.



MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

Henry T. Armistead

Except for some heavy snowfalls in late January and February, this was not a severe winter. December averaged 1.2°F above normal, with an excess of 1.53 inches of rain, and was snowless. Thus conditions for the CBCs were good. January was mild except for the last one-third of the month, when there was a quite strong cold spell combined with heavy snows in most areas on the 22nd and again on the 25th and 26th. January temperatures were 0.6° below normal with an excess of 3.09 inches of precipitation. February averaged 1.3° below the norm, with precipitation also below normal by almost one-half inch, although there was a big snow February 22–23.

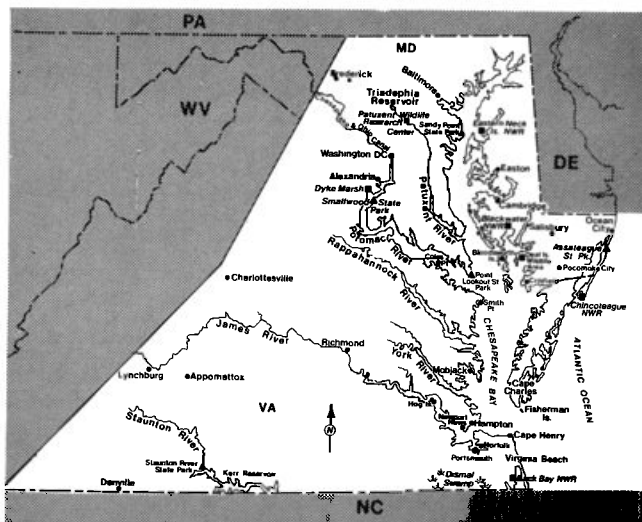
It was a good winter for most piscivorous birds, eagles, northern irruptive species (especially owls), and bluebirds, although the spattering of records for the northern finches was highly hit or miss depending on the species. As usual reports of most herons and shorebirds were minimal with most records coming from the Virginia coast.

ABBREVIATIONS — Assat. = Assateague I., Md.; Balt. = Baltimore, Md.; the Bay = Chesapeake Bay; C.B.B.T. = Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel, Va.; Chinc. = Chincoteague Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Va.; Craney = Craney Island Disposal Area, Portsmouth, Va.; D.C. = Washington, D.C.; Fish. I. = Fisherman's Island Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Va.; Susq. = the Susquehanna River, Md., in the vicinity of Conowingo Dam. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — A Red-throated Loon at Chesapeake Beach, Calvert, Md., Dec. 26 was unusual for the upper Bay in winter (JLS, RFR). Excellent local counts were of 49 Pied-billed Grebes at D.C., Dec. 20 (JB *et al.*) and 20 at Loch Raven Res., n. of Balt., Jan. 14 (SS), while zero on the Back Bay, Va., CBC Dec. 28 were indicative of the continuing abysmal conditions for bay waterbirds there (PWS *et al.*). Horned Grebe continued in low numbers, although CBC counts of 382 at Chinc. and 175 at Cape Charles, plus 200 at Craney Feb. 20 (CZ), were at least a step in the right direction. Always scarce here, Red-necked Grebe was reported from 6 localities, the most interesting record being of three at Loch Raven Jan. 1 (SS). Nine N. Gannets off Crisfield Dec. 30 (RFR, HLW) and two off Annapolis Jan. 4 (EB) were most unusual for the upper Bay in winter and firsts for these respective Maryland CBCs. At Cheriton, Va., Gabler saw an Am. White Pelican flying over Rt. 13 Feb. 4. More to be expected were one to two at Chinc. (BP, C & DB) and one at various Virginia Beach locations such as Owl Creek and Lynnhaven Inlet (GH, HCI), these present through January and February. Small numbers of Brown Pel-



Adult Brown Pelican among gulls at Conowingo Dam, Md., Dec. 22, 1986. Photo/Robert Fraunfelter.



icans lingered into mid-January in s.e. Virginia, such as one at Fish. I., Dec. 7 (SR), three at Virginia Beach Dec. 6 (VK), 10 at Cape Henry Jan. 2 and three there Jan. 10 (GH), and five at Ft. Story Jan. 24 (BP). Completely unexpected were one at Swift Creek Res., n. of Richmond, Va., Dec. 31–Jan. 6 (BD *et al.*) and an adult in n. Maryland along the Susq., Dec. 20–22 (RKF, FDA, ph.).

Great Cormorant continues to winter in numbers that are maximal for the Region, such as 28 Dec. 30 (BP), 23 Jan. 17 (GH) and 31 Jan. 24 (DFA, BP) at C.B.B.T., with 18 at Pt. Lookout, Md., Jan. 4 (*vide* RFR), and smaller, yet record numbers of four at Ocean City CBC and nine at Cape Charles CBC. Small numbers of Double-crested Cormorants lingered on the upper Bay in Maryland through December at Brandon Shores, Chesapeake Beach, and Balt. (RFR *et al.*) but as usual large numbers were found only at the mouth of the Bay in Virginia, such as CBC totals of 197 at Cape Charles, 542 at Newport News, and 1034 at Little Creek (TK, PWS *et al.*).

Aside from the CBCs the most remarkable heron count was at Deal I., Md., Dec. 26 with 59 Black-crowned Nights, 63 Tricoloreds, and two Little Blues, plus five Am. Bitterns (MO, JO). Deal Island is one of the most bird-rich salt marshes in the state. A Great Egret at Nokesville, Va., Dec. 19 was unusual for the Piedmont (KHB, RAA). Unique was a Cattle Egret near Ocean City Dec. 29 (CSR) in the n. Pocomoke Swamp. At the Cape Charles CBC, totals of 52 Little Blue and 76 Tricolored herons were far above average Dec. 27 (BPK, PWS *et al.*). Great Blue Herons were in excellent numbers on some CBCs with 71 at Salisbury, Md. (CRV), 186 in D.C. (JB *et al.*), and 244 at Little Creek, Va. (PWS *et al.*), most of these record or near-record counts; 100 were at Susq., Dec. 7 (RFR, SRI). Over 50 had already returned to their colony at Mason Neck N.W.R., Va., by Feb. 23 (DAD). An imm. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was reported from Norfolk Dec. 31 (NB).

WATERFOWL — Last year's drought apparently forced out most of the Chinc. Mute Swans with only two there for the CBC (*vide* JWD), perhaps accounting for the three at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (C & DB) and two at Cedar I., Va., Dec. 21 (HTA). Two Greater White-fronted Geese were in Gaithersburg, Md., Feb. 22 (LD), three were at Curles Neck, Henrico, Va., Jan. 30 (FD), one was at Chuckatuck, Va., Dec. 19 (BP), and one was at Jug Bay, Md., Feb. 8 (AS). Snow Geese continued to winter in the central area of the Region in huge numbers with 16,027 on the Ocean City CBC (CSR *et al.*) and 32,316 on the Denton CBC, Caroline, Md. (AJF) with a fine total of 1900

blue forms at the s *Dorchester* CBC Dec 31 (CSR *et al.*) At Cape Charles a **Ross' Goose** was seen at Wise Pt., Feb. 22 (HTA, GLA, MS, CW), only the 3rd or 4th report for Virginia.

Conditions are so bad at Back Bay that serious consideration has been given to the deliberate introduction of exotic plants, including *Hydrilla*, or the creation of an inlet to the sea. Witness these anemic numbers on the CBC Dec. 28: four Green-winged Teal, seven Gadwall, one Am. Wigeon, three Buffleheads, and 50 Ruddy Ducks, plus two Am. Coots.

Unusual Maryland Piedmont winter records were of a Green-winged Teal at Thurmont, Frederick, and nine at Piney Run, Carroll, Jan. 15, plus a N. Pintail at Piney Run Jan. 1 (RFR). Many waterfowl were in record or near-record numbers in the Balt. area Dec. 28, with 115 N. Shovelers, 85 Gadwall, 8975 Canvasbacks, 2545 Lesser Scaup, 929 Red-breasted Mergansers, and 8072 Ruddy Ducks, the majority of these in the large impounded spoil area of Hart and Miller Is. (RFR, JLS). Eurasian Wigeon males were at Sunken Meadows, Surry, Va., late December to January (HCI, EMW, RAA, JWD), at Fish. I., Va. Dec. 27-Feb. 21 (RLA, GLA, BP), and Ocean City, Md., Dec. 29 (GLA, CW, DCt). Canvasbacks were in good numbers, for recent years at least, on the Bay with a record 10,218 on the Crisfield, Md., CBC Dec. 30 in company with 1731 Ruddy Ducks (HLW, RFR). The same may be said for Ruddy Ducks with 5000 on Back R., e. of Balt., Jan. 13 (WK) and 4000 at Brandon Shores, Md., Dec. 1 (RFR). It is encouraging to see these two beleaguered species bouncing back a little bit.

At Loch Raven Res., n. of Balt., 320 Ring-necked Ducks were counted Dec. 29 (SS). The sole Com. Eider report was of one at Little Creek, Va., Dec. 31 (*vide* PWS) but one to two ad. ♂ King Eiders were at Fish. I., Dec. 27-Jan. 31 (BW, RLA, HTA *et al.*) and a female was at Chinc., Dec. 28 (DFA), where this species is rare. A ♂ Harlequin Duck was unusual up the Bay a bit at Hampton, Va., Dec. 26 to early February (BP, PM), a female was at Smith I., Va., Dec. 27 (DCt), and up to one male and four females were at C.B.B.T. throughout the winter (SR, VK, D & MM, HK, HCI). The peak Hooded Merganser report was of 381 at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*) and Red-breasted Mergansers were in excellent numbers in s.e. Virginia with a record 2421 on the Cape Charles CBC, 2100 on the Back Bay CBC, and 5000 at Virginia Beach Jan. 24 (BP).

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES — Trans-Bay movements of vultures are seldom reported but Harris saw 45 Turkey Vultures at Cape Henry, Va., Dec. 13 apparently coming over from the E. Shore. Ospreys were seen in at least 7 areas in late December and early January including 3 spots near D.C., mostly on CBCs, a completely unprecedented situation; but the first spring bird was not seen until Mar. 3 at Newport News (D & MM), the occasional stray February birds not being seen this year. Bald Eagles continue to surprise us. At Crisfield 44 were seen Dec. 30 (CRV) at a roost area (unknown 4 years ago) where

they are attracted by remains discarded by chicken farmers, previous CBC totals for this site being of 18 in 1984 and 20 in 1985. Fourteen on the CBC at D.C., Dec. 20 were the best since 1951 (JB). An astounding 57 were at Ft. Belvoir CBC s. of D.C., Jan. 3, their best total since 1985 (33) and 1953 (31; JMA). In this same area at Mason Neck N.W.R., an estimated 67 eagles wintered (50 imm.) including about 34 banded individuals from New York, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (DAD). The January Bay area eagle survey found 345 eagles in 10 major areas (167 imm.) such as 37 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., 29 at Blackwater N.W.R., Md., and 73 on the Rappahannock R., Va., with an estimated 50-100 additional birds in the greater Bay area (JMA, MAB). A record 10 were on the CBC at Chinc., Dec. 29 (JWD *et al.*). As Bald Eagles continue to increase as well as shift their areas of concentration, area birders are becoming increasingly sophisticated in identifying individual birds and eliminating duplicate sightings.

Sharp-shinned Hawks were in good numbers on many CBCs with 24 each at D.C. and Cape Charles. Northern Goshawk was reported from at least 8 locations from late December on, with, as is usual with this species, really good descriptions lacking for all birds. But many of these were probably valid, indicating a strong winter for them by Regional standards. Rough-legged Hawks staged a moderate incursion, the best numbers as usual being in marshy s. *Dorchester*, Md., with 19 on the CBC Dec. 31 (EMW, CSR *et al.*). Up to three Golden Eagles wintered here at Blackwater N.W.R. (GI *et al.*) with another bird in Kent Jan. 26 (FLP), where one (plus 28 Bald Eagles) was also seen on the CBC Dec. 21 (JG *et al.*). Interesting Merlin reports included one at inland Nokesville, Va., on the Piedmont Dec. 28 (*vide* KHB), one at Patuxent W.R.C., Laurel, Md., haunting feeders Feb. 17-Mar. 5 (MKK), and two at the National Press Bldg., D.C., Feb. 4 (*vide* EMW). Merlins in winter are scarce away from the coast and should be documented. At the Redskins-Rams playoff game in D.C., Dec. 28, a Peregrine Falcon flew into the stadium at dusk and landed on one of the goal posts (PMk)! Six Ruffed Grouse at Deer Creek, Harford, Md., Dec. 27 were new for this county (*vide* DK).

Winter western shore rails are always of interest; a King Rail, 11 Virginias, and eight Soras were at Fishing Creek Marsh, Calvert, Md., Dec. 26 (RFR, JLS, SD), while 10 Virginias were at Balt., Dec. 28 (*vide* RFR). Unusual was a Com. Moorhen at Big Mill Pond, Worcester, in coastal Maryland Jan. 29 (C & DB). Excellent Am. Coot counts were of 3610 (previous high 733 in 1985) on the Ft. Belvoir, Va., CBC Jan. 3 (JMA *et al.*) and 400 at Loch Raven Res., Dec. 20 (SS). A rarity was a Sandhill Crane reported from Kent I., Queen Anne's, Md., about Feb. 18 (RL).

SHOREBIRDS — For only the 2nd winter regular shorebird counts were made in the Cape Charles area at Thoms Creek (BPk, HTA, GLA, CW *et al.*) with results comparable to last year's (see Table 1). These trips depend on the vagaries of

Table 1. Shorebirds at Thoms Creek, Mockhorn Island, Va., Winter 1986-1987

	Dec. 10	Dec. 27	Feb. 1	Feb. 21	Mar. 15
Black-bellied Plover	x ^a	296	175	260	260
American Oystercatcher	65	123	90	20	25
Willet	120	113	110	110	90
Whimbrel		3	5	1	
Marbled Godwit	18	40	60	69	50
Ruddy Turnstone	x	15	12	12	10
Red Knot			3		1
Western Sandpiper	x	10	35	20	470
Dunlin	5000	7000	3500	5000	4200
dowitcher (sp.) ^b	x	6	70	15	40

^a x = species present but not censused.

^b Majority believed to be Short-billed Dowitchers. Numerous birds calling or seen well enough to be identified on latter four dates were all Short-billed.



American Oystercatchers at Mockhorn Flats, Va., Dec. 10, 1986. Photo/Bill Portlock.

weather, watermen, and tides, and the widely and wildly ranging counts are due to these variables as much as actual changes in the numbers of birds, although a certain stability of wintering populations can be assumed. At any rate, as during the previous winter, godwits, dowitchers, Willets, Whimbrels, and knots apparently overwintered again. When these birds are all concentrated together at high tide, tame and vocal, it is exciting to drift among them in a rented skow in this wild, remote saltmarsh. Willets, dowitchers, and Marbled Godwits also overwintered in the Chinc. area in small numbers (C & DB) and the CBC there, always excellent for shorebirds, produced three Semipalmated Plovers, 702 Am. Oystercatchers, three Willets, 12 Marbled Godwits, seven Red Knots, four Least Sandpipers, and 12 dowitchers (fide JWD) Dec. 28. Two Semipalmated Plovers near Crisfield were notable for the central Bay Dec. 30 (HLW, RFR). American Oystercatchers overwin-

tered at Ocean City, a relatively recent phenomenon, with 12 there Jan. 25 (WK), 17 Feb. 28 (EMW), and 28 on the CBC Dec. 29. Notable far up the Bay was a Greater Yellowlegs at Ft. McHenry in Balt., Jan. 11–Feb. 16 (RFR), and 22 were at Crisfield CBC Dec. 30 (CRV). At Stumpy L., Virginia Beach, 25 Lesser Yellowlegs Dec. 14 made a notable tally (GH). On Jan. 14 Portlock spotted 24 dowitchers (sp.) at Dameron Marsh, Northumberland, Va., an isolated area on the w. shore of the Bay opposite Tangier I. At Back Bay CBC Dec. 28, 1565 Sanderlings were estimated (PWS et al.). Good counts were of 75 Com. Snipe at Jug Bay on the upper Patuxent R., Md., Jan. 3 (RFR, SRI) and 85 Am. Woodcock along a one-mi transect Jan. 29 at Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R. (LH) with 30 there Jan. 31 (HTA, GLA). Winter woodcock often do not appear in that area in big numbers until forced down by severe weather well after New Year's.



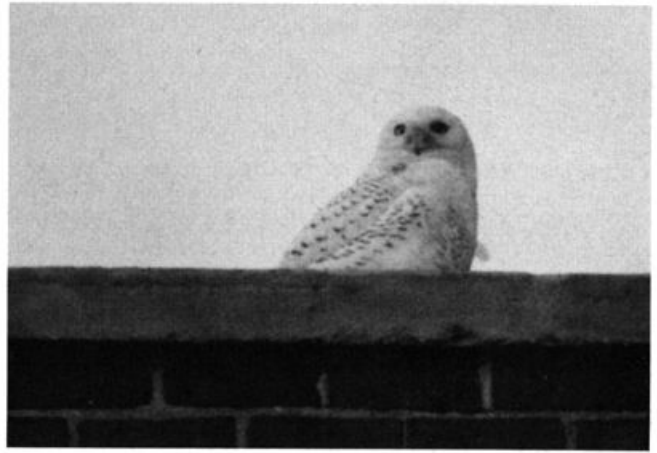
Marbled Godwits (and one Willet) at Mockhorn Flats, Va., Dec. 10, 1986. Photo/Bill Portlock.

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — One Pomarine and one Parasitic jaeger were reported from Ft. Story, Cape Henry, Va., Jan. 17 (BP, PM). Very unusual inland, an ad. Laughing Gull was at the Spotsylvania, Va., mall Jan. 24 after a big snow storm (MRB). Laughings were rather widespread in early winter on upper Bay areas such as 38 on the CBC at Balt., Dec. 28, 15 in Calvert, Md., Jan. 2 (JLS), and four at the Bowie, Md., landfill Dec. 28 (EM). Yet they were curiously low at the mouth of the Bay where sometimes many hundreds can be found at this time of year, with but four at Newport News CBC Dec. 20 (TK et al.), a more respectable 303 at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS et al.), but only two at Back Bay CBC Dec. 28 (PWS et al.). Up to five (two ad., three imm.) Little Gulls were at Ocean City Feb. 7–8 (BDx, BY, ED). The only Com. Black-headed Gull seen was at Back R. Sewage Treatment Plant e. of Balt., Feb. 14 (HKt et al.). Off Calvert Cliffs, Calvert, Md., 400 Bonaparte's Gulls Jan. 24 furnished a good count for the central Bay (SD). Gulls massed again on the lower Susq., Md., with an estimated 20,000 Herring Gulls Feb. 13 (EB). Other gull highlights here were two imm. Icelands and three ad. Lesser Black-backed Feb. 14 (MSG), the Icelands seen again Feb. 21 (LD). Iceland Gulls were reported from 5 places with an immature at Prince William landfill, Va., Jan. 12–24 (together with two Lesser Black-backed Gulls Jan. 12 and an imm. Glaucous Gull Feb. 7–10—MRB, BP), an immature at C.B.B.T., Dec. 6 & 27 and Jan. 31 (SR, BP, HTA, GLA), and an immature in D.C., Feb. 28 (DC). One was at the Bowie, Md., dump from December to Feb. 14 (EM).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls continue to turn up in many places. One at the mouth of Tuckahoe Creek was new for Caroline, Md., Dec. 21 (SG) and another at Reichs Ford landfill was new for Frederick, Md., Jan. 15 (RFR). One at Myrtle I., Va., Dec. 27 was the first for the Cape Charles CBC (Bpk). Good counts were of five at C.B.B.T., Dec. 6 (SR), four in D.C., Feb. 14 (DC), three on CBC at Balt., Dec. 28, three on Triadelphia Res., Md., CBC Dec. 27 (fide RFR), eight at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS et al.), and two at Chesapeake Beach, Calvert, Md., Dec. 25–Jan. 25 (WKr). One inland at Chancellor landfill s. of Fredericksburg Feb. 2 & 4 was of interest (MRB) in the Virginia Piedmont. Glaucous Gulls included immatures at Alpha Ridge landfill, Howard, and one at Reichs Ford, both Jan. 15 (RFR), and one at Chesapeake Beach Jan. 24–25 (WKr), these all in Maryland. A record 359 Great Black-backed Gulls were on the CBC at D.C., Dec. 20 (JB et al.) with 255 there Feb. 19 (DC) plus 111 at inland Howard, Md., Jan. 31 (JS). Some 39 Great Black-backed at inland Nokesville, Prince William, Va., CBC of Dec. 28 along with three Lesser Black-backed were remarkable (KHB et al.). Clearly the two black-backed gulls are still in an expansive phase.

An ad. Black-legged Kittiwake was at C.B.B.T., Feb. 16 (HK) but only 20 were seen by the pelagic trip off Ocean City Feb. 14 (HLW et al.). Eight Black Skimmers were at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia Beach, Dec. 31 (fide PWS) and some were later seen there Jan. 10–17 (GH, HCI). This is often the only Regional spot where they are seen in winter. Royal Terns were seen on 3 greater Norfolk area CBCs with one lingering until Jan. 10 at Cape Henry (GH). An extremely late Com. Tern was reported from Calvert, Md., Dec. 10 (JLS). The Ocean City pelagic trip of Feb. 14 turned up two Dovekies and about six Atlantic Puffins (WK, HLW), most of these in Virginia waters.

DOVES THROUGH SHRIKES — Mourning Doves were in very high numbers on many of the Virginia CBCs such as 1262 at Newport News, 1003 at Ft. Belvoir, and 1100+ at Wachapreague. All five "southern" owls were found at Elliott Island Rd., Dorchester, Md., Feb. 8 (MSG) and a Com. Barn-Owl was at seldom-visited Watts I., Va., Dec. 17 (Bpk). This was an excellent winter for the three other owl species, the "northern" ones. Single Snowy Owls were in Virginia at Hopewell Dec. 15–Jan. 23 (Bpk, FRS, BP, HCI + 150± others, ph.), at Crystal City, Arlington, Dec. 18 atop a 15-story building (RAA, KLK, EMW et al., ph.), at Richmond Feb. 14 (PB, LKR, ph., some chance it was the same as the Hopewell bird), and



Snowy Owl at Hopewell, Va., Dec. 20, 1986. Photo/Bill Portlock.

at Chinc., Dec. 13 and Feb. 5 (C & DB). Most of these evoked media coverage and various "photo opportunities" and taken together represented a superior "invasion" by Regional standards. Another was reported in the Ocean City, Md., area in late December, details lacking. Long-eared Owls also made a very good showing with reports from at least 8 locations including two at the National Arboretum in D.C., Feb. 16–Mar. 1 (where there was also a N. Saw-whet Owl Feb. 16–Mar. 6—DC) and one at Back R., e. of Balt., Feb. 14 (HKt), plus up to six on the Triadelphia, Md., CBC (fide RFR). Northern Saw-whet Owls were rather widely reported on the CBCs plus two at McKee-Beshers W.M.A., Montgomery, Md., Jan. 8–Feb. 26 (MSG) and two on Assat. I., Md., Feb. 8 (WK, HLW). Short-eared Owls, which perhaps I should not lump with the "southern" owls since many of them are indeed birds from the Arctic tundra, staged a moderate flight with 10 on the s. Dorchester, Md., CBC Dec. 31 and three at Dameron Marsh, Va., Jan. 14 (Bpk), plus six at Nokesville Dec. 28 (KHB).

Belted Kingfisher was in high numbers on many CBCs, in spite of concern by many over its apparent decline; 71 were at Newport News Dec. 20 (TK et al.) plus 44 in D.C. the same day (JB et al.). Three Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were reported from Wakefield, Va., Jan. 25 (BP). Eastern Phoebes were in higher numbers than usual on most CBCs where they are usually expected species. A genuine rarity, although the 3rd verified record for this CBC, was an Ash-throated Flycatcher at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (JO, MO, ph.), for about the 7th or 8th Virginia record. As usual the most impressive numbers of Horned Larks came from Piedmont areas, such as 592 at Nokesville, Va., Dec. 28 (KHB et al.) and 400 at New Design Rd., Frederick, Md., Jan. 12 (MO), but 329 at Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27 set a record for there. One Tree Swallow was at Assat. I., Feb. 8 (WK, HLW), an interesting date and number. Ten Fish Crows far inland at Kerr Res., Va., were notable for that location Feb. 22 (JML), and other high counts were on CBCs at Crisfield (2380), Salisbury (2208), and Dorchester (2550), with 1587 at Ft. Belvoir and 294 at inland Nokesville. This species is the scourge of colonial waterbirds.

Red-breasted Nuthatches were in good numbers this winter with high counts on many CBCs, although this was not true for coastal counts. Carolina Wrens seemed to survive the winter snows satisfactorily (v.o.); the Breeding Bird Surveys will tell us for certain. Eleven Marsh Wrens at Fishing Creek Marsh Dec. 26 furnished an excellent winter count for the w. shore (SD, JLS, RFR). In addition to, one is tempted to say, the usual Blue-gray Gnatcatchers seen on the CBCs one was present at Susq. from about Thanksgiving to Jan. 17 (RMS, EB, RFR, SD, ph.) and two were at Richmond Jan. 6 (fide PB). Eastern Blue-bird numbers continue to swell with optimum counts on many CBCs, the perennial best coming from Mathews, Va., as usual with 453 there Jan. 4 (MP et al.), but with especially good counts on the Delmarva Peninsula CBCs. A rarity was a Varied Thrush in Bethesda, Md., at a feeder Feb. 1 (SAB et al., ph.). American

Robins and Cedar Waxwings were in low to moderate numbers compared with their big numbers the previous winter (v.o.). An imm. N. Shrike was at Normans, Kent I., Md., Jan. 5 (RF, *fide* EMW), its presence in this Region extremely unusual.

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES — Two White-eyed Vireos were on the Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27 (BP, GG, FS), and Solitary Vireos were reported from at least 6 places, two of them, gratifyingly, after the CBC period: one at Northwest R. Park, Chesapeake, Va., Jan. 15 (GMW) and one at Virginia Beach Jan. 16 (HCI). An Orange-crowned Warbler was at Hopewell, Va., Dec. 20–Jan. 15 (*fide* PB). Outstanding warblers were a N. Parula at Little Creek, Va., Dec. 31 (NB), three Cape May Warblers in D.C., Dec. 20 (DC, GG, ph.), two Prairie Warblers at Chinc., Dec. 28 (CPW, TF), and two Black-and-white Warblers at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (MO, PD, one ph.). A Dickcissel in Howard, Md., Jan. 31 furnished the only report (JS). Outstanding CBC totals of Chipping Sparrows were of 105 at Salisbury and 83 at Chinc. An ad. Lark Sparrow was discovered at a private club in Anne Arundel, Md., at Crownsville and stayed Jan. 30–Mar. 5, for a new county record (MB, EM, ph.). At Cape Charles, 37 Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrows Dec. 27 on Smith, Myrtle, and Fish. Is. surpassed the previous CBC all-time high count (BPK, HTA *et al.*), but were not that surprising considering that 3 barrier islands with a total of about 15 mi of beach were involved. Fox Sparrows continued in very low numbers with 13 CBCs, all with high numbers of participants, reporting only zero to three birds. Several observers commented on the high numbers of Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Juncos. Several unusually high counts of Lapland Longspur were reported including 25 at New Design Rd., Frederick, Md., Jan. 12 (MO), nine at Nokesville, Va., Jan. 2 (KHB), and 35 at Craney Dec. 30 plus 12 there Jan. 7 (NB) and three at Lucketts, Va., Dec. 13 (EMW).

A ♀ Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Rising Sun, Md., Dec. 28 (HF, *fide* RFR)

Purple Finches were in very low numbers this winter but the crimson tide of House Finches rolls on (see Table 2). Numbers of Purple Finches are much more cyclical than those of House Finches so this table is relatively meaningless for them except to show their relative abundance for the 6 years charted. However, the sheer biomass of House Finches, even considering that the table is not geared to party-hours, is overwhelming and shows no signs of leveling off. Many House Finches hesitate to come S prior to severe weather, so even more are sometimes present after the CBCs. For example: the Cape Charles CBC, with 56 observers, reported 110 House Finches, the species being seen by 5 parties. Two observers cruising through this area in a car Feb. 1 found a single flock of 110 on phone wires in the middle of an agricultural area far from the nearest town or houses (GLA, HTA). Eleven Red Crossbills at Ft. Belvoir, Va., Jan. 3 (DFA) and a White-winged Crossbill at a Denton, Md., feeder Feb. 19 & 21 (R), *fide* AJF) furnished the only reports for these two species. Common Redpolls in small numbers were widely reported from late January on with vanguard individuals at Sandy Point S.P., Md., Dec. 6 (DM, *fide* EMW), Cedar I., Va., Dec. 21 (HTA), and at sea 20 mi e of Virginia Beach Jan. 25 on a Dutch fishing vessel (WM). A group of 40 was at Ellicott City, Md., Jan. 31 (PO, *fide* EMW) and one was banded at Patuxent W.R.C., Md., Feb. 1 (MKK, DB). Another early bird was at a feeder at Gibson I., Md., for about a week through Jan. 4 (BC, *fide* RFR). Pine Siskins also became common following the same schedule with small numbers on most CBCs building up to big numbers in some places (e.g., Lynchburg, Va., *fide* MM). They invaded Patuxent W.R.C. during February with over 1000 banded there plus one previously banded in Missouri last April (MKK). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce all winter (v.o.).

Table 2. Comparative Abundance of House Finch and Purple Finch on Selected Christmas Bird Counts: 1986, 1981, 1976, 1971, 1966 and 1961

year:		1986		1981		1976		1971		1966		1961	
CBC		HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF
MD	L. Kent Co.	343	7	112	4	421	4	37	14	28	11		
VA	Lynchburg	508	126	596	195	84	135	15	399		2		7
VA	Nokesville	607	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MD	Salisbury	381	22	239	2	63	21	8	4	9	1	—	—
MD	Denton	330	10	276	5	51	3	18	16				2
MD	Baltimore	404		92	4	70	31	195	70	101	88	—	—
MD	Port Tobacco	74	13	19	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MD	S. Dorchester	136		2	6	36	2		2		2		9
MD	Ocean City	409	6	57	11	122	18	64	14	1	26		1
MD	Crisfield	339	1	344	24	9	9	1	25	—	—	—	—
DC	Wash., D.C.	747	21	515	36	321	58	97	174	32	10		40
VA	Ft. Belvoir	504	47	153	56	19	80	16	72	5	3		10
VA	Mathews	326	1		14	3	23		19	—	—	—	—
VA	Chincoteague	260	17	142	6	13	39		29		1		4
VA	Cape Charles	110	20	55	14	18	21	7	31		3	—	—
VA	Newport News	186	5	97	2	1	9		1		5		1
VA	Little Creek	111	13	85	4	39	65	4	94		6		3
VA	Back Bay	26	1	1	5		35		92		6		
	TOTALS PF		321		402		553		1056		164		77
	TOTALS HF	5801		2785		1270		462		176		0	
		HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF	HF	PF

—means CBC not in existence that year.

Comments: Note that House Finches are still relatively uncommon in some remote areas in the extreme south of the Region or towards the end of peninsular or isolated marshy regions such as Back Bay, Little Creek, Cape Charles, S. Dorchester County and Port Tobacco. Note their recent increase in some other areas such as Mathews and Newport News.

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SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION

Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

The winter in the Southeast was somewhat milder than usual, but rainfall was quite heavy, especially in January. The Drought of 1986 was certainly a memory of the past when reservoirs in North Carolina reached 12 to 20 feet above normal levels in later winter. Portions of the western Piedmont had ten or more inches of snow in mid-January, but the most damaging weather [at least to vegetation] was a sleet storm on February 16–17 that dumped six or more inches of pellets in many areas; it took a week for the sleet to completely melt.

Many observers commented on the enormous wild food crop and complained that this was the reason that birds just would not come to their feeders. The Drought of 1986 was certainly responsible for the heavy volume of flowers on trees and shrubs that later led to the heavy acorn, nut, and berry crops. Winter finches were not particularly numerous in early winter but by February were widespread. Waterfowl numbers were somewhat lower than normal, but the overall decline in the breeding populations is certainly at least partly responsible; the Canada Goose populations are especially depleted. The snow and ice storms apparently did not cause severe hardships because of the excellent food crop, but several observers noted birds killed as they foraged along road edges, often the only places where the food was not covered. The highlights of the season were a mystery gull and several rare gulls, as well as flycatchers. The Snowy Owl invasion in the East did reach the Region, barely, and pelagic trips off North Carolina again provided notable records, although these were of lingering species north of their expected ranges (such as storm-petrels) rather than longed-for Northern species south of theirs (such as puffins, murres, and skuas).

ABBREVIATIONS — Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH FLAMINGOS — A good flight of 200 Red-throated Loons was seen flying S at Tybee I., Ga., Jan. 30 (DS). The elusive Red-necked Grebe was encountered twice—three at Ft. Fisher, N.C., Jan. 3 (RD) and one at Charleston, S.C., Feb. 18 (DF). Unfortunately, there were no reports of Eared



Grebes, and the one report of Western Grebe, from Kerr Res., N.C., was poorly documented. Lee continued his pelagic studies by making a handful of trips out of Oregon Inlet, N.C. In addition to a small number of the expected Black-capped Petrels, he had Manx Shearwaters on 4 trips Dec. 20–Feb. 25, with an apparent Regional record 15+ Feb. 14. The first mid-winter Audubon's Shearwaters for the state were two (one collected) Jan. 21 (DL). Truly amazing were the 351 **Wilson's Storm-Petrels** seen in those waters on a CBC Dec. 20 (DL, BO et al.); this species had never previously been reported on any continental CBC. Lee was also able to detect one, and possibly three, **Leach's Storm-Petrel(s)** among the Wilson's; until last winter, there were no North Carolina winter records for any storm-petrels.

There were just two reports of Am. White Pelicans: one again all winter at Charleston (DF) and another Jan. 2 near Sapelo I., Ga. (TKP, JC, CB). The Brown Pelican continues to increase as a winterer in North Carolina, and the species was frequently seen as far "inland" as New Bern in late February (BH). Great Cormorants also have shown an upward trend in that state and were seen at 6 coastal sites from Oregon Inlet to Southport,

where, for the 2nd straight winter, about 14 birds have been found along the lower Cape Fear R. (BB *et al.*).

The Am. Bittern, a Blue-listed species, has shown a distinct decline in wintering numbers in recent years near the coast. A few were notable inland, where not regular—singles at Augusta, Ga., all winter (AW), at Greenville, S.C., Dec. 21 (JB), at Aiken, S.C., Dec. 24 (JA), and in n.w. Oconee, Ga., Jan. 23 (PS). Cattle Egrets were reported at a number of inland sites in Georgia, including Decatur, Seminole, Ben Hill, and Bibb (*vide* TM, TI); whereas a count of 11 near Currituck, N.C., Jan. 2 (BL) was notable in that state. Likewise, Green-backed Herons were encountered at 4 Piedmont sites. A Greater Flamingo spent the winter at Pamlico Pt., N.C. (PJC).

WATERFOWL — The only report of Fulvous Whistling-Duck came from one of its favored locales, Savannah N.W.R., S.C., where 10 were present Feb. 7 (RWL). A rarity for the Atlanta, Ga., vicinity was a Tundra Swan flying over Peachtree City L., Dec. 12 (O & JK). Two Greater White-fronted Geese each were at L. Mattamuskeet, N.C., Feb. 8 (BH, JF) and L. Hartwell near Clemson, S.C., Feb. 15 (JB *et al.*). Snow Geese are rare away from n.e. North Carolina, and thus notable were one Dec. 21 near Townville, S.C. (JB), another Jan. 31–Feb. 1 at Croft S.P., S.C. (MC), and two at L. Lanier, Ga., from fall to Jan. 10 (JP).

The only puddle ducks of note were a Blue-winged Teal far inland near Roswell, Ga., Jan. 29 (NJ) and a ♂ Eur. Wigeon near the North R. in Carteret, N.C., Dec. 21 (BH) that was likely the same bird that was there a year ago. Although it was not a cold winter, both eiders and Harlequin Duck were encountered. The Com. Eiders were females—one at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., Dec. 5 into February (LG, PN, m.ob.) and one at Cape Hatteras Point, N.C., Jan. 22 (JF); whereas the sole King Eider report was from Beaufort, N.C., a female seen Dec. 21 (MT). A ♂ Harlequin Duck was shot by a hunter during the winter near Pamlico Pt., N.C. (*vide* TT); this is not the first time a Harlequin has been taken in this manner in that state. Oldsquaws were found inland only in North Carolina, with nine at Roanoke Rapids L., Jan. 3 (ML, KL) and one in Forsyth Jan. 26–Feb. 5 (GT *et al.*). Impressive numbers of scoters were tallied on the Charleston CBC, including 450 Surfs (*vide* SC); another Surf was very rare inland in Clayton, Ga., Dec. 6 (PM, TM, HG, PB). The best of the usual handful of inland Com. Goldeneyes were two birds at Rum Cr. Wildlife Management Area, Ga., Jan. 27 (TJ) and 3 records for the Atlanta area (*vide* TM). The mild winter must have been the main factor in the excellent numbers of Hooded Mergansers on many CBCs, including 205 at Marietta, Ga. (*vide* TM) and 225 at Southern Pines, N.C. (TH, *vide* JHC). Common Mergansers, a good barometer of winter weather severity, were predictably scarce, although 15 were at Roanoke Rapids L., their favorite Regional locale, Feb. 1 (ML, RY).

HAWKS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — There were more sightings of Ospreys than normal, with birds far inland at Augusta Dec. 6 and Jan. 2 (AW, VW) and Dublin, Ga., Jan. 10 (HG *et al.*). One of just a few recent nestings of Bald Eagles for Georgia involved an active nest this winter at Rum Creek W.M.A. (TJ *et al.*). Unfortunately, the nest toppled into L. Juliette and the nesting thus failed. Elsewhere, eagle numbers continue to increase, and the Midwinter Survey in North Carolina tallied a record 29 birds (*vide* TH). Quite a surprise was an ad. N. Goshawk seen in residential Raleigh, N.C., Dec. 9 (DC). The description for a Rough-legged Hawk near Rocky Mount, N.C., Dec. 1 (FE) was reasonably convincing; as usual, a couple of other reports with shaky details were not accepted. A Merlin was seen at Columbia, S.C., Jan. 15 (BM) and the same bird or another was noted the next day 3 mi away (BM). More notable was a Peregrine Falcon, eating a Rock Dove, at Reidsville, N.C., Dec. 6 (*vide* JG).

Much was learned about Yellow Rail behavior, habitat, and distribution in North Carolina this season. And 2 parties actually found the species in a purposeful search; nearly all previous records were the result of serendipity! Fussell and Nance figured that the extremely high tides and heavy rains Jan. 1 would force rails onto high ground at North R. near Beaufort, and such was the case, as they saw two Yellowlegs (plus three Clappers, two Soras, and 25 Virginias, but no Blacks). Even more significant in location and habitat was a series of 3 sightings of single Yellowlegs, including one shot by a hunter mistaking it for a N. Bobwhite, Jan. 17–Feb. 16, in weedy fields well inland a few miles n.e. of L. Mattamuskeet (FA, KR, ML). The bird flushed Feb. 16 required 28 man-hours of field walking (*vide* ML)! Fussell was able to elicit calling by Black Rails on CBCs at previously known year round sites at Wanchese and North R. in North Carolina. A King Rail was unusual near Roswell, Ga., Jan. 10 (JS). The Sandhill Crane at Augusta in fall was last seen Dec. 6 (*vide* AW).

A very good count of the federally threatened Piping Plover was of 35+ at Huntington Beach S.P., Jan. 5 (JEC). Notable in inland Georgia in winter were two early Lesser Yellowlegs in Clayton Feb. 22 (PB) and single Spotted Sandpipers at Augusta Dec. 6 and Jan. 17 (AW, VW), Carrolton Dec. 7 (NK), and Fairburn Feb. 7 (PB, HG). A midwinter Whimbrel Jan. 24 at Pea I., N.C. (HL, WI) was notable, but just a single Long-billed Curlew was reported—one most of the winter at Ft. Fisher, N.C. (JN, DW), perhaps the same individual that wintered there last year. Sanderlings almost never occur inland in winter, despite their abundance along the coast; thus, of interest was one Jan. 6 at Sumter, S.C. (LG, ED). A Semipalmated Sandpiper was studied in detail by Fussell at Cape Hatteras Point Dec. 2, a very late date. The mild weather allowed larger numbers of Least Sandpipers to overwinter inland than usual, with good totals of 75–100 near Dublin, Ga., Jan. 31–Feb. 8 (TKP), 65 at Sumter Jan. 6 (LG, ED), 20–50 all winter at New Bern, N.C. (BH), and 49 at Augusta Jan. 17 (AW). A Pectoral Sandpiper lingered to Dec. 4 at L. Lanier, Ga. (JP), whereas a more hardy Dunlin remained in Forsyth, Ga., through the end of January (JP). A tally of 35 Long-billed Dowitchers at Eagle I. near Wilmington, N.C., Jan. 8 (KK) was excellent for that area. With each passing winter it becomes more evident that the Red Phalarope is the most common winter pelagic species off the Region's coast. Lee's trips off Oregon Inlet generally yielded triple digits each time with a peak of 525 Dec. 20 (DL, BO, m.ob.). Other records were of 52 off Morehead City, N.C., Feb. 14 (HL, JN) and one found dead on the beach at Avon, N.C., Dec. 5 (JF).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS — An excellent tally of eight jaegers was noted on the Bodie-Pea I. CBC Dec. 29 (*vide* PS); four were identified as Pomarines, two as Parasitics, and two were unidentified. The only other jaegers were seen on a pelagic trip off Jekyll I., Ga., Feb. 28—one Pomarine and three Parasitics (TM *et al.*); it is a rare trip in which Parasitics outnumber Pomarines. Bonaparte's Gulls were encountered 3 times in the Atlanta area, where surprisingly they are not seen each winter. The best inland count was of 300 at L. Wateree, S.C., Feb. 10 (LG).

Although there were likely no more rarities at Cape Hatteras than usual, the fact that the gull flocks received through weekly coverage by Fussell through March made it appear to be a true bonanza of rarities. An ad. **Thayer's Gull**, furnishing the 3rd sight record for the state, was present Jan. 18 (JF, JW), and single ad. Iceland's—apparently different birds—were there Jan. 25 (JF, JN) and Feb. 1 (JF, JW). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were mundane at the cape, and are no longer a target species for many birders at that site. Fussell found no Glaucous Gulls there until March, but he did encounter 17 Black-legged Kittiwakes at the cape Dec. 2 immediately after a storm. The Spring Season report will contain numerous highlights from Cape Hatteras Point.

This was the most exciting winter for gull watching in several years, but unfortunately it was more exciting than really necessary. Forsythe found a very strange "mystery" gull at a sewage treatment plant near Folly Beach, S.C., Feb. 17. The gawky-looking bird, with very long yellow-orange legs, yellow-orange bill with black ring and red tip, and other puzzling marks brought birders from many parts of the country to the Charleston area, once word got out that the bird was a probable Gray-headed Gull, never before recorded in North America. Some who saw it agreed that it was a Gray-headed, others were so perplexed by the field marks that they simply could not identify it, whereas others said it definitely was not a Gray-headed. It is surprising to me that no one who saw it insisted that it was a hybrid, although the descriptions provided to Tove and myself seemed to indicate a hybrid hooded \times non-hooded species. Finally, in mid-March, Post collected the bird (*N.M.N.H.) and said that the bird was definitely a hybrid—most likely Laughing \times Herring, although Laughing \times Ring-billed is a possibility. The National Museum staff is studying the gull to make a final determination, if possible at all, as it is unlike anything at the museum. Birders should be cautioned about jumping to premature conclusions about unusual-looking gulls; birders in the East are not accustomed to such mystery gulls because little hybridization occurs here. From now on, I suspect (and hope) that the possibility of hybridization will be considered more strongly than simply trying to call a bird whatever species most closely resembles the gull in question.

Other Iceland Gulls were seen at Hatteras, N.C., village Dec. 30 (JF) and at Huntington Beach S.P., S.C., Jan. 24 (PW, GC). Lesser Black-backed Gull reports were limited to coastal North Carolina, and the sole report of Glaucous Gull was at Wanchese, N.C., Jan. 24 (JN). Kittiwakes were found on just 2 of Lee's pelagic trips, with a peak of 29 Jan. 9. There were 2 sightings of alcids, both unidentified Razorbill/murre birds from coastal New Hanover, N.C., Dec. 20 (fide FN) and Jan. 31 (MT, HL).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS — The small flurry of Com. Ground-Dove reports for the Augusta area continued, with two seen near Silver Bluff Sanctuary, S.C., Jan. 18 (DCo). The rumors of a Snowy Owl invasion in the Northeast came true in this Region; North Carolina's first **Snowy Owl** in 13+ years appeared at Cape Hatteras Nat'l Seashore (Avon and Bodie I.) in late December (fide MaL). As birders scoured the Outer Banks for this elusive bird, it or another appeared on Run Hill—a large sand dune—at Kill Devil Hills Jan. 9 (SaC, ph). Although they probably winter regularly in each state in the Region, Long-eared Owls are seldom reported. Not only was one road-killed Long-eared found near Oak City, N.C., Jan. 14 (FW), but Williams had the good fortune (or misfortune?) of finding a road-killed N. Saw-whet Owl the same day near Winton. Hummingbirds make news every winter now. Two *Selasphorus*, thought to be Rufous Hummingbirds—a female and an imm. male—were at a New Bern feeder all winter (JD, BH, RB, DFoy, RF), for about the 6th North Carolina record. Reports of *Archilochus* hummingbirds involved two birds each at 2 locations in Carteret, N.C. (IF, RM). Regional birders are still awaiting an ad. δ *Archilochus* or a specimen in winter, or any tangible evidence that these birds are anything other than Ruby-throateds (i.e., Black-chinneds). Two Red-cockaded Woodpeckers near the Rocky Mount-Wilson, N.C., airport Feb. 21 (RD) were at a new location, and in a pecan grove at that!

Remarkably, there were 3 reports of *Empidonax* flycatchers, all with thorough details. Apparently the first winter records for North Carolina and Georgia were of **Least Flycatchers** seen and heard calling ("whit" note) near Lake Landing, Hyde, N.C., Dec. 28 (HL) and at Ft. Pulaski N.M., Ga., Jan. 29 (DS). A silent

Empidonax, thought to be a Least, was near Southport, N.C., Jan. 3 (JN, JH). Undoubtedly the best-studied **Say's Phoebe** ever for the Region was Georgia's 3rd, in n.e. Laurens, Dec. 27-Feb. 8 (TKP et al.). Western Kingbirds lingered as usual at a few coastal sites; two were near Grandy, N.C., Jan. 2 (BL), one was somewhat inland at Gull Rock in Hyde, N.C., Dec. 28 (JF), and one surprisingly lingered all winter at Sapelo I., Ga., having first been seen Jan. 2 (TKP, MO et al.). Probably a first in winter for North Carolina was a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** Dec. 25-Jan. 4 in n. Duplin (MH, RD et al.). Seldom seen on the South Carolina coast were two Horned Larks at Huntington Beach S.P., Dec. 5 (LG). Although they winter in small numbers in s. Florida, **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** have essentially cleared out of our area by August. Perhaps the first winter record in over 10 years for the Region was of two Dec. 22 and four in the following week at New Bern, N.C. (BH). These birds were at a quarry along with Tree Swallows and rare-in-winter Barn Swallows, with a peak of eight Barns in late December and one remaining through Feb. 1 (BH). Other Barns were at L. Mattamuskeet Dec. 28 (BL) and near Georgetown, S.C., Dec. 6 (LG).

CROWS THROUGH WARBLERS — Fish Crows were present in much larger numbers than usual near the Fall Line in Halifax, N.C. (ML). Red-breasted Nuthatches stayed to the north this winter; they were difficult to find, although many CBCs did manage to find a very few individuals. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers appeared at 4 Piedmont sites—Jordan L., N.C., Greenville, S.C., and Pendergrass and Atlanta, Ga. Golden-crowned Kinglets were widely regarded by birders in the s part of the Region, where not usually common, as being much more numerous than normal. On the other hand, the ice storms in late February may have caused a major kill of Ruby-crowned Kinglets. A δ N. Parula was very late at Sapelo I., Jan. 3 (CB), whereas completely out of season was North Carolina's first winter record of **Yellow Warbler**, one studied at close range at L. Mattamuskeet Feb. 8 (JF, BH). Several Yellow-throated Warblers were again found on the Cape Hatteras CBC (HL, PS, GW), and others farther inland than usual were at Orangeburg, S.C., Jan. 21 (LG) and Dublin all winter (TKP). A Prairie Warbler on the Peachtree City Lake CBC Dec. 20 (CF, MO) was very rare for n. Georgia, and another was at L. Seminole Dec. 11–14 (PR) in that state's s.w. corner. The 2nd-best warbler of the period was a Wilson's Jan. 10–17 in Forsyth, Ga. (JP), for one of just several state winter records.

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES — Sibley heard a calling Summer Tanager Feb. 1 at St. Catherines I., Ga. The sole W. Tanager of the season was a feeder bird in the Winston-Salem, N.C., area Dec. 10–Feb. 17 (ME, m.ob.). A Blue Grosbeak at Sapelo I., Jan. 2 (TKP, JC) was quite unusual, as was an Indigo Bunting at Ft. Fisher Jan. 3 (JF). A \emptyset Painted Bunting was noteworthy away from a feeder near Greenfield L. in Wilmington Jan. 21 (KK). The lone Am. Tree Sparrow report, at Jordan L., Jan. 4 (KKn) was believable and conceivable, which could not be said for over half of the reports received over the years. Perhaps because of the slightly warmer than usual temperatures this season, Chipping Sparrows were remarkably common on many CBCs. A Clay-colored Sparrow Dec. 28 near Fairfield, N.C. (RD, EDe) provided about the 4th state winter record. The secretive Lincoln's Sparrow was seen at least 3 times, all in the North Carolina Coastal Plain, where the species winters in many locales. New sites were Weldon Dec. 7 (ML) and Fayetteville Jan. 6 (PJC). Winter records of White-crowned Sparrow are very spotty below the Fall Line, mainly along the coast; quite notable were three near the Savannah R. in Hampton, S.C., Jan. 16 (RC, LG). Lapland Longspurs again returned to the Charlotte Motor Speedway near Harrisburg, N.C.: a few were seen in early December (fide DB). Snow Buntings were reported only from the extreme n. coast of North Carolina, where 28 were counted Dec. 31 (HL, RD, MT, BL) and 19 were there Feb. 26 (JF, CM), all within 5 mi of the Virginia border.

A Brewer's Blackbird Jan. 1-3 at a sewage treatment plant in Winston-Salem (HH, PC, JCu) was a good find in North Carolina. All in all, Winter 1986-1987 was a decent one for winter finches. Pine Siskins were not common in December on most CBCs, but numbers steadily increased and by February they were fairly common or common in most areas, except in the s. part of the Region. Evening Grosbeaks were quite spotty in December and January but picked up in abundance by February. They tended to be more common in the lower Coastal Plain than in the upper Piedmont, a trend that has revealed itself on several other occasions in past winters. Because of the wild food crop, most of these finches showed little interest in feeders until late in the season. Red Crossbills remained in the Far North or the Appalachians for the umpteenth straight winter; yet, a ♀ White-winged Crossbill at a Huntersville, N.C., feeder during a snowstorm Feb. 16-17 (EJ, fide DB) was an excellent (and enviable) find. One might have expected a few Com. Redpolls among the hordes of goldfinches and Pine Siskins, but there was just one report; it could not be confirmed by experienced birders.

OBSERVERS — Jeannine Angerman, Fred Annand, John Batson, Clarence Belger, Rich Boyd, Patrick Brisse, Bill Brokaw, Dick Brown, Matthew Campbell, Derb Carter, J.H. Carter III, Robin Carter, J.E. Cely, Steve Compton, Dan Connelly (DCo), Jack Cooper, Sam Cooper (SaC), Greg Cornwell, P.J. Crutchfield, Jim Culbertson (JCu), Pat Culbertson, Evelyn Dabbs, Ricky Davis, Eric Dean (EDe); Mr. & Mrs. John Dunn III, Frank Enders, Mary Ericksen, Craig Faanes, Dennis Forsythe, Dorothy Foy (DFoy), Roger Foy, Iris Fulcher, John Fussell, Hugh Garrett, Lex Glover, Julia Gunn, John Hardwick, Marie Harper, Tom Henson (The), Bob Holmes, Hop Hopkins, Tom Howard, Wayne Irvin, Ty Ivey, Eric Johnson, Nanette Johnson, Terry Johnson, Oscar & June Kiplinger, Nell Kirkland, Ken Knapp (KKn), Kitty Kosh, Dave Lee, Harry LeGrand, Bob Lewis, R.W. Loftin, Karen Lynch, Merrill Lynch, Marcia Lyons (MaL), Bruce Mack, Rosemary Markham, Chris Marsh, Peggy Moore, Terry Moore, Jeremy Nance, National Museum of Natural History, Frances Needham, Perry Nugent, Mark Oberle, Bob Odear, John Paget, T.K. Patterson, Will Post, Paul Raney, Ken Read, Dave Sibley, Jay Stolar, Paul Sykes, Mike Tove, Gray Tuttle, Tommy Tuttle, Anne Waters, Vernon Waters, Floyd Williams, Gary Williamson, Pete Worthington, David Wright, John Wright, Randy Yelverton. — **HARRY E. LeGRAND, JR., 331 Yadkin Dr., Raleigh, NC 27609.**

FLORIDA REGION

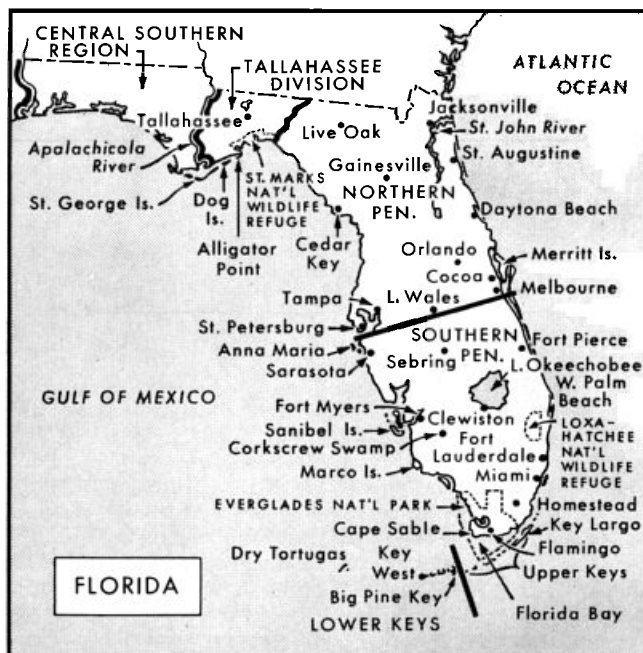
John C. Ogden

The winter of 1986-1987 was wet and warm throughout Florida, with a complete absence of major cold fronts. For the Tallahassee Division, Henry Stevenson considered the winter "without a doubt one of our warmest and cloudiest." Amazingly, Tallahassee had only a single night with below-freezing temperatures. At the other end of the peninsula, Bill Robertson commented that the Everglades during January-February looked more like mid-summer, water levels were so high.

Presumably in response to such goings-on, winter sparrows and finches were scarce. Area editors throughout the Region commented one way or another on the small numbers or outright absence of Hermit Thrushes, Golden-crowned Kinglets, White-throated, Song, and Fox sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and finches. Interestingly, no compensatory trend for increased numbers of overwintering neotropical species was clearly evident. A few unusual warblers, and more northerly wintering tanagers and Painted Buntings (see species accounts), were about the only balancing reports.

Frequent rainfalls throughout the normal dry season had a major and unfortunate impact on wading birds in south Florida's interior wetlands. Water levels were so high, and often rising rather than falling, that the tremendous number of waders (mostly egrets and ibis) that usually concentrate in the Everglades and Big Cypress regions were mostly absent throughout the winter period. Nesting colonies that form in late winter-early spring in southern Florida were also impacted, with very few waders in the traditional colony sites through late March (see Roseate Spoonbill and Wood Stork).

Finally, the Florida peninsula again demonstrated its disregard for the standard four seasons concept. As you read the following species accounts, you will encounter migrants going both north and south, passing over the heads of wintering and nesting populations, all during the traditional December-to-February "winter" period.



ABBREVIATIONS — A.B.S. = Archbold Biological Station; E.N.P. = Everglades Nat'l Park; F.S.M. = Florida State Museum; U.S.F. = University of South Florida.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Although it was not a record year for loon mortality such as occurred during the winter of 1982-1983, 30 dead Com. Loons were found on beaches of Levy County through the period (LLA). While loons are far less common in those waters than are cormorants and mergansers, more dead loons were found than all other species combined. A high count of 53 Com. Loons was made from the Gandy Bridge, Old Tampa Bay, Dec. 19 (RTP). Extremely rare

was one **Western Grebe** studied carefully as it swam off the Lake Worth Pier Dec. 2 (HPL, TT). Both observers considered this bird to be the formerly dark-phase *Aechmophorus occidentalis*, because the dark on the head extended "well below where the eye would be".

Details are lacking as I write, but Masked Boobies were reported to be making another nesting attempt on Hospital Key, Dry Tortugas, Feb. 15 (JRL). Over 1000 N. Gannets passed S at Ward's Bank, near Jacksonville, Dec. 8 (RHC). Several gannets were off the Venice Fishing Pier, Sarasota Co., Dec. 28 and Jan. 2 (LB, m.ob.); one found dead on Venice Beach Feb. 16 had a piece of cheesecloth in its throat. Area editors in Venice, Naples, and the Keys reported larger than usual numbers of Am. White Pelicans, including 1500 in the Rookery Bay area, Collier Co., Dec. 12 (THB, LR), 16 at the Dry Tortugas Dec. 1 (DOL), and 11 over Key West Jan. 2 (JO). On the other hand, Brown Pelican numbers in s. Florida were low, perhaps owing to the warm winter. A series of censuses in the Naples area revealed 25 percent fewer Brown Pelicans compared to a 13-year mean (THB). Possibly providing evidence of a late (?) flight of Brown Pelicans into the upper Florida Keys were 2 well-formed flocks (40 birds total) headed SW over Plantation Key Dec. 28 (JCO). A Great Cormorant was at the W. Delray sewage treatment plant, Palm Beach Co., Feb. 22 through the end of the month (HPL, BH).

COLONIAL WADING BIRDS —

S.A.

This winter was one of the worst on record for nesting of wading birds in s. Florida, continuing a pattern we have seen for the past several years, where almost all nesting species show annual declines. Each year we hear excuses (too wet, too dry, etc.) but it must be remembered that "normal" as a weather event is more theoretical than real. The point is that "normal" seasons were just as elusive decades ago, yet waders once nested in most years. The big picture, as has been said many times, is that with the combination of wetland feeding habitats already lost forever and the serious mismanagement (from the waders' point of view) of the remaining wetlands, we are watching the total collapse of a s. Florida wading bird population that once numbered in the hundreds of thousands. If as many as 500 total pairs successfully nest in the Everglades-Big Cypress region during this winter-spring season, I will be amazed.

Two species were of special concern in the 1986-1987 winter. Roseate Spoonbills, which have not in the recent past been included on the list of troubled species, may now be joining that unenviable category! The number of spoonbills nesting in Florida Bay during the last 2-3 years has been about one-half the number that nested there during the mid-late 1970s (GP). This winter saw an almost complete reproductive failure when about 450 pairs abandoned active nests following heavy rains and high winds in late December and early January, and about the same number of pairs (re-nesting?) again abandoned a late nesting during March following more rain (GP, RBj). Whether this recent decline by spoonbills is related to the water management problem, or is a more immediate response to the recent spate of cold or wet winters, is a question as yet unanswered. As for Wood Storks, none successfully nested in either E.N.P. or the Big Cypress. The only stork colony that formed, about 150 pairs at Cuthbert I., in mid-February, was abandoned by the end of March (WBR, SJe). Perhaps related to the storks' failure in s. Florida, the earliest-ever arrival in the Tallahassee Div. was of five storks near St. Marks Light Feb. 26 (MSR).

