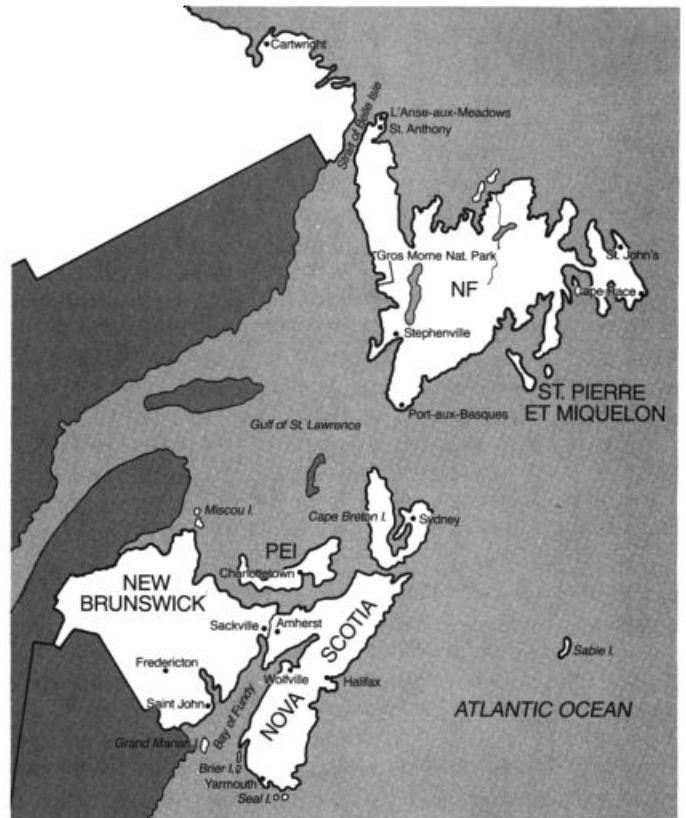


The Winter Season

December 1, 1988 - February 28, 1989

ATLANTIC PROVINCES REGION

Ian A. McLaren



Map Illustrations/Denise L. O'Brien

As a new Regional Editor I was handed an interesting season, with patterns to think about and rarities to savor. Reporting was excellent from all four provinces. Christmas Bird Counts referred to here include many "unofficial" ones that will not reach *American Birds*. Early winter was mild, with little persistent snow in most coastal areas. However, February became unusually cold, extinguishing many half-hardy survivors. If we can keep our eyes off the rarities momentarily, the two most striking events this winter were an exceptional influx of Pine Warblers and a huge holdback of American Robins in the Region. Why the warblers should have flung themselves northeastwards so late in the fall is a mystery; simply to call them reverse migrants is no explanation. The robins are more explicable: the Mountain Ash fruit crops in Newfoundland and northeastern Nova Scotia were extraordinary. Conifer and other seeds also abounded and there were complaints throughout the Region about the paucity of birds at feeders. However, they may also have been diluted by a sharp increase in bird feeding, perhaps more recently here than in other, more developed parts

of the continent. Bird food and bird-feeding paraphernalia are now sold everywhere. Some of the most interesting birds this winter turned up at recently-established feeders in the countryside and small towns. The unusual number of rarities also reflects the establishment, within the past year or so, of weekly columns on birds in major Regional newspapers, one in Newfoundland and two in Nova Scotia. Our informal rare-bird alerts are being fed from new sources. As one who has been at the game for a long time, I feel a twinge of nostalgia for the days when we had to go out and figuratively (and literally) beat the bushes ourselves.

ABBREVIATIONS — S.P.M. = Saint-Pierre et Miquelon.

LOONS TO WATERFOWL — Wintering Red-throated Loons remained scarce in the Region, with CBC counts of only one in New Brunswick and 10 in Nova Scotia where a few probable returnees were seen in mid-February. Although CBC Com. Loons were "double the average number" in New Brunswick (DSC), they were rated as scarcer in Nova Scotia

(LPMP). A Pied-billed Grebe was still at Pleasant Lake, NS, to Feb. 19 (H & HH, ER). Red-necked Grebes seemed secure, with good CBC counts throughout and "a high count for Nfld" (BMct) of 27 at Bellevue Beach Dec. 3. However, Horned Grebes were at best average in New Brunswick (DSC), and the CBC total was less than half last year's in Nova Scotia. As usual in recent years, a few Double-crested Cormorants were seen into the new year in Nova Scotia. Only one Great Blue Heron was reported to have survived the February chill, near Pubnico, NS.

Unusual were seven Snow Geese on Dec. 27 near Sackville, NB, two through January near Glace Bay, NS, two in late January at Chezzetcook, NS, and especially an adult Jan. 28 at Bonne Bay, NF (Hank & Kirsten Deichmann). Brant only began to winter on Grand Manan I. in 1970; this season, 160+ were there Jan. 3 (BD). None lingered elsewhere. A "Eurasian" drake was among six Green-winged Teal wintering in St. John's, NF (m.ob.).

S.A.

Increasingly large congregations of wintering waterfowl, mostly Am. Black Ducks, are fed by the public in parks in Moncton, NB, the Halifax-Dartmouth area and Sydney, NS, and St. John's, NF. Wildlife authorities voiced concern about dependency of these birds, and also about increased dalliance between Blacks and the more dependent Mallards. However, the handouts do help the Am. Black Ducks get through winter, and they are generally paired and leave for saltmarshes and other sites little used by Mallards before the latter become consumed by courtship. Mallard x Black hybrids have not notably increased over recent years in the Halifax-Dartmouth area at least.

In Nova Scotia this winter, civic authorities attributed pollution to ducks (and to gulls roosting on lake ice), and also blamed them for increases in urban lakes of "swimmer's itch," the partial penetration of the skin by larvae of trematode parasites in snails, in turn from waterfowl feces. Birders, as part of this ecological-recreational web, cherish such waterfowl gatherings for their laggards and vagrants. Three N. Pintail remained as far north as St. John's, NF, along with a handsome drake Mallard x Pintail for its 2nd winter (BMct). Other laggards included a drake Blue-winged Teal at St. Andrews, NB, until late January (*fide* DSC), a N. Shoveler in Yarmouth, NS, through February (m.ob.), two Gadwall in Saint John, NB, into mid-January (Tom Page), and scattered Am. Wigeon, including a drake in St. John's, NF, until at least Feb. 5 (RB).

A single Lesser Scaup appeared in late January among the dabbling hordes in Dartmouth, NS. Roger Etcheberry feels that overhunting is dispersing the once larger flocks of Com. Eider around S.P.M. Up to 10 King Eiders were seen in s.e. Newfoundland, and CBC birds at Brier Island, NS, and St. Andrews, NB. Only one Harlequin Duck was reported from New Brunswick, and five from Nova Scotia; they are clearly in trouble, and the current hunting ban may come too late. An aerial survey off Guysborough, NS, Dec. 17 found some 55 Surf and 3600 Black scoters, but no White-winged Scoters (*fide* WAM), although these last were the most heavily reported from elsewhere. The survey was in relation to increasingly extensive culture of mussels, and pleas for duck "control" bear watching. A single Barrow's Goldeneye near St. John's, NF, and about 10 in Nova Scotia were outmatched by some 40 at a traditional site at Cocagne Bridge, NB, in February. A few Hooded Mergansers remained in the southwest,



This duck wintering at St. John's, Newfoundland, photographed in early January 1989, was apparently a Mallard x Northern Pintail hybrid. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.

but only two near Halifax, NS, were seen through winter. A Ruddy Duck near Halifax until Jan. 6 (FLL *et al.*) provided the first winter record in a decade.

DIURNAL RAPTORS — A Turkey Vulture near Sackville, NB, Dec. 26 (WAM) was not unprecedented. David Christie is "perplexed by winter reports of Osprey," including a recent one from near St. Stephen, NB. There are a few good winter sightings from Nova Scotia, but I know of one that proved to be a hovering light morph Rough-leg! A CBC total of 47 Bald Eagles was "best ever per party hour" for New Brunswick (DSC), but was outmatched by a record 96 on the CBC at their winter stronghold around Wolfville, NS.

Sharp-shinned Hawks in Newfoundland were "back to normal after two high winters" (BMct), and were "average" on CBCs in New Brunswick (DSC) and perhaps below average in Nova Scotia (IAM). Impressions of small-hawk abundances may have been affected by paucities of feeder birds (*see later*). No details were available for two Broad-winged Hawks reported in New Brunswick, one on the Woodstock CBC and one near Oak Bay Jan. 5. However, an immature near Hortonville, NS, Jan. 28 (J & SC *et al.*) furnished a well-described 10th winter record for the province since 1979, and the 2nd-latest seasonally. Rough-legged Hawks did not make a big showing in the Region, although three were more than usual at the St. John's, NF, dump (BMct). A muskrat was exceptional prey for one near Amherst, NS, Feb. 18 (BD). An ad. Golden Eagle, joined by an immature in early February, was around Albert, NB, through winter (v.o.), and another adult was near Saint John, NB, Jan. 11-12 (KO'D). In Nova Scotia, adults were seen in late February near Mt. Uniacke (PM) and Martinique Beach (Linda Conrad), the latter feeding on carrion put out for Bald Eagles.

An Am. Kestrel was late at Cape Race, NF, Dec. 4 (RB). The only post-CBC birds reported were two from Nova Scotia, where there has been a decided drop in numbers in recent winters. Two or three Merlins wintered as far north as St. John's, NF, but elsewhere only three birds were reported following CBC totals of five. Peregrine Falcons appeared in Nova Scotia at Wolfville Dec. 10-11 (RS, G & JT) and at Cherry Hill Dec. 30 (JSC), and an ad. male wintered around Saint John, NB (*fide* DSC). In Newfoundland Gyrfalcons were not seen south of L'Anse-aux-Meadows, but single dark birds occurred near Wolfville, NS, in mid-February and along the Petitcodiac R., NB, from late December (v.o.).

GALLIFORMES TO ALCIDS — Flocks of five and eight ptarmigan were reported near Tracadie, NB, in late January (Yolande Paulin, *vide* HC), but were not identified to species. Wild Turkeys introduced to Grand Manan I., NB, have reproduced since 1987 and survived the winter with some supplemental feeding (BD). One Am. Coot was seen until early January in St. John's, NF, and two survived through the season on Sullivan's Pond, Dartmouth, NS. No other rallids were reported. Yet another **Northern Lapwing** reached Newfoundland, a specimen found in early December at Port Saunders and sent to the Wildlife Division (*vide* JM). As usual, some Black-bellied Plovers (also six at S.P.M. on Dec. 30) and Killdeers remained for CBCs in Nova Scotia, but the latest of these was a Killdeer on Jan. 2. Two Greater Yellowlegs on the Dec. 26 CBC at Port Hebert, NS, matched the latest provincial records. A few Ruddy Turnstones winter in s.e. Newfoundland, where four were at Carbonear Jan. 7 (BMct *et al.*). One near Grand Barrachois was a CBC first for S.P.M. Another appeared healthy at Canso, NS, Jan. 14 (SB, N & WP). Five Red Knots on S.P.M. were also a CBC first, and three remained at Hartlen Pt., NS, until at least Jan. 17 (FLL *et al.*). Single Sanderlings were near Cape Race, NF, Dec. 17, and on S.P.M. in late December, and 14 wintered at Cherry Hill, NS (J & SC). A Purple Sandpiper was on S.P.M. Jan. 28, and they wintered in their usual places farther south, with an aerial count in Guysborough, NS, of 205 on Dec. 17 (WAM). A lingering Dunlin was at Grand Pré, NS, Dec. 17 (G & JT) and a few remained at St. Andrews, NB, as in some other years (*vide* DSC). Two Com. Snipe "overwintered as usual at a sewage ditch in St. John's" (BMct), but there were no reports of post-CBC birds farther south.

Good counts of Com. Black-headed Gulls were of up to 100 in St. John's and 60 along W. Conception Bay, NF, 65 around Glace Bay and Sydney, NS, and 75 around Halifax, NS (*vide* BMct, RB, RBGB, FLL). One on Brier I., NS, Jan. 1 (RS) was less usual. At least three Bonaparte's Gulls were seen through February around Halifax, NS (v.o.), and an immature was reported without details for St. John's, NF, Jan. 14. One Ring-billed Gull overwintering in St. John's, NF (BMct), contrasted with the scores now staying around Halifax and to a lesser extent elsewhere in coastal Nova Scotia. In Newfoundland, an ad. Mew (Common) Gull returned to St. John's for the 4th winter (v.o.), and on Feb. 5 there was a first-winter bird at Dildo and one first-winter, one 2nd-winter, and one adult at Bellevue Beach (BMct, KKn). Two first-winter European birds were in Dartmouth, NS, from Dec. 17 through January (IAM *et al.*, ph.) and a 2nd-winter bird was at nearby E. Passage Jan. 9 (J & SC). There were detailed reports of single Thayer's



Mew Gull of the European race (= Common Gull, *L. c. canus*) in first-winter plumage at Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, January 1, 1989. The tail pattern of this race is strikingly different from that of the North American race at this plumage stage. Photograph/Ian McLaren.

Gulls at Western Brook, NF (RB), and from near Halifax, NS, in late February (v.o.). I thought the latter was an extreme, dark-eyed "Kumlien's"—it was pale-headed and its bill was rather too slight. The distinction will no doubt soon become academic for listers. There were at least six Lesser Black-backed Gulls (one first-winter, one 2nd-winter, and two 3rd-winter birds, and two adults, including a possible fuscus) in St. John's, NF (*vide* BMct), and Halifax, NS, had two or three adults (m.ob.). Bruce Mactavish observed a Herring Gull Feb. 5 at Carbonear, NF, that he believed was of the north European race *L. a. argentatus*. Its salient features included a darker mantle, and restricted black and larger mirrors on the wing tips. He had seen a similar bird Nov. 15, 1987, and points out that such birds would come from the same range as the *intermedius* Lesser Black-backed that occur in our Region. As usual, Ivory Gulls were reported from the tip of Northern Pen., NF, where there were up to six during December, and "many" at Quirpon Jan. 11 (Delena Anderson). One was at Canso, NS, Jan. 6-13 (SB, N & WP, *et al.*, ph.). Two supposed Iceland x Herring Gulls, which are rare or unknown and in need of better documentation, were seen in Nova Scotia. The more regular Glaucous x Herring (2nd-winter bird) and Great Black-backed x Herring (an adult, also seen last winter) were reported from St. John's, NF (BMct).

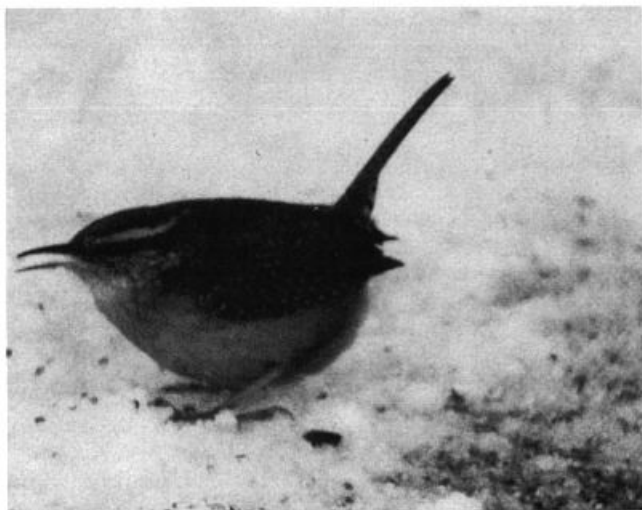
The CBC total of 2530 Thick-billed Murres (most off Grand Manan I.) was record high for New Brunswick, and 487 Razorbills were above average (DSC). No major Dovekie "wrecks" were reported.

DOVES TO WOODPECKERS — Four Mourning Doves wintered at 2 feeders in St. John's, NF, where they normally succumb (BMct). They also did well in s. New Brunswick and throughout Nova Scotia, and there was a "scattering" in Prince Edward Island, "typical now in most winters" (GH). A first **Common Barn-Owl** for Prince Edward Island was found dead in a chicken barn in January (*vide* GH, ph.). Although post-CBC Snowy Owls were more common in New Brunswick, 5-6 sightings from Nova Scotia and 2-3 from Newfoundland bespeak a far-from-peak winter. There were 4 reports of N. Hawk-Owl from New Brunswick (*vide* DSC), and one from Gander, NF (BMct). Four Boreal Owls (one killed by a car) were recorded from s.w. Newfoundland (*vide* BMct), one was near Saint John, NB, in mid-January (KO'D), and another near Lamèque, NB, Feb. 28 (HC). A N. Saw-whet Owl captured in the Salmonier Valley, NF, and rehabilitated, was a provincial rarity (*vide* BMct). Only four post-CBC Belted Kingfishers were reported in Nova Scotia, where larger numbers sometimes winter. The only reports of Three-toed Woodpeckers were of a CBC-period bird on the S.E. Upsalquitch R., NB (*vide* DSC), and one coming to a feeder at Eastport, NF, in mid-December (*vide* RB). Last fall's Red-bellied Woodpecker was faithful to a Waverley, NS, feeder through winter (m.ob., ph.). Wintering N. Flickers were "at least three times more numerous than average" around St. John's, NF, attributable to the heavy Mountain Ash crop (BMct). Five on a CBC in S.P.M. (RE) were part of this northern holdback. There were also said to be "many" at feeders in Prince Edward Island (*vide* GH), but they were unreported in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia after the CBCs.

FLYCATCHERS TO STARLING — A Say's Phoebe found at Lawrencetown, NS, Dec. 30 (Jean & Bill Morse), was seen during the next few days by other enthusiasts. It was the 9th for the province, and the 2nd at this unusual time of year. A late W. Kingbird was at Ferryland, NF, Dec. 4 (RB).

Horned Larks remained in numbers in parts of Nova Scotia, encouraged by lack of snow in early winter. A flock of eight

on Feb. 11 on the Isthmus, S.P.M., was rated unusual (RE). Sixty Gray Jays Dec. 17 at Alexander Bay, NF, set a local CBC record, but there was no sign of an outbreak farther south. The vagrant **Black-billed Magpie** reported in the last issue of *AB* stayed near L'Anse-aux-Meadows, NF, until at least Jan. 21 (Delena Anderson). A **Eurasian Jackdaw** appeared Nov. 27 in Halifax, NS, and could reliably be found in an area where birds were being fed with bread and scraps. In spite of a missing lower mandible, the bird was in fine fettle, often filching food from gulls and crows (m.ob., ph.). Two observers (FLL, Joe Robertson) separately reported another, un mutilated bird in the vicinity in January. Two jackdaws were found in the same area in winter 1984-1985, but it is unlikely that this year's birds could have remained there throughout the intervening period.



Carolina Wren in Saint John, New Brunswick, winter 1988-1989. Seventh record for the province. Photograph/Cecil Johnston.

Nova Scotia's 5th **Carolina Wren**, the first in winter, was at a feeder near Tusket from late December through the period (m.ob., ph.). New Brunswick's 7th of this species frequented a suburban Saint John feeder after Jan. 28 (m.ob., ph.). These extralimits no doubt reflected the wider pattern of recovery of this wren. The only Winter Wrens (misnamed) were on Grand Manan I., NB, Jan. 1 (BD) and at Five I. Park, NS, Jan. 17 (FS).

Newfoundland had "a good year" for Golden-crowned Kinglets (BMct), the "woods were almost dripping" with them in Nova Scotia (RS), and "only the 1974 CBCs were comparable" in New Brunswick (DSC). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet came to a feeder in Yarmouth, NS, until Jan. 3 (ER). Hermit Thrushes were seen in Fredericton, NB, Feb. 6 (Tony Thomas), Dartmouth, NS, Feb. 7 (D & JP), and Sackville, NS, Feb. 12 (Jim Taylor).

Newfoundland's 4th **Redwing** appeared in St. John's Dec. 10 (BMct, KK), and what seemed to be the same bird was seen nearby Jan. 29 (BMct, Mike Parmenter) and Feb. 11 (RB). "Despite heavy coverage . . . there were no other sightings" (BMct). Photographs showed extensive, broad streaking on the upper breast, matching the Faroese-Iceland race *coburni*. This is as expected, but the nominate race *iliacus* did occur in numbers in W. Greenland in November 1976. Almost as exciting was a **Fieldfare** at Cape Spear, near St. John's, NF, Feb. 8 (BMct), for a 3rd provincial occurrence (including one record of four individuals). It too eluded many later searchers. Bruce Mactavish feels that these thrushes in St. John's (three Redwings and five Fieldfares since he moved there in 1982) are not storm-driven vagrants and that, although Newfound-

land may be poised as a first potential stopover, the records also reflect high expectations and a lot of birding effort.

Two Varied Thrushes appeared at Nova Scotia feeders at the very end of the report period, one at St. Margaret's Bay on Feb. 25, and another at Truro a few days later (v.o.). Six of the 16 reported individuals of this species in Nova Scotia have appeared after January, suggesting that they may continue to move (whence and whither?) through winter.