Elsewhere, a "Great White" Heron, mated with a "blue" bird, was carrying nesting material at Terra Ceia Bird Key, Manatee Co., Dec. 30 (RTP). Another Great White made an unexpected landing at the A.B.S. parking lot, Highlands Co.,

Jan. 21 (FEL). Both one Great White Heron and two Reddish Egrets (2nd winter record for Wakulla County) occurred throughout the period at St. Marks Refuge (CSG). A surprisingly high count of 756 Glossy Ibises was at Clear Springs Mines, Polk Co., Dec. 6 (PJF, CG).

WATERFOWL, RAPTORS — The first Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in Alachua County in 10 years were six at Paynes Prairie and L. Kanapaha Dec. 21 (JHH, TEO), and 30 at the latter site Dec. 25 (THK). Four Snow Geese (3 "blue") were on St. George I., Dec. 16 (CM), and 16 total (all white) were at 2 locations near Lake Wales Jan. 19 (HF). Unusually high counts were of 2000 Green-winged Teal Jan. 12 and 1250 Shovelers and 5300 Ruddy Ducks Feb. 7 (CG, PJF) at Clear Springs Mine. Following last winter's invasion by Black Scoters, the only report this year was of 12 at St. Marks Light Jan. 11 (BSc). Among the rare species were one Eur. Wigeon at St. Marks Light Jan. 9-28 (JEC, CSG), an imm. ♂ **Common Eider** at several coastal Broward County locations, Nov. 15 through the period (GH, BH), and Com. Mergansers, both females, one at Venice Beach Dec. 28-31 (LB, m.ob.) and one at Tallahassee Feb. 3 (JEC).

Suggestions of mid-winter flights of Turkey Vultures in the Florida Keys were 100 over Key West Dec. 17 (JO) and 75 headed S at Plantation Key Jan. 2 (JCO). Two **Mississippi Kites**, one adult and one immature, which I understand were not included in the fall seasonal report because of a lack of supporting details at that time, have now been abundantly documented. The kites were first seen near Watson's Hammock, Big Pine Key, Monroe Co., Nov. 7, and remained through the winter period on Big Pine (once on nearby Middle Torch Key, TW, JK, MBr, m.ob.). Mississippi Kites are extremely rare in s. Florida at any season, and do not normally winter anywhere in the United States. Most often when seen, these two were together soaring and wheeling over woods on Big Pine. Both light and dark phase Short-tailed Hawks were over Key West during the winter, Dec. 17 and Jan. 18 (JO), and on Big Pine Key throughout the period (PB, MBr, JK). Among the rarities were one Swainson's Hawk at Clewiston Feb. 18 (BM), two Golden Eagles near St. Marks Light, at least one of which was observed Dec. 10 through the period (JEC, CSG, RMW), and one Crested Caracara, unusually far n. near Otter Creek, Levy Co., Feb. 8 (DTF, ORF). A bumper crop of seven nestling Bald Eagles was censused at St. Marks Refuge, Feb. 28 (CSG). Included in the falcon department was one unseasonable Merlin at the Dry Tortugas Feb. 4 (DOL). Peregrines were reported from many coastal or near-coastal locations, including one at the Dry Tortugas Dec. 16, Jan. 24, and Feb. 12 (DOL), one to two in downtown Tampa throughout February (DW), and one far to the n. at St. Marks Light Feb. 11 (CSG).

CRANES THROUGH TERNS — Two Sandhill Cranes, extremely late fall migrants if not wintering, were at Medart, Wakulla Co., Dec. 30 (DCB). What may have been the southernmost nesting of Am. Woodcock in Florida occurred at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Collier Co. (SE). One displaying adult was seen and heard repeatedly during January, followed by the discovery of one adult with two downy young Feb. 26 near the boardwalk. Apparently several visitors photographed the family group, but copies of the photos received so far at Corkscrew are only of the adult. Early returning Black-necked Stilts were one near Jewfish Creek, Monroe Co., Jan. 30 (JCO), one at Clear Spring Mines, Polk Co., Feb. 7 (PJF), and one e of Sarasota Feb. 15 (CS). Parasitic Jaegers close inshore in the Keys were two off W. Summerland Key Nov. 30 (MBr, PB), and two near Middle Butternut Key, Florida Bay, Jan. 14 (RBo).

A gull considered to be a Thayer's, at a sewage treatment plant near Tallahassee Dec. 16, was well photographed (HMS, JEC); if the photos confirm the identification this will become the first Tallahassee Div. record. Lesser Black-backed Gulls showed up in record numbers along the e. coast throughout the period. The high count was of 11 Jan. 3 at the Pompano Beach landfill (HPL, m.ob.). Others were at the Lantana Dump (high count four, Feb. 19, HPL), one at Ft. Pierce (HD, WD),

and one at New Smyrna Beach Jan 3 (CW, SW) Much more unusual was one Lesser Black-backed at Tallahassee Dec 16 (HMS, JEC), for about the 5th Divisional record. Great Black-backed Gulls were reported from a wide scatter of locations, with the more noteworthy being one on Paynes Prairie Jan. 17, the first for Alachua County (LA), and one at Dry Tortugas Dec. 15 (DOL). The high count of Great Black-backed was of 10 at the Pompano landfill Feb. 15 (*fide* HPL). A Caspian Tern in Tallahassee Feb. 6 was one of few found there in winter (JEC, HMS). Sooty Terns first landed on Bush Key, Dry Tortugas, on the early date of Feb. 27 (DOL).

ALCIDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — If ever there was a winter when alcids would not be expected, the warm winter of 1986–1987 was it. So instead, we had an unprecedented three species, two of which were firsts for the state! It all began with an **Atlantic Puffin** found alive but in poor condition by a lifeguard (Joe Bridges) on n. Jupiter I., Martin Co., Dec. 6; it died the next day in a Stuart veterinarian's office. Next to arrive was a **Razorbill**, also alive and beached, at Miami Beach, and picked up by another curious lifeguard (Bill Dorney), Dec. 16. It too was taken to a local vet, where it died Dec. 23. The puffin was new for Florida; both specimens went to the F.S.M. If that wasn't enough, the near impossible occurred when a **Marbled Murrelet** was found freshly dead on the beach at Honeymoon I., Pinellas Co., Dec. 29 (WH). Words fail me for this n. Pacific species! Needless to say, it too was a Florida first. The specimen went to U.S.F.

A *Streptopelia* dove, identified as Ringed Turtle-Dove (*risoria*), was at a new location, Skinner Lake, Putnam Co., Dec. 11 (SPC). The 3rd record of a Smooth-billed Ani for Alachua County was provided by one at Paynes Prairie Dec. 21 (JHH). Although winter nesting by owls in our latitudes is well known, precise dates and locations are not abundant in the literature. A Com. Barn-Owl nestling estimated to be 3 weeks old was found in a barn near Lake Placid Jan. 27 (FEL). A pair of E. Screech-Owls on Plantation Key, Monroe Co., laid during the first week in February; four chicks fledged between 23–25 March (MBi). The 4th Tallahassee Div. record of a Burrowing Owl, on St. Georges I., Nov. 1–Feb. 10 (*fide* HMS), like the 3 before, occurred in fall-winter and at a coastal location. As many as six Short-eared Owls were at Zellwood, Nov. 24 through the winter (SH, m.ob.), an unusually high number for anywhere in Florida. Rufous Hummingbirds appeared at 2 locations, one at Tallahassee through the period (DY), and one in Gainesville, Feb. 9–28 (DTF).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS — The big news from the n. peninsula was furnished by an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** at Imeson Industrial Park in n. Jacksonville, Dec. 12–Feb. 1 (RKR, m.ob.). It was the first for n.e. Florida, and one of the few encountered in the peninsula. The Ash-throated was apparently well photographed (*fide* PP). Great Crested Flycatchers were seen on many dates throughout the period at A.B.S., Highland Co., where they normally do not winter (FEL, DRS). What may have been an unusually early spring arrival was one Gray Kingbird at Mahogany Hammock, E.N.P., Feb. 27 (DF, SA). Purple Martins returned to central Florida by January with an early high count of 25 over A.B.S., Jan. 5 (DRS), and the first of the season at L. Alfred, Polk Co., Jan. 19 (*fide* PJF). Most unusual anywhere in Florida in mid-winter was one Nashville Warbler, well described by the observer, at Micanopy, Alachua Co., Jan. 24 (THK). Both a N. Parula and two Black-throated Green Warblers were as far n. as Jacksonville. The Parula occurred throughout the period and the Black-throated Greens Feb. 1–17 (JPC). The rarest by far, and perhaps the first in winter in the n. peninsula, was one **Chestnut-sided Warbler**, also at Jacksonville, Dec. 25–28 (HPL, ph. James Ollmann). A late fall flight of warblers deposited one Black-throated Green Warbler and one Black-throated Blue Warbler at the Dry Tortugas, Dec. 1 (DOL).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES — Perhaps influenced by our mild winter, one Summer Tanager was as far n. as Gainesville, Jan. 13 and Feb. 1 (PSF), where only about two have previously been found in winter. Possibly in the same category was one well-described ♀ Scarlet Tanager on the U S F campus Feb. 7 (KJM). A late fall migrant Blue Grosbeak appeared on the Dry Tortugas Dec. 10 (DOL). Much higher than usual numbers of Painted Buntings wintered in central Florida, including a maximum of 12 at several feeders in Winter Haven throughout the period (MG), and one near Sebring, where they are rare in winter, Jan. 10 (SJo). The rare but secretive Lincoln's Sparrow was also near Sebring, one on Jan. 8 (SJo). Several long-time observers in Tallahassee were "appalled" at the scarcity of White-throated Sparrows. Where usually seen in numbers at local bird feeders, this winter either singles or none were found (HMS, JEC, BSt). A White-crowned Sparrow, rare in the s. peninsula, was at Delray, Palm Beach Co., Feb. 22–26 (HPL, GSH); two others were in Winter Haven, Feb. 25 (JP). A locally unprecedented high count of 12 Yellow-headed Blackbirds, in one flock, was at Bartow Feb. 24 (DM).

The puzzling peregrinations of Com. Grackles in the Florida Keys may not be generally known. Grackles are common permanent residents on the adjacent mainland (Dade County), and nest abundantly throughout the Keys. Yet each October, essentially all leave the Keys in a strong NE flight to the mainland. Grackles return to the Keys by early March, with the forerunners arriving in late February. This winter, the first in the upper Keys was one flying SW over Plantation Key Feb. 15 (JCO), and one very early in the lower Keys, at Summerland Key, Jan. 29 (MBr). Although an occasional grackle remains, why almost all remove themselves for 3–4 months is a mystery Unusual on the s.e. Florida coast almost anytime, but especially in winter, was one imm. ♂ Orchard Oriole at the Delray sewage treatment plant Feb. 22 (AW, PSW). As for winter finches, Purple Finches were scarce, with only a very few reported from Tallahassee (HMS), Orange Park, Clay Co. (MC), and Gainesville (RDR). Likewise, Pine Siskins appeared only in the northernmost counties, a few in Tallahassee (DY) and Jacksonville (*fide* PP), and the only Evening Grosbeaks were six at Orange Park Feb. 13 (MC).

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Ron D. Weir

Observers from James Bay in the north, Kenora in the west, Ottawa in the east and Point Pelee National Park in the south marvelled at the unusually mild winter, extensive areas of open water, and substantially less than normal snowfall. Their accounts were laden with late departures, unusual overwintering waterfowl and passerines, and low attendance at feeders, which were lifelines for many songbirds when the few cold snaps did occur. There was no evidence that actual winter songbird populations were lower, but apparently they were widely dispersed exploiting the available food left exposed by the lack of snow.

Strong showings were made by Snowy Owl, Short-eared Owl, Pine Siskin, and redpolls. The rebound to higher population levels of Red-bellied Woodpecker and Carolina Wren, both at the northerly edge of their range in southern Ontario, fortunately coincided with this easy winter. Again, numbers of Barrow's Goldeneye, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and House Finch have risen as their status continues to change. The overwintering Eastern Phoebe and Indigo Bunting, and the Northern Shrike feeding regularly on suet, contributed to the sense of a strange and atypical winter.



ABBREVIATIONS — Pelee = Pt. Pelee National Park and vicinity. Place names in *italics* denote counties.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — Single Red-throated Loons tarried at Hamilton Dec. 13 (KAM), Wolfe I., Dec. 21 (GV, RDW), and Toronto's e. Headland (BDP). Another near Mississippi Lake, Lanark, Dec. 13 was found alive on a road (BMD). A Com. Loon at Peterborough overwintered successfully in the Otonabee R. (DCS), and late for locale were loons at Michipicoten Harbour, L. Superior, Dec. 20 (ERA, EF), Long Sault, Stormont, Jan. 9 (BMD), and Niagara Falls Jan. 11 (KJR). A lone Pied-billed Grebe lingered at Long Pt., Dec. 1–Feb. 28 for a first February record (L.P.B.O.), and singles were in Sarnia to Jan. 18 (DFR), St. Thomas Jan. 24 (RH), and Pelee Jan. 20–31 (AW, WL *et al.*). Late Horned Grebes were two at Oakville Jan. 4 (KAM) and one at Bath Jan. 27 (KC). Some 15 Red-neckeds occurred Dec. 7–Jan. 6 at Port Rowan, Manitoulin I., Prince Edward Pt., Wolfe I., Peterborough, Aldershot, and Ottawa. The bird at Kettle Pt., Feb. 1 (AHR) was thought to have been an early arrival. An Eared Grebe at Tobermory Jan. 2 was extremely late (JF).

As the breeding population of Double-crested Cormorants continues to rise on the lower Great Lakes, more late autumn and winter occurrences are being noted. Five were in e. Hamilton Bay Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (*vide* KAM) and another was at Wheatley to Dec. 13 (AW, KO). A cormorant at Kingston Dec. 21 was flying too far away to identify to species (GV, RDW). Greater than usual numbers of Great Blue Herons overwintered, to include 12 sightings around Owen Sound (*vide* GMB), three at Port Hope-Cobourg (ERM), and 22 at Holiday Beach P.P., Feb. 11 (GTH). Record numbers for recent years of Black-crowned Night-Herons were sighted. Several overwintered in e. Hamilton Bay where nine occurred Dec. 6 (WL, KAM) and eight Jan. 1 (RC *et al.*). Two and one were at St. Catharines Dec. 21 and Dec. 28–Jan. 1 (*vide* MEF & AGC), respectively. An adult appeared at Erieau Dec. 1–Jan. 17 (KJB), and the immature at Niagara-on-the-Lake Feb. 3 was unable to fly (ND). Another immature remained in Cambridge Dec. 21–Jan. 10 (TC, PW, WW).

WATERFOWL — One hundred Tundra Swans, a high number, overwintered in the Long Pt. marsh (L.P.B.O.). For the 6th successive winter a Mute Swan returned to W. Guilford, Haliburton, Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (RPi). Observers counting waterfowl in Essex, Kent, and Lambton Jan. 6 tallied 36 Snow Geese, 22,119 Canadas, and three Brant, rare in winter anywhere in Ontario (PAW). Three other Brant were in Sarnia to Jan. 25, one remaining to Feb. 28 (SAC). Overwintering Wood Ducks numbered two in Hamilton (*vide* KAM) and one in Guelph (RVT *et al.*). A female in Algonquin P.P., Dec. 6–Jan. 5 provided a first-ever winter record (DSt, RGT), and one at Long Pt., Jan. 11 was that area's first ever in January (GP). A female appeared at Wheatley harbour Feb. 3–15 (AW *et al.*). A Green-winged Teal successfully survived the winter in Sudbury and the seven at Manitoulin I., Feb. 28 presumably also overwintered (JCN). Late Blue-wingeds were a female at Bowmanville's Second Marsh Dec. 27–29 (DJM *et al.*) and a male in Sudbury Jan. 4–31, furnishing a first winter record there (RP, JGL). The ♂ hybrid Blue-winged Teal × N. Shoveler noted at Hamilton in the autumn report stayed to Dec. 6 (WL, KAM). Noteworthy N. Shovelers, rare in winter, were a male at Whitby Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (MJB, HK *et al.*), 14 at Hamilton during January (*vide* KAM), and singles at Port Dover Jan. 3 (HB) and Kingsville Feb. 5 (JL). The Am. Wigeon in Ottawa Dec. 24–Jan. 17 was also unusual (TFMB, RJ).

Numbers of northbound migrants arrived on the lower Great Lakes Feb. 26–28 and included 85 and 600 Canvasbacks plus 250 and 600 Redheads at Ivy Lea and Long Pt., respectively (JHE, RDW, L.P.B.O.). Late Ring-necked Ducks were singles at Warton Dec. 21–31 (JWJ), Whitby Dec. 30 (*vide* MJB), Hamilton in January (KAM *et al.*), and the Long Pt. area Jan. 10 & 31 (TS, TW). A Lesser Scaup nearby at Turkey Pt., Feb. 2 was rare for winter (GEW). An ad. ♂ King Eider impressed observers at Niagara-on-the-Lake Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (GBe *et al.*) and was joined for one day by a female Jan. 31 (GBe). An imm. male at the Toronto waterfront Dec. 31 was described nicely by the observers (BDR, MLT). Six Harlequin Ducks were reported, one more than the 9-year winter average. Single males were along Toronto's waterfront Dec. 7–Feb. 28 (HGC, BDP), Mississauga Jan. 3 (ph. TS), and Sarnia Feb. 7 (DFR). Single females were



Male King Eider at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Jan. 17, 1987.
Photo/Tim Sabo.

at Sarnia Dec. 6 (DFR), Presqu'ile P.P., Dec. 21 (AGC, RS), and Pelee Jan. 25 (AW), the last one thought to have been the same individual as on Nov. 7 last. The lone Surf Scoter at Burlington Jan. 18 provided one of very few January records (WL, KAM) and a ♂ White-winged inland at Ottawa Jan. 5–11 was only their 3rd ever in winter (DFB *et al.*). Overwintering Hooded Mergansers were two at Long Pt. (L.P.B.O.) plus singles at Whitby and Manotick (MJB *et al.*, BMD *et al.*). A record late date was set by a Red-breasted Merganser at Manitoulin I., Jan. 18 (CTB). Ruddy Ducks were in greatly increased numbers. Some 22 were in e. Hamilton Bay Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (*fide* KAM), 21 in w. Elgin Dec. 27 (*fide* WRJ), 12 at Blenheim Dec 1 (AW), 10 in Essex, Kent, and Lambton Jan. 6 (PAW), and singles at Sarnia Dec. 13–Jan. 15 (SAC, DFR) and Turkey Pt. Feb. 13 (TW).

S.A.

The 21+ reports of Barrow's Goldeneye were unprecedented, and compared with the 15-year winter average of only three. The previous maximum was nine last winter. It is debatable whether this increase reflects a real change in the wintering population in Ontario or an improvement in observers' ability to search methodically and identify the Barrow's. Perhaps it is a combination of both. Three imm. males and two ad. females were in Ottawa Dec. 1–Feb. 28, and upriver at Cotnam I., Renfrew, two ad. males and one ad. female were present Dec. 20 (BMD *et al.*). Another ad. male swam in the Gull R. rapids near Minden Dec. 20–21 (DB *et al.*). One of two females at Fort Erie Jan. 17 was photographed (TS) and an imm. male appeared at the Lambton generating station, St. Clair R., Jan. 25 (DFR). The big surprise came at the Cornwall dam where at least nine different Barrow's fed below the dam and around Cornwall I. There were four males and two females present Feb. 6, and one male and five females Feb. 27 (BMD *et al.*).

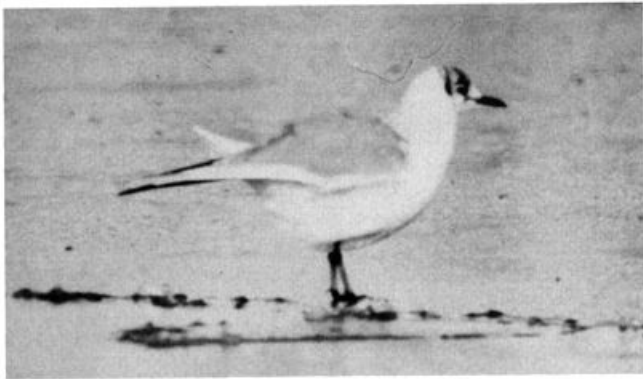
VULTURES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS — Late Turkey Vultures were singles at Kingston Dec. 20 (GY, AEB) and Westport Dec. 23 (B & PM), but the bird at Port Ryerse Feb. 16 (GH) was a spring migrant. Single Ospreys lingered at Bridgeport, Waterloo-Wellington, Dec. 8 (LN) and Fonthill, Niagara, Dec. 21 (JB *et al.*). One of the very few mid-winter Ospreys in Ontario was at Fawn I., Lambton, Feb. 2 (SAC). The 67 Bald Eagles throughout the s. compared with the 58 of last winter. At least 10 different birds wintered in the Peterborough region (*fide* DCS). Near record numbers of N. Harriers wintered near Sarnia

(SAC), and the 44 in w. Elgin Dec 27 made an impressive concentration (WRJ). A Sharp-shinned Hawk in Algonquin P.P., Feb. 21 furnished the park's 3rd winter record (RGT, GY). The 15 Cooper's Hawks overwintering in Essex were noteworthy (GTH), and provided half the total sightings for the province. Red-shouldered Hawks at Sauble Beach Feb. 20 (MP) and Chafey's Locks, Leeds, Feb. 28 were evidently spring arrivals (FP). Single dark phased Red-taileds were at Holiday Beach P.P., Dec. 10 (BE, CT), Bronte Jan. 12 (WL *et al.*), and Paris Feb. 19–21 (AW *et al.*). Noteworthy numbers of buteos were the 79 Red-taileds and 104 Rough-leggeds in w. Elgin Dec. 27 (*fide* WRJ). Rough-leggeds were also in record numbers at Sarnia (*fide* SAC).

The 11 Golden Eagles were double winter's usual number and followed last autumn's record flight. Six were from the n. at Sudbury, Wawa, Cochrane, and Sault Ste. Marie, while the five in the s. were at Long Pt., Pefferlaw, and the Peterborough area. Nine Merlins marked a return to usual numbers. Four were in Toronto Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (BDP), and singles were at Peterborough Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (DCS), Leamington Dec. 22 (DAW, MJO), Amherst I., Dec. 23 (AS *et al.*), Goderich Feb. 1 (WT), and Long Pt., Feb. 28 (DS *et al.*). Several were thought to have overwintered in Thunder Bay (NGE). Single Peregrine Falcons totalling nine birds were at Whitby Dec. 18 (MJB), St. Catharines Dec. 21–Feb. 25 (MEF), Long Pt., Dec. 27 (TS), Toronto Dec. 28 (BDP), Ottawa Dec. 28–29 (BMD *et al.*), Joyceville Jan. 8 (MH), Kingston Feb. 5 (FA), Winona Jan. 11 (MEF *et al.*), and Peterborough Jan. 24–Feb. 15 (RPa, WS). Two Gyrfalcons remained in Ottawa Dec. 11–Feb. 12 (BMD *et al.*) and singles were in the Sandhill to Wildfield area, Peel, from December to late February (*fide* GMB), Sault Ste. Marie Jan. 15–Feb. 16 (TDM), Presqu'ile P.P., Dec. 21 (AGC), near Queenston Feb. 14 (TW), and Petroglyphs P.P., Feb. 22 (*fide* GMB). These seven were above average numbers.

Six Virginia Rail reports were atypical of Ontario's normal winters. One was calling at Shrewsbury Dec. 21 (AW) and individuals were at Pelee Dec. 22 and Jan. 17 (PB *et al.*), Ingersoll Dec. 28 (DBu), Burlington Feb. 14–16 (LG *et al.*), and Long Pt., Feb. 15 (JBM *et al.*). A Com. Moorhen was still in Mississauga's Rattray marsh Jan. 17–18 (GC, HK), and an Am. Coot at Long Pt., Jan. 10 was that area's latest ever (TS). A Sandhill Crane at Pelee Dec. 22–Jan. 9 was found by 3 independent parties (ph. GTH, PDP *et al.*, KO *et al.*). A Spotted Sandpiper on a Burlington beach Dec. 13–Jan. 18 (KAM *et al.*) was an extreme rarity for winter. Other tardy sandpipers were a White-rumped in Rondeau P.P., Nov. 27–Dec. 1 (PAW), a Pectoral at Toronto's Humber R. mouth Dec. 1 (HK *et al.*), three Purples on the rocks above Niagara Falls Jan. 17 (JBM), plus six there Feb. 17 (HHA), a Dunlin there Dec. 13–24 (RFA *et al.*), and single Am. Woodcocks at Pelee Dec. 13 (JEP) and Windsor Dec. 15 (MB).

GULLS, OWLS — The last of autumn's Franklin's Gulls was at Niagara Falls Dec. 1 (GBe). Noteworthy high counts of Little Gulls were of 22 and 15 at Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 22 and Feb. 10, respectively (GBe), and the only other occurrences away from the Niagara region were of three at Leamington Dec. 10 (AW), 26 at Long Pt., Dec. 20 (*fide* GEW), and one in Toronto Feb. 6 (AR). Three Com. Black-headed Gulls constituted a strong showing, given their 14 during the past 23 winters up to 1985–1986. Single adults were at Ottawa Dec. 21–Jan. 3, only the area's 2nd ever (ph. IJ *et al.*), Niagara Falls Jan. 1 and Feb. 10 (AGC, RS, GBe), and at Port Credit from mid-January to Feb. 20 (*fide* GMB, BDP). Some 10,000 Bonaparte's Gulls, a remarkable number, were still along the Niagara R., Jan. 28 (*fide* RFA), and 410 at Wheatley Jan. 4 mostly disappeared, leaving at least eight to overwinter (AW). Twenty were tallied along the Detroit R., Jan. 13 (JL). In a normal winter, none is seen past early January. The lone Ring-billed Gull exploiting the unfrozen n. channel along Manitoulin I., Jan. 18 was a record late bird (CTB). Unusually large concentrations of Ring-billeds for late dates were the 6500 at Erieau Jan. 4 (KJB) and 4000 at Long Pt., Jan. 5–7 (L.P.B.O.). A mixed flock



Common Black-headed Gull at Port Credit, Ont., Feb. 2, 1987. Photo/Tim Sabo.

with Herring Gulls numbering 8000 were moving W past Holiday Beach P.P., Jan. 17 (BE). The seven reports of Thayer's Gulls represented usual numbers. Iceland Gulls numbered only 30, fewer than usual, and they were distributed evenly across the south. The 208+ Glaucous Gulls were more than usual, and peak tallies were of 50 at Ottawa Jan. 15 (BMD) and 30 in the Whitby area Jan. 3-8 (EP, MJB).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued their gradual increase in numbers during all seasons. The eight this winter were above their average of six during the past 4 winters. One adult was regular at Niagara Falls Dec. 6-Jan. 17 (AGC *et al.*). The others included an adult and immature at the Sarnia dump Dec. 7 (DFR, SAC), one at Port Dover Dec. 11 (TW), an adult and immature in the Whitby area Jan. 7-27 & Jan. 3-8 respectively (EP, MJB *et al.*), an adult in e. Hamilton Bay Jan. 22 (DG), and a single at Long Pt., Feb. 8 for a first February record there (GEW, BC). Impressive concentrations of Great Black-backed Gulls were noted as their winter numbers continue to rise. There were an unprecedented 250+ at Long Pt., Jan. 3 (TW, MKM), 219 at Wheatley Jan. 11 (AW), 220 near Gananoque Jan. 2 (K.F.N.), 140 at Ottawa Jan. 15 (BMD), and 100 along the Rideau canal at Washburn Jan. 1 (K.F.N.). Their spread has also occurred inland, where up to 44 visited the Orillia dump Dec. 1-Jan. 16 (RLB).

Snowy Owls staged their strongest flight since 1982-1983. The birds were distributed widely and in uniform numbers from Atikokan and Thunder Bay e. to Sudbury, Ottawa, and throughout the south. Light snow cover and mild conditions aided their survival, and only four were admitted to the Owl Research Rehabilitation Foundation, Vineland, for treatment of injuries (KMCK). Three N. Hawk-Owls s. of range appeared near Orono, Durham, Dec. 17-Feb. 28 (WB, JMR), Pembroke from late December to Jan. 30 (MF, JMB), and Almonte, Lanark, Dec. 26 (RG). In the n., three turned up at 3 sites in Quetico P.P., Jan. 16-20 (*fide* SFP). Only two Great Grays were noted out of range, at Kingston Dec. 8 (TP) and Kaladar Jan. 4 (AC). Within range, three overwintered in Moosonee and five were found between Winisk and Fort Severn (AMM). Over 20 Long-eared Owls spent part of the winter at a Toronto site until relentless chasing by some birders forced them to disperse (*fide* GMB). Two roosts in Essex held 10 and four Long-eareds through the winter (GTH). After Christmas, a major influx of Short-eared Owls all along the lower Great Lakes from Kingston to Amherstburg resulted in some impressive concentrations. Overwintering were about 100 between Selkirk and Dunnville (GEW), 40 each near Stevensville, Niagara (MW) and London (PAR, DAM), up to 30 at Hamilton (*fide* KAM), 25 at Cottam (GTH), and 25 at Blenheim (KJB). Inland there were five at Waterloo Dec. 5-13 (SRK) and 14 at Kincardine Jan. 4-31 (TRM). Single Boreal Owls surfaced late in the period at Bronte Jan. 11 (MW *et al.*), Manitoulin I., Feb. 15-28, found dead on the last date (CTB), Toronto Feb. 22-28 (HGC *et al.*), and Baillieboro Feb. 28 (WS). Another was seen hunting at a grain elevator in Thunder Bay Feb. 27 (JFo).



Northern Hawk-Owl at Orono, Ont., Jan. 5, 1987. Photo/Tim Sabo.

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WRENS — Out of season Red-headed Woodpeckers included one at Orillia Dec. 21-Jan. 16, which was joined by a 2nd bird Jan. 2 (RS, RLB), and one at Amherst I., Jan. 17 (FA, EG). Red-bellieds prospered in the mild conditions and their 67+ records marked a big increase. Some 38 were in the counties bordering L. Erie, six in Niagara, and about 10 from Clarkson e. to Oshawa. Seven others were n. to Clinton, Campbellford, Peterborough, and Hepworth Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (m.ob.) and Georgian Bay Islands N.P., Feb. 16 (*fide* RKP). Extralimital were three e. to Prince Edward Pt., Dec. 20 and three in Kingston Dec. 1-21 (K.F.N.). The spinoff from the irruption of Three-toed Woodpeckers last autumn was detected only in e. Ontario, where six appeared in Alonquin P.P., Jan. 3, the first of any numbers since 1981-1982 (RGT), Pembroke where they outnumbered the Black-backed Gulls (*fide* GMB), Kingston Jan. 17 (SO), and Petroglyphs P.P., Jan. 31 (*fide* DCS). Irrupting Black-backed Gulls reached Norwood Nov. 29 (SO), Buckhorn Dec. 6 (SO), Orillia sites Dec. 17-Jan. 20 (WEZ), Lombardy Dec. 29 (WC), Flinton Feb. 21 (VPM, RDW), and Ivy Lea Feb. 28 (RDW). Numbers of wintering N. Flickers were up sharply in e. Ontario.

The abnormally warm weather encouraged an **Eastern Phoebe** to remain at Pelee Dec. 22-Feb. 14 (PDP *et al.*), where a Tree Swallow lingered to Dec. 22 (NPC *et al.*). Gray Jays were common all winter at Atikokan, highest numbers in 25 years (*fide* SFP), Thunder Bay (NGE), Wawa (JHA), and Sault Ste. Marie (TDM), and more numerous than usual at Sudbury (JCN). Out of range birds were two each at Westmeath Dec. 14 (KD) and Petawawa Dec. 23 (JA), four each at Gravenhurst-Bracebridge and Petroglyphs P.P., Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (RLB, DCS), and singles in King Township, Toronto, Dec. 7 (LW) and Cyprus L., Bruce, Dec. 18 (TRM). One Black-billed Magpie found the

regimen to its liking at the Kenora dump Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (SAM) and another was found e. to Schreiber on L. Superior Feb. 2 (DI).

Black-capped Chickadees were present in higher numbers than normal through the extreme southwest. The remainder of last fall's irruption of Boreal Chickadees into the s. included two at Pembroke Dec. 13 (KG), four at Long Pt., Dec. 20–Feb. 28 (GEW), one in Essex Dec. 20 (GTH), 10 at Gravenhurst Dec. 21 (RLB), 30+ in Petroglyphs P.P. in the period (DEC), and three near Harrowsmith Jan. 17 (VPM). The only Tufted Titmouse sightings were of two at Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 1–Feb. 28 (GBe) and six on Walpole I., Feb. 2 (SAC). The 33+ reports of Carolina Wrens are over 3 times their 5-year winter maximum. As usual, most were in the extreme s.w., where 25+ wintered. Four and two spent the period in the Toronto and Hamilton areas respectively. One turned up at a Peterborough feeder Feb. 9 (JD) and another remained at an Ottawa feeder Dec. 13–Feb. 6 (fide BMD). Late Marsh Wrens tarried at Kingston and Presqu'île P.P., Dec. 21 (RDW, AGC, RS) and those in the s.w. included 37 at Long Pt., Dec. 20, where five were still present Feb. 28 (GEW), three at Shrewsbury Dec. 21 (AW, MWJ), and one each at Pelee Dec. 22 (KO) and Kleinburg Jan. 1 (GMB).

KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS — A Ruby-crowned Kinglet appeared at Pelee Jan. 29 and Feb. 21 (GTH, TS) and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher lingered there Dec. 1–29 (WBo). Eastern Bluebirds overwintered successfully near Oakville (PVD) and Long Pt. (GEW), and one at Portland, Leeds, Feb. 28 was apparently a spring arrival (fide MH). The Townsend's Solitaire reported last autumn in Clark's Rattray Marsh was still present Feb. 28 (fide KAM). More than the normal numbers of Am. Robins overwintered, and their usual mid-winter influx at Pelee failed to occur as birds had no need to withdraw southwards. Farthest n. to overwinter was one in Thunder Bay Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (NGE). Three Varied Thrushes were reported, half the species' average number for the past 10 winters. One remained at a Sudbury feeder Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (HBa, JCN).



Townsend's Solitaire at Rattray Marsh, Mississauga, Ont., Jan. 26, 1987. Photo/Tim Sabo.

The others were males at Berford L., Bruce peninsula, Dec. 21–Jan. 22 (TRM) and in N. York, metropolitan Toronto, Jan. 11–Feb. 14 (J & BN et al.). Single Gray Catbirds were at Mississauga Dec. 1–15 (fide GMB), St. Catharines Dec. 21 (AB), Kingston Dec. 26 for a latest ever record (P & NN), and Holiday Beach P.P., Jan. 31 (BE). Eight Brown Thrashers were a respectable number for winter and frequented feeders in Pembroke Dec. 1–Feb. 23 (CM), Smiths Falls Dec. 9–Feb. 28 (GW), Georgina near Pepperlaw where two different birds appeared Jan. 8–Feb. 28 (DH, DW) and Jan. 13–Feb. 28 (FF), Pelee Dec. 22–Jan. 4 (PDP et al.), Toronto in December and January (fide GMB), Winona during January (BJ, JO), and North Bay Jan. 4 (BR).

Late Water Pipits were singles at Pelee Dec. 13 (AW, KO), and Long Pt., Dec. 20 and Feb. 14 (TS). Others included six and four on the Toronto Islands Dec. 28 and Jan. 6 respectively (HK) and six at Erieau Jan. 2 (BE). The Bohemian Waxwing flight was again heavy from the Lakehead to Sudbury through Parry Sound, Muskoka, n. Gray-Bruce, and n. Simcoe to Ottawa and Kingston. The only birds reported s.w. of these areas were singles at Whitby Jan. 30 and Feb. 8 (JFl, MJB) and four singles in Toronto Dec. 28–Feb. 3 (fide BDP). High numbers of N. Shrikes were noted nearly everywhere and one resourceful bird fed regularly on suet hanging from a feeder line in Virginiatown, Timiskaming, Jan. 17–26 (PWR). Each time it fed, it thumped its wings as it beat the lump of suet, perhaps to maintain balance or to subdue its prey! An Orange-crowned Warbler on Garden I., Kingston, Dec. 19 was the latest ever for that area and possibly for the province (DV & LW). A ♂ Nashville Warbler tarried to Dec. 6 at Whitby (DB, JFa). An ad. ♂ Yellow-rumped, auduboni race, was at Pelee Jan. 13–31 and may have been the same individual as seen there last Nov. 10 (GMA, WBo et al.). The last of 11 sightings of Com. Yellowthroats was of a male at La Salle Jan. 2 (JL).

BUNTINGS THROUGH ORIOLES — One ♂ Indigo Bunting overwintered at Birch Beach, 50 km e. of Thunder Bay, Dec. 20–Feb. 28 (ph. WZ) having successfully weathered the cold snap of -40°C in late January. Winter records of this species are extremely rare anywhere in Ontario. Two Dickcissels provided the first winter records since 1984–1985. One consorted with House Sparrows at a Scarborough feeder Dec. 12–Jan. 31 (fide BDP) and the other, an imm. male, appeared intermittently at a Guelph feeder from January to Feb. 28 (RVT, BKW). The 11+ records of Rufous-sided Towhees were well up over their normal numbers and all were in the southwest. A flock of 11 Chipping Sparrows in Essex Dec. 20 was a surprise (PEP). Other out-of-season sightings were of two at Leamington Dec. 22 (MWT), and singles at Niagara-on-the-Lake Dec. 28 (DG), Pickering during January and February (DM), and Long Pt., Feb. 26–28 (VF), for only the 2nd mid-winter record ever in that area. Savannah Sparrows were up in numbers in early winter as singles tarried at Langton in the Long Pt. area Jan. 11 (GEW) and at Pelee to Jan. 25 (AW et al.). A very late Lincoln's was in Essex Dec. 20 (GTH, SDi). In the far n., a hardy White-throated Sparrow survived at a Moose Factory feeder Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (M.R.N.). Three Dark-eyed Juncos were in Vermilion Bay through the period (SRM) and another turned up at a Moosonee feeder Feb. 16 (RPI).

Blackbirds overwintered successfully at feeders well n. of their normal locations. Red-winged numbered 100 at Thunder Bay (NGE) and eight at Moosonee (AMM) through the period. Single ♂ Yellow-headed were at Lansdowne Dec. 28 (WC), well e. of range in any season, and at Pelee Feb. 20–21 (WBo, TS). One Rusty Blackbird at a Matachewan feeder survived the period (LT) and another appeared suddenly in Espanola Feb. 1 (CGB). The 13 Brewer's Blackbirds were unprecedented for winter. One was in Sudbury Jan. 4 (JCN) and five at the Schreiber dump e. of Thunder Bay were thought to have overwintered (NGE, AH). In the s.w., two males were at Shrewsbury Dec. 21 (MWJ, AW), followed by singles at Wallacetown, Dec. 27, West Lorne Dec. 27, and London Jan. 25 (fide WRJ).

One remained at an Etobicoke feeder Dec. 23–Jan. 29 (ph., *fide* BDP, AGC), and another on Wolfe I., Dec. 21 provided the first winter record for the Kingston area (JP, MA). During the season Com. Grackles were in Moosonee (AMM), Matachewan (LT), Kenora (SRM), and Thunder Bay, at least 36 birds at the last location (NGE). The two reports of N. Oriole were of a female at a Whitby feeder Dec. 1–13 (MJB et al.) and a male at a Cambridge feeder Dec. 1–Jan. 10 (*fide* SRK).

FINCHES — For the 2nd consecutive winter, the Pine Grosbeak flight was strong, but weakened by the end of the period as birds returned north. They were present from Sudbury to the s.e., reaching Peterborough and Frontenac in numbers. The few reported s.w. of Shield country were one at St. Williams, near Long Pt., Jan. 10 (TS) and 10 at Harwood Jan. 28 (ERM). Past Dec. 31, Purple Finches were absent virtually everywhere. House Finches continued to increase their numbers with the biggest rises occurring in the Sarnia and Ottawa areas (SAC, BMD), as this species spreads away from the shoreline of lakes Erie and Ontario. Red Crossbills remained scarce, although more were reported than last winter. Up to 20 birds each wintered in the red pines near Chaffey's Locks, Godfrey, and Flinton, where nesting was suspected Feb. 21 (K.F.N.). Only five were seen in Algonquin P.P., Jan. 3 (RGT), but six were outside the park at Dorset Feb. 17 (RPI). At Petroglyphs P.P., a male was seen feeding a female Feb. 13 (HGC) and nest construction was underway late in the month (AGC). Four were s. to Whitby Dec. 21 (MJB). The 30 White-winged Crossbills at Ottawa Dec. 15 (BMD) and 20 at Douro, Peterborough, Jan. 30 (A. Hill) were the largest groups noted. A few others were sighted at Thunder Bay, Sudbury, w. Elgin, Perth, Ivy Lea, and Algonquin P.P.

Common Redpolls were common to abundant nearly everywhere n. to North Bay, Atikokan, and Kenora. Southbound migrants were passing Prince Edward Pt. by the thousands Dec. 20, and one flock in Decewsville, Haldimand-Norfolk, contained 6000 birds Feb. 14 (TW). As usual when redpoll invasions occur, some Hoaries were noted. Pine Siskins poured into the s. during early January and remained in large numbers through counties from Toronto e. to Ottawa-Carleton. Up to 10,000 were estimated to have wintered in the Port Hope-Cobourg area (ERM). Kent and Muskoka were other counties to host large numbers. Numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were lower in most counties of the s., except for Kent, Haldimand-Norfolk, and Leeds, where the birds were common.

EXOTICS — Ringed Turtle-Doves overwintered at a Peterborough feeder (DCS) and another turned up at a Waterloo feeder Feb. 8 (HH). Single Eur. Goldfinches were in LaSalle near Windsor Feb. 25 (JL) and Waterloo Mar. 8 (MS).

CORRIGENDA — The five Cattle Egrets at Long Pt. (AB 40:1197) July 6 and three in the Cranberry Marsh June 15 should have read Little Gulls (HGC). The ad. Greater White-fronted Goose near Riceville (AB 40:463) was seen Apr. 3, not Mar. 29 (BMD), and the Rufous Hummingbird at Algonquin P.P. (AB 40:1199) was present July 30–Aug. 3 (RET).

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NIAGARA-CHAMPLAIN REGION

Douglas P. Kibbe

The November snowstorm set the stage for a grim winter, but that expectation was only partially fulfilled. Although much of the Region remained snow-covered from November through the close of the season, the weather was not as severe as it has been in several recent winters. Snowfall varied considerably within the Region. There were few storms tracking through the Region from the west, much to the relief of those in areas normally experiencing "lake-effect" snowfall. Buffalo, for example, enjoyed receiving only 5 inches in December, a marked contrast to the 68 inches that fell the previous December. Most of the



significant snowfall came in January from storms tracking up from the southeast. The majority of this snowfall, consequently, was dumped on the mountainous eastern portion of the Region. February, in marked contrast to the preceding month, was the driest this century, at least in Rochester. Temperatures remained seasonable, however, and in the absence of a thaw there was little evidence of migration until spring officially arrived. Doubtless the wintery conditions that debilitated areas south of us offered little to induce birds that survived to head north.

As usual opinions varied regarding the birding this season. Those glad to find open water in some smaller lakes were equaled by those wishing for a deep freeze to push birds off the Great Lakes into the harbors. The early snowfall may be blamed for a marked decrease in lingering half-hardies, but Regionwide the usual array of laggards was noted.

While there are no data at this time to support this supposition, birders this summer should be alert for possible declines in breeding populations of species which regularly winter in the Mid-Atlantic and southeastern states that received significant snowfall this winter. Comment and supporting data, pro or con, are hereby solicited.

LOONS THROUGH HAWKS — Waterbird counts, particularly of those species that frequent the Great Lakes, were depressed somewhat, probably owing to the prevalence of open water which allowed them to disperse. Notable sightings included a **Western Grebe** on L. Ontario near Greece Dec. 6 (RS). The abundance of open waterways was presumably the factor that induced numerous Great Blue Herons to linger at least into January. While a few are found nearly every year, numbers this winter appeared to be the highest in at least a decade. Eight were reported on the Ferrisburg CBC alone. Central New York hosted most of the exciting waterfowl. At least four Eur. Wigeon were reported, but observers are reminded that this species is commonly kept by aviculturalists. The Mute Swan at Buffalo is even more likely to have been an escapee; but the King Eider there, and three others near Rochester, were typical winter stragglers to the Region. More unusual was the Greater White-fronted Goose on Cayuga Lake Dec. 20 (PM, *vide* SBS). A Barrow's Goldeneye that wintered below the Vernon dam on the Connecticut R. (m.ob.), while not unexpected, certainly qualified as a rarity.

Conditions were apparently favorable for wintering raptors in many parts of the Region, but the L. Champlain valley must have been particularly attractive. The Ferrisburg CBC hosted five Bald Eagles and 60 Red-tailed Hawks. The latter total is rarely exceeded even in w. New York farmland where peak Regional counts are typically taken. Bird feeding and the resultant plague of Evening Grosbeaks and, now, House Finches attending the feeders may be the major factor inducing both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks to overwinter in the Region more frequently. Recent winters have also seen occasional Merlins listed in seasonal reports. Although it is often assumed that these sightings represent errors in identification, it is possible that the ready availability of prey may be inducing this species to alter its wintering habits in the East. This year at least two were convincingly identified, one near Rochester and the other in Burlington. Four Gyrfalcon reports added a touch of class to an already exceptional season.

GALLIFORMES THROUGH GULLS — Although efforts are underway to establish Gray Partridge in Cayuga County, the only winter reports were from Ellisburg (LC), a traditional area in the St. Lawrence valley. Presumably the trap and transport program is designed to eventually supplement faltering Ring-necked Pheasant populations, which have declined throughout much of their Regional range to a mere vestige of their former abundance. The only Spruce Grouse report was from Vermont's "northeast kingdom" (FO). The only Virginia

Rail report was from the Rochester area, although if observers were zealous enough to search major marshes in the majority of the Region the number of winter reports would probably increase substantially. The season's creative endeavor award goes to the observers who reported Sora tracks from a c. New York marsh. The Sora is, as far as is known, a very rare winter straggler. At present, muskrat trappers, who inadvertently capture far more rails than birders ever find at this season, know more about this group's winter abundance than we do. Only the usual assortment of hardy shorebirds tarried past the early snowfalls. Up to seven Purple Sandpipers and a single Dunlin could be found at Niagara Falls throughout much of the season. American Woodcocks, which were hit by major snowfalls in many wintering areas, were slow to return north in the absence of a significant February thaw. None was reported to have successfully overwintered within the Region.

As usual, New Yorkers along the Great Lakes and the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers provided most of the notable gull sightings. The usual array of rarities in the Buffalo area included a peak count of 22 Little Gulls in late January, a Franklin's Gull, and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. Farther e., near Rochester, a Com. Black-headed Gull was sighted and three Black-legged Kittiwakes were found. The latter, exceptional enough at this season, included two adults. Rounding out the list were Thayer's Gulls found at Oswego and Fulton (FS). Mild conditions apparently forestalled build-ups of gulls in most harbors, but 3000 Bonaparte's Gulls were found at Dunkirk (TM) and another 10,000 swarmed over the Niagara R. in late January. White-winged gulls remained very scarce, continuing a decline that started with the close of many landfills in the 1970s.

OWLS THROUGH SHRIKES — Snowy Owls staged a good influx with some excellent local counts early in the winter, but decreased noticeably as the season progressed. Most other owls were noted in usual modest numbers except for Great Horned Owls which, for no discernable reason, set a record on the Rochester CBC, and Com. Barn-Owls, which were unreported.

A veritable "plague of woodpeckers" attacked a Barcelona, N.Y., feeding station, where about 20 birds of seven species dined daily on suet and seed (K & DJ). Even Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology could only muster six species for 2nd place Ferrisburg hosted another Red-bellied Woodpecker, indicating Vermonters may yet add this species to the state's list of breeding avifauna. The only concentration of Com. Ravens noted was of 31 at L. Willoughby in early February (PT, TR).

Carolina Wren populations are apparently building up, judging from the numbers reported at feeding stations. In New York they were found as far n. as Watertown and Saranac Lake, and four appeared at scattered locations in Vermont. The **Rock Wren** at Fredonia lasted until a Dec. 3 snowstorm. A Varied Thrush appeared briefly near Rochester in mid-December (TP, TK).

Hermit Thrushes were noticeably scarce in much of the Region, possibly a result of the shortage of berries predicted after last spring's hard late frosts. Bohemian Waxwings, on the other hand, staged a strong invasion. Although only single digits could generally be found in w. New York, flocks of up to 450 birds cruised the Champlain valley looking for mountain ash, high-bush and cranberries or apples. Perhaps the strongest influx of N. Shrikes in nearly a decade occurred. Dozens of reports were received from throughout the Region as birds moved south, but few birds maintained territories through the entire winter season.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES — This was not a good year to find lingering small insectivorous passerines, as demonstrated by the low numbers of warblers reported. Nonetheless there were a few interesting records, including a Yellow Warbler near Trumansburg through Dec. 5 (P & MR), several

Com. Yellowthroats, including one at Ferrisburg, Vt., in mid-December, a Palm Warbler at Buffalo into January, a Cape May Warbler at Pittsford until Jan. 25 (AS, EB), and an Ovenbird at Wellsville, N.Y., Jan. 4-7 (HS, EL).

A belated report of a **Painted Bunting** at Canajoharie, N.Y., Oct. 20-25 (FT, DAS) was received. Equally exotic in appearance were the male and imm. Eur. Goldfinches in Addison County, Vt. (J & MD). While it cannot be determined whether these goldfinches originated from this summer's releases in the Catskills, it is safe to assume they were part of some misguided introduction effort. A **Brewer's Blackbird** reported on the Burlington CBC may be the first confirmed Vermont sighting.

The only "winter finch" to truly invade the entire Region this season was the Com. Redpoll. Flocks in the 100s were commonplace and a peak tally, 1250, came from the Rochester area. Surprisingly few "Hoaries" were spotted compared with other recent redpoll incursions and most observers felt the

origin of this year's invasion was different from, for instance, last year's. The general impression was that the current hordes were smaller and darker birds from more southerly populations. American Goldfinches were present in numbers but other finches in general were hard to come by outside true boreal areas.

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APPALACHIAN REGION

George A. Hall

For most parts of the Region it was a strange winter. Persons whose birding activities centered on feeding stations were sure there were no birds in the area, as indeed such stations were sparsely visited. Persons getting farther afield found a few more birds in local areas, but even there no lists were very large after the first of the year. But in total for the whole Region a great many species were seen.

It was a warm and generally dry season. At the Pittsburgh weather station all three months were warmer than normal and in total showed a temperature excess of 211 day-degrees. December was somewhat wetter than normal but January had a precipitation deficit of 0.63 inches and February with a total precipitation of only 0.71 inches had a deficit of 1.69 inches. The north had some snowfall, and several heavy snowstorms swept through the south, but the belt from about Pittsburgh to central West Virginia had practically no snow.

The mild weather induced many birds to stay north, and most Christmas Bird Counts showed record high numbers of many species. Most of these birds did not stay after the first of the year. There was no freeze-up of most bodies of water until quite late, and Lake Erie did not freeze entirely.

There was a nice list of "half-hardy" species lingering through the winter, and most of them made it successfully. Conspicuously absent were two, Northern Oriole and Rufous-sided Towhee, which often remain quite late. The northern invaders were represented by Northern Shrikes, Common Redpolls, and Pine Siskins, all of which staged good flights.

Perhaps the most interesting news was the good flight of raptors led by the Short-eared Owl, Bald Eagle, and Rough-legged Hawk. Interestingly, many of these birds were attracted to some of the extensive recovered strip-mines in western Pennsylvania, areas often considered biological deserts.

ABBREVIATIONS — B.E.S.P. = Bald Eagle State Park, Centre Co., Pa.; Ch.N.F. = Chattahoochee Nat'l Forest, Ga.; G.S.M.N.P. = Great Smoky Mountains Nat'l Park; P.I.S.P. = Presque Isle State Park, Erie Co., Pa.; P.N.R. = Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., Pa. Place names in italics are counties.



LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Red-throated Loons were reported from Bath, Va., Dec. 3 (LT) and P.I.S.P., Dec. 6 (JM). There was a heavy movement of Com. Loons in the Elizabethton, Tenn., area until Dec. 10 (GE) and there were many individual records from throughout the Region in December. These birds had all disappeared by the first of the year. A group of 22 Pied-billed Grebes at P.I.S.P., Jan. 22 was the result of a partial freeze-up (JM). Horned Grebes were reported from more places than usual. A Red-necked Grebe was seen in Bath, Va., Feb. 25 (LT) and one was found dead on a road in Bedford, Pa., Jan. 12 (TD). Five Double-crested Cormorants were at P.I.S.P. until late January and one was there Feb. 17 (JM), while other records came from Kyger Creek, O., Feb. 8 & 9 (TI, WA) and from Knoxville, Tenn., Jan. 17, for the only winter record there (MD, BF).

The Am. Bittern reported from Union, Tenn., in the Fall report remained there until Dec. 30 (DS). The mild weather induced numerous Great Blue Herons to remain in the Region and reports came in from 11 areas with some high numbers

being 50–75 at Glenwood Swamp, W Va, Feb 16–28 (WA), 47 that survived the winter at P I S P (JM), up to 27 in Bath, Va (LT); and 10 on the Pittsburgh CBC (PH). A Great Egret was at Ft. Loudon L., Tenn., Jan. 17 (MD, BF). A Green-backed Heron was at Roanoke, Va., Jan. 17 (MP). Two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen at Elizabethton, Tenn., Dec. 20 (RL). An imm. White Ibis (ph.) was present at Salem, Va., Dec. 20–Mar. 10 (m.ob.).

The waterfowl picture was mixed with most places in the s. reporting low numbers. However, at Knoxville numbers were good early in the season but declined later (CN). The only large numbers were reported from Presque Isle Bay where the delayed freeze-up resulted in a January concentration of 24,000 waterfowl, including an estimated 15,000 Com. Goldeneyes, 5000 Canvasbacks, 500 Redheads, 500 Mallards, and 300 Am. Black Ducks (JM). Such numbers in the n. may have accounted for the lack of ducks farther s., as goldeneyes were scarce at Pittsburgh (PH) and at Morgantown, W.Va. (GAH).

The S flight of Tundra Swans was still in evidence in early December and a few stayed all winter at Kyger Creek, O. (TI), and Shenandoah L., Va. (R.B.C.), and one was on the Ohio R. at Vienna, W.Va., Jan. 6 (JE, NO). The N flight started in late February but no great concentrations were reported by the end of the period. A Mute Swan was in the State College, Pa., area from Dec. 20 to the end of the period (*vide* JP). A Greater White-fronted Goose was at Mosquito Creek Res., O., from Dec. 1 to the end of the period (CB, NB). Snow Geese were reported from Point Pleasant, W.Va., Jan. 1 (blue) and Gallipolis, O., Feb. 19 (white) (TI), plus Mosquito L., O., Feb. 17 (NB) and Hiawassee, Ga., Dec. 14–Jan. 8 (AG). At Pymatuning L., Pa., 12,000 Canada Geese were present Dec. 21, but this number declined to 1200 by Feb. 1 (RFL). That the Canada Goose is increasing throughout this Region is indicated by the count of 508 on the Pittsburgh CBC, 89% above the 10-year average (PH). The 300 Am. Black Ducks at B.E.S.P., Pa., Jan. 1 (PS) was an encouraging number for this troubled species. Northern Shovelers were reported in unusual numbers for this Region. A Eur. Wigeon was at Marion, Pa., for a month (KG, JW). Oldsquaws were reported from Mosquito L., O., Dec. 7 (CB), Kyger Creek, O., in January (WA, TI), and Huntington, W.Va., Feb. 15 (TI). A Black Scoter and one or two Surf Scoters were at P.I.S.P., Dec. 20–Jan. 18 (JM), and a White-winged Scoter was at Huntington, W.Va., Jan. 28 (TI). Counts of 81 Hooded Mergansers and 191 Com. Mergansers on the Warren, Pa., CBC were noteworthy (WH). There were 2 reports of exotic waterfowl. A Bar-headed Goose was present with Canadas at Mosquito L., O., the week of Feb. 15 (NB), and two Ruddy Shelducks were at Apple Grove, W.Va., Feb. 1 and were found shot Feb. 7 (WA).

RAPTORS — Black Vultures showed a noticeable increase in the Elizabethton, Tenn., area (GE), and flocks of 12–15 at Speedwell, Tenn., in December (GM) were unusual, but the species was reported at Huntingdon, Pa., in December (JP), 2 locations near State College, Pa., in January and February (DK), and in Bath, Va., Jan. 9 (LT). Turkey Vultures arrived in Huntingdon, Pa., by Feb. 3 (DK). Ospreys were reported from Starbrick, Pa., Dec. 1 (*vide* WH), singles were at Norris L., Tenn., Dec. 12 (JH) and Roanoke, Va., Dec. 12 (FC, CM), and there were several records in the Parkersburg, W.Va., area (LR). It was a great season for Bald Eagles with reports from 23 locations of approximately 37 birds. These records ranged from L. Erie in the n. to the Hiawassee region of Georgia. Northern Harriers were in greater numbers than usual. All three Accipiters seem to be doing well. The Cooper's Hawk was reported in good numbers at most places, there were unusual numbers of reports of Sharp-shinned Hawks, and N. Goshawks were reported from 9 locations as far s. as Highland, Va. (LT), Roan Mt., Tenn. (FA), and Bristol, Tenn. (GE). Rough-legged Hawks were unusually numerous and widespread, being reported as far s. as Hiawassee, Ga. (HD). The last migrant Golden Eagle was seen at Bald Eagle Ridge, Pa., Dec. 3 (JP). At least three wintered

in Highland, Va. (LT), and other records came from the George Washington N.F., Va., Feb. 7 (R B C), and Chingman's Dome, Tenn., Jan. 24 (CN).

Record CBC counts of Am. Kestrels were of 27 at Clarksville, Pa. (RB), and 18 at Indiana, Pa. (*vide* PH), but Pittsburgh had only half the usual numbers (PH). Merlins were reported from Westmoreland, Pa., Dec. 15 (BW), and Allegheny, Pa., Jan. 5 (MM) and Feb. 20 (EM). One was present at Apple Grove, Mason, W.Va., Dec. 31 to the end of the period (TI, WA). There were two reports (possibly the same bird) of Peregrines in the State College, Pa., area, Dec. 16 (BR) and Jan. 12 (S & RMc), and one was seen at Waynesboro, Va., Feb. 15 (SR).

TURKEY THROUGH TERNS — Wild Turkeys seem to be doing well: 16 were seen on the Clarksville, Pa., CBC (RB) and 115 on the Pipestem State Resort CBC (JPh), while 25 were counted at Lock Haven, Pa., Feb. 24 (PS). No reporters mentioned N. Bobwhite. Was this simply oversight or has this attractive species silently disappeared from most of the Region? It is certainly gone from n. West Virginia (GAH). An Am Coot wintered near Houserville, Pa. (ES). The 80 Sandhill Cranes seen at the Ch.N.F., Feb. 26 (HD) were a little early but not unexpected.

Greater Yellowlegs were seen in Augusta, Va., Dec. 10 (RS) & 20 (SR), and a Dunlin was at Boone L., Tenn., Dec. 15 (RK). There were more reports of Com. Snipe than usual: several in Centre, Pa., through January (CS); up to eight that wintered in Bath, Va. (LT); Fayette, W.Va., Jan. 4 (JPh); one on the Waynesboro, Va., CBC (RS); and six to eight in Whitfield, Ga., Feb. 25 (HD), that may have been early migrants. American Woodcock had arrived at Troutville, Va. (BK), and Beech Fork S.P., W.Va. (TI) by the middle of February, but for the first time in years they had not arrived at P.N.R. by the end of February (RM, RCL).

There were some unusual concentrations of Ring-billed Gulls at some places: 100 at Princeton, W.Va., Dec. 11 (JPh), 410 at Warren, Pa. (WH), 700 at Ft. Loudon Dam, Tenn., Feb. 19 (RC), and 5700 at Pymatuning L., Pa., Dec. 21 (RFL), as well as "large" numbers on the Ohio R. at Parkersburg, W.Va. (LR) and Huntington, W.Va. (TI). Ten Bonaparte's Gulls were at Huntington, W.Va., Feb. 18 (TI). The white-winged gulls were less numerous than usual at P.I.S.P., with a Glaucous Gull Jan. 11 (SS) and an Iceland Gull Jan. 24 (JM, LS). Up to three ad. Little Gulls were at P.I.S.P., Jan. 19–24 (JM).

The prize of the season was a **Bridled Tern** seen near Fishersville, Va., Dec. 3 (SR). This occurrence followed a severe storm off the Virginia-Carolina coast and convincing documentation was submitted for this record, a Regional first

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — In w. Pennsylvania (PH, RB) and n. West Virginia (GAH), Mourning Doves were unusually abundant throughout the season.

Owls provided the real spice of this winter season. A possible new nesting site for Com. Barn-Owl was discovered at Fishersville, Va. (RS), but the only report in the Knoxville area was of one Dec. 25 in Campbell (GM). While E. Screech-Owls remained scarce, and Great Horned and Barred owls were in about normal numbers, the real excitement of the season came from the northern visitors. Snowy Owls were found at P.I.S.P., Jan. 28 and Feb. 4 (JM), Edinboro, Pa., Jan. 29 (SH), State College, Pa., Dec. 17 & 18 (m.ob.), and Salem, O., Jan. 21 (WB). The only report of Long-eared Owl came from State College, Pa., Dec. 20 (HH, CS). For the 2nd winter in a row, Short-eared Owl staged a heavy invasion. The recovered strip-mines at Knox, Pa., retained a part of the large concentration reported in November (WF), at least eight were present at other mines in Indiana, Pa. (M & RH), and up to 17 were at one location near Dublin, Va. (CK). Other reports came from Pymatuning L., Pa., Dec. 21 (m.ob.), Avis, Pa., all winter (PS), 2 locations in Huntingdon, Pa., Dec. 21 and Feb. 9 (DK), Adams, Pa., in mid-January (KG), Augusta, Va., in December (SR), Roanoke, Dec. 20 (TF) and Jan. 19 (BK), and Adelphia, O., Jan

22 (LR, LB) Only four N Saw-whet Owls, compared with last winter's phenomenal 92, were located at State College, Pa (JP). Other reports came from P.I.S.P., scattered dates through the period (m.ob.), and a new county record for Rockingham, Va, Dec. 1 (R.B.C.).

Six Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered at Norris L., Tenn. (JH), but at Elizabethton, Tenn., none was seen after Dec. 22 (GE). A road-killed bird was picked up in Washington, Pa., in early January (JL), and there were 2 late February reports from the Huntington, W.Va., area (TI, WA). The Red-bellied Woodpecker continued its N move. The Pittsburgh CBC listed a record 36 (PH) and reports came from Erie, Pa. (JM), Warren, Pa. (CNe), and Lock Haven, Pa. (PS). There were more reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers than usual, and 63 N. Flickers were listed on the CBC at P.I.S.P. (JM).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH VIREOS — An E. Phoebe was seen in Wood, W.Va., Jan. 6 (JE, NO). Horned Larks were unusually common throughout w. Pennsylvania, with flocks of up to 200 seen in Lawrence (PH). Remarkably early was a N Rough-winged Swallow at Cheshire Ponds, O., Feb. 19 (TI). Two Com. Ravens at P.N.R., Feb. 15 (RM, RCL) were not far from the normal range, but observations of up to three on 6 days in mid-February at Clarksville, Pa., were noteworthy (RB).

A record 676 Black-capped Chickadees were found on the Warren, Pa., CBC (WH). A Black-capped was found as far s. as Vienna, W.Va., Jan. 3 (LR), but at Pittsburgh the Carolina Chickadee has displaced the Black-capped in many areas (RM). Red-breasted Nuthatches were more widespread than in most winters but no place reported any great numbers. The Pittsburgh CBC had record numbers of Brown Creepers (PH) but no other area reported unusual numbers. The good news is that the Carolina Wren seems to be on its way back, with good numbers reported everywhere and reports from as far n. as Warren and Erie, Pa. The mild winter at most places and the lack of heavy snowfall should have assured good survival rates. Winter Wrens were on the low side at most places. A House Wren was seen at Jonesboro, Tenn., Jan. 21 (RK).

Golden-crowned Kinglets were in better-than-normal numbers. More unusually, there were Ruby-crowned Kinglets at P I S.P., Feb. 13 (LS), Pittsburgh CBC (PH), Beaver, Pa., Dec. 31 (RCa), Vienna, W.Va., Dec. 21 (JC), and Waynesboro, Va., all season (RS). Both Am. Robins and E. Bluebirds were in unusually large numbers at most places, with a roost of 4400 robins discovered at Pittsburgh (PH). Hermit Thrushes were also in unusual numbers. Gray Catbirds were reported from Saybrook, Pa., in January and February (CNe), and at Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Jan. 22 (DC), for the first local winter record. A Brown Thrasher wintered at a heated bird bath in Rockingham (R B C.), and other winter records came from Indiana, Pa. (MH), and Wayne, W.Va. (TI). Out-of-range N. Mockingbirds were reported from Somerset, Pa. (TM), Springboro, Pa. (CNi), and Pittsburgh, Pa. (JL).

It was a good year for N. Shrikes. Singles were at the Indiana, Pa., strip-mine site through January (MH, TD), P.I.S.P., Dec. 19–Feb. 7 (JM), Erie, Pa., Dec. 20 (RSw), Huntingdon, Pa., Feb. 16 (MK), L. Arthur, Pa., through December (reported in November as a Loggerhead) (PH), and 3 locations in Crawford, Pa., Dec. 28 (RFL, RCL), Jan. 4 (RFL), and Feb. 8 (CNi). In Rockingham, Va., where an intensive study of Loggerhead Shrike is underway, 4 new possible nesting sites were discovered (R B C.). A report of Loggerhead Shrike from Glenwood Swamp, W Va., Feb. 19 (TI) was noteworthy. Otherwise this species seemed in normal low numbers.

Solitary Vireos were reported from Roanoke Dec. 20 (TF) and Feb. 28 (MP), Botetourt, Va., Jan. 17 (MDo, BHu), Kingsport, Tenn., Jan. 3 (RK), and Dalton, Ga., in late February (AH).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES — Yellow-rumped Warblers were fairly common in the s., but in n. West Virginia and w. Pennsylvania they were spotty and in low numbers. More unusual were Orange-crowned Warblers in Murray, Ga.,

Dec 15 (HD) & 27 (D & KJ), one wintering again at a feeder in Knoxville (LF), a Palm Warbler in Murray, Ga., Dec. 15 & 20 (HD), and Pine Warblers at P.I.S.P., Dec. 26 (F & BH) and Feb 13 (JM), Botetourt, Va., Dec. 21 (BO), and Fayette, W.Va., Jan 4 (JPh). Other remarkable warbler records were: Nashville Warbler in Murray, Ga., Dec. 15 (HD); Cape May Warbler at Vienna, W.Va., late December to Jan. 25 (EA); Yellow-throated Warbler at Huntington, W.Va., in mid-February (TI); and Com Yellowthroat at Jonesboro, Tenn., Jan. 21 (RK).

An Indigo Bunting was seen at Knoxville Feb. 28, for the first county winter record (MD). Field Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Song Sparrows were all considered to be in lower numbers than normal. On the other hand, because of the delayed freezeup, many of these sparrows were unusually numerous along the s. shore of L. Erie (JM). These declines may be temporary, but the Am. Tree Sparrow has undergone a massive decrease in the north over the last few years. Tree Sparrows were seen as far s. as Highland (LT) and Rockingham, Va. (R.B.C.). There were more records of Vesper Sparrows than usual: State College, Pa., Jan. 20 (DD), B.E.S.P., Jan. 1 (JP), Huntington, W.Va., Jan. 2 (TI), Greenville, Tenn., seven Jan. 25 (GE), and Whitfield, Ga. (HW). Other unusual sparrow records were: Chipping Sparrow at Vienna, W.Va., Dec. 12–15 (LR) and Norris, Tenn., Dec. 27 (CN); a Savannah Sparrow at Murray, Ga., Dec. 20 (HD), 10 at Greencastle, Pa., Jan. 1 (JW), and one at Ashton, W.Va., Jan. 12–Feb. 28 (WA); and a Lincoln's Sparrow at Speedwell, Tenn., Jan. 1 (GM). Dark-eyed Juncos were scarce at feeding stations but were probably really in normal numbers.

The only reports of Lapland Longspurs came from P.I.S.P., Dec. 20 (JM), State Line, Franklin, Pa., in early January (KG), and Shenandoah L., Va., Jan. 2 (R.B.C.). Snow Buntings were numerous in n.w. Pennsylvania as far s. as Butler, but there was only one record at State College (JP). More unusual were buntings seen in Somerset Jan. 20 (TM) and State Line, Pa., in January (KG).

There were more winter records for Rusty Blackbirds than normal. A roost of 250,000 Com. Grackles was present for a while in Putnam/Cabell, W.Va. (TI). There was little sign of northbound blackbirds at the end of February.

The only report of Pine Grosbeak came from Salem, O., Feb 22 (RBo). House Finches continue their astronomical increase and concurrently the Purple Finch has declined as a wintering species, at least at feeders. The only record of White-winged Crossbill came from Meadville, Pa., Dec. 6 (RFL, ML). Red Crossbills were found on Shenandoah Mt., Va. (LT), where they are apparently permanently resident, at Ch.N.F., where they have been regular recently (HD), and G.S.M.N.P., where they may be year-round residents (CN). Other reports came from State College, Pa., Nov. 28 (JP) and Watauga L., Tenn., all season (FA).

The finch of the year was Com. Redpoll, which staged the best flight in recent years. West of the mountains they came only about as far s. as Pittsburgh, but e. of the mountains in the Great Valley they occurred as far s. as Staunton, Va. (LH), and Salem, Va. (D & JHo). At Lock Haven, Pa., two Hoary Redpolls were seen Jan. 29 with the others (CH). Pine Siskins were in large numbers throughout the Region but the distribution was very spotty, with some places having none. The extreme patchiness of this distribution can be illustrated by mentioning that while I had many at my feeders, a neighbor within a mile of me had none. A fair number of Evening Grosbeaks passed through in December but most had disappeared by the end of the month. They were felt to be quite common at the edge of the Smoky Mts. (CN), but elsewhere were in low numbers, and were missing from most places.

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WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

David J. Powell

The weather this winter was unlike any in recent memory throughout the Region. The predominant weather was sunny and mild, even in Minnesota. The only severe weather was in Minnesota, where it got down to -27° at Isabella in mid-December, and -42° at Embarrass and -45° at Warroad in late January, but it was short-lived. The only significant snow was in northeastern Minnesota. The norm was temperatures at or near freezing throughout the Region. In Michigan, there was more sunshine this winter than in three or four normal winters combined and residents of the southern portion of the state had to shovel snow only a half dozen times all winter, and most of the time the ground was bare. Because of the mild weather, birds were very widespread and not particularly common at feeders. It was possible to drive miles without seeing birds, owing to the lack of any concentrating factors. There were few rarities in the Region, with Wisconsin's second Curve-billed Thrasher the only exceptional one. But, who cared, because the weather was so beautiful for winter.

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

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — One to three Red-throated Loons, possibly more, were in Manitowoc in the first one-half of January (BC, CS *et al.*), extremely unusual for Wisconsin. A Com. Loon was found Jan. 27 on a lake kept open by a power plant in Virginia, St. Louis (SW/MS); there are very few mid-winter records for Minnesota, especially in the north. Pied-billed Grebes were unusually scarce in Wisconsin. Single Eared Grebes were seen Dec. 20 at Muskegon (JW *et al.*) and Dec. 21 into January at St. Joseph, Berrien (DP, JP), the 3rd December in a row at St. Joseph (The same bird?). Six W. Grebes were found Dec. 6 on L. Superior near Duluth (AB), late for Minnesota, and casual for L. Superior. American White Pelicans (three) again overwintered at Albert Lea, Minn. Double-crested Cormorants were found at 2 Wisconsin and 3 Michigan locations with four overwintering in Bay, Mich. This is no doubt a reflection of their continued increase throughout the Region. Great Blue Herons were reported in above-average numbers Regionwide, with one Feb. 25 in Michigan's Alpena (C & HP), well n. of normal. Black-crowned Night-Herons were found in both Michigan and Wisconsin.

Tundra Swans were present in good numbers in early December, with 2000 Dec. 1 in LaCrosse, Wis. (FL) and a couple of individuals overwintering. Mute Swans continue to do well in the Region, with the overwintering flock in Kalamazoo, Mich., now up to 280 birds (DP, RA). Brant were found at 2 Michigan locations: Gull Lake, Kalamazoo Jan. 21 (RA, JG) and



St. Clair, Feb. 22 (JP, JPa, AM). Canada Geese were reported in larger numbers and from more locations than normal, with 105,000 on the Lac Qui Parle, Minn., CBC particularly impressive. Wood Ducks were present for all or part of the period in 3 Wisconsin and one Michigan locations. Green-winged Teal were found at 2 Michigan and 2 Wisconsin locations. Wintering ducks were surprisingly scarce in Michigan and Wisconsin. Three Harlequin Ducks were found: Dec. 26 on L. Michigan at Muskegon (JH) and Jan. 13 on L. Michigan at Ludington, Mason, Mich. (ES, GW), both normal locations; much less normal, however, was one all winter on a creek in Austin in s. Minnesota (R & RK *et al.*). Observers on the Grand Marais, Minn., CBC found 223 Oldsquaw, the most in Minnesota in recent years. Black Scoters were reported from 4 Michigan locations, with 14 Jan. 31 in Ottawa (BM, DD *et al.*), a large number for Michigan. Only one Surf Scoter was reported

RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS — Early Turkey Vultures were in both Michigan and Wisconsin, with one Feb. 8 in Sauk, Wis. (SS), amazingly early. Bald Eagles were reported in above-average numbers in both Michigan and Minnesota, with a high single-location count of 12 at the Shiawassee N.W.R., Mich (SSk). Rough-legged Hawks were up in s. and w. Minnesota. A well-described Ferruginous Hawk was in Bayfield, Wis., Jan 28 (TD). Golden Eagles were seen at one Michigan and 3 Wisconsin locations, with perhaps 10 total individuals seen. Merlins were seen at one Wisconsin, 3 Michigan, and 5 Minnesota locations, continuing the good showings of recent years. There were two Peregrine Falcon sightings: Dec. 21 in LaCrosse, Wis (FL) and Feb. 26 at Shiawassee N.W.R., Mich. (SSk). For the 5th consecutive winter, a Prairie Falcon overwintered at Rothsay W.M.A., Aitkin, Minn. (S & DM *et al.*), and one was in Moorhead, Minn., Dec. 7 and Jan. 1 (L & CF).

Minnesota observers felt that numbers of both Gray Partridge and Ring-necked Pheasant were definitely down. Up to 18 Spruce Grouse were seen at dawn in Minnesota's Lake, the 4th consecutive winter that this elusive species has been dependably sighted here. Several ♂ Greater Prairie-Chickens were booming vigorously on the early date of Feb. 20 at Rothsay W M.A., Aitkin, Minn. (KE et al.). Wild Turkeys are increasing in Wisconsin, particularly in the s. quarter, and also doing well in Michigan. Three Virginia Rails lingered until at least Jan 16 in Wisconsin's Chippewa (JPo et al.). A Sandhill Crane was found in Michigan's Muskegon Jan. 19 (TH), and returning birds arrived in Michigan Feb. 20 and Wisconsin Feb. 21. A Ring-billed Gull was at Black Dog L., Dakota, Minn., Jan. 19 (RG), quite unusual for Minnesota in mid-winter (observers in Michigan wish they could say the same). Thayer's Gulls were found at 3 Minnesota and 5 Wisconsin locations, with a total of at least 20 individuals. Iceland Gulls were seen at 3 Michigan, 3 Minnesota, and one Wisconsin locations (nine total individuals), more than average for this rare gull. Glaucous Gulls were seen in above-average numbers with peaks of 15-17 at Duluth/Superior and 26 in Saginaw Bay, Mich. A Lesser Black-backed Gull was at the Erie Gun Club, Monroe, Mich., Dec. 31 (JG, BP) Great Black-backed Gulls away from their normal s.e. Michigan locations were at Holland, Mich., Jan. 25 (JPon, GW, EH), Duluth/Superior (two) Dec. 15-Feb. 22 (KE et al.), Racine, Wis. (two) Dec. 6-31 (GD et al.), and Milwaukee Jan. 17 (JF et al.).

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A Com. Barn-Owl was found injured Dec. 14 in Midland, Mich. (JR). This was the best Snowy Owl winter in at least 5 years, with many reports from throughout the Region, although they seemed less common after mid-January. After 2 years with only one N Hawk-Owl (and that one found dead), hawk-owls returned to Minnesota in force, with no fewer than 14 individuals found from 7 counties. One was also in Michigan's Schoolcraft. Minnesota had an average winter for Great Gray Owls with 11 individuals from 5 n. counties. There was none elsewhere. Long-eared Owls were more commonly reported throughout the Region than in recent years, an encouraging sign. Short-eared Owls were much more common than in the last several years throughout the Region, with birds overwintering in several locations, also encouraging. Boreal Owls were also above average, with 5 reports, all from Minnesota: Dec. 23 at Cook, St Louis (KB); Feb. 1-2 at Saginaw, St. Louis (VR et al.); Feb. 21 on Gunflint Trail, Cook (MN); Feb. 27 at Hovland, Cook (SL); and a male calling on territory for the 3rd year in a row n. of Isabella, Lake (SW/MS). Northern Saw-whet Owls were also above average in Minnesota, with 7 reports.

As might have been expected with the mild weather, Belted Kingfishers were in above-average numbers in Minnesota. Red-headed Woodpeckers were very scarce in both Michigan and Wisconsin. Two Red-bellied Woodpeckers were n. of normal in Delta, Mich., Dec. 20-26 (JFi). After last winter's invasion, Three-toed Woodpecker numbers returned to normal, with seven individuals found at 4 Minnesota locations. Northern Flickers were down in numbers in Wisconsin, but up in numbers in Minnesota.

JAYS THROUGH WARBLERS — Gray Jays were seen in good numbers throughout the n. parts of the Region, particularly in Minnesota, where several were s. of normal and an all-time record 154 were found on the Isabella CBC. This followed on the footsteps of last fall's invasion. Also invading last fall and lingering somewhat s. of normal were Boreal Chickadees, with overwintering birds at feeders in Wabasha and Cottonwood, Minn. Tufted Titmice were more often reported this winter in Minnesota than normal. Red-breasted Nuthatches were less common than in many winters in Wisconsin. More Brown Creepers than normal were reported in Minnesota. Carolina Wrens were found at 3 Minnesota and one Wisconsin locations, about the same as last year for this winter-

limited species, which has been quite scarce in recent years. Golden-crowned Kinglets were seen in good numbers in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was at a Minnetonka, Hennepin, Minn., feeder until Jan. 5; there are very few mid-winter records for Minnesota. Townsend's Solitaires were seen in 3 Minnesota and 2 Wisconsin locations, slightly more than average. American Robins were seen in increased numbers in Minnesota, but in reduced numbers in Michigan and Wisconsin. Varied Thrushes were less common than usual, with only 2 Minnesota and 4 Wisconsin sightings. A late Gray Catbird was at Trempealeau, Wis., Jan. 3 (THu). Northern Mockingbirds were n. of normal Dec. 13 in Marquette, Mich (TR) and all winter at a feeder in Indian River, Cheboygan, Mich. (RD). A Brown Thrasher overwintered in n. Minnesota at a Crow Wing feeder. The bird of the season, and the only truly exceptional rarity, was the **Curve-billed Thrasher** that appeared at the Hendrickson feeder in Spencer, Wis., Nov. 26. It reappeared in mid-December, when it was positively identified. Many birders came to see it, including two overzealous out-of-state individuals who harassed it so badly that it disappeared for almost 3 weeks. In mid-January it reappeared and was still present in March. Seen and photographed by many, this was the 2nd occurrence of this species in Wisconsin. Bohemian Waxwings were seen in good numbers in Minnesota and n. Wisconsin, but only average numbers in Michigan, where 500 Dec. 7 at Whitefish Point (JG, JM) were exceptional. Cedar Waxwings were scarce in Wisconsin. Northern Shrikes were seen in good numbers throughout the Region, surprising considering last winter's invasion. Loggerhead Shrikes were seen in all 3 states: one on the Plymouth, Wis., CBC (JB), and early returnees Feb. 20 in Anoka, Minn. (KL) and Feb. 27-28 in Ingham, Mich. (CH, JK et al.), an encouraging number of reports of this scarce species. A Pine Warbler was found for only the 2nd time in winter in Minnesota, with one photographed at a Willmar feeder in January. Two Pine Warblers were at a Grandville, Mich., feeder Dec. 29-Jan. 1 (JPon et al.) A Com. Yellowthroat was found Feb. 20 in Waukesha, Wis. (JBi).

GROSBEAKS THROUGH FINCHES — A Rose-breasted Grosbeak survived at a Chippewa, Wis., feeder until Feb. 1 (fide JPo). Wisconsin had its first winter occurrence of an Indigo Bunting when one was found on the Stockbridge CBC. It remained into early February (DT, CR et al.). American Tree Sparrows were down in numbers throughout the Region. White-throated Sparrows wintered in above-average numbers in s. Michigan. The less common wintering sparrows (Fox, White-crowned, Field, Vesper and Harris') were seen in the expected low numbers. Fewer Dark-eyed Juncos were seen in Minnesota. Lapland Longspurs were very scarce in both Michigan and Wisconsin. Snow Buntings were also less common than usual, but a flock of 3650 was found Dec. 20 in Midland, Mich. (BG, BW).

Despite the mild weather, Wisconsin observers found fewer Red-winged Blackbirds than normal. Eastern Meadowlarks continued their pattern of recent years with almost none seen anywhere in the Region. A Yellow-headed Blackbird Feb. 21 at Horicon N.W.R., Wis. (JB), was either an overwinterer or early returnee. A Rusty Blackbird overwintered in Monroe, Wis. (EE). Many more Brewer's Blackbirds than normal lingered in Minnesota, with individuals remaining into January at 4 locations, even way n. at Grand Marais. These individuals were all well documented, unusual for this frequently-misidentified species. All the normal blackbirds returned to the Region in mid-to-late February, earlier than normal.

The winter finch picture was bleak again this winter. Pine Grosbeaks were extremely scarce, with none reported in s. parts of the Region and low numbers in the n. except in n.e. Minnesota, where they were noted in average numbers. Purple Finches were in low numbers in Michigan and Wisconsin. House Finches continue to do fabulously in the Region, with Michigan numbers still climbing rapidly. Wisconsin observers

found from one to 15 at feeders in 6 counties, and in Minnesota, where none had ever stayed for any length of time, as many as four were at a feeder in Minneapolis all winter, and a lone female was at a Marshall feeder in late December. Perhaps this species is ready to follow the path blazed in the other states of the Region and become established in Minnesota. Crossbills of either species were scarce this winter, with only the Red approaching normal numbers, and only in Minnesota and Michigan. White-winged were the scarcest finches this winter throughout the Region. Common Redpolls were in near-average numbers, but nothing spectacular as in some winters; only a handful of Hoaries were seen, all in the north. Pine Siskins were probably the most common finches, and they were not seen in exceptional numbers. Evening Grosbeaks also were generally scarce.

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MIDDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

Bruce G. Peterjohn

Can you imagine a February when it does not snow in Chicago? Hard to believe, but true, and it was symptomatic of a season when the entire Region never really experienced winter. Temperatures generally averaged 3–5 degrees above normal during all months while precipitation was below normal, particularly in the eastern states. Cold temperatures and snow cover were short-lived. These conditions were fairly uniform across all states and produced the mildest winter in more than ten years.

Despite the open conditions and mild temperatures, the birding was generally rather dull. Not surprisingly, waterbirds were more widespread than normal since open water was unusually plentiful, even in the northern states. Passerines were generally reported in low numbers and bird feeders attracted a dearth of visitors, perhaps reflecting the availability of natural foods. With the exception of a small Snowy Owl movement, few birds moved into the Region from farther north. Only a few scattered rarities enlivened the birding at some localities. As expected, mild temperatures during the last one-half of February triggered an influx of early migrants into all states.

ABBREVIATIONS — S.C.R. = Squaw Creek Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Mo.; O.W.R. = Ottawa Nat'l Wildlife Ref., O.; Say Res. = Saylorville Reservoir, Ia.; Spfld. = Springfield, Ill. *Italicized* place names are counties.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — A Red-throated Loon was reported Dec. 1 from Say. Res. (†SD), where they are casual migrants, and the previously-cited Pacific Loon tarried at the same lake through Dec. 6. Despite the mild weather, most Com. Loons departed by mid-December. The only sizable flock totalled 65 at L. Cowan, O., Dec. 2 (LG). As expected, a few loons lingered through Jan. 3–10 in all states except Illinois, but the only wintering loon was reported from Table Rock L., Mo. (PM). Certainly the most unexpected bird of the season was an imm. **Yellow-billed Loon** that was widely observed at Rock Falls, Ill., Dec. 14–29 (†LJ, †BS, m.ob., ph.).

Not surprisingly, more Pied-billed Grebes wintered this year including unusually large mid-winter concentrations of 75 at L. Pewee, Ky., Jan. 11 (BP, CJu) and 44 at Turtle Creek Res., Ind., Jan. 3 (CK, TK). Migrant Horned Grebes were widespread during December but generally disappeared by early January.



One at Cedar Rapids through Jan. 7 was late for Iowa (SD) and the largest January flocks totalled eight to 16 in Indiana and Missouri. No Red-necked Grebes were discovered this winter. Eared Grebes are becoming regular late fall migrants along L. Erie, where one or two were noted at three sites along the Cleveland–Lorain lakefront through Dec. 26 (m.ob.). The only other Eared Grebe remained in Iowa until Dec. 1. A late W. Grebe appeared at Carlyle L., Ill., Dec. 6–19 (LHa, BR, m.ob.), while details provided on two Western/Clark's Grebes along L. Michigan at Ogden Dunes, Ind., Dec. 26 were insufficient to separate these species. Double-crested Cormorants were widely reported into early January but the only wintering reports were of five at L. Taneycomo, Mo. (PM), plus singles at Bettendorf, Ia. (P et al.) and Rend L., Ill. (TFI). Reports from 3 Ohio locations Feb. 14+ may have been of wintering birds or early migrants.

The mild weather induced more Great Blue Herons to winter with reports from all states including scattered concentrations of 20–58 and a maximum of 144 in w. Kentucky. Quite rare after early December, a Great Egret was intermittently observed at Horseshoe L., Ill., Dec. 26–Jan. 13 (JZ et al.) and two remained at O.W.R. through Jan. 2 (MS, fide KA). Lingering Green-backed Herons were documented from Warren, Ill., Dec. 13 (†MBA) and Spring Lake W.M.A., Ill., Dec. 27–Jan. 3 (†MBA et al.). Wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons peaked with 48 at Toledo, O., and eight at Horseshoe L., Ill. Other sightings consisted of one or two in the Chicago area during December, one at Eastlake, O., Jan. 4 (LR, RH), and two at Hammond, Ind., through Jan. 16 (KB).

WATERFOWL — As expected during a mild winter, waterfowl were more widely reported than normal. The only exception was along L. Erie where the usual concentrations generally failed to materialize. Mild weather during late February triggered a fairly substantial movement of early migrants.

Small numbers of Tundra Swans passed through Ohio and Illinois during December when two were also noted at Ballard W.M.A., Ky. January sightings included 15 along w. Lake Erie, plus a maximum of seven at 3 inland locations in Ohio, and singles at 2 Illinois sites. A small influx during February may have represented wandering wintering swans or early migrants. This influx was most apparent in Illinois, where as many as eight appeared at 6 scattered locations Feb. 3+, and two were found at Barkley L., Ky., Feb. 7 (ER). Two wintering Trumpeter Swans in Mills, Ia., undoubtedly came from the reintroduced population in Minnesota. Small numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese remained in Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois into January with the latest report of three at Canton, Ill., Jan. 17 (MBa). Large numbers of Snow Geese do not normally winter in Iowa. Hence, 2000 at DeSoto N.W.R., Jan. 5 were unexpected. Normal numbers elsewhere included a maximum of 9000 at Ballard W.M.A., Ky. Ross' Geese continued their slow increase in the w. portion of the Region. Late migrants included six recovered in s.w. Iowa at Fremont through Dec. 29 (CP) plus previously-mentioned fall sightings of four to six at Ballard W.M.A., Ky., in early December, and the Spfld. bird remaining through Dec. 9. Wintering Ross' Geese are still quite rare, with an adult returning to Baldwin L., Ill., through Jan. 22+ (SR et al.) and two in Atchison, Mo., Feb. 1 (MR). The mild weather caused fewer Canada Geese to concentrate on the refuges along the Mississippi R.

Puddle ducks were widely reported and most were able to successfully overwinter. However, their numbers were generally small. Only Mallards were abundant with large flocks in most states including a maximum of 41,253 at Rathbun Res., Ia. (RCu). While a few Blue-winged Teal may occasionally linger into the CBC period, mid-winter records are exceptional, such as six in Taney, Mo., Jan. 29 (PM). Gadwalls are apparently increasing as winter residents, with flocks of 105–213 noted in Illinois and Kentucky.

Winter Canvasback concentrations consisted of 2500+ at Oregon, O., and flocks of 400–700 in Illinois. These numbers were swelled with early migrants that peaked at 15,000 on the Mississippi R. at Keokuk, Ia., Feb. 22 (RC) and 8000+ at Oregon, O., Feb. 21 (TKe). Since Ring-necked Ducks normally winter in small numbers, a flock of 400 at L. Pewee, Ky., Jan. 14 (JH) was exceptional. Early migrants totalled 3000 at Keokuk, Ia., Feb. 20 (RC). Greater Scaup were widely reported from inland localities and normal numbers appeared on the Great Lakes. Flocks of 38 at Montrose Jan. 10 and 40 at Keokuk Feb. 6–7 were noteworthy for Iowa. Migrant Lesser Scaup totalled 8000 at Keokuk, Ia., Feb. 22. The previously-reported King Eider at Chicago was last observed Dec. 8. More surprising was an imm. ♂ King Eider discovered at Spfld., Jan. 22+ (†H, m.ob.), providing one of few inland records for Illinois. Harlequin Ducks were detected only at Beverly Shores, Ind., with two Dec. 20 (KB). No concentrations of Oldsquaw were reported from L. Michigan this winter. The 9 inland sightings were more than normal and included two s. to Stockton L., Mo., Jan. 27 (LK). The last Black Scoters departed from Iowa, Ohio, and Illinois Dec. 7–20. Surf Scoters were detected at single locations in Iowa and Illinois Dec. 6–18 while the only wintering bird was discovered in St. Joseph, Ind. (m.ob.). White-winged Scoters may be declining in the Great Lakes, where the largest reported "flock" was of two. Most remarkable of the 7 inland reports included seven at Springfield, Mo., Jan. 5 (m.ob.), one at S.C.R., Dec. 26–Jan. 1 (FL et al.), and one near Danville, Ky., Feb. 1 (WK, fide FLo). Fewer Com. Goldeneyes appeared this winter with maxima of 800–1000 in Ohio and Illinois. Barrow's Goldeneyes have been discovered on L. Erie during 3 of the last 4 winters; this year's sighting was of an ad. male in Ottawa, O., Feb. 11 (†KA). The mild weather enticed flocks of Hooded Mergansers

to remain well into January with 100 at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Ill., Jan. 24 (DR) and 75 at L. Pewee, Ky., Jan. 11 (BP, Cju). Common Mergansers were locally numerous in the n. states, particularly Iowa and Illinois, where concentrations of 1700–4000 were reported. However, few penetrated farther south. Unusual for winter were 449 Ruddy Ducks at Turtle Creek Res., Ind., Jan. 3, declining to 150 by Feb. 28 (CK, TK).

HAWKS — Black Vultures may prove to be regular winter residents in s.w. Missouri. Although there was only one previous winter record from the area, a roost at Bull Shores L. supported 45 Blacks Dec. 8 and 24 Jan. 14 (PM), while four were also located in Barry Jan. 28 (LK). A flock of 31 Blacks in Johnson Jan. 4 provided a noteworthy winter concentration for s. Illinois (TFi). The roost at Bull Shores L., Mo., also supported 116 Turkey Vultures Jan. 29 (PM), while 120 wintered at the established roost at Turkey Run S.P., Ind. (AB). Scattered Turkey Vultures also appeared n. to Vermilion, Ill., Jan. 6 (DW). Migrants were widespread during the last one-half of February and returned to Lee, Ia., by Feb. 16 (RC). Lingering Ospreys were noted through Dec. 20–27 on 2 Illinois CBCs. An early migrant returned to Taney, Mo., Feb. 28 (PM). Bald Eagles continued their steady improvement along the Mississippi R. valley. Farther e., Monroe Res., Ind., is proving to be a regular wintering area where as many as 12 were counted in mid-February (m.ob.). Indiana and Illinois supported the largest numbers of N. Harriers including roosts of 13–28; similar numbers were not reported from the other states. Both Sharpshinned and Cooper's hawks were reported in numbers representative of recent years. The N. Goshawk movement was not impressive with 13 Iowa sightings and 9 Illinois reports s. to Cass and Danville, plus single birds in Ohio and Indiana.

Red-shouldered Hawks appeared to be stable and maybe even improving slightly in several localities. One at St. Joseph Jan. 25 provided an unusual winter record for n.w. Missouri (FL). Rough-legged Hawks were widespread but numbers were substantially reduced from last year. They were apparently most numerous in c. and n.e. Iowa. Wintering Golden Eagles were noted in normal numbers with a total of 11 sightings from Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Kentucky. Merlins were observed into the CBC period in Illinois but the only subsequent report was of one photographed at Minnehaha W.M.A., Ind., Jan. 17 (MB). A Peregrine Falcon wintered in downtown Toledo, O. (m.ob., ph.), while other winter sightings included singles at Chicago Jan. 17 (†RE) and O.W.R., Feb. 7 (ET). Prairie Falcons were discovered in normal numbers for recent years with 2 sightings from Missouri plus singles in Iowa and Illinois.

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS —

Gray Partridges continued their S range expansion in Iowa. As a result of extensive reintroduction efforts, Wild Turkeys are thriving in most states, and included flocks as large as 100 in Iowa. The mild winter undoubtedly aided N. Bobwhite populations. A covey of eight in Sioux Dec. 26 (JV) was unusual for n.w. Iowa. The only wintering rail was a Virginia at L. Rockwell, O. (LR). More remarkable was a Com. Moorhen at Hammond, Ind., Dec. 27 (KB et al.), providing one of very few winter records for the Region. Wintering Am. Coots were more widely distributed than normal and included flocks of 600 at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Ill., Jan. 31 (DR), and 395 at L. Pewee, Ky., Jan. 14 (JH). Migrant Sandhill Cranes passed through Indiana, Kentucky, and w. Ohio during December, and the latest sighting was of a flock of four over Hardin, Ky., Jan. 4 (P & DK). For the 4th consecutive year, one wintered in the Region with an immature in Knox, O. (HG, m.ob.). Early spring migrants returned to Indiana and e. Illinois by late February and included extralimital sightings of one at Amana, Ia., Feb. 10 (CB) and four at Ballard W.M.A., Ky., during February (CW).

Despite the relatively mild weather, few shorebirds lingered beyond normal departure dates. Only Killdeer were more widely reported than normal, with small numbers successfully wintering in all states. The only Purple Sandpiper discovered



Sandhill Crane in Knox County, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1987. Photo/Mary Gustafson.

was at Waukegan, Ill., Jan. 3 (DJ), and Dunlins lingered into the CBC period along L. Erie. Late Am. Woodcock remained in Missouri into December, and early spring migrants returned to all states by the end of February. Representative arrival dates were Feb. 12 at St. Joseph, Mo. (L.Ga), Feb. 14 at Carbon-dale, Ill. (TFi), Feb. 15 in Madison, Ia. (EA), and Feb. 21 in Franklin, O. (BA).

JAEGERS THROUGH TERNS — An imm. jaeger was discovered at Kentucky L., Feb. 22 (†BP, †m.ob., ph.). As frequently happens with imm. jaegers, its identity became a matter of intense debate. However, photographs taken of the bird Mar. 4 clearly demonstrate it to be a **Pomarine Jaeger**, establishing the first record for Kentucky.

As a whole, gulls were rather disappointing this winter. The open conditions allowed gulls to disperse widely while the relatively mild weather did not force many of the "winter gulls" into the Region. Except in Iowa, Ring-billed remained the most numerous species throughout the entire season with a brief influx of Herrings during early February. Unusually large concentrations of Herrings appeared only in Iowa with 1500–2000 at several reservoirs.

With the steady increase in Laughing Gulls during recent years, they are being discovered even during the winter months, when they were previously unknown. This winter, adults were reported from Lorain, O., Dec. 6 (RH, m.ob.), Chataqua N.W.R., Ill., Dec. 27 (†H, et al.), Kentucky L., Ky., Feb. 1+ (BP et al.), and Oregon, O., Feb. 21–27 (TKe). While Franklin's Gulls regularly remain along L. Erie into the CBC period, few are noted anywhere in the Region after late December. Hence, the appearance of an adult at Keokuk, Ia.–Hamilton, Ill., Jan. 16–17 (†VK, †RC) was remarkable. Little Gulls were reported only from L. Erie where as many as five wintered along the Cleveland-Lorain lakefront. Two Com. Black-headed Gulls were found along L. Erie through Dec. 16. Since L. Erie remained open until late January, Bonaparte's Gulls remained numerous on the lake with 35,000 at Cleveland Jan. 24. Numbers were greatly reduced during February, although flocks of 300+ were still scattered along the lakeshore. The only other wintering Bonaparte's were noted in Kentucky and Illinois. California Gulls are apparently casual winter visitors to L. Erie, where a first-winter bird was closely studied at Eastlake, O., Jan. 4 (†J, †MG). Fewer Thayer's Gulls were reported this year,

with daily maxima of three or fewer from traditional localities along the Great Lakes, Illinois R. system, Alton-Carlyle L., Ill., area, and the w. Kentucky lakes. Thayer's Gulls away from these localities still require documentation. For example, among the plethora of Iowa sightings, only the adult at Keokuk Dec. 17–Jan. 3 (†RC, m.ob.) and the first-winter bird at Red Rocks Res., Dec. 3+ (†T et al.) appear to have been correctly identified. Only small numbers of Iceland Gulls were scattered along the Great Lakes and none wandered farther inland than Joliet, Ill.

More Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported, especially inland, which may reflect the greater availability of open water this winter. In addition to the expected small numbers sprinkled along L. Erie, singles were detected at Red Rocks Res., Ia., Dec. 3–19 (†P, †JF), Carlyle L., Ill., Dec. 30–Jan. 6 (BR), Iowa City, Ia., Jan. 31 (†JF), and the Quad Cities area of Ia.–Ill., Feb. 6–16 (†P, m.ob.). Glaucous Gulls were restricted to the n. states with daily maxima of three to six along the Great Lakes. Scattered singles wandered inland in Illinois to Carlyle L. Great Black-backed Gulls continued their increase in the n. states. An incredible 1000+ were tallied in the Sandusky Bay area of L. Erie during the CBC period. They have become regular winter visitors in the Chicago area where the daily maximum was of four. Inland reports included two Jan. 3–Feb. 1 at Carlyle L., Ill. (LHa, BR et al.), where they have been regularly encountered in recent years, plus an adult at Bettendorf, Ia.–Moline, Ill., Dec. 19–Jan. 25 (†P, †FM, m.ob.). Normal numbers of Black-legged Kittiwakes consisted of immatures at Horseshoe L., Ill., Dec. 3–4 (†RG, m.ob.), Carlyle L., Ill., Dec. 6–7 (LHa, m.ob.), an Iowa CBC, and on L. Erie through Dec. 20. They are casual late winter visitors on the Great Lakes, where one appeared at Lorain, O., Feb. 21–23 (RH et al.). The mild weather allowed one or more Com. Terns to linger along L. Erie into the CBC period.

CUCKOOS THROUGH SWALLOWS — The small population of Greater Roadrunners in s.w. Missouri remained intact with reports from Taney and Stone this winter (fide PM). The only Com. Barn-Owls were detected at single locations in Indiana and Ohio, an indication of its bleak status in this Region. Snowy Owls staged a rather unimpressive movement into the n. states with reports of seven to 10+ birds in each. As expected, most sightings were clustered near the Great Lakes during December. These owls rapidly dispersed and few were found after early January. This movement extended S to Dayton, O. (fide LG), Knox, Ind. (DB), Mt. Carmel, Ill. (LHa), and the only Missouri sighting at Peculiar Dec. 17 (TO). Totally unexpected was a Burrowing Owl near Rathbun Res., Dec. 20–28 (†RS, †RCu et al.), providing the first winter record for Iowa. Normal numbers of Long-eared Owls consisted of reports from 14 Illinois locations plus scattered sites in the other states except Missouri. Most roosts contained eight or fewer owls. Fewer Short-eared Owls wintered this year, especially in Illinois. They were scattered across the n. states with the largest concentrations totalling seven to 14. Numbers of N. Saw-whet Owls were also reduced from last winter. Scattered individuals were generally detected in the n. states with a maximum of eight in Boone, Ia. (SD).

Red-headed Woodpeckers received mixed reports but were generally quite scarce in Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, and n.w. Missouri. The "Red-shafted" Flicker in Alexander, Ill., Jan. 2 (†RP, †MD) provided one of few Illinois records of this race. Pileated Woodpeckers are slowly expanding in the w. states. Their status is imprecisely known in n. Missouri, where two were observed at Crowder S. P. in early January (LH) and one at Thur-nau W.M.A., Jan. 30 (MR). One at Mason City, Ia., Dec. 18 was outside of its normal range (TF). Not surprisingly, E. Phoebes lingered into the CBC period in all states except Indiana but none apparently overwintered. Early migrants returned to s. areas by the last week of February. Lingering Tree Swallows survived along w. Lake Erie into the CBC period, remaining at O.W.R. through Jan. 4.

CROWS THROUGH SHRIKES — Sizable Am Crow roosts assembled in Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, and Ohio, with 25,000 at Keokuk, Ia. (RC), 10,000 at Rockford, Ill. (EW), and 3000–5000 elsewhere. There was no detectable S movement of Black-capped Chickadees, and Red-breasted Nuthatches were generally scarce except for a few local concentrations in the s. states. The previously-cited Rock Wren was noted at Say, Res. through Dec. 8. The mild winter was certainly beneficial for Carolina Wrens, which exhibited a marked improvement in many areas. While a few House Wrens lingered into the CBC period, mid-winter records are exceptional such as one at Louisville Feb. 8 (m.ob.). Few Winter Wrens were detected as their populations remain distressingly low. The only Sedge Wren was reported from an Iowa CBC, while Marsh Wren sightings included birds successfully wintering at Spfld. (H) and L. Rockwell, O. (LR). Golden-crowned Kinglets received mixed reports, while only the normal small numbers of Ruby-crowneds were noted, despite the lack of severe weather.

Eastern Bluebird populations were generally stable and benefitted from the mild weather. A Mountain Bluebird turned up on the Jefferson City CBC, providing one of few records for Missouri. Townsend's Solitaires may be rare but regular winter visitors to n.w. Iowa, where one was detected near Larabee Dec. 21 (DBi). Fewer Hermit Thrushes were reported this winter. Most of the Region's Am. Robins must have wintered in Taney, Mo., where a roost was estimated at 100,000+ during December (PM). Numbers were generally low elsewhere with only scattered concentrations such as 1000 at Evansville, Ind., Jan. 31 (CK). Most noteworthy among a bumper crop of **Varied Thrushes** was Missouri's 2nd record at Columbia Jan. 21+ (†JW). Other singles were discovered at Ames, Ia., Dec. 4+ (EMu), Champaign, Ill., Dec. 4–9 (†RCh, m.ob.), Bluffton, O., Dec. 20–Jan. 24 (HH, m.ob., ph.), Elgin, Ill., Dec. 20+ (†JM, †EW, m.ob.), Mason City, Ia., Jan. 2–16 (BK), and Spfld., Jan. 14+ (†H, m.ob.). Wintering mimids were well represented. Of five Gray Catbird sightings, one in n.w. Iowa at Cherokee Jan. 2 was most unusual (DBi). A Water Pipit at Carlyle L., Ill., Jan. 7 was conceivably a late migrant (H *et al.*). Bohemian Waxwings were noted in Iowa for the 4th consecutive winter, with a maximum of 15 at scattered locations Dec. 6–Jan. 4. In n. Illinois, where they are casual visitors, a Bohemian Waxwing was discovered among a large flock of Cedars at Morton Arboretum Feb. 21–26 (†EW, m.ob.). Cedar Waxwings were generally scarce and the expected late February influx produced flocks only in Illinois and Kentucky. Good numbers of N. Shrikes appeared in Iowa with a maximum of 11 in the n.e. counties. However, it was a poor flight elsewhere with only six other reports from the other n. states. Loggerhead Shrikes remained fairly stable in Missouri and Kentucky but few were noted elsewhere.

VIREOS THROUGH BLACKBIRDS — The mild weather enticed a few late migrants to linger into December although most disappeared shortly thereafter. A single White-eyed Vireo was discovered on an Illinois CBC, while a Cape May Warbler remained at a Park Forest, Ill., feeder through Dec. 10 (JKo, ph.) Indiana's 2nd winter record of a Black-throated Blue Warbler was provided by a male in Terre Haute Dec. 8–Jan. 9+ (JK, m.ob., ph.). Yellow-rumped Warblers were universally scarce. The previously reported Black-throated Gray Warbler was last observed at Lexington, Ky., Jan. 18. A late Black-throated Green Warbler appeared on an Indiana CBC. Pine Warblers may be rare but regular winter residents in s. Missouri, where two were noted in *Butler* Dec. 15 (MR). A Palm Warbler at Danville, Ky., Dec. 7 (FLo) provided the only report of this typically late migrant. The hardy Com. Yellowthroat survived until Feb. 1 at L. Rockwell, O. (LR), while two were noted at S.C.R., Jan. 8 (FL), and they appeared at 3 Illinois locations during the CBC period. Certainly the most surprising lingering passerine was a **Summer Tanager** at Springfield Jan. 3–10 (CJ, ph.), establishing the first winter record for Missouri. A few Indigo Buntings are encountered during most winters;

this season's reports were of males visiting feeders in Coles, Ill., Jan. 10+ (*fide* BH) and Tusculumbia, Mo., Jan. 29+ (†JW). Wintering Dickcissels have a similar status. One wintered at a Toledo, O., feeder (ET, KO) and another appeared at Davenport, Ia., Jan. 24 (†ABa).

A **Green-tailed Towhee** was carefully studied at Union County W.M.A., Ill., Jan. 3–10 (†RP, †MD, m.ob.), providing the 6th Illinois record of this vagrant from the west. Following a generally poor fall migration, sparrows were observed in low numbers in most areas. While Am. Tree Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were exceptionally scarce, most of the other wintering sparrows were thought to have been present in below-average numbers for recent years. Wintering Chipping Sparrows were found on an Illinois CBC and at Lexington, Ky., Jan. 24 (BP). Vesper Sparrows were reported from 4 locations in Illinois and Ohio, including one in Piatt, Ill., Feb. 8 (RCh) that apparently overwintered. A Lark Sparrow near Lowry City Dec. 27 (SH) provided the first winter record for Missouri. Small numbers of Savannah Sparrows normally winter n. to c. Ohio and c. Illinois, but one at Bays Branch W.M.A., Ia., Jan. 8 (†SD) was unexpected. Given their relative scarcity elsewhere, 381 White-crowned Sparrows at Turtle Creek Res., Ind., Jan. 3 provided a remarkable concentration this year (CK, TK). Few Harris' Sparrows wintered in the w. states and they wandered E only to s. Illinois. The absence of snow cover resulted in a poor season for longspurs and Snow Buntings. Even though they appeared in all states, Lapland Longspurs were generally noted in flocks of 50 or fewer with Jan. 10 maxima of 607 in Polk, Ia. (SD) and 400 in Ford and Iroquois, Ill. (RCh). Snow Buntings were restricted to the n. states and included flocks of 500 at Rockford, Ill., Jan. 10 (DWi) and 400 at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., O., Feb. 1 (J, MG).

Except for a few local concentrations, wintering blackbird numbers were generally unimpressive. The mild weather during February triggered an early migration of most species. Singing ♂ W. Meadowlarks at O.W.R. and Maumee Bay S.P., O., Feb. 11 (KA) and in Knox, Ill., Feb. 17 (MBa) probably represented early migrants rather than overwintering birds. Yellow-headed Blackbirds may turn up anywhere in the Region during winter. Most noteworthy of the 6 reports this year were one wintering at Euclid, O. (RH, *fide* LR), three in Holt, Mo., Jan. 30 (MR), and one at Illinois Beach S.P., Ill., Jan. 1–2 (†TS). Brewer's Blackbirds were detected only in the w. states, particularly Missouri where they are described as rare but regular winter residents in several w. counties, with the largest flocks numbering in the "hundreds" (MR). Great-tailed Grackles wintered at S.C.R. in unusually large numbers with 100+ Jan. 8 and 40+ Jan. 30–Feb. 1 (FL, MR). A "large-tailed" grackle at Pere Marquette S.P., Ill., Feb. 7 was probably this species although the very brief view did not allow for the positive identification of the bird (†MD, †RP). The only lingering N. Oriole was discovered at Shades S.P., Ind., Dec. 20 (†AB, EM).

FINCHES — The movement of winter finches was hardly remarkable this winter. Purple Finches were not impressive anywhere. Largest numbers occurred in s. areas including scattered flocks of 20–35+. House Finches continued their relentless W march through the Region. Their populations are expanding dramatically in Illinois, where largest concentrations totalled 100 at Danville (ME) and 40 at Spfld. (H). They are on the verge of becoming regular residents in Iowa, where this winter's sightings included 17 at Muscatine (TD), four at Davenport (*fide* P), and one near Red Rocks Res. (SD).

Red Crossbills staged a small movement in Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa, wandering E to n.w. Indiana. Small flocks of eight to 20 were widely scattered in these states with a maximum of 82 at Sand Ridge S.F., Ill., Jan. 11+ (LA). This movement extended to s. Missouri with reports from Carter and Oregon Dec. 15–16 (MR). White-winged Crossbills were completely absent. The Com. Redpoll movement was most noticeable in n. Ohio along L. Erie with scattered reports s. to Summit. Flocks of 40–90 were regularly encountered along the lakeplain. This

movement was not nearly as apparent elsewhere, although scattered small flocks and individuals were detected in the other n. states. Pine Siskins were most numerous in Illinois where the largest flock totalled 400 at Clinton L., Jan. 31 (MD). Such numbers were not representative of the other states, where they were very locally distributed in small numbers with occasional flocks of 20–60. They were rather nomadic this winter and frequently remained in an area for only a few days. Evening Grosbeaks exhibited a similar pattern but were less numerous than siskins. Most grosbeak flocks totalled 30 or fewer with a maximum of 200 in Saline, Ill. (KP).

Lastly, Eur. Tree Sparrows have been quietly expanding their range in c. Illinois for a number of years. They have spread W to the Mississippi R. at Warsaw (RC) and their appearance in s.e. Iowa is probably imminent.

CONJECTURAL REPORTS — An ad. ♂ Painted Bunting appeared at a Bettendorf, Ia., feeder Jan. 6. While a case can be made for spring overflights within this Region, ad. males appearing at n. locations during mid-winter raise the strong possibility of having escaped from captivity.

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CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

David P. Muth

Before I begin my diatribe, I'll dismiss the weather: it was generally mild, generally wet, except in Arkansas, and lacked any really major Regionwide disturbances; even a few local storms had no discernible long-term effects. Thus, while there were few significant rarities this season, there were a great many reports of lingering and abnormally far-north birds.

Now: Writing the winter report is extremely frustrating. The reason is simple: Christmas Bird Counts. I do not refer to the fact that many counts are conducted by people who do not seem to know the slightest thing about bird distribution in their area—we all know the problems, and it is up to state editors to straighten them out. I'm referring to an essentially logistical problem. With so much observer effort being expended on CBCs each winter, I must rely on that material if I am going to make any sense out of the winter season. But the exigencies of publishing the CBC issue mean that under no circumstances will I see the CBC data that was sent to New York. Every person who sees a significant bird, number, or trend, during a CBC should fill out a 3 × 5 card and send it to the appropriate sub-regional editor. Conversely, every CBC compiler should see to it that this happens. If you rediscover a bird originally found on a CBC, report it! Do not assume that someone else will do it. Too much important data is slipping through the cracks. I don't just mean that it will not get into the winter report—the winter editor may or may not choose to specifically cite the material. Its importance is not in being reported twice, but in allowing the editor to see the larger picture. Most important is the fact that records that are not separately reported are almost certainly lost to future researchers, lost to the science of ornithology. If you want it recorded for posterity that you found North America's first Ashy-tailed Swift on your local CBC, you'd better not assume that any future Ridgway is going to take its publication in the CBC issue as proof.



And a pox on those of you who never quite manage to send any data in at all.

ABBREVIATIONS — L.S.U.M.Z. = Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology; N.H.P. = National Historical Park; O.A.S. = Orleans Audubon Society. Place names in *italics* are parishes (in Louisiana) or counties. Note: at the time of this writing, no reports had been received from western Tennessee.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — There is, not surprisingly, an increasing probability of finding Red-throated Loons as one moves from west to east in the Region. A 6th record for the Tennessee Valley in Alabama was found at Wheeler N.W.R.,

Dec 20 (ALM *et al.*), providing a 13th inland record for the state. Five were found on coastal CBCs—there are now more than 30 total records for Alabama. One was found at the Pascagoula R. marsh in Jackson, Miss., Dec. 1–3 (CC, CK, DH ph.). As usual, none was found in Louisiana. Eared Grebes were well reported e. of their usual range with two in s.e. Louisiana, four in Mississippi, three in coastal Alabama, and, farthest afield, a single Dec. 25 at Andrews S.P., the 3rd for Bay, Fla. (SJS). One of the highlights of the season was surely the sight of five small shearwaters during the Gulf Shores CBC, Jan. 3 (CDC, JF), one of which was seen clearly enough to call an **Audubon's Shearwater**, for Alabama's 2nd winter and 3rd record overall. Another small shearwater was seen from shore a week later feeding with loons, gannets, and Bonaparte's Gulls, at Gulf Shores, Jan. 10 (GDJ). Northern Gannet counts were high all along the coast, from 581 during the Gulf Shores CBC Jan. 3 to 60 counted along Cameron, La., beaches Feb. 11 (DLD, SWC). Five Am. White Pelicans were unusual in Baton Rouge, La., Dec. 25 (JPK, PMcK), but seven on the Ft. Smith, Ark.–Moffett, Okla., CBC Dec. 20, and one in Washington, Ark., Jan. 10 (MMI, BSa, KWi) were rare lingerers in a mild winter.

The news on Brown Pelican recovery along the n. Gulf coast remains cautiously good. They are increasing in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi (CLK, TAI, JAT); one graced 2 counts in Cameron, La., where they had been absent for years; and for the first time since 1967, at least three were seen in New Orleans, where once they were common (GS, JO). One of these was found dazed from a powerline collision in a suburban backyard, and brought to Bird Rehab. at the Audubon Zoo (*vide* JaP). A Great Cormorant was reported from Hancock, Miss., Jan. 24 (JAT, DK). The details are perfectly good, but I confess to some skepticism about essentially all Gulf reports. This would be the 10th for Mississippi, all immatures. Some very high numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were reported from central Louisiana and Mississippi, and a few were well n. in Benton, Ark., Feb. 1 & 8, and Washington Dec. 20 (MMI). Anhingas were everywhere: about 50 were seen around Louisiana, with the northernmost being three in Point Coupee Jan. 7 (DWG), and one in Madison Dec. 5 perhaps only a late migrant (HM, HC). Two or three again wintered in s. Mississippi (JAT, m.ob.). Five found during the Texarkana, Ark., CBC were really far north Dec. 20. One found on the Gulf Shores CBC Jan. 3 represented only the 3rd coastal winter record for Alabama.

Two white morph Great Blue Herons appeared in the Region, one at St. Joseph Peninsula S.P., Fla., Dec. 28–29 (SJS *et al.*) and one at the e. end of Grand Isle Jan. 25 to at least Apr. 5 (KK, AS, GS). There are perhaps 10 records for n.w. Florida; this was Louisiana's 3rd. The location, timing, and soft-part colors, at least of the Louisiana bird, suggested that these were of the population *A. h. occidentalis*, or "**Great White**" Heron, but the white morph supposedly may occur in the mainland population. Is it possible to resolve the question by field observation alone? Fifty-one Great Egrets were found on the Lonoke CBC, Ark., Dec. 21, where they are normally rare. At least two Tricolored Herons wintered at Baton Rouge (JPK, m.ob.), unprecedented at this non-coastal location. There were at least 70 Green-backed Herons found for the season in Louisiana, many on CBCs—a reflection of the mild weather. One was in Hancock, Miss., Jan. 30 (JS, MB, JAT), where, with considerably less wetland habitat, they are quite rare in winter. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron numbers were nearer to normal, although perhaps a few more than expected could be found at traditional wintering sites in s. Louisiana. Sixty Black-crowned Night-Herons were lingering well n. in Morehouse, La., Dec. 27 (MMH, JA, TD).

WATERFOWL — Fewer Tundra Swans were reported this winter. In Tennessee, two adults and one immature were at the Duck River Unit, Tennessee N.W.R., from mid-December to Feb. 16 (*vide* JCR), and in Mississippi two adults were seen Dec. 13 in Grenada and an adult first seen Dec. 24 was joined

by an immature Jan. 11, both remaining to the end of the period (GK, SK, MD). Greater White-fronted Geese were, as has become usual, n. and e. of the old range, although there were fewer reports than in recent years. More than one hundred seen at a new locale in Richland, La., Feb. 15 (JB) were possibly migrants. Numbers of Snow Geese peaked there at 10,000± in February (JB). More **Ross' Geese** for Arkansas: at Holla Bend N.W.R., Jan. 30, four adults were picked from the flock (CM, WM). Two Am. Black Ducks were found among Mallards in a flooded rice field up in Richland, La., Feb. 21 & 25 (JB). Although expected in n.e. Louisiana, suitable habitat rarely gets coverage. The mild winter was thought responsible for 18 Blue-winged Teal on the El Dorado, Ark., CBC Dec. 18, but surprisingly, there were no CBC records in mid-Tennessee—the sole sighting was of one at Cross Creeks N.W.R., Jan. 1 (JCR). Cinnamon Teal turned up away from s.w. Louisiana in unexpected localities. One was found on the New Orleans CBC Dec. 28 and seen thereafter by various observers, for only the 3rd modern record for s.e. Louisiana and the first for the city. Another, shot by a hunter in Richland, La. (*vide* MMH), was also from an unexpected area Jan. 17. Up to three Greater Scaup in Benton, Ark., Dec. 6–Feb. 7 (MMI), and four in Oktibeha, Miss., Dec. 6 (TS), were unexpected. Oldsquaws were reported from s. Mississippi and Louisiana, but in hardly impressive numbers. There were 2 Black Scoter reports for Louisiana CBCs, from Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20 and Reserve Jan. 3. Three Surf Scoters were seen in St. Tammany, La., Nov. 15 to probably Dec. 26 (DPM, BMM). One was seen on Bear Creek in both Colbert, Ala., and Tishomingo, Miss., Feb. 22 (NP). Common Mergansers were well reported throughout the Region s. of their usual haunts. Twenty-seven Red-breasted Mergansers in Lawrence, Tenn., Dec. 11 (DJS) made a good count at an unusual location.