A Gray Catbird lingered near Halifax, NS, to early February (v.o.). Two N. Mockingbirds wintered in St. John's, NF, and another was on S.P.M. on Dec. 17 (fide RE). They are of course more regular in the s.w. parts of the Region. Noteworthy were single Brown Thrashers at feeders in Winterton, Trinity Bay, NF (v.ob.; absent late February, RB), St. Catherines, P.E.I. (GH), and from early January at Mactaquac, NB (David Myles).

S.A.

American Robins made big news everywhere, but especially in Newfoundland, where they were "all over the island to mid-January" (BMct), after which they seemed to converge on St. John's, which was rich in Mountain Ash and other berries. "It was easy to imagine 5000-10,000+ robins in the St. John's Christmas Count circle at any time during February" (BMct). They occurred for the first time on a CBC on S.P.M., where six were still present Feb. 26 (fide RE). In Nova Scotia they were common throughout during early winter but dwindled in most parts, except to the northeast in Guysborough, where huge flocks totalling 2500+ were seen Jan. 9 (FLL, PM et al.) and good numbers into February (N & WP), eating abundant Mountain Ash berries. In New Brunswick, CBC estimates per party mile were above average and a flock of 40 was still present in the northeast at Lamèque Jan. 14 (HC). In Prince Edward Island there were "more than in any previous winter in my memory" (GH). The pattern suggested that fruit crops were exceptional in the northeast of the Region, less so in the southwest.

PIPITS TO WARBLERS—A few Water Pipits got through winter in s.w. Nova Scotia, where they do not always manage to do so (fide RS). It was definitely an off year for Bohemian Waxwings, with reports of two in St. John's, NF, a flock of seven in Nova Scotia, and a low CBC total in New Brunswick. By contrast, Cedar Waxwings were unusually common in the Region, with flocks of up to 80 appearing in December in St. John's, NF, and several reports of 15-25 birds on Cape Breton I. (fide RS). Apart from 30 wintering in Moncton, NB (ST), generally smaller numbers were reported from New Brunswick and mainland Nova Scotia; again, good fruit crops in the northeast may have set the pattern. Northern Shrikes were low on CBCs throughout and there were only 4 post-CBC reports. A Solitary Vireo lingered in Halifax, NS, until Dec. 3 (FLL et al.).

As usual in recent years, warblers reappeared in late fall, presumably as reverse migrants. An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen in St. John's, NF, until Dec. 23 (JM) and one made it through winter in Halifax (FLL et al.) for only the 2nd time in Nova Scotia. More rare was a ♂ Nashville Warbler at a feeder on Grand Manan I., NB, from late December to at least Jan. 9 (FL). A N. Parula was in St. John's, NF, to Dec. 2 (BMct et al.). Outstanding was Newfoundland's 2nd (and the Region's 6th) **Townsend's Warbler** in St. John's from Nov. 20 to Jan. 15 (BMct, RB et al.). The bird "was elusive, although confined to a small area of spruce and Scots Pine" (BMct).

A Palm Warbler on S.P.M. on Dec. 8 was thought to be a "western" (RE). I believe that most late birds in the Region are indeed *D. p. palmarum*. A Black-and-white Warbler in St. John's, NF, Dec. 24-27 (BMct et al.) was not unprecedented.

S.A.

A spectacular fall influx of Pine Warblers became a winter delight. Up to 18 were in Halifax, NS, in late November, where nine made it to the CBC and at least three through winter, sustained on suet and small seeds (m.ob.). Nine in St. John's, NF, in December dwindled to five by late January, and only one after early February's extreme cold, in spite of heavy use of suet (BMct). There were also another feeder bird in Pictou, NS, Jan. 19, four CBC birds in New Brunswick and one through February in Saint John, NB, and at least one in February at Crossroads, P.E.I. (GH). The species has only been found breeding in the Region since 1987, in extreme s.w. New Brunswick.



Four Pine Warblers (of five present) at St. John's, Newfoundland, January 23, 1989. The presence of such numbers so far north of the breeding range was a mystery of the season. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.

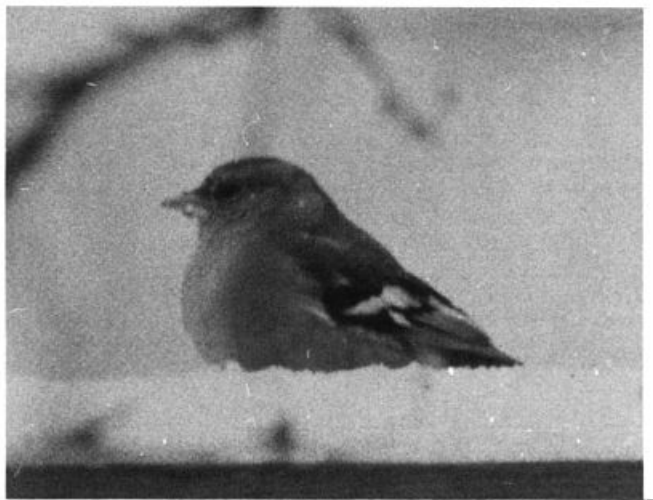
However, a N. Waterthrush there Dec. 16 was very late (no previous post-September Newfoundland records), and "was obviously whiter below . . . than the Nfld.-breeding N. Waterthrush" (BMct); the northwestern race *notabilis* seems indicated. A "chipper" Com. Yellowthroat Jan. 7 near Albert, NB (ST), was the latest of several in the Region, the most northerly one in St. John's Dec. 14 (BMct). The usual Yellow-breasted Chats appeared in early winter in Nova Scotia (fide KK): at least six around Halifax (latest Jan. 6) and one Dec. 27-28 in Glace Bay. One was in St. John's, NF, Dec. 7-15 (fide RB).

CARDINAL TO FINCHES—Northern Cardinals are "flourishing" on Grand Manan I. (FL), and there were seven CBC birds elsewhere in New Brunswick (DSC). At least four wintered in the Yarmouth beachhead in Nova Scotia. A wintering imm. ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at a feeder in Mt. Stewart, P.E.I., was a first to do so in the province (fide GH, ph.), although not unprecedented in the Region. The first Blue Grosbeak to winter successfully in the Region was a female at a Bridgetown, NS, feeder from late December (m.ob., ph.). Also outmatching earlier attempts was an Indigo Bunting at a Dartmouth, NS, feeder Jan. 1-16 (D & JP et al.). A Dickcissel near Albert, NB, survived through February (RW), and two in St. John's, NF, until at least mid-January (BMct et al.). Single Rufous-sided Towhees were at feeders in Broad Cove and Cole Harbour, NS, Traytown, NF, and Saint John, NB.

A few years ago, wintering Chipping Sparrows needed careful documentation in Nova Scotia. This year, there were at least 11 individuals at 10 different feeders, mostly in the

southwest (fide DAC). Oddly, there was otherwise only one bird, from a New Brunswick CBC. Of greater interest was a **Clay-colored Sparrow** in St. John's, NF, from Dec. 3 to at least Jan. 15. This was a 6th provincial record, all from St. John's and 5 of those into winter (BMct). A Field Sparrow found Jan. 3 at Greenwich, NS, did not use feeders until mid-February (G & JT). A Vesper Sparrow near Shepody, NB, from Feb. 4 provided the first post-December record for the province (DSC). A Lark Sparrow at a feeder in Hazel Hill, NS, was only the 2nd to winter in the province (N & WP). The remaining sparrows, most wintering routinely in the Region, had abundant wild food and were not generally well accounted for. Of interest were a successfully wintering Lincoln's Sparrow at a feeder in Harvey, NB (RW), and White-crowned Sparrows in St. John's, NF (two birds), near Yarmouth, NS, and at Alma, NB (v.o.). A **Harris' Sparrow** at a feeder in Wilmot, NS, between late December and mid-February (Norman Phinney, ph.) was not well publicized. It furnished a 3rd provincial (and Regional) record.

Along with scattered individuals elsewhere, six Eastern Meadowlarks stayed near Pubnico, NS (v.o.), and three near Albert, NB (v.o.). On Jan. 7 one of the latter was heard to utter a single Western-like "chup" (DSC), but further searching and scrutinizing were unsuccessful. A N. Oriole survived in St. John's until mid-January (BMct), and one remained lively through winter at a feeder in Tusket Falls, NS, only the 3rd to have done so in the province (m.ob.). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was briefly at a feeder in Barton, NS, in late December (fide BD), and feeder birds through winter at Middleton and nearby Wilmot, NS, were believed to be different individuals (fide PM). Other icterids were present in the usual numbers, but perhaps less feeder-dependent than usual.



This Common Chaffinch in Halifax, Nova Scotia, photographed in early January 1989, attracted birders from all over the continent, despite controversy over its origins. Photograph/Peter MacLeod.

The **Common Chaffinch** reported in the last AB disappeared in early December, but as a result of newspaper publicity, was rediscovered Dec. 16 at a feeder in n.w. Halifax in time for the CBC. It was agonizingly sporadic for many hopeful visiting birders until Jan. 19, after which it doubtless stayed in the area at some of the many other feeders. What was probably not the same bird was seen briefly with Am. Goldfinches at W. Lawrencetown, some 12 mi to the east, Feb. 13 (Doug Lindsey). Its (their) status can always be questioned by skeptics. The feeder bird was dark plumaged, like those in n. Europe. Chaffinches are not commonly imported as cage birds (P. William Smith, in litt.) and there are many Iceland records and one from s.w. Greenland (Salomonsen, *Birds of Greenland*). However, all 4 previous records from the Atlantic

provinces and New England are for the period Feb. 25–Apr. 3, and most Iceland records are for spring (fide P. W. Smith), so that ours was untimely. Ship assistance can, of course, always be invoked. Perhaps on the supportive side are the European thrushes in Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia's (and the Region's) 3rd **Brambling**, which appeared at a Tusket Falls feeder Feb. 7 and obliged birders through the month (m.ob., ph.).



Brambling at Tusket Falls, Nova Scotia, February 19, 1989. Third record for the province. Photograph/Ian McLaren.

Native fringillids were not well represented at urban feeders, although more common in the countryside at feeders or feasting on the large crops of conifer and other seeds throughout the Region. Wintering House Finches, five at Moncton, NB (fide DSC), and three in the Halifax, NS, area (fide DAC), did not signal an overwhelming northeastward progression. However, one **House Finch** during February in Charlottetown, P.E.I., was only the 2nd confirmed for the province

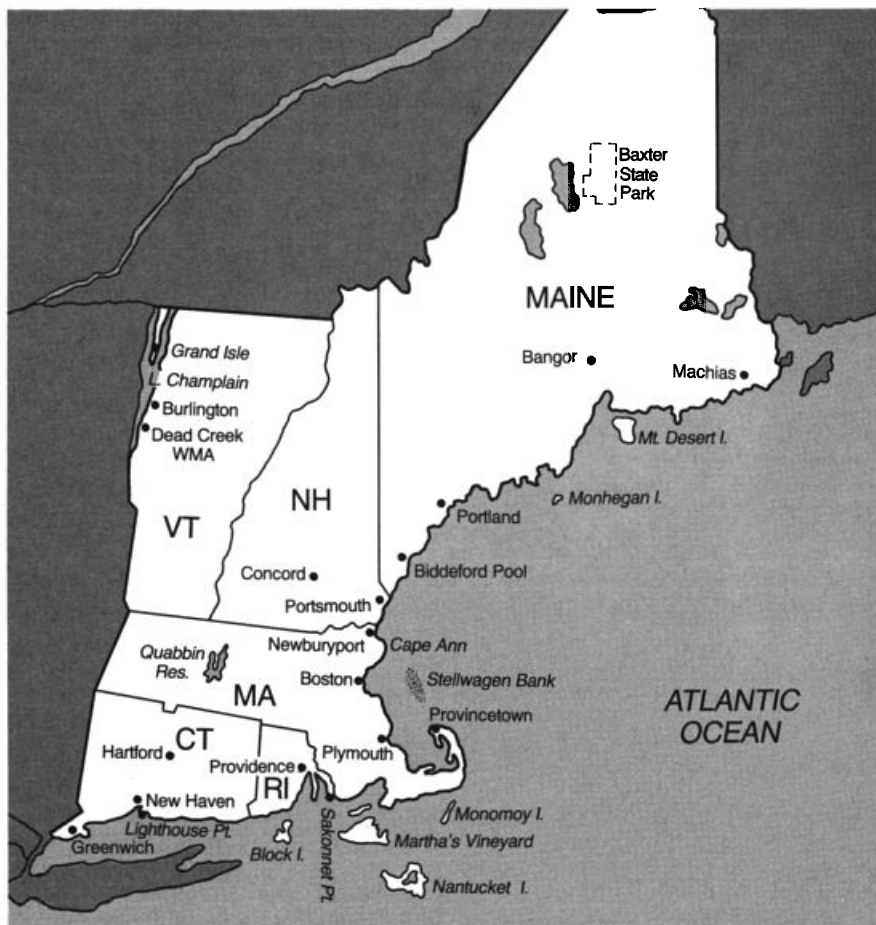
(GH). Red Crossbills were relatively uncommon throughout, while White-winged Crossbills were outstandingly abundant, especially in s.e. Newfoundland, s.e. New Brunswick, and c. Nova Scotia. There was much singing and displaying. In New Brunswick birds killed seeking roadside grit included males with cloacal protuberances and a female in mid-February with a possible post-breeding brood patch (DSC). Another female in St. John's, NF, had grass in her beak on Feb. 20 (BMct). Common Redpolls were unreported in Nova Scotia and P.E.I., low on CBCs but more common later in New Brunswick (DSC), and fairly common in small flocks during the new year in Newfoundland (BMct). There was one report of a Hoary Redpoll in Gros Morne N.P., NF (RB). Details might be submitted on all such sightings, given current taxonomic dispute about redpolls. Pine Siskins were common throughout the Region in their native habitats, but almost absent at feeders. Evening Grosbeaks were "amazingly almost totally absent" (BMct) in s.e. Newfoundland, "found irregularly" in Nova Scotia (DAC), yet CBC estimates per party-hour in New Brunswick were "only exceeded by 1986" (DSC). Presumably they stayed largely n. and w. of our Region.

ADDENDA — A subadult **Ross' Gull** at Canso, NS, June 7–9, 1988 (SB, June Jarvis, N & WP, ph.) was not previously reported in AB. A **Northern Wheatear** well observed Oct. 2, 1988, was new for S.P.M. (Frank Uritzbera, fide RE).

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NEW ENGLAND REGION

Blair Nikula



The winter of 1988–1989 once again found birders bemoaning the paucity of avian life. The season was mild, very dry, and almost snowless throughout the Region. In Boston, the seasonal temperatures averaged 1.3°F above normal, owing entirely to a phenomenally mild January that averaged a whopping 4.9°F above normal. Precipitation totaled just over 4 inches for the period, 66% below normal, making it the second driest winter in 119 years of record-keeping in Boston. Snowfall there totaled only 11.9 inches, 62% below average, while Portland, Maine, received 31 inches, a 56% deficit. Only northernmost Maine received any significant snowfall.

Whether birds were in fact scarce, or simply more dispersed and harder to find due to the mild, open conditions is difficult to ascertain, although a combination of the two seems likely. Perhaps never before have the northern irruptive species been found in such universally low numbers. Only a couple of these species approached even average numbers, while most were scarce to nearly-absent. On the other hand, those species that have invaded from the south over the last two to three decades continued to expand, or at least consolidate, their ranges within the Region. One wonders if there isn't a connection here.

While it is quite clear that the "irruptions" of various northern species are triggered by a food shortage within their normal range, rather than that season's (i.e., short-term) weather pattern, the long-term climatic warming we have experienced over the last half-century is likely the primary factor responsible for the northward shift in the range of a wide variety of species. It may be that an expansion at the northern edge of a species' range would be accompanied by a contraction at the southern edge. Thus, assuming that the range of many boreal species has also shifted northward (unproven speculation on my part), these species would continue to irrupt when food supplies failed, but their wanderings simply would not carry them as far south. Although there seem to be many examples to support this theory—we are seeing more Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Tufted Titmice, but seemingly fewer Black-backed Woodpeckers and Boreal Chickadees—there are some perplexing contradictions to the general trend: Great Cormorants and ravens are spreading south, as Double-crested Cormorants and Fish Crows spread northward. Although the northward expansion of a variety of unrelated species into New England is indisputable, the northward contraction of some boreal species out of the Region has yet to be shown. Clearly, an examination over a much larger geographical scale than just New England is needed to confirm or disprove any such trends. Confounding the issue is that such population shifts typically do not occur in a smooth continuum over time or space, but rather in sporadic bits and spurts which, only when averaged over many years, show a net gain or loss. These are just the sort of trends that the information presented in *AB*, when viewed as a whole over time, is well-suited to detect.

Returning to less speculative matters, the mild season resulted, predictably, in a number of unseasonal occurrences, although far fewer than would have been expected, especially following a mild second half of the fall. Avian mortality was, if not actually low, at least less in evidence than usual. Some flavor was lent to the winter by a modest variety of vagrants, prominent among which was the Region's first confirmed Sprague's Pipit.

It is a pleasure to relate that, for the first time in this editor's experience, fairly extensive and in some cases exhaustive reports were received from all six states in the Region! Let's hope that this is one trend that continues. As always, sincere thanks to all contributors, most espe-

cially to the various state compilers, all of whom must go to great lengths to get their records to the *AB* editors on time.

As in the past, no Christmas Bird Count data is included in this summary, except in the case of particularly noteworthy rarities or in instances where a noteworthy species was recorded prior to or beyond the count day.

ABBREVIATIONS — M.V. = Martha's Vineyard, MA; S.I.S.P. = Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, CT; T.A.S.L. = "Take A Second Look," Boston Harbor census.

LOONS TO HERONS — Hundreds of Red-throated and Common loons were present off Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard in December, but elsewhere numbers seemed decidedly low. A Pacific/Arctic Loon was found on Monhegan I. Dec. 22–23 (†PDV), and another was reported, without details, from Gloucester, MA, Feb. 2 (T. French).

For the 5th consecutive year the Cape Cod Bird Club conducted a waterfowl census covering 284 ponds and lakes during the first weekend of December. The census turned up only 56 Pied-billed Grebes, 34% below the 5-year average (C.C.B.C.). Modest numbers of Horned Grebes were found, with a peak count of 156 in Georgetown, ME, Jan. 15 (PDV). Elsewhere there were 62 in Westport, CT, Feb. 20 (SKO); 50 at S.I.S.P., on the same date (FM); and 54 in Boston Harbor Jan. 29 (T.A.S.L.). Inland, 29 Horned Grebes at Charlotte Beach, VT, Jan. 29 (B. Meador) and a total of 32 reported from w. Massachusetts, the latest on Jan. 22, were indicative of the generally ice-free conditions prevailing throughout January. Red-necked Grebes appeared in good numbers early and remained throughout the period, with 110 found in Hull, MA, Dec. 1 (P. Thayer); 100 at Reid S.P., ME, Jan. 17 (*fide* WCT), 54 at Rye, NH, Feb. 14 (LP); and 64 at Sachuest Pt., RI, Jan. 14 (S. Dziadosz). The venerable Western Grebe remained at Georgetown, ME, through at least Feb. 4 (v.o., *fide* JD); another was in Rye, NH, Jan. 29–Feb. 12 (B. & H. Rathbone *et al.*), and one was reported from Wellfleet, MA, Jan. 18 (H. & N. Ober).

Unusual numbers of N. Gannets, mostly adults, lingered throughout the period. A concentration of 2000 in Chatham, MA, Dec. 3 was typical for that date and locale, but 350 in Provincetown, MA, Jan. 21 (R. Fox *et al.*); 500+ in Eastham, MA, Feb. 25 (WRP *et al.*); and up to 65 off Pt. Judith, RI, in mid-January (DLK) were exceptional mid to late winter totals. Inland Great Cormorants were found at Enfield, CT, Jan. 14 (PS); Waltham, MA, Dec. 13 (RAF); Agawam, MA, where up to three were present Jan. 5–13 (J. Withgott *et al.*); and Salmon Falls, NH, Dec. 30 (DA). The wintering population of Double-crested Cormorants continues to burgeon as indicated by 76 and 60 in Boston Harbor, Dec. 4 and Jan. 8, respectively (T.A.S.L.), and 30 in Jerusalem, RI, Jan. 7 (DLK).

The only reports of Am. Bitterns (outside of CBCs) were of single birds in Portsmouth, NH, Dec. 22 (L. Urban), and S. Dartmouth, MA, Jan. 29 (L.C.E.S.). The unseasonable weather apparently induced several Great Egrets to linger: two in Norwalk, CT, Dec. 1, had dwindled to one by Dec. 16 (FM), and it (or others) were seen a short way down the coast at S.I.S.P. Dec. 24 (R. Winkler) and Stratford Dec. 29 (SKO). Others were at Potters Pond, RI, Jan. 11 & 28 (DF); Scituate, MA, Jan. 16 (S. Hecker); and Nantucket on the remarkable date of Feb. 26 (ML).