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES — Ospreys were well reported all along the coast, but one in n. Louisiana in Bossier Jan. 10 (WE, AE) was the first seen on L. Bistineau in 17 years. One Black-shouldered Kite seen just inside Louisiana territory near the Sabine R., Jan. 22 (JPK, JG) furnished the sole Louisiana report. In Hancock, Miss., they continued to occupy one of the original spots and were found in 2 new areas, an encouraging sign (*vide* JAT). Very encouraging numbers of wintering Bald Eagles came in from around the Region, and our nesting S. Bald Eagles continue to struggle along. The bad news included an immature killed by gunshot in Wayne, Tenn., in mid-January, and harassment by a photographer of Mississippi's only interior nest, which drove the incubating parent off the nest for one hour Feb. 8 (*vide* GTL). The photographer was ticketed and fined. Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are doing as well or better than ever based on mid-Tennessee CBCs (*vide* SJS). Reports from the rest of the Region were mostly neutral.

— **S.A.** —

Broad-winged Hawks winter regularly in the delta below New Orleans. They are expected at Venice and Grand Isle, where they were again found on this year's CBCs. The delta, of course, forms a peninsula, jutting farther s. than any other point along the n. Gulf coast. A great many birds winter there which are otherwise not normally found n. of s. Florida, the Yucatan, or the Rio Grande Valley. The presumption has always been that Broad-winged Hawks there, which are invariably immatures, missed their normal circum-Gulf migration routes east or west, and ended up in the delta with water on 3 sides and nothing to do but stay or head back north. Cameron in s.w. Louisiana, on the other hand, is along the normal western circum-Gulf route. Although it is intensely birded, Broad-winged are rarely found there in winter. Surprising, then, were the six seen on three Cameron CBCs, half of them adults, and most of them seen flying W along the line of the cheniers, exactly as one might see them in October, migrating.

An imm. Swanson's Hawk in *Plaquemines*, La (below Venice in the delta) Feb. 7 (DLD, SWC, DPM) was near where one had been reported in November (*vide* OAS), and furnished the first record for Louisiana between early January and April, and one of the few truly wintering individuals ever found in the Region. Six dark-phase Red-tailed Hawks in mid-Tennessee were above normal (*vide* SJS). Rough-legged Hawk numbers were down in Tennessee (SJS) but up in n. Alabama (TAI), with a couple of dark-phase birds. A dark-phase Rough-legged was also in Benton, Ark., Jan. 21–31 (RG, JCN, DJ), for a first record of this phase for the Ozarks and one of few for the state. Golden Eagle numbers were up in mid-Tennessee (*vide* BY). One was in an unusual locality on the road to Gum Cove in *Calcasieu*, La., Feb. 22 (GDJ, DJ). Another was in *Polk*, Ark., Dec. 27 (DB). American Kestrel numbers were reported encouragingly up in Tennessee and Alabama (SJS, TAI). A Merlin seen Jan. 23 to the end of the period in *Lauderdale*, Ala., provided the 7th record for the Tennessee Valley there (PK, TH, DJS). One was in *Grundy*, Tenn., Feb. 3 (RR) and another in *Franklin* Feb. 20 (JP). The species normally does not winter in Tennessee, and these may have been early migrants in the mild winter. The Prairie Falcon in *Marshall*, Ala., returned for the 3rd winter Feb. 1–10 (m.ob.). None of the many observers of this bird has ever sent in arguments to dissuade one from believing this to be a falconer's escaped bird.

Virginia Rails were n. in Mississippi (MFH) at *Noxubee N.W.R.*, Jan. 3, Louisiana in *Richland* Jan. 9 (MMH, EGM), and Tennessee in *Stewart* Dec. 21 (JCR) and two in *Maury* Dec. 27 (WNJ). A Sora caught by a cat in *Oktibbeha*, Miss., and rescued Feb. 27 (*vide* MFH), was probably a migrant, but two wintered in *Maury*, Tenn. (OBL). Sandhill Cranes continue to show up in unexpected places. An adult and immature provided a first *Grenada*, Miss., record Feb. 13 (GK). Two were at *Wheeler N.W.R.*, Ala., Jan. 20 (RC) for a 3rd inland record. Cranes showed up again in n.e. Louisiana, this time in *Morehouse* Dec. 17 & 27 (MMH *et al.*)—eight adults and two immatures. The *Cheneyville* flock was counted at 52 Jan. 10 (SN) & 11 (JMo), in *Rapides*, La. Most surprising of all in Louisiana was one seen flying along the *Mandeville* lakefront in *St. Tammany* Dec. 7 (JPK), providing the first parish record in 30 years. Tennessee, as usual, had a few reports from *Wilson* Dec. 14 (RA); and at 3 locales in *Coffee* Feb. 21 (GY, WY, NM, LM), numbers were 38, 48, and 75.

PLOVERS THROUGH TERNS — A Lesser Golden-Plover in *Baldwin*, Ala., until Dec. 2 (PB) was remarkably late. Wilson's Plovers were found, as usual, on the CBC at *Sabine N.W.R.*, Dec. 20, but one in *Lafourche*, La., Jan. 31 (PW, CK, PS) was presumably wintering. Six were found in *Cameron* Feb. 11 (SWC), a flock of four, and two birds already behaving territorially. Peak Piping Plover counts along Louisiana beaches were: three on *Grand Isle* during the CBC Jan. 4; 12 on *Fourchon Beach* in *Lafourche* Jan. 25 (GS, AS, KK); eight along *Rutherford Beach* in *Cameron* Dec. 19 during the Creole CBC; seven along *Holly Beach* in *Cameron* Dec. 20; and six along the Johnson's Bayou beaches during that CBC in *Cameron* Dec. 21. Some of coastal Mississippi's Am. Oystercatchers have changed their habits: they were seen throughout the winter on *Waveland Beach* in *Hancock* (JAT), a pattern that began in February 1985, although before that time they were never seen away from offshore islands. Greater and Lesser yellowlegs were n. with two and four in *Caldwell*, La., throughout the season (JB), and six and three in *Richland*, La., Jan. 14 (MMH, EGM), and, finally, seven on the CBC at *White River N.W.R.*, Ark., Dec. 27. Lessers were also present in *Point Coupee*, La., Dec. 27 with seven (DWG), on the *Lonoke* CBC with two Dec. 21, and one, a real rarity, on the *Percy-Priest Lake* CBC in *Davidson*, Tenn., Jan. 3. Alabama's first mid-winter **Solitary Sandpiper** was discovered on the *Gulf Shores* CBC Jan. 3; none was found this year on Louisiana CBCs. A Spotted Sandpiper was n. in *Madison*, La., Dec. 13–Jan. 20 (GTL, HM, m.ob.). A **Whimbrel** in *Harrison*, Miss., Feb. 2 provided the first winter record

(JP, *vide* JAT). Least Sandpipers were n. in *Stewart*, Tenn., Dec. 21–Jan. 1 (two) (JCR), in *Oktibbeha*, Miss., Dec. 6 (one) (TS), in *Benton*, Ark., Dec. 6–Feb. 21 (five) (MMI *et al.*), and in *Washington*, Jan. 11 (six) (RJ). Eleven Baird's Sandpipers were amazingly early in *Lawrence*, Tenn., Feb. 28 (DJS). This is earlier by 2 weeks than any coastal Louisiana record, and defies explanation. Incredible also was a Pectoral Sandpiper reported in *Stewart*, Tenn., Jan. 28 (LCC, JCR). Three Stilt Sandpipers appeared during the *Jackson*, Miss., CBC Dec. 20, and eight during the Johnson's Bayou CBC in *Cameron*, La., Dec. 21. Most unusual was a single in basic plumage Feb. 22 in *Lafayette*, La., well inland (SWC, DLD). A Long-billed Dowitcher was late in *Benton*, Ark., Dec. 8 (RG, MMI, NB). An impressive total of 230 Com. Snipe was counted in *Prairie*, Ark., Jan. 16 (HP, MP). An imm. **Wilson's Phalarope** found during the Johnson's Bayou CBC in *Cameron* furnished Louisiana's 2nd winter record.

Four Louisiana counts turned up a total of seven jaegers, an unprecedented total: two unidentified, four Parasitics, and one Pomarine found Dec. 20 on the CBC at *Sabine N.W.R.*, for the first December record for Louisiana.

An imm. Laughing Gull, one of n. Alabama's few records at any season, was in *Colbert* Jan. 20 (DJS). A Franklin's Gull was in *Lauderdale*, Ala., Jan. 17–25 (NP, DJS, m.ob.), an immature way out of place. To top it all off, Alabama's first **Little Gull** was there in *Lauderdale* Jan. 24 (TAI, NP), an adult. Trying not to be outdone was *Grenada*, Miss., with the state's 3rd **Common Black-headed Gull**, an immature Jan. 17 (JAT). Man-made lakes and dams may be disastrous for bottomland ecosystems, but they're great for wayward gulls and the birders searching for them. (When will n. Louisiana get into the act?) Bonaparte's and Ring-billed gulls took advantage of the mild winter and lingered far n. in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama (m.ob.). The Region's first CBC **California Gull** was discovered at *Sabine N.W.R.*, *Cameron*, Dec. 20. Returning for its 5th consecutive winter to *Harrison*, Miss., Nov. 16 to the end of the period was the Region's only reported **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (JAT). The inscrutable Ol' One-Foot put in a brief appearance Feb. 8 (RAD) in *Escambia*, Fla., for about the 9th year. Only one Glaucous Gull was found, in *Baldwin*, Ala., Dec. 31, a first-year bird (BH). Forster's Terns were n. and late in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama (m.ob.) A Sandwich Tern was late in *Jackson*, Miss., Dec. 7 (JAT, GM, CC), and another was on the CBC at *Sabine N.W.R.*, Dec. 20. Alabama's 3rd winter **Least Tern** was found on the *Gulf Shores* CBC Jan. 3. Finally, two rare Black Terns were in *Cameron* Jan. 2 (MJM).

DOVES THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS — A gratifying number of Com. Ground-Dove reports was received for Louisiana and Mississippi. It is cautiously hoped that we may be witnessing a comeback for this declining species. Groove-billed Ani numbers were unexceptional across Louisiana, although two wintered in a previously unreported area of *Vermillion* (JE, EE, BW). Three on the *Gulf Shores* CBC Jan. 3 were far east. Tennessee's 9th **Snowy Owl** was seen Jan. 5–Feb. 6 in *Stewart* (JCR, and—surprise—60+ obs.). An immature, its pellets revealed a diet of primarily coots, plus ducks, grebes, and voles (*vide* P. Parmalee, D. Snyder). A **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, Alabama's 5th, was found stunned but uninjured on a road in *Talladega* Jan. 30 (MAH). It was released Feb. 4. This species is probably more common in the pine-woods of this Region than is supposed. A Short-eared Owl was found well s. on the *S. Hancock*, Miss., CBC Dec. 29. A Com. Nighthawk was late but not wholly unexpected in *Davidson*, Tenn., Dec. 9 (CKC). Another was on the coast in *Escambia*, Fla., Dec. 7 (SD). An unidentified nighthawk was seen briefly in *Jefferson*, La., Dec. 29 (CS); on the basis of urban location, it was probably a Common. Three nighthawks, all probably Lessers in rural habitat, were found on the Creole CBC in *Cameron* Dec. 19. A Lesser Nighthawk was found on the *St. Tammany*, La., CBC Dec. 26, and seen thereafter by many. Two Whip-poor-wills

and two Chuck-will's-widows found on Louisiana CBCs were the only reports

It is perilous to make predictions about wintering hummingbirds. Better to explain things with hindsight. The relative dearth of records must have been a result of the mild weather, making it unnecessary for the birds to concentrate at feeders. A single Buff-bellied was reported, from Terrebonne, La., for the 2nd year there (PA). Totals for Ruby-throated, Black-chinned, and *Selasphorus* were down for most traditional locations. An *Archilochus* in Harrison, Miss., Dec. 20 (JAT) failed to remain to become Mississippi's first confirmed Black-chinned. A *Selasphorus* was in Harrison, Miss., Dec. 20 (JAT, DK), and another in Escambia, Fla., Dec. 23-30 (JPF, KW). A first interior Alabama Rufous Hummingbird visited Mr. Dugle's feeders from October through the period in Tuscaloosa (BS, GDJ, DGJ, PF). And just to keep you on your toes, those of you who continue to report imm. or ♀ Rufous Hummingbirds, Louisiana's 8th **Allen's Hummingbird** was in Jefferson Jan. 12 to the end of the period (NLN, a banded imm. female).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SHRIKES — An *Empidonax* flycatcher in Sumner, Tenn., Dec. 4-Jan. 14 (RN, MI, ECC ph.) was unprecedented. Only one was found on a Louisiana CBC, Johnson's Bayou in Cameron Dec. 21, and one passed through a backyard in Jefferson Feb. 9 & 26 (NLN). An E. Phoebe was n in Benton, Ark., Jan. 13 (MMI). There were eight Vermilion Flycatchers reported from around Louisiana, two from Mississippi, and one from Alabama, a good showing. The only Ash-throated was found on the Johnson's Bayou CBC Dec. 21. An ad **Couch's Kingbird** found at Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20 (Dec. 21 *LSUMZ), was the 2nd confirmed for Louisiana, and about the 7th for the complex, one of which was a definite Tropical (see AB 38:923). There were two W. Kingbirds reported for Louisiana, one on the Grand Isle CBC Jan. 4 and one in Terrebonne in February (FA). One was on the Mobile Bay CBC Dec. 20, and three, Alabama's largest wintering concentration, were in Baldwin Dec. 29 (BB, RAD, SD, BoS, BrS). Two to three Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were present throughout in Terrebonne, La. (RD, FA, VD). One Tree Swallow returned to Cross Creeks N.W.R., Tenn., Feb. 20 (JCR). Two N. Rough-winged Swallows wintered very far n. in Madison, La., Dec. 17-Jan. 1 (HM, HC, m.ob.). A few were scattered on s. Louisiana CBCs. Barn Swallows are somewhat more unusual: one was with one of the Rough-wingeds in Madison Jan. 1 (JBa), and two were quite late in Caldwell, La., Dec. 10 (JB). Four were found on the Gulf Shores CBC Jan. 3. Red-breasted Nuthatches barely put in an appearance.

One or two Bewick's Wrens wintered in Grenada (GK, m.ob.) and one was in Lafayette Dec. 27 (MD, GK). About eight were found in central Tennessee, a good year (AP, RMc). There was only one report for Louisiana, from the Johnson's Bayou CBC Dec. 21. House Wrens were variously reported in n. Alabama and mid-Tennessee and described in both areas as rare but increasingly regular (TAI, SJS). Four were found through the season in Washington, Ark. (MMI). Not surprisingly, both Sedge and Marsh wrens lingered in the n. as well. Two Sedges were found on the Grenada, Miss., CBC Dec. 23, one was in Washington Jan. 27 for a first n.w. Arkansas winter record (MMI); another was there Feb. 3 in another location, and one was in Benton Feb. 5 (RG). One or two Marsh Wrens wintered in Maury, Tenn. (WNJ); one was on the Grenada, Miss., CBC Dec. 23, and three were unusual in Richland, La., Jan. 8-9 (MMH, EGM) Naturally, a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were up n. as well one in Pope, Ark., Dec. 12 (MP), one on the Arkadelphia CBC Dec. 20, and one in Lawrence, Tenn., Feb. 7 (DJS, MAB). Eastern Bluebirds were reported in good numbers for coastal Mississippi and Alabama (JAT, TAI). At the risk of my reputation, I report a **Swainson's Thrush** seen during the Venice CBC in Plaquemines Dec. 31—the 2nd winter record for Louisiana (DPM). One Wood Thrush was found at Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20, and one found on Grand Isle, La., Dec. 12 (AS, GS)

was still present for the CBC Jan. 4 Gray Catbirds joined the list of birds lingering n. of their coastal haunts in this mild winter. Three were found during the Eldorado CBC in Union, Ark., Dec. 18. One was in Lincoln, La., Dec. 7 (JWG). One in Bossier Jan. 4 (LH) and one in Bienville Feb. 5 (PMD) provided the 2nd and 3rd mid-winter records for n.w. Louisiana. Cedar Waxwings staged a good invasion. Loggerhead Shrike numbers were encouragingly up for both Alabama and Tennessee (TAI, SJS).

VIREOS THROUGH BUNTINGS — Four Solitary Vireos were n. on 3 Arkansas CBCs. A **Red-eyed Vireo** was a highlight of the CBC at Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20. This was the 3rd winter record for Louisiana, all by excellent observers. (One probably could not rule out the possibility that these were "red-eyed" vireos from one of the South American populations.) Rare Tennessee and Nashville warblers were found on the CBC at Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20. A N. Parula was found in Cameron Dec. 14 (MS, JPK) and was still present for the Johnson's Bayou CBC Dec. 21. Another was found Dec. 18 (MW), but missed on the Creole CBC the next day. One was found on the adjacent CBC at Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20, and one was seen in the Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte N.H.P., Jefferson, La., Feb. 8 (RJS, PMc, JPK). A Yellow Warbler was located during the Venice CBC in Plaquemines, La., Dec. 31. A Magnolia, a Black-throated Green, and, best of all, a **Bay-breasted Warbler** rounded out the list of rare *Dendroica* for the Sabine CBC. Yellow-rumped Warblers bucked the trend of most insectivores and headed south: their numbers were off in Tennessee but new maxima were achieved on Mississippi and Alabama coastal CBCs.

The only Black-throated Gray Warbler was in Ibberville, La., Feb. 14 (HF). Another Black-throated Green Warbler was late in the Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte N.H.P., La., Dec. 15 (DPM) Yellow-throated Warblers were found in coastal Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, as usual, but a **Yellow-throated Warbler** in Benton, Ark., Feb. 1 furnished the 3rd winter record for that state (MMI). A few Black-and-white Warblers, Am Redstarts, Ovenbirds, and N. Waterthrushes were found during coastal CBCs. A late Am. Redstart was in the Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte N.H.P., Dec. 3-14 (DPM) and another was 3 mi away there Feb. 8 (AS, GS, GO, JSe). One N. Waterthrush was there Nov. 24-Jan. 12 (DPM). Two were still present in Plaquemines, La., Feb. 7 (SWC, DPM). Common Yellowthroats were n. in Ouachita, La., Jan. 6 (MMH) and on the Arkadelphia CBC Dec. 20. Finally, a **Wilson's Warbler** Feb. 4 in Jefferson, Ala. (HHK), was the first for the mountain region, first in February, and only the 4th in winter for the state.

A Summer Tanager was in Escambia, Fla., Dec. 27 (CLK, KW, JPF). For the 2nd year in a row, one wintered at the same feeder in E. Baton Rouge (FG, AG). One was nearby during the Baton Rouge CBC Dec. 27. A W. Tanager was found during the Sabine CBC, and another wintered in Terrebonne, La. (MSa, ESa, RD, PA). One Rose-breasted Grosbeak was unusually far n. during the St. Tammany, La., CBC Dec. 26. One Blue Grosbeak was late in St. Tammany Nov. 20 (DBC, GS, DPM), and one was on the Venice CBC, La., Dec. 31. An Indigo Bunting was seen in Escambia, Fla., Dec. 20 (DC, OF). They were recorded on 3 s. Louisiana CBCs; one on the Catahoula CBC in c. Louisiana Jan. 1 was unexpected. A ♂ Painted Bunting brightened the Fort Morgan, Ala., CBC Jan. 1. They were found on 3 s. Louisiana CBCs, and one was in the Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte N.H.P., La., Dec. 22-Jan. 15. A male was an eyep opener as far n. as Point Coupee, La., Jan. 25 (DWG).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES — A Dickcissel, 30 mi inland, was unusual in Baldwin, Ala., Dec. 9 (CMK). Another was at a feeder in Garland, Ark., Jan. 18-Mar. 1 (BL, PL), where they are very rare. There were three found in Louisiana: in Iberia Jan. 28 (MJM), St. John Jan. 18 (RJS, MWo), and Cameron Feb. 11 (SWC, DLD). A Bachman's Sparrow was out of its usual

piney habitat in Grenada, Miss., Dec. 14 (TS, MFH). There were but 2 Am. Tree Sparrow reports: five on the CBC at Cross Creeks N.W.R., Tenn., Dec. 21, and 12 in Garland, Ark., Jan. 10 (BL, PL). A Lark Sparrow was unusual in Escambia, Fla., Feb. 16 (RAD, LD). It is surely time to sound the alarm for Henslow's Sparrow: despite intensive searches, none was found on the St. Tammany, La., CBC, which usually gets the national high. If not there, then where? Lincoln's Sparrows were more widespread, n. and e., than usual. Several observers reported low numbers of White-throated Sparrows; perhaps they remained n. of the Region. There was only one report of Harris' Sparrow from an unusual locale—Cheatham, Tenn., Dec. 24 (ECC, MI). One Lapland Longspur was heard during the Jackson, Miss., CBC, an unusual coastal location. One was also near the coast in Hancock, Miss., Jan. 11 (TS).

Brewer's Blackbirds seem to be becoming more common in the e. areas of the Region (m.ob.). Bronzed Cowbirds away from their s.e. Louisiana strongholds were on the CBC at Sabine N.W.R., Dec. 20 (first record), and in Iberia, La., Dec. 13 (MJM). An ad. ♂ Orchard Oriole, nowadays a real winter rarity, wintered in the lushly planted Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, often seen feeding on Turk's Cap (*Malvaviscus grandiflora*), sometimes in the company of a N. (Baltimore) Oriole (BuM, JaP, DPM). Other N. Orioles of both subspecies were scattered about s. Louisiana. One ♂ "Baltimore" was n. in Montgomery, Tenn., Dec. 20–Jan. 26 (NH, EH, EW). Purple Finches hardly caused a ripple. House Finches do not seem to be retreating; three were at a Mobile, Ala., feeder throughout February, for a 2nd coastal record there. Two **Red Crossbills** made it to the Region, in Stewart, Tenn., Jan. 1 (JCR). Pine Siskins, unlike most boreal invaders, were widespread, if not in overwhelming numbers. A **Common Redpoll** was reported from Garland, Ark., Dec. 18, for Arkansas's southernmost record. The **Benton, Ark., Lesser Goldfinch** continued to visit the feeder where it first appeared in the summer of 1983 (DJ); there are only 2 other Regional records. Evening Grosbeaks were widespread but sporadic, and did not reach the coastal tier.

CORRIGENDA — Both the **Wilson's Plover** in Jackson County, Miss., Dec. 21, 1985 and the **Red-necked Phalarope** in Cameron Parish, La., Dec. 22, 1985 in AB 40:290, 291 should have been bold-faced.

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PRAIRIE PROVINCES REGION

We regret that at press time, we had not received the Prairie Provinces Regional Report.

NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

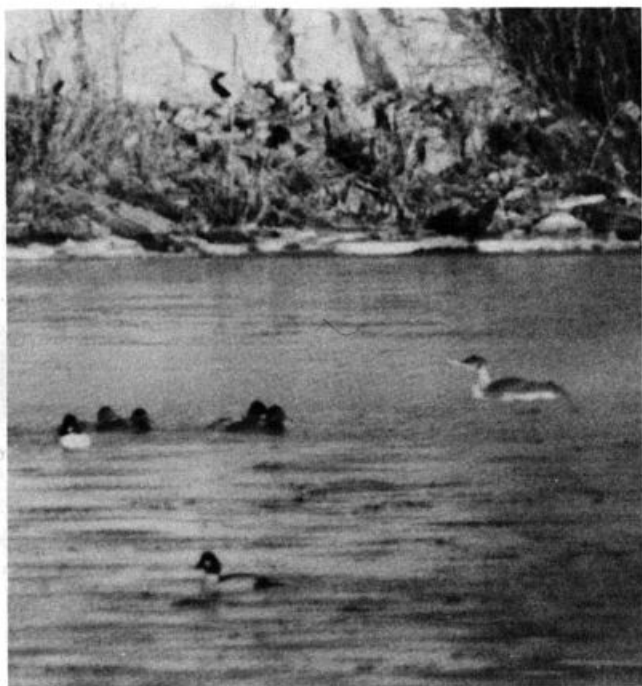
David O. Lambeth

This winter was the first or second mildest on record, depending on the locality. Temperatures generally averaged 10–15 degrees above normal, and the masses of cold arctic air normally expected were experienced briefly only in mid-December and mid-January. At Grand Forks, a subzero reading was not recorded in all of February. It was also the first or second driest winter in many places, with only the northeast quadrant of North Dakota retaining a snowpack throughout the winter—that snowpack being due largely to the early November storm. Larger lakes throughout South Dakota remained at least partially open all winter, and the reservoir at Fort Peck in Montana did not freeze over for the first time in its history.

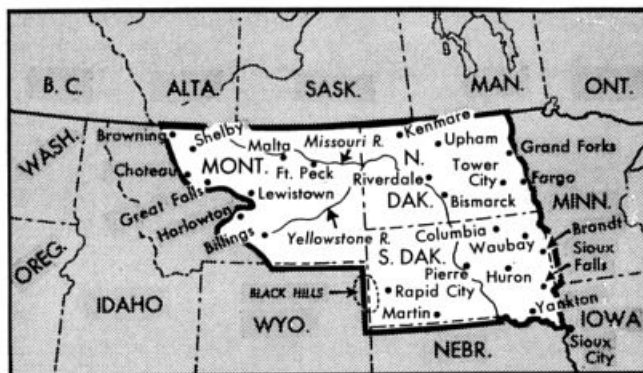
With such a mild winter, observers tended to expect a richer and more varied birdlife than usual. Only waterfowl came close to fulfilling this expectation, as they took advantage of open water occurring hundreds of miles farther north than usual. Perhaps the most interesting story of this winter involved such semi-hardy species as Mourning Doves, American Robins, Dark-eyed Juncos, American Tree Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, American Goldfinches, and various hawks, which were either absent or in low numbers in areas where they often winter. Explanations offered to explain the dearth included: (1) the early and severe November storm (see the fall report) drove potential winterers south, (2) a series of recent harsh winters had killed off individuals genetically disposed to overwinter, and (3) potential overwinterers succumbed to the November storm which they were not yet physiologically adapted to endure.

ABBREVIATIONS — Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Montana's first **Yellow-billed Loon**, and also a first for the Region, was pho-



Yellow-billed Loon on the Missouri R. at Giant Springs, Great Falls, Mont., Jan. 6, 1987. Photo/Charles Marlen.



tographed Jan. 5–6 on the Missouri R. at Great Falls, near Giant Springs (Charles Marlen). Two W. Grebes were on L. Sakakawea, N.D., Dec. 14 (REM), while a Great Blue Heron was seen at Sand Lake Ref., S.D., as late as Jan. 7 (SJY, WAS). Twenty-one species of waterfowl were observed during the period with many records owing to late fall stragglers and early spring migrants—some species, including Canvasbacks and Ring-necked Ducks, were moving up the Missouri R. at Yankton, S.D., by Feb. 13 (WH). Tundra Swans remained into January on L. Ellwell near Chester, Mont. (HM), and an unidentified swan was seen Feb. 22 near Lostwood N.W.R., N.D. (Karen Smith). Canada Geese, Mallards, and Com. Goldeneye normally winter in large numbers in each of the 3 states in free-flowing areas below the mainstem dams of the Missouri River. This winter in e. South Dakota, mild temperatures, the lack of snow cover, and open lakes encouraged both Canada Geese and Mallards to winter widely in numbers up to several thousand in areas where they are seldom found in mid-winter (fide BKH). Canada Geese returned to Nelson Res., and Bowdoin N.W.R. in Montana by Feb. 1, and to n.w. North Dakota by Feb. 11 (DLG).

Exceptional mid-winter records for waterfowl in South Dakota included **Ross' Goose** at Oahe Dam Jan. 30 (BKH), and a Snow Goose there Feb. 3 (DAT); a N. Pintail and a Wood Duck in Pennington Jan. 9 (NRW); and a **Greater Scaup** at Pierre Jan. 30 (DGP et al.). A ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneye** wintered for the 9th consecutive year at Canyon Lake in the Black Hills (JLB)—has it been the same bird all these years? In Montana, a Green-winged Teal and an Am. Wigeon near Malta in late January furnished new winter records for L9 (J & KS). Observations of N. Pintail included one at Garrison Dam Jan. 10 (REM), one near Malta, Mont., Jan. 21 (J & KS), and 20 at Benton Lake N.W.R., Mont., during February (DLi).

HAWKS THROUGH OWLS — Hawks apparently did not winter in exceptional numbers, despite the mild winter, and the number of Ferruginous Hawks in South Dakota was much decreased (fide BKH). An unusual number of Rough-legged Hawks in Deuel, S.D., in November, did not result in any wintering there. There were good numbers in w. South Dakota, however, and Rough-leggeds arrived late and in good numbers in Montana (fide CMC).

Both N. Harriers and Am. Kestrels were moving back into the Region by mid-February. A Sharp-shinned Hawk apparently wintered in Bismarck, N.D. (DMR et al.), and others were sighted in North Dakota at Minot Jan. 30 (GBB), in Slope Feb. 15 (GBB, REM), and in Ward Feb. 21 (REM). A Cooper's Hawk was seen Feb. 14 at Hettinger, N.D. (D & CG). A Red-tailed Hawk roosted nearly every night in a yard in Bismarck, N.D., Jan. 9–19 (RLQ). Merlins wintered widely, and a Prairie Falcon used the same window ledges as roosting sites at Grand Forks as used the previous 4 winters (RL). Peregrine Falcons were seen in Montana near Harlowton Jan. 4 (LM) and Benton Lake

N.W.R., Feb. 20 (DLi); and in North Dakota near Bismarck Dec. 21 (GRH), near Zealand Dec. 25 (CJB), and near Bismarck Dec. 28 (RNR). **Gyrfalcons** were sighted in Montana about 50 mi w. of Lewistown Jan. 15 (LM) and near Benton Lake N.W.R., Jan. 6 & 19 (DLi). North Dakota observations were for one in the Lostwood area Dec. 9–Feb. 16 (RKM), and one feeding on a Sharp-tailed Grouse north of Bismarck Dec. 27 (RWH).

Greater Prairie-Chickens in Bennett, S.D., Jan. 3 (D & CG) were w. of their usual range. Sharp-tailed Grouse were actively displaying on leks throughout December near Malta, Mont., and were similarly active in the South Dakota badlands Feb. 6 (MAG). An Am. Coot wintered as far n. as Sand Lake N.W.R. in South Dakota, and six remained through at least Jan. 21 near Malta, Mont. (J & KS). A Killdeer and a Com. Snipe were seen on McNeill Slough near Malta as late as Feb. 1 (D & TP).

A Franklin's Gull remained at Pierre, S.D., through Jan. 29 (BKH) while an ad. California Gull, two Thayer's Gulls, and three Glaucous Gulls were last seen at Garrison Dam, N.D., Jan. 10 (REM, GBB). Photos of two possible, 2nd-year Thayer's Gulls below Oahe Dam Jan. 29–30 (DAT, BKH) are currently being evaluated; two first-year and two 2nd-year Glaucous Gulls were also there (BKH, m.ob.). Montana's 2nd **Great Black-backed Gull**, an adult at Fort Peck Feb. 21–28, was photographed by Carlson and observed by others (LM, DP). The bird was in the company of 16 Herring Gulls and possibly an imm. Great Black-backed. How does a Great Black-backed Gull find its way to n.e. Montana in late winter?



Adult Great Black-backed Gull (with adult Herring Gull) at Fort Peck, Mont., Feb. 1987. Apparently Montana's second record. Photo/Charles Carlson.

Great Horned Owls were on the nest by Feb. 15 near Grand Forks (SOL), and Feb. 21 near Minot (REM). Three N. Pygmy-Owls responded to tape recordings Feb. 4 along Cottonwood Creek s.w. of Lewistown, Mont. (LM). There were about 30 reports of Snowy Owl for North Dakota, six for South Dakota, and none for e. Montana. The only Long-eared Owls were found Dec. 15 in Pennington, S.D. (MMM) and Dec. 21 at Garrison Dam (GBB). Short-eared Owls were reported from 4 counties in e. South Dakota, and there was one report each from Montana and North Dakota. Northern Saw-whet Owls, a species whose breeding status is largely unknown throughout the Region, were heard Feb. 1 & 21 in the Custer area of South Dakota (RAP, MJP), and also in February near Sawyer, N.D. (REM). This species was also found near Bismarck Jan. 2 (RMR), and in the North Unit of Roosevelt N.P., Feb. 10 (SWS).

KINGFISHERS THROUGH WARBLERS — In contrast to other semihardies, more than the usual numbers of Belted Kingfishers were found in South Dakota, where they wintered in at least 9 areas (fide BKH). One was also seen Jan. 6 at Giant

Springs near Great Falls, Mont. (DLi). Red-bellied Woodpeckers were reported from 5 locations in n.e. South Dakota, and a female was seen in Fargo Feb. 11 (MAB). A Three-toed Woodpecker was observed in Lawrence, S.D., Jan. 18 (MMM). A N. Flicker with both red "moustaches" and a red nape appeared at a Malta, Mont., feeder in January (JM). A Pileated Woodpecker near St. John, N.D., Feb. 1 was something of a surprise since this species is not known to occur in the Turtle Mountains during the summer (DLK).

Clark's Nutcrackers continued to roam the Black Hills following the fall irruption (MJP, RAP), and there was speculation as to whether they would nest. American Crows wintered at a number of locations across North Dakota. The two Mountain Chickadees appearing at a feeder at Ft. Peck in November were regulars throughout the period (CMC). The numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches reported were in the normal range; the best count by far was of 13 apparently territorial birds in the ponderosa pines of the badlands of North Dakota Feb. 15 (REM, GBB). Both Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets normally migrate through North Dakota well into December. Many more than usual were found in South Dakota, and both species remained throughout the period at several locations in North Dakota. The number of Townsend's Solitaires e. of the Missouri R. in South Dakota was called "unprecedented"; a total of 12 was found in 8 different counties. Five of these were in mixed conifers in Day (DRS, MSS). Another Townsend's was found in Grand Forks Dec. 12 (SOL). American Robins wintered widely, but perhaps in lower numbers than usual. Some were reported as singing by Feb. 6 in Brown, S.D., and Feb. 10 at Minot (GBB). A Varied Thrush was in Minot from Jan. 5 through February (Zenie Herther, REM), and another was in Day, S.D., from Nov. 17 to at least Jan. 11 (DRS). It was considered to be a "flight year" for Bohemian Waxwings across much of both Dakotas. At Grand Forks, more than one thousand arrived in mid-January and remained for about a month while stripping the numerous crab apple trees of their fruit. Cedar Waxwings were present in much lower numbers; the larger flocks contained 30 birds. Yellow-rumped Warblers were found in South Dakota in Beadle Jan. 3–15 (Blanche Johnson), and in Pennington Dec. 29, the latter identified as a "Myrtle" (NRW).

CARDINAL THROUGH FINCHES — The only N. Cardinal reported for North Dakota was a male wintering at Bismarck, where the species nested last year. Up to 15 per day could be found in Sioux Falls (MSS). A Song Sparrow wintered near Fort Peck (CMC), and one was seen Jan. 7–Feb. 3 at Fargo (MAB). Wintering Harris' Sparrows were seen in New Town, N.D., Dec. 16–Feb. 28 (RAS), Hettinger, N.D., Feb. 14–25 (D & CG), Bowdoin N.W.R., Mont., through January (KS), and Chester, Mont., throughout the period (HM). Both Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs were mentioned as being very low in numbers in South Dakota and Montana. However, flocks of Snow Buntings exceeding 1000 were seen in Grand Forks, N.D. (DOL). Four W. Meadowlarks at Fort Peck Feb. 8 were believed to be early migrants, and one was singing (CMC).

A Yellow-headed Blackbird wintered at a feedlot near Minot (REM). Rusty Blackbirds wintered in good numbers in w. North Dakota, including 25 in February at New Town (BCH), and 19 at Hettinger (D & CG). Two ♀ Brewer's Blackbirds were observed carefully Jan. 4 in a feedlot near Bismarck, N.D. (RWH), and 10 were at Sand Lake N.W.R., S.D., in January (DAT, DGP).

In the Black Hills, up to 200 Rosy Finches (Gray-crowned) appeared at 2 different feeders during the period (RAP, MAG), with 30 at the Glass' feeder being returns from her 1985–1986 banding season. A flock of 100 Rosy Finches at Lewistown Jan. 16–18 included seven of the "Hepburn's" form (LM). Fewer than 10 Pine Grosbeaks were reported for the entire Region. Cassin's Finches frequented 3 different feeders in the Black Hills. North Dakota's 7th record of House Finch was provided by a well-described male at Hope Jan. 25–Feb. 16 (DLK); the previous records were for females/immatures. A female-

plumaged House Finch came to Harris' feeder in Deuel, S.D., Dec. 22 through Feb. 2. Red Crossbills were described as very common to abundant in the Black Hills, where observations of heavily-streaked young being fed Feb. 28 provided evidence of very early nesting (RAP, MJP). More than 600 Com. Redpolls were banded in Day, S.D. (DRS), and numbers were generally considered to be high throughout the Region despite the mild winter which assured good food supplies away from feeders. There was a strong and definite influx of Pine Siskins into North Dakota in January. The number of Evening Grosbeaks was large in the Black Hills as usual, otherwise, numbers were very low.

CITED OBSERVERS AND AREA EDITORS (in boldface) —

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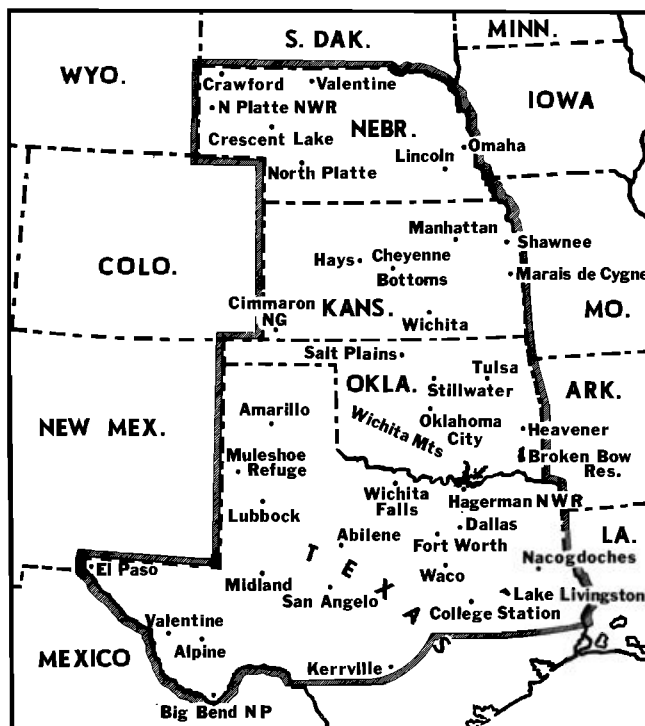
SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

Frances Williams

It was wet and mild all winter. In Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma, most contributors commented that bird numbers were low, especially sparrows. Montane birds, except for nutcrackers in northwestern Nebraska, and "winter finches" were scarce throughout. But in Texas, although there were few outstanding rarities, the season was far from dull. Species counts were high, and populations of some species, especially berry-eaters, were spectacular. Across Texas, the abundance of lush grasses and weedy growths resulting from last year's heavy rains provided abundant habitat for sparrows, and their numbers were generally high.

ABBREVIATIONS — B.B.N.P. = Big Bend Nat'l Park, Texas; G.M.N.P. = Guadalupe Mountains Nat'l Park, Texas; T.C.W.C. = Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collection at Texas A & M University. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH IBISES — A Pacific Loon in Platte, Neb., Dec. 9 was described well (BJR). At Oklahoma City, where



even one Com. Loon has been noteworthy in past winters, as many as 20 could be counted Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (JGN). Horned Grebes were found in the Texas hill country at Kerrville Jan. 23 and Buchanan L., Feb. 5 (E & KM). A Red-necked Grebe at Balmorhea L., Reeves, Tex., provided one of the few w. Texas records (CB, m.ob.). Eared Grebes rarely linger in the Texas Panhandle past November, so one at Amarillo Dec. 14 was noteworthy (KS). In Keith, Neb., a W. Grebe Jan. 11 provided a first winter record (RCR), and four in Wagoner, Okla., Jan. 24 were unusual so far e. (JNo, JMcM). Two Clark's Grebes wintered at Balmorhea L. (ML, NJ). Small numbers of Am. White Pelicans can be found on most e. Texas lakes all winter, but two on Red Bluff Res., Reeves, Jan. 3 were surprising (WHH). There is nothing unusual about flocks of Double-crested Cormorants on lakes in n. Texas in winter, but where a few hundred used to be counted, there are now flocks comprising two to four thousand birds (*vide* AV). A single Olivaceous Cormorant was on L. Tawakoni, Van Zandt, Tex., on the late date of Dec. 21 (RK).



Clark's Grebe (with head turned) with Western Grebe on Balmorhea Lake, Texas, winter 1986–1987. Photo/Mark Lockwood.

An Am Bittern at Buffalo Lake N W R., Tex., Dec. 6–24, provided only the 4th winter record there. Great Blue Herons wintered n. to Saunders, Douglas, and Boone, Neb. Great Egrets remained until late January at many Texas sites, with a peak of 12 in *Nacogdoches*. One at Muskogee, Okla., Dec. 14 was about 2 weeks later than normal (JMCM). A Snowy Egret in *Nacogdoches* Dec. 12 and Jan. 8 provided a first winter record (DW). A Little Blue Heron wintered in Tarrant, Tex. Cattle Egrets wintered across Texas, from *Nacogdoches* to El Paso. About 40 Black-crowned Night-Herons fished in flooded fields at Midland until late January, and a single bird was found at Lubbock Jan. 26. At least 300 White-faced Ibises wintered in flooded areas of w. Texas from Big Spring to Odessa. Two were found at Balmorhea L., Jan. 3 (WHH), and one lingered at Muskogee, Okla., Nov. 20–Jan. 20 (VJ).

WATERFOWL, RAPTORS — Tundra Swans graced Muskogee Nov. 30–Dec. 24, and Steinhage L., Jasper & Tyler, Tex., Dec. 22. One was found dead in B.B.N.P., Jan. 23. Ross' Geese were carefully identified at Cedar Bluff Res., Kans., Dec. 21 (SS), Sequoyah N.W.R., Okla., Jan. 31 (JMCM), Hagerman N.W.R., Tex., to Jan. 22 (m.ob.), Panola, Tex., Feb. 14 (SC), and Randall, Tex., Feb. 10–24 (DM). According to the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, record numbers of geese were in Nebraska in early December, including 115,000 Canadas, 50,000 Snows, and 500 Greater White-fronteds. A Wood Duck was found in Presidio, Tex., Feb. 17. American Black Ducks were observed in Douglas, Neb., Dec. 2 and Jan. 17. A Cinnamon Teal at Tulsa Jan. 1 was the first there since 1983, and four were found in Kimble, Tex., Feb. 14–18. Greater Scaup were carefully studied at Muskogee Feb. 22 (JMCM), Bell, Tex., Jan. 9 (ML), Tarrant, Tex., Feb. 18–23 (RH, CH), and El Paso Dec. 7–14 (BZ, m.ob.). Oldsquaws were discovered at Cedar Bluff Res., Kans., Jan. 24 (SS), Tulsa Jan. 23–Feb. 28 (JCH), Comanche, Okla., Jan. 14 (JMM, LEM), and Randall, Tex., Dec. 1–14 (DM, KS). A Surf Scoter visited a pond surrounded by apartments at Oklahoma City Dec. 20–Feb. 7 (JGN). A Surf Scoter photographed at El Paso Dec. 7 provided a first area record (BZ). At Lake o' the Pines, Tex., 111 Com. Goldeneyes were counted Jan. 11. A single brightly-colored ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye was reportedly found at a small lake near Harrah, Okla. (no date given, P & BM); there is still no specimen of this species for Oklahoma. Hooded Mergansers were found in Llano and Kendall, Tex., Feb. 5 & 8 (S & EW), and in Midland to Jan. 31 (m.ob.). In Platte, Neb., 1200 Com. Mergansers were estimated Dec. 9 (BJR). Red-breasted Mergansers were found at Tulsa Jan. 3–10, Oklahoma City Dec. 1–Feb. 28, and at many Texas lakes throughout the season.

Turkey Vultures returned to Washington and Osage, Okla., Feb. 8, about 3 weeks early. Two Ospreys wintered on L. Whitney, Hill and Bosque, Tex. Other Texas Ospreys were located in Tarrant Dec. 14, Van Zandt Dec. 3, and Lake O' the Pines Feb. 20. A Mississippi Kite in Grimes, Tex., Feb. 26 was very early (RJH). In Cedar, Neb., 20 Bald Eagles were counted Dec. 13, and in Osage, Okla., the winter congregation of Bald Eagles comprised 30–35 birds. Although no large concentrations of Bald Eagles were reported in Texas, they were more widespread than usual, as observations came from 18 counties across the state. For the past 3 years, a N. Harrier roost on the Ft. Sill military reservation, Comanche, Okla., has been censused in early February. Results were as follows: 1985, 311 birds; 1986, 173 birds; 1987, 1045 birds (JB, SO, m.ob.). Northern Goshawks were reported in Pierce, Neb., Jan. 7 (MB), Douglas, Kans., Feb. 10 (KH), and Pecos, Tex., Dec. 4 (GWh).

A Harris' Hawk in Muskogee, Okla., Dec. 3–Feb. 28 and later provided a new record for n.e. Oklahoma (JMCM). Other noteworthy sightings of this species were in Dallas in February (BH), G.M.N.P., Dec. 26–Feb. 6 (OVO), and Comanche Nov. 15–Feb. 22 (JDT). Ferruginous Hawks were rather far e. at Tulsa Dec. 7, McIntosh, Okla., in early January, and Tarrant Dec. 11. There were good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks in Boone, Neb., all winter, and one in Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy, Neb.,

Jan. 19 was unusual. In Texas, Crested Caracaras were seen in Van Zandt Dec. 31, Medina Dec. 26, and Comal Jan. 29. Merlins were reported at only 12 localities. The breeding pair of Peregrine Falcons in G.M.N.P. was on territory by Feb. 28 (OVO). A Peregrine was seen in downtown Wichita in full pursuit of a Rock Dove Jan. 14 (DK). A gray-phase Gyrfalcon was studied carefully as it perched atop a telephone pole near Angora, Morrill, Neb., Jan. 10 (RCR). Although Prairie Falcons were scarce in w. Kansas, more were observed than usual along the e. edge of the Region in Nebraska and Oklahoma, and in n.c. Texas.

QUAIL THROUGH TERNS — A N. Bobwhite × Scaled Quail hybrid was killed by a hunter in Midland, Tex., Feb. 15. Gambel's Quail were located in w. Jeff Davis, Tex., Jan. 20. A Com. Moorhen was found in Presidio, Tex., Feb. 17 (GWh). A color-banded first year Whooping Crane was seen Jan. 30 with a flock of Sandhill Cranes in Blaine, Okla. By Feb. 8, both the Sandhills and the Whooper had left, and the Whooping Crane was next seen at Quivira N.W.R., Kans., Feb. 10. Then, incredibly, it appeared back in Blaine the last week of February, again with a flock of Sandhills. Sandhill Cranes have been known to go back and forth in this manner, so possibly the young Whooper, being lost from its own kind, was sticking close to the only friends it had (*vide* IB).

In Comal, Tex., 27 Mountain Plovers were observed Jan. 29 (E & KM). Greater Yellowlegs remained in Muskogee Dec. 1–Jan. 12, and visited Oklahoma City Dec. 17. A Solitary Sandpiper at Big Spring, Tex., Jan. 11–16 provided an extraordinary record for the season (GW *et al.*). Spotted Sandpipers wintered in El Paso and Hudspeth, and remained until mid-January at Midland. Least Sandpipers lingered in Muskogee Dec. 12–Jan. 12, and one arrived in Randall, Tex., on the early date of Feb. 21. Large numbers of Com. Snipe wintered in the flooded fields of n.e. Oklahoma and w. Texas. On Feb. 17, an Am. Woodcock probed in the wet ground in a Wichita backyard. Woodcock courtship flights were watched in Washington, Okla., Feb. 10 & 18. At Tulsa, a woodcock sat on a window ledge of a residence for several hours Feb. 19. Woodcocks were sighted in Kerr Dec. 30, Tarrant Jan. 23–24, and Palo Duro Canyon S.P., Tex., Feb. 8. Two Wilson's Phalaropes at Amarillo Dec. 14 provided a first winter sighting for the Texas Panhandle (KS).

Five Franklin's Gulls wintered with 5000 Ring-billed Gulls in Denton, Tex., and single Franklin's were seen in Rogers, Okla., Jan. 10 and Washington, Okla., Jan. 11. The Little Gull discovered during the L. Ray Hubbard (Kaufman, Tex.) CBC remained until Jan. 24. A constant stream of Texas birders searched for the bird but unless it was in flight it was impossible to find among several hundred Bonaparte's Gulls. Herring Gulls were found in Texas at Llano Feb. 5, Balmorhea L., Dec. 17–Jan. 3, and Hudspeth Feb. 4. A Glaucous Gull was reported in Geary, Kans., Dec. 30 (TTC). Thayer's Gulls were discovered in Geary Dec. 27 and Riley, Kans., Jan. 4 (TTC), Cherokee, Okla., Dec. 12 (JCH, JA), and Tulsa Feb. 6 (JCH *et al.*). A Lesser Black-backed Gull, thought to be the same as the one that appeared in the 3 previous winters, was seen at Oklahoma City only 4 times among the 6500 or more Ring-billed Gulls. This year it appeared to be fully adult (JGN). A Black-legged Kittiwake that wintered at Oklahoma City was the first at that locality since 1968. A Black-legged Kittiwake on L. Buchanan, Burnet, Tex., Jan. 24 provided an unexpected bonus for a Sinton, Tex., bird club that had taken the "Vanishing River Cruise" to see Bald Eagles. Forster's Terns now winter in n.c. Texas in numbers. Fourteen in Panola, Tex., Jan. 1 provided the first winter record there in 5 years.

DOVES THROUGH WRENS — A small flock of White-winged Doves wintered in Big Spring, Tex., and one was seen in Midland Feb. 15. It seems probable that one photographed at Pauls Valley, Okla., was an escaped or released bird. [But this species is known to wander widely—K.K.] A Com. Barn-Owl nest with 4 eggs was found in Tulsa Jan. 10 (CR). Common

Barn-Owls found in Washington, Okla., Jan. 11 were the first seen there since July 1980 (DV). An excellent description was submitted of a Flammulated Owl in Crockett, Tex., Nov. 13 (ME). Congregations of Long-eared Owls included 18 in Chautauqua, Kans., 12 in Lyon, Kans., and eight in Douglas, Neb. In Washington, Okla., Feb. 6, 26 Short-eared Owls worked at eliminating the rodent population. The only other Short-eared Owls reported were at Tulsa. In Kimble, Tex., a Com. Poorwill was heard Feb. 14 (DJ), and several poorwills lingered in Kerr until December (S & EW). At least 65 White-throated Swifts foraged over Balmorhea L., Jan. 3 (WHH). Two birds identified as Black-chinned Hummingbirds had returned to B.B.N.P., Feb. 13 (BMCK). At least four Anna's Hummingbirds were present at feeders in El Paso most of the season. At Big Spring, an Anna's remained Dec. 4-Jan. 17 (PM, m.ob.).

The colony of Acorn Woodpeckers that had resided in Kerr, Tex., "always", seems to have disappeared (E & KM). Red-bellied Woodpeckers were w. of their usual haunts in Garden, Neb., Feb. 21, Idalou, Tex., Feb. 2-7, and Midland Feb. 15. Red-naped Sapsucker is the regularly occurring species at El Paso, so a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker there Jan. 13 was noteworthy (BZ). A Downy Woodpecker visited Mason, Tex., Jan. 24-Feb. 20 (BF). A previously-unknown clan of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers was found in Hardin, Tex. (AM). A Vermilion Flycatcher in Nacogdoches, Tex., Feb. 21-28+ was the first at that locality since December 1981 (JKe et al.). The bird of the season in Nebraska was **Clark's Nutcracker**. After an absence of 10 years, they appeared in Sioux canyons in October, 1986. On Feb. 7, a "nutcracker count" in Sioux totalled an unprecedented 71 birds (RCR). About 50 Black-billed Magpies chattered in Knox, Neb., Dec. 13 (MB). Very few Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported. Rock Wrens wintered e. to Van Zandt and Wood, Tex. A Canyon Wren was discovered at Dinosaur Valley S.P., Tex., Jan. 31. Elusive Winter Wrens were discovered in Sioux, Fontenelle Forest, Tulsa, Washington, Okla., Kerr, Comal, and Ingram, Tex.

KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS — A monumental incursion of Golden-crowned Kinglets occurred throughout the Region. In some localities, they outnumbered Ruby-crowned Kinglets as much as two to one. Unusual for the season were Blue-gray Gnatcatchers at Oklahoma City Dec. 13 and Llano, Tex., Jan. 15. In Texas, W. Bluebirds visited Palo Duro Canyon S.P., Feb. 18, Kerr Jan. 12, and Crockett Jan. 3. Mountain Bluebirds were numerous and widespread from the Texas hill country w. to El Paso and from Waço n. to Lubbock. Elsewhere, the only Mountain Bluebirds observed were two in Pawnee, Kans., Feb. 3 (SS). Townsend's Solitaires staged a major invasion in the w. one-half of Texas. The high count comprised 15 birds at Hueco Tanks S.P., Jan. 19. In Nebraska, Townsend's Solitaires were recorded in Saunders Dec. 1-Jan. 31 (TH) and Boone Jan. 18 (WJM). One remained at Oklahoma City Nov. 23-Feb. 25 (ES, MO). A Varied Thrush provided a 2nd county record in Johnson, Kans., Jan. 17 (m.ob.). A Gray Catbird was found in B.B.N.P., Feb. 11. Sage Thrashers were abundant in w. Texas and were seen e. to Real, Kerr, and Mason. A Curve-billed Thrasher visited a feeder in Reno, Kans., Dec. 10-28 (fide DK). Small numbers of Bohemian Waxwings were seen in Kansas in Kearny, Morton, Ness, and Pawnee during January. There was a fairly good flight in Nebraska, where 25 were counted Dec. 29 in Sioux. Cedar Waxwings in Texas must have numbered in the millions! It was a good winter for N. Shrikes in Boone, Neb., and Randall, Tex., but only three were located in w. Kansas.

An Orange-crowned Warbler wintered at Muskogee. Single N. Parulas were noted in B.B.N.P., Jan. 18 and Feb. 7 (AB). A very late Magnolia Warbler was discovered in Tarrant, Tex., Dec. 7-8 (GG). A Pine Warbler provided a first county record at Midland Jan. 4-Feb. 20 (JMe, RMS, m.ob.). Two Black-and-white Warblers visited a Norman, Okla., feeding station Jan. 12 (MAJ), and one was seen in B.B.N.P., Feb. 9. The most unexpected warbler of the season was an **Ovenbird** at Big Spring,

Tex., Jan. 12-15 (GW, ph to T C W C.). A Louisiana Waterthrush was found at Ft. McKavitt, Tex., Jan. 31 (DE). January Com. Yellowthroats were seen in El Paso, Midland, Bandera, Tex., and Scott County S.P., Kans. A Wilson's Warbler in Dallas Jan. 19 was surprising (HH).

GROSBEAKS THROUGH FINCHES — An imm. ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak lingered in Tarrant to Dec. 14 (CH). A Black-headed Grosbeak in Wood, Tex., Dec. 9 was both out of range and out of season (LC, FMW). A Lazuli Bunting was reported at El Paso Jan. 4 (RG). A brightly-plumaged ♂ Painted Bunting fed on millet at a Lawrence, Kans., residence for 3 weeks in January (AC, MC). [This could have been an escaped cagebird—K.K.] In Muskogee, Okla., a Dickcissel visited a feeder Feb. 17 (VJ). Green-tailed Towhees in Mason, Tex., Jan. 31 and Real, Tex., Feb. 12 were farther e. than usual. A Rufous-sided Towhee was sighted in Lancaster, Neb., Jan. 12.

A Bachman's Sparrow provided a not-unexpected first record in Shelby, Tex., Jan. 1 (RP). Although Am. Tree Sparrows were scarce in Kansas, two managed to journey far into Texas: Hunt, Dec. 29 (JMa) and Midland Feb. 1-8 (DKe, MCr). Field Sparrows were unusually common in w. Texas and one at Hueco Tanks Jan. 19 represented the first record in the El Paso area in nearly a decade (JD et al.). Five Black-chinned Sparrows were found at Hueco Tanks Jan. 19 (BZ, JD). Three Lark Sparrows Jan. 26 provided an unusual winter record for Tarrant. Grasshopper Sparrows were seen in Llano, Tex., Jan. 15 and B.B.N.P., Feb. 6. Le Conte's Sparrows were reported widely during the CBC, but apparently lack of effort after that event limited observations, and only 2 reports were received: Clinton, Okla., Dec. 23 and Balmorhea L., Jan. 3 (both WHH). Fox Sparrows were observed from El Paso, G.M.N.P., and B.B.N.P. east to the hill country of c. Texas, while in Bell, Tex., up to 20 a day could be counted in late January. Song, Lincoln's, and Swamp sparrows were significantly more numerous than usual in much of Texas.

The Golden-crowned Sparrow in Kimble, Tex., remained until Feb. 10 (N & DJ). Unusually large numbers of Harris' Sparrows wintered in n.w. Nebraska, but numbers were low in the Bartlesville, Okla., area. In Texas, Harris' Sparrows wintered at many localities where they are normally absent B.B.N.P., El Paso, Midland, Kimble, and Llano. Longspurs were mostly seen in small flocks and were especially scarce in w. Kansas and the Texas Panhandle. In Sarpy, Neb., 70 Lapland Longspurs were counted Jan. 17, and 200 fed on a golf course in Tarrant Jan. 18, but in Morton, Kans., where there are usually thousands, very few could be found. Smith's Longspurs remained in Rains, Tex., Dec. 28-Feb. 8. In Crosby, Tex., following a storm and 5 inches of snow Jan. 19, more than 5000 Chestnut-collared Longspurs swirled across the fields. "Good numbers" of McCown's and Laplands accompanied them (ML).

Rusty Blackbirds provided new records at Balmorhea L., Jan. 3 (WHH) and Bell, Tex., Jan. 9-Feb. 15 (ML). In Cass, Neb., a N. Oriole (unspecified form) survived on oranges and suet Dec. 1-Jan. 14, but was caught by a cat. Two "Baltimore" N. Orioles visited feeders in Tarrant in December, and one was seen in Cleburne, Tex., Feb. 18. Red Crossbills were abundant in Sioux, the maximum count comprising 137 Jan. 17. Small flocks of Red Crossbills were present in Boone, Neb., Dec. 23-Feb. 1, and one dozen came to an Omaha feeder during January. In Kansas, small flocks visited Pawnee in February, and Stafford, Reno, Sedgwick, and Cowley in December and January. Groups of Red Crossbills were about the only birds active in the higher portions of G.M.N.P. in February. A flock of Com. Redpolls comprising about 200 birds was observed in Sioux Jan. 3 (JT). Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, and goldfinches were nowhere numerous, although populations of siskins began to build up toward the end of the period. If the Evening Grosbeaks seen this winter represented an "echo" of last year's invasion, it was a very quiet, minor one. Reports of small groups came from n.w. Nebraska, Ness, Kans., Muskogee, Okla., Ft. Worth, and Nacogdoches.

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SOUTH TEXAS REGION

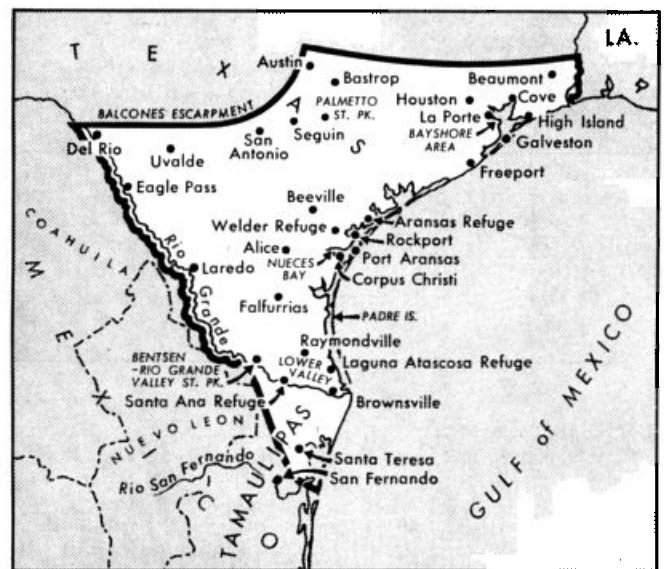
Greg W. Lasley and Chuck Sexton

There was little in the way of drama or trauma in the winter's weather here. Most of the Region received abundant rains, particularly in December, but some observers noted that the ponds and lakes filled up "too late" to attract and hold migrant and wintering waterfowl. The season was notable for a lack of hard freezing weather. Austin saw only four days (barely a few hours, really) with sub-freezing temperatures, with a low of 28°F January 23. The Upper Texas Coast had only a single morning with a light freeze. Despite this, temperatures Regionwide were not particularly warm; Austin, for example, stayed within a few degrees of normal monthly means for December, January, and February.

Mike Austin noted a substantial shift in coverage on the Upper Texas Coast, where southern Waller County received unprecedented coverage after some notable fall sightings there. The same effect was seen in the New Braunfels and Canyon Lake areas as magnet species (e.g., longspurs and loons) attracted more observers. Coverage was strong as usual in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and we seemed to get more than a usual dose of detailed reports from visiting out-of-state birders, for which we are very grateful. We also noted an increasing computer-enhancement (at least word-processor-enhancement) of reports: A small but increasing number of observers are delightfully deluging us with detailed lists and commentary. Keep it up, we love it!

ABBREVIATIONS — Aransas = Aransas Nat'l Wildlife Ref.; Attwater = Attwater Prairie Chicken Nat'l Wildlife Ref.; Bentsen = Bentsen Rio Grande State Park; Laguna Atascosa = Laguna Atascosa Nat'l Wildlife Ref.; Santa Ana = Santa Ana Nat'l Wildlife Ref.; T.P.R.F. = Texas Photo Record File (Texas A & M University); U.T.C. = Upper Texas Coast. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — A Pacific Loon on Offatt's Bayou in Galveston Dec. 20 apparently did not stay around long (M & RB). A pair of Pacific Loons on Canyon L., Jan. 27–29 provided a 2nd Austin-area record but were impossible to relocate when weekend boating traffic took over the lake (L & SF, ph. BA). Three W. Grebes wintered in the San Antonio area: one on Mitchell L., Dec. 13–Feb. 22, and two on Calaveras L. from mid-January on (WS, CB, MH, m.ob.). Another W. Grebe was at Laguna Atascosa, where small numbers occasionally winter (SR, SL). Northern Gannets provided "the premier event on the U.T.C. this winter" (RB), easily eclipsing last year's showing. Groups of a few to several dozen birds could be seen



during appropriate wind conditions (especially easterly) from late December through early February (m.ob.). They were the most common species off Galveston I., Jan. 31 when 350+ were counted. Eleven N. Gannets were notable off Padre I., Jan. 4 (CC) as was one observed in Aransas Bay Feb. 14 (GB, fide SB). A final notable gannet record was of six birds flying S past the mouth of the Rio Grande into Mexican waters Jan. 31; the species is still considered hypothetical in Mexico (JAR, DH). Brown Pelicans continued their good showing at numerous coastal locations. Five Little Blue Herons and one Tricolored Heron wintered in San Antonio, the latter species representing a first winter record for the area (MH). Green-backed Herons, always noted singly, seemed to be reported more often than usual throughout the Region this season.

WATERFOWL — In general, reports of waterfowl abundance were quite mixed, with little in the way of Regional consensus or clear geographic trends for most regular species. Twenty-six Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks wintered for the first time in Del Rio (GBo, fide VH). Three Tundra Swans in Chambers Feb. 16–Mar. 2 (MBro) were unexpected. Greater White-fronted Geese were conspicuously abundant in Duval (3500 Jan. 15; AO) and Jim Wells (5000 Dec. 13; RA). Ross' Geese continued their good showing from Fall with higher populations on the U.T.C., a dozen birds near Bayside Jan. 9 (CC), and singles near Canyon L., Dec. 13+ (SH, MH) and Alice

Dec. 13 (1st Jim Wells record; RA). That date was apparently a red-letter day for geese; a Brant was noted Dec. 13 at High Island, for only the 2nd U.T.C. record (DALE, DM). Reports of Muscovies tapered off to scattered sightings of individuals through the period. A possible imm. Muscovy at San Ygnacio Jan. 28–Feb. 1 would significantly extend the species' known range on the Rio Grande (FM, MA). A single pied Muscovy at Rancho Santa Margarita Dec. 30 (SCa, DD) was presumably a feral bird (despite its strong flight), but it highlights the care and caution needed in observations of this species at present.

The southward influx of Wood Ducks noted in the Fall reached the L.R.G.V., with one bird on the Rio Grande Dec. 6 (DDe et al.) and one or two at Laguna Atascosa Dec. 28 & 29 (fide SL). Cinnamon Teal, by most accounts, were more numerous and conspicuous this season. Northern Shoveler was a unanimous choice for high population levels Regionwide. We're not quite sure what pattern was displayed by diving ducks which, more than other groups, were the subjects of widely contrasting (even conflicting) reports. Up to 12 Greater Scaup were at Mitchell L., Dec. 26 and one or two stayed the winter (MH, m.ob.). Another 45 Greater Scaup constituted an unusually large flock at Canyon L., Feb. 8 (B & JR, WS). Surprisingly for the mild weather, Lesser Scaups may have wintered in larger than normal numbers on the far s. Texas coast and fewer than normal on the U.T.C. In contrast to last winter, scoters were virtually absent from Galveston I., and very sparse elsewhere. Three Black Scoters were seen at High Island Feb. 19 (PL). Many wintering waterfowl reportedly "departed early" this season (m.ob.).

RAPTORS — News on raptors was voluminous and uniformly good. A few Ospreys wintered on reservoirs in Austin, New Braunfels, San Antonio and elsewhere where they are normally scarce or absent. Up to four Hook-billed Kites apparently became "a predictable late afternoon show" at Salineño (BB, m.ob.). An imm. N. Goshawk in Bexar Dec. 29 (MH) was a very rare find. Single Com. Black-Hawks were noted Dec. 20 at Santa Ana (JI) and Jan. 18 at Falcon Dam (OC). Harris' Hawks were in good numbers in Corpus Christi and San Antonio (KM, MH); a single Harris' Hawk wintered at Attwater, where the species is very rare (MA), and another was reported even farther e. at Sealy Feb. 22 (CB). A rehabilitated Roadside Hawk was released Jan. 13, 25 mi n. of Harlingen (fide SH) (the bird was reportedly confiscated from someone trying to smuggle it into the United States), but a confusing subad. hawk (Roadside or Broad-winged?) was periodically seen s.e. of Brownsville Dec. 27–Feb. 5 (fide TP, m.ob.). Various observers were 100% "sure" the bird was one species or the other. To our dismay, no photographs of this bird have been submitted, even though several observers reported that it allowed close approach. A wintering imm. Broad-winged Hawk in San Antonio Jan. 7–Feb. 8 was observed by m.ob. and photographed. Our correspondence this season was sprinkled with reports of late Swainson's Hawks into mid-December and early northbound arrivals by late February (AO et al.). Reports of White-tailed Hawks were up in coastal s. Texas and the U.T.C., with a single bird as far e. as Anahuac N.W.R. (HL) and another inland to Bastrop Jan. 10 (LB). It is interesting to note that several written descriptions we have recently received of supposed imm. Swainson's Hawks in winter actually sound more like imm. White-tailed Hawks. Observers need to be aware of the latter species' varied plumages. Two Zone-tailed Hawks were seen at different Bastrop locations Feb. 28 (EK, SHi et al.), continuing a trend of recent years, while others were reported at Sarita and in the L.R.G.V. (m.ob.). Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks were reportedly regular and widely scattered in small numbers, clearly indicating more birds than in a typical winter. Five Merlin sightings in the Rockport area during January and February was a substantial number (CC). Reports of Aplomado Falcons at Laguna Atascosa December to February mostly pertained to recently released birds, but a bird carefully studied Dec. 7 was not banded, indicating a probable native bird (MF, fide SL, SR). Prairie Falcon was an-

other uncommon species that was reported more widely this season.

RAILS THROUGH GULLS — Several Virginia Rails were found in the marshes at L. Long, e. of Austin; the species was heretofore thought to be only a rare migrant in the area (PH). The record Whooping Crane population topped out at 110 birds (one in Oklahoma; 109 in/around Aransas—TS). One of the 21 birds hatched in 1986 died ca. Feb. 25. One adult left the refuge about Jan. 15 and spent the rest of the winter with Sandhills at La Ward, 15 mi from the refuge.

There was an encouraging sighting of Piping Plovers when 100+ were seen at Bolivar Flats Feb. 16 (BO). Up to 45 Mountain Plovers were found at or near the New Braunfels airport during January (MH, m.ob., ph. to T.P.R.F.). The adult and imm. N. Jacanas at Welder Ref. were observed in January but were apparently gone by Feb. 13 (MA, CC). Two different pairs of Solitary Sandpipers were noted: Two birds in Karnes Jan. 23



One of two Solitary Sandpipers found in Karnes County, Texas, Jan. 23, 1987. Photo/Willie Sekula.

(WS, ph.), and two at Santa Ana Jan. 18–29 (BH, EH, m.ob.). This species is rare, but possibly regular in winter in this Region. A Long-billed Curlew Dec. 13 and a Dunlin Feb. 12 at Mitchell L. provided rare inland winter records. Graber has noted a serious decline in the number of wintering Red Knots on Bolivar Pen. in recent winters. Last Fall's Ruff finally departed Mitchell L., Dec. 21, after nearly a 5-month stay. Two or three Wilson's Phalaropes wintered at the McAllen sewage ponds (m.ob.), and three Wilson's were noted Jan. 30 at Laguna Atascosa (BH, EH).

Kutac and group were startled by a brief fly-by of an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger on an Aransas Bay boat trip Feb. 10. A first-winter Franklin's Gull was at Mitchell L., Dec. 13–26 (MH, m.ob., ph.). An ad. Little Gull Jan. 21 at Granger L. provided a 2nd Austin-area record (fJA, GL), but after a tentative sighting Jan. 23 (BF), could not be relocated. An ad. California Gull was photographed on Mustang I., Dec. 3 (GL) and was seen the next day (SB, PP, AO). Another ad. California was at Sabine Pass Dec. 21 (fTSc). This species is rare anywhere in the state. An ad. Thayer's Gull was found on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande at Boca Chica Dec. 4 (fDDe, TB, GL), and a probable first-winter bird was nearby on the United States side. The ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull on Mustang I. was present through the period and a 2nd-winter bird was at the Brownsville Dump Dec. 28 (SCa, DD, CM). Another ad. Lesser Black-backed was at a Corpus Christi landfill Feb. 10 (CC). A Black-legged Kittiwake stayed around the Texas City Dike Dec. 6 through at

least Feb. 21, providing the first U.T.C. record since 1979. Another kittiwake, a 2nd-year bird, was at Canyon L., Feb. 10 (CB, WS).

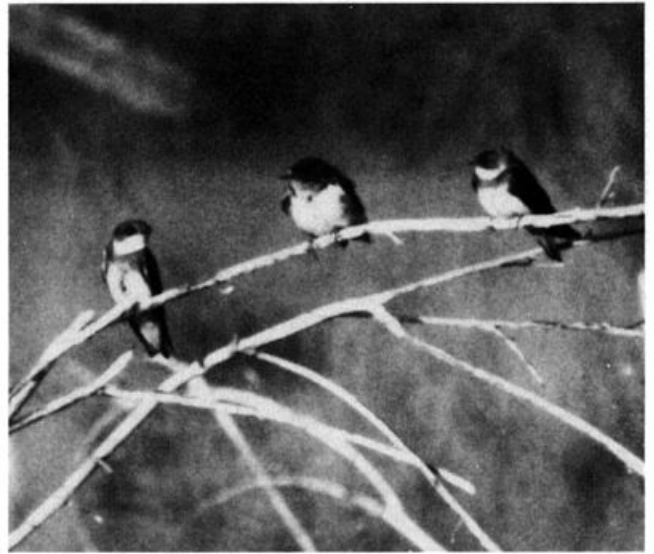
DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — White-winged Doves are clearly increasing as a wintering species in urban areas n. of their regular range. Small numbers were seen in various n. Austin neighborhoods (CS et al.) with an unprecedented 80 counted at one area Dec. 23 (AP). Highest counts of psittacids in the L.R.G.V. included 38 Red-crowned Parrots in Brownsville Jan. 17, 26 Red-crowns in McAllen Jan. 16, and up to 50 Green Parakeets in McAllen Feb. 1+ (SWe, JAr, m.ob.). Small numbers of Yellow-headed and White-fronted parrots were among the "extras" in the L.R.G.V. parrot scene. A pair of Black-hooded Parakeets (*Nandayus nenday*) nested successfully in Rockport, fledging three young in December (CC).

Numbers of wintering hummingbirds were still low on the U.T.C., having not fully recovered from pre-1983-1984 freeze levels. A few Rufous and *Archilochus* sp. wintered in scattered locations. All three kingfishers made a good showing in the L.R.G.V., with single Ringeds especially notable in/around Laguna Atascosa Dec. 15-18. We received a remarkable report of a ♀ Black-backed Woodpecker, as yet undocumented in Texas, that stunned itself on a window in Del Rio (fide VH). The bird was identified in hand ("black back, black head, and three toes!") with the aid of a field guide. The bird recovered and flew off before other observers could be notified.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH SWALLOWS — The continuing vulnerability of our Regional specialties was highlighted when some brushland near Bentsen frequented by a N. Beardless-Tyrannulet (and without doubt other peripheral species) was bulldozed in January (L & RG). Some interesting *Empidonax* showed up: A probable Willow Flycatcher was reported Nov. 29 in Mission (L & RG), and a Least Flycatcher wintered in Waller (TE et al.). A few Least Flycatchers were also reported from Santa Ana during December and January. Most remarkable was a wintering **Hammond's Flycatcher** near Bastrop Feb. 16-28 (†N & SN, GL, ph.). Lasley's first hunch on the identification of the bird was confirmed with a long series of photographs and brief responses to taped calls and songs. This is apparently the first Texas winter record, and the first record of the species for the e. one-half of the state.

A Black Phoebe in Falfurrias Feb. 22 furnished a 2nd county record (AO). Several Ash-throated Flycatchers wintered on the U.T.C. and elsewhere, far more than we normally expect. Two Great Kiskadees were found in San Marcos Jan. 14-15, for a first Austin-area record, far n. of the species' regular range (JN, fide JA). They were joined by a 3rd bird Jan. 17 and were seen and photographed by m.ob. through Feb. 9 (BA, GL, ph. to T.P.R.F.). Information from local residents indicated the birds were probably present since October. Silent Couch's/Tropical Kingbirds outside the L.R.G.V. were found in Victoria Dec. 23 (PR), near Tivoli Jan. 10 (CC), and on the Lamar Pen., Feb. 20 (EK et al.); however, a Couch's found Feb. 7 in Rockport was confirmed by response to tapes Feb. 26 (CC). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers apparently lingered late (e.g., Dec. 31) and arrived early (e.g., Feb. 14), but none of the reports clearly indicated overwintering by individual birds. Two Rose-throated Becards were reported at Santa Ana Dec. 20-31 (fide JI).

It was a very unusual season for the number of swallow species that lingered late and/or overwintered. Twelve Purple Martins were at San Antonio Dec. 14 (AO, N & PP, SB), with several reported there into late December. Especially notable were a few Bank Swallows, Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows, and Cave Swallows around San Antonio all period (WS, MH, m.ob., ph.). From two to 20 Bank Swallows were noted periodically through January at Santa Ana (SCa, MO, m.ob., ph.). Most February records of various species seemed to be of spring arrivals moving through or investigating nesting areas.



Barn Swallow (center) and two Bank Swallows at Mitchell Lake, Texas, on the extremely late date of Dec. 31, 1986. Photo/Willie Sekula.

JAYS THROUGH PIPITS — A few Green Jays were reported s.e. of Pleasanton (fide VH), n. of their usual range, and up to 12 were in Corpus Christi through the period (J & PS). Two Fish Crows Feb. 15 on w. Galveston I. were a rare find that far w. (B & SWi). Golden-crowned Kinglets were virtually unanimously cited for higher numbers Regionwide. The E. Bluebird population in the L.R.G.V. was highlighted by 300+ at Anzalduas Dec. 5 (JAr). Following a CBC record, a ♀ Mountain Bluebird was seen in San Antonio Dec. 23 (MH); another was very far e. at Attwater Jan. 31 (fide MA). The Clay-colored Robins at Bentsen established clear membership in the "junk-food guild" by punctuating their popcorn diet with occasional servings of corn chips and who knows what else (fide BB). Sage Thrashers were noted in small numbers during January and February at La Joya (CV), Laguna Atascosa (BH, EH), and the coastal bend (fide KM). Despite R. Braun's analysis (in the Spoonbill) which shows Brown Thrashers at a low point of their cyclic abundance, single birds made it as far s. as Laguna Atascosa Jan. 25 (BH, EH), and Bentsen Feb. 15 (KW). The Long-billed Thrasher banded at Driftwood in November was recaptured Jan. 12 (DC). Sprague's Pipits were regularly found at several L.R.G.V. locations.

VIREOS THROUGH FINCHES — A remarkably late Philadelphia Vireo was well described at Bentsen Dec. 5 (JAr). A single "Yellow-green" Vireo, a form that actually winters in South America, was reported Feb. 11 at Brownsville (MH); see our Fall comments. Rare wintering warblers in small numbers included Yellow-throated (at least five at 3 locations), Pine (widespread, including 12-15 in San Antonio and others in the L.R.G.V.), and Ovenbird (a few on the U.T.C.; also Victoria, Santa Ana, and Bentsen). A Black-throated Green Warbler was seen in Houston Jan. 19 (MBro). A Magnolia Warbler at Brazos Bend S.P., Feb. 23 (DM) provided a first February record for the U.T.C. Yellow-rumps were widely regarded as overly abundant this season. A ♂ Hooded Warbler seen Jan. 13 and photographed Jan. 14 w. of Austin provided a first area winter record and about the 3rd for Texas (DA, fide CL, CS). A Golden-crowned Warbler s.e. of Brownsville, initially discovered Feb. 1 (DH, JAr), provided to be very difficult to relocate at times but was seen by m.ob. through at least Mar. 7 (ph. to T.P.R.F.). The more familiar we become with the habits of this species, the more we suspect that it may be scarce but regular and overlooked in winter in th L.R.G.V. A Hepatic Tanager in n. Austin Dec. 25 (JW) seemed to add to a pattern of winter occurrence in our area superficially similar to that of Zone-tailed

Hawks! (The tanagers do not hang out with vultures, though) A W Tanager was at Laguna Atascosa Dec 25 (fide SL, SR) A concentration of 600-700 Pyrrhuloxias near Falfurrias Feb. 21 (AO, m.ob.) was an eye-catching phenomenon very rarely reported. A Black-headed Grosbeak spent its 2nd winter at Falfurrias. A ♂ Lazuli Bunting visited a Corpus Christi feeder Feb. 2-Mar. 16, with a few Indigos (J & PS). A Painted Bunting appeared Feb. 22, for a triplet of bunting species at that feeder! Up to seven White-collared Seedeaters were reported at San Ygnacio during the season.

A Black-chinned Sparrow in Del Rio in December was reportedly the 2nd winter in a row for the species there (VH). This is the only part of the Region where we might reasonably expect this species. A Seaside Sparrow in w. Harris Jan. 24 provided a rare non-coastal record (RC, BG). Fox Sparrows were reportedly up in numbers in Austin (EK), and a single bird got as far s. as Victoria Dec. 23 (PR). Sparrows were thought to be sparse on the U.T.C., especially White-throated (m.ob.), but a single White-throated was rather far s.w. at Del Rio Jan. 12+ (VH). A Song Sparrow in Brooks Feb. 12 provided only a second county record. Longspurs excited observers in the n. one-half of the Region. Laplands were generally the most common on the U.T.C. (e.g., Waller), outnumbering McCown's 100 to 1 Four Laplands at San Antonio Jan. 4 provided a 4th Bexar record, and one dozen or so Laplands made it down to McMullen (BP, fide KM). New Braunfels played host to all four species between December and February, with peak counts of 1000 McCown's Jan. 11, 60 Laplands Jan. 1, and 150 Chestnut-collareds Dec. 25 (WS, MH, m.ob.). One to three Smith's Longspurs were seen or heard there Dec. 25-Jan. 22, but were difficult to locate. The latter species is casual in the area. A Rusty Blackbird Jan. 4 in Del Rio (VH) furnished about the 2nd area

record, and two Rusties on the King Ranch Feb 15 provided a first Kleberg record (†N & PP) As many as 380 Boat-tailed Grackles near Austwell Jan. 19 were a large group for so far south (CC). Four Red Crossbills were identified Feb. 17 near Bastrop (BW), and a single Red Crossbill was heard at Uteley (closer to Austin) Feb. 22 (BF).

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NORTHWESTERN CANADA REGION

W.G. Johnston and C.A. McEwen

In Yukon and northern British Columbia, this was "the winter that wasn't." Below the Arctic Circle, winter temperatures remained well above normal throughout the season. Temperatures were 9.8 and 7.8°C warmer than average in Whitehorse and Fort Nelson, respectively, with precipitation also well below normal. The mild winter weather was reflected in the increased number of non-resident species overwintering in the Region, and the early migration of robins through the Fort Nelson and Fort St. John areas (RD). The most unusual northern sightings of non-resident species involved a male Mountain Bluebird inspecting a bird box in Whitehorse in February (CH) and a Common Grackle that overwintered in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (DMu).

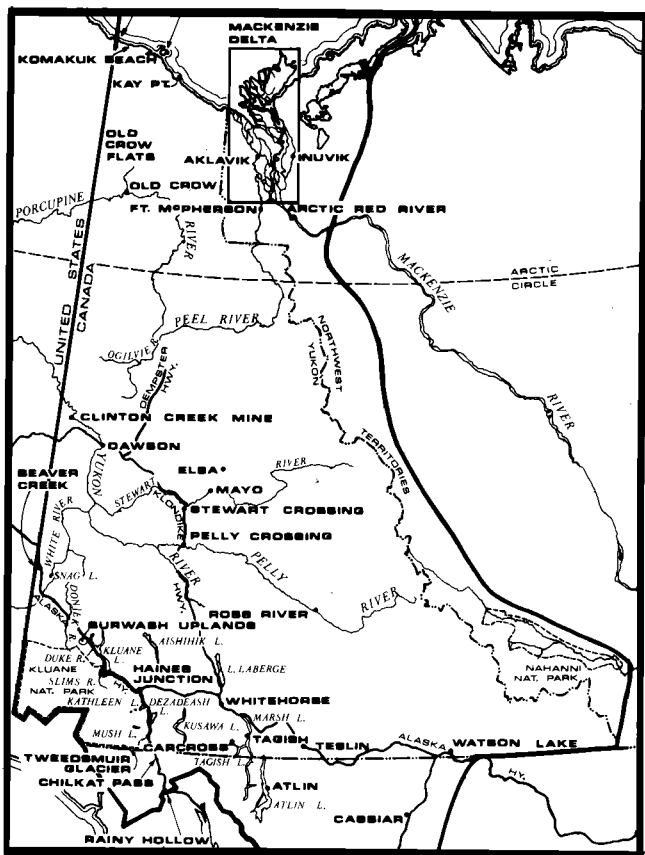
ABBREVIATIONS — F.N. = Fort Nelson, B.C.; F.S.J. = Fort St John, B.C.

WATERFOWL THROUGH GROUSE — Two Trumpeter Swans were noted throughout the season utilizing traditionally-open water areas on the Yukon R. near Whitehorse and open water in the Tagish area (DC, fide MD). This represented the first winter record for the Yukon. Mallards were unusually ubiquitous and abundant throughout the Region. Flocks of 250 Dec. 20, 50 Jan. 12, and 10 Jan. 22 were seen in the Peace R. area n. of F.S.J. (HB). At F.S.J., one male was seen Feb. 14, and 75 males and 10 females Feb. 22 (CS); at Tarten Rapids on the Yellowknife R., N.W.T., one female was seen Jan. 26 (JS); and

in Whitehorse, one female was seen Dec. 28 on McIntyre Cr (GJ) and another Jan. 10 at the Whitehorse Rapids (HG). Other ducks observed were three Com. Goldeneyes on the Peace R., Jan. 11 (CS), another on the Yukon R., Dec. 28 (JM), and 3 sightings of Com. Merganser: three at Taylor Feb. 22 (CS), three at Hudson Hope Jan. 11 (CS), and three on the Yukon R. at Lewes R. Marsh Dec. 28 (DM, JM).

At least three ad. Bald Eagles apparently wintered on the Peace R. between F.S.J. and Hudson Hope (CS). Although Gyrfalcons are probably common winter residents in the northern mountains, they are rarely observed. Only one was seen this season, Jan. 2 near the Yellowknife airport (BC). Single N. Goshawks were noted near Yellowknife Feb. 7 & 14 (BC), and in the F.N. area Jan. 10 & 29 (JB).

Ruffed Grouse were reported from North Pine in the F.S.J. area, with three Dec. 27 and one Dec. 28 (CS), and one was in Whitehorse Jan. 4 (GJ). A flock of 100 Sharp-tailed Grouse was noted at Two Rivers, s.e. of F.S.J., Jan. 24 (GP), four were at North Pine Dec. 28 (CS), and five were near Beaver Creek, Yukon, Jan. 14 (DM). Although Spruce Grouse are common in this Region, only one observation was reported this season: one at McClintock Bay, s.e. of Whitehorse, Dec. 28 (BH). Several hundred Willow Ptarmigan wintered in the Yellowknife area, as they commonly do (JS), and 51 were counted during the Inuvik CBC Dec. 27 (JP, BM). Flocks of ptarmigan, likely Willow and White-tailed, numbering into the hundreds were noted during aerial moose surveys in the mountains to the e. and s.w. of Whitehorse and n. of Watson L., Yukon, usually in the shrub willow habitat at treeline, often in association with herds of moose (GJ, SM).



PIGEONS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Although Rock Doves are seen daily in the Whitehorse area, their numbers have declined from a high of 150 in 1984 to a maximum of 50 this year (GJ). In 1984 their main winter roost site was torn down, concurrent with a local merchant no longer feeding them grain through the winter. Siddle notes that Rock Doves have almost vanished from F.S.J., with only two seen Feb. 21, but were still common in Dawson Creek, with 100 Jan. 23. Great Horned Owls were noted throughout the c. and s. parts of the Region, with records of one Dec. 27 and one Dec. 28 at F.S.J. (CS), one Feb. 4 at F.N. (JB), and throughout February at Whitehorse (GJ). One N. Hawk-Owl was noted 320 km e. of Inuvik, N.W.T., Feb. 1 (DH), and a Snowy Owl was observed at North Pine Dec. 27–Feb. 21 (CS). A N. Saw-whet Owl roosting in a garage in Taylor, Peace R. area, Dec. 29 (CS) represented the first winter record there. A Boreal Owl was heard near the F.N. airport Feb. 5, 6 weeks earlier than the previous year (JB).

The first winter record for Pileated Woodpecker in the Peace R. area was established Jan. 19 near Taylor (CS), and another individual was reported in the F.N. area Dec. 21 (JB). A Hairy Woodpecker was noted near the F.N. airport Feb. 12 (JB), and an unusual winter sighting of this species was reported at Duck Lake, near Yellowknife, Jan. 4 (JS). Hairy and Downy woodpeckers were noted in usual numbers in the F.S.J. area (CS). A Three-toed Woodpecker was noted in Inuvik Dec. 27 (JP, BM), one male was in Whitehorse throughout the winter (GJ), one was seen at Stoddart Cr., near F.N., Dec. 27 (JB), and two were near Lewes R., s. of Whitehorse, Jan. 15 & 18 (ML).

CORVIDS THROUGH STARLINGS — Gray Jays were seen in regular numbers in all areas (m.ob.). Four to six Blue Jays were seen almost daily during January and February in F.S.J. (CS). Black-billed Magpies were reported in regular numbers from the F.S.J. and Whitehorse areas (m.ob.). Common

Ravens were reported in regular numbers, with December high counts of 946 at Yellowknife (JS) and 281 in Inuvik (JP, BM). Boreal and Black-capped chickadees were reported in usual numbers. A White-breasted Nuthatch remained at a feeder in Dawson Creek from November to February (JC). A ♂ Mountain Bluebird inspecting a bird box in February in Macpherson subdivision, n.w. Whitehorse (CH), provided the first winter record for the Yukon. A Brown Creeper noted Jan. 28 at F.S.J. provided the 3rd winter record for the area (JB, JJ).

American Dippers were seen in regular numbers at open-water sites near Whitehorse Rapids and McIntyre Creek (HG, GJ), and on the Peace R. at F.S.J. (CS). An early Am. Robin was reported just s. of F.S.J., Feb. 15 (RD); one to two were in Dawson Creek at about the same time (CS), and one was in downtown F.N., Feb. 27 (JB). Bohemian Waxwings were noted in small flocks throughout the winter feeding on ornamental shrubs and trees in F.S.J. (CS). A rare winter sighting of a N. Shrike came from Yellowknife Feb. 12 (DMu), and the species was also recorded on 3 occasions in the F.S.J. area (CS). Two Eur. Starlings singing in a flock of Com. Ravens at the Whitehorse dump provided the first winter record for the Yukon (GJ), and a total of 14 starlings was noted throughout the winter in F.S.J.

LONGSPURS THROUGH HOUSE SPARROW — The first winter record of a Lapland Longspur for the F.S.J. area was made at North Pine Dec. 27 (JB). Snow Buntings were reportedly less common than usual in the F.S.J. area. Common Grackles are unusual in this Region at any season; one was at a feeder in Yellowknife all winter (DMu), and one was seen at F.S.J., Jan. 18. Few White-winged Crossbills were noted in the Yukon. Pine Grosbeaks were common this winter, reported in small flocks throughout the s. parts of the Region, including the F.S.J., F.N., Whitehorse, and Watson Lake areas (m.ob.) Both redpoll species were reported as less common than usual in the F.S.J. area (CS). However, during November and December they were abundant in the Teslin and Watson Lake areas, with flocks of 50–150 noted feeding in birch and alder thickets adjacent to the Alaska Hwy (GJ). Evening Grosbeaks were noted in the F.S.J. area, concentrated near sunflower seed feeders, with flocks of 60 at Mountney, 30 at Beaton P.P., and 60 at Stoddart Dec. 27 (CS). House Sparrows were noted throughout the winter in flocks of 20–40 near feeders in F.S.J. (CS) and several individuals were noted daily in Yellowknife, where they roosted in Cliff Swallow nests (JS).

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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN-INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

Thomas H. Rogers

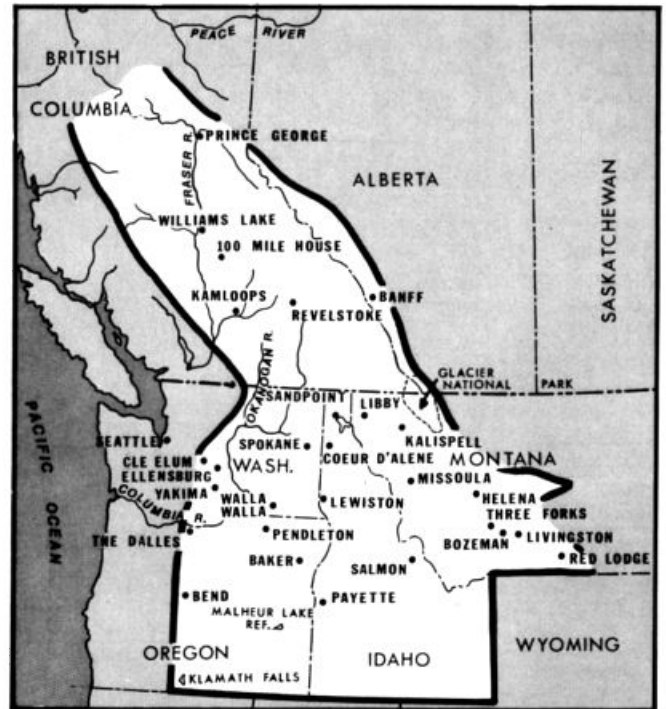
Winter in the Region was mild and dry, with little snow cover, presaging a hot dry summer to follow. Several observers reported low numbers of birds, attributing this to the weather, which did not force birds to concentrate in their search for food, and left much water unfrozen. Reports were numerous of birds that normally do not winter or do so only occasionally or in very small numbers. "Northern" finches were generally scarce, presumably remaining farther north or in the mountains. Sparse cone crops in some lowland areas no doubt were also a factor.

LOONS THROUGH HERONS — A Pacific Loon wintered at Vernon, B.C., Dec. 15–Feb. 28 (PR). Hayden L., Kootenai Co., Ida., had a Pacific Loon and a Red-throated Loon Jan. 2–9 (PH). A Yellow-billed Loon visited Nicola L. in the Brookmere–Aspen Grove, B.C., area Dec. 29–Jan. 20 (RRH, WWe). Three Horned Grebes and a Red-necked Grebe were sighted on Hayden L., Jan. 4 (PH, MM, ES, SHS), and another Red-necked spent December and January there (PH). Red-necked Grebes on the Columbia R. near Orondo, Wash., were also unusual (RF). About 500 Eared Grebes on Soap L., Grant Co., Wash., were mostly forced out by the mid-January freezeup (RF). Three Eared Grebes on Pend Oreille L. at Bayview, Ida., Feb. 16 were suspected of having wintered (DF), and three wintered on Hayden L. (PH). Two W. Grebes on the Snake R. at Clarkston, Wash., Jan. 27 were very early (MK, PP) as was one on the Snake at Massacre Rock, Power Co., Ida., Jan. 17 (CHT).

Seven Am. White Pelicans frequented Malheur N.W.R., Burns, Ore., in early January, for one of the few winter records there (CDL). Very unusual were two near Wallula, Wash., Jan. 24 (KK), and the wintering of 10 on the Hanford Reach of the Columbia R. n. of Richland, Wash. (RF). Two that lingered around Klamath Falls, Ore., through December were late (SS). Double-crested Cormorants wintered in greater numbers at Malheur N.W.R. than ever before, at least 10–11 remaining. This species wintered in Hood River Co., Ore. (DAA), and small numbers were noted in the Tricities, Wash., vicinity through Jan. 2 (CR, REW). A Great Egret, exceptionally rare in Jefferson County, Ore., and rare anywhere e. of the Oregon Cascade Mts. in winter, was at Madras during January (IH). A Cattle Egret remained at Clarkston until Dec. 16 (MK, LL, RM). Five were sighted n. of College Place, Wash., Dec. 7, and two showed up s. of Walla Walla, Wash., a week later (KK). Eight Black-crowned Night-Herons appeared in the Toppenish, Wash., residential area Dec. 21 (CD, DG), and two were sighted at Glead, Wash., Jan. 30 (ZB) for those localities' first winter records. The species is rare there at any season.

WATERFOWL — Twenty-eight Tundra Swans were at Sunriver, Ore., Jan. 17+ (DD). An imm. Tundra Swan at the Yakima R. mouth, Wash., Jan. 1 was a rather surprising find (REW). Small numbers wintered in Washington's Columbia Basin. One on the Salmon R. 15 mi n. of Salmon, Ida., Jan. 9 was also unusual (LH). Malheur had 48 wintering Tundra Swans in the s. Blitzen Valley. Over 500 Tundra Swans and 25 Trumpeter Swans wintered at Kamloops, B.C. (RRH), as did 75 Tundra and 11 Trumpeter swans in the Okanogan Valley, B.C. (SC). Trumpeter Swan numbers at Malheur N.W.R. were up from last winter, with 49 counted Jan. 6. Ten Trumpeters at Cold Springs N.W.R., Hermiston, Ore., Feb. 4 were gone Feb. 8 (KK).

A small flock of Greater White-fronted Geese was at Bend, Ore., Dec. 27 (MMo) and one appeared near Parkdale, Ore., Jan. 4 (DAA). This species began arriving at Malheur N.W.R., Feb. 14 and was common near Burns by the end of the spring period. At Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, Ida., 20 arrived



Feb. 24 (LDN). The first two migrant Snow Geese to appear at Malheur N.W.R. arrived Feb. 9 but the bulk of the movement was late. Six blue-phase Snow Geese were along Frenchman Hills wasteway, Grant Co., Wash., Jan. 4 (RF). Canada Geese were abundant in the n. Columbia Basin, with flocks of 200–2000 common. A record number of Canada Geese, 12,450 plus 50 "Lesser" Canadas, wintered in the Malheur-Harney Lakes Basin, Harney Co., Ore. Goose and duck numbers were up at Bend, presumably because of the mild winter. Two ♂ Wood Ducks wintered at Helena, Mont., where they fed with Mallards on food supplied them (GH). Up to 24 Wood Ducks were sighted in the Lewiston, Ida., area in January. Green-winged Teal were common in the n. Columbia Basin; some 600 were on Potholes Res., Grant Co., Wash., Jan. 4. Mallards were particularly abundant in the Columbia Basin from mid-February on: 15,000–20,000 fed in stubble fields e. of George, Wash., and over 80,000 were along Frenchman Hills and Winchester wasteways, Grant Co., Wash., and in adjacent corn stubble-fields. Mixed with them in the latter area were several thousand N. Pintail. Some 7000–8000 Mallards at Kootenai N.W.R. were reduced to one-half that number by the January freezeup. About 10 N. Pintail lingered into December at Kootenai N.W.R., and the species returned Feb. 16 (LDN). Two very early N. Shovelers were on Noxon Rapids Res., Sanders Co., Mont., Feb. 8 (DH). About 800 Gadwall were on Moses L., Grant Co., Wash., Jan. 4 (RF), and fifty near Cascade Locks, Ore., Feb. 16 was a very good number there (DAA). The only Eur. Wigeons reported were single males that wintered near Odell, Ore. (DAA), and in Walla Walla (KK); one at Pateros, Wash., Feb. 14 (EH, GG, S.A.S.), and one on Toppenish N.W.R., Yakima Co., Wash., Feb. 14 (BB, AS, SSt). Six Ring-necked Ducks wintered on Nicola L., where they are rare in winter (RRH). Two Greater Scaup were identified at the Tricities Dec. 21, and 15 were sighted at John Day Dam on the Columbia R., Ore. (CR). The species was also noted at Wells Dam, s. Okanogan Co., Wash., and Chelan Falls, Wash., in February (EH, GG, S.A.S.). A pair of Oldsquaws was on Hayden L., Jan. 4 (MM, ES, SHS), and one appeared at Vernon Dec. 21 (PR). One found on L.

Ewauna, Klamath Falls, Nov 28 stayed around until Jan 2 (SS) The Columbia R in Richland hosted a ♀ Surf Scoter Dec 21 (REW). A ♀-plumaged White-winged Scoter was present Feb. 6+ on Siphon Pond near Pocatello (DFi, m.ob.), and one was on Shuswap L., n. of Salmon Arm, B.C., Dec. 21 (SR). A ♂ Barrow's Goldeneye at Cascade Locks, Ore., Dec. 27 was apparently a latilong first (DAA). Banks L., Grant Co., Wash., had 1500 Com. Mergansers Jan. 4 (RF). Noteworthy were three Red-breasted Mergansers at Vernon Dec. 2-21 (PR) and four at Trail, B.C., during December (ME). One appeared on a pond near Wapato, Wash., Jan. 1 (DG).

VULTURES THROUGH GULLS — A Turkey Vulture at Hayden L., Ida., Jan. 12 was remarkable (PH) and a very early one was at Panhandle L. near Newport, Wash., Feb. 27 (EJL). As many as 81 Bald Eagles were believed present in Lincoln and Sanders counties, Mont., during the winter (DH). Twenty-seven were counted in the Adam's R.-Shuswap L. area n. of Salmon Arm, B.C., Dec. 21 (RRH). The Bald Eagle count at Lower McDonald Cr., Glacier N.P., Mont., reached a peak of 236 Nov. 4, and the head of L. McDonald in the park recorded 1575 eagle-use-days, the highest ever there (BRM). A wing-tagged Bald Eagle, marked in Glacier N.P. in 1979, returned for the 3rd consecutive year to the Lemhi R. near Salmon, Ida. (LH). Kootenai refuge's Bald Eagle nest site was again active, with incubation under way by Mar. 5 (LDN). A nearly all-white Red-tailed Hawk at Toppenish, Wash., Dec. 30 had been reported as a white Gyrfalcon (BB, DG, CR, AS, REW) and a very dark Red-tailed there Feb. 10 probably was a "Harlan's" (CR). Falcon sightings indicated six Am. Kestrels (and "common" in the Columbia Basin), 21 Merlins, five Peregrines, ten Gyrfalcons, and 19+ Prairie Falcons.

Ring-necked Pheasants were very scarce in the Idaho Falls, Ida., vicinity (EC), but conversely increased "dramatically" in the Frenchglen, Ore., area, 185 being counted Dec. 18 (CDL). A ♂ Blue Grouse wintered in the town of Invermere, B.C., visiting feeders and eating sunflower seeds (MY). Several White-tailed Ptarmigan wintered on Silver Star Mt., Vernon, a fully treed area some 40 mi from the nearest alpine habitat (PR).

A Virginia Rail at Frenchglen Dec. 18 made Malheur's 2nd winter record (CDL) and Vernon had two Dec. 7 (PR). Presence of the species at Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, Mont., was unusual although not unprecedented (CC, Sca, DHo). Three were heard at Caliche L., 30 mi e. of Ellensburg, Feb. 16 (EH, GG, S.A.S.). Open water springs at Malheur enticed a Sora, seen Dec. 10 (CDL). A Semipalmated Plover was reported near Enderby, B.C., Jan. 11 (no details supplied) (PL). Two Greater Yellowlegs were at Asotin, Wash., Dec. 13 (C.B.), and two appeared along the Clearwater R. at Lewiston Jan. 24 (RG, MK, PS). Two Lesser Yellowlegs accompanied the regular wintering flock of Greater Yellowlegs at Klamath Falls December to early January for the 2nd winter record since 1978 (SS). Most unusual were 21 Least Sandpipers at Malheur N.W.R., Dec. 15-19 (GI). A Dunlin stayed at Tranquille, B.C., Dec. 28-Jan. 20; the species is very rare there (RRH, RR). Up to 13 Long-billed Dowitchers wintered at Klamath Falls until the freezeup in early January (SS).

Vernon had a Mew Gull during December (PR) and 37 were at Kamloops Dec. 28; they normally do not winter there (RRH). Eight California Gulls at Harney L., Malheur N.W.R., Dec. 19 were most unusual (CDL). Lewiston had two Herring Gulls Feb. 22 (C.B.). Herring Gulls numbered 2000 at Kelowna, B.C., Jan. 3, and up to eight Thayer's Gulls were there Dec. 2-Jan. 3 (PR). Apparent latilong firsts were a Herring Gull and several Glaucous-winged Gulls at Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake R., e. of Pasco, Wash., Jan. 24 (KK). Three to four Glaucous-winged Gulls appeared at Kelowna (PR) and four were seen at Kamloops (RRH, PR). A remarkable concentration of gulls at Coeur d'Alene, Ida., Feb. 14 included 30 to 50 Ring-billeds, a few Californias, 350+ Herrings, one imm. Thayer's, one adult and two imm. Glaucous-wingeds, and three adult and three imm. Glaucous (DF). Hayden L. also had a Thayer's Feb. 17 (PH).

Noteworthy were an imm Thayer's and an ad Glaucous Gull at Richland, Wash., Dec. 11 (CR). A Glaucous Gull in first-year plumage appeared at Lenore L., Grant Co., Wash. (RF).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS — A Ringed Turtle-Dove, presumably an escape, visited a Cranbrook, B.C., feeder in late December (MB). A surprising 25 Mourning Doves fed on the snowy ground at Colburn in n. Idaho in mid-February (DF). Two were seen near Frenchglen Dec. 18 for one of very few winter records at Malheur N.W.R. (CDL).

An E. Screech-Owl was reported s. of Lewistown, Mont., Feb. 28 (LKM). Up to three Snowy Owls were sighted in the Reardan-Davenport, Wash., area (JA), and one was reported s.e. of Moses L., Wash. (RF). One appeared in the Bitterroot Valley s. of Missoula, Mont., in December (JS). The only N Hawk-Owl reported was one at Kelowna Jan. 3 (*fide* PR). A Barred Owl was sighted at Asotin in December (C.B.). Two Great Gray Owls spent the winter at Timber L., Kamloops (RB). A single Great Gray appeared at Tetonia, Ida., in December, the usual influx into that area's bottomlands did not occur (CHT). A pair of these birds was observed twice in February at La Pine, Ore. (HH). An estimated 40 Long-eared Owls wintered in the Frenchtown valley w. of Missoula, Mont. (DHo). Seven Boreal Owls were detected Feb. 26 with the help of taped calls on a 2-hour snowmobile run at Lolo Pass on the Idaho-Montana border. The night run was in 6°F weather and 4-6 ft of snow (DHo, RL, PLW). The only N. Saw-whet Owls reported were two heard near Culesac, Ida., Feb. 14 (C.B.)

A White-throated Swift was heard in the Yakima R. Canyon n. of Yakima, Wash., Feb. 16 (CD). An Anna's Hummingbird stayed at Vernon December to February (PR). Fort Simcoe, Wash., had 10 Lewis' Woodpeckers Feb. 14 (BB, AS, SS) and one at Salmon, Ida., Dec. 18 was very unusual (HBR). A White-headed Woodpecker was in Madras, Ore., in January. The species is extremely rare in that area (IH). Another one spent the winter on Anarchist Mt. near Osoyoos, B.C. (MF), and one was sighted at Fields Springs S.P., s. of Anatone, Wash., Jan. 7 (CV). A Black-backed Woodpecker was observed Feb. 9 about 40 mi n.e. of Burns (CCa), and one was found at Kaslo, B.C., Jan. 9 (LVD). Downriver from Spokane one was seen in January and February (JA). One sighted Jan. 2 at Fortine, Mont., was the first there since 1983 (WW). The albino Pileated Woodpecker returned to the Libby, Mont., feeder that it frequented last winter (DH). The earliest Say's Phoebe appeared in Asotin Feb. 10 (BC). A very early Violet-green Swallow appeared at Coeur d'Alene, Ida., Feb. 24 (MM).

JAYS THROUGH SHRIKES — Steller's Jays visited Madras, Ore., where they appear only about once every 5-10 years (IH). A Blue Jay was seen near Frenchglen Dec. 18+ (CDL) and one was sighted at Spokane in January and February (JA). Another stayed in Madras late October to mid-January for the county's first record (KL). The Bitterroot Valley had one much of the winter (BD). A Scrub Jay in Madras Feb. 14 made the county's first (DHR) and two were in Bend Dec. 15+ (TC, DGI). About 100 Com. Ravens scavenged at Coeur d'Alene's landfill Feb. 16 (DF). Mountain Chickadees appeared in Madras; like Steller's Jays, they are rare there (IH). A Chestnut-backed Chickadee wintered in Bend (TC). A Rock Wren lingered among the rimrocks near Harney L., Dec. 19 (CDL). Single Brown Creepers and Winter Wrens were sighted at Sheep Cr., 20 mi n. of Salmon, Ida. They are rarely seen in that area in winter (HBR). Bewick's Wrens were found at several spots in the Lewiston-Asotin-Wawawai, Wash., area during the winter (m.ob.). Russian olive thickets along Lower Crab Cr., Grant Co., Wash., hosted a Hermit Thrush Feb. 22 (RF) and one was in Clarkston, Wash., Dec. 1 (GAT). Many of this species wintered in the Yakima Valley (Y.A.S.). Frenchglen had a Varied Thrush Dec. 18 for a rare winter record (CDL). A N. Mockingbird, apparently a latilong first, was sighted at Nicola L., Dec. 29-Jan. 10 (RRH, WWe). One mockingbird wintered near Twin Falls, Ida. (JT, CHT), and another was reported at the Ft. Hall Bottoms (TR). Most unusual was a Sage Thrasher near Harney

L, Dec 19 (CDL) A Brown Thrasher at Sunriver in early January and later stayed close to where one was found 2 years ago (TC). Fort Hall Bottoms n.w. of Pocatello had a Brown Thrasher Jan. 14 (CHT, m.ob.), and another was reported in Boise, Ida., in January (*vide* CHT). A few Water Pipits seen Dec. 18 at Frenchglen were presumed to have wintered (CDL), and one was sighted near American Falls Res. on the Snake R. in s Idaho Jan. 21 (CHT). Bohemian Waxwings were common to abundant in most localities. Conspicuous exceptions were the Tricities and Missoula areas, where the birds were decidedly scarce. An albino Bohemian was sighted near Windermere and Wilmer, B.C., in early December (OM, DW). Cedar Waxwings were little noted, although a few scattered flocks appeared in e Oregon and Washington. A N. Shrike appeared at Fortine, Mont., where they have been rarely seen in recent years (WW). Malheur N.W.R. still had Loggerhead Shrikes in late December, and one arrived along lower Crab Cr., Feb. 22 (RF). About 20 N Shrikes wintered at Malheur. A few were reported elsewhere in e. Oregon and Washington.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES — Wintering Yellow-rumped Warblers were found in Russian olive thickets in e. Washington: two birds near Ephrata and several along the Dodson-Frenchman Hills road (BJ). One remained at Malheur N.W.R. through Dec. 19 (GI) and one was seen at Sunriver Dec. 12 (DD).

A ♀ W. Tanager killed by a cat at Kamloops Dec. 27 furnished the 2nd winter record for that area (EMc). A probable ♀ Black-headed Grosbeak was observed near Ft. Hall, Ida., Dec. 21 (TR). Vernon had a Chipping Sparrow Dec. 11 at the same spot where one was photographed last year (PR). A Fox Sparrow was reported at a Libby feeder Dec. 1 (DH) and one visited a Hayden L. feeder during the winter (PH). A Lincoln's Sparrow appeared at McKay Creek N.W.R., Pendleton, Ore., Feb. 4 (KK), and one was at Ft. Simcoe Feb. 14 (BB, AS). A well-described Swamp Sparrow was observed along lower Crab Cr., Nov. 27 (EM). A Golden-crowned Sparrow stayed at Vernon during December (PR) and Sunnyside Dam, Parker, Wash., had 10 Jan. 1 (DG). White-crowned Sparrows wintered in unprecedented numbers at Malheur N.W.R.; 24 were noted near headquarters Dec. 19 (CDL). A few Harris' Sparrows were noted in every state and province of the Region. Two at Libby feeders were worthy of special note (DH), as were three that wintered in the Hood R.-Odell area (DAA). The species was described as "getting to be too common to report" in the Missoula vicinity (PLW). A bird identified as a "White-winged" Dark-eyed Junco, which would be a first for Oregon, visited a Bend feeder Feb. 25+ and was photographed (TC, m.ob.). A lone Lapland Longspur was sighted in the Frenchtown valley w. of Missoula (SG), and one plus a Snow Bunting accompanied a flock of Horned Larks on Michaud Flats n.w. of Pocatello Jan. 7 (CHT, CW). Snow Buntings were mostly very sparsely reported. Exceptions were a flock of 300 at Kamloops Dec. 28 (RRH, EMc), 150 at Lincoln, Mont., Feb. 8 (DHo), and a spectacular migrational movement in the open country w. of Spokane Feb. 15, when numbers were conservatively estimated at 10,000 (JA).

Red-winged Blackbirds wintered abundantly in the n. Columbia Basin, where flocks of 200–5000 were noted along Frenchman Hills and Winchester Wasteways (RF). Hundreds wintered in cattle feed lots and at feeders in the Flathead Valley, n.w. Montana (F.A.S.). Ten to 15 Yellow-headed Blackbirds, mixed with large flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds, were sighted several times in the N. Columbia Basin, Wash. (RF). One Yellow-headed Dec. 19 at Malheur N.W.R. was also unusual (CDL), and three with Red-wingeds near Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, Mont., Dec. 20+ were the first ever for January or February there (CC, Sca, DHo). A Rusty Blackbird and a Brown-headed Cowbird spent Dec. 9–Feb. 21 at Vernon (PR).

Rosy Finches were plentiful in e. Washington and s. interior British Columbia. A few appeared in the Moscow, Ida.–Pullan, Wash., area., and one stayed near Fortine, Mont., for 2 weeks in February. A few were seen near Hines, Ore., Dec. 8.

Lac le Jeune near Kamloops had 50 Pine Grosbeaks Jan. 15 (RB) Several Purple Finches at Toppenish Dec 22 supplied the first wintering record in that area (BB, CD, DG, CR, AS) Two Purple Finches visited Vernon feeders Jan. 3 (PR). A ♂ Cassin's Finch at the Yakima R. mouth Feb. 8, for the only report, was unusual (REW). House Finches, rare at Malheur N.W.R. in winter, were sighted there Dec. 19 and Jan. 29 (CDL) Red Crossbills were "virtually absent from many areas" in s. interior British Columbia (RRH). The only other reports were of one bird at a Selah, Wash., feeder Feb. 10 (MS), and one devoured by a N. Pygmy-Owl at a Bend feeder (HH). A few Com. Redpolls appeared in w. Montana, n. Idaho, at Panhandle L., and e. of Davenport, Wash. Most apparently stopped in s. interior British Columbia where 100 were sighted at Kamloops and 275 at Shuswap L. (RRH). A very few Pine Siskins were reported, in Pend Oreille County, Wash., only (SZ). American Goldfinches wintered in larger numbers than usual. Evening Grosbeaks were mostly absent. Best numbers appeared in the Richland area and in the Asotin–Clarkston area.

ADDENDA — A pair of Red-throated Loons was observed on Alice L., n.w. corner of Blaine County, Ida., the summer of 1978 (DJ). Some 200 imm. Am. White Pelicans were observed at Pelican L., n.e. of Adel, Ore., July 22, 1986 (WHP). A Green-backed Heron at Fields, Ore., in mid-September, 1986, apparently represented the 5th record for s.e. Oregon (CDL). Sandhill Cranes nested successfully in the upper Blackfoot Valley e. of Missoula in 1986 (C.B.) The species also nested at Metcalf N.W.R. (*vide* PLW). A Ruddy Turnstone was seen at Hart L., Lake Co., Ore., June 4, 1986 (WHP) and another was at Malheur N.W.R., Sept. 6, 1986 (CDL). Bluebird nest box trails, mostly in w. Montana, were highly successful, fledging a total of 6115 Mountain and 1368 Western bluebirds from 2670 boxes for a 35% increase over 1985 (AA, DHs).

CORRIGENDUM — Panhandle L., mentioned in AB 40:1231, is not in Idaho but w. of Newport, Wash.

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Hugh E. Kingery

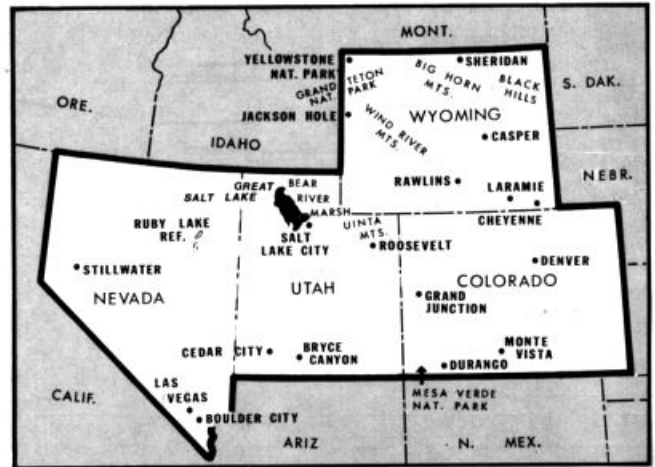
Except for two well and widely observed Yellow-billed Loons that visited Denver and Pueblo, the Mountain West this winter had fewer birds, either common or uncommon. Mild weather typified the Regional winter and probably affected migratory movements. The abundance of two species, and the scarcity of three others, suggested that the mildness restrained the southward movement. Particularly scarce were three winter visitors from the North: Rough-legged Hawk, Horned Lark, and American Tree Sparrow. White-crowned Sparrows and Canada Geese showed high numbers. The tally of White-crowned Sparrows on Christmas Bird Counts almost doubled over last year; since southern Nevada, Utah, and Colorado form the northern part of their winter range, the sparrows apparently stayed farther north than usual. Along the Front Range of Colorado so many Canada Geese remained that they became pests—an ironic status for a beautiful bird.

Christmas Bird Counts: The report that follows includes frequencies calculated for several of the commoner species on a party-hour (p.h.) basis. The figures exclude Nevada. The averages cover counts from 1972 to 1985.

ABBREVIATIONS — # = no written description submitted by deadline; 1st Lat = first latilong record (a latilong is that piece of geography outlined by one degree of latitude and longitude).

LOONS TO IBISES — Observers reported Pacific Loons only from Denver (three from Dec. 2–4, D.F.O.) and Coalville, Utah (Dec. 13–14, †CK, ph.). A few Com. Loons lingered into December; four to five wintered at Pueblo, Colo. (A.V.A.S.). The first spring ones arrived at Ordway, Colo., Feb. 8 and Yellowstone N.P., very early on Feb. 23 (SD). Remarkably, two **Yellow-billed Loons** appeared in e. Colorado simultaneously. One stayed in Denver Dec. 13–22 (RB, D.F.O., m.ob.). High tech preserved the record: Wainwright documented it on videotape! South 100 mi in Pueblo, a 2nd Yellow-billed, seen Dec. 14–16, may have wintered in a remote part of the reservoir. A similar loon, presumably the same bird and with plumage different from that of the Denver Yellow-billed, was found there Feb. 1–14 (†MY, DS, m.ob.). At Boulder, one to five Horned Grebes and three to eight Westerns wintered at a reservoir kept open by warm water from a power plant (B.A.S.). The same Pueblo reservoir frequented by the loon held four to five wintering Eared Grebes (A.V.A.S.). Zion had its largest flock of Eareds ever, 115 Jan. 17 (JG). Warm water in a power plant reservoir n. of Ft. Collins, Colo., allowed five Westerns to winter. About 100 Great Blue Herons wintered at Ruby Lake N.W.R., Nev. (SB), and a Great Egret, one to three Black-crowned Night-Herons, and three White-faced Ibises wintered at Fish Springs N.W.R., Utah (CDa).

WATERFOWL — Through the winter Utah had waterfowl numbers comparable to those of last year, but the migration began a little earlier. By Feb. 28 the count of 66,234 ducks exceeded substantially last year's count of 49,665 (U.D.W.R.). Denver likewise had more wintering ducks, with the D.F.O. season's total up to 14,116 from 12,304 and 4397 the last 2 years. Fish Springs had 5480 ducks Feb. 27 (2800 Green-winged Teal—CDa) and Kirch W.M.A., Nev. had 5,720 at its Feb. 9 peak, including 1805 Green-winged Teal and 1455 Canvasbacks (CS). Tundra Swans stayed in the Region longer than usual, with over 100 at both Ruby L. and Pahrnanagat Ref., Nev. (SB, VM). At Fish Springs, 45–50 wintered (CDa). They began their N flight in February; Kirch W.M.A. counted 283 Feb. 23 (CS). Yellowstone estimated its winter population of Trumpeter



Swans at 250–300 (JZ), and Ruby L. had an average population of 25, with 49 at the peak Jan. 15 (SB).