WATERFOWL — The only Tundra Swans reported were at their traditional site at Squibnocket on M.V., where four were still present Feb. 20 (VL *et al.*). Greater White-fronted Geese have become routine visitors to s. New England and a record number this winter included single birds (possibly involving some duplication) in Storrs, CT, Dec. 31 (J. McDonald) and Bloomfield, CT, Jan. 9–Feb. 25 (B. Kleiner); Matunuck, RI, through Dec. 3 (DLK) and Kingston, RI, Dec. 26

(DLK), Wenham, MA, Dec 31 (R. Humphrey) and Danvers, MA, Jan 31 (J. Brown), and the two birds that appeared in New Bedford, MA, in the fall remained through the period and were joined by a 3rd individual in early February (m.ob.). The New Bedford birds were identified as the Greenland race *flavirostris*; the racial identity of the others was not specified. Ever the skeptic, I wonder how reliably the racial identity of these birds can be determined in the field. Snow Geese continue to linger in s. New England in ever-increasing numbers and this year there were far too many to enumerate. Massachusetts had a total of six birds, the latest Feb. 14 (v.o.); Connecticut had four birds through Jan. 9 (v.o.); and Rhode Island had possibly as many as 37 birds, including a flock of 19 in Kingston Dec. 5 (RB) and 10 at Gardners Pond Jan. 1 (RB). Finally, a "Blue" Snow Goose was in Framingham, MA, Feb. 23-28 (RAF). Presumably, these wintering birds are "Greater" Snow Geese (*A. c. atlanticus*). An elusive Barnacle Goose, first discovered in late October, frustrated many birders in the New Bedford, MA, area throughout the period. The fact that the bird was discovered in the company of the aforementioned Greenland White-fronteds led to continuing speculation that it might be legitimately wild.

A few Wood Ducks were scattered across the Region, the northernmost being single birds in Waterville and Damariscotta, ME, in January (*fide* JD); Hinsdale, NH, in February (WE); and two in Auburn, NH, in December (D. Crowe). Notable counts of Am. Black Ducks included 450 inland at Hinsdale, NH, Feb. 18 (WE) and 1300 in Duxbury, MA, Dec. 10 (WRP), while highest concentrations of N. Pintail were of 35 in Westport, MA, Jan. 18 (RB) and a well-below-normal 30 in Yarmouthport, MA, Feb. 11 (BN). Northern Shovelers, always a good winter find anywhere in the Region, were found in Maine (one; *fide* Bart Cadbury), Massachusetts (three birds at 2 sites; v.o.), and Rhode Island (three birds at 2 sites; v.o.). Gadwalls continue to increase, as indicated by flocks of 75 in White Brook, RI, Jan. 1 (DF); 47 in Stratford, CT, Dec. 27 (SKo); 28 in Newport, RI, Jan. 24 (R. Enser); and 20+ in both Plymouth and Sandwich, MA, throughout the period (v.o.). Eurasian Wigeon totaled one or two each in Connecticut and Rhode Island, and five-plus in Massachusetts (v.o.). Watchmocket Cove, RI, hosted a maximum of 635 Am. Wigeon (RB) nearly identical to last winter's count there, while 200 were in Plymouth, MA, Jan. 2 (R. Fox *et al.*) and 83 in Stratford, CT, Feb. 19 (SKo).

Redheads wintering on Nantucket numbered 70 on Feb. 19-20 (DL *et al.*), somewhat below recent levels; and 30 were at Island Park, RI, Dec. 17 (J. & R. Gee). A ♂ Tufted Duck played hide-and-seek with birders in Sandwich, MA, from

Dec 17 through the period (GG, m ob.) A carefully studied flock of 125 Lesser Scaup in New Haven, CT, Feb 12 (FM *et al.*) was an unusual find; the exact winter status of this species in the Region remains obscure. Sea ducks, once again, were scarce across the Region. The largest concentration of Com Eider was of only 7312 in Boston Harbor, Feb. 26 (T.A.S.L.) King Eiders totalled only three in Maine, one in New Hampshire, and six in Massachusetts. Oldsquaw and all three species of scoters seemed very scarce as well, with only a handful of reports received.

A total of 393 Com. Goldeneyes in w. Massachusetts (SK) was exceptional and presumably reflected the relatively ice-free conditions through much of the period. By far the highest count of Barrow's Goldeneyes came from Belfast Harbor, ME, where there was a maximum of 25+ (AH). Inland Barrow's included at least five birds on Lake Champlain (v.o); two in Holyoke, MA, Jan. 25-28 (HA); and up to three in Enfield, CT, Jan. 15-Feb. 25 (M. O'Leary, v.o.). Bufflehead is one of those widespread species that rarely evoke any comments from observers; however, a total of 1727 on the Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Census, Dec. 5-6, was a record high, 38% above the 5-year average (C.C.B.C.), and a total of 50 in w. Massachusetts (SK) was also well above average. Hooded Mergansers were numerous in s.e. New England: a total of 381 on Cape Cod Dec. 5-6 (C.C.B.C.) was 47% above the 5-year average. Few Ruddy Ducks were reported, except for a flock of 190 in E. Providence, RI, Dec. 7 (DE).

VULTURES, HAWKS — A Black Vulture frequenting a farm in E. Machias, ME, Dec. 13-Feb. 14 (D. Craven, v.o.) was one of the season's avian luminaries and provided a very rare winter occurrence (and apparently the northernmost) for the Region. Turkey Vultures wintered as far north as Massachusetts, where about 10 birds were seen in December and January (*fide* RHS). Ospreys were reported, without details, from Harwich, MA, Dec. 4 (R. Rozsa), and Whaleback (?), NH, Jan. 4 (Phil Gentile). The Region's wintering Bald Eagle population continued at a high level: the annual eagle census recorded 44 birds in Massachusetts, about average by recent standards, but a whopping 88 eagles in Connecticut, 36 birds above last year's record.

Sharp-shinned Hawks were sparsely reported, but Cooper's Hawks were widespread. It was definitely not a flight year for N. Goshawk, perhaps owing to an abundance of grouse in the north. However, this is one of the many species for which it is difficult to determine whether a lack of reports accurately reflects a lack of birds; CBC data provides a better indication of population trends for most of our wintering species.

One Red-shouldered Hawk was reported from New Hampshire (B. & M. Suomala), three from Massachusetts (v.o.), and four from Rhode Island (*fide* DE), a fairly typical winter distribution. Utterly improbable, and lacking any details, was a report of a Broad-winged Hawk being hand-fed liver and hamburger at a residence in Ashville, ME, Feb. 7-28 (?) (M. Dedmon, *fide* WCT). Rough-legged Hawks were sprinkled across the Region in well-below-normal numbers. The only Golden Eagles were an individual in the Quabbin area, MA, throughout the period (M. Lynch, v.o.), and an immature at Barkhamsted Res., CT, Jan. 14-Feb. 19 (S. Broker *et al.*).

A total of nine Am. Kestrels in w. Massachusetts (SK) was below average, and "very few" were in Connecticut (FM), continuing the discouraging trend exhibited by this species over the last decade or so. Merlins seemed scarcer than we have come to expect in recent winters; only one was reported in Connecticut, two in Rhode Island, several in Massachusetts, and two in Maine. However, 10 years ago a similar number of wintering Merlins would have been considered exceptional. Peregrine Falcons were fairly numerous, with four to six or more in Connecticut (*fide* FM), two in Rhode Island (*fide* DE), three or four in Massachusetts (*fide* RHS), one in Vermont (R. Durand), two in New Hampshire (*fide* DL), and

S.A.

Harlequin Ducks provided a sharp contrast to the general sea duck trend, at least in s. New England where once again record counts were noted. At the species' southern stronghold, Sachuest Pt., RI, 64 were present Jan. 22 (N. Hill *et al.*), eclipsing the previous record of 60 set there 2 years ago. On M.V., a maximum of 38 on Feb. 20 (VL *et al.*) was probably the highest ever on that island, as was a total of 20 birds on Nantucket (*fide* SAP). At least nine others were found elsewhere in Massachusetts, and one at New London Dec. 31-Feb. 28 (v.o.) was a rare find in Connecticut. Few Harlequin reports were received from Maine, however, and once again no effort could be made to census around Isle au Haut, traditionally the core of the species' range in New England. Whether the increase in the south indicates an overall population increase, or simply a southern shift in the wintering range, is unclear. For a discussion of the present and historical status of Harlequins in the northeast see Vickery (1988, *Wilson Bulletin* 100:119-126) and Goudie (1989, *Wilson Bulletin* 101:112-114).

one in Maine (*vide* J Hamlin) Only 3 Gyrfalcon sightings consisted of one in Ferrisburg, VT, Jan. 5 (†S. Whitmore), one in Burlington, VT, Feb. 4 (†SBL *et al.*); and one in Dixmont, ME, Dec. 3 (B. Barker).

GALLIFORMES TO ALCIDS — Ruffed Grouse were described as “abundant” in Vermont (WE) and there were “many” in Maine (JD). For the 2nd consecutive year a Com. Moorhen survived the season on Nantucket (E. Ray). Although a count of 200+ Am. Coots in Plymouth, MA, Dec. 4 (WRP) was encouraging, elsewhere the species was very scarce. The Cape Cod Lake and Pond census turned up only 20 coots, 73% below the 5-year average (C.C.B.C.).

Despite the mellow weather, it was one of the poorest winters for shorebirds in memory, with almost no lingerers. Two Killdeer survived until at least Jan. 4 in Hampton, NH (I. MacLeod *et al.*), and several others were reported later in the season in s. coastal areas. Flocks of Ruddy Turnstones were present in several e. Massachusetts locales, most notably Scituate where a peak of 80 was noted Jan. 21 (D. Clapp *et al.*), and Nantucket where 50 were found Jan. 2 (*vide* RHS); 4 other sites had a total of 36+ birds. A dowitcher (sp.) in Hyannis, MA, Feb. 27 (*vide* GG) was presumably one of the same birds that has wintered there for at least 4 of the past 6 years now; presumably a Long-billed (as in past years), it did not voice its identity this time around. No description whatsoever was received for a bird reported as a Short-billed Dowitcher in Concord, NH, Feb. 11, an extremely unlikely location and date. I am unaware of any valid records of Short-billed in New England later than the first week of December.

Laughing Gulls tarried at Briggs Beach, RI, Dec. 6 (C. Raithal), and Westport, MA, Dec. 17 (RB *et al.*). For the 2nd consecutive winter, no Little Gulls were reported. A total of 25–30 Com. Black-headed Gulls Regionwide was about average, with a maximum of 14 in the usual Winthrop/Boston Harbor area, MA (v.o.). Elsewhere, there was one in Maine in December (R. Widrig); two in New Hampshire in January and February (*vide* DL); two in Newburyport, MA, in January and February (v.o.); and 10–12 in Rhode Island in December and January (*vide* DE). The season’s only Mew Gull was in Quincy, MA, Dec. 15 and Jan. 16 (D. Brown *et al.*).

Thayer’s Gull reports included a 2nd-winter bird in Burlington, VT, Feb. 4 (†SBL *et al.*); a first-winter bird on Monhegan I., Dec. 22 (†PDV); an adult in Provincetown, MA, Jan. 16–21 (W. Bailey *et al.*); and a 3rd-winter bird in Gloucester, MA, Feb. 5 (†WE *et al.*). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were just about everywhere, and too numerous to list individually. Maine had three reports; Vermont, one; Massachusetts, 10+; Rhode Island, one; and Connecticut, three. Most were adults. Black-legged Kittiwakes were present along s.e. coastal sections, but rarely in concentrations exceeding 100 birds—a far cry from the high levels of the past 15± years.

Very few alcids were reported except for Razorbills, which were once again present in the hundreds off Cape Cod and Nantucket through January: 500+ were at Nantucket Dec. 31 (G D’Entremont); 350+ large alcids, thought to be Razorbills, were in Provincetown Jan. 22 (BN), and 250+ Razorbills were still there Jan. 28 (JBr). A Black Guillemot at Narragansett, RI, Dec. 27 (*vide* DLK) was noteworthy at that locale, but elsewhere they drew little comment. Single Atlantic Puffins were observed at Rockport, MA, Jan. 31 (JBr) and in Cape Cod Bay, w of Provincetown, Feb. 13 (S. Highley).

OWLS TO CORVIDS — It was certainly not a winter for owl lovers. Common Barn-Owl sightings, outside of their M.V. stronghold, included a bird in Boston Jan. 8 (T.A.S.L.); one in Bridgewater, MA, Dec. 26 (KHo); and at least two on Nantucket through the period (v.o.). Following 2 winters marked by major incursions, Snowy Owls returned to a more typical low level: several were reported from Maine, two from Ver-

mont, a dozen or so from Massachusetts (mostly at the traditional Logan Airport and Newburyport sites), and one or two from Connecticut, but none from New Hampshire or Rhode Island. Unique this season was a N. Hawk-Owl in Sherman, ME, Jan. 31 (*vide* WCT). The elusive Long-eared Owl revealed itself only in Massachusetts, where three or four were noted during the period. Short-eared Owls seemed scarce as well, except at 3 Massachusetts sites: up to six were in Middleboro (WRP), three in Newburyport (JB), and four on Nantucket (DL). Very few N. Saw-whet Owls appeared either, except on Nantucket where at least several were present.

Red-headed Woodpeckers, following a good showing last winter, again became very scarce, with only two birds Regionwide: an immature in E. Machias, ME, Dec. 31–Jan. 26 (S. Bahrt *et al.*), and one in Wayland, MA, throughout the period (*vide* RHS). In sharp contrast, Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to consolidate their holdings in central New England Outside of their Connecticut and M.V. strongholds, two Red-bellieds were found in Vermont, three in New Hampshire, no fewer than 15 in Massachusetts, and at least three in Rhode Island, but none, apparently, in Maine, where six had appeared last winter. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers survived the winter in S. Hadley, MA (B. Dzwonkoski) and E. Orleans, MA (J. & S. Talin); one was on Nantucket in January (*vide* RHS), and one was found for the 4th consecutive year in Cowesett, RI, Dec. 12–Jan. 4 (K. Kinsey).

Eastern Phoebe lingered into December at no fewer than 5 sites in Massachusetts and one site in Rhode Island, and individuals survived until at least Jan. 10 in Jamaica Plain, MA (T. Aversa), and Jan. 21–22 in Wellfleet, MA (*vide* R. Prescott). Intriguing was a description of a bird thought to have been a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that, unfortunately, was seen only briefly flying across the road in Littleton, MA, on the highly improbable date of Feb. 23 (†V. Yurkunas). Exceptionally late Tree Swallows were found on Cape Cod in early January: three in Truro and one in Eastham Jan. 1 (DL, R. Comeau), and one in Provincetown Jan. 3 (R. Titus).

The Region’s largest (?) roosts of Am. Crows contained maxima of 4400+ birds in Framingham, MA (v.o.); 3000 in Lawrence, MA (*vide* GG); and 1600+ in Norwalk, CT (FM) Fish Crows made no new inroads during the period, and were even thought to be declining in their major wintering area S.W. of Boston (RAF)—although a maximum of 600+ at the Framingham crow roost (KH) suggested no significant decline. A seasonal total of nine in Rhode Island (DE) was above average.

NUTHATCHES TO SHRIKES — Red-breasted Nuthatches seemed numerous in the interior but scarce along the coast. Few contributors commented on Brown Creepers, but a total of 58 in w. Massachusetts was well above normal (SK). The Carolina Wren population of the Region is near or at an all-time high. The species was widespread throughout most of s. New England, and to the north, there were no fewer than six in Vermont, the northernmost in Brandon; two in New Hampshire; and of five in Maine, birds in Skowhegan and Hamden (*vide* JD) were particularly ambitious wanderers. A Marsh Wren on Nantucket Feb. 12 (ML) was late, although the species occasionally overwinters in the Region’s southern coastal sections.

Golden-crowned Kinglets seemed to be present in modest numbers, although 65 total in w. Massachusetts was low (SK) The only Ruby-crowned Kinglet sighted in the new year was in Jamestown, RI, Jan. 2 & 29 (C. Powell). Less fortunate was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher found dead in Grand Isle, VT, Dec 24 (E. Henning, *V.I.N.S.).

Wintering E. Bluebirds continued to increase throughout s New England, except on Cape Cod where, for no apparent reason, the species remains rather rare. A **Townsend’s Soli-**

taire was a surprising find in remote Errol, NH, Dec. 26 (DA, SA et al.). Hermit Thrushes survived the season in a number of s. coastal sites, but one in Veazie, ME, Feb. 16–19 (C. Guidotti) was particularly hardy. American Robins were scarce everywhere, except in e. Massachusetts and Cape Cod where they were found in abundance. In Barnstable, MA, 2100+ robins were counted flying to roost Dec. 27 (KH et al.); a maximum of 750+ were roosting in Cambridge, MA, throughout the period (fide RHS); and 350+ were estimated in Provincetown Jan. 14 (BN et al.). Surprisingly, only one Varied Thrush appeared this year, and then for only a day, Feb. 4 in Wolfeboro, NH (J. Frazier et al.); in recent years we have come to expect several of the lovely “mountain robins” per winter.

A Brown Thrasher in Lamoine, ME, Feb. 4–18 (M. Stocking) was unusually late at that latitude. Exceptional, although not without precedent, were 16 Water Pipits at Sand Hill Cove, RI, Jan. 23, with 15 still there Jan. 29 (DLK et al.). Single pipits were found at Scarborough marsh, ME, Feb. 16–27 (JD), and on George’s Island, Boston, MA, Jan. 28 (J. Nove). Unquestionably the bird of the season was a **Sprague’s Pipit** in Provincetown, MA, Dec. 17 through at least Feb. 12 (J. Smith, R. Heil, m.ob.). Although elusive at times, the bird was often very cooperative and delighted scores of birders, many of whom were treated to their best looks ever at this normally very shy species. The record represents one of very few anywhere on the east coast, and the first confirmed in the Region, there being but one previous single-observer sight record in 1975 at Lincoln Centre, ME.

Bohemian Waxwings were extremely scarce throughout n. New England, and were essentially absent even in the Orono area of Maine where hundreds can normally be expected. Yet, curiously, Bohemians showed up in 3 places in e. Massachusetts: four in Middleboro Jan. 14–Feb. 24 (KHo), a single in Cambridge Jan. 29–Feb. 5 (L. Taylor et al.), and 20 in Millis Feb. 19 (RAF). Small flocks of Cedar Waxwings were scattered throughout the Region, but nowhere was the species numerous. Northern Shrikes were very few and far between, with no more than 15 or so reported.

VIREOS TO SPARROWS — No details accompanied a report of a White-eyed Vireo in Wells, ME, Dec. 3 (fide WCT). Very few tardy warblers were found this season. An Orange-crowned Warbler survived at a feeder in Camden, ME, through at least mid-February (ph. AH). An “Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler was present throughout the period at the same feeder in Greenfield, MA, where one, undoubtedly the same bird, spent last winter (D. Potter). A few Pine Warblers routinely winter in s. coastal sections, but a flock of 15+ feeding on the ground in Middleboro, MA, Jan. 21 (WRP et al.) must have been an amazing sight. Although Palm Warblers regularly linger into December in s. New England, they rarely survive the first solid snowfall. This snowless season saw at least four birds in Massachusetts and Rhode Island in January, and individuals persevered to Feb. 5 in Rye, NH (DA, SA), and Feb. 13 in Halifax, MA (K. Anderson). An Ovenbird visited a feeder in Eastham, MA, Dec. 16–17 (fide D. Reynolds). Yellow-breasted Chats persisted until Jan. 4 in Portland, ME (R. Eakin) and into early February at at least 3 sites on Cape Cod (R. Prescott).

Three *Phaeucticus* grosbeaks appeared at feeders this season: a bird reported as a Rose-breasted in Cheshire, MA, Dec. 5–8 (R. Daub); a Black-headed in Harwinton, CT, Jan. 29–Feb. 11 (D. & D. Cromwell, fide FM); and another Black-headed on M.V., Dec. 3 to Feb. 27 (D. Small, v.o.), expiring on the latter date in the talons of a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Unfortunately, once again no details were submitted (to this editor) for any of these grosbeaks. Only two Dickcissels were noted: at Kenduskeag, ME, Dec. 28 (C. Dorchester), and in Newburyport, MA, throughout the period (v.o.). A **Green-tailed Towhee** throughout the period in Southwest Harbor, ME (†M.L. Hughes, v.o.) provided only the 2nd state record.



Le Conte's Sparrow at Newbury, Massachusetts, February 11, 1989. Photograph/Jeff Young.

Although an excellent variety was found, sparrow populations generally seemed very sparse. The only tardy Chipping Sparrows were in Middlebury, VT, Dec. 13 (M. Nelson et al.), and Essex, MA, Dec. 18–19 (JB et al.). Clay-colored Sparrows were found in Hadley, MA, Dec. 18–Feb. 28 (SS, v.o.); Middleboro, MA, Jan. 15–16 (WRP et al.); and Smithfield, RI, Dec. 1–Jan. 18 (A. Fry). Procrastinating Vesper Sparrows were in Hadley, MA, Dec. 18–Jan. 1 (SS et al.) and Newbury, MA, Feb. 5–19 (SP et al.), and a Grasshopper Sparrow in Halifax, MA, Feb. 5 was very late (WRP). Many observers enjoyed a relatively cooperative **Le Conte's Sparrow** in Newbury, MA, Feb. 4–28 (WRP, m.ob.). This species, if not actually increasing in the Region, is certainly being detected more frequently in recent years. Only four Fox Sparrows were reported, a paltry total, if complete. Lincoln's Sparrows are showing up more often in the early winter and occasionally surviving the season. This year three were in e. Massachusetts in December, and one particularly hardy individual was in Deerfield, MA, Jan. 14–Feb. 10 (M. Kasprzyk et al.). A Swamp Sparrow in Hubbardton, VT, Jan. 14 (WE et al.) was considered a good find in that state, while farther south they were in short supply. Following a good fall flight, White-crowned Sparrows were widespread across s. New England in December, with at least nine in Massachusetts and 20 in Rhode Island. For the 3rd consecutive winter, a **Harris' Sparrow** punctuates the sparrow list, this year's bird in Deerfield, MA, from Jan. 2 into April (H. Allen, v.o.).

LONGSPURS TO FINCHES — Up to 100 Lapland Longspurs were found in Newbury, MA, in February (fide RHS), but few were noted elsewhere. Snow Buntings, on the other hand, were in abundance, primarily in northern and inland locales. Mind-boggling was a report of 8000 “snowbirds” in Monkton, VT, Jan. 20 (H. Bennett), and “1000s” were in W. Pawlet, VT, Jan. 26 (A. Black). A seasonal total of 1030 Snow Buntings in w. Massachusetts, although paltry in comparison, was substantially above average there (SK).

Counts of 40+ E. Meadowlarks in Middleboro, MA, Jan. 29 (WRP); 25 in S. Kingston, RI, Jan. 1 (fide DE); and 10 at Sachuest Pt., RI, Jan. 24 (fide DE) were encouraging, and undoubtedly a consequence of the snowless conditions. Rusty Blackbirds seemed to be present in good numbers, with several small flocks reported from throughout the Region. A Brewer's Blackbird in Westport, MA, Dec. 17 (RB et al.) provided a very rare winter occurrence. Northern Orioles were found in December in every state except Vermont, and January sightings included one each in Maine and New Hampshire, and at least

seven in Massachusetts. Particularly hardy were singles in Portsmouth, NH, Feb. 8 (J. Silver) and Sandwich, MA, Feb. 6 (P. Trimble). None of these orioles was reported to be "Bullock's," but then only a couple were specifically reported as "Baltimores."

For many of us in s. New England, the term "winter finch" evokes only the vaguest of memories. Were it not for the resident House Finches and a few goldfinches, this winter would have been truly finchless in many areas. Pine Grosbeaks were numerous in Aroostook, ME (WJS), but were virtually absent elsewhere. Purple Finches were again apallingly scarce just about everywhere, although one reporter thought them to have been fairly common in s. Maine (WCT). A seasonal total of only seven Purples in w. Massachusetts (SK) was pitiful. A few token Red Crossbills were noted, mostly in the far north, and White-winged Crossbills were equally scarce, except in Aroostook, ME, where "high numbers" were present (WJS). A handful of Com. Redpolls filtered into Maine in February, but were elsewhere and otherwise absent. Aroostook also hosted "many" Pine Siskins (WJS) but, although recorded in every state, they were very few and far between anywhere else. Apparently, Evening Grosbeaks were

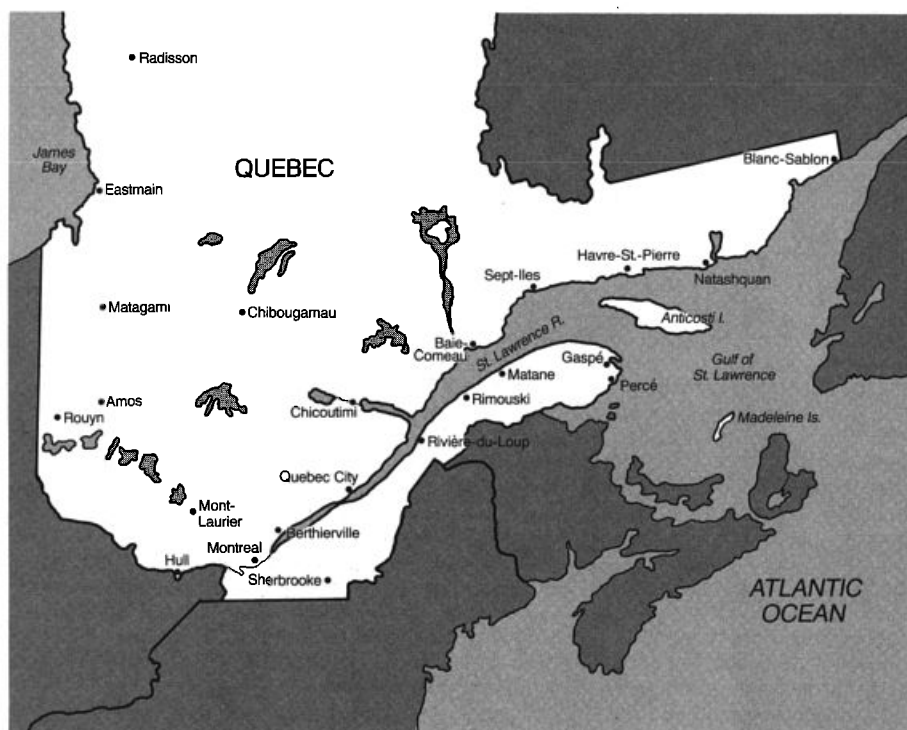
also in good supply in n. Maine, but were in the lowest numbers in recent memory throughout the remainder of the Region. I was unaware of any on Cape Cod, and in Rhode Island they were totally absent for the "first time in at least 20 years" (DE).

EXOTICS — At least 40 Monk Parakeets were in their traditional Bridgeport/Fairfield, CT, area throughout the period (*fide* FM).

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QUEBEC REGION

Richard Yank,
Yves Aubry, and
Michel Gosselin



Northern Quebec experienced cold and dry weather throughout the season. Conditions in the south were much more variable by comparison. As in the north, December temperatures and precipitation levels were below normal, forcing most migrants to depart before year's end. January was the warmest in recent years, however, and widespread areas of open water and bare ground sustained a variety of half-hardy waterfowl and passerines. Precipitation was heavier than usual in western Quebec and below average elsewhere during January. February was dry with near normal temperatures.

Observers found the season lacking in the unusual:

boreal species stayed in the forest where cone crops were plentiful, and vagrants from outside the Region generally failed to appear.

GANNETS TO WATERFOWL — A first-year N. Gannet travelled up the St. Lawrence R. and appeared at the Beauharnois dam Dec. 4 (PB)—the first to reach w. Quebec since 1984. A Black-crowned Night-Heron lingered at Quebec City until Jan. 1 (CV), surpassing the previous record departure date by almost one month.

A February tally of 3838 ducks around Montreal represented the highest total in the 8-year history of the count and

was indicative of the above-average number of waterfowl in the Region this winter. The sightings that follow were of notably late individuals. On Feb. 5, a group of eight Canada Geese was still present at Deauville where they were being fed by local admirers (GD). LaSalle hosted a lone Gadwall until Jan. 22 (PB), while a pair of Am. Wigeon remained at nearby Côte-Sainte-Catherine until the record late date of Feb. 19 (m.ob.). An imm. ♂ Ring-necked Duck paused at North-Hatley Feb. 4–28 (PS); we know of only one previous February sighting. Scaup are also rare during February, nevertheless, observers discovered single Greater at Laval-des-Rapides Feb. 2 (PB) and at Disraeli the following day (VL), and a ♀ Lesser at LaSalle Feb. 18 and later (JCS, PB). The only Harlequin Duck to appear inland was an ad. male at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Dec. 24–25 (DS, FH). With little ice on the waters surrounding the Magdalen Is., one Black and two Surf scoters were present at Havre-aux-Maisons Jan. 9 and a White-winged Scoter was still there Feb. 6 (SP); scoters do not regularly winter in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. A ♀ Hooded Merganser was sighted Jan. 6 at Dégelis (GG, DR), where six had overwintered last year, and three others found at Kiamika Feb. 25 (RLD, EB) could have wintered locally.

RAPTORS TO OWLS—Few N. Harriers were sighted, despite the mild weather; one at Lavaltrie Jan. 10–19 (BC) furnished the only late report. The status of Cooper's Hawk appears to be changing in this Region, judging by the increasing number of winter records in recent years. Singles were identified at Hemmingford Dec. 26 (PB) and Hull Jan. 8 (DSH, NG), while up to three patrolled fields in Dorval Dec. 17–Jan. 24 (m.ob.) and one was seen at Warwick until Feb. 11 (JPa). Northern raptors staged a modest flight: following an average passage in November and December, almost no Rough-legged Hawks wintered in the province and only two or three Gyrfalcons showed up in s. Quebec. Two Peregrine Falcons cruised the Verdun-LaSalle waterfront during January (*fide* PB) while another was present at Hull throughout the period (RLD *et al.*).

Gray Partridge seems to be well established in the Quebec City area. This season, groups of 12 were encountered at Berthier-sur-Mer Jan. 8–15 (RF, JLC) and at Saint-Alban in February (CM). A seasonal high of six Com. Snipe lingered along the St. Lawrence R.: one at Les Cèdres Dec. 31–Jan. 2 (MMc *et al.*), one at Sorel in January (DM), two at Tracy (JLL) and one at Beauport (JFR) all season (an annual event at the latter site since 1983–1984), and another Feb. 17–24 at La Pocatière (CA) that likely wintered in the area. Common Black-headed Gulls are to be expected in the Magdalen Is. during December, and two were indeed observed at Havre-aux-Basques Dec. 7 (PF); up to two immatures also appeared at Saint-Romuald-d'Etchemin Nov. 23–Dec. 11 (CV, RF, JLC *et al.*). Ring-billed Gulls usually leave this Region for several weeks in mid-winter; an adult at Sherbrooke Feb. 4 (CD) was therefore noteworthy. A 2nd-year Thayer's Gull was studied at the Beauharnois dam Dec. 7 (BB *et al.*) and an adult turned up at Rimouski Jan. 3 (GG, DR). Two imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes were viewed at the Beauharnois dam on the late date of Dec. 28 (PB), while an ad. Ivory Gull appeared inland at Métabetchouan Dec. 4 (MS, CG). As was the case last year, at least one Mourning Dove survived the season at Baie-Comeau (MR, ST). One at Maniwaki Jan. 31 (GB) was also farther north than usual, but a flock of 120 at Lavaltrie the same day better illustrated the current winter status of this species in s. Quebec (BC).

Relatively few Snowy Owls reached s. Quebec, with only Quebec City reporting numbers approaching those of last winter. Although less than one-half of last year's tally, 20 N. Hawk-Owls was still well above average. Reports totalling 14–15 Great Gray Owls originated from w. Quebec and around L. Saint-Jean, while eight Boreal Owls, including five near Montreal, constituted an excellent showing for this species. The distribution and number of sightings of the latter three

boreal species would indicate a gradual and simultaneous southward displacement of our resident populations during the season. Again this winter, N. Saw-whet Owls were present throughout the period; one at Chicoutimi until Jan. 14 (RT) was particularly far north.

KINGFISHERS TO SHRIKES—As one would expect, open water enticed a few Belted Kingfishers to tarry this winter; isolated birds were discovered near Lac-Brome Jan. 18 (LS), at Capelton Feb. 4 (PS), and at Saint-Sauveur Feb. 22 (JH). Single Red-bellied Woodpeckers enlivened the season at Wakefield (DL, *fide* RLD), Gatineau N.P. (PV), Sainte-Sophie-de-Lévrard (FT), and Mont-Saint-Hilaire (DH, m.ob.); seen on 5 occasions prior to 1978, this species has now been sighted 18 times in the past decade. Northern Flickers, usually rare in winter, occurred here and there across s. Quebec; among them were lone birds at Pabos Dec. 23 (RG), Saint-Eusèbe Jan. 9 (MB), Jonquière Jan. 15 (CCr, GS), and Sainte-Louise Feb. 4–25 (CA, BD). Red-breasted Nuthatches remained common throughout the season in boreal forests around L. Saint-Jean, and along the Saguenay and the Lower St. Lawrence—areas normally vacated during the winter.

An unprecedented total of 12 or more Carolina Wrens sojourned in s.w. Quebec, while a feeder at Rivière-du-Loup sustained a Winter Wren, adding to the very few wintering records for the province (YTh, GT). Another resident of the boreal forest to remain farther north than usual was Golden-crowned Kinglet: encountered, like Red-breasted Nuthatch, in above-average numbers in the Saguenay, around Quebec City, and along the North Shore. A very late Hermit Thrush frequented the Montreal Botanical Gardens until Jan. 16 (PB). Observers in extreme s. Quebec saw a few Am. Robins, as is typical; in areas north and east of Quebec City, on the other hand, the species made its best winter showing since 1982–1983 including counts of 150 at Petite-Rivière-Saint-François Jan. 29 (JMC), 50 at Bergeronnes (AB) and at Rimouski (GG, DR) and 75 at Sacré-Coeur Feb. 5 (*fide* GC), and 250 between Gaspé and Percé Feb. 10 (PL). A ♂ Varied Thrush that adorned a Hull feeder Dec. 30–Mar. 11 (LL, LR) was one of the few western vagrants of the season. Bohemian Waxwings were almost totally absent; notable exceptions included up to 200 in the Martin-Valin conservation area, Saguenay, Jan. 21–29 (CCr, GS, LI, JI), and singles at Havre-aux-Maisons Jan. 22 (YTU) and Feb. 22 (SP) which provided our first records for the Magdalen Islands. Cedar Waxwings were also observed in low numbers, but small flocks were noted at Rimouski (GG, DR) and in the Saguenay area (*fide* GS) where they are seldom seen in winter. Contributors generally reported Northern Shrikes in below-average numbers across s. Quebec.

WARBLERS TO FINCHES—Late warblers were limited to single Yellow-rumpeds at Gaspé Dec. 20 (ML, CCu) and Havre-aux-Maisons Feb. 11 (SP, YTU), and single Com. Yellowthroats at Longueuil Dec. 14 (DD) and on nearby Notre-Dame I., Dec. 17 (JMB). Northern Cardinals were widely reported across s. Quebec as far north as Quebec City, and a female ventured to Rivière-du-Loup Dec. 10 (LD). Feeders and weedy fields with thin snow cover attracted a variety of sparrows, many of which stayed over the winter. Lone Rufous-sided Towhees spent the period of Drummondville (DJ, JPr), and at L. Saint-Charles near Quebec City (MMi *et al.*)—the latter a bird of the western race. A Swamp Sparrow came briefly to a feeder in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Jan. 22 (FH). Among the many Song Sparrows that wintered, one at Baie-Comeau (*fide* GC) should be highlighted as it represented our northernmost report; quite exceptional, however, was a Lincoln's Sparrow at Saint-Gérard-des-Laurentides (ph. MSo) that provided only the 2nd wintering record for the Region. An overgrown field in Dorval supported a mixed flock of sparrows and finches that included two to three imm. White-crowned Sparrows (RY, MMc *et al.*), also seldom found in winter. A

feeder at Lac-Superieur harbored a closely studied E. Meadowlark (RD, MC, m.ob.) throughout the period, and a meadowlark (sp.) was observed at Saint-Jacques, Montcalm, Jan. 7 (YH). Regular winter visitors in recent years, three ad. ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbirds brightened flocks of blackbirds at Beauharnois Dec. 18 (PB), Dorion Dec. 31 (JA), and Châteauguay Jan. 17–Mar. 14 (SD); the latter roosted nightly in a school yard with an estimated 4000 cowbirds! Brown-headed Cowbirds were reported wintering as far north as Chicoutimi and nearby Saint-Bruno (*fide* GS), as well as Baie-Comeau (JB).

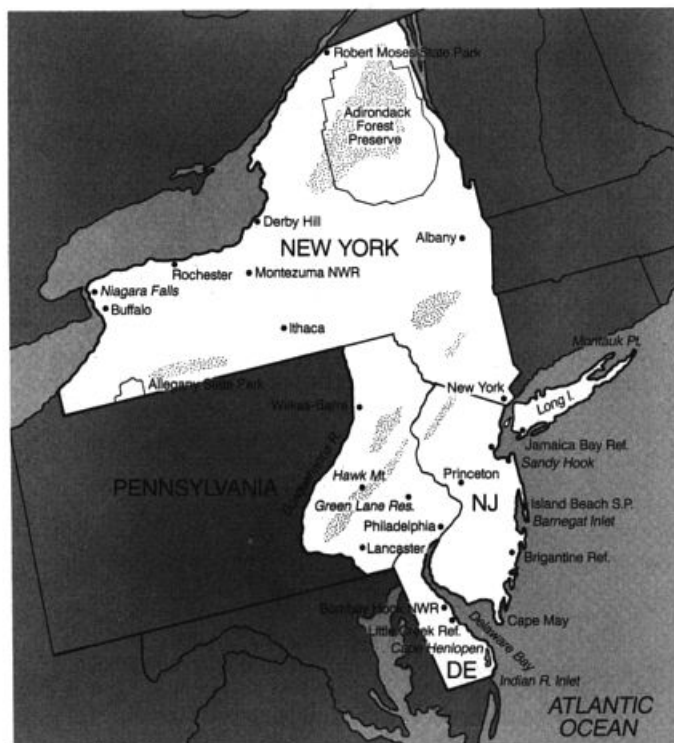
Finches did not wander far beyond the boreal forest this winter. Observers along the Upper St. Lawrence Valley had to wait until mid-February to see their first Purple Finches and Pine Siskins, and many never did see Pine Grosbeaks, crossbills, nor Evening Grosbeaks. In the Laurentians and the Appalachians, both grosbeaks, Purple Finches, and Am. Goldfinches were found in good numbers throughout the period. As a result of a plentiful cone crop, White-winged Crossbills were also abundant in c. Quebec. Redpolls reached Chicoutimi and Rimouski in good numbers but were rare farther south. An Eur. Goldfinch appeared at Saint-Amable Jan. 23 (LP, *fide* ND), and another joined the band of sparrows at Dorval Jan. 24–Feb. 19 (FH *et al.*).

CORRIGENDUM—The late Vesper Sparrows reported last season were at Mont-Laurier rather than Maniwaki.

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HUDSON- DELAWARE REGION

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



This was almost the winter that wasn't in the northeast. Exceptionally mild, dry weather prevailed from the last third of December into early February, with January averaging 6–8 degrees above normal. The warm conditions left most large bodies of water open for much of the season and resulted in many waterfowl staying farther north than usual. The temperature of Lake Erie finally fell to 32 degrees on February 8, but much of the lake remained ice-free for the duration of the winter. Many reports were

received of marginal wintering species, such as Tree Swallow, Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Oriole, and even Great Blue Heron in the Adirondacks. Far more of these and other half-hardies would probably have remained, had not the coldest weather of the season struck in mid-December—just in time to have a serious impact on the Christmas Bird Counts, which were below average over most of the Region.

Most observers called the winter season one of the duller in memory. Waterfowl were well represented, but winter finches were virtually nonexistent, raptors were unexceptional (except for Bald Eagles), and rarities were few. Some of the liveliest action occurred offshore along the New Jersey and Delaware coasts, where there were, unfortunately, few observers. Concentrations of sand eels near shore at Avalon, Cape May County, in November and early December resulted in large flocks of Northern Gannets and other seabirds, and presumably accounted for the numerous sightings of whales, including Hump-backed and Fin, from land (DW *et al.*). Fifteen miles to the south, Cutler noted a frenzied feeding flock of grebes, loons, 6000–8000 scoters, and many thousands of gulls off Cape May on the afternoon of December 31; less than an hour later the flocks had dispersed (DAC). On January 16, thousands of gannets, kittiwakes, and gulls attended a huge fishing fleet off Asbury Park, New Jersey, where the sea was alive with mackerel and sand eels (AB).

ABBREVIATIONS — Bombay Hook = Bombay Hook Nat'l Wildlife Ref., near Smyrna, DE; Brig = Brigantine Unit, Forsythe Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Atlantic, NJ; Dunkirk = Dunkirk Harbor, Chautauqua, NY; Indian River = Indian River Inlet, Sussex, DE; L.I. = Long Island, NY; Montauk = Montauk Point and vicinity, Long Island, NY; CBC = Christmas Bird Count. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO HERONS — The open water in the north produced a handful of wintering Red-throated Loons at Dunkirk, the Niagara River, and Oswego, Oswego, NY, and there were scattered inland reports from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Pied-billed and Horned grebes were present in good numbers in the southern part of the Region, but the only other species noted was Red-necked Grebe, with about a dozen records, mainly along the coast. Inland reports came from Beltzville Lake, Carbon, PA, Dec. 12 (RW), Merrill Creek Res., Warren, NJ, Feb. 18 & 25 (GH), Sodus Bay, Wayne, NY, Dec. 14–15 (late), and the Niagara River Feb. 10 (early).