A surprising number of Greater White-fronted Geese appeared: singles at Provo, Utah, Feb. 7 (MW), Grand Jct., Colo., Jan. 18 and Feb. 14–18 (CD, A.S.W.C.), Bonny Res., Colo., Jan. 19 and Feb. 23 (D.F.O., DL), and Windsor, Colo., Feb. 7 (DL, PO); plus one to two Julesburg, Colo., Jan. 3–24 (D.F.O., DBr) and five at Ft. Collins Feb. 21 (DL). At Ordway, Colo., 4000–5000 Snow Geese wintered (A.V.A.S.) and by late February migrants had appeared to the n. at Ft. Collins, and Cheyenne, Wyo. The only Ross' Geese were singles at Boulder Jan. 1 (BK) and Grand Jct., Jan. 18+ (A.S.W.C., CD, RL). Canada Geese have succeeded so mightily along the Colorado Front Range that they have turned into a pest species. In a triangle with 75-mi sides, Ft. Morgan to Ft. Collins to Denver, the wintering population of 100,000 compared with normal numbers of 50,000–70,000. At least part of their staggering numbers may have resulted from the mild winter reducing their migratory urge (C.D.W.). They grazed every piece of open space bigger than an acre; their calling cards caused particular anguish among park and golf course patrons and proprietors. To deal with the associated problems, C.D.W. has assigned a full-time specialist.

Reports of two to six Greater Scaup came from Delta, Boulder, and Denver (3 locations; one group of six stayed Jan. 21+). Oldsquaws stayed into December at Casper and Grand Jct., in Denver Dec. 28–Jan. 14, and Boulder Dec. 13–Jan. 31. Pueblo had the only scoter, a White-winged Dec. 15 (WRM). Numbers of Barrow's Goldeneyes dropped a bit, although Salida, Colo., had its first record, with two Feb. 10 (H.R.A.S.).

HAWKS THROUGH GULLS — Yellowstone reported 25 wintering Bald Eagles; Ogden, Utah, counted 47, and Durango, Colo., counted 34 Jan. 10. Cheesman Reservoir, a foothills reservoir near Evergreen, Colo., boasted 60 Bald Eagles Dec. 21; the resultant news reports sent many Denver residents to the lake to observe them. Many observers have commented over the last year on the scarcity of N. Harriers; CBC counts of N. Harriers this season backed up those comments. The tally of 0.056/p.h. compared with an average of 0.125/p.h. and a peak, in 1983, of 0.24/p.h. Accipiter averages on CBCs also dropped below average, 0.037/p.h. cf. an 0.052 average. The two major winter buteos showed opposite trends on CBCs. Red-tailed Hawks increased—0.21/p.h. (average 0.137)—and Rough-leggeds crashed—0.095/p.h. count (average 0.178). For the Rough-legged, Regional reporters almost unanimously reported scarcity (counts only 10–35% of normal), consistent with CBCs.

The Region reported two Gyrfalcons—the usual report from Sheridan, in December (m.ob.), and one at Julesburg, Colo., Dec. 4, swooping at ducks and gulls (†JC).

During the winter Janos found two Virginia Rails killed by avian predators (a Red-tailed Hawk and a Prairie Falcon); he marveled that “such a secretive bird would be such a popular prey item.” A Com. Moorhen was at St. George, Utah, Feb. 14 (MW). Two Sandhill Cranes reportedly wintered at Riverton, Wyo. (LS), about 650 mi n. of their normal winter quarters in New Mexico. The Region hosted a handful of shorebirds besides the usual Killdeer and snipe. Overwintering Greater Yellowlegs have become regular although rare. At Fish Springs five to 10 stayed over, and 21 were on hand Jan. 12 (†CDA). For the 5th year one stayed through the winter at the same Denver greenbelt (DN, D.F.O.). A Solitary Sandpiper remained at Grand Jct. until the marsh froze toward the end of January (A.S.W.C., †RL, ph.); until the freeze that same marsh also held one each Virginia Rail, Sora, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Hermit Thrush (CD). Grand Jct. also reported a Spotted Sandpiper Jan. 13 along the Colorado R. (A.S.W.C.), and Fish Springs had three Long-billed Dowitchers Jan. 4 and two Feb. 27 (†CDA).

Many observers saw a **Laughing Gull** that wintered at Pueblo (DS, A.V.A.S.); its photograph provided Colorado's first documentation by photo or specimen (WRM). Two Franklin's Gulls remained in Denver to Jan. 1 (D.F.O.). Pueblo had eight Bonaparte's Gulls Jan. 10 (DBr). A late report advises of Nevada's first record of nesting **Ring-billed Gulls**. First observed at the nest site in 1985, a 1986 check confirmed about 1000 nesting individuals (HJ, AG). For the season D.F.O. counted 579 California Gulls (201 and 102 the last 2 winters) and 248 Herring Gulls (881 in 1985 and 65 in 1984). The numbers seemed consistent with a mild winter. Thayer's Gull counts dipped, with five in Denver and three at Pueblo, but Delta, Colo., tallied its first one Dec. 8 (†MJ 1st Lat). Colorado reported three Glaucous Gulls along the Front Range Jan. 20–Feb. 8. Three Glaucous Gulls and one bird believed to be a Herring x Glaucous hybrid were seen among the 7000–10,000 gulls at the Salt Lake City dump Feb. 7–8 (EB). A Black-legged Kittiwake stayed only a day at Pueblo Dec. 13 (†DS).

PIGEONS TO WOODPECKERS — Two early Band-tailed Pigeons perched on a phone wire at Delta Feb. 28 (MJ). The calls of one (two?) screech-owls that wintered at Sheridan were thought to resemble those of both Eastern and Western (BB). Four Colorado Front Range locations from Denver n. to Ft. Collins reported E. Screech-Owls. At Pueblo Feb. 15 one was, by call, a Western (DJ). Grand Jct. and Ruby Valley, Nev., also reported Westerns; the latter owl roosted in an open garage one January night (C & SB). Only one foray turned up a Boreal Owl: one Feb. 28 at Slumgullion Pass in s.w. Colorado's San Juan Mts. (JJR). Owling enthusiasts found several N. Pygmy-Owls and N. Saw-whets, the latter reported less frequently in the Mountain West. Among the Saw-whet reports, a road kill gave Evanston, Wyo. (JS) its 3rd record, all of dead birds (CK). Yellowstone had one Jan. 25 (JZ) and Jackson had one Feb. 21 (PHa). The discovery of four Saw-whets at Glenwood Springs Dec. 27+ suggests that they may occur widely in the extensive pinyon/juniper woodland of w. Colorado (†VZ).

An Anna's Hummingbird was at Davis Dam at the s. tip of Nevada Jan. 24 (VM, J & MC). On Jan. 11 Devils Tower, Wyo., had its first Lewis' Woodpecker in 20 years, and the first winter record of a Red-headed Woodpecker for n.e. Wyoming (JA). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker spent Jan. 9–13 at Golden, Colo. (†WF, m.ob.). On CBCs observations of both Downy and Hairy woodpeckers dropped. The Downy count of 0.145/p.h. (average 0.17/p.h.) dipped to the lows of 1977–1979, and the Hairy count of 0.085/p.h. (0.103/p.h. average) equaled low counts in 1981–1982. The N. Flicker CBC count of 0.53/p.h. represented the lowest recorded from 1972 to date and compared with an average of 0.7/p.h.

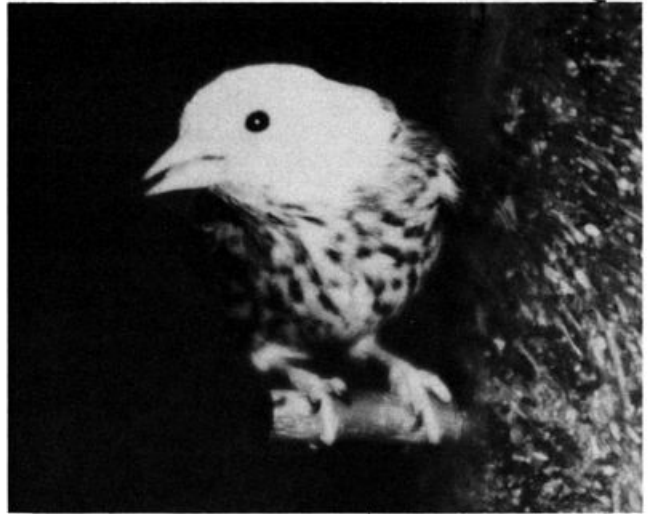
LARKS TO PIPITS — The mild winter probably spread out the Horned Larks and kept them farther n.; most plains

observers saw substantially fewer than they see in most winters (HD, PO, D.F.O.). In contrast, at Sundance, Wyo., in the far n.e. corner of the Region, multiple flocks contributed to double the usual numbers (JA). An early Tree Swallow spent Feb. 23–26 at Ruby Valley (C & SB). Las Vegas sported two N. Rough-winged Swallows Feb. 15 (VM). CBCs counted fewer Steller's Jays, 0.6/p.h. cf. a 0.8/p.h. average. Only 2 reporters mentioned Steller's in town (at Ogden and Cody). Blue Jays ventured into the mountains at Salida (one to three Dec. 16+—H.R.A.S.) and across the mountains to Grand Jct. (one Jan. 18 & 24—CD). Scrub Jays dropped into Ogden, the valley floor at Zion N.P., Eagle, Colo., and two visited Ruby Lake N.W.R., Feb. 8–14. Clark's Nutcrackers had begun nest building Feb. 9 at Eagle (JM). CBCs found Black-billed Magpies at an average 3.13/p.h. Chickadee counts on CBCs contrasted: Black-capped posted a 1.13/p.h. tally, exactly on average, but the count of Mountains, 1.07/p.h., dropped below the average of 1.27/p.h. The latter species varies considerably from year to year, depending largely on reports from several CBCs in the Colorado foothills.

The Region reported unusually high numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets, from Zion and Ogden n. to Sheridan and Sundance, throughout the Colorado mountains, out onto the plains at Bonny Res., and especially Boulder (123 counted through the winter). Even a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets stayed the winter—one at Green R., Wyo. (MA, AD), one to two at Grand Jct. (A.S.W.C., CD), and one Feb. 21 only at Pueblo (DBr). Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers in w. Colorado, at Grand Jct., Dec. 7–8 and Jan. 16 (A.S.W.C.) and at Delta Jan. 7 (MJ) added to a CBC record at Hotchkiss. A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher was at Beaver Dam Wash, s.w. Utah, Feb. 14 (†MW). A remarkable E. Bluebird was at Lander, Wyo., Feb. 1 (†SF, 1st Lat). Other reports included six Jan. 10 near Yuma, Colo. (JB) and one at the usual Bonny Res. site Feb. 23 (DL). By mid-February Mountain Bluebirds had arrived throughout the Region, from Fish Springs to Cheyenne, and into the mountains at Salida. Numbers of Townsend's Solitaires increased in the piedmont towns. A flock of 100 feasted on juniper berries at Sheridan Feb. 8 (MR) and a roadside survey there counted 31, twice the average. The count at Denver doubled those of the last 2 years (D.F.O.). In addition to the Hermit Thrush at Grand Jct., Zion had four observations, and one spent Feb. 19–Mar. 11 in Mowbray's backyard in Las Vegas. The distribution of Am. Robins differed from that of most winters, with lower numbers in the s. one-half of the Region but surprising flocks in Evanston, Wyo., to Jan. 5, 215 wintering in Sundance, and 89 at Sheridan Jan. 12. Observers found four Varied Thrushes: Casper Jan. 7 (†#) & GL), Cascade, Colo., in December (A.A.S.), one that wintered at Beulah, Colo. (A.V.A.S., ph.), and one at Ft. Collins



Varied Thrush in Fort Collins, Colo., Feb. 25, 1987. Photo/Dave Leatherman.



These photographs, submitted by Pat Wheat of Boulder, Colorado, show an albinistic Pine Siskin (above and left), and two different albinistic Evening Grosbeaks. Although these photos were not taken this past winter season, we thought they would be of interest to readers.



Above: Offspring of the female albinistic Evening Grosbeak pictured below and below left. All photos/Pat Wheat.



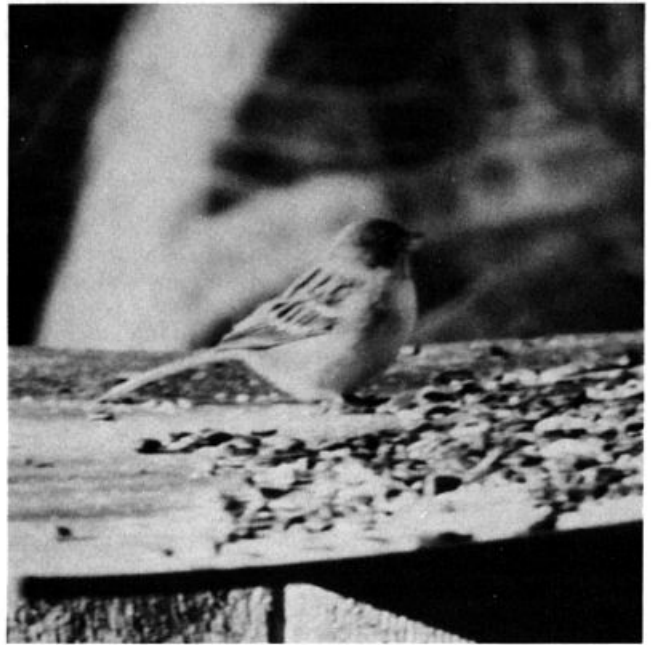
Feb 14+ (JSh et al) A N Mockingbird wintered at Glenwood Springs, Colo., feeding mainly on crabapples and occasionally on suet (†VZ). Others were at Provo Feb. 5 (MW) and Grand Jct., Feb. 28 (RH). Brown Thrashers wintered at Ft. Collins, Boulder (three), and Eldora, Colo. Water Pipits wintered at Grand Jct. (CD), Pueblo (A.V.A.S.), and probably at Delta (MJ), all 1st Lat winter records.

WAXWINGS TO WARBLERS — The Bohemian Waxwing invasion assumed large proportions. After thousands made late fall appearances in n. Wyoming, they streamed S to s. Wyoming (250 in early December and 1090 to mid-January in Evanston) and Colorado. At the same time they scattered into n.e. Nevada, where they rarely venture. Notable reports came from Lamoille and Ruby L., and a flock of 70 spent the whole winter at Ruby Valley, Nev. Wyoming reported few after mid-January. The numbers in Colorado peaked in January (Boulder's season-long total mounted to 5222), although 600 flocked at Masonville near Ft. Collins Feb. 15. The Colorado birds reached s. to Pueblo, Gunnison (600 Dec. 15+), and Grand Jct. Utah's few reports came later: Provo hosted 300 all February, Salt Lake City had several February flocks, and Ogden reported 25 Feb. 28. Cedar Waxwings mixed with some of the Bohemians, but they moved S to Salida, Durango, Las Vegas, and Davis Dam (10 Jan. 24).

Several Yellow-rumped Warblers remained in the Region into early January, at Denver, Boulder, and Provo; one stayed far n. in Gillette, Wyo., Jan. 5–Feb. 9 (VH). Fifty began the winter at Grand Jct. but in January a zero-degree interruption to the mild weather resulted in a drastic reduction in their numbers (CD). Denver had two **Pine Warblers**: one Dec. 10–Jan. 17 (PF et al., ph.) and another Feb. 16–20 (AH, D.F.O.). An Ovenbird frequented a Boulder yard Jan. 1–17 (JK).

CARDINALS TO SISKINS — Bonny Res. reported a N. Cardinal Jan. 10–19 (JB). CBC numbers reflected a paucity of Am. Tree Sparrows that continued the entire winter; this winter's count of 1.26/p.h. compared with the 15-year average of 2.19/p.h. A Chipping Sparrow stayed at Rye, Colo., Jan. 14–25 (†DS). The Field Sparrow reported on the Glenwood Springs CBC stayed to Jan. 18 (†VZ, †MJ). A Vesper Sparrow reportedly wintered at a Jackson, Wyo., feeder (BR#). At Zion one to two Golden-crowned Sparrows were seen regularly, as they have been for several years. Gifford theorizes that s.w. Utah falls within their normal winter range. At the same time, Golden-crowns wintered in Boulder and Denver, the latter for a 2nd year (B.A.S., D.F.O.). White-crowned Sparrows almost doubled the count levels of the past 2 winters, although the CBC average of 2.32/p.h. did not exceed the 15 year average of 2.02/p.h. by much. They concentrated in the s. part of the Region, especially in Utah; the St. George count alone had 5629, up from 1853 and 1632 the last 2 years. The numbers probably indicate that White-crowns at least started the winter farther n. than usual. Harris' Sparrows wintered throughout the Region, in all 4 states; farthest w. were three wintering at Kirch W.M.A. (CS) and one Feb. 21–22 at Las Vegas (VM). The CBC count of Dark-eyed Junco declined, the 4.35/p.h. comparing with a 5.9/p.h. average.

Observers found few Lapland Longspurs—a total of only 20 in Cheyenne and n.e. Colorado. Snow Buntings were also scarce, with only 2 reports of three, at Walden and Julesburg, Colo. An important Las Vegas bird spot, the Mormon Farm, saw a significant reduction in large flocks of blackbirds and starlings; that and the presence there of several dead raptors led to the discovery that a dairy farmer had used a chemical, Warbex, “to get rid ticks on the cows. Any bird coming in contact with the stuff keeled over immediately. A federal drug agent told the manager to stop use of the substance and the birds have started to come back” (R.R.A.S., VM). Yellow-headed Blackbirds joined flocks of Red-wingeds at Delta, Florence, and Boulder, Colo., and a flock of eight Yellow-headed was at Rocky Ford, Colo., Jan. 8 (CKi). Colorado had its first



Field Sparrow at Glenwood Springs, Colo., winter 1986–1987. Photo/Victor M. Zerbi, Jr.

wintering Great-tailed Grackles, which found a congenial feeding and roosting site at the Del Norte sewage ponds (JJR). A Com. Grackle spent Nov. 23–Jan. 13 at the ski center of Vail, Colo. (BRi). A N. (Bullock's) Oriole came daily to a Sheridan feeder Nov. 1–Jan. 31 (†HD, N & MJ ph.).

A bird whose description matched that of a Brambling appeared at a Salida feeder Feb. 26 and Mar. 12 (†RE). House Finches burgeoned on CBCs: 2.98/p.h. vs. a 2.28 average. The few Red Crossbill reports included 214 on 24 occasions at Yellowstone (JZ), 2 small flocks at Sheridan, and a tiny number in the c. Colorado mountains. Common Redpolls moved S sparingly, with few s. of c. Wyoming although a few reached Colorado. Daily in his Ogden yard, Killpack had 100 Pine Siskins, apparently gypsy flocks. He banded 900+ from Jan. 1 on, and had very few recaptures. Siskins ranged sporadically over the rest of the Region, with hundreds at Ft. Collins, Boulder, and Durango, and lesser numbers in e. Colorado and at Zion.

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Arizona, Sonora

Janet Witzeman and David Stejskal

The major event of the season was the large invasion of thrushes throughout the state. There was also a small invasion of Harris' Sparrows. An excellent crop of berries and seeds supported record numbers of several species around Prescott, including an influx of Purple Finches. The two severe cold spells in January and February seemed to have caused a setback in the development of vegetation in southern Arizona.

In the report which follows are the usual interesting examples of species that managed to winter farther north and/or at a colder location than usual.

ABBREVIATIONS — B.T.A. = Boyce Thompson Arboretum; L.C.R. = Lower Colorado River; P.R.D. = Painted Rock Dam; S.P.R. = San Pedro River.

GREBES THROUGH IBISES — A Horned Grebe at Many Farms L., Feb. 15 (DS, RF, RN, SG) represented the first winter record for n.e. Arizona. Western Grebe is an uncommon winter visitor to s.e. Arizona, so of interest were up to two at McNeal during December (AM, BH) and one at Patagonia L., Dec. 5 (BH et al.).

An ad. Brown Pelican observed in the Bill Williams arm of L. Havasu Jan. 15–17 (R. Beaudry et al.) was most unusual, as there are scarcely any records of this species in winter and only a few records of an adult anytime. An Am. White Pelican, uncommon in winter away from the L.C.R. and P.R.D., was at Prescott Dec. 13–20 (fide CT). A Double-crested Cormorant was seen Feb. 23 at McNeal (AM) where it has been recorded only once previously in winter.

An Am. Bittern, a sparse winter resident, was observed at Prescott Dec. 2 (RH). Up to four Cattle Egrets, uncommon winter visitors in s.e. Arizona, were recorded at McNeal Dec. 15, and one at Elfrida Dec. 3 (AM). A high number of 500 wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons was counted e. of P.R.D., Jan. 7 (DT). A White-faced Ibis, rare in winter away from the L.C.R., was present through the period at McNeal (AM).

WATERFOWL — Tundra Swans were reported at 3 locations: one at the San Bernardino Ranch, e. of Douglas, Dec. 5 (B. Robertson, M. Ellis), one at Prescott Dec. 20 (fide CT), and at 2 lakes s.w. of Concho, n.e. Arizona, where there were 18 Dec. 23 and two Feb. 6 (GM). Two Greater White-fronted Geese, sparse winter visitors, especially in n. Arizona, were at Prescott Feb. 22–24 (fBT). Four Ross' Geese were observed at McNeal Dec. 3+ (AM et al.). Twenty-two Canada Geese near Cook's L., Feb. 6 were of interest as the species is seldom seen on the lower S.P.R. (GM).

A Wood Duck, rare in s.e. Arizona, was observed at McNeal Jan. 22 (AM, BM, WS, RP). Early single ♂ Blue-winged Teal were seen e. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (A. Higgins), at P.R.D., Jan. 24 (RW et al.), and at Kino Springs Jan. 31 (DD, TD, AM). Early single ♂ Cinnamon Teal were seen at Elfrida Jan. 11 and at Kino Springs Jan. 12 (JD et al.). A ♂ Eur. Wigeon was present during the period, for the 2nd time, at a pond in Phoenix (T. Chew); another individual was recorded at Elfrida Jan. 1 (JS et al.). There were three Oldsquaws in the state during the winter. In addition to the one at Parker Dam (since November), there was one at Prescott Jan. 14–Mar. 26 (fBT, RH et al.), and one at P.R.D., Jan. 24–25 (LH, RW et al.). The ♀ Surf Scoter at Parker Dam remained at least to Feb. 6 (SG et al.). The peak count of Barrow's Goldeneyes below Parker Dam was of 15 (including two males) Jan. 23 (GM, GG). Three Hooded Mergansers in the Phoenix area and four more in s.e. Arizona



through the period were slightly more than usual (m.ob.). Three ♀ Com. Mergansers, uncommon in s.e. Arizona, were observed at McNeal Dec. 12 (AM). A high number of 310+ was counted at Little Mormon L. near Show Low Feb. 6 (GM). A ♀ Red-breasted Merganser, rare in s.e. Arizona, was observed at Portal Dec. 26 (M. Ward).

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS — Reports of Bald Eagles in areas where they are not commonly found were: an adult at Many Farms L., Feb. 8 (CL et al.), an adult and an immature at Ganado L., Feb. 7 (GM, TH) and the immature again at Ganado L., Feb. 15 (DS, RF, RN, SG), an adult at Parker Canyon L., Dec. 4 (TD), an adult near Portal Dec. 12 (fide SS), an adult at McNeal from Jan. 1 on, plus an immature there Feb. 17, and an immature at Elfrida Feb. 5 (AM et al.); plus an adult and immature at Cananea, Son., Mexico, Jan. 31 (AM, DD, TD). Harris' Hawk is "certainly expanding its range at a relatively rapid rate" (GM). Additional new or unusual locations were noted for two at Willcox in January (W & SS), one near Black Canyon City in January (JBu), one s. of Arivaipa Cr. and one w. of Oracle Feb. 9 (GM), and one s. of Ajo Dec. 20 and Feb. 17 (GM). An ad. **Red-shouldered Hawk**, a rare winter visitor, was observed along the Hassayampa R., s. of Wickenburg, Feb. 28 (H. Messing, fide TG). A high number of 20 adult and imm. Golden Eagles was observed feeding on sheep carcasses in Elfrida Dec. 3 (AM). A pair of Golden Eagles was found nesting Feb. 23 on the same windmill as last year (AM).

Single Crested Caracaras, wandering far e. of their normal range, were observed during the first one-half of December at Elfrida (AM et al.) and s. of Sierra Vista Dec. 20 (fide DD).

Numbers of Sandhill Cranes at McNeal and Elfrida built up from 600+ in December to a high of 2400+ by mid-February (AM et al.). A lone Sandhill Crane along the Verde R., e. of Phoenix, Feb. 8 & 11 was at an odd location (M. Collie).

The flock of Mountain Plovers was present again at Elfrida all winter; 131 were counted there Jan. 27 (AM, RT et al.). At the s. end of the Colorado R. Indian Reservation, 50+ counted Jan. 21 (JBu, GM) were the first to be reported in w. Arizona for several years. Two very late Solitary Sandpipers were observed in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 15 (fDS, CH). A large group of Long-billed Curlews was found wintering again in the McNeal/Elfrida area; 75 were counted Feb. 9 (AM et al.). Another large group of 55 was reported at Gilbert, s. of Phoenix, Jan. 14 (SG). Two Dunlins, sparse winter visitors, were present at the Gilbert sewage ponds through Dec. 12 (SG), and one in Tucson re-

mained to Dec 16 (H Brody, R Freeman) A late Red Phalarope was found at sewage ponds in Tucson Dec. 7 (BH).

Individual Bonaparte's Gulls, uncommon in winter, were seen at Roosevelt L., Dec. 10 (DB, D. Stahlecker), at sewage ponds in Tucson Dec. 11 and Jan. 6 (TG, WD), and near Parker Dam Feb. 6 (SG). A California Gull was observed at Prescott Dec. 20 (fide CT). Single Forster's Terns were reported at Patagonia L., Dec. 5 (BH, JD et al.) and at Roosevelt L., Jan. 12 (TG, DB).

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A road-killed ad. ♀ Spotted Owl was found on Arizona Hwy 88 n.w. of Globe at 3500', Feb. 20 (C. McKusick, fide BJ), adding another location for the records of this seldom-encountered owl. Short-eared Owls, uncommon in s.e. Arizona, were found near McNeal for the 2nd winter; two were observed there from Dec. 4 at least to Jan. 1 (BH, AM et al.). Twelve probable Vaux's Swifts, seen flying over Patagonia Feb. 4 (†J & AP), were n. of their usual wintering grounds.

A ♂ Broad-billed Hummingbird was in Sabino Canyon, Tucson, at least from Jan. 20 to Feb. 16 and probably was present all winter; the species is scarce in winter, especially away from feeders (KK). Two ♂ Magnificent Hummingbirds were still frequenting feeders in Madera Canyon Dec. 6, but were absent when feeders were checked Jan. 10 (JD).

Two Elegant Trogons were found on the s. side of the Santa Rita Mts., Dec. 20–21 (G. Taylor); the species is rare in winter. The Green Kingfisher at Kino Springs was present at least into February (m.ob.). One on the upper S.P.R. (since November) remained at least until Dec. 17 (DK).

Four of the Lewis' Woodpeckers at Molino Basin (since November) remained through the season (m.ob.). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was observed e. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (PB). Four Red-breasted Sapsuckers were reported: one at Sullivan L., Prescott, Dec. 2 (RH), one e. of Phoenix Dec. 22 (SD), one at Sycamore Res., Santa Catalina Mts., Dec. 21–Jan. 1 (JBo, JBa), and the one at Catalina S.P., Tucson, that "clearly showed hybrid characteristics" (JD) was present from November through the period (m.ob.).

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — N. Beardless-Tyrannulet was first found at B.T.A. as recently as Fall 1985, was found nesting there for the first time in Summer 1986, and now was discovered wintering at this new northernmost locality; an individual present all fall remained at least to Jan. 13 (CT, CH). Three Greater Pewees wintered in the Tucson area and one in the Atascosa Mts. (m.ob.).

A Least Flycatcher was observed along the Salt R., e. of Phoenix, Dec. 22–24 (†DS, RN et al.); the individual at B.T.A. since October was seen again Jan. 13 (CT). Numbers of Hammond's Flycatchers on the upper S.P.R. decreased after the large storms in January, but the species was still found on a regular basis through the winter in proper habitat (DK et al.); four were counted along Sonoita Cr., Dec. 5 (BH). Dusky Flycatcher was found to be a rare wintering species throughout the S.P.R. valley, preferring tall stands of cottonwoods and foraging in the upper one-third of the canopy (DK, TC); three were counted along Sonoita Cr., Dec. 5 (BH). Three Gray Flycatchers were observed at Big Wash, Falcon Valley, w. of Oracle, Jan. 7 (GM).

The E. Phoebe on the upper S.P.R. (since September) remained at least to Feb. 14 (DK). Ash-throated Flycatcher is uncommon to rare in winter s. and e. of Tucson, so of interest were singles at Elfrida Dec. 18–Jan. 8, in the Swisshelm Mts. w. of Elfrida Feb. 5 (AM et al.), at Patagonia L., Dec. 5 (BH), and in Falcon Valley w. of Oracle Jan. 7 (GM). The species was also more common than usual in the Sonoran Desert (GM). A ♂ Rose-throated Becard, found along Arivaca Cr., Dec. 23 (SM et al.), provided the 2nd winter record for the state.

Early Tree Swallows were one at Kino Springs in mid-January (fide JBa) and two s. of Pinal Air Park, Pima Co., Jan. 28 (WD, GM). The Cave Swallow returned to Tucson Feb. 23, but it was not seen after the snowstorm at month's end (TH). Three

late Barn Swallows were seen in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 15 (DS, CH) and one in Tucson "wintered" at least through Jan. 1 (m.ob.).

TITMICE THROUGH STARLING — A Plain Titmouse was found out of its normal habitat at 2800' in Falcon Valley Jan. 7 (GM). Individual Winter Wrens were found at Prescott Dec. 20 (CT), at Madera Canyon Feb. 8 at least to Feb. 14 (JBo, DH), and above the dam in Sabino Canyon, Tucson, at least from mid-January to mid-March (KK). An Am. Dipper at Prescott Dec. 20+ was new for that area; the one at B.T.A. remained through the period (CT, RF et al.), and one was back in Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahuas, for at least the 3rd winter (RP). Golden-crowned Kinglets were widespread and in high numbers in the forests around Prescott during the winter (CT). A ♂ Black-capped Gnatcatcher was heard calling and observed at Kino Springs Jan. 10 (†JD, JBo et al.); this was a new location and one of only a few reported in winter.

The invasion of the thrushes was the main event of the season. By December exceptional numbers of Townsend's Solitaires had reached the s. Arizona mountains, and by mid-January there were scattered solitaires all over the deserts of the Tucson-Nogales area; many of the birds remained into April (KK, DS et al.). There were also record high numbers of Townsend's Solitaires in Prescott and Camp Verde, and numbers n. and e. of Phoenix. There were high numbers of both bluebirds, robins, and Hermit Thrushes as well, in Prescott, Camp Verde, Sedona, and farther south. Over 1000 W. Bluebirds were counted along the Salt/Verde Rivers e. of Phoenix in December (m.ob.) and this huge influx extended through s. Arizona, even to some being recorded in the Sulphur Springs Valley where they are seldom seen (AM). Over 600 Mountain Bluebirds were counted Jan. 12 in the Kino Springs/Guevavi Ranch area alone (JD et al.). American Robins were numerous throughout the state, even on the e. part of the Navajo Indian Reservation (GM); numbers in most areas increased in January or February (m.ob.). A Rufous-backed Robin spent the winter, at least from Dec. 14, at Kino Springs (D. Jones, m.ob.). Another uncommon



Rufous-backed Robin at Kino Springs, near Nogales, Ariz., February 1987. Photo/Rick Bowers.

thrush visitor was Varied Thrush, discovered along Arivaca Cr., Buenos Aires N.W.R., Dec. 23–24 (AM, DD, B. Robertson)

There were two Brown Thrashers reported during the period: one at B.T.A., Nov. 30–Dec. 1, and the other at Elfrida Feb. 11 (S & RR, AM). By mid-December the number of Sprague's Pipits at McNeal had risen to at least six (AM *et al.*). An exceptionally large concentration of 1000+ Eur. Starlings was observed at Many Farms Feb. 7 (GM).

WARBLERS, TANAGERS — A possible Tropical Parula was reported at Sonoita Cr., Patagonia, Feb. 1 (†J & AP); there has been only one confirmed state record of this species. A ♂ **Cape May Warbler**, discovered at Fountain Hills, e. of Phoenix, Dec. 22–24 (†M. Eubanks, A. Collister, RBr *et al.*), provided the 5th winter record and 9th overall for Arizona. A ♂ Townsend's Warbler, uncommon in winter, was seen at B.T.A., Feb. 22 (DH). Even more uncommon was the Hermit Warbler seen in Sabino Canyon Dec. 22 (JBo, JBa). A N. Waterthrush, present since fall, remained at least to Jan. 4 at Nogales (JS, JBo *et al.*); another was found Jan. 9 along Arivaca Cr. (GG, R. Dorrance).

No fewer than three Louisiana Waterthrushes were found this winter: one at Sycamore Res., Santa Catalina Mts., Dec. 22 (JBo, JBa); one in Madera Canyon Feb. 14 (BS); and one farther n. than usual at Seven Springs, n.e. of Phoenix, Jan. 21–31, furnishing the first record for Maricopa County (H. Beatty, †SD, LH, RH, ph. JBu). The only Wilson's Warbler of the winter was one seen in Huachuca Canyon Jan. 27 (J. & B. Epler).

An ad. ♂ Hepatic Tanager, uncommon in winter, was seen in lower Madera Canyon Jan. 10 (JD). A Summer Tanager found near Nogales Feb. 7 (JS *et al.*) represented one of only a few winter records for the state.

BUNTINGS THROUGH FINCHES — A ♂ Pyrrhuloxia at Tuba City, Navajo Indian Reservation, Dec. 20 (WA, ph. SST) represented a big leap north; previous northernmost records were from w. of Prescott. A Blue Grosbeak, an uncommon winter resident, was observed at Patagonia Dec. 13 (R. Smith).

An Abert's Towhee at Elfrida Feb. 11 was the first for the Sulphur Springs Valley (AM). A Black-chinned Sparrow was found in Drift Hills, Cabeza Prieta N.W.R., Dec. 19 (SR); the species is a rare winter visitor to s.w. Arizona. Two Five-striped Sparrows, rare in winter, were found in Holden Canyon, Atascosa Mts., Dec. 26 (JBo). An e. race Fox Sparrow was observed at Elfrida Feb. 11 (AM, RN *et al.*). A Swamp Sparrow was observed at McNeal Dec. 4 and two were seen at Kino Springs Dec. 5 (BH). A White-throated Sparrow spent the winter at B.T.A., (CH, CB); another was seen along Sonoita Cr., Dec. 5 (BH), and a few were recorded on the CBCs as usual. Two Golden-crowned Sparrows spent the winter in Sedona (VG), an immature was observed in Molino Basin, Santa Catalina Mts., Nov. 11 (BD, RBo), and two immatures were seen in Florida Wash, below Madera Canyon, Feb. 14 (DH, P. Zucker).

A small influx of Harris' Sparrows took place again as last winter. In addition to the two reported in November, there was one at Tuba City Dec. 11–Mar. 9 (WA, SST), and two or three at Sedona all winter (VG); farther s. were one at Tucson Jan. 16 (NB) and two immatures on the upper S.P.R., one Dec. 4–Feb. 28 and the 2nd Jan. 31–Feb. 28 (ph. DK). Unprecedented numbers of McCown's Longspurs (150–300) were at McNeal from early December into March (AM, S. Perry *et al.*).

The ad. Rusty Blackbird on the upper S.P.R. since Nov. 30 was last seen Dec. 17 (DK, ph. TC). Individual Hooded Orioles frequented feeders during the winter at Tucson (H. Ware), and s.e. of Phoenix at Tempe (*fde* PB) and Mesa (A. Comeau).

Purple Finches staged the largest invasion ever recorded into the Prescott area; not only high numbers (*i.e.*, over 75 counted in a 5-mi stretch), but also widespread, in many localities from the chaparral to riparian woodlands, as well as into the coniferous forest (CT). Pine Siskins were also abundant in the Prescott area (CT) and also at feeders in Portal (SS). Large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were found in n.e. Arizona: 40 at Teec Nos Pos Feb. 8 (GM, CL), 150 at Ganado Wash

Feb. 15, and 300–400 at Canyon de Chelly Feb. 16 (DS, RF, RN, SG)

ADDENDUM — AB 40:1237, regarding the nesting pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks in Cave Cr. Canyon, Chiricahuas, on July 16 an adult was observed with two fledglings (TC).

CORRIGENDA — AB 40:1237, the Harris' Hawks at Cochise July 17, 1986 did not represent the northernmost record for the Sulphur Springs Valley as stated; they have been recorded n. of there for the past 2 years during the breeding season and 14 mi n.e. of Willcox during migration, plus a pair n. of San Simon in both winter and summer (JP). AB 40:1238, the Belted Kingfisher at S. Fork, w. of Eagar, was seen July 4, not June 4 as stated (TC). AB 40:1239, the statement that Curve-billed Thrashers had not been recorded before at Willcox is incorrect; they are not uncommon breeders 14 mi n.e. of Willcox, and the species was recorded at least once (July 14, 1985) at Willcox (JP).

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New Mexico, Northern Chihuahua

John P. Hubbard

ABBREVIATIONS — Bosque N.W.R. = Bosque del Apache Nat'l Wildlife Ref. Place names in *italics* are counties.

GREBS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Clark's and Western grebes again wintered at Caballo L., with respective highs of 20 and 45 Jan. 28 (JD, BZ). One to two Westerns at Cochiti L., Dec. 17 & 21 (JH, WH) and *Aechmophorus* sp. at Storrie L., Jan. 1 (JH, JV) were late. High numbers for winter were 37 Am. White Pelicans at L. McMillan Jan. 4 (WH) and 25+ there Feb. 15–16 (RT). Stragglers were one at Farmington through Jan. 12 (AN) and an injured one near Pleasant Dec. 3 (SW). Late were three Snowy Egrets at Caballo L., Dec. 18 (DM), plus another through the period at Bitter Lake N.W.R. (KW). Highs were four each Great Egrets at Bitter Lake N.W.R. Jan. 9 (KW) and Caballo L., Dec. 18 (DM).

A swan in the Percha Dam area Jan. 15–Feb. 9 (DM *et al.*) may well have been a subad. **Trumpeter Swan**, although the identification was not verified. Notable were two Greater White-fronted Geese at Cochiti L., Jan. 25 and Feb. 18 (PI *et al.*). Out-of-the-way Snow Geese included 22 at La Cueva, Mora, Dec. 10 (D. MacCarter), nine near the Gila Cliff Dwellings Dec. 31 (J. Koons), and up to 75 near Tularosa Feb. 8–10 (J. Hutto, NH). Northerly were eight Ross' Geese at Farmington Dec. 20–22 (AN *et al.*). Maximum counts of Ross' Geese at Bosque N.W.R. were of 800+ Dec. 26 and 1300+ Feb. 10 (HL). Four Mandarin Ducks were seen in the wild near Corrales

Dec 20, where a single male had been seen in December 1984 (HS *et al.*). More Greater Scaup than usual were reported, including four at Las Vegas Jan. 1 (JH, JV), at least four at Zuni Dec 21 and later (DC), two at Albuquerque Feb. 22–23 (WH, PS), and up to three at Caballo L., Dec. 16 (BZ) to Feb. 5 (DM). Other rare ducks were an **Oldsquaw** at Clayton L., Dec. 23 and Jan. 3 (WC *et al.*), a Surf Scoter at Caballo L., Dec. 18–Feb. 7 (BZ *et al.*), and two White-winged Scoters at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Feb. 16 (RT). More Hooded Mergansers than usual were reported, with a minimum of 18 statewide (v.o.). The only reports of Red-breasted Merganser were of one to two at Cochiti L., Dec. 17–Feb. 21 (WH) and Bitter Lake N.W.R., Jan. 2 (KW).

RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS — Several Black and Turkey vultures were near Galeana, Chih., Feb. 7, where regular in winter (WB, RD). That area is about 90 mi s. of New Mexico, where the Black Vulture is unverified and the Turkey Vulture does not winter. More than the usual numbers of Ospreys were seen, including single birds at Bosque N.W.R., Dec. 26 (HL), near Cliff Dec. 20 and Jan. 3 (RF *et al.*), Caballo L., Dec. 18–Feb. 27 (BZ *et al.*), and Percha Dam Feb. 26 (DM). Single Black-shouldered Kites were n.e. of Deming Jan. 12 (L. Herrmann) and at San Simon Cienega Feb. 7 (B. & M. Schaughency). Also notable was a pair at Galeana, Chih., Jan. 29—plus another bird well to the s. at Encinillas Feb. 6 (WB, RD). A total of 316 Bald Eagles was counted on the annual January survey (G. Schmitt *et al.*), compared to the average of 230. The 55 birds in the Cochiti L. area Jan. 13–14 (T. Johnson) furnished the highest count ever there, while a single bird at L. McMillan Jan. 10–11 (B. Swayze, S. West) was s.e. of the usual range. An ad. Bald Eagle was at Ascencion, Chih., Jan. 28, and two immatures were near Casas Grandes Feb. 7 (WB, RD). A vagrant Harris' Hawk was near Tularosa Feb. 12 (J. Garuba, JM). About 20 were in the Casas Grandes–Galeana vicinity Jan. 28–29, which is the northernmost area of regular occurrence in that portion of Chihuahua (WB, RD). Ten N. Bobwhites were at Bitter Lake N.W.R., Dec. 6 (KW).

Highs for Sandhill Cranes in the Gila Valley were 300+ near Cliff Dec. 6 (RF) and 52 at Redrock, December to February (A. Ford). The maximum number of Whooping Cranes in the middle Rio Grande Valley was 23, while another was at Ascension, Chih., Jan. 27 (WB, RD). Unusual was a Snowy Plover at Laguna Grande, Eddy, Jan. 4, along with one Western and 204 Least sandpipers (WH). A notable concentration was of 72 Long-billed Dowitchers at L. McMillan Jan. 4 (WH), while n. of the usual range were three at Cochiti L., Dec. 11 (PS). At least 35 Long-billed Curlews were at Ascension, Chih., Jan. 27–28, while others occurred southward (WB, RD); the species winters regularly in that state (RD). An imm. **Little Gull** was seen and well-described at L. McMillan Jan. 4 (WH), for the first report for New Mexico; it was also seen there Feb. 16–17 (RT). A high count was of 94 Bonaparte's Gulls at L. McMillan Jan. 4 (WH), as were up to 12 Herring Gulls at Cochiti L., Dec. 21 (JH) and eight at Caballo L., December to February (BZ *et al.*). Late California Gulls were singles at Cochiti L., Dec. 11 (PS) and Jan. 7 (WH), plus Caballo L., Dec. 18 (BZ *et al.*) and Feb. 8 (WH). An ad. Thayer's Gull at Cochiti L., Jan. 7 (WH) furnished the only report. Unusual was an imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (L. Schulte) & 23 (H. Harrison). First New Mexico winter records of **Forster's Terns** were of singles at Caballo L., Dec. 18 (BZ) and L. McMillan Jan. 4 (WH), plus six or more at the latter site Feb. 16–17 (RT).

DOVES THROUGH SWALLOWS — Highs for White-winged Doves were 20–30 at Socorro Dec. 6–Feb. 14 (JS), eight at Percha Dam Dec. 29 (HL) and 35 there Jan. 28 (JD, BZ), and up to five at Alamogordo Dec. 15–Jan. 30 (RJ *et al.*). At Truth or Consequences, the only one seen was Feb. 7–8 & 12 (DM). At Zuni, an Inca Dove was present Dec. 12–Jan. 15 (DC, JT). Highs included up to nine at Socorro Dec. 5–Feb. 13 (JS) and three at Alamogordo December to January (RJ *et al.*). Eight

Com Barn-Owls near Mesilla Jan. 4 (BZ) furnished a high count. White-throated Swifts included 15–20 at Caballo Dam Jan. 28 (JD, BZ) and Feb. 19 (JH *et al.*), plus several hundred near Cliff Feb. 22 (RF).

Notable numbers of Lewis' Woodpeckers were present in the Bluewater L. area (AM) and near Silver City (RF) in the period. Southerly were single Downy Woodpeckers near Percha Dam Dec. 16 and Jan. 28 (JD, BZ), while a vagrant was in n.e. Albuquerque Dec. 10 (WH). A Hammond's Flycatcher was reported at Percha Dam Jan. 28 (JD, BZ), while a likely Dusky/Hammond's was near Pleasanton Feb. 13 & 23 (M. Renfro, SW). Northerly Black Phoebes were one to two at Cochiti Dam Jan. 7–Feb. 15 (WH *et al.*). Late were one to two Tree Swallows at L. McMillan Jan. 4 and two Barn Swallows at Caballo Dam Dec. 8 (WH); while possible early migrants were about 15 Tree Swallows at Percha Dam Jan. 19 (DM) and two N. Rough-wingeds at Caballo Dam Feb. 19 (JH).

CORVIDS THROUGH THRUSHES — Dispersing Steller's Jays included one at Bernalillo Feb. 25 (WH) and one to three at White Sands Missile Range Jan. 29 and Feb. 12 (JM). The remnants of last autumn's Blue Jay invasion included at least three in Albuquerque through Feb. 7 (C. Wellborn *et al.*) and one at Silver City Dec. 27–Feb. 27 (RF *et al.*). Pinyon Jays were irregular in the Santa Fe area (JH *et al.*), while notable numbers were present in the Zuni Mts. (AM *et al.*) and southward to the Silver City region (v.o.). Highly unusual were about 35 **American Crows** near Galeana Feb. 7, in an area where about 25 had been seen Feb. 14, 1986 (RD *et al.*); this species had not been reported before in w. Chihuahua. At least four Am. Crows were in the Ribera-Villanueva area Jan. 1 (JH, JV), and a Chihuahuan Raven was calling at Silver City Jan. 30 (JH). Three Bridled Titmice were at Percha Dam Dec. 16–18 and Jan. 28 (JD, BZ). Fifteen-plus Bushtits were in n.e. Albuquerque Jan. 23 (WH).

High counts were of five House Wrens at Percha Dam Dec. 18 and six near Mesilla Jan. 4 (BZ). The only Winter Wrens reported were one to two at Zuni Dec. 17 & 21 (JT). An Am. Dipper was at Cochiti Dam Jan. 25 and Feb. 8 (PI, CR). Golden-crowned Kinglets continued to be evident following the autumn influx—including on the CBCs at Albuquerque (HS *et al.*) and Peloncillo Mts. (RS *et al.*). Other reports included several in the foothills of the Sandia Mts., Jan. 9–Feb. 28 (WH), two at Silver City Dec. 15–19 (M. Moseley), and three at L. McMillan Jan. 4 (WH). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was near Tularosa Jan. 3 (NH *et al.*), and two *Polioptila* sp. were at Percha Dam Feb. 16 (CR).

The only westerly reports of E. Bluebirds were at Percha Dam, with up to 12 Dec. 16–Jan. 28 (BZ *et al.*). Western and Mountain bluebirds appeared in numbers outside their breeding ranges, with reports from the Peloncillo Mts. (RS *et al.*) e. to Roswell (KW) and the Tularosa Basin (RJ *et al.*). Both species were common in the Silver City area (RF *et al.*) and reasonably so in the Rio Grande Valley area to Dona Ana (BZ *et al.*). Notable reports of Westerns included 70 near Rodeo Dec. 27 (RS *et al.*) and five w. of the Florida Mts., Feb. 19–20 (JH *et al.*), plus up to six near Alameda Dec. 30–Jan. 3 (J. Phillips). Mountain Bluebird reports included 124 birds near Rodeo Dec. 27 (RS *et al.*), large flocks at Las Cruces Feb. 27 (LS), and a few near Ascencion, Chih., Feb. 7 (WB, RD). (The species was present and winters regularly in the Babicora area of Chihuahua [RD].) By contrast, both species were rare in the Zuni Mts., apparently due to the scarcity of juniper "berries" (AM *et al.*).

Townsend's Solitaires in areas where infrequent were one to two at Clayton Jan. 26 (WC), n.e. Albuquerque Dec. 15 & 22 and Feb. 26 (WH), and Las Cruces all season (LS), plus 10 at Percha Dam Feb. 7 (PS, RT). American Robins were much in evidence in several areas of the state, including near Farmington (AN *et al.*), Clayton and vicinity (WC *et al.*), Albuquerque (HS *et al.*), Silver City (RF *et al.*) to the lower Rio Grande Valley (BZ *et al.*), the Peloncillo Mts. (RS *et al.*), and near Alamogordo (RJ *et al.*). By contrast, numbers were lower than usual in the Santa Fe area (JH *et al.*).

MIMIDS THROUGH EMBERIZINE FINCHES — West-erly Brown Thrashers were singles at Zuni Dec 17–Jan 16 (JT), Bosque N.W.R., Dec. 26 (HL), and Percha Dam Feb. 16 (CR). Notable were two Crissal Thrashers in Santa Fe Dec. 21 (B Moffett *et al.*) & 25+ (ph. A. & T. Stampfer); these and a belatedly-reported bird there in winter 1985–1986 provided the first local reports. Cedar Waxwings were rather widespread in the w. two-thirds of the state (v.o.), with the largest numbers in the Farmington area (AN *et al.*). Acceptable reports of N. Shrikes were of two in the Zuni Mts. in December (JT *et al.*), plus a belated report of one at Bosque N.W.R., Nov. 26 (S. Hoffman). Notable reports were of a Solitary Vireo at Percha Dam Dec. 16 (JD, BZ), an Orange-crowned Warbler for the 3rd consecutive winter at Farmington Dec. 19–Feb. 28 (H. H. Lesperance), three Orange-crowns at Mesilla Park Jan. 4 (BZ *et al.*), a **Northern Waterthrush** at Albuquerque Jan. 4 (HS), and a Com. Yellowthroat near Mesilla Jan. 4 and later (BZ *et al.*).

Four Abert's Towhees were at San Simon Cienega Feb. 21 (JH), and two were near Rodeo Dec. 27 (RS *et al.*). Single reddish Fox Sparrows were at Socorro Dec. 15–Feb. 20 (PB, RT), near Mesilla Jan. 4 and later (BZ *et al.*), and at Rattlesnake Springs Jan. 4 (WH). Northerly were one to two Lincoln's Sparrows on the CBCs at Zuni (JT *et al.*) and Bluewater L. (AM *et al.*). Notable Swamp Sparrows were two at Zuni Dec. 21 & 31 (JT *et al.*) and one at Pleasanton Feb. 22 (SW); at least 12 were present in the Rio Grande Valley of *Dona Ana* in the period (BZ *et al.*). The only Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Percha Dam Dec. 18 (BZ). By contrast, at least 17 Harris' Sparrows were recorded—all in the Rio Grande Valley or vicinity and westward; the high count was an amazing seven at Farmington Dec. 20 (AN *et al.*). Two Yellow-eyed Juncos were in the Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 27 (RS *et al.*), where rare at best. Up to 35 McCown's Longspurs were w. of Magdalena from early December to Feb. 8, along with a **Lapland Longspur** Jan. 23 (ph. HL). One to two McCown's were in s. *Dona Ana* Dec. 1–Feb. 11 (ph. BZ).

ICTERIDS, CARDUELINE FINCHES — Yellow-headed Blackbirds n. of the usual winter range were one at Las Vegas Jan. 1 (JH, JV) and nine at Zuni Feb. 28 (DC). The only records of Rusty Blackbirds were of three at Las Vegas Jan. 1 and one there Jan. 24 (JH *et al.*). Northerly were six Great-tailed Grackles at Las Vegas Jan. 1 (JH, JV), two at Zuni Dec. 21 (JT *et al.*)

and eight there Jan 10 and Feb 28 (DC), and two on the Blue-water CBC (AM *et al.*) Also notable were up to 50 Dec 20 and Jan. 9 at Silver City (RF *et al.*), where the species now appears to be a local resident. North of the usual winter range were 45 Brown-headed Cowbirds at Pena Blanca, *Sandoval*, Jan 7 (WH), eight on the Bluewater Lake CBC (AM *et al.*), and 49 near Cliff Jan. 3 (RF *et al.*).

Unusual were eight "Brown-capped" Rosy Finches visiting a feeder in Farmington Feb. 26–28, a period of heavy snowfall (AN). Cassin's Finches were most frequently reported in December to early January and again in late February, with most records in or near montane and foothill areas (v.o.). The southernmost reports were of one near Cliff Jan. 3 and 47 at Silver City Dec. 20 (RF *et al.*). Pine Siskins were also limited to montane and foothill areas, except for being uncommon to abundant in the Farmington area (AN *et al.*), and scarce at Roswell Feb. 2 & 12 (KW). Mainly small numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were evident in Santa Fe through the period, and the species was at least irregularly present in the Zuni Mts. and Albuquerque areas as well. Other reports included 123 at Farmington Dec. 20 (AN *et al.*), several at Bosque N.W.R., Jan 24 (LS), and four at Silver City Dec. 20 (RF *et al.*) and Jan. 31 (JH)

ADDENDUM — The maximum count of Ross' Geese at Bosque N.W.R. was of 5000 Nov. 13, including a blue-phase bird (RD) A **Ruddy Turnstone** was reported and briefly detailed s. of Cliff Nov 4, 1986 (A. & H. Parent). A bird identified as a ♂ **Black-backed Woodpecker** was reported on Sandia Crest, Sandia Mts., July 18, 1986 (H. & J.A. MacKenzie); the description fits this species, which is not known (or suspected) to occur in New Mexico. Regarding Red Crossbill nests, 5 were observed being constructed at Jemez Falls and Redondo Campground, Jemez Mts., June 28–30, 1983 (W Beckman), for the first reported for the state.

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ALASKA REGION

D. D. Gibson, T. G. Tobish, and M. E. Isleib

It was another mild winter in Alaska. There was above-average precipitation (mostly rain) along the Pacific coast, and below-average precipitation (snow) inland. Observers in all parts of the mainland mentioned an uncharacteristic paucity of feeder birds, including Black-capped Chickadees—the visitor at many feeders, but no hard numbers were available for comparison. It was, as usual for birdlife, an uneventful winter away from the North Pacific coast.

LOONS TO HERONS — Three Arctic/Pacific loons were seen at Adak I., c. Aleutian Is., on the CBC held Dec. 31, one Feb. 18 (GTM, PWD, KVR), and four Feb. 23 (GTM, FGD, KVR, PWD). Field separation of these taxa remains a problem. A lone Horned Grebe observed at St. George I., Pribilof Is., Jan. 24 (RLS) furnished an unusual Bering Sea winter record. Five Great Blue Herons seen together at Kodiak in mid-January (*fide* RAM) provided a remarkable count at that peripheral locality. A lone **Cattle Egret** caught alive at Sitka Dec. 18 (KH

ph.) was sent via commercial airline to California a few days later. Known in Alaska only from Southeast and Southcoastal in November–December, this species was recorded first in November 1981 (Gibson and Hogg 1982, *AB* 36:335) and subsequently in November 1984 (*AB* 39:90).

WATERFOWL — Six Whooper Swans at Adak Dec 7 (BMW) furnished the season's only report. That there were 2 reports of single Wood Ducks this season was quite remarkable for a species that had not been reported in the State in 10 years. A wary imm. male was seen at Lake Louise, Kodiak, Dec. 18 (JBA, RAM), but not thereafter, and an ad. male was discovered at Auke Lake, Juneau, Dec. 20 (GVV, JGK). The latter bird, accompanying flocks of Mallards, Canada Geese, and other waterfowl, was present in that area through February (MEI *et al.*). Whether or not these Wood Ducks were escapees is problematic and difficult to assess. The Kodiak bird was a long way from any *bona fide* natural occurrence of this species (and two Wood Ducks escaped from a Kodiak aviculturist "4 or 5 years ago" and disappeared [*fide* RAM]). Alaska's only (two) accepted records of the species are from Southeast Alaska

The species breeds (annually? abundance?) but does not winter (see Palmer 1976, *Handbook of N. American Birds* 3:261–263, and CBCs) as close to us as Graham I., Queen Charlotte Is., British Columbia.

Maximum count of Eur. Wigeon this season was of 10 birds at Adak Feb. 16 (CFZ); a male at Womens Bay Jan. 27–Feb. 17+ provided one of few winter records for the Kodiak archipelago (RAM), and a male wintered with other waterfowl on the Petersburg waterfront for the 2nd consecutive year (PW). Heating-plant cooling ponds at Ft. Wainwright, Fairbanks, provided overwintering records of seven Mallards, a ♂ Am. Wigeon, a ♀ Greater Scaup, a ♀ Lesser Scaup, and two Buffleheads (JK). All but the Mallards were most unusual in winter in the Interior, for lack of annually-available habitat. American Wigeon were also unusual in winter at Anchorage (one male through Jan. 30, RLS) and at Seward (a pair through Mar. 1, RLS et al.). Northern Shoveler is scarce in winter anywhere on the Alaska Pacific coast. It was seen in small numbers at Adak (two Feb. 16 & 21—CFZ, TRE) and Kodiak (one at Kalsin Bay Dec. 17–Jan. 1—RLS, RAM et al.).

Interesting winter diver records came from Kodiak, where Canvasbacks (at least one on Pasagshak R., Dec. 2–Jan. 1—JM, DWS), Redheads (two males through Mar. 1—RAM, DWS), and a Ring-necked Duck (female, Buskin Lake, Dec. 26–Jan. 3—RAM, JBA) were located. Up to six Canvasbacks were present at Adak during February (CFZ et al.). A flock of 12 Tufted Ducks at Adak Feb. 24 (FGD, GTM, CFZ, MGZ) furnished the maximum count this season; an ad. male was seen at Narrow Cape, Kodiak, Jan. 1 (RAM). A ♀ Black Scoter at St. George I., Jan. 19 & 22 and a pair of Surf Scoters there Jan. 26 (RLS) numbered among few Pribilof records of these species at any season.

HAWKS TO GULLS — Observers from Wasilla and Palmer to Anchorage remarked on the above-average numbers of wintering Bald Eagles. High day counts from Anchorage through the close of the period were of five birds (DJO, TGT). A N. Harrier observed at Womens Bay, Kodiak, Jan. 19 (DWM) was of interest; this species is a distinctly scarce winter visitant on Alaska's Pacific coast. Near the s.w. limit of the species' Alaska range, an imm. Golden Eagle was seen at Avatanak I., e. Aleutians, Mar. 1, and an adult at nearby Tigalda I., Mar. 3 (DRH). It is probably not an accident that the Golden Eagle's Aleutian range parallels that of the locally-introduced arctic ground squirrel (*Spermophilus parryii*).

Three Dunlins were seen at Adak Feb. 2, and two Feb. 18 (GTM, KVR, PWD); the species is an irregular winter visitant in the Aleutians. A lone Sanderling observed at St. George I., Jan. 21 (RLS) provided a first winter record for the Pribilofs. This species is a local winter visitant in the Aleutians and on the Alaska Pacific coast to the east. One Bonaparte's Gull still present on the Petersburg waterfront in mid-January (PW) furnished a most unusual winter record anywhere in the Region. A Ring-billed Gull seen at Narrow Cape Jan. 1 (DWS) provided a first Kodiak winter record and one of few ever in that archipelago (RAM). One California Gull was identified with congeners at Swan Lake, Sitka, in late January (MWS), for perhaps Alaska's first midwinter record. A few Thayer's and Glaucous gulls were mixed in with the hundreds of wintering Glaucous-winged Gulls in the Kodiak harbor this season (RAM, JBA). In most winters Black-legged Kittiwakes are absent from Kodiak's inshore waters, although they may be regular at the mouths of large bays around the island. In winter 1986–1987, however, they were seen regularly in small numbers (up to six) inshore and onshore in inner Chiniak Bay and around the town of Kodiak. Increased fish-processing activity at Kodiak may have held these birds there all winter (RAM). A first-winter Red-legged Kittiwake seen at St. George I., Jan. 26 (RLS) may have provided the first winter record in the Bering Sea.