A Brown Pelican was seen sitting on a piling at Phillips Creek, near Hampton Bays, Long Island, on the morning of Jan. 8, but could not be found later in the day (A. Baldelli). Given the species' massive influx into the Region last summer and its continued presence in s. New Jersey through most of the fall, this record is not too surprising and follows a similar occurrence last December. Up to 16 Great Cormorants wintered at their now traditional location on the Delaware River at Riverton, Burlington, NJ (TB), but no new sites were discovered, and numbers along the coast were well below recent winters. Despite the booming Great Lakes population of Double-crested Cormorant, only a few wintered at scattered spots along lakes Erie and Ontario.

The rarest member of the Pelecaniformes in the Region, however, was an **Anhinga**, found dead and partially decomposed at Whiting, in the Pine Barrens of Ocean, NJ, in December (AMa). The CBCs produced the usual scattering of herons and egrets from the coastal parts of the Region, but other than high numbers of Great Blue Herons in upstate New York, there were no exceptional records.

WATERFOWL — The Midwinter Waterfowl Survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in early January found 862,000 swans, geese and ducks in the four-state Region, almost exactly the same as last year; for the Atlantic Flyway, numbers of waterfowl were up 9% from the ten-year average. Among the species that winter in the Region, significant local declines were noted for Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, Oldsquaw, and mergansers, while Canada Goose showed a substantial increase.

Several hundred Tundra Swans took advantage of the mild weather to winter at Whitesbog, Burlington, NJ, a traditional stopping place (L. Little). Although it should perhaps be classified with exotics at this stage, a new species for the Region in modern times was recorded with the appearance of two ad. Trumpeter Swans at Dunkirk Dec. 24 (JG); the birds had been raised in captivity and released with wild-caught Trumpeters at Long Point, Ontario, in March 1988. An imm. Trumpeter was in the Niagara River at Ft. Erie Feb. 24–28.

The increasing numbers of reports of Greater White-fronted Geese, most identified as belonging to the Greenland race, cannot be attributed to escaped feral birds, but may be partly owing to greater diligence on the part of birders in searching through the large wintering flocks of Canada Geese. Other than a flock of five at Bombay Hook Jan. 23 (JB), there were singles at Lawrenceville, Mercer, NJ, Dec. 4 (C. Fox, 3rd recent record); Brig, Jan. 4 (*vide* RK); East Hampton, L.I., Jan 14 (JJR), Purchase, Westchester, NY, in late December (J. Moyle, m.ob.), Struble Lake, Chester, PA, Feb. 3–15 (G. Saunders, m.ob.), and Lake Galena, Peace Valley Nature Center, Bucks, PA, Feb 4–12 (AMi, m.ob.). More problematical is the rash of recent records of Barnacle Goose, which has been found annually in recent years. This season one wintered in the Oyster Bay-Cold Spring Harbor, L.I., area (B. Conolly, v.o.), while another was discovered in the same flock as the White-fronted at Lake Galena, Feb. 4–19 (AMi, m.ob.).

Up to 63,000 Snow Geese wintered at Prime Hook N.W.R., DE, while 3000 remaining at Elmer, Salem, NJ, in mid-winter was an unusually high number (JH). A flock of 40–50 Mallard-sized Canada Geese, presumably *hutchinsii*, were at Davis Mill, Cumberland, NJ, Jan. 14 (RBA, VE), while two were in the flock containing the Greater White-fronted and Barnacle geese at Lake Galena Feb. 4 (AMi). Forty-two Wood Ducks took advantage of the hospitality at a private pond and spent the entire winter at Pennfield, Monroe, NY.

A Green-winged Teal of the Eurasian subspecies wintered at Lake Galena, making that quite a hot-spot for unusual waterfowl this winter; another Eur. Green-winged Teal was with the large flocks at Brig in February and March. A Blue-winged Teal was an unusual winter visitor to Green Lane Res., Montgomery, PA, Jan. 16 (KC), and a couple of others were found in New Jersey. A total of about 18 Eur. Wigeon was a bit above average, and included an unprecedented five drakes at West Point Island, Ocean, NJ, in December (DSu, BO, m.ob.). The rest were scattered along Long Island and coastal New Jersey, except for a male at Lake Ontelaunee, Berks, PA, Feb. 11 (GLF).

A drake Tufted Duck again returned to New York City's Central Park Reservoir in January, but was seen only a few times; it distinguished itself by joining a flock of Greater Scaup at Weehawken, Hudson, NJ, in early February, for one of the few state records and the first since 1971 accessible to numbers of birders (JD, m.ob.). A large flock of Greater Scaup was again at Sandy Hook, Monmouth, NJ, part of the estimated 70,000 that wintered in the state. Eiders were generally scarce, with only about five Commons at Montauk, six to eight scattered individuals along the New Jersey coast, and one at Indian River in early December (NH). A couple of King Eiders were in New Jersey, two at Montauk, and one each at Irondequot Bay, Monroe, NY, Dec. 27–31, Niagara Falls Dec 3–Feb. 4, and Dunkirk on Lake Erie, where one was shot by a hunter Dec. 26 for only the 6th local record.

Harlequin Duck staged a major invasion of New Jersey, where groups of three to 10 were seen at various spots from Sandy Hook to Cape May from Dec. 29 into February; at least 25 individuals were believed present during January. On Long Island, there were scattered individuals early in the season, 10 at Shinnecock Inlet, Suffolk, Jan. 16, and 11 at Montauk in late February. Up to three were at Indian River during the season (NH, WWF). Three Barrow's Goldeneyes were at Moses-Saunders Dam in the St. Lawrence River, near Massena, St. Lawrence, NY, Feb. 19 (BDiL), but most unusual was

a well-described female at Indian River, Jan. 7-9 (NH). If accepted, it would provide a first record for Delaware.

RAPTORS—The increasing Black Vulture population continues to spread in the south, where 125 at Angola Neck, Sussex, DE, Dec. 31 was the highest number ever seen in the state (K. Gordon, M. Peeples, K. Tebbens), and in the north, up the Susquehanna River, where 20 on the New Bloomfield, Perry, CBC were the first ever for the count. An Osprey wintered for the 2nd year in a row at Connetquot River State Park, L.I. (BK, P. Martin). Another Osprey seen Jan. 19 at Gardener's County Park, Islip, several miles to the west, was thought to be a different bird because of its size (BK).

Wintering Bald Eagles are now so numerous and widespread in the Region that they are incompletely reported. The main concentrations are along the St. Lawrence River in n. New York; the upper Delaware River in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York; the Delaware Bayshore of s. New Jersey; and the lower Susquehanna River in s. Pennsylvania. The Salem, NJ, pair that had built 2 nests in previous years, without following through, failed to return to the area, but recently-successful pairs at Iroquois and Montezuma refuges in w. New York were working on their nests in late winter. The smaller accipiters were again widespread and raiding feeders, and individual N. Goshawks were surprisingly numerous following a mediocre fall flight.

Wintering Golden Eagles were in Sullivan, NY; near Kempton, Berks, PA (LG, J. Weidensaul); Dingman's Ferry, Sussex, NJ, Dec. 26 (F. Tetlow); and two birds at McNamara W.M.A., Cape May, NJ. Although wintering Merlins are no longer rare along the coast, inland birds are still unusual and often poorly documented. The mild weather perhaps contributed to sightings of individuals noted at Pt. Gratiot on Lake Erie Dec. 19 & 31 (R. Peterson), Dunkirk Feb. 28 (JG), Caledonia, Livingston, Jan. 24 (B. & J. Kesselring), Oswego Jan. 22 (J. Smith), and N. Syracuse in late December (FGS), all in upstate New York; one that spent the winter in Trenton, NJ, was noteworthy, if less unexpected (RJB). The only Gyrfalcon of the season was a juvenile of the gray morph found near Lima, Livingston, NY, Dec. 31 (J. Dodge, J. Bouton, B. Oswald et al.), but not seen again.

RAILS TO ALCIDS—A King Rail was an excellent find on the Sandy Hook CBC, but other than the usual scattering of Virginias and coastal Clappers, no unusual rails were reported. Two Sandhill Cranes were exceptionally late at Iroquois N.W.R., Orleans, NY, Dec. 15-22 (DT, m.ob.). This year's early winter Semipalmated Plovers were individuals on the Queens, NY, CBC, and at Broadkill Beach, Sussex, DE, Jan. 1 (G. O'Shea). Wintering Am. Oystercatchers were noted again at Hereford Inlet, Cape May, NJ, where 45 were still present Jan. 25.

An outstanding find on the Philadelphia winter bird count Jan. 7 was a **Spotted Sandpiper** discovered along the Schuylkill River (J. Guarnaccia, M. Darcy); the bird was studied at length while the possibility of Common Sandpiper was considered, but the description appears to rule out that species. A Least Sandpiper in Allentown, Lehigh, PA, Dec. 17-20 (B. Transue, m.ob.), was almost as unusual as the preceding species. American Woodcock were found wintering in the coastal parts of the Region, but one at Union Township, Lebanon, PA, Jan. 28 was unusual, and several weeks earlier than the observer's previous record (F. Hartman). A Red Phalarope was an outstanding find at Codorus S.P., York, PA, Dec. 2-4 (Russell Ryan, m.ob.), as was another on the Ithaca, NY, CBC.

Away from their upstate New York stronghold, where up to 15 were at Rochester, Little Gulls were found in small numbers along the Atlantic Coast. Two were on Long Island in December (*vide* TWB), one at Avalon Dec. 10 (DW), one at Shark River, Monmouth, NJ, Jan. 8 (AB), and at least two at

Indian River in December (v.o.). A total of about nine Com. Black-headed Gulls, three in each coastal state, was a shade below par; noteworthy was one at the Wilmington, DE, sewage plant that stayed around long enough to molt into breeding plumage (D. Shoch, m.ob.). An imm. **Thayer's Gull** was discovered and well-photographed at Safe Harbor Dam, Lancaster, PA, Dec. 31-Jan. 9 (T. Garner, EW, ph. R. Miller); an adult was reported without details from Sandy Hook Jan. 8, by an observer experienced with the species (BMo). There is still no well-documented record for Thayer's Gull in New Jersey. White-winged gulls were present in modest numbers along the coast and the Great Lakes, while a few ventured farther afield. An Iceland Gull was a first for the s. Lancaster County CBC, while a first-winter Glaucous Gull was an exceptional find at Whallon's Bay on Lake Champlain Jan. 25 (B. & C.



Thayer's Gull in first-winter plumage at Safe Harbor Dam, Pennsylvania, January 7, 1989. The moderately dark tail band and the "striped" effect of the secondaries and outer primaries can be discerned in this flight shot. Photograph/Randy Miller.



Adult Common Black-headed Gull in winter plumage at Wilmington, Delaware, February 18, 1989. Photograph/Frank Haas.

Ladwig). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were again so numerous that they scarcely deserve mentioning, with more than 2 dozen reported and many others not reported.

An amazing 455 Forster's Terns made the Rehobeth, DE, CBC, and at least 30 were still at Indian River on Jan. 14 (NH). Alcids were scarce near shore, with only one Razorbill on Long Island and four along the New Jersey coast in December

and early January. A murre, thought to be a Common, was found on the Oceanville, NJ, CBC.

OWLS TO SHRIKES— It was not a big year for Snowy Owls, with about 10 in extreme w. New York and about eight on Long Island, but one at Jersey City, NJ, Dec. 29 into February, was the only other one reported. A Great Gray Owl was near Parishville, St. Lawrence, during the winter (*vide* KLC), while both Long-eared and Short-eared owls were present in good numbers at selected locations. A good flight of N. Saw-whet Owls was confirmed by the presence of 13 at the doomed Thorofare, Gloucester, NJ, grove [E. Manners], and 25 road kills from Atlantic City south to Cape May during November and December (PS).

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird continued coming to a Jamestown, Chautauqua, NY, feeder as late as December 10; it appeared sluggish on that date, was netted and taken to a veterinarian, but died the next day [B. Sundell, D. & E. Anderson]. This was the 2nd-latest record ever for New York, after one that spent Nov. 26–Dec. 13, 1961, in warmer habitat at Queens, New York City. Eastern Phoebes were widely noted on CBCs, but a cooperative **Say's Phoebe** near Montgomery, Orange, NY, Dec. 17–Jan. 8 was one of the highlights of the season [M. Borko, JPT, m.ob.]. A late W. Kingbird was at Cedar Beach, L.I., Dec. 3–11 [SW et al.], and another was found on the Brooklyn CBC.

With the mild weather, Tree Swallows lingered in greater numbers than usual, and were found from Long Island to Delaware; a flock of 60–70 at Cape May Jan. 6 gradually diminished during the rest of the season [B. Glaser]. Blue Jays were as scarce as acorns over most of the Region, while the other corvids were plentiful. Seven thousand Fish Crows joined their American cousins at the Ewing, Mercer, NJ, roost [RJB], and a few of the former were at their far northern outpost at the Ithaca, NY, dump.

Christmas Bird Counts and later reports turned up good numbers of Winter Wrens, part of a trend during the past couple of years reversing a long-term decline in that species; hopefully, the upturn will continue. A Sedge Wren was found Feb. 3 at South Cape May, where successful nesting apparently occurred last summer. Two others were at Goshen Landing, Cape May, Feb. 14 [JD]. The dramatic recovery of Eastern Bluebird was confirmed by the dozens of reports of sizeable flocks from all parts of the Region, including upstate New York in mid-winter. A highlight of the season, however, was the ♀ **Mountain Bluebird** discovered at Long Arm Res., York, PA, Dec. 23 [DHe, m.ob.]. Still present in March, this bird furnished the 3rd recent record for the state, and followed closely on last October's female at Cape May.



Female Mountain Bluebird at Long Arm Reservoir, Pennsylvania, December 26, 1988. Photograph/Daniel R. Heathcote.

A Bohemian Waxwing at Iroquois N.W.R. Jan. 28 provided the only report of the season [D. Endres]. A few Northern Shrikes made it to the central part of the Region, with a total of four on 2 Long Island CBCs, one at Great Swamp N.W.R., Morris, NJ, Dec. 17 through January [WJB, m.ob.], and another at Beltzville Lake, Carbon, PA, Feb. 18 [R. ZainEldeen].

VIREOS TO LONGSPURS— A Solitary Vireo was a late straggler at Lafayette, Sussex, NJ, Dec. 2 [J. Zamos], and another was at Robert Moses State Park, L.I., the next day. An Orange-crowned Warbler was an unusual find at Camden, NJ, Dec. 4–18 [B. Tannery, T. Wilson], as was one in Philadelphia Jan. 7 [B. Ridgely, M. Logan]. More expected were a total of three on 2 Long Island CBCs, another on the Cape May CBC, and one that wintered at an Eatontown, Monmouth, NJ, arboretum for the 2nd year in a row [N. Kazanjian, m.ob.]. A well-described Cape May Warbler at Lakehurst, Dec. 17 could not be relocated [AMA], but a Black-throated Blue Warbler spent the entire winter at a Newark, DE, suet feeder [JR]. A Yellow-throated Warbler discovered visiting a feeder at Conesus Lake, Livingston, NY, on the local CBC Dec. 26, stayed to at least Jan 10 [BA, I. Montan, m.ob.]; this species is rare in the Rochester area at any season and there are no previous winter records.

The Christmas Bird Counts turned up the usual scattering of Palm Warblers, Pine Warblers, and Com. Yellowthroats. A Pine Warbler was at a feeder in the Dunkirk, Chautauqua, NY, area in mid-January [*vide* A. Benton], and another was seen at a feeder in Westbrookville, Sullivan, NY, Jan. 15 [S.C.A.S.]. A few more Yellow-breasted Chats were found on CBCs than in most years, including one that wintered in the Eatontown arboretum with the Orange-crowned.

A ♂ Summer Tanager visited an Oldfield, L.I., feeder for 2 weeks to Dec. 4, arriving after a storm in mid-November [M. Hemmerick]. More excitement, however, was provided by the imm. ♂ Western Tanager discovered at Robert Moses State Park, L.I., Dec. 3; it remained for 2 more days and was seen and photographed by many [T. Lauro, m.ob., ph. K. Fuestel]. Taking advantage of the mild weather, a ♂ and ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak wintered at a South Dayton, Cattaraugus, NY, feeder [G. Gould]. A couple of Dickcissels were at New York City feeders, but more exceptional was a female in a field [with nearby feeders] near Warwick, Orange, NY, Jan. 29–30 [E. & L. Dumont].

Chipping Sparrows were widely reported from the warmer parts of the Region, but a Vesper Sparrow at a dump in Westwood, Bergen, NJ, Dec. 17–Jan. 19 was very unusual [DK, KK]. Individual Lark Sparrows were on 2 New Jersey CBCs, and White-crowned Sparrows were unusually common. Small



Western Tanager at Robert Moses State Park, Long Island, New York, December 4, 1988. Photograph/Ken Fuestel.

numbers of Lapland Longspurs were at scattered locales, with the only concentration being a maximum of 22 at their favored St. Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale, L.I., Jan. 7 (SW).

BLACKBIRDS TO FINCHES — Only four Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported, including one on the s. Lancaster Co., PA, CBC, one in Salem, NJ, in January and February (C. Githens), and two at Bombay Hook, Jan. 5 (DSh, JJ). A highlight of the season for Pennsylvania birders was the discovery of two Brewer's Blackbirds at Westtown, Chester, Dec. 17 (PH, B Hurlock). Subsequently, up to eight birds were seen in the area; some were photographed to provide what was believed to be the first photographic documentation for the state, although there have been numerous other acceptable sight records. Another ♂ Brewer's Blackbird was at Manito Beach, Monroe, NY, Feb. 8, an unusual winter record (R. O'Hara). Art Morris and Elaine Belsky carefully counted the 103 Boat-tailed Grackles coming to roost in Queens, New York City, Feb. 7, the highest total ever for the state. Farther south, an impressive 1000 Boat-taileds were at Brigantine Island, Atlantic, NJ, Feb. 23 (S. Harty). There were many reports of wintering N. Orioles around the Region, including three (one a female "Bullock's") at a Ft. Lee, Bergen, NJ, feeder (L. Pierson, *vide* DK).

The winter finch story is easy to summarize: there were virtually none, even in New York's Adirondacks. All of the usual species were detected, but no more than a few small flocks or individuals of each at widely scattered locations. For example, a flock of 16 Pine Grosbeaks at Grahamsville, Sullivan, NY, Feb. 10, were the only ones reported south of the Adirondacks (S.C.A.S.). After last season's major flight, even Pine Siskins were extremely rare.

EXOTICS — A Ruddy Shelduck returned to Monty Bay on Lake Champlain in December and another was found at Allentown, Monmouth, NJ, Feb. 26. The Chilean Flamingo that frequented Mecox Bay, Suffolk, L.I., for much of the year died on the afternoon of the Quogue-Watermill CBC, Dec. 17.

UNCONFIRMED REPORTS — The massive flights of seabirds along the Delaware and New Jersey coasts in December and January produced two sightings of birds thought to be Yellow-nosed Albatrosses, one by an observer experienced with the species. Two birds were flying by Cape Henlopen in the wind and rain on the Jan. 1 CBC (WJW), while the other report was of a single at Belmar, Monmouth, NJ, Jan. 8 (AB). Given the great distances involved, the poor viewing conditions, and the possibility of confusion with other species under those circumstances, the reports can be considered hypothetical at best. They should, however, alert birders to watch for the unusual when large concentrations of seabirds are brought close to shore by weather and feeding conditions.

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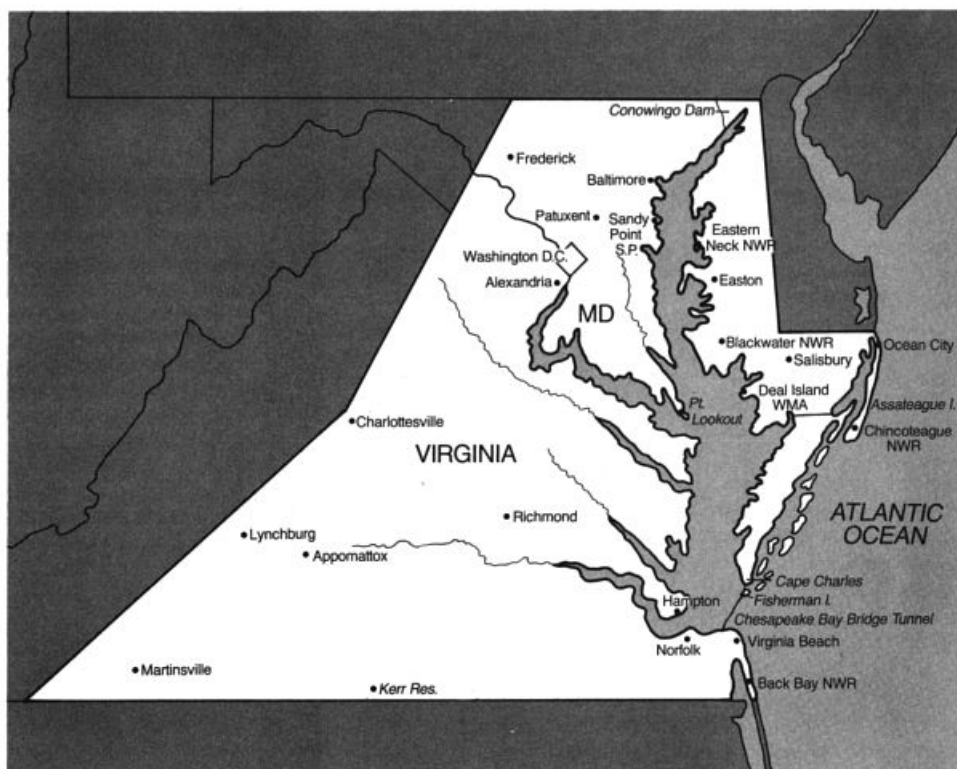
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MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

Henry T. Armistead



This winter was mild and dry. Most snow came in February, especially in the south and coastally. For example, at Norfolk highs reached 77°F February 14, and 80° February 15; then there were 15.4 inches of snow February 17–19, which all disappeared a few days later as the temperature hit 76° February 21! Offsetting the mildness was some very cold weather December 12–13 and 16–18, which chased many birds south before most of the Christmas Bird Counts. Of the dozen or so rarities, about three-quarters were western species. There were a few more than usual of these, as well as of lingering warm-weather birds. Most northern irruptive species were absent or nearly so. Bright spots were good numbers of fish-eaters, many waterfowl, raptors, gulls, and bluebirds.

Deviations from normal of temperature: December -0.6°, January +5.5°, February +1.2°; of precipitation: December -2.4 inches, January -1.0 inches, February +0.8 inches.

ABBREVIATIONS — Back Bay = Back Bay Nat'l Wildlife Ref., VA; the Bay = Chesapeake Bay; Blackwater = Blackwater Nat'l Wildlife Ref., MD; C.B.B.T. = Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel, VA; Chinc. = Chincoteague Nat'l Wildlife Ref., VA; Craney = Craney Island Disposal Area, Portsmouth, VA; D.C. = Washington, D.C.; M.W.B.C. = Mid-Winter Bird Count.

LOONS TO HERONS — The only notable loon count was a record total of 587 Red-throats at Ocean City CBC Dec. 29 (CSR); an inland bird on L. Anna, VA, was of interest Feb. 18 (MRB). Also inland and unusual were a Com. Loon at Lilypons, MD, Feb. 18–25 (HH, TW), three at Loch Raven Res. n. of Baltimore Jan. 13 (SWS), and a flock of 89 flying over C.B.B.T. Feb. 25 (HTA, GLA, CW). Horned Grebes continue in depressed numbers, with the best count (higher than on any CBC) being of 300 at Tom's Cove, Chinc., Jan. 28 (TMD).

Scott found 44 Pied-billed Grebes on Swift Creek Res. n. of Richmond, VA, Dec. 10. Red-necked Grebe was reported at York R. near Williamsburg, VA, Jan. 25 (SRn, two), Chinc. Dec. 3 (BL, two), Loch Raven Res. Feb. 26 (SWS, two), and Flag Ponds, Calvert, MD, Jan. 15 (JLS, one). The star grebe was an Eared at Chinc. Dec. 27–31 (MAT, DC, DFA). Northern Gannets attracted attention in s. Virginia with 2000 at Back Bay Dec. 10 (VBK), 3500 from C.B.B.T. Jan. 29 (TMD), and an estimated 10,000 off Ft. Story at Cape Henry Jan. 28–29 (DFA, BP, SRn, CT).

Two Am. White Pelicans spent most of the period at Chinc., especially from late December to early February (m.ob.). Brown Pelicans made a strong showing, at least by winter standards, the best record involving a Maryland bird at Ocean City Jan. 28 (EF). They overwintered in Virginia at the mouth of the Bay with six at C.B.B.T. both Jan. 22 (SRn) & 28 (HTA). Twelve were there Feb. 12 (DFA) and 11 were on the Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (DLH, TRW, RLA). Earlier, 30 had been at Back Bay/False Cape S.P. on Dec. 1 (DS, TMP). Great Cormorants were in high numbers at C.B.B.T. with 37 on Dec. 19 (SRn) and 38 on Feb. 26 (DFA, BP, GP), while nine were on Lower Machodoc Creek, VA, Jan. 10 (JE) and up to 10 at Cobb I., Charles, MD, Feb. 20 in company with 100 Double-crested (RFR). A Double-crested Cormorant at Laurel, MD, Feb. 13 was most unusual at this inland site in winter (J & EC) and numbers were excellent at the mouth of the Bay with 2360 Dec. 31 on Little Creek CBC (PWS), 693 at Newport News CBC Dec. 17 (TK), and 1500 at Hampton Dec. 11 (SRn), these all in Virginia.

Just coming to light is a record of a **frigatebird**, undoubtedly a Magnificent, at St. Michaels, Talbot, MD, seen June 2, 1988 (LPW). This winter's scheduled pelagic trips were all weathered out. Herons were scarce all winter with the exception of Great Blues, of which there were fine counts of 275 on the Harford, MD, M.W.B.C. of Jan. 28 (RFR), 315 at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS), and 303 at Hopewell, VA, CBC Dec. 18

(LR), while 60 nests were occupied at Poole's I, MD, on the upper Bay Feb. 28 (JG). Fifty-six Great Egrets were also seen on the Little Creek CBC. Single Green-backed Herons were at Triadelphia, MD, CBC Dec. 23 (SM), at Ashton, Montgomery, and Ocean City Dec. 31 (RFR, ph.). Black-crowned Night-Herons seem to be declining as wintering birds. Such prime areas as Chinc. and Cape Charles had only singles on their respective CBCs Dec. 28 & 27 (FRS, HTA), yet nine were found at Chinc. by a single observer Jan. 28 in company with four Great and five Snowy egrets (TMD).

WATERFOWL — The Crisfield, MD, area is seldom visited by birders except at CBC time. This year on its CBC Dec. 30 an astounding 10,000 Redheads were estimated in Pocomoke Sound, the highest state count in over 40 years, in company with 10,000 Ruddy Ducks and 2000+ Canvasbacks (HLW, RFR). Locally, 550 Redheads made a good total for Newport News Feb. 15 (NMD). The best Canvasback totals were of 10,000 on the lower Back R. east of Baltimore Jan. 22 (RFR), 13,937 on the Annapolis-Gibson I. CBC Jan. 2 (HLW), 5000 at Piscataway Creek, MD, Dec. 3 (EW), and 4300 at Elliott I, MD, Dec. 31 (EMW). The Ft. Belvoir, VA, CBC, which includes much of the Piscataway Creek areas infested with the exotic aquatic plant *Hydrilla*, had another excellent year for ducks with 561 Green-winged Teal, 2166 Am. Black Ducks, a lingering Blue-winged Teal, 171 N. Shovelers, 475 Gadwalls, 5372 Canvasbacks, 21,100 Lesser Scaups, 299 Hooded Mergansers, and 4525 Ruddy Ducks Jan. 2 (DFA). Numbers such as these, including several Regional highs for this season, would have been considered impossible prior to the advent of *Hydrilla* only a few years ago.

Single Greater White-fronted Geese were seen s.e. of Richmond Jan. 14–Feb. 24 (FD, MRB, SR, SRn) and w. of Berlin, MD, Dec. 29 (CSR). Snow Geese continue to abound with CBC totals in Maryland of 25,070 at Ocean City, 21,500 in lower Kent, and 11,092 at Denton (CSR, JG, SW *et al.*), plus 5000 in the Bay proper, very unusual, off Worton Pt., Kent, Jan. 14 (J & TG). Top counts of "Blue" Snow Geese were at the traditional strongholds of Blackwater, with 1610 Feb. 19 (HTA, GLA), and the Hopewell CBC, with 600 Dec. 18 (LR). Far into the interior at Scottsville s. of Charlottesville, VA, nine "Blues" with four white morph birds were seen Dec. 18 (WM), unusual for there. A probable Ross' Goose was at Ironshire, Worcester, MD, Jan. 20 (MO, PO). Canada Geese thought to be of the race *hutchinsii* were again reported, with three Dec. 18 and two Jan. 26 in the Curles Neck Farm–Henrico area, VA (FD), and six on the Piedmont near Nokesville, VA, Dec. 18 (KHB). Canada Geese continue to increase in Piedmont areas with 2000 overwintering at Piney Run Park, Carroll (RFR), and 1200 at Loch Raven Res. north of Baltimore Dec. 14 & 22 (SWS); and a record 1356 were on the CBC at D.C. on Dec. 17 (JAB).

At Hopewell, VA, 949 Wood Ducks were seen on the CBC Dec. 18 (LR), usually the best place for them in the Region in winter, and 106 on the Baltimore County M.W.B.C. Jan. 22 made a good count (RFR). On the Eastern Shore of Virginia, a winter check of 112 Wood Duck boxes revealed that during the 1988 breeding season 32 had been used by E. Screech-Owls, 28 by Wood Ducks, and 17 by passerines (GR). An intergrade Green-winged Teal (American x Eurasian) was at Chinc. Jan. 29 (KHB), two Eurasians were s. of Berlin Dec. 29 (EM), and one was at Wachapreague, VA, Dec. 17 (*vide* IA). The continued decline of the Back Bay area was reflected by counts of only 58 N. Shovelers, 34 Gadwalls, 100 Am. Wigeon, and one Am. Coot Dec. 28 (PWS). Two Eur. Wigeon were in the Hampton area from January to mid-February (BP, MRB, SRn, FRS) and one was in Norfolk late December to early January (BP, GP, PM, TRW).

High counts of Ring-necked Ducks were of 760 at Piscataway Creek Feb. 8 (CS) and 1183 at Patuxent W.R.C., Laurel, MD, Feb. 24 (HO). Up to 30,000 scaup, mostly Lessers, were

at the Hart & Miller Is area east of Baltimore Feb 8 (J & TG) One to two Com. Eiders were at Ocean City and C.B.B.T. most of the period, and one to two King Eiders were at the same places in February. One to two Harlequin Ducks were also at these 2 spots, but with up to four at C.B.B.T. Jan. 7 and Feb 25, and six there Feb. 28 (DFA). Outstanding diver counts included 10,000 Oldsquaws from Swan Pt.–Eastern Neck N.W.R., MD, Dec. 17 (J & TG), 1050 Surf Scoters in the upper Bay off Calvert, MD, Jan. 15 (RFR), 3000 Com. Goldeneyes in Hawk Cove e. of Baltimore Jan. 22 (RFR) and 2500 at Wakefield, VA, Dec. 10 (MRB), 745 Hooded Mergansers at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS), 760 Com. Mergansers in Harford Jan. 28 (RFR), and 1100 Red-breasted Mergansers at Craney Jan. 9 (SRn). In spite of the well publicized decline of many waterfowl species there are, as may be seen above, still huge concentrations of some in the greater Bay area. Presumed exotics seen were three Black Swans in the Piscataway Creek area in December and January (*v.o.*), a Ruddy Shelduck at Blackwater Feb. 19 (HTA, GLA), and a Falcated Teal at Piney Run Park Feb. 19 into March (RFR, ph.).

RAPTORS TO CRANES — This winter there were excellent counts of Black Vultures, such as 266 on the Lynchburg, VA, CBC Dec. 17 (TD), 208 in Carroll Jan. 29 (RFR), and 145 in Howard, MD, Jan. 28 (JS, DH). A late Osprey was at Virginia Beach Dec. 6 (DD), one was at Back Bay Dec. 28 (NB, CP, RL), an unprecedented five (three in sight simultaneously) were at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (PWS, GMW, HCI, JL), and one was still in Norfolk Jan. 5 (TRW). In Maryland one was at Myrtle Grove W.M.A., Charles, Dec. 29 (MM).

Bald Eagles continue to winter in impressive numbers around the Bay with up to 101 (61 adults) at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Harford, MD, during January (GDT). A roost in a remote section of Blackwater contained 42 on Feb. 10 (BG, WNJ). A record 89 (66 immatures) were at Hopewell CBC Dec 18 (LR), on a count which until recently never had more than one or two. Vaughn had 22 near Pocomoke City, MD, Jan. 28 Lower Kent CBC reported 28 on Dec. 18 (JG). Ft. Belvoir CBC, south of D.C., had 30 on Jan. 2 (DFA), and the CBC at D.C. had 13 on Dec. 17 (JAB). Most encouraging, perhaps, was that many other CBCs where Bald Eagles normally are not common nevertheless had record or near-record numbers, such as six at Wachapreague Dec. 17 (AI), eight at Cape Charles Dec. 27 (HTA), and 10 at Annapolis Jan. 2 (HLW).

Reliable N. Goshawk sightings were of singles at Janes I near Crisfield Dec. 30 (HLW, RFR) and Double Rock Park, Baltimore, Jan. 22 (EB). An impressive 114 Red-shouldered Hawks were seen on the mid-winter count in Howard Jan 28 (JS, DH). Golden Eagles were reported from at least 4 places with three in the Blackwater area Dec. 31 (*vide* CSR) and one far southeast at Back Bay Dec. 28 and Jan. 16 (NB, PMS, BF, HTA). For the first time a Merlin was confirmed as overwintering in D.C., Nov. 20–Apr. 4 (DC). Both Chinc. and Cape Charles CBCs reported five Peregrine Falcons Dec. 27–28 (FRS, HTA).

In spite of the ongoing decline of Ring-necked Pheasants (and N. Bobwhites) in the Region west of the Bay, a record 31 pheasants were counted on the Baltimore CBC Dec. 18 (PW), but bobwhites were missed for the first time. Best counts of Am. Coots were of 2856 on the Ft. Belvoir CBC Jan. 2 (DFA) and 500 at Loch Raven Res. Dec. 4 (SWS). The Sandhill Crane at Poolesville, Montgomery, MD, present for 9 months, was seen through the winter (PO, GMJ, RAA, MO).

SHOREBIRDS — The star shorebird was a Long-billed Curlew present on the Chinc. causeway in the Queen Sound area Dec. 28 into March (LMD, VBK, BP, BT, GLA, m.ob), possibly the same individual seen last spring and fall several times. One to two Marbled Godwits also overwintered in the

Chinc. area but were harder to locate (v.o.). Bad weather and less effort resulted in only 2 trips to the Thoms Creek flats farther south and east of Mockhorn I., but on Jan. 29, 60 Marbled Godwits, 390 Black-bellied Plovers, 115 Willets, four Whimbrels, 310 W. Sandpipers, 4100 Dunlin, and 20 Short-billed Dowitchers were counted there (HTA, GLA). Cape Charles CBC, which includes Thoms Creek, tallied 627 Am. Oystercatchers, 290 Black-bellied Plovers, 135 Greater Yellowlegs, 82 Willets, a Whimbrel, 76 Marbled Godwits, a Least Sandpiper, 11,574 Dunlin, 61 dowitchers (sp.), and 63 Am. Woodcock (with many of these, especially the larger shorebirds, at Thoms Creek) Dec. 27 (RLA, WP).

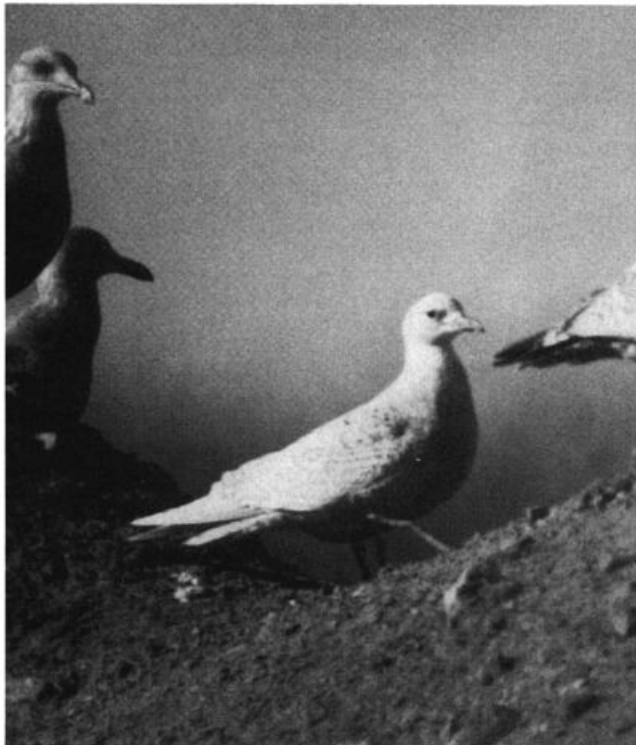
Twenty Semipalmated Plovers at Little Creek CBC were the season high count Dec. 31 (GMW). At Craney, 22 Am. Avocets were present Nov. 22 (JWD, FRS). Rare on the upper Bay in winter, two Greater Yellowlegs were at Baltimore Feb. 26 (fide PW) but rarer still were one Purple Sandpiper there Dec. 18 (HK) and another at Sandy Point S.P. near Annapolis Jan. 7 (LMD, HLW). A Willet was at Deal Island W.M.A., MD, Jan. 28, as were 15 Greater Yellowlegs (CRV, ELP). Unprecedentedly late were a Hudsonian Godwit at Savage Neck w. of Eastville, VA, Oct. 25–Nov. 8, two in Hog I. Bay, VA, Dec. 17 (HG), and one at Harmony Corner, Kent, MD, Dec. 10 (SS). Nine Marbled Godwits were seen from Oyster, VA, Feb. 12, probably wanderers from the Thoms Creek flock (DFA). The high Sanderling count from Back Bay/False Cape was of 1022 Dec. 22, yet none was seen Jan. 31 (DS, TMP). Wintering [or at least present in early winter?] Least Sandpipers included two in s. Dorchester, MD, Dec. 31 (fide CSR), one at Crisfield CBC Dec. 30 (fide CRV), and four at Hopewell CBC Dec. 18 (fide LR) with one still (?) there Feb. 24 (MRB). Extremely late birds included a White-rumped Sandpiper at Lilypons Dec. 3 (SWH) and a Wilson's Phalarope at the Easton, MD, sewage ponds Dec. 4 (RLK, DM). At Cape Charles 218 Am. Woodcock (149 males) were banded from December to mid-February (PT, KB, MB), and several birds were outfitted with radios. These latter remained in the area all winter.

JAEGERS TO ALCIDS — Jaeger reports were confined to the Virginia Beach area with a Parasitic and a Pomarine seen on the Back Bay CBC Dec. 28 (BP, CP, PWS, MS) and another Pomarine at Ft. Story Feb. 15 (SRn). Four Laughing Gulls lingered until Christmas Day at N. Beach, Calvert, MD (JLS), and an early arrival was at Hampton Feb. 12 (CC). One to two Little Gulls were at Ocean City Dec. 26–Feb. 18 (MO, PGD) and several were in the Fort Story area Dec. 31 to March, with an astounding 46 reported there Feb. 17 (GP), and 10 adults just south of there at Rudee Inlet Feb. 10 (DFA). An ad. Com. Black-headed Gull was at Ocean City Dec. 28–Jan. 28 (HLW, MO, GMJ, ph.), seen most often at the local Hardee's, and two were seen Jan. 7 (DA). There were 2 possible records of California Gull in Virginia, where the species is still on the state hypothetical list. A bird thought to be a first-winter California was at Dulles International Airport w. of D.C. Feb. 14–22 (DFA, VBK, RAA, ph.), and a probable adult was at Ft. Story Jan. 28–29 (BP, FD, GP, KHB, RLA, BT, ph.). Two Thayer's Gulls were reported, both first-winter birds: one on the lower Susquehanna R., MD, Dec. 31 (PO) and one on C.B.B.T. Feb. 26 (SRn, BP, DFA, GP, ph.). Landfills produced this winter's Iceland Gulls with one in Prince William, VA, Dec. 18–Jan. 16 (KHB, RAA, FD, DFA, ph.) and one at Dumfries, VA, Jan. 8 (EL).

Lesser Black-backed Gulls continued to increase, with reports from 21 locations, such as nine at Triadelphia CBC Dec. 23 (HLW, EB), six in the Ft. Story-Little Creek area Dec. 31 and Jan. 28–29 (PWS, BP, SRn), five in Spotsylvania, VA, Jan. 4 (MRB), four at Ft. Belvoir CBC Jan. 2 (DFA), and three at C.B.B.T. Feb. 13 (PB). A Glaucous Gull was at Cape Henry Jan. 20 & 28 and Feb. 25 (SRn, BP, FD, GP, DFA), one to two were present all winter at the Virginia Beach landfill (v.o.), one was at the Prince William landfill in February and March (KHB, MRB, ph.), and one was at C.B.B.T. Jan. 15 (A & CT).



Adult Common Black-headed Gull at Ocean City, Maryland, January 7, 1989. The classic underwing pattern is illustrated well here. Photograph/Michael O'Brien.



Iceland Gull in first-winter plumage (surrounded by Herring Gulls) at Prince William County landfill, Virginia, December 22, 1988. Photograph/Kenneth H. Bass.

Great Black-backed Gulls seem to continue to increase at tidal areas up the Bay and its tributaries as well as at inland landfills with 579 seen on the CBC at D.C. Dec. 17 (JAB) and 1608 on the Harford, MD, M.W.B.C. Jan. 28 (fide RFR). An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake was at C.B.B.T. Dec. 3 (BP, GP, PM) and an adult was nearby at Ft. Story Jan. 25 (MRB). Possibly providing the first Regional winter record, a Caspian Tern was well described from Ft. Story Jan. 12 (SRn), and a late one was at Craney Dec. 1 (TRW). The only mid-winter Royal Tern report was of one at Back Bay Jan. 28 (DFA). A fresh Dovekie specimen was retrieved after having been dropped by a N. Harrier at Fisherman I., VA, Dec. 27 (MAB). The only other alcid was a large, unidentified one seen off Ft. Story Dec. 11 (SRn, BP, DTS).

DOVES TO SHRIKES— The top Mourning Dove count was of 1338 seen on the Howard, MD, M.W.B.C. Jan. 28 (JS, DH). Two Monk Parakeets were seen at a nest at Pt. Lookout, MD, Dec. 31 (PC). Two N. Saw-whet and two Long-eared owls were on Assateague I., MD, Dec. 29 (EB, HLW), and a Long-eared was still there Jan. 20 (PO, MO). Northern Saw-whet Owls were seen at 5 places in Maryland and a roadkill was found on Fisherman I., VA, Dec. 27 (MAB). Short-eared Owls were more widely seen than usual, although in modest numbers, with records from over 20 localities. A Rufous Hummingbird was at Newport News Dec. 6–12 (LT, D & MM, ph.), and one overwintered at Takoma Park, MD, within feet of the D.C. boundary (MKK, BM, PO, RAA, GMJ, ph.). Red-headed Woodpeckers were in low numbers in Maryland (RFR), but some of the Virginia CBCs had good numbers such as 21 at Ft. Belvoir, 12 at Williamsburg, and 12 at Brooke. Excellent CBC woodpecker totals were of 397 Red-bellieds at Ft. Belvoir (DFA) and 448 Downies at Nokesville (KHB).

A genuine rarity was an E. Kingbird on the Port Tobacco, MD, CBC Dec. 18 (PJ, DH). Interesting winter Tree Swallow sightings were of one at Patuxent, MD, Dec. 19 (POs), and 2000 at Back Bay Jan. 16 (PMs, BF) with just 15 there Feb. 11



Selasphorus hummingbird at Takoma Park, Maryland, January 15, 1989. The bird was identified as an immature male Rufous Hummingbird, although the throat pattern seen here would seem to suggest an adult female. Photograph/Bob Mitchell.

(DFA). Two extremely late Barn Swallows were seen on the Back Bay CBC Dec. 28 (WFR) w. of the refuge. Red-breasted Nuthatches were very scarce. Twenty-two Brown Creepers were an excellent one-person count along the C. & O. Canal north of D.C. on Jan. 17 (MO). Rarely reported after the counts are some of the wrens, such as single House Wrens at Leeds-town, VA, Jan. 14 (FD) and Chinc. Feb. 26 (HTA), a Sedge Wren at Cove Pt., Calvert, MD, Jan. 14–15 plus two Marsh Wrens there Jan. 15 (JLS), and a Marsh Wren at Black Marsh e. of Baltimore Jan. 22 (RFR). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were not seen as often as in some winters but three were at Little Creek CBC Dec. 31 (fide PWS) and one was at Brooke, VA, Dec. 19 (fide DBS).

Eastern Bluebirds continued to be in excellent supply with record counts of 343 on the St. Michaels, MD, CBC Dec. 18 (CM) and 212 at Ft. Belvoir CBC Jan. 2 (DFA), plus fine totals of 342 on Salisbury, MD, CBC (CRV) Jan. 2, 290 at Nokesville, VA, CBC Dec. 18 (KHB), and the by now usual superlative numbers at Mathews, VA, CBC, which had 582 on Jan. 1 (MP). The three mimic thrush species all were in good numbers this winter (v.o.). One of the outstandingly rare species of the season was **Sprague's Pipit**. Two were at Curles Neck Farm, s.e. Henrico, VA, s.e. of Richmond Feb. 20–21 (JWD, FD, BP, ML). Virginia's only other reports had been two hypothetical records. Cedar Waxwing, anomalous as ever, was notably scarce in many areas, yet some CBCs had huge numbers such as 1602 at Mathews Jan. 1 (MP), 1258 at Ft. Belvoir Jan. 2 (DFA), and 888 at Lynchburg Dec. 17 (TD), these all in widely separated areas of Virginia, while Port Tobacco, MD, had 971 Dec. 18 (GBW). The troubled Loggerhead Shrike was recorded at only 5 localities, actually an improvement over some recent winters.

VIREOS TO BUNTINGS— Unique was a White-eyed Vireo at Williamsburg, VA, Dec. 18 (BW). As usual Solitary Vireo was present in s.e. Virginia with records from Cape Charles Dec. 27 (NB, CT), Back Bay Dec. 28 (GMW), and Ft. Story Dec. 31 (JHG). Much more unusual were sightings from Maryland near the Pocomoke R. Dec. 28 (C & DB) and Jan. 14 (JC, AJ). Notable winter warblers near Baltimore were an Orange-crowned at Woodlawn Dec. 31–Feb. 27 (JW, RFR) and an Ovenbird at Phoenix Dec. 11–12 (KJ). Single Cape May Warblers were at Port Tobacco CBC, MD, Dec. 18 (PN) and Mathews, VA, CBC Jan. 1 (JG, ph.). Rounding out the rare winter warblers were a Yellow-throated at God's Grace Pt., Calvert, MD, Dec. 8 (JLS, EBd), a Prairie at False Cape S.P., VA, Jan. 28 (SRn), and a N. Waterthrush w. of Back Bay Dec. 28 (JL, MF). There were three non-CBC Yellow-breasted Chats: singles at D.C. Dec. 1 (DKa), Townsend, VA, n. of Cape Charles Jan. 29 (TMD), and Dyke Marsh, VA, Feb. 18 (BTH).

There were unique records of single birds for four winter rarities: Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Pt. Lookout, MD, Dec. 31 and Jan. 2 (PC); Indigo Bunting in Wicomico, MD, on the lower Eastern Shore Jan. 29 (PW); a spectacular ♂ Painted Bunting at Pungo, VA, w. of Back Bay during December and January, frequenting feeders there, especially on cold days (TRW, SRn, BP, MRB, m.ob.); and Dickcissel near Monkton, MD, n. of Baltimore Jan. 22 (JLS). At the Chinc. CBC on Dec. 28, 132 Chipping Sparrows made a record tally for there (FRS). At Back Bay, one to three Lark Sparrows were present n. of the refuge in the Sandbridge area Dec. 28 to mid-February (TRW, MRB, BP, PM, GP et al.). Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrows were in mediocre supply, with totals such as nine at both Ocean City and Cape Charles CBC, the exception being a record total of 17 on Cedar I., VA, Dec. 17 (GLA, HTA). Back Bay hosted single Le Conte's Sparrows detected on Dec. 10 (DTS, BP, FD, BT) and Jan. 28 (SRn, DFA, GP, BP). Fox Sparrows continued in low numbers in most areas, with occasional exceptions such as 68 at Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27 (HTA) and a flock of 30 at Old Iron Furnace on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland Feb. 20 (CRV). A Lincoln's Sparrow was at the dump at Chesapeake, VA, Dec. 31 (NB). Also at the Old

Iron Furnace, Worcester, MD, was an imm Harris' Sparrow Feb. 4 (CPi). Dark-eyed Juncos were in excellent numbers this winter (MKK, CRV, RFR). Lapland Longspurs showed up in force at Curles Neck Farm with 35 on Jan. 29 (DFA), 15 on Feb. 12 (FRS, JWD), and 11 on Feb. 19 (MRB), plus six on Jan. 3, Feb. 21, and Feb. 24 (FD, MRB). It is most unusual to see more than three or four birds in a day in this Region. Snow Buntings were widely reported with 47 at Ocean City CBC, Dec. 29 (*fide* CSR) and an astounding 330 at Hart & Miller Is. east of Baltimore Dec. 18 (BD *et al.*; but *cf.* 385 seen there on the Baltimore Harbor CBC Dec. 27, 1987, *fide* PW).

BLACKBIRDS TO FINCHES — Eastern Meadowlarks seem to be declining during the 1980s. Several CBCs had record or near-record lows this season. An imm. ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird was near Stockton, Worcester, MD, just north of the boundary with Virginia on Jan. 2 (DC), and a female was at Blackwater Dec. 27 (LDB). Brewer's Blackbirds made a strong showing in Virginia with two at Nokesville Dec. 6–25 (KHB, RAA, ph.), two in Surry Jan. 18 (SRn), two to three nearby at Rustic Jan. 27–29 (FD, DFA, BP, GP, PL), and two to four at Shippo Cabin Rd. w. of Back Bay Dec. 3–11 (DTS, SRn, CT, FD), where up to 20 had been found Nov. 20–21 (BP, GP). Outstandingly rare at this season was an Orchard Oriole seen on Back Bay CBC Dec. 28 (KI, WFR) and a N. (Bullock's) Oriole was reported from Parsonsburg, Wicomico, MD, Dec. 4 (ELP).

Purple Finches were in very low numbers this winter, one active observer accurately describing them as "almost non-existent" (RFR). It will surprise no one that by way of contrast, House Finches continue to blanket the landscape, occurring by the hundreds on most CBCs, often outnumbering Purple Finches by 100:1 or more. The biggest total on hand is of 2581 at the St. Michaels, MD, CBC Dec. 18 (CM) with other impressive tallies of 1060 at the Lower Kent, MD, CBC on Dec. 18 (JG), 944 at Annapolis–Gibson I. CBC Jan. 2 (HLW), and 1158 on the Howard, MD, M.W.B.C. Jan. 28 (JS, DH). Deep in the Virginia Piedmont at Lynchburg the House Finch, with 866, was the 4th most common bird species on the CBC Dec. 17 (TD), while their count of 31 Purple Finches was the lowest in 20 years. Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak were scarce enough that prudent CBC compilers requested details from those daring to report them, and observers made certain to report any they were lucky enough to encounter during the course of the winter. House Sparrows apparently have continued to decline, with 284 on the St. Michaels CBC Dec. 18 the

lowest ever (CM) and 63 at Lynchburg CBC Dec. 17 the lowest since 1961 (TD).

OBSERVERS (Area compilers in boldface) — D.F. Abbott, Irvin Ailes, R.A. Anderson, R.L. Anderson, G.L. Armistead, Scott Atkinson, Dan Audet, K.H. Bass, J.A. Bjerke, Eirik Blom, M.R. Boatwright, L.D. Bonham, Ed Boyd (EBd), Ned Brinkley, Patrick Brisse, Michael Bryant, Carol & Don Broderick, J.H. Buckalew, Kurt Buhlmann, M.A. Byrd, Danny Bystrak, Connie Christian, Jeff Chynoweth, J. & E. Clegg, Barry Cooper, Patty Criag, Harnet Critchlow, David Czaplak, Thelma Dalmas, L.M. Davidson, Doug Davis, Fenton Day, T.M. Dick, J.W. Dillard, Bob Dixon, Sam Droege, P.G. DuMont, Stephen Eccles, Howard Elitzak, Ethel Engle, Jane Farrell, Ed Fingerhood, Bettye Field, A.J. Fletcher (Caroline Co., MD), Harold Fogleman, Laura French, Marlou Fromme, Hans Gabler, J.H. Getgood, Bill Giese, J.S. Gottschalk, Greg Gough, Jim Greaves, Jim & Trish Gruber, Alex Hammer, Mike Haramis, Ed Hatch, D. Henderson (DHn), M.W. Hewitt, Robert Hilton, David Holmes, Helen Horrocks, D.L. Hughes, Kent Ihrman, Gregory Inskip, H.C. Irving, Ottavio Janni, Andrea Jauck, Kye Jenkins, G.M. Jett, J.E. Johnson, W.N. Johnson, P. Jung, Hank Kaestner, **Teta Kain** (C.B.B.T.), Diane Kane (DKa), Dennis Kirkwood, V.B. Kitchens, R.L. Kleen, M.K. Klimkiewicz, Ed LeBlanc, Bev Leeuwenberg, H.E. LeGrand, Margaret Lisi, Paula Little, Joyce Livermore, Reese Lukei, Nancy McDonald (NMd), Stuart MacClintock, Gail Mackiernan, Nancy Magnusson, Elwood Martin, Paul McAllister (PMs), Paul McQuarry, Don Meritt, Carolyn Mills, Mike Milton, William Minor, Bob Mitchell, Dorothy & Mike Mitchell, Sonya & Vincent Montagnino, Pat Moore (PMo), Paul Nistico, Holly Obrecht, Michael O'Brien, Paul O'Brien, Kevin O'Neal, Peter Osenton (POs), T.M. Padgett, Brian Patteson, Grayson Pearce, Carl Perry, Carroll Pinckard (CPi), E.L. Pitney, William Portlock, Mary Pulley, J.G. Reese (Talbot Co., MD), George Reiger, Sue Ricciardi (SRi), Sue Ridd, **R.F. Ringler** (entire state of MD), C.S. Robbins, Larry Robinson, Stephen Rottenborn (SRn), W.F. Rountrey, Steve Sanford, R.M. Schutsky, Don Schwab, F.R. Scott, Matt Sharp, Jay Sheppard (JSp), D.T. Shoch, L.T. Short, S.W. Simon, **Jo Solem** (Howard Co., MD), J.L. Stasz, C.E. Stevens, D.B. Stewart, Chris Swarth, P.W. Sykes, Brian Taber, Peter Tango, Alan & Carol Temple, G.D. Therres, Bill Thomas (BTh), Lou Thomas, M.A. Todd, R.J. Tripician, Craig Turner, **C.R. Vaughn** (lower Eastern Shore of MD), L.P. Warriner, Pete Webb, Ed Weigel, Steve Westre, Judith & Robert Whitcomb, Steve Whitcomb (SWh), Tony White, H.L. Wierenga, Jim Wilkinson, Bill Williams, G.M. Williamson, G.B. Wilmot, **E.M. Wilson** (greater D.C. area), Chris Witt, T.R. Wolfe.—**HENRY T. ARMISTEAD, 523 E. Durham Street, Philadelphia, PA 19119.**

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SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION

Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.
Fall 1988 report



The fall featured a number of strong cold fronts in late September and October, a welcome change from past autumns. Thus, October was noticeably cool, but November was mild. Rainfall was on the low side. No hurricanes approached the Region, but two Tropical Storms made an appearance. Chris came ashore in South Carolina on August 28, blowing a few pelagic birds to the coast of the Carolinas; however, the storm contained no eye when it came ashore and thus there were essentially no pelagic birds carried inland. Keith passed well offshore on November 23, bringing gale-force winds, but it produced few rarities along the coast.

Despite the many strong fronts, the passerine migration was just mediocre, although better than during the past several autumns. It is clear that the volume of Neotropical migrants, particularly thrushes, is not what it was ten years ago; major fallouts on the coast, even with strong cold fronts, simply do not compare with those in the 1960s and 1970s. The winter finch flight was a complete bust, recalling the classic "non-flights" of the previous decade. Shorebirding at inland lakes was locally excellent, with extensive mudflats on some lakes. Pelagic birding off North Carolina produced a very good array of rarities, and observers onshore in South Carolina turned up a few accidentals.

LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS— The only inland sighting of Red-throated Loon was at Jordan L., Chatham, NC, Nov. 13 (RD). On the other hand, Eared Grebe was found in the Region 3 times, all at inland sites: at Goldsboro, NC, Sept. 14–21 (ED), likely the same individual that was present there last fall; at Plant Scherer Ash Pond, Monroe, GA, where two birds were noted Sept. 30 (T), (KD); and at nearby L. Juliette Oct. 1 (MC, AC, DCo). Seldom seen from shore, a N. Fulmar was noted over the surf at Pea I., NC, Oct. 10 (BL). A number of

pelagic trips were again taken out of the North Carolina Outer Banks; collectively, the trips were a success, with many rarities found and only Masked Booby and Long-tailed Jaeger missed from the list of reasonable possibilities in August and September. Remarkable was the scarcity of Greater Shearwaters, with only single birds seen Aug. 20, 21, & 27. Notable counts of Audubon's Shearwaters were the 1500 noted off Oregon Inlet, NC, Sept. 18 (MT party) and 100+ off Charleston, SC, on the fairly late date of Nov. 10 (DF).

S.A.

One concern about pelagic bird identification that I and a number of other veteran North Carolina birders have is the "Band-rumped Syndrome." This is the syndrome whereby the first storm-petrel to depart from a resting flock, and head straight away from the boat, is called a Band-rumped. Some of such birds were called on trips off Oregon Inlet on Aug. 27 & 28. The leaders of these trips, Bryan and Fussell respectively, examined birds initially called Band-rumped and determined them to be Wilson's. To reiterate what I have stated before in these reports, Band-rumped are out there (in North Carolina waters), but many of them are reported without a careful scrutiny of the essential field marks. Admittedly, this species is difficult to observe well because of its very fast flight (faster than most boats) and its complete dislike for boats; this is the variest pelagic species that I have ever seen. I strongly suspect that most of those out-of-state birders who take an Outer Banks pelagic trip to search for this species get a less than satisfying look at a Band-rumped. Probably the best field mark, for a close-up Band-rumped, is the near lack of a pale bar on the upper wing (see Photo 239 in Harrison's *A Field Guide to Seabirds of the World*).

After a several-year absence from these Regional reports, a White-faced Storm-Petrel was carefully studied by several birders on the Aug. 27 trip (AB *et al.*).

White-tailed Tropicbirds were encountered twice—on the record late North Carolina date of Sept. 18 off Oregon Inlet (MT party) and far off Charleston Aug. 24 (DO). American White Pelicans were reported from 3 coastal sites. North Carolina's first inland report of **Great Cormorant** was of an immature at Goldsboro Oct. 18 (ED). Three Greats may have summered at Masonboro Inlet, NC, as they were noted Aug. 20 (SC), seemingly much too early for southbound migrants. A nest of Anhingas was found in August at the s. end of Whipping Creek L., Dare, NC (BN), to confirm the suspicion of nesting of birds noted in April. Tropical Storm Chris certainly brought a Magnificent Frigatebird to Sullivans I., SC, Aug. 28 (HM, *vide* WP), and another was seen between Jekyll and Little Cumberland Islands, GA, Sept. 30 (LT *et al.*).

WADERS—Remarkable as it may seem, **Great White Herons** (white morph Great Blues) were seen at 2 Piedmont locales in the Carolinas, where of casual occurrence. One was seen at Jordan L. Aug. 13–31 (JS, BW, MW, m.ob.) and the second was along the Little Saluda R., Saluda, SC, Nov. 11 (TK). The best post-breeding count of Snowy Egrets at a Piedmont site was of seven, at L. Oconee, GA, Aug. 13 (PY). The Reddish Egret present near Ft. Fisher, NC, in summer remained at least to Sept. 8 (SC); however, the only other Reddish seen was at a spoil pond in South Carolina near Savannah, GA, Aug. 27 (LG, KC). The post-breeding influx of White Ibises to Piedmont lakes was near normal, with a notable count of 20 at Jordan L. Aug. 20 (C.H.B.C.). That lake also had the best inland total of Glossy Ibises, with eight on Aug. 14 (ED). Two Roseate Spoonbills were encountered, both in Georgia: inland near Burke July 29 (CD) and coastally at Jekyll I. Oct. 8–16 (AW, VW *et al.*). Over the past few decades, out-of-range records of Wood Storks have been multiplying in the Region, perhaps owing to the northward shift in the breeding range of the species (decreasing as a breeder in southern Florida but increasing in South Carolina and Georgia). North of the usual post-breeding limits were one at Sneads Ferry, NC, Aug. 15 (GG), two at L. Oconee, GA, Aug. 6 (PY), and one at Commerce L., GA, Sept. 9 (LS).

WATERFOWL—The only record of Fulvous Whistling-Duck was of three at Magnolia Gardens near Charleston, SC, Nov. 25 (RC, CE). It is difficult to speculate whether a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck at L. Lanier, GA, Sept. 2–17 (JP, m.ob.) was a wild or an escaped bird. There is one previous sight record for the state. Because the species is migratory, and there are many extralimital records for the southern United States, it is imperative that the record not be automatically dismissed as an escapee. Out-of-range Snow Geese (all blue morph birds) were three at Watkinsville, GA, Nov. 12 (PS) and eight at Savannah N.W.R., SC, Nov. 5–25 (SCa, AW, VW); and 21 birds, about half of which were blues, were near Fairplay, SC, Nov. 26 (SG, RC *et al.*). A Ross' Goose appeared in the Region this fall, of course at Pea I., Nov. 11–30+ (DC, JW, MT *et al.*). A Gadwall was quite early at St. Simons I., GA, Aug. 25 (EH), and the always notable Eur. Wigeon was detected at 2 North Carolina waterfowl meccas—a male at L. Mattamuskeet Nov. 25 (RD) and four males at Pea I. Nov. 12–13 (MT *et al.*). A count of 3056 Ring-necked Ducks at Par Pond on the Savannah River Plant, SC, Nov. 20 (CZ) was notable, as was a ♀-plumaged Harlequin Duck at the bridge over Oregon Inlet Nov. 13 (MT). Davis had the only inland records of sea ducks this fall: an Oldsquaw at Jordan L. Nov. 24 and a Surf Scoter at L. Wheeler near Raleigh, NC, Nov. 13. He also had the only record of Com. Merganser, which normally does not appear until mid-December in the Region, a pair at Jordan L. Nov. 24.