OWLS TO FINCHES — A casual winter visitant in the upper Cook Inlet region, a Snowy Owl was present near treeline w. of Hatcher Pass in early January (RB). This species is evi-



dently now resident at Adak (CFZ), where single birds were seen Dec. 12 (CFZ), on the CBC Dec. 31, and Feb. 1 (RPS). At least two Great Gray Owls were reported in early February between Palmer and Wasilla (RH, DJO), in an area where the species has been annual since 1978. At the very n. end of the species' winter range, single Belted Kingfishers were present in the Matanuska Valley Jan. 8 (DJO), and in Anchorage through Mar. 1 (m.ob.).

Steller's Jay numbers reached a new upper Cook Inlet high count when they peaked at 30 birds on the Anchorage CBC, Dec. 20. Two Steller's Jays appeared in the Eagle River valley, n. of Anchorage, in late February. Observers' impressions were that Black-capped Chickadees were less numerous at feeders than in previous winters. Observers from Palmer and Anchorage, for example, commented on an apparent reduction of chickadee numbers this season, especially in late winter after snow and normal cold should have prompted more feeder activity than earlier. The total of 715 Black-capped on the Anchorage CBC was less than the 1984 or 1985 counts, but was at or slightly above the 20+-year average there. In SE Alaska, Golden-crowned Kinglets were among a very few passerine species reported in above-normal abundance. Kinglet populations were way down in SC Alaska; no kinglets were recorded on the Anchorage CBC in 1986. Post-CBC Ruby-crowned Kinglets were reported from Anchorage (one through Jan. 14—LW) and Kodiak (up to eight birds into early January—RAM, JBA).

Lingering Am. Robins remained into early January at Anchorage (six-plus—TGT), Eagle River (one Dec. 16—MF), Hope (two Dec. 6—DMT), Kodiak I. (one each Jan. 1 & 3—RAM), and Fairbanks (at least one overwintered, fide JMW). Despite a mild winter with little snow cover in SE, passerine numbers there were low, with, for example, very few robins and Varied Thrushes. Single Varied Thrushes in south and downtown Anchorage on Jan. 3 (TN) and Feb. 9 (RF), respectively, numbered among few winter records there. Bohemian Waxwing flocks, usually in evidence in SE in early winter, were almost totally absent this season: a single bird at Petersburg Jan. 13 (PW) furnished the only report. European Starling numbers were remarkable at Kodiak this winter. The species was found at scattered locations in the vicinity of the town of Kodiak,

and in flocks of up to 19 birds (Dec 11), total number present was estimated at 30 (RAM et al.).

A flock of 20 Lapland Longspurs at Adak, where seen with 40+ Snow Buntings Feb. 1 (CFZ), was of interest; the species is an irregular winter visitant anywhere on Alaska's Pacific coast. A wintering flock of Red-winged Blackbirds at Juneau was joined by approximately 20 additional birds at the close of the period (MEI). The ♂ **Brewer's Blackbird** at Sitka [see Autumn report] remained all winter and by mid-February was singing (MWS, KH, MEI ph.). Up to three ♀ **Purple Finches** began visiting a Ketchikan feeder in late January; by the close of the period the group had grown to four females and a male (REW). Both crossbill species were widespread and fairly common in SE Alaska, but not elsewhere in the Region. White-winged outnumbered Reds in n. portions of SE. Redpolls were not reported in SE this period, but large flocks of Pine Siskins began moving in during early December; breaking into nu-

merous small flocks by the close of the period, siskins became very common and widespread in SE. Observers beyond SE were unanimous on the scarcity of redpolls, White-winged Crossbills, and siskins.

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NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

Bill Tweit and Philip W. Mattocks, Jr.

It was a very mild, dry winter with no prolonged cold snaps, and many lowland areas received no snow at all. As a result, there were good numbers of many lingering species, and very few of the typical northern wanderers. Surprising and exciting, however, were the several far northern, Siberian species present—Steller's Eider, Slaty-backed Gull, Ross' Gull, and Rustic Bunting.

ABBREVIATIONS — Q.C.I. = Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C.; S.J.C.R. = south jetty of the Columbia River, Ore.; V.I. = Vancouver Island, B.C. Place names in italics are counties.

LOONS THROUGH PELICANS — Five reports of Yellow-billed Loons, four from s. British Columbia and one from the Q.C.I., were well below the average number of reports for this species. Two sightings of **Clark's Grebes** from the Vancouver, B.C., area, at Boundary Bay and near Tsawassen (†BK, †GA, †JoAnne MacKenzie) Dec. 7 & 8, may have involved the same individual. This represented only the 2nd provincial record. Other sightings in the Region included singles at Ocean Shores, Wash., Jan. 16 & 20 (G & WH), Forest Grove Sewage Ponds, Ore., Jan. 25 (Linda Weiland, Pat Muller), Reedsport, Ore., Jan. 2 and Port Orford, Ore., Jan. 3 (DF, SH), and Yaquina Bay, Ore., Feb. 7 (Steve Jagers). This was the largest number of winter records yet for Clark's. There are still no locations in the Region where they are known to occur regularly. A Black-footed Albatross seen 3 mi off Newport, Ore., Jan. 10 (Marvin Penberton, fide HN) furnished one of only three tubenose sightings this winter, other than CBC records. One oiled **Mottled Petrel** was found dead on the beach near Waldport, Ore., Dec. 15 (RL, fide DFa) for the first winter Regional record since 1978. The other sightings were of live Short-tailed Shearwaters: five at Masset, Q.C.I., Dec. 21 (PH, Charles Bellis) and one Jan. 24 at Florence, Ore. (SH). In contrast to the last several warm winters, Brown Pelicans did not linger in the Region. There was only one report from s. Oregon.

EGRETS THROUGH DUCKS — After an excellent fall movement, many Great Egrets wintered in the Region. At least five in Washington was the highest number of wintering individuals ever for that state. Two Green-backed Herons were reported from Vancouver, B.C. (†Chris Harris, †John Reynolds, fide DK). They are rare in winter that far north. There were no Cattle Egret reports this season, even though there was a



fairly large fall movement. Black-crowned Night-Herons may be far more common winterers here than is currently thought. It is possible that every major estuary from the Fraser R. south may have a roost. Four night-herons wintered at Reifel I., Delta, B.C. (JJ) in the Fraser delta. Up to 14 were noted at a roost on the Skagit estuary, Wash. (Curt Howard et al.). Another newly-discovered roost on Tillamook Bay, Ore., had 18 birds Dec. 20 (JG), and 13 used a North Portland, Ore., roost (JG). The ibis (*Plegadis* sp.) found this fall at Port Hardy, V.I., was reported until mid-March (fide DK).

Trumpeter Swans now winter regularly in small numbers in n. Oregon. One flock was noted in Polk (fide BB) and another in Lane (TM). Three wintered in Jackson Bottoms near Hills-

boro, Washington (JE, Verda Teale) and three were at Meares L., Tillamook, Jan. 21 (HN). Four reports of Emperor Geese were more than usual. Two were in Oregon, one in the Willamette Valley all winter (fide BB) and the other on the Umpqua R. estuary Dec. 10 (Merle Archie). In Washington, one was in Seattle all winter (m.ob., †EH) and the one found at Post Office L., Clark, this fall was apparently shot nearby by a hunter Dec. 27 (fide HN). Seventeen 'Aleutian' Canada Geese found dead on the beach at Pacific City, Tillamook, Ore., Dec. 1 (fide DfA) appeared to have drowned in the surf. Other 'Aleutian' sightings included one at Ankeney N.W.R., Ore., Dec. 26 with a yellow leg band (Jon Anderson), another with a blue leg band Jan. 13, and 11 at Salmon River, Ore., Jan. 21 (RL). Up to 20 collared 'Dusky' Canada Geese were noted at 2 locations in the Columbia R. bottomlands, Wash. (IB), where most of the world population of this subspecies winters, although eight 'Duskies' with red neck bands wintered in Victoria, V.I. (BG, Brent Diakow). 'Cackling' Canada Geese were unusually common in the Willamette Valley this winter (HN).

We received 6 reports of 'Eurasian' Green-winged Teal, from Vancouver, B.C., south to Florence, Ore., about average for this race. Huge numbers of N. Pintail were noted during December and January in c. Washington, Ore. (DI). Cinnamon Teal, rare winterers, were found at 2 locations in the Region. One male and three females were noted at Reifel I., B.C. (JJ), and a pair was in the Columbia R., Wash., bottomlands (IB). The first migrant ♂ Cinnamons were found in mid-February. One ♀ Tufted Duck wintered at Stanley Park, Vancouver (BK), and a first-year ♂ Tufted wintered at Green L., Seattle (m.ob.). Another first-year male was at the Monmouth Sedimentation Ponds, Polk, Ore., Jan. 12-31 (†RG et al.). Three individuals is about normal for a winter here. The **Steller's Eider** found last fall at Port Townsend, Wash., was reported through Feb. 8 (m ob., CP). The 1200 Oldsquaw on Bellingham Bay, Wash., Feb. 20 (TW) and 400 on Manzanita Bay, Kitsap, Wash., Feb. 28 (GG) were very large numbers for anywhere in the Region. A Black Scoter flock of 200+ at Lincoln City, Ore., Jan. 24 (DI) was also extraordinarily large in size. Barrow's Goldeneyes have been tagged with nasal disks and nasal saddles during the nesting season in interior British Columbia. One with a blue-green nose clip was noted Jan. 18 in Tacoma, Wash. (CP). A Com. Goldeneye with a nasal saddle, also tagged by the Canadian Wildlife Service, was noted at Shilshole Marina, Seattle, Jan. 18 (Ward Beecher). Buffleheads were thought to be in well above usual numbers in w. Oregon this winter (HN).

VULTURES TO FALCONS — Two Turkey Vultures Feb. 18 over Saanich Inlet, V.I. (Barbara Begg), either were wintering birds or were about a month earlier than usual for this area. Three winter records of Turkey Vultures came from Oregon: one in Linn Dec. 31 (fide M & EE) and two in Polk Jan. 14 (PO). The first certain migrants were reported, as usual, in late February. Winter Osprey sightings included one Jan. 29 in North Saanich, V.I. (Jerry & Gladys Anderson), one Dec. 20 near Eugene (PS, fide SH), and one Feb. 4 in Linn, Ore. (Ray Valburg, fide M & EE). Record numbers of wintering Black-shouldered Kites were reported from s.w. Washington. There were five near Raymond (BT), two near Tokeland (JB), three s. of Toledo, Lewis (Arden Hagen), and one at the White-tailed Deer N.W.R., Wahkiakum (N. Larson). The bird seen Feb. 6 at Nisqually N W R. (Jennifer Adams) was the farthest north. Kites were reported from at least 14 locations in w. Oregon. Most individuals were in the Rogue R. valley (MM), but fair numbers were found in the Willamette Valley and good numbers were on the coast. Bald Eagles appear annually along the lower Cowlitz R., Wash., in association with the late-winter smelt run. This year 51 were counted along the lower 10 mi of the river during late February (fide IB), many more than normal. Northern Harriers were quite scarce in parts of w. Washington and throughout Oregon (BT, G & WH, DF).

The number of Sharp-shinned Hawk reports was average or above in n.w. Washington (D & SS, TW) and w. Oregon (DI). Cooper's Hawk sightings in Victoria were about half those of

last winter (BW). There were 4 sightings of N Goshawk in Washington, 6 in Oregon, and none from British Columbia. Two "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawks were reported, both from Oregon (BO, ph., M & EE). Rough-legged Hawk numbers were low in w. Oregon (DF, BO, JG, DI) and in s.w. Washington, where one observer reported only one-fourth as many as usual (G & WH). A minimum of 47 Peregrine Falcons was reported from throughout the Region, including four thought to be *F. p. tundrius*. Two of these were from the Victoria area (BW), one from Washington (BT), and one from Oregon (TM). Recent band recoveries indicate *tundrius* does occur in the Region (Steve Herman). However, since their status here is still unclear and there is wide variation in Peregrine plumages, observers should include notes on facial pattern with any reports of *tundrius*-type birds. There were reports of eight Gyrfalcons from the Region, the majority from n.w. Washington. This was slightly below recent winters' totals.

GROUSE TO ALCIDS — A White-tailed Ptarmigan at 3500' on the undamaged side of Mount St. Helens, Wash., Jan. 4 indicates that some survived the explosion (Mark Chilcote, Steve Bachhuber). Two Sandhill Cranes wintered at Delta, B.C (WW et al.), far n. of their regular wintering area on Sauvie I., Ore., where a fair-sized flock wintered (HN et al.). A *fulva* Lesser Golden-Plover with a broken leg was at the Forest Grove Sewage Ponds, Washington, Ore. (DI, †Donna Lusthoff) Jan 10-11. There were few prior winter records from the Region. There were 23 Semipalmated Plovers, an above-average number, reported from the Washington coast (JB, BT). Above-normal numbers were also in the area of Yaquina Bay, Ore. (DFa), and 40 were at Bandon, Ore., Feb. 23 (HN).

Only a handful of Greater Yellowlegs reports came from Washington, despite the mild winter. Willets wintered in their usual locations: Yaquina Bay (HN), Willapa Bay (G & WH), and one at Port Angeles (D & SS). There were 2 reports of Whimbrels in the Victoria area, where they are quite rare in winter. One was at Esquimalt Lagoon Dec. 17 (J & RS), and the other in Saanich Jan. 21 and Feb. 17 (J & RS). Farther s., individuals often winter at a few consistent locations; one at Port Angeles (D & SS) and another at Tokeland (PM) this season were examples. The composition of the Marbled Godwit/Long-billed Curlew flock of 140+ birds wintering at Tokeland, Willapa Bay, was 75% godwits and 25% curlews (PM, BT). The only other report from the Region of either species was of a curlew at Ocean Shores Dec. 20 and Jan. 16 (G & WH) for the first winter record there.

None of the 5 Washington sightings of Ruddy Turnstones included details. This is a rare wintering bird that should be documented. Two unusually large flocks of Surfbirds were of 40 Dec. 7 at Tongue Point, Clallam, Wash. (D & SS) and 120 Jan. 18 n. of Florence, Ore. (TM). There were 3 reports of Red Knots, 2 from Oregon and one from Washington, none with details. Well-documented winter records of Red Knots for this Region are still very scarce. We received only 3 reports of W. Sandpipers from s. British Columbia and three from Washington. As with Greater Yellowlegs and Long-billed Dowitchers, it has been learned that Westerns winter here regularly, but in varying numbers. Tracking annual variation in easily-surveyed wintering populations, such as those of W. Sandpipers, is one of the basic functions of this report. We hope that contributors will continue to record numbers of these shorebirds, even though they have lost some of their "pizzazz" as more has been learned about them. There were 4 Least Sandpiper reports in Washington, all from the outer coast (BT, G & WH). They were unreported elsewhere. Up to 35 Long-billed Dowitchers were reported from the Vancouver, B.C., area (v.o., fide DK), where they are sporadic winterers, indicating a good year there. However, there were only 2 reports from Washington, where they are now regarded as regular winterers. The usual few Red Phalarope sightings were of 14 seen Dec. 3 and one Dec. 21 at the S.J.C.R. (HN).

An ad. **Slaty-backed Gull** found Dec. 31 at the Elwha R

mouth, Clallam, Wash. (†Jsk) stayed to Jan. 4 (†DP, †EH, m.ob.) at least. Plumage differences indicated that this was a different individual than the bird that appeared this fall at Port Hardy, V.I. This was the southernmost record on the eastern Pacific coast, the first s. of British Columbia, and the 3rd Regional record. Additionally, a dark-backed, pink-legged gull of undetermined species was observed at the Hartland Landfill, Highland District, V.I., Feb. 18 (†BW, Ken Morgan). Three Glaucous Gull reports from the Vancouver area (fide DK), three from the Victoria area (fide DFr), and five in Washington were average numbers for those areas. However, 14+ reports in Oregon (fide HN) represented a big winter for them there. Three Oregon and two Washington records for Black-legged Kittiwake were somewhat below average. A **Ross' Gull** at Yaquina Bay, Lincoln, Ore., was discovered by HN Feb. 18, coincident with the first N movements of Bonaparte's Gulls. It was seen through March 2 (fide HN). This also was the southernmost record for the e. Pacific, and the first s. of Canada. The aesthetic quality of the photographs and sketches of this bird was exceptional.



Ross' Gull at Yaquina Bay, Ore., Feb. 21, 1987. Photo/Owen Schmidt.

Flocks of 400 Ancient Murrelets off Ten-mile Point, V.I., Dec. 6 (BG), 300 off Central Saanich Dec. 6 (J & RS), and 200 past Point Wilson Dec. 7 (DBe) indicated a major movement in the e. Strait of Juan de Fuca at that time. Following this, smaller numbers were in Admiralty Inlet through January and there were a few Oregon reports.

DOVES TO KINGBIRDS — A **White-winged Dove** seen in flight Dec. 20 at Wilson Creek meadows near Tillamook provided the 3rd record for Oregon (†JG, DBa, JKe), each of which has been during fall and early winter. Of the amazing 48 **W. Screech-Owls** found Dec. 27 on the Florence, Ore., CBC, 43 were called out by one fast-moving team working a 9-mi stretch along the N. Fork Siuslaw R. (DF, SH, PP, CB, Matt Hunter). How many are out there in a whole count circle? The **Snowy Owl** tally on the CBC at Ladner, B.C., is a useful index to annual abundance in the Region. This season five were counted there, vs. five last year and a record high 40 the year before. Six **Snowies** were spread through w. Washington, with two at Leadbetter Pt. (JB) the farthest south. One of the two on the Skagit flats endured the unseasonal heat until Feb. 15 (BT) for the latest sighting this season. Two **Burrowing Owls** wintered as usual at the Eugene, Ore., airport (TM). Wintering numbers of this species in the Rogue R. valley of s. Oregon have declined steadily for several years (MM). The only report there this season was of a window-killed bird during January (Roger Schnoes). A **Great Gray Owl** found Dec. 26 e. of Willow Lake, near Ashland (Ed Abbott, fide MM) was near the established population in the s. Oregon Cascades. A **Long-eared Owl** seen Dec. 27 in Discovery Park, Seattle, furnished the only report this season of this scarce wintering species (†David Reusser,

Don Varekamp). **Short-eared Owl** numbers in the Vancouver, B.C., area were the lowest in many years (fide DK), and the species was absent or in very low numbers at reporting localities throughout w. Washington and Oregon. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** began calling somewhat earlier than usual in mid-January and early February at scattered lowland sites—Bainbridge I., Vashon I., and Sequim, Wash., and Rickreall, near Salem, and Mt. Pigsah in Eugene, Ore.

A bird thought to be an imm. ♂ **Rufous Hummingbird** Dec. 9 at a feeder in Corvallis, Ore., was exceptionally late (Don & Elizabeth MacDonald, fide M & EE). Apparently a different bird was also in Corvallis for the CBC. Three ♂ **Selasphorus** hummingbirds, believed to be **Rufous**, were found at Brookings, s.w. Oregon, on the early dates of Jan. 15 & 27 (AB, Gary Lester). Otherwise the first arrivals reported were Feb. 19 in Yachats, Ore. (Jim & Janice Gerdemann, fide DFa) and Feb. 25 on Vashon I., Wash. (PM). The first ♂ **Allen's Hummingbird** was noted on schedule Feb. 22 at Azalea Park, Brookings (RG). A **White-headed Woodpecker** wandered W of its usual range to Takilma, Josephine, Ore., Dec. 9 (Romain Cooper, fide MM). The **Black Phoebe** found on the Eugene, Ore., CBC was also seen Jan. 10 & 18 (TM). **Single Say's Phoebes** were also farther n. than usual at Salem Dec. 27 (RG) and Finley N.W.R., Jan. 7 (Karen Raferty, fide M & EE). Another **Tropical Kingbird** of the annual late fall movement was noted Dec. 7 near Harbor, Curry, Ore. (AB et al.).

SWALLOWS TO THRASHERS — A few **Tree Swallows** had returned early to Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark, Wash., by Jan. 23 (Brad Waggoner). One was in the Medford area on the CBC Dec. 27 and four were there Jan. 24 (Otis Swisher). Then Feb. 10 about 100 appeared near Stayton, Marion, Ore. (Platt Davis, fide M & EE), and five were at Reifel I., Delta (Roy Phillips, JJ) for the earliest-ever arrival date for the Vancouver, B.C., area. Widespread arrival of the first few **Violet-green Swallows** was noted Feb. 14–18. A very late **Barn Swallow** lingered at Tillamook, Ore., until Dec. 20 (JJ, ph., OS) and a very early one was seen Feb. 12 at Grant's Pass, Ore. (M & EE).

Many more **Steller's Jays** than usual were in the Bellingham, Wash., area this season (TW). Two **Blue Jays** wintered in Chilliwack, B.C. (Jim & Linda Patterson). A **Scrub Jay** wandered N to Tacoma, Wash., Dec. 1–6 (George Aulback, fide TB). Another **Clark's Nutcracker** from the fall flight was well described from just w. of Salem, Ore., Dec. 3 (†PO). The **Mountain Chickadees** from last fall's invasion remained in the Vancouver, B.C., area and throughout w. Washington. Reports were widespread also in w. Oregon but were considered to be in about normal numbers. A new high count of 1223 **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** was set on the Victoria, V.I., CBC. Likewise there were high counts nearby of 777 on Salt Spring I., 486 at Sooke, V.I., and 472 at Bellingham, Wash. The **Chestnut-backed** is the predominant chickadee on islands in n. Puget Sound. Only 72 were counted in Vancouver, B.C., and 156 in Seattle, nearby mainland censuses with high observer hours. A **White-breasted Nuthatch** was observed almost daily near a feeder in Saanich (Betty Pellow, m.ob.) for the 2nd consecutive year that one has wintered on southern V.I.

A female or imm. **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was found Dec. 6–Jan. 30 on Foster's I., Seattle, for the 3rd record for Washington (†DP, Netta Smith, m.ob.). Another **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was also much farther n. than usual in Medford, Ore., Dec. 27 (fide MM). Large-scale movement of thousands of **Am. Robins** was noted Feb. 1 & 2 in Ashland, Ore. (MM). Five scattered **Townsend's Solitaires** were reported, not including CBC sightings, for about a normal number. The five **N. Mockingbirds** found: near Siletz, Lincoln, and in Salem, Ore. (BB), at the mouth of the Hump Tulips R., **Grays Harbor** (G & WH, m.ob.), and in Bellingham, Wash. (TW), and in W. Vancouver, B.C. (†Allen Poynter, m.ob.), with four of these spending the winter at these sites, was also about a normal number for recent years. A **Sage Thrasher** seen Dec. 6 along the Hylebos waterway in Tacoma furnished the 5th record for w. Washington, and the first outside of late April–early May (†Bob Ramsey).

WAXWINGS TO WARBLERS — Flocks of 100+ Bohemian Waxwings were noted in Ashland and at nearby Roxy Anne Butte during January (Bruce Stewart, Joe Shelton). Seventy were seen at the Toketee R.S., e. of Roseburg, Jan. 29 (DF). Smaller groups were noted at other locales in the interior of s. Oregon during January-February, presumably all having moved W from the Klamath Basin. Single Bohemians were seen to the n. in Florence (SH, DI), near Corvallis (JKr), and on the Nisqually N.W.R., Wash. (GW). Several CBCs in s.w. British Columbia reported normal numbers for that area. A Loggerhead Shrike noted Dec. 20 at Rain River Reserve near Tillamook provided one of very few records for w. Oregon (†JG, DBa, JKe).

Despite the warmer winter, Orange-crowned Warblers were not found in larger-than-usual numbers. There were four sightings in Washington and three on V.I. However, one was much farther n. than usual to Queen Charlotte City, Q.C.I., Dec. 20 (Ruth Wigmore). Certainly the outstanding warbler find of the season was the **Lucy's Warbler** found at Florence, Ore., Dec. 27 (Al Prigge, Norm Barrett, CB) and seen by many through Jan. 25 (†DF, †SH, ph. OS). This first state record required a flight directly opposite the species' normal migratory path, and is difficult to ascribe to a warmer winter than usual. An imm. Nashville Warbler was found the next day in the same area (AC, m.ob.) and also stayed to at least Jan. 18 (JG). Two other Nashville Warblers, scarce wintering birds here, were noted Jan. 11 near the Nehalem, Ore., sewage ponds (†Jack Corbett) and Jan. 15 in Brookings (AB). In addition to the record high 25 Townsend's Warblers counted on the Seattle CBC, four others were found this season in King and more than usual were seen in Whatcom as well (TW). Single Hermit Warblers possibly wintered along the Oregon coast at Florence Dec. 27 (†JKr, fide DF) and at Cutler City, Lincoln, Jan. 24 (†DI, fide DF). A Palm Warbler did winter at Newport, Ore. (RL, m.ob.) and another found Feb. 8 at Nehalem Meadows, Tillamook, could have also (RG, fide BB). Following the several sightings of N. Waterthrushes last fall others were found Dec. 23-Jan. 7 at Alaksen W.R.A., Delta, B.C. (†BL) and Jan. 4-24 at the Skagit flats W.R.A., Wash. (BT et al.). Each bird was along a wooded creek beside a dike. Seven Com. Yellowthroats can undoubtedly be attributed to the warmer winter. Singles were found Dec. 23-Jan. 22 on Reifel I., B.C. (†BL, JI, Eric MacBean), Dec. 28-Jan. 2 in Victoria for the 2nd winter record for V.I. (Keith Taylor, J & RS), Jan. 3 in Kent (EH) and Jan. 4-17 at the Skagit W.R.A. (BT, TS, FM) for the 3rd and 4th winter records for Washington, Dec. 20 in Eugene (PS, Don Shrouder), Dec. 27-Jan. 3 in Port Orford (Dennis Rogers), and Feb. 10 at Forest Grove, Ore. (PP, DF).

SPARROWS TO FINCHES — American Tree Sparrows appeared to be present in their usual small numbers. Savannah Sparrows definitely wintered in larger numbers than usual. High counts were of 20 near Parrydale, Ore., Dec. 16 (HN), and nine and 16 on the Skagit flats, Wash., Jan. 19 and Feb. 7 (DBe). Single Clay-colored Sparrows were sighted Dec. 27 at Sauvie I., Ore. (†JJ, Rob Fergus) and Jan. 4 at the Forest Grove, Ore., sewage ponds (JE). Three Swamp Sparrows on V.I. (fide DFr), one Dec. 21 on the Musqueam Indian Res., Vancouver, B.C. (†Richard Cannings), and singles in Aberdeen, Wash., Dec. 6-20 (†BT, JSk et al.) and on the Skagit flats Jan. 4 (†BT, TS, FM) were more than usual for this portion of the Region. South of the Columbia R. at least eight Swamp Sparrows were noted, from Tillamook, Eugene, Florence, and Harbor. Good details are in hand for most of these sightings. This is one of those species for which identification is potentially difficult enough that sightings should not be taken for granted, despite their almost regular occurrence. Twelve White-throated Sparrows were noted n. of the Columbia R., with two of these n. to the Q.C.I., Dec. 20-21 (PH, MH). In Oregon, White-throateds were "widely scattered and well reported" (HN) as usual. See *Oregon Birds* 13:91-95, 1987, for distribution maps of the CBC occurrences in Oregon of White-throated and Harris' sparrows and seven other species (AC). Harris' Sparrow numbers continued

their steady increase in the Region. This year's conservative total of about 33 sightings was more than double the average of the last 5 years. (See AB 38:351, 1984, for exactly the same statistic at that time.)

— S.A. —

The media sensation of the season was the winter-plumaged ♂ **Rustic Bunting** found Dec. 15 at the Kent, Wash., sewage ponds (†DBe) for the first state record and only the 2nd record for the lower 48 states. From dawn the next day observers logged in from all across the continent (†EH) and numerous photos were taken (DP, PM, JJ). The bunting spent the season with a flock of the slightly-larger Dark-eyed Junco, as had the bird at River Jordan, V.I., in the winter of 1983-1984. Some slight plumage changes were noted by Feb. 8 (†DBe), but at last report on Mar. 22 the bird had not molted.



Rustic Bunting in a parking lot in Kent, Wash., Dec. 16, 1987. Photo/Dennis Paulson.

A winter-plumaged ♀ **Rusty Blackbird** was found Feb. 14+ on Sauvie I. (†JG et al.; †DI, ph. JG, BO) for only the 3rd record for w. Oregon. In that same flock of blackbirds Feb. 14 there was a ♀ Tricolored Blackbird as well (†JG, Richard Smith, Tim Bickler, JJ, OS), presumably from the recently-discovered breeding colony in nearby Portland. Two other Tricoloreds were noted Dec. 27 in the Medford area (fide MM). An ad. ♂ N. Oriole was present Dec. 1 near Harbor, Curry, Ore. (AB, Steve Summers), and another ♂ Northern was noted Dec. 25 in Portland (Barbara Beale). A first-year ♂ oriole of undetermined species was seen Dec. 24-26 in Keizer, Marion, Ore. (†Tom Anderson, Bill & †Louise Loomis). An almost complete failure of the Douglas Fir cone crop was noted this fall on the Oregon coast (TM). This followed a bumper crop year the previous fall and winter, and paralleled production in the Cascades of s. Washington (Chris Chappell). Correspondingly, Red Crossbills were either not commented on or reported as absent or very few in those areas and the Willamette Valley (HN). Pine Siskins were reported to be in lower numbers than usual in these same areas and in Whatcom, Wash. (TW). Both species appeared to be present in normal numbers on V.I. (v.o., fide DFr).

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Joseph Morlan, Stephen F. Bailey, and
Richard A. Erickson

The winter season continued the dry weather of the late autumn. Even fewer Christmas Bird Count results were available to us than has been the case in recent winters.

ABBREVIATIONS — C.B.R.C. = California Bird Records Committee; C.V. = Central Valley; O.S.P. = Open Space Preserve; S.F. = San Francisco; W.A. = Wildlife Area; ph. = photo on file with the Regional Editors. *Italicized* place names refer to counties. All records from Palomar and Southeast Farallon Island [hereafter F.I.] should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory [hereafter P.R.B.O.]. References to the Gull refer to Golden Gate Audubon Society's publication, whose observations column is currently written by Helen Green. Most such birds were originally reported to Joseph Morlan for the Northern California Rare Bird Alert. Additional help in gathering and organizing records was provided by Kurt F. Campbell.

LOONS THROUGH CORMORANTS — Seven loons of three species occurred from Lexington Res., Santa Clara, to Redwood City, San Mateo, in December (DLSu, m.ob.). Any loon is rare in this area. Five Red-throated Loons away from the coast in Santa Cruz (B. Hargis, DLSu et al.) and one in Sacramento were unexpected. Northbound migrant loons were first noted at Santa Cruz Feb. 17 (DLSu). The inland high count of Horned Grebes was of 72 on Camanche Res., San Joaquin, Jan. 3 (DGY, RA). Red-necked Grebe numbers were very small, with 30 at Tomales Bay, Marin, Feb. 28 (JGE) and five at Monterey Dec. 30 (SFB) representing the only sites with more than two. Only seven individuals were noted at 5 other coastal sites, and two were inside S.F. Bay.

S.A.

The winter distribution of Clark's Grebe is becoming clearer, but contributors should continue to report their counts. As expected, the major concentration is on S.F. Bay. Inland counts are usually small, but this species is so widespread on C.V. and foothill waters that aggregate numbers must be substantial. Up to 20 were identified at Moss Landing this season (DLSu). Elsewhere along the central California coast north to Bodega Harbor, Clark's Grebe is regular in smaller numbers inside bays and harbors, but less so on exposed waters. On the north coast the species remains rare; this season only two reports came from Arcata, and one bird was at Navarro R. estuary, Mendocino, Dec. 29 (RAE). One Clark's Grebe at Tule Lake N.W.R., Feb. 21 was considered an early return (RAE, RE).

At Cordell Bank, Marin, one Laysan Albatross Dec. 2 preceded an astounding 10–15 Dec. 7 [eight in view simultaneously—DLSh], and three were reported Feb. 1 (all *fide* Gull). Another Laysan Albatross was 44 mi s.w. of S.F., Jan. 28 (ph. S.E. Smith). After 350 N. Fulmars were estimated offshore Monterey Dec. 7 (DLSh, *fide* HG), only up to 10 fulmars per day were reported. Only two Pink-footed Shearwaters were reported, fewer than normal. Single Flesh-footed Shearwater sightings were offshore Monterey Dec. 6 (DLSh, *fide* Gull) and Dec. 30 (†SFB). Small numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters slightly outnumbered Sooty Shearwaters from Monterey to Marin. However, from Pt. Saint George, Del Norte, 312 of 515



dark shearwaters Dec. 21 were identified as Short-tailed versus only three as Sooty, and most of those not identified were believed to be Short-tailed (ADB, GSL, NEC). Of 300 dark shearwaters seen there Jan. 10, 100 were called Short-tailed versus no Sooties (ADB). Up to 15 Black-vented Shearwaters were in Monterey Bay during December, and three were there Feb. 1 (DLSh, m.ob.).

As has happened many times in past years, a late winter NW gale blew many Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels into Monterey Bay. February 23 estimates along the Monterey shoreline ranged up to 400 (BW, AB), making this one of the largest such concentrations on record. Simultaneously three were at Santa Cruz (DLSu). After the gale abated the next day, only two remained at Monterey (AB). Four Ashy Storm-Petrels were also blown in to Monterey Feb. 23 (AB).

American White Pelicans have been rare in coastal Monterey in recent years, so 47 flying over the Salinas R. mouth Jan. 21 (DEG) was like times past. Although 550 (75% imm.) Brown Pelicans remained on Ano Nuevo I., San Mateo, Dec. 14 (GJS), this species departed the Region by the month's end. Thereafter only three individuals were reported, Jan. 3–11, Sonoma to Santa Cruz (DLSu, NTC). The 236 Double-crested Cormorants on the Sacramento CBC Dec. 27 more than doubled last year's all-time high (*fide* TDM), and 400 on Modesto Res., Stanislaus, Dec. 6 contrasted with typical counts of 25 (HMR, SLR). The peak of about 600 in the Badger Cr. roost, Sacramento, Feb. 7 (HK, BK) was not exceptional. Single Pelagic Cormorants at Hayward Shoreline Dec. 28 (RJR) and Menlo Park Dec. 30 (DLSu) were rare that far inside S.F. Bay.

HERONS THROUGH WATERFOWL — Monterey's first recorded Little Blue Heron fed among the kelp beds at Pt. Lobos State Reserve Jan. 3–4 (B. & G. Francis, †DR et al.). Cattle Egrets are experiencing a lull in their conquest of the Region. For the 2nd consecutive year they were present in low numbers along the coast, in the Sacramento Valley, and in at least the n. portion of the San Joaquin Valley. White-faced Ibises again wintered in the Sacramento Valley, with flocks of 50–60 each at

Delevan N.W.R. and Colusa N.W.R. Three at Gray Lodge W.A., Dec. 20 (DES) were in Butte where there are still few records (all *fide* BED).

A flock of 27 Tundra Swans over Coyote Pt., Jan. 16 was reported as the largest group ever in San Mateo (PJM). A "Bewick's Swan" was at Terminus, San Joaquin, Jan. 20 (GW). Trumpeter Swans were found in exceptional numbers with three on W. Butte Rd., Sutter, Dec. 30 (†RLR), two at Tule Lake N.W.R., Jan. 18 (†PhR), and two at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Feb. 2 (NEC, RE, MR). One of the latter birds was a female banded and fitted with a numbered green collar as a cygnet at Turnbull N.W.R., Washington, in 1981.

Birders have generated few reports of the large dark form of Greater White-fronted Goose known as "Tule Goose" (race *elgas*). This season, five at Colusa N.W.R., Jan. 25 (RJR), seven at Sacramento N.W.R., and six at Delevan N.W.R. (both Feb. 22—MjL) were all at expected locations in the Sacramento Valley. Another in Carmel Valley, Monterey, Dec. 29—Jan. 25 (ph MJL *et al.*) was on the coast where almost no previous records exist. Wege (1984. Distribution and abundance of Tule Geese in California and southern Oregon. *Wildfowl* 35:14–20.) recently summarized the bird's status in our area, and a popular article on "Tule Geese" by Elgas and Dingle appeared in the Am. Federation for Aviculture *Watchbird* (1986. The Tule Goose . . . solving the mystery. vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 36–41.). Comparative photographs in the latter publication should help give birders the needed confidence to identify this bird.

An albino Snow Goose with all-white wings was seen at Honey Lake W.A., Lassen, Feb. 6 and a partial albino was at Tule Lake N.W.R. the following day (both MJL). An imm. blue morph Snow Goose wintering in Santa Cruz (Dec. 12+; T. Kirk, BLAB, ph. JM, ph. DLSu *et al.*) was only the 2nd to be found on the coast of our Region. Ross' Geese had another strong season on the coast with 20+ reported. One at F.I., Dec. 11 was the island's first. A blue morph Ross' Goose on Empire Tract Feb. 12 (†DGY) provided San Joaquin's first record of this form. Two were at Tule Lake N.W.R., Feb. 2+ (RE, MR, †RAE, †KLH, †GMCC) with two blue morph Snow/Ross' intermediates there as well Feb. 21 (RE, †RAE). There were persistent rumors of an Emperor Goose at Tule Lake N.W.R. this winter but some suspect the dark-necked blue morph Ross' and Ross'/Snow intermediates were actually responsible for the sightings. We received no direct reports of any kind. A Brant was also at Tule Lake N.W.R., Feb. 21 (RAE, RE).

Almost the entire population (ca. 5000) of endangered "Aleutian Canada Geese" (race *leucopareia*) wintered in Stanislaus this year. An outbreak of avian cholera at their favored night roost, the Modesto sewage ponds, was killing up to 100 ducks a day by the end of January and causing considerable concern. A hazing program set up at the ponds kept the geese and other waterfowl away through the remainder of the season (*fide* HMR). The only other report of "Aleutians" was of three at Pt. Reyes Jan. 25 (RS). An nearly complete albino "honker" (race *moffetti*) was at the Modesto ponds for several weeks in late December (†HMR). In lowland Santa Clara, an increase in the number of wintering Canada Geese may be owing to the expanding introduced population centered in Alameda (WGB). The only "Cackler" (race *minima*) reported from the coast was at Nicasio Res., Marin, Jan. 15 (RJR).

A ♂ "Common Teal" on Brack Tract Feb. 14 (†DGY, MJL, JML) was the first of this Eurasian form of Green-winged Teal to be found in San Joaquin. Five others on the coast were more expected. A bird believed to be a Garganey was present in Arcata Jan. 30—Feb. 10 (†M. Peters, †RE, †SWH, †THK, †GSL *et al.*) The bird was reported as a female but the descriptions seemed to best fit an imm. male (*fide* JLD). The bird accompanied migrant Cinnamon Teal but nevertheless occurred a month and a half earlier than any other record of Garganey in North America. The record is somewhat controversial and should be considered tentative until a decision by the C.B.R.C. has been made. Two ♂ Blue-winged Teal at Hollister Jan. 9 were the first ever for San Benito (KVV) and one at the Wood-

land sugar ponds Feb. 27+ provided the first February record for Yolo (BM). The following were all reported as record high counts for these counties: 400+ Cinnamon Teal, 135 Gadwalls, 65 Ring-necked Ducks, and 600 Lesser Scaup at College L., Santa Cruz, Feb. 24 (DLSu), and 650 Ring-necked Ducks at San Felipe L., San Benito, Feb. 8 (KVV). High numbers of ducks concentrated on Tomales Bay, Marin, during herring spawning included 8000+ Greater Scaup Jan. 18, 11,000 Surf Scoters Feb. 28, 4000+ Buffleheads Jan. 18, and 3380 Ruddy Ducks Feb. 28 (JGE).

It was the best winter ever for Tufted Ducks, with eight found. Males were at Inverness Feb. 15 (N. Brinkley, *fide* HG) and Tiburon Jan. 19 (†DAH, †GC), at Mallard Res., Dec. 27—Jan. 10 (Contra Costa's first—†RJR, †JM *et al.*), and San Leandro Bay, Alameda, Jan. 11–12 (D. Leo, †ph. JM). Females were s. of Petaluma Feb. 28 (†J. Anderson), at Larkspur, Marin, Feb. 16 (JCo, *fide* HG), and a returning bird at Golden Gate Park/S.F. Zoo Dec. 19—Feb. 23 (MW, †GMCC, †PG, ph. RS, †DLSu). The only bird away from the immediate S.F. Bay area was a returning male near Grenada, Siskiyou, Feb. 15+ (RE *et al.*). A ♂ hybrid Tufted Duck × scaup sp. near Clements, San Joaquin, Jan. 8 (†DGY) was probably the same bird as present there in January 1984. Greater Scaup were again found inland in exceptional numbers at O'Neill Forebay, Merced, with up to 250 there Feb. 1–15 (MJL, JML).

The ♀ King Eider found at Crescent City Harbor in November was present to at least Dec. 21 (ADB, ph. WEH, †GMCC *et al.*) Harlequin Ducks are casual inside S.F. Bay; a male was s. of Candlestick Pt. in San Mateo Dec. 29 (ASH, *fide* HG). A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye at Eureka Feb. 14—Mar. 23 (M. Morrison, †RAE *et al.*) was only the 2nd found in Humboldt in 14 years. Like the Com. Goldeneye, this species is surprisingly scarce on the n. coast as compared to the rest of the Region. In contrast, 60 Barrow's were again present at the L. Merritt outflow, Alameda, Feb. 7 (JM). A ♂ Red-breasted Merganser on L. Shastina Feb. 27 (RE, MR, SDS) furnished the only inland report.

RAPTORS — This was considered the worst winter ever for most hawk species in Marin (DDeS, P.R.B.O.). However, an imm. N. Goshawk on Pt. Reyes Jan. 14 (†RS) was an exceptional find in that county. Red-shouldered Hawks continue to pioneer new sites in Alameda, Contra Costa, and the Sacramento Valley. Single-day sightings of imm. Broad-winged Hawks were from near Scott's Valley, Santa Cruz, Dec. 21 (BH, DM) and Pacific Grove Jan. 8 (AB, DLSH). A light morph Swainson's Hawk at N. Midway Rd., Alameda, Dec. 7 (†ALE, A.A. Edwards) was the 4th to straggle into December in this Region. Two dark morph Swainson's Hawks at Empire Tract, San Joaquin, Feb. 16 (†DGY, †RAE) beat last year's earliest-ever return by 3 days, but many have returned during late February and early March. "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawks were reported without details from Nicasio, an adult Jan. 4 (RS), and e. of Sacramento N.W.R., Feb. 22 (MJL). The previous 8-year average was 2.6 per year. Average numbers of Ferruginous Hawks appeared, but Rough-legged Hawks were relatively uncommon.

Record numbers of Merlins were found in Santa Cruz, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. The ever-increasing number of sightings of hacked Peregrine Falcons included a pair copulating on a S.F. highrise Feb. 5 (LL, *fide* HG). Ten Prairie Falcons was a very high total for Santa Clara (*fide* WGB).

RAILS, SHOREBIRDS — Yellow Rail was recorded for the 2nd consecutive winter. In Humboldt, one found dead near Ferndale Jan. 2 (*Humboldt State Univ., *fide* GSL) was followed by reports of another at a small pond near Fairhaven Feb. 7 & 17 (D. Leal, *fide* GSL). In Marin, one was seen at Pt. Reyes Dec. 3 (†JGE).

Two Black-bellied Plovers at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Feb.

14 were the earliest ever for Siskiyou (RE, MR). About 40 Lesser Golden-Plovers were reported from the coast, with six wintering at the Modesto sewage ponds (HMR) and one wintering at the Lodi sewage ponds (DGY *et al.*) being inland. The San Joaquin Valley produced another interior winter Snowy Plover record when a male was found at the Los Banos sewage ponds Dec. 26–27 (KFC *et al.*). There are only 3 other such records for the Region. Five Snowies at Pt. Pinole Jan. 31 (RMcN, *fide* HG) were in Contra Costa where the species is equally scarce. Up to five Mountain Plovers straddling the Alameda/San Joaquin line s. of Byron Jan. 8–17 (RJR, †DGY *et al.*) were more significant than might be expected. Vague reference to this species from the last century by Grinnell *et al.* (1918. *Game Birds of California*. Univ. Calif. Press) is the only indication of prior occurrence in the former county, and there are apparently no records for over 20 years in the latter county (*fide* DGY).

Evidence continues to accumulate for the increase of Black-necked Stilts in the Region. Up to six at Gray Lodge W.A., Dec. 6–30 provided the first December records for Butte (BED), one was at the Woodland sewer ponds Dec. 28 (*fide* TDM), and 75 at the Yolo Bypass Jan. 13 were the first ever in January for Yolo (BM). Another stilt at the Bolinas sewage ponds Jan. 24 (DDeS) was very unusual for w. Marin, especially in winter. Two Am. Avocets at Tule Lake N.W.R., Feb 14+ were very early migrants (RE, MR). A Greater Yellowlegs that wintered in Fall R. Valley, Shasta (BY, CY), was unexpected e. of the Cascade/Sierran crest. Two Marbled Godwits at Sacramento N.W.R., Dec. 7 were significant since they are “still rare in the Sacramento Valley in winter, though these were possibly migrants” (BED).

A count of 58 Red Knots on Humboldt Bay at Arcata Feb. 16 (DAH) was high for that n. locale. Two Sanderlings at the Modesto sewage ponds Jan. 6–19 (HMR) were probably the same two as seen there last winter. Another at San Antonio Res., Dec. 12–Jan. 11 (RLR) was considered to furnish the “first truly inland record” for Monterey (*fide* DR). Western Sandpipers are now widely acknowledged as generally rare inland in winter. This season’s total of none along the heavily worked coast of Santa Cruz (DLSu *et al.*) showed how rare the species can be away from specific wintering areas even on the coast. Least Sandpipers are considered casual in winter in the mountain and Great Basin portions of our Region, so 25 at L. Almanor, Plumas, Dec. 28 (HG) and four all season in the Fall R. Valley (BY, CY) were noteworthy. A Rock Sandpiper with other shorebirds on a tidal mudflat at Walker Cr. estuary on Tomales Bay Dec. 20 (†LJP) was conspicuously out of habitat. A Ruff on Brack Tract Feb. 7–17 (†DGY, DC *et al.*) was a first for San Joaquin, and one in the Loleta Bottoms, Humboldt, Jan. 4 (RE *et al.*) provided the first winter record for the n. coast. An albino dowitcher sp. at Alameda Feb. 10 (†AIH) was possibly one of two birds seen on south S.F. Bay the previous May and July. Like W. Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher was unrecorded in Santa Cruz this winter (DLSu *et al.*). Large numbers of Red Phalaropes were present on Monterey Bay at least through January (AB *et al.*).

GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS — The ad. Little Gull inhabited the Stockton sewage ponds throughout the period (DGY, †GMcC), and the other adult at the Lodi sewage ponds remained at least through mid-February (DGY). Heermann’s Gull was unusually abundant in Monterey Bay. High CBC counts were obtained: 350 at Santa Cruz Dec. 21 (highest since 1974—DLSu) and 850 at Monterey Bay Dec. 30 (AS). Beach censuses Jan. 16–19 found 93 in Santa Cruz (DLSu, m.ob.) and 414 in Monterey n. of Pt. Joe (BW, m.ob.). Farther n. only five in San Mateo and two in Marin were noted. Mew Gull was well reported as more widespread and numerous inland, especially in the central C.V. Fifty at Clear Lake S.P., Lake, Feb. 16 were considered exceptional (JRW). California Gull also produced record CBC counts in Monterey Bay: 6678 at Santa Cruz and 4237 at Mon-

terey Bay (AS) The largest coastal concentration of Thayer’s Gulls, 120+ at Moss Landing Dec 1, probably was a record high for Monterey (DR, R.E. Abbey). Conversely, in the S F Bay area, maxima were of only 35–70 (DAH, RJR). At Bethany Res., Alameda, 25 Thayer’s Jan. 8 was the largest number ever reported s. of the Delta (RJR). The Thayer’s Gulls farthest inland were singles at Redding Dec. 27 (KVV) and Modesto sewage ponds Jan. 11 (HMR).

S.A.

A bird believed to be an ad. Iceland Gull of the race *kumlieni* frequented the Arcata sewage oxidation ponds Feb. 6–23 (DaS, †THK, †SFB, †GMcC, †LPL, †RAE, m.ob.) Although some questioned this identification based on the medium gray-brown eye and mantle color nearly the same as a Ring-billed Gull’s, comparison of all ad Iceland Gull specimens in the American Museum of Natural History suggests that this bird was entirely typical of *kumlieni* (SFB). This race normally has a mantle color closer to Ring-billed Gull than to nominate *glaucooides*. There are no accepted records of this species in California, as the C.B.R.C. has just begun reviewing the controversial 1985 Sonoma adult and 1986 San Diego immature.

Examination of about 22,500 W. Gulls (mostly adults) in Santa Cruz during the period revealed 212 showing hybrid characters of Glaucous-winged Gull (DLSu). At least 11 Glaucous-winged Gulls were found in the C.V. from Shasta to Stanislaus. This gull’s apparent increase inland probably reflects observer effort. Interesting descriptions were received of two gulls believed to be Glaucous × Herring Gull hybrids: a first-winter bird at Palo Alto Dec. 26 (†WGB) and a 3rd-winter bird at Nimbus Fish Hatchery, Sacramento, Jan. 25 (†TDM, AM) Observers should be very cautious in identifying such birds, and should be aware that hybrids of large gulls occur in various combinations. One that is seldom identified in our Region is Glaucous-winged × Herring from s. Alaska. Of about 13 credible Glaucous Gulls, none was farther inland than the periphery of S.F. and San Pablo Bays. Both ad. and imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes were present the length of our coast and throughout the period. Peaks of 100 were noted offshore Monterey Jan 17 (PG, L.K. Aldrich) and along the Monterey shoreline during the gale of Feb. 23 (AB).

Late Caspian Terns were detected at Foster City Dec. 18–27 (PJM, DLSu) and at Pajaro R. mouth Jan. 5 (†DLSu). Also unseasonal was one at Arcata Feb. 14–19 (GMcC, GSL). Two Elegant Terns at Seacliff State Beach Dec. 15 (DLSu) were late, but one at Pescadero Beach Feb. 15 (MW, *fide* Gull) was the latest ever for the Region. Wintering Forster’s Terns continue to increase on Humboldt Bay, with a high of 21 counted at Arcata Jan. 18 (RAE).

Six sightings of Xantus’ Murrelet inshore and offshore Monterey Dec. 6 to Jan. 24 included two on the latter date (MJL, AB, DLSh, D. Lemon). Another was at F.I., Jan. 18. One to two Tufted Puffins in Monterey Bay Dec. 6–7 (RST, DLSh, *fide* HG) and three offshore Pillar Pt., San Mateo, Jan. 18 (BGh, *fide* Gull) constituted the most ever reported during the Winter Season

OWLS THROUGH WOODPECKERS — A Spotted Owl heard calling at Bonnymede, Santa Cruz, Dec. 21–Jan. 4 (†DLSu *et al.*) was undoubtedly the same bird first found there last season. The status of this species in the Santa Cruz Mts. remains unclear, as there are very few confirmed records. The Barred Owl first found Nov. 28 at Tule Lake N.W.R. was seen daily through mid-January and sporadically through Feb. 21 (MR, †RAE, ph. J.R. Silliman *et al.*). Another Barred Owl at Howland Hill, Del Norte, Dec. 21 (ADB *et al.*) was undoubtedly the bird first found in March 1982 which has been present continuously



Barred Owl on a daytime roost at Tule Lake N.W.R., Cal., Jan. 31, 1987. Photo/John Silliman.

ever since. A pair of Long-eared Owls copulating at a nest at the Monte Bellow O.S.P., Santa Clara, Feb. 19+ (†PLN) was encouraging, as this species has seriously declined as a breeding bird, and is seldom reported nesting in the Region.

A Com. Poorwill at Palo Alto Dec. 30 (DLSu) was calling during a spell of warm weather with high insect populations (PLN). Warm weather may also have induced a Vaux's Swift to linger at Moss Landing Jan. 1 (†PJM). Costa's Hummingbirds appeared as follows: an imm. male in Moraga Aug. 15–Feb. 6 (†K. Prill) was voice-recorded by L.F. Baptista; an immature in Concord was found injured Feb. 1 (†K. Prill) and later died (*Cal. Academy of Sciences); an ad. male found injured in Redwood City Feb. 10 later died (*Cal. Academy of Sciences); and an imm. male was in Sacramento Jan. 2–Mar. 5 (†HK, †BK). This species is now considered annual in winter. A ♂ Rufous Hummingbird at Tiburon Jan. 1 (†DAH) was probably wintering, but another at Los Altos Feb. 6 (PLN) was believed to be an early migrant. Male Allen's Hummingbirds first arrived in Santa Cruz Jan. 15, a week ahead of average for the last 14 years (DLSu). Single unidentified *Selasphorus* were at Santa Cruz Dec. 14–18 (BLaB, †DLSu) and at Hayward Jan. 8–9 (HLC). The identity of most wintering *Selasphorus* in the Region remains problematical.

Single imm. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at Nicasio Jan. 4–Feb. 21 (RS, †GMcC et al.) and Three Rivers, Tulare, Dec. 7 (†LLN); and single adults were at Ferndale, Humboldt, Jan. 4–23 (MR et al.) and Palo Alto Feb. 20–22 (†A. Jasberg). Either this species is increasing in the Region or the taxonomic decision to split this form from Red-naped Sapsucker has resulted in greater observer awareness. A total of nine Red-naped Sapsuckers was found in the Region, and an apparent hybrid Red-naped × Red-breasted Sapsucker was studied Dec. 21–28 at Wilder Cr. Ranch, Santa Cruz (R. Morgan, †DLSu).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS — An Eastern Wood-Pewee at the Carmel R. mouth, Monterey, Dec. 11–14 (†DEG, †ph. DR et al.) was voice recorded and sonograms were prepared of its call, "a distinct upsurred 'pwee'". If accepted by the C.B.R.C., this would constitute the 3rd Regional record, and the first confirmed winter record of any wood-pewee identified to species n. of Costa Rica. Six W. Flycatchers were found along the coast this winter, an exceptionally high seasonal total. An E. Phoebe at Pacific Grove Jan. 8–10 (JB, DR et al.) was the only one seen. An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Feb. 9 (†KFC) provided this year's only winter record. Santa Cruz had two Tropical Kingbirds, one at Monterey Bay Academy Jan. 1–Feb. 22 (†S. Walters, †SFB, †ph DLSu et al.), and another at Wilder Cr. mouth Dec. 21–23 (†E Lebow, †DLSu). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at outer Pt. Reyes Feb. 6–21 (B. Allen, ph. EDG, m.ob.) represented the first Regional winter record.

A Bank Swallow at the Salinas sewage ponds Jan. 18 (†CT), and single Barn Swallows at the Stockton sewage ponds Dec 16 (†DGY), Glenburn, Shasta, Dec. 16 (BVDm, fide BY), and two Barn Swallows at Moss Landing Jan. 1 (†PJM) were all unseasonal.

The fall invasion of Clark's Nutcrackers faded rapidly, with only three seen along the coast from Del Norte to Monterey Mountain Chickadees staged a minor invasion to coastal Del Norte and Humboldt (ADB, BED), but one at Sacramento N.W.R., Jan. 25 (†RJR, PEG, DES) was at a most unusual locality

THRUSHES THROUGH WOOD WARBLERS — Two Townsend's Solitaires reached the coast with one at Portola S.P., Jan. 3 (DLSu) and one at Castro Valley, Alameda, Nov 29–Dec. 8 (PEG, RAE). Only one coastal Sage Thrasher was found, on Mt. San Bruno Feb. 7 (ph. J. McCormick).

Bohemian Waxwings made a good showing in the extreme n.e. parts of the Region, beginning with 14 at Susanville Dec 15 (†RNJ) and reaching a maximum of 78 at Yreka Feb. 24, with fewer lingering through the end of the period (MR, m.ob.) High counts of 60 and 52 Bohemian Waxwings were recorded in n. Modoc Feb. 6–17 (MJL, MR et al.).

S.A.

California's 2nd **Brown Shrike** was found near Olema Marsh, Marin, Nov. 28+ (†ph. M. Denny, †KGG, m.ob.). The first was at F.I., Sept. 20, 1984 (AB 39:99). There are only four other North American records, all from Alaska. Unsuspecting birders on the Pt. Reyes CBC Dec. 20, unaware of Denny's startling discovery 3 weeks earlier, misidentified it as a N. Shrike. The identification did not become clear until Hints correctly identified it as a Brown Shrike Jan. 14. It remained cooperative for most of its stay, generating national interest and even appearing on television.

The only North American specimen of Brown Shrike, an immature collected at Shemya Oct. 10, 1978, was attributed to the race *lucionensis* by Gibson (Condor 83:65–77, 1981). That is the most southerly of the four races and would appear to be the least likely race to reach North America. According to Medway (Ibis 112: 184–198, 1970), imm. Brown Shrikes are not identifiable to race even in the hand. Further confirmation of the racial identity of the Shemya specimen is warranted. This season's bird eventually molted into adult plumage exhibiting a bright rufous crown and relatively indistinct supercilium characteristic of the *cristatus/confusus* subspecies group (Dean, Brit. Birds 75:395–406, 1982). This group is far more likely to reach North America than *lucionensis* on geographic grounds, as it includes the most northerly populations.

Northern Shrikes penetrated S to San Joaquin (DGY, RAE) and Merced (JCL, SEF) in the C.V. but apparently were scarce elsewhere. Three wintering Solitary Vireos were attributed to the race *plumbeus*: one at Bodega Bay Dec. 29 (RS *et al.*), one near Los Banos Dec. 26 (†KH *et al.*), and one at Modesto Jan. 10 (†HMR). Two other Solitary Vireos were attributed to the race *cassinii*: one at Olema Marsh Dec. 21 (RS) and one at Lodi L., San Joaquin, through Feb. 16 (DGY, RAE).

Six wintering Tennessee Warblers were more than average. Two were in Humboldt, one at King Salmon Dec. 8–Jan. 4 (DGY, KH) and one in Ferndale Jan. 4 (GSL). Four were concentrated in Santa Cruz, two at Freedom Dec. 31–Jan. 30 (†S. Getty, †DLSu *et al.*), one in Santa Cruz Dec. 6–21 (†DLSu), and one at the U.C.S.C. Arboretum Jan. 25–Feb. 17 (†DLSu). Eleven Nashville Warblers concentrated between San Francisco and Monterey were far fewer than we have come to expect, but this could have been an artifact of incomplete reporting from Humboldt/Del Norte.

Twelve Yellow Warblers were reported along the coast from Humboldt to Monterey, with five concentrated in Santa Cruz. This was about average for recent winters. A ♂ Cape May Warbler at Ferndale Jan. 4–5 (GSL, †LPL *et al.*) provided the first documented Humboldt winter record and one of only a handful of Regional winter reports. A ♀ Black-throated Blue Warbler at Ferndale Jan. 4–5 (GSL, †LPL) was even more unusual. Thirty-one Black-throated Gray Warblers in the C.V. and along the coast was a higher total than expected and may represent a real increase in recent winters. Seven Hermit Warblers were reported along the coast n. of Monterey, where the species is regarded as fairly common in winter. A Blackburnian Warbler in Pacific Grove Dec. 29+ (†DR, m.ob.) was apparently the first to winter in the state. A Prairie Warbler at Princeton, San Mateo, Dec. 6+ (D. Keller, †PJM, †PEL, m.ob.) provided the 4th Regional winter record. Two others were reported near Arcata, Dec. 20 and Dec. 20–23 (SWH, *fide* GSL). Twenty-one Palm Warblers made a good showing and included one well inland in Sacramento (†JTr, †TDM *et al.*).