RAPTORS TO CRANES—A report of 11 Mississippi Kites near Charlotte, NC, in early September would have been remarkable, but no details were provided. One kite near L. Wateree, Fairfield, SC, Sept. 10 (RC, GM) furnished a very rare Piedmont sighting. Reports of Bald Eagles continued to be overwhelming, a very good sign indeed. However, one report caused me some concern; an immature was seen at Mocksville, NC, Oct. 24, but it was found in emaciated condition on the following day (*vide* RS). It was treated by the Winston-Salem Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and was taken to the Carolina Raptor Center near Charlotte for further rehabilitation. Johnson reported a pair of eagles nest-building at Rum Creek W.M.A., GA, Nov. 19; this is apparently a new locale for breeding. The best counts of Broad-winged Hawks were of 350 flying past Tryon, NC, in 30 minutes Sept. 22 (ST) and 200+ n. of Roswell, GA, Sept. 25 (PM, TM). One report of Golden Eagle is about par for the season; this fall's report was of an immature soaring over the Neuse R. between Clayton and Wilson's Mills, NC, Nov. 24 (LJ).

There were eight inland records for Merlin, the most painful being one found dead (shot) near the L. Norman, NC, dam Sept. 3 (DB). Despite the many strong cold fronts in late September and October, the peak time for Peregrine Falcons in the Region, the coastal flight was dismal. Terry Moore and other banders on Jekyll I. noted only two birds in October instead of the usual 25–50. Lewis saw only three on the Outer Banks Oct. 8–10, and Brown and Murray saw only one in 26 days of hawk-watching Sept. 30–Nov. 13 near Sunet Beach, NC. I would speculate that, because the species often migrates to the West Indies and South America by an oceanic route, the northwesterly winds may have allowed more than the usual number of Peregrines to bypass the coast for the oceanic route. There were Peregrine reports from 6 inland sites, including shockingly early sightings (from re-introduced populations?) Aug. 23 at Jordan L. (BW, MW), Aug. 26 at Augusta, GA (AW, VW), and Aug. 28 at Goldsboro (ED).

I always wonder if Black Rails noted during spring or fall are actually just migrants or whether they are on their breeding grounds. That is my thought concerning one rail that was flushed from a field on West Point W.M.A., GA, Aug. 31 (RWW) and another seen in flight across a road through a marsh at Santee Coastal Reserve, SC, Oct. 7 (PR). Definitely out of habitat was a Clapper Rail swimming in sargassum 33 mi off Beaufort Inlet, NC, Sept. 22 (JF). Common Moorhens must be decreasing as breeders in Regions to our north and northwest, as inland sightings seem to be on the decline. The only inland report was of one in Clayton, GA, Sept. 17 (HP). Noteworthy Sandhill Crane reports were of two near Aurora, NC, Nov. 4–17 (SC *et al.*), one in flight over Savannah N.W.R., SC, Nov. 5 (SCa), one at L. Oconee, GA, Oct. 30 (PY), and 40 flying over Thomasville, GA, Nov. 24 (RLC).

SHOREBIRDS—Lesser Golden-Plovers may have been more widely found than ever, with 16 reports; however, this may have been owing to better coverage, as the only totals of more than two birds were of four at Jordan L. Sept. 17 (HH, LM *et al.*) and three at L. Hartwell near Fairplay Sept. 4–Oct. 23 (SW *et al.*). Quite late Lessers were one near Greensboro, NC, Nov. 18 (HH) and two at L. Hartwell Nov. 13 (SW *et al.*). Very rare inland were three Piping Plovers at Jordan L. Aug. 14 (ED, ML, HL), and a Black-necked Stilt Oct. 27 in n.e. Pamlico (PJC, MEW) was quite late. The only inland Am Avocet appeared in Monroe, GA, Aug. 20 (TJ, MCh), while inland Willets, single birds in each case, were found at Falls L. Aug. 5 (RD), Jordan L. Aug. 14 (HL, ML), and at the Gainesville, GA, airport Sept. 10–13 (GV, JP). Long-billed Curlews were reported from their usual haunts—at Ft. Fisher, NC, Cape Romain N.W.R., SC, and Jekyll I., GA—plus a "new" locale, the e. end of Ocracoke I., NC, where one was seen Aug. 24 (AR) and Sept. 11 (RD). North Carolina's first Piedmont record of **Hudsonian Godwit** occurred at Falls L., where

one was noted Sept 11 (HL, DM) and two were present Sept 12–15 (RD). The only other Hudsonian away from the Outer Banks was one at Corncake Inlet near Ft. Fisher Sept. 5 (DC, ED).

Single Ruddy Turnstones were detected inland at L. Hartwell and Falls L., but an outstanding count was of 10 at Jordan L. Aug. 30 (RD). The only inland Red Knot was at Jordan Aug. 30 (MT); and notable counts on the lakes were of seven Sanderlings at Falls L. Sept. 29 (RD), 18 Sanderlings at Jordan L. Sept. 7 (HL), and 250 Semipalmated Sandpipers at the latter site Aug. 28 (HL). Just one White-rumped Sandpiper was detected away from tidewater, that being one at Jordan L. Oct. 29 (HL). On the other hand, Baird's Sandpipers were everywhere, inland and coastally! Normally, individual records would be cited here, but the 15 reports from 11 localities make this impossible. To summarize, reports came from 2 inland locales in Georgia (L. Lanier and Forsyth), one inland site in South Carolina (L. Hartwell), and 3 coastal (Bodie I., Cape Hatteras, and Eagle I.) and 5 inland (Falls L., Jordan L., Goldsboro, Pineville, and Winston-Salem) sites in North Carolina. All records were of single birds except for two at Jordan Aug. 29 (DC). A Purple Sandpiper on a sandy beach at Cape Hatteras, 40 mi from the nearest rocks, was most unexpected Nov. 12 (MT). Stilt Sandpipers are apparently increasing in global numbers, and inland counts continued to be impressive compared to those of a decade ago; the best such counts were of 42 at Falls L. Sept. 6 (RD) and 12 at Jordan L. Sept. 18 (DS). At last, Buff-breasted Sandpiper reports suggested positive signs of a turnaround in the dismal fall numbers in this decade. There were 10 reports, from 6 inland and 3 coastal sites; the better counts (although still nothing to brag about) were of four at L. Oconee Aug. 27 (BD), four at Cape Hatteras Aug. 20 (JW), and three at Citadel Mall in Charleston Aug. 29 (CW). A Ruff was noted at Jordan L. Sept. 1 (HH, PF) for just the 2nd inland (= non-tidewater) record this century for North Carolina. Other Ruffs were seen near Aurora, NC, on the late date of Nov. 7 (SC, MT, DC) and on Ocracoke I. Sept. 1 (JSh). Wilson's Phalarope reports and numbers in the Region continued to increase, with notable totals of 15 at a spoil pond in South Carolina adjacent to Savannah Sept. 17 (SCa), 10 at Pea I. Aug. 21 (MT, HL), and an excellent six inland at Jordan L. on Aug. 20 (VM). Always noteworthy inland, a Red-necked Phalarope was seen at the Clayton Water Treatment Plant, GA, Sept. 5–10 (PB et al.).

JAEGERS TO TERNS—What was apparently the first inland record of Pomarine Jaeger for South Carolina was furnished by an immature at L. Wylie Nov. 26–30 and later (TP, DW, m.ob.). A good pelagic count for that state was four off Charleston Nov. 10 (DF). In addition to one skua sp. and one S. Polar Skua on pelagic trips off North Carolina, an excellently described S. Polar Skua was seen from shore, a most unusual circumstance in fall, at Salvo, NC, Aug. 29 (RA). The bird was likely pushed to shore by winds from Chris, which came ashore in South Carolina the previous day. An excellent find was an ad. Franklin's Gull at Cape Hatteras point Oct. 29 (DC), for about the 6th state record. Notably early Bonaparte's Gulls were one at Goldsboro Aug. 12 (ED) and 12+ at Bear Island W.M.A., SC, Aug. 28 (LG, KC). Reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, formerly primarily a midwinter feature, are now commonplace in fall, and the birds are appearing earlier with each passing year. Each state had Lessers for the season, although all were coastal sightings; the earliest were one in the Jekyll I.–St. Simons I., GA, area Aug. 13–15 (RMA et al.), two at Tybee I., GA, Aug. 22–23 (AWY, SuC, JB), and one at Cape Hatteras Aug. 29 (MaL). However, the most exciting gulls may have been the three juv. Sabine's Gulls found off Oregon Inlet Sept. 18 (MT, HL, m.ob.). The trip date was specifically selected to try to encounter one of these very rare East Coast migrants; most fall trips in the Region have been from August to the Labor Day weekend,

and also in October. Not to be outdone, Davis and Parnell found another juv. Sabine's onshore at Cape Hatteras Oct 7–8.

An outstanding count was of 34 Caspian Terns inland at Falls L. Sept. 6 (RD). Tropical Storm Chris displaced 25+ Royal Terns to L. Moultrie, SC, Aug. 29, for a record high inland count for the state (WP). At Cape Hatteras, a yellow-billed Sandwich Tern Aug. 16 (PY) further added to the confusion about what really is a "Cayenne" Tern. An ad. Roseate Tern was noted at this cape Aug. 20–29 (DC, PD, RA). Reports of this species I have received in recent falls from South Carolina and Georgia, including a detailed report of several from Georgia this season, may well have referred to Forster's Terns. Roseate, of course, is essentially a pelagic migrant, and very rare to boot; few birders have encountered them on Regional pelagic trips. A Com. Tern was seen inland Nov. 21 at Winston-Salem (DD); it was still mostly in breeding plumage. Another elusive pelagic migrant, Arctic Tern, was encountered off Oregon Inlet Aug. 20 and Sept. 18 (MT party). The only inland sighting of Least Tern was at Pendergrass, GA, Aug. 20 (DH, BDr). Chris was responsible for bringing other terns to the South Carolina coast, including 15–20 Bridled Terns and a very rare Brown Noddy at Folly Beach Aug. 28 (D & PFr), and a Sooty Tern at Hilton Head I. Aug. 28 (GJ). A weakened Bridled was picked up alive Aug. 29 at Cape Lookout, NC, as a result of Chris (SH, JR). In addition to those on pelagic trips off Oregon Inlet, two Sooty Terns were noted at Cape Hatteras Aug. 16 (PY), one was very rare at Oregon Inlet proper Aug. 20 (JW), and singles were off Charleston Aug. 17 (DF) and Cape Fear, NC, Aug. 18 (SC). A minimum of seven Black Terns was found at each of 6 inland sites, but the best record of the species was of a very tardy bird Nov. 4–7 near Aurora, NC (SC et al.).

CUCKOOS THROUGH FLYCATCHERS—Amazingly, Black-billed Cuckoo was detected only twice—perched on a telephone wire (!) near Congaree N.M., SC, Oct. 8 (PW) and banded at Jekyll I. Oct. 6 (fide TM). A Short-eared Owl was noted Nov. 13–20 at the Gainesville airport (JP), but the most unusual owl sighting was from the Outer Banks at Buxton. There a N. Saw-whet Owl was seen feeding in yards with outdoor lights Nov. 1–30 and later (fide MaL); it fed on cockroaches on one of the porches. Although Com. Night-hawk appears to be declining in numbers in the East, a tally of 5000+ migrating past Stone Mt., GA, Sept. 12 (PB) was exceptional. An Archilochus hummingbird was late in Kernersville, NC, late November and subsequently (CeD, HH). As usual, *Selasphorus* hummingbirds made news. Kosh had an imm. ♂ Rufous at her feeders in Wilmington Oct. 9–Nov. 30+, and a ♀-plumaged *Selasphorus* there beginning Oct. 14. A ♀/imm. bird of the genus was present Nov. 16–30 and later at a Charlotte feeder (HW, DW et al.), and a hummingbird with rufous flanks and an incomplete orange-red gorget was noted at flowers in Granite Falls, NC, Oct. 19 (DkC). Also in that state, a *Selasphorus* was reported for several weeks near Jacksonville (JO). In South Carolina, an imm. ♂ *Selasphorus* was present at a Greenville feeder early October into winter (fide PW); while from Georgia came reports of an imm. ♂ Rufous at a feeder at Rum Creek W.M.A., Oct. 19–23 (TJ et al.) and a ♀/imm. *Selasphorus* in Norcross Nov. 24 (RMA). At present, all conclusive *Selasphorus* records in the Region have been of Rufous, and all conclusive *Archilochus* have been Ruby-throateds.

Olive-sided Flycatchers migrate southward mainly along the mountains and farther west, thus it is not surprising that four-fifths of the reports came from n. Georgia—near Roswell Sept. 2–4 and Sept. 20 (PM, TM), Chattahoochee R. near Atlanta Sept. 10 (JC), and Commerce L., Sept. 17 (JC, JP). The other report was of an Olive-sided at Winston-Salem, NC, Oct. 8 (HC, F.A.S.). The nearly-as-rare Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was noted twice at Pea I. and at Wilmington, e

Halifax, NC, and near Atlanta Is the W Kingbird having trouble on the n.e. portion of its breeding range? I cannot remember an autumn without Western reports from North Carolina, but the only report I received in the Region was of one at Ft. Pulaski near Tybee I., GA, Nov. 24 (AA). However, more spectacular flycatchers made up for the absence of W. Kingbirds. The Scissor-tailed Flycatchers that nested near Cartersville, GA, were last noted in early September (*vide* TM), and another Scissor-tailed was seen at Huntington Beach S.P., SC, Nov. 6 (SW *et al.*). A 2nd state South Carolina record, and 3rd for the Region, of **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** was furnished by one in changing plumage at an old rice field Oct. 23 in s. Colleton (JH, *vide* JEC).

LARKS TO VIREOS—Horned Larks are not known to nest within 50 mi of the Region's coast, but one singing at the New Hanover, NC, airport Aug. 8 (SC) was suggestive of breeding. A N. Rough-winged Swallow at Pendergrass, GA, Oct. 22 (JP) was quite late, as were two Barn Swallows at Goldsboro Nov. 26, with one remaining to the end of the period (ED). The fall "flight" of Red-breasted Nuthatches was not a flight at all; the species was very scarce everywhere. Exceptionally early Brown Creepers were found Sept. 13 at Oriental, NC (DFoy) and Sept. 16–17 at Pea I. (ML, HL, MT). Rarely reported in this decade in North Carolina, a Bewick's Wren was carefully studied Sept. 6 near Weldon (ML); and Bewick's were also seen Oct. 28 at Conyers, GA (FMI) and Oct. 30 near Marietta, GA (NI). Since the Sedge Wren is not known for certain to breed in the Region, it is likely that two singing birds Aug. 6 at L. Oconee, Greene (PY) and one singing wren at Eagle I. near Wilmington Aug. 13 (SC, JN) were wandering birds or early migrants [but the species is an August breeder in some regions—K.K.].

Again this fall, Golden-crowned Kinglets were in larger numbers than normal in South Carolina and Georgia, and illustrative of this abundance were five present at Thomasville, GA, by Oct. 15 (RLC). Foy banded a rather late Swainson's Thrush at Oriental, NC, Nov. 12. A **Bell's Vireo** was reported by Forsythe Nov. 1 at Santee N.W.R. for the 2nd South Carolina record; the first was a bird collected on the coast in 1985. Because of the difficulty in identification of the species, the state's Bird Records Committee will need to review all records of Bell's Vireo. The always notable Warbling Vireo was detected near Commerce L., GA, Sept. 24 (JP). Perhaps reflecting the lackluster migration, sightings of Philadelphia Vireos were down from previous falls. Singles were near Roswell, GA, Sept. 17 (TM), Atlanta Oct. 1 (A.A.S.), and Lugoff, SC, Sept. 28 (LG), and an excellent four were seen together at Pea I. Sept. 17 (ML *et al.*).

WARBLERS—Eric Dean had a good count of four Blue-winged Warblers Aug. 28 at Goldsboro. Despite the so-so warbler migration, at least 8 sightings of Golden-winged Warblers, all September 1–20, were encouraging. Both *Vermivora* hybrids were encountered. A ♂ "Lawrence's" flew into a window at Tryon, NC, Sept. 3 and was killed (ST, *N.C.S.M.) and another was seen at Augusta Oct. 1 (VW). "Brewster's" were noted Sept. 5 along the Saluda R., Lexington, SC (RC, TH) and Sept. 13 at Conyers, GA (FMI). An imm. Chestnut-sided Warbler was banded at Oriental on the early date of Aug. 18 (DFoy), whereas 100+ along the Chattahoochee R. near Atlanta Sept. 3 (A.A.S.) was a remarkable count. Notable date records for Georgia warblers included an early Magnolia Aug. 14 on Jekyll I. (RMa *et al.*), a late Magnolia Nov. 5 at Athens (PY), a late Cape May at Athens Nov. 16 (PY), an early Black-throated Green near Atlanta Aug. 16 (JHi), and an early Blackburnian n. of Atlanta Aug. 6 (PM, TM). Palm Warblers are abundant fall migrants on the coast (although not as numerous as the ubiquitous Yellow-rumped), but an estimate of 3000 at a campground at Salvo, NC, Oct. 10 (BL) was

awesome. A Blackpoll Warbler Nov. 11 at Sullivans I., SC (PW) was quite late, as was a very rare coastal Cerulean Warbler at Bald Head I., NC, Oct. 16 (DC). The only other Ceruleans, away from the four Atlanta reports, came from Tryon (ST) and Caesars Head S.P., SC (DF, DCI), both likely breeding sites. A count of 1000+ Am. Redstarts Sept. 22 at Bald Head I., NC (SC), was just as stunning as the Palm Warbler total mentioned above. Another redstart was very tardy Nov. 25 on Roanoke I., NC (JM). Approximately 6 reports of Wilson's Warblers was a little below par, but most disappointingly, there was nary a single report of Connecticut or Mourning warblers.

TANAGERS TO FINCHES—South Carolina had, surprisingly, 2 records for Western Tanager: in Lugoff Sept. 8 (LG) and at James I., Sept. 14 (G & MD, *vide* PL). A ♀ Painted Bunting at Camden, SC, Aug. 13, in the same yard where a male was present in the summers of 1986 and 1987 (FK, *vide* LG), hinted at local breeding. As usual, the only fall Dickcissels were coastal—at Pea I. Oct. 9 (RD, BL) and banded at Jekyll I. Oct. 5 (TM *et al.*). Glover found a **Lark Bunting** at Huntington Beach S.P. Sept. 24 for about the 5th South Carolina record. Clay-colored Sparrows were detected only at Pea I. Sept. 24 (RMO) and Ft. Fisher Oct. 14 (SC). Lark Sparrows were found at 5 coastal North Carolina sites and one coastal South Carolina locale, with no count greater than two individuals. A Savannah Sparrow was early Aug. 28 in Forsyth, GA (JP, JC), and a Le Conte's Sparrow was a good find inland near Mayesville, SC, Oct. 23 (LG). Although many Sharp-tailed Sparrows from the Northern Plains must certainly migrate over inland sections, few such birds are encountered. Lynch noted a Sharp-tailed at Jordan L. Oct. 7, and Kalbach noted another in e. Saluda, SC, Nov. 27, a very late date for the species at an inland site. McCamey banded two Lincoln's Sparrows at Dawsonville, GA, Oct. 5 and another Oct. 14, and a 4th bird was also banded at Jekyll I. Oct. 5 (*vide* TM). Other Lincoln's were at a feeder in Winston-Salem Sept. 25 (RS, HS), near Atlanta Oct. 15 (JHi, JC), and on their wintering grounds near L. Phelps, NC, Nov. 25 (three birds—DC, ML, RD).

It was not many years ago that records of Lapland Longspurs were as scarce as hen's teeth. This fall, 45 were tallied at an apparently regular wintering locale at First Colony Farms near L. Phelps Nov. 25 (DC, ML, RD); five were at Cape Hatteras Nov. 26 (MT *et al.*); up to five were at the Charlotte Motor Speedway in November (*vide* DW); one was at Ft. Fisher Oct. 22 (SC); and two were near L. Lanier, GA, also on Oct. 22 (JC, JP). There were four reports of Snow Buntings, not bad for a fall season, with non-coastal reports of one on the shore of L. Wylie, SC, Nov. 26–27 (DW, TP, m.ob.) and one in n.e. Pamlico, NC, Nov. 13 (PJC, MEW).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds, regular but rare in early fall along the coast, were found at a feeder in Long Beach, NC, Sept. 9 (BH, BB, KK) and at Salvo, NC, Sept. 25 (SR). The Purple Finch flight was the poorest in the memory of nearly everyone, and Red Crossbills went unreported. Likewise, Pine Siskins were encountered only by several birders, and the only report of Evening Grosbeak