Fifteen Black-and-white Warblers was 3 times last year's total and included 2 records in the C.V., where this species is seldom found: one in Sacramento Dec. 3 (SFB) and one in Lodi Dec. 17+ (†DGY). An Am. Redstart returning to the Pajaro R. mouth, Monterey, Feb. 14 (DEG) for the 2nd consecutive year was the only one seen. Four of the five N. Waterthrushes found during the period were in Santa Cruz, and the other was just over the county line at Año Nuevo, San Mateo. This is an excellent showing, the highest on record, but only one bird was believed to be actually wintering. The others were probably late migrants. Single MacGillivray's Warblers were described from Pt. Arena Jan. 4 (†OJK) and from Montara, San Mateo, Dec. 26–27 (†PJM). This species is seldom recorded in the Region in winter. Fifteen Wilson's Warblers were all along the coast between Del Norte and Santa Cruz, but one was in the C.V. at Tuolumne R. Regional Park Dec. 28 (†HMR).

TANAGERS THROUGH SPARROWS — A ♂ Summer Tanager returning to Corralitos Cr., Freedom, Santa Cruz for the 2nd consecutive winter Dec. 24+ was the only one seen. Three W. Tanagers were below recent seasonal expectations. Five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks from San Mateo to Monterey made an excellent showing. This species usually outnumbers Black-headed Grosbeak during the winter. This season, no Black-headed Grosbeaks were reported at all.

Up to six Am. Tree Sparrows wintered at a traditional locality, Tule Lake N.W.R., Dec. 26+ (MR, †GMcC, m.ob.), but one at Arcata Feb. 3 (THK) was away from normal wintering areas. Up to five Chipping Sparrows near Fairfield, Solano, Dec. 25–Jan. 28 (SFB *et al.*) made a good winter concentration in a typical locality. A Grasshopper Sparrow at Dry Cr. Regional Park, Alameda, Feb. 19–20 (†RJR) was probably wintering locally. Winter records are almost unknown in the Region. Four Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Limantour Natural Area, Marin, Jan.

31–Feb 14 (J. McConnell *et al.*) were in an area where the species has seldom been reported. Another Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Arcata remained from the fall through Jan. 27 (†DR *et al.*) and three others were seen during high tides at traditional sites at Palo Alto Dec. 2–Jan. 29 (†WGB, †DLSu, m.ob.). A Fox Sparrow showing characteristics of the *iliaca/zaboria* group was banded and photographed in Sacramento Dec. 27–Feb 8 (†TDM). Most "eastern" Fox Sparrows reported in our Region are actually of the reddish western race *altivagans*.

Twenty-eight Swamp Sparrows mostly along the coast from Del Norte to Santa Cruz were about average, but 52 White-throated Sparrows made an exceptionally high total, possibly a consequence of more extensive reporting from feeders than usual. Single Harris' Sparrows were reported from Ft. Dick, Del Norte, Dec. 21 (NEC), Chico Jan. 4 (BED), Glenburn Dec 21 (BY), Tule Lake N.W.R., Jan. 18 (PhR), McKinleyville Jan 5+ (*fide* GSL), and Lodi Dec. 20 (†DGY). The only significant concentration of Lapland Longspurs was of 25–30 at the S Spit of Humboldt Bay Jan. 4 (ADB *et al.*). A Snow Bunting at Bodega Bay Nov. 29 (ph. JCo) and another at Eureka Dec. 6–8 (JCS, †ph. DR, †LPL *et al.*) were the only ones reported. Another was rumored to be at Arcata through Dec. 2 but no details have been received.

ICTERINES THROUGH FINCHES — A Rusty Blackbird at Pescadero, San Mateo, Jan. 3+ (†RST, †PEL, †DLSu, †SEF, m.ob.) was possibly one of two that wintered nearby last year. Another Rusty Blackbird put in a brief appearance at Pacific Grove Jan. 3–4 (BW, ph. DR *et al.*). A pair of Great-tailed Grackles in S.F., Jan. 17 (CRC) was believed to be the same pair found in 1978–1979 and present continuously ever since. An imm. ♂ Orchard Oriole in Union City Jan. 14–24 (F. Kelly, †RAE) was a first for Alameda. Another was reportedly photographed at Big Sur Jan. 22–31 (*fide* DR); but the identification was controversial and the photographs were not submitted, so we cannot judge. Three Hooded Orioles wintering in the Region was exceptional. One at Rio Dell Jan. 11–Apr. 4 (I. Sippola, †RAE *et al.*) furnished the first confirmed winter record for Humboldt. Others were at Pacific Grove Dec. 29 (†DR, S. Hennessey) and Stockton Dec. 20–21 (RA, †DGY *et al.*). The only "Baltimore" N. Oriole was at Rio Dell Dec. 11–mid-March (I Sippola, ADB *et al.*). Four other wintering N. Orioles were reported as "Bullock's".

A ♂ Purple Finch at Crescent City Feb. 12 (ADB) was thought to be of the race *purpureus*, but no description was received. There are no published reports of this race for California, but it breeds as far west as n. British Columbia and should be looked for. [Although presumably, hopefully, a sight record of this race will never be accepted without in-hand photos and measurements—K.K.] A ♂ Cassin's Finch was well described at Lafayette, Contra Costa, Dec. 24–25 (†H. Adamson).

S.A.

Two possible Eurasian Siskins were reported from Arcata, and one was banded and photographed. However, the measurements did not quite fit, and the characters by which bright ♂ Pine Siskins with yellow rumps and green backs can be distinguished from true Eur. Siskins have never been adequately addressed (*cf.* Blake, AB 30:770, 1976). The two species differ slightly in measurements and bill shape, but the best field-character for separating xanthochroistic Pine Siskins from ♀ Eur Siskins is the color of the undertail-coverts, bright yellow in Pine and whitish or pale yellow in Eurasian. Both Arcata siskins had bright yellow undertail-coverts, providing a positive identification of both birds as Pine Siskins. Details are expected to be published elsewhere (JM, SFB). There appear to be no unassailable North American records of Eur. Siskin.

S.A.

An **Oriental Greenfinch** in Arcata Dec. 5+ (JCS, †JLD, †DR, †SFB, †JML, †GMcC, †JM, m.ob.) was a first for the contiguous United States. It generated national interest, as this species had previously been recorded only in the outer Aleutians, where there are about 10 records of migrants. Its relatively large size, combined with a broad facial stripe, broad posterior supercilium, and bold white edges to the tertials were characteristic of the northernmost race, *kawahariba*. All Aleutian specimens have been attributed to that race as well. The literature is somewhat contradictory, but most sources indicate that *kawahariba* migrates S to Japan and occasionally to Taiwan, so a vagrant in North America might be expected to winter as far s. as Arcata. Apparently the species is rare in captivity in California and Japan (fide L.F. Baptista, fide JLD), but we have heard rumors that cage-bred individuals of this species were released in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia (fide R. Odear). Preliminary investigations suggest that captive Oriental Greenfinches are not *kawahariba*, but more research is needed in view of the lack of records between the outer Aleutians and California. However, this was an unusually good season for Siberian strays along the West Coast, and the Oriental Greenfinch might have been part of a general pattern which brought Brown Shrike and Rustic Bunting (in Washington) to the West Coast.

CORRIGENDUM — Vaux's Swifts were over Santa Cruz Jan. 21, not Feb. 21 (AB 40:326).

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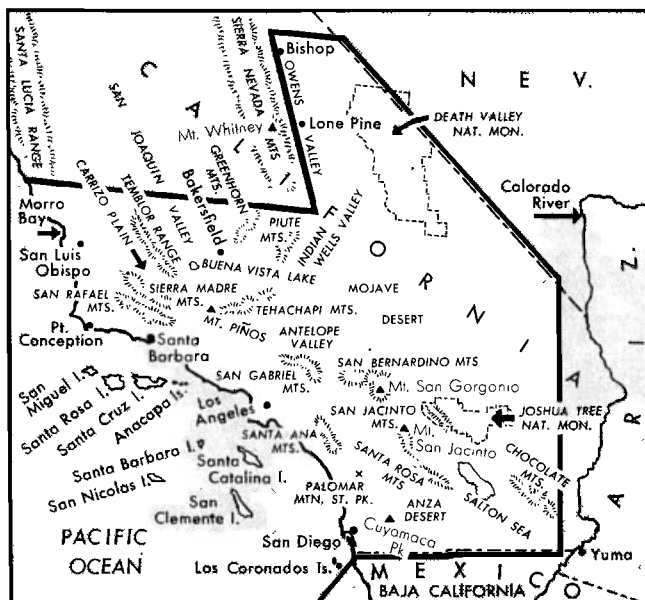
SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

Guy McCaskie

This was a very mild winter with less than the average amount of rainfall. An exciting variety of unexpected bird species was found, including a number returning from previous winters.

ABBREVIATIONS — N.E.S.S. = north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.; S.E.S.S. = south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County. As virtually all rarities found in southern California are seen by numerous observers, only the observer initially identifying the bird is included. Documentation is on file with the California Bird Records Committee (c/o Don Roberson, 282 Grove Acre, Pacific Grove, CA 93950) for all rarities listed in this report, and records submitted without documentation are not published.

LOONS THROUGH STORK — A Pacific Loon, casual inland, was on L. Isabella, Kern Co., Feb. 12 (KH), a 2nd was on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara Co., Feb. 10–Mar. 9 (PEL), one was on Silverwood L., San Bernardino Co., Dec. 8 (CMcG), up to two were on L. Perris, Riverside Co., Dec. 14–Feb. 23 (RMcK), one was on L. Havasu, San Bernardino Co., Feb. 14 (RMcK), and another was on Castaic L., Los Angeles Co., Jan. 24. A Horned Grebe on a small pond in California City Feb. 28 (MOC) was unexpected, since most found inland in winter are frequenting the large freshwater lakes and reservoirs. A Red-necked Grebe in Ventura Dec. 15–18 (KK) was the only one reported.



Counts of up to 30,000 Am. White Pelicans made during aerial surveys of the Salton Sea in January (RMcK) clearly show this to be a major wintering locality for this species, particularly

in light of the estimated North American breeding population as presented by Sidle, Koonz, and Roney (*Am Birds* 39:859–864). Up to 20 Brown Pelicans remained on the Salton Sea throughout the period (RMcK) to give us the first concrete evidence of wintering on this inland body of water.

At least two adult and one imm. Little Blue Herons remained around s. San Diego Bay throughout the period (EC), and another adult was on nearby San Dieguito Lagoon Feb. 22 (SM), but the species was unreported elsewhere in the Region. The ad Tricolored Heron found in Imperial Beach Nov. 6 remained through the period (EC) and appears to have been the only one present in California this year. The adult and imm. Reddish Egrets that appeared at the mouth of the Tijuana R. during the fall remained through the winter (GMcC), as did the adult on s. San Diego Bay (EC), but the immature in Del Mar could not be found after Jan. 11 (JO'B). A Wood Stork near Oceanside Feb. 22 (JO'B) was undoubtedly wintering locally, and was probably one of the birds that have been frequenting this area each of the past 6 winters.

WATERFOWL — The only Tundra Swans reported were one on Oso Flaco L., San Luis Obispo Co., Jan. 1 (TEW), four on L. Cachuma Nov. 22–Jan. 25 (GT), and two in the San Jacinto Valley Nov. 25 (AMC). As now appears to be normal a few Ross' Geese were found along the coast with two around Morro Bay Dec. 14–Jan. 25 (GPS), one in Santa Barbara Nov. 5+ (JEL), another on L. Cachuma Feb. 10–21 (PEL), three near Pt. Mugu, Ventura Co., during December and January (JSR), one near Santa Ana Mar. 8–17 (PE), and one near Oceanside Dec. 27–Mar. 6 (GMcC). A ♀ Wood Duck in National City, San Diego Co., Dec. 20–Jan. 1 (DK) was at the s. limit of the species' winter range on the w. coast. A ♂ Eur. Green-winged Teal in Goleta, Dec. 9–Apr. 1 (HR), was undoubtedly the same bird that has spent the past 5 winters at this location, and an apparent hybrid Eur. Green-winged Teal × Am. Green-winged Teal was carefully studied at S.E.S.S., Jan. 14 (JLD). At least 16 Eur. Wigeon were found in the Region during the period, and this no doubt was only a small percentage of the birds actually present. The ♂ Tufted Duck found on Quail L., Los Angeles Co., Nov. 25 was still present Jan. 24 (KLG), and another in Saticoy, Ventura Co., Feb. 10+ (KS) was undoubtedly the same bird that has spent part of the past two winters at this location. A duck on San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego Co., Feb. 20+ (SRG), initially identified as a ♂ Tufted Duck, had a shorter crest than expected. Upon close inspection, it showed gray rather than black on the back, so it is considered a Tufted Duck × scaup; hybrid Tufted Duck × Greater Scaup have been found in the wild in Europe and at least one has previously been so identified in California (AB 38:352–353), indicating all "Tufted Ducks" found in w. North America should be identified with caution. The ♂ Harlequin Duck present at Bolsa Chica since 1984 remained through the period (DRW). The only Oldsquaws reported were two at Avila Beach, San Luis Obispo Co., Dec. 27–31 (RK), one at Bolsa Chica Dec. 25 (RiH), two at Newport Beach Dec. 20–Mar. 11 (DRW), one near Oceanside Feb. 7 (JO'B), and another in Del Mar Dec. 6–Jan. 11 (LuS). A Black Scoter on Morro Bay Nov. 25–Dec. 25 (K & JH) was the only one reported. A ♂ Surf Scoter on Castaic L., Jan. 24 (JKA) and another on L. Cuyamaca Dec. 6 (CGE) were both inland. White-winged Scoters were exceptionally scarce along the entire coast, but two were found inland on L. Havasu Feb. 14 (RMcK). A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye at S.E.S.S., Jan. 24 (GMcC) was only the 5th ever to have been found on the Salton Sea.

RAPTORS — At least three Black-shouldered Kites were present in the Imperial Valley s. of the Salton Sea throughout the period (RHi), and another was found even farther e. near Needles Feb. 16 (RMcK). This species was formerly considered accidental in s.e. California, but is now being found in the Imperial Valley annually, reflecting the overall increase in the numbers of these birds now occurring along the coast, and the consequential expansion of its range. An imm. Bald Eagle near Pt Mugu all winter (JSR) was along the coast where now ex-

ceedingly rare. The Red-shouldered Hawk present in Brawley since Aug 26 remained through the winter (RHi) with additional birds present near Westmorland Dec. 13+ (GMcC), Niland Dec. 18+ (JO'B), and in El Centro Dec. 26+ (JO), all being in the Imperial Valley where formerly considered accidental.

Since **Swainson's Hawks** are extremely rare anywhere in North America in winter (Browning, 1974, Comments on the winter distribution of the Swainson's Hawk in North America AB 28:865–867), with only 3 acceptable mid-winter records for California, the presence of one light-phase adult near Oceanside Dec. 27–Mar. 8 (GMcC) and a 2nd individual there Mar. 1 (GMcC) was totally unexpected. The ad. Zone-tailed Hawk seen over the Plano Trabuco, Orange Co., Nov. 28 was not seen after Dec. 7 (DRW), and the other in Vista Sept. 13–25 was seen sporadically through Mar. 3 (EC); but unlike wintering Red-tailed Hawks, this species does not appear to remain within a relatively small territory throughout the period, but wanders over many miles, and hence may be hard to keep track of. Rough-legged Hawks were exceptionally scarce, but reports did include a dark-phased bird near Ventura throughout the period (JSR) and a typical immature as far s. as Seeley Feb. 28 (RHi). A Golden Eagle over Goleta Jan. 3 (JP) was one of a very few ever to be found along this stretch of the California coast.

CRANES, SHOREBIRDS — Sandhill Crane numbers at the Goose L. Evaporation Ponds near Wasco, Kern Co., peaked at 600± Dec. 3 (MOC) with smaller numbers remaining through the rest of the winter, and 300± were present near Brawley through the period (GMcC); a large wintering flock on the Carrizo Plain and smaller numbers along the Colorado R. near Blythe are the only others regularly occurring in s. California.

Up to 12 Lesser Golden-Plovers were present near Santa Maria throughout the winter (KJZ), three were near Pt. Mugu during December and January (JSR), five were on the Seal Beach N.W.R., Feb. 8 (LRH), and up to two were at S.E.S.S. during December (GMcC), all being identified as of the form *fulva*. Since Mountain Plovers are now most unusual along the coast, a flock of up to 10 near Imperial Beach Dec. 20–Feb 1 (GMcC) was of interest. A Black Oystercatcher in Oceanside Feb. 7 (JO'B) was far away from areas of regular occurrence. As expected small numbers of Lesser Yellowlegs were present at various select localities along the entire coastline and around S.E.S.S. throughout the period, but up to three on the Tulare L. Drainage District ponds in Kern County all winter (RS) were in an area where until recent years they were unknown at this time of year. A Solitary Sandpiper near Corona Jan. 28 (HLJ) was only the 4th ever to be found in winter in s. California. Up to four Ruddy Turnstones at S.E.S.S. during December (GMcC) and two more at Salton City Feb. 8 (RHi) were all probably wintering on this inland body of water. Red Knots now regularly winter on the Salton Sea, but 12 at Salton City Feb. 8 (RHi) was a larger number than expected. Totally unexpected was a Baird's Sandpiper photographed near Goleta Dec. 10 (BA), the previous latest date for a fall migrant being Nov. 1, 1985 (AB 40:158). A Ruff near Santa Maria Jan. 24–Mar. 17 (PEL) and another on s. San Diego Bay Aug. 17+ (EC) were wintering along the coast, while up to two on the Tulare L. Drainage District ponds Jan. 17–22 (MOC) and another on the nearby Goose L. Evaporation Ponds Feb. 22+ (RS) were wintering inland. A Wilson's Phalarope at S.E.S.S., Dec. 26 (MJL) and another near nearby El Centro Dec. 26 (BN) were both probably wintering in that general area. Red Phalaropes were relatively common off San Diego during January as indicated by a count of 300 from La Jolla Jan. 15 (JLD), but had disappeared by February.

JAEGERS THROUGH SKIMMER — A jaeger, believed to be a Parasitic Jaeger, at N.E.S.S., Dec. 17 (JLD) was exceptionally late to still be on this inland body of water. A Laughing Gull, normally absent in winter, was at S.E.S.S., Feb. 8 (RHi). A first-year Franklin's Gull in Santa Barbara Nov. 23–Dec 28 (AB) was evidently a very late fall migrant, but another in



Adult Lesser Black-backed Gull at the south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial County, Cal., Dec. 17, 1986. This bird and another of the same species frequented this area for the remainder of the winter. Photos/John O'Brien.

Malibu Nov. 23–Feb. 25 (JKA) clearly wintered. The only Mew Gull found truly inland was a first-year bird at S.E.S.S., Dec. 13 (GMcC). A Herring Gull on the Kern N.W.R., Jan. 17 (MOC) was in an area where virtually unknown in winter. With all reporters from along the coast commenting on the paucity of Thayer's Gulls, along with the remarkably few found by this editor, it is clear this species was notably scarcer than normal throughout the Region. Up to two ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at S.E.S.S., Dec. 13+ (GMcC) were unexpected, considering the first ever for the Region was found only 2 years ago (AB 39:210), and another photographed in Malibu Jan. 19 (TK) was the first for the coast of s. California; but, considering the increase in numbers now being found in the e. United States, we can anticipate more. Up to six Yellow-footed Gulls spent the winter around S.E.S.S., where 10 years ago the species was unknown at this time of year. A first-year Glaucous-winged Gull at S.E.S.S. throughout December (RH*i*), a 3rd-year bird there Dec. 17 (CAM), and an adult there Jan. 24 (CGE) were the only ones reported from far inland. The only Glaucous Gulls present this winter were two in Santa Maria Jan. 24 (PEL). An Elegant Tern on Morro Bay Dec. 29 (GPS) was exceptionally late. The only Com. Terns reported this winter were one around Corona del Mar, Orange Co., Jan. 4–5 (RRV) and another near Imperial Beach Jan. 6 (MAP). A Black Tern in Corona del Mar Dec. 6 (CMcC) and what could well have been the same



First-winter plumaged Black-legged Kittiwake (above and left) on shore at La Jolla, San Diego County, Cal., February 22, 1987. This species was exceptionally scarce in southern California waters this winter and to see one on shore any winter is unexpected. Photos/John O'Brien.



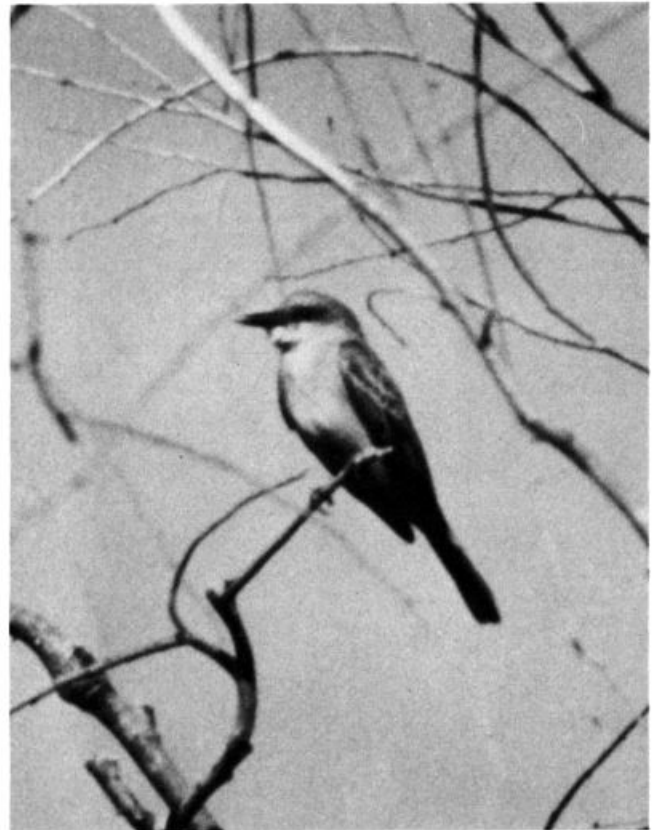
First-winter plumaged Black-legged Kittiwake seen at La Jolla. Photo/John O'Brien.

bird at nearby Newport Beach Feb. 24 (CH), along with one inland near El Centro Feb. 2 (RH*i*), were of interest considering the fact that only 12± previous winter records are known for the Region. One or two Black Skimmers were present on the Salton Sea during December and January (RH*i*), but not found in February, suggesting they did not winter.

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS — Up to 12 White-winged Doves at Butterfield Ranch in e. San Diego County throughout the period (JO) and another at nearby Palm Spring Jan. 31 (JO'B) were in the area along the e. base of the coastal mountains where small numbers regularly winter, but one near Santa Ynez, Santa Barbara Co., Feb. 13 (PEL), up to five in Goleta Nov. 14–Mar. 31 (PEL), and another in Malibu Jan. 1–3 (KLG) were all well w. of the species' normal range. An Inca Dove in Imperial Jan. 18+ (RH*i*) was probably a pioneer from the resident population of Calexico a little to the south. Some 45 Vaux's Swifts at Morro Bay S.P., Dec. 15–21 (TME), 20 near downtown Los Angeles Jan. 19 (KLG), 20 more over El Monte Jan. 24 (JB), and up to 75 around Oceanside throughout the period (GM*c*C) were all evidently wintering. A ♂ *Xantus'* Hummingbird reported feeding on red flowers in a desert wash at Yaqui Wells in e. San Diego County Dec. 27 (RK) was supported by convincing details. If accepted by state and national committees this would be a first record for the United States; the species is resident some 300–400 mi to the s. in Baja California. A ♀ *Archilochus* hummingbird identified as a Black-chinned, considered casual in winter, was found in Westminster, Orange Co., Jan. 29 (BED), and two were on Pt. Loma Dec. 28+ (JO). Six Lewis' Woodpeckers were found at 3 widely-scattered localities around S.E.S.S., Dec. 22 (RH*i*) but all had disappeared 10 days later, suggesting all were on the move. An Acorn Woodpecker, probably associated with the movement of Lewis' Woodpeckers, in El Centro Dec. 22–24 (RH*i*) was only the 3rd ever to be found in the Imperial Valley. An imm. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker near Gaviota Jan. 14 (BA) and a male in Newport Beach Feb. 1–Mar. 1 (BED) were carefully identified by observers familiar with the characters separating

this species from the similar, and more likely, Red-naped Sapsucker, but the true identity of others reported could not be determined. A Red-naped Sapsucker at Montana de Oro S.P., Oct. 10–Jan. 13 (BH) and another in Wheeler Canyon near Ventura all winter (KS) were a little to the n.w. of the species' normal winter range, and a Red-breasted Sapsucker in El Centro Dec. 26 (JO) was one of very few ever found in the Imperial Valley.

FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS — An Olive-sided Flycatcher in Santa Barbara Feb. 2–Apr. 1 (LB) was evidently the same bird found here each of the past 2 winters, and one of fewer than one dozen ever found in California in winter. A Greater Pewee in San Diego Nov. 23+ (EC) was probably the same bird found here last winter. A Least Flycatcher near Brawley Dec. 31 (RH*i*) was the 7th to have been found in s. California in winter. A Hammond's Flycatcher in Santa Barbara Dec. 16 (REW) was probably an exceptionally late fall migrant, since it could not be relocated on later dates. The only Gray Flycatchers reported this winter were one in Ventura Dec. 21–Jan. 4 (RJM), another in Oceanside Dec. 21+ (JO) evidently returning for its 7th winter, a 3rd near Brawley Dec. 28–Jan. 4 (RH*i*), a 4th at Yaqui Wells Feb. 8 (JO'B), and a 5th in Bow Willow Canyon in e. San Diego County Feb. 22 (SM). Three W. Flycatchers were found, with single birds along the coast in Santa Barbara Dec. 7–Jan. 4 (PEL) and Irvine Nov. 12–Feb. 4 (DRW), and one inland in Morongo Valley Feb. 14 (DCH). Two Vermilion Flycatchers near Pt. Mugu all winter (RJM), one in Fountain Valley, Orange Co., Jan. 4–Mar. 1 (RF), and another near Imperial Beach throughout December (GM*c*C) were along the coast where now exceedingly rare. An Ash-throated Flycatcher, very rare to casual in winter, was in Goleta Jan. 3–Feb. 6 (PEL), another was near Upper Newport Bay Jan. 24–Feb. 7 (TEW), and a 3rd was near San Diego Mar. 1 (PP). A Tropical Kingbird in Goleta Oct. 26–Feb. 21 (CDB) and a 2nd in nearby Santa Barbara Nov. 11–Feb. 21 (JLD) were unex-



Tropical Kingbird in Goleta, Santa Barbara County, Cal. This bird spent the winter in the company of up to four Cassin's Kingbirds at this location. Photo/Paul E. Lehman.

pected, especially considering the paucity of birds found during the fall. The **Thick-billed Kingbird** successfully spent its 5th winter near Tustin, being present Nov. 9–Mar. 1 (LRH).

Two N. Rough-winged Swallows present near Imperial Beach Nov. 8–Feb. 21 (JO), joined by spring migrants on the latter date, clearly wintered, and cannot be considered either late fall stragglers or early spring arrivals as are so many mid-winter birds. Most unusual were up to four Bank Swallows near Oceanside Dec. 27–Feb. 8 (RM). A Cliff Swallow, the rarest of the swallows to be found in California in winter, was at Montana de Oro S.P. near Morro Bay Jan. 10 (LD). Single Barn Swallows over Puddingstone Res., Los Angeles Co., Jan. 24 (JB) and in Irvine Dec. 20 (HLJ) along with three near Oceanside Feb. 8 (GMcC) and up to four near Imperial Beach during December and January (JO) were all most likely wintering.

WRENS THROUGH VIREOS — A Winter Wren in Brawley Dec. 22–24 (RH) was only the 5th ever to be found in the Imperial Valley. Golden-crowned Kinglets were widely scattered, with some reaching the extreme s.e. corner of the state as indicated by up to eight at Finney L. near S.E.S.S., Dec. 26–Jan. 25 (MJL) and two in Brawley Feb. 21 (RH). Single Townsend's Solitaires near Bakersfield Dec. 1–Feb. 8 (RS), in Ojai Jan. 18 (KK), near Ventura Feb. 28 (RJM), and in Imperial Feb. 1+ (RH) were all in the lowlands and away from areas of normal occurrence. A Brown Thrasher, a rare straggler to California, was present in Huntington Beach Jan. 10–Mar. 7 (BED) and another was at Morongo Valley Dec. 15–Feb. 28 (CMcG). Two Bendire's Thrashers in the Chemehuevi Wash in e. San Bernardino County Feb. 14–15 (RMcK) were probably early spring migrants, since this species arrives on breeding territories exceptionally early. A Sprague's Pipit near Westmorland Dec. 6 (RH) was the 2nd ever to have been found in the Imperial Valley, and another was flushed from tall grass near Lakeview, Riverside Co., Dec. 12 (RMcK).

A Bell's Vireo, casual in winter, was in Santa Barbara Jan. 3–Feb. 10 (JEL) and another was in Brawley Dec. 1–20 (RH). A brightly marked Solitary Vireo in San Diego Jan. 16–Mar. 22 (JLD) was apparently of the nominate form *solitarius*, considered casual to accidental in the w. United States, and previously unrecorded in California in winter. Single Solitary Vireos along the coast in Goleta Jan. 3 (PEL), Ventura throughout the period (JSR), and in Coronado Dec. 28 (JO), as well as one in El Centro Jan. 24–Feb. 22 (GMcC) and another at Butterfield Ranch in e. San Diego County Feb. 8 (DK) were all gray birds of the *plumbeus* form, while one in Santa Barbara Feb. 4 (CDB), single birds in Lake Forrest Dec. 20 (DRW) and nearby Huntington Beach Dec. 5–Jan. 10 (LRH), and another on Pt. Loma in San Diego Jan. 31+ (REW) were of the w. form *cassini*. A Warbling Vireo, exceedingly rare in winter, was in Santa Barbara Jan. 11–Feb. 1 (HR) for its 3rd winter, another in Ventura throughout the period (JSR) was apparently the same bird as present last winter, and a 3rd was seen in Coronado Jan. 10 (REW).

WOOD WARBLERS — It was a better-than-average winter for wood warblers in s. California with at least 20 Nashville Warblers, over 30 Yellow Warblers, 30 Black-throated Gray Warblers, seven Hermit Warblers, and about 40 Wilson's Warblers reported along with the commonly occurring Orange-crowned, Townsend's, and Yellow-rumped warblers and Common Yellowthroats. In addition, nine Tennessee Warblers were found along the coast between Oceano and Coronado, along with one inland at Needles Feb. 16 (RMcK); 16 Palm Warblers were present between Morro Bay and Doheny Beach, and another was inland at S.E.S.S., Jan. 31 (DRW); nine Black-and-white Warblers were at various points along the coast, and at least four Am. Redstarts were wintering away from S.E.S.S., these all formerly considered casual to accidental in California in winter. A Virginia's Warbler in Oceano Dec. 3 (KJZ) was most likely a very late fall vagrant since searches for it on subsequent dates failed to turn it up, and the same can be said for the Blackburnian Warbler at the same location

Dec. 6–12 (K & JH). A N. Parula, very rare in winter, was in Oceano Dec. 7–Feb. 16 (BS) and another was at L. Mathews, Riverside Co., Jan. 14 (TM). A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Brawley Nov. 9+ (RH) was probably the same bird as present last winter. A ♀ Cape May Warbler on Pt. Loma Dec. 25–Feb. 16 (GMcC) was the 6th to have remained in s. California through the mid-winter period. A ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler in Santa Barbara Nov. 30–Jan. 4 (A & JC) and another in Placentia, Orange Co., Dec. 16–Jan. 28 (L. Berry) apparently did not remain through the winter, leaving the bird present in Santa Barbara Jan. 15–Mar. 16, 1982 (AB 36:332) as the only one known to have wintered in the Region. Four Grace's Warblers were present this winter, three of them believed to be returning birds, with one in Santa Barbara Oct. 13–Mar. 19 (PEL) successfully spending its 8th winter, another at the same location Oct. 19–Jan. 11 (TEW) spending its 3rd winter, one in Ventura throughout the period (JSR) for its 3rd winter, and the last in Newport Beach Feb. 21–Mar. 23 (BED). A ♂ Pine Warbler on Pt. Dume, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 21 (KLG) was the 8th to be found in s. California in mid-winter. A ♂ Prairie Warbler on San Clemente I., Feb. 25 (LaS) had undoubtedly wintered locally, giving us the 4th winter record for the Region. A Prothonotary Warbler frequenting a hummingbird feeder in San Diego Jan. 25–Mar. 20 (RAB) was only the 2nd ever to have wintered in California. An Ovenbird in Oceano Dec. 3–21 (KJZ) was apparently attempting to winter. A ♂ Kentucky Warbler in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo Co., Dec. 7–Feb. 1 (C & EB) was the 3rd to have wintered in California. A MacGillivray's Warbler, very rare in winter, was on Pt. Loma Dec. 28–Apr. 5 (REW) and another was in Coronado Jan. 10 (REW). A Painted Redstart, a casual to very rare straggler to California, was on Pt. Loma Dec. 20–Mar. 22 (RAR).

TANAGERS THROUGH LONGSPURS — A ♂ Hepatic Tanager in Santa Barbara Dec. 7–Jan. 13 (PEL) was evidently the same bird known to have spent the past 4 winters at this location, and a female in Irvine Nov. 17–Feb. 15 (DRW) was apparently the same bird present here during the past 2 winters. A Summer Tanager in Oceano Dec. 3–7 (KJZ) was probably a late fall straggler, but one in Santa Barbara Nov. 22–Feb. 1 (PEL), another near Santa Ana Jan. 4 (GF), and 10 along the San Diego County coast throughout the period (EC) were all clearly wintering. Seven Rose-breasted Grosbeaks wintering along the coast was about average, but five Black-headed Grosbeaks in the same area was more than normal.

A Green-tailed Towhee in Santa Barbara Jan. 4 (CL) and another at Upper Newport Bay Jan. 1 (RC) were n.w. of the species' limited winter range in extreme s. California. "Several" Brown Towhees found in the Indian Wells Valley of extreme n.e. Kern County during the winter (CP) were very close to the presumed isolated population in Inyo County known as the Inyo Brown Towhee, *P.f. eremophilus*. An Am. Tree Sparrow near Bishop Mar. 15 (TEW) was in an area where small numbers probably occur every fall and early winter, but was much later than most previous records. A Clay-colored Sparrow in Goleta Jan. 3–Mar. 24 (PEL) was one of a very few ever to have wintered in California. Two Lark Buntings, now quite rare in California, were in Niland near S.E.S.S., Dec. 18+ (JLD), and were the only ones found in s. California this winter. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow, very rare in s. California, was on Mission Bay in San Diego Dec. 31–Feb. 27 (EC). At least 13 wintering Swamp Sparrows, seven wintering White-throated Sparrows, and three wintering Harris' Sparrows along the coast were about as expected, but a White-throated Sparrow in El Centro Dec. 26–Feb. 16 (JO) and a Harris' Sparrow near Brawley Dec. 6 (RH) were in an area where few have been found. It was a better-than-average winter for longspurs with a McCown's Longspur present on the Plano Trabuco in Orange County Nov. 28–Jan. 11 (JLD), four to five near Lakeview Dec. 12 (RMcK), and six more at L. Henshaw in the mountains of San Diego County Jan. 3–11 (DK). Single Lapland Longspurs were near Los Osos Dec. 10–12 (CM), Pt. Mugu Jan. 25 (RJM), on the Plano

Trabuco Nov. 28–Jan. 18 (JLD), at L. Henshaw Jan. 3–11 (DK), and at S.E.S.S., Jan. 31 (RHi), along with two near Oxnard Jan. 11 (JSR) and two to four near Lakeview Dec. 12 (RMcK). Six to 10 Chestnut-collared Longspurs were present on the Plano Trabuco Nov. 28–Mar. 15 (JLD), one was at Harper Dry Lake Jan. 19 (MAP), eight to 10 were near Lakeview Dec. 12–14 (RMcK), three were at L. Cuyamaca in the San Diego County mountains Feb. 8 (JO'B), and 30 were at S.E.S.S., Mar. 1 (REW).

BLACKBIRDS THROUGH FINCHES — Yellow-headed Blackbirds are rare and local along the coast, particularly so in winter, hence 30 near Pt. Mugu all winter (RJM), 100 near Irvine Jan. 30 (RRV), and five near Oceanside Feb. 28 (JO'B) were of interest. A ♀ Rusty Blackbird near Oceanside Feb. 22–Mar. 20 (GMcC) was one of fewer than one dozen ever to be found wintering along the s. California coast. Great-tailed Grackles continued to reach the coast with one at Upper Newport Bay Jan. 4 (HL), another at San Elijo Lagoon Feb. 10–11 (RP), and up to five near Imperial Beach during December (RM). A ♂ Bronzed Cowbird associating with thousands of “blackbirds” at a dairy near Oceanside Feb. 28–Mar. 8 (JO'B) was an immature moulting into ad. plumage, and had undoubtedly been present all winter. This species is a rare summer visitor to extreme s.e. California, and is expanding its range with vagrants recorded from as far w. as Whittier and Jacumba, but was previously unrecorded along the immediate coast, and had never before been found in winter.

An Orchard Oriole, considered a very rare winter visitor to California, was at Pt. Dume Dec. 21–Jan. 1 (KLG), three more were in the Newport-Irvine area Nov. 22–Feb. 1 (RoH, RRV), and a 5th was in Coronado Dec. 20–Feb. 16 (EC), to give us an average number for this time of year. Nine Hooded Orioles along the coast were more than expected, one in Redlands throughout the period (RMcC) was at an unusual location, but single birds near N.E.S.S., Feb. 14 (HAG) and in Brawley Jan. 14 (JLD) were in an area where small numbers may prove to be regular in winter. Six of the 75± N. Orioles found wintering along the coast were of the e. race *galbula*. Away from the extreme w. edge of the s. deserts (e.g., Morongo Valley and particularly Anza Borrego Desert Park), where small numbers

of Scott's Orioles regularly winter, five were found in the Santa Barbara area Oct. 24–Jan. 15 (PEL) and another was near Irvine Dec. 21 (HLJ).

A flock of 200± Rosy Finches found frequenting a bird feeder in the small community of Aspendell w. of Bishop Mar. 15 (TEW) could well have wintered locally. A few finches were dispersed through the lowlands as indicated by 15 Purple Finches in Brawley Jan. 24 (RHi) and 60 Cassin's Finches in Whitewater Canyon Feb. 25–28 (DCH). Evening Grosbeaks continued to attract attention with 40 on Mt. Palomar Feb. 9 (KW) and up to 20 in the Laguna Mts., Jan. 2–18 (BMcC) being the southernmost, apart from a single female in Plaster City, Imperial Co., Feb. 1 (RHi).

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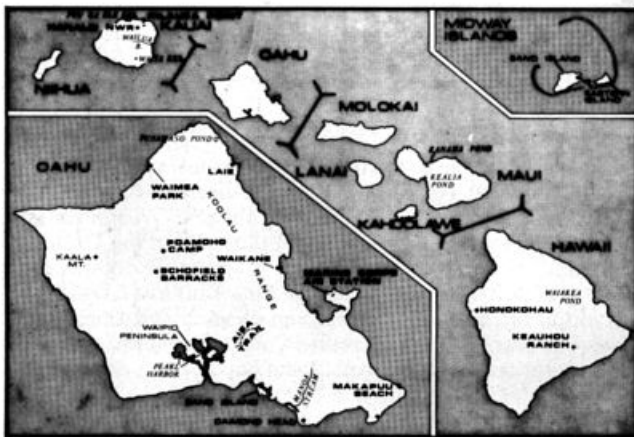
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

Robert L. Pyle

The encouraging return of rainfall last fall to levels modestly above seasonal normals was, unfortunately, short-lived. Winter rainfall during December–February was below normal at 27 of 33 reporting stations statewide, many of them with totals well below 50% of normal. Considering that winter (December to February) is Hawaii's “rainiest” season, when 42% of the annual total should normally fall, a deficit at this time has a severe effect on general moisture conditions for the year. Unfortunately, four of the past five winters have been dry, with percentages of normal seasonal rainfall (at Honolulu) being 21%, 18%, 108%, 13%, and 36% back to 1982–1983.

The low rainfall plus development pressures have put much wild bird habitat under stress. While most birdlife could probably take one such year in stride, a succession of this many very dry winters must be taking its toll on bird survival and breeding, even including many of the dryland species.

One unexplained anomaly in this pattern is at Waimea in north central Hawai'i Island where 1986 total annual



rainfall was more than twice normal, and this winter's total was over three times normal. Waimea and two nearby stations on Hawaii's windward coast, plus three stations in

analogous locations on nearby Maui Island, were the only six stations in Hawaii to have above-normal rain this winter.

ABBREVIATIONS — F.F.S. = French Frigate Shoals; H. = Hawai'i I.; K. = Kaua'i I.; M. = Maui I.; O. = O'ahu I., J.C.N.W.R. = James Campbell Nat'l Wildlife Ref. on O'ahu.

GREBES, ALBATROSSES — Hawaii's only Pied-billed Grebe population, which has been developing naturally in recent years at Aimakapa Pond, H., now consists of the original breeding pair plus three fully-grown offspring of different ages (RD). The banded subad. **Short-tailed Albatross** returning to Sand I., Midway, for the 3rd straight winter, was first seen the 3rd week of November and was still present at the end of February (KM). A Black-footed Albatross, rarely reported near shore in recent years, was seen at Kilauea Point N.W.R., K., Dec 31 and landed briefly on Moku'ae'ae islet off the point (JD *et al.*).

The Laysan Albatross colony at Pacific Missile Range, Barking Sands, K., fared badly this year. By Feb. 4, dogs had destroyed 16 of 19 nests and killed 12 adults and subadults (TT). Across the island at Kilauea Point N.W.R., where a much smaller nesting colony is well-protected, up to 11 birds were seen regularly through the winter. Increasing numbers of non-breeding Laysans have been seen along the n. shore of Kaua'i, with up to 40 reported at one time near Pila Beach (TT). On O'ahu, Laysans returned in larger numbers to the Mokule'ia area. High counts at Dillingham airstrip were of at least 19 Jan. 25 (WG), and 23 Feb. 16 with nine others flying nearby (AE). Five to eight were reported at Ka'ena Pt. during late January and February (JO *et al.*).

TROPICBIRDS THROUGH DUCKS — A pair of White-tailed Tropicbirds, rare in the low Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, nested again this winter in a flower box at one of the military homes on Sand I., Midway. This is the same locality where a pair has nested several times in the last decade. The adults were incubating an egg Nov. 20, and had a large chick Feb 11 (KM *et al.*). A Lesser Frigatebird observed sporadically at Tern I., F.F.S., in recent years, was seen there again Jan. 26–Feb 17 (RV, JS). A vagrant Great Blue Heron reported at Whittington Park, H., Feb. 10 (SB) might have been the same bird reported regularly last year at Kakahai'a N.W.R., Moloka'i, although Whittington would be a reasonable first landfall for another straggler crossing from North America. The stray Cattle Egret on Tern I., F.F.S., remained through the fall and winter (RV, JS).

The stray Fulvous Whistling-Duck at Kakahai'a N.W.R. was still there Feb. 12–13 (GY), and a stray Snow Goose wintered at the pond on Kea'au Ranch s.e. of Hilo, H. (TP). The stray Brant remained at Aimakapa Pond, H., through the end of February (RD *et al.*), and another wintered across the island at the Kea'au Ranch pond (TP). A 3rd Brant (mentioned in last season's report) at Tern I., F.F.S., Dec. 5–8 is now *BPBM-175791 in the Bishop Museum.

Four Hawaiian Geese (Nene—Endangered) were seen Dec. 7 flying over Pu'uana'hulu, H. (DP), an upper coastal slope area at the n.w. edge of the species' current range. Single free-flying Nene observed on Kaua'i at Smith's Tropical Gardens in Kapa'a (Dec 30, MW) and at the pond near Lihue Airport (Feb. 15, GY, Mar. 4–6, BH) were presumably from the group of banded escapes reported last season.

Migrant wintering ducks (basically N. Pintails and N. Shovelers) seemed low in numbers again this year at J.C.N.W.R. and Waipi'o, O., and Aimakapa Pond, H., although counts at Kealia Pond, M., were higher. Among them, up to seven Green-winged Teal were reported from ponds on O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i. A ♀ Gadwall appeared at Aimakapa Pond Dec. 26 and remained through season's end (RD). This was an unusually good year for Eur. Wigeon. One or two males were reported during December and January at Kanaha Pond, M. (DP), Ki'i Pond, O. (DT), and Kekaha'a Res., K. (TT). Four males with

one female were seen at Kakahai'a N W R , Moloka'i, Feb 12–13 (GY), and two males along with two ♂ Am. Wigeon and three females were at Waiakea Pond, H., during December and January (RD *et al.*). Ring-necked Ducks were reported at 5 localities on 3 islands, with the highest count of one male and four females at Kealia Pond, M., Feb. 9 (GY). High counts of Lesser Scaup were of 27 at Punamano Pond and 12 at Hale'iwa Pond, both on O'ahu, Jan. 15 (PD), and 15 at Lokoaka Pond, H., Jan. 10 (RD). Three or fewer were reported from 5 other localities. The ♀ Greater Scaup, much rarer than the Lesser in Hawaii, remained at Aimakapa Pond, H., through season's end.

RAPTORS — The Osprey sojourning on Kaua'i was seen through the winter in the Kipu Kai area (*fide* TT) and also at Kilauea Point N.W.R., Nov. 24 (*fide* KM) and at Menehune Fishpond in early December (RD). The O'ahu bird was reported at Punaho'olapa Pond Jan. 14 (SB).

The season's most exciting visitor was a Peregrine Falcon that roosted most of the winter between the 25th and 44th floors of a highrise condominium in Aiea, O., overlooking Pearl Harbor and the Waipi'o Peninsula. It was seen in that area from Jan. 14 (PD) well into March (GG *et al.*), but generally was absent each day between roughly sunrise and sunset. Daytime observations of a Peregrine elsewhere on O'ahu, including Punamano (SB) and Ki'i (DW) Units of J.C.N.W.R. at the n. tip of the island and Makapu'u Pt. (BE) near the s. tip, suggested either that this bird was ranging widely over the entire island or that more than one individual was present. Earlier reports of a Peregrine in downtown Honolulu Dec. 2 (BE) and about the same time in Waikiki (*fide* PB), as well as at Kailua on the Honolulu CBC Dec. 21, could also have involved the same bird. Peregrines have occurred as rare stragglers to Hawaii since the first known report of one on Hawai'i I. in 1961. But they have been appearing much more frequently in the past few years, perhaps reflecting the species' comeback in North America.

FRANCOLINS THROUGH GULLS — Black, Erckel's, and Gray francolins and Chukars were all found in good numbers Dec. 15–18 in undeveloped portions of Kohala Ranch just n of Kawaihae, H. (PB). The area has recently been opened to public access, but is being planned now for residential development. High counts of (Hawaiian) Am. Coots (Endangered) on Aimakapa Pond, H., were of 123 (Dec. 3, SB) and 142+ (Jan 5, RD). Among them, two coots identified as of the North American race were found Dec. 14 (RD), and one Jan. 17 (RLP). Also at Aimakapa, high counts of (Hawaiian) Black-necked Stilts (Endangered) were of 20 Dec. 3 (SB) and 27 Feb. 15 (RD). Eleven Stilts at nearby Makalawena (= Opae'ula) Pond Dec. 2 (SB) furnished a good count, and five were found Jan. 15 across the island at a small pond near the old Puna sugar mill in Kea'au (RLP). It is encouraging to see this endemic Hawaiian subspecies getting a foothold on this geologically-youngest island, where wetland habitat is still limited compared to the older islands to the north.

Bristle-thighed Curlews are normally uncommon fall transients in the main Hawaiian Is., but this year one remained near Ki'i Ponds, J.C.N.W.R., through the winter (AB, PD, DP). A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Kanaha Pond, M., during the week of Jan. 12 (SB) and single Pectoral Sandpipers at Waipi'o Dec. 20 (PD) and Puna sugar mill pond, H., Jan. 10 (RD) also provided unusual mid-winter records. Two Least Sandpipers were at Waipi'o Jan. 23 (PD), and a W. Sandpiper was reported at Tern I., F.F.S., Jan. 3–7 (RV, JS). More than three Pomarine Jaegers were seen offshore of Sand I., O., Feb. 1 (PD) and 15 were counted there Feb. 16 (AE). Numbers in the hundreds could be found there in winter before the sewer outfall was shut down several years ago. One first-winter Laughing Gull was at Aimakapa Pond Jan. 4 and two were there Feb. 15 (RD). An ad. Franklin's Gull in fine spring plumage flew over Ki'i Pond Mar. 31 (SB), but has not been seen again. Three Ring-billed

Gulls were at Ki'i Ponds Dec 4 (MO), with two remaining there through the winter (DT, PD) A larger gull at Aimakapa Jan 4-6 was photographed and identified tentatively as a 2nd-winter Herring Gull (RD).

PARAKEETS THROUGH HONEYCREEPERS — An estimated 30 Rose-ringed Parakeets in a flock in Kapiolani Park, O, Nov. 30 (DP) was an unusually large number and indicated the species is not only persisting on O'ahu but may well be breeding.

S.A.

Shrinking habitat has reduced (Hawaiian) Short-eared Owls (Pueo) on O'ahu to the point of endangerment. Thus, it was highly significant when an adult was flushed from a nest high in the Wai'anae Mts. near Pohakea Pass. The nest was on the ground in grass partway down a steep cliff face, in a locality rarely visited because of difficulty of access. The locality also has unusual botanical interest. The nest contained 2 eggs when first found Feb. 26 and had one egg and a large chick when photographed Mar. 19 (SP, JO). No other nests of Pueo have been reported on any island in recent years.

Two 'Elepaio were observed Dec. 17 in an isolated patch of forest on Kohala Ranch near Kawaihae, H. (PB). The locality, near 800 ft elevation, was unusually low and was cut off from suitable habitat farther upslope. Five Red-billed Leiothrix were found on the Honolulu CBC Dec. 21 (PB, RLP) in the only place on O'ahu where the species has been located fairly regularly in recent years. However, extensive clearing in anticipation of residential development has pushed the birds upslope and will make them more difficult to find. Three N. Mockingbirds found Dec. 15 along the top of Lana'i Island's only mountain ridge (LF) seemed out of place. One briefly tried to imitate an 'Apapane. A count of 25+ 'Apapane the same day along the same ridge between Lana'i Hale and Waiakeakua (LF) was an unusually high number for the island. 'Apapane may well

be the only native landbird species remaining on Lana'i A Kaua'i Creeper ('Akikiki) was seen Dec 6 near Koke'e, along Kilohana Trail a short distance beyond its intersection with Pihea Trail (PD).

FINCHES AND ESTRILIDS — Several Cordonbleus and 10-20 Lavender Waxbills were found near Pu'u'anahulu, H, Dec. 7 (DP) and Jan. 11 (RD). Warbling Silverbills, Yellow-fronted Canaries, and Saffron Finches are also seen there in good numbers. Three Lavender Waxbills were also observed in a yard in Kailua-Kona, H., Feb. 12 (RD), and two or more were found on Nala'au Trail, O., Feb. 2 along with three-plus Com. Waxbills (PD). Three Orange-cheeked Waxbills were at the Kaneohe Water Treatment Facility, O., Dec. 23 (PD, RLP). More than 500 Nutmeg Mannikins, an introduced species with much longer tenure in Hawaii, were concentrated in several huge flocks on Kohala Ranch near Kawaihae, H., Dec. 15 (PB) Meanwhile, Chestnut Mannikins are now increasing dramatically on Kaua'i where they first appeared a decade ago. Large flocks were reported during December in many localities in e and s. Kaua'i (RD, DP).

CORRIGENDA — Hawaii's first reported Solander's Petrel received alive at a shearwater aid station on Kaua'i was not released in December as stated in last season's report. After 2 more months in captivity it sickened and died Feb. 22, and has become specimen BPBM-175801 in the Bishop Museum. It will be submitted to specialists for confirmation of identification. Also in last season's report, the "Sharp-tailed Sandpiper" at Tern I., F.F.S., in August was an imm. Ruff (*).

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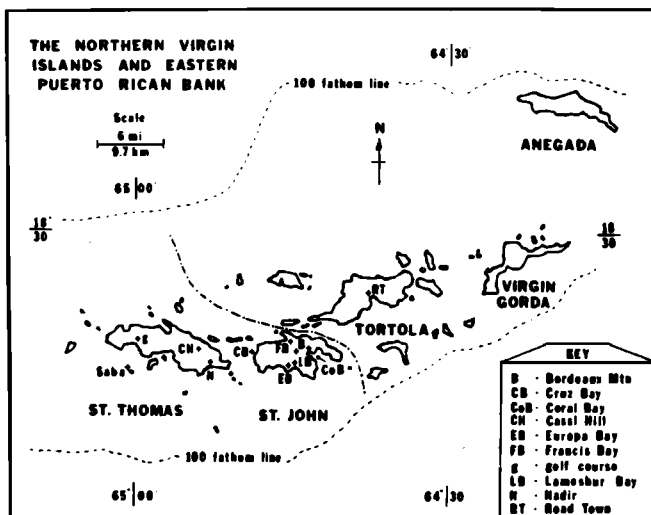
WEST INDIES REGION

Robert L. Norton

Monthly precipitation averages this winter were on the low side at Cruz Bay, St. John, in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Although December was normal, January's precipitation was 56% below average and February's was 68% below average. The net precipitation for the season was thus 38% below average, following a net of 18% below average for the fall season.

Puerto Rico's Tropical National Forest at Luquillo has apparently been spared a large demonstration project that would have reduced the rainforest's habitat by nearly 20%. On the other side of Puerto Rico, a Club Med resort is planned for property adjacent to the unique Guanica Forest and nearby wetlands. Federal and local agencies have studied the proposal and find that their jurisdiction is limited on the basis of habitat endangerment, although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service warned against the resort (San Juan Star, March 1987).

ABBREVIATIONS — B.V.I. = British Virgin Islands; D.R. = Dominican Republic; P.R. = Puerto Rico.



SHEARWATERS THROUGH TERNS — Audubon's Shearwaters were heard at Frenchcap Cay, St. Thomas, Jan. 14 (WS, LS, *vide* JCz). Nesting Red-billed Tropicbirds were surveyed in the U.S. Virgin Islands (JCz), with 74 nests counted between December and February. Four White-tailed Tropicbirds were seen Feb. 1 at a single location on the s. coast of St. Croix (RW) where the species has been known to nest in the recent past. In December, Brown Pelican nests numbered about 20 at Congo Cay and 45 at Dutchcap Cay, St. Thomas (JCz). Masked Booby nests numbered 9 at Cockroach Cay and 12 at Sula Cay, only a few meters away, in early December. Red-footed Boobies continue to increase at Frenchcap Cay, St. Thomas, where 12 adults were seen roosting and one nest with a chick was noted Jan. 14 (JCz). A Red-footed Booby was seen sitting on a buoy at Anegada Jan. 26 (RG), for one of the few inshore records of this otherwise pelagic species. A Greater Flamingo was photographed at Vieques, P.R., Jan. 8 (DG) for the 2nd record there since 1985; two birds had been reported Jan. 5 (*vide* DG). Two flamingoes reported at Cabo Rojo, P.R., Dec. 21 had been monitored by federal and local biologists for 6 months (*vide* JCo).

The St. Croix CBC Dec. 19 reported 64 White-cheeked Pintails, and in February as many as 206 were counted at St. Croix (FS), 47 White-cheeked Pintails were noted on the St. John CBC Dec. 20 (*vide* GW). Noteworthy ducks at St. Croix included a N Pintail from December to February, one N. Shoveler Dec. 21 and two in February, and a Ruddy Duck in February (FS). A notable count of 45 Ruddy Ducks was made Dec. 12 at Cabo Rojo, P.R. (JCo et al.). Peregrine Falcon sightings included one at Capella Cay off St. Thomas Dec. 10 (JCz), one at Vieques, P.R., Jan. 5 (DG), and two at St. Croix in January (FS). Single Merlins were noted at St. John Dec. 20 (RLN) and at St. Croix in January (FS).

Gairdner reports that a rail inhabiting a small mangrove swamp at Biras Cr., Virgin Gorda, B.V.I., for several winter seasons fits the description of a Virginia Rail or possibly a Virginia Rail × Clapper Rail hybrid [?], but the record should be considered hypothetical until a photograph or other confirmation is submitted. Bond (1979) lists only a single record of Virginia Rail for the Region (October, in Cuba). Sightings of shorebirds at Anegada, B.V.I., Jan. 19–23 included 16 Black-bellied Plovers, 60+ Semipalmated Plovers, two Snowy Plovers (resident breeders), two Whimbrels, five Sanderlings, and 200+ Semipalmated Sandpipers. Lesser Yellowlegs numbered 92 at Vieques, P.R., Jan. 5 (DG).

A bonanza for gull watchers was reported Feb. 25 from Mayaguez Harbor, P.R., where 20+ Laughing Gulls, one adult and one imm. **Common Black-headed Gulls**, three adult and four imm. Ring-billed Gulls, three imm. Herring Gulls, and one imm. **Great Black-backed Gull** were observed (AL). Note that one Com. Black-headed was seen last summer at Cabo Rojo, P.R. At least one Ring-billed Gull was seen at Frederiksted, St. Croix, Feb. 19 (WM), and Sladen noted Ring-billed at St. Croix from December to early February. The list of gulls is impressive, and poses questions as to their status as vagrants on the P.R. bank. Also at Mayaguez Harbor Feb. 25 were 60+ Royal Terns and 80+ Sandwich Terns (AL).

DOVES THROUGH BUNTINGS — A Ruddy Quail-Dove was seen Dec. 20 (RLN, DH) along the Reef Bay Trail, St. John, providing additional evidence of vagrancy or limited residency of Puerto Rico. Two Hispaniolan Parrots were reported on the CBC at Cabo Rojo, P.R., Dec. 21 (JCo), but it is not known whether these birds were escapees or associated with some recent invasion of birds from the Dominican Republic. A Great Lizard-Cuckoo noted at Staniard Cr., Andros, Dec. 26 (RP et al.) provided one of the few reports of this secretive endemic of the n. Bahamas and Cuba. A well-described ♀ Antillean Mango at Virgin Gorda, B.V.I., Jan. 8 (RG) represented one of the few sightings on the eastern P.R. bank. The Antillean Mango is still found in e. Puerto Rico; the island boasts five

species of hummingbirds, more than any other island in the West Indies. Barn Swallows numbered 311 on the St. Croix CBC Dec. 19 (*vide* FS). More than 300 unidentified swallows were seen Jan. 9 crossing North Sound, Virgin Gorda (RG).

The most extraordinary report of the season came from Barbados, where so many remarkable sightings have been recorded, including more than one-half dozen European stragglers. On Jan. 28 a **White Wagtail** was seen at the cruise ship docking area at Bridgetown, providing a close view in excellent light (HHF). The bobbing behavior, black crown and bib, and contrasting white plumage were carefully noted. This represents the first sighting of the species in the West Indies. Apparently the southernmost previous record for the New World was from La Paz, Baja California, at 24°N; Barbados lies at 13°N.

A Yellow-throated Vireo was noted at St. Croix in early December (RW, *vide* FS). The St. Croix CBC Dec. 19 counted 15 Black-whiskered Vireos, a high number for winter in the Virgin Islands. A **Blackpoll Warbler** reported on the CBC at Santo Domingo, D.R., Dec. 18 (*vide* ASD) extended the late fall date for the Region. A Palm Warbler seen Feb. 8 at St. Croix (RW) furnished one of few reports this far east. Worm-eating and Hooded warblers were also reported from St. Croix on the CBC for the first local occurrences in December (*vide* FS). Two Painted Buntings on the CBC at Staniard Cr., Andros, Dec. 26 represented one of few records for the central Bahamas.

CORRIGENDUM — PWS states that Eur. Collared-Doves were accidentally introduced into the Bahamas about 1975 (Smith 1986, *Florida Field-Nat.* 14:104–107), and that the origin of the Florida birds is still under investigation, *contra* a suggestion (AB 40:5 1260) that Florida might have been the source of the Bahaman birds.

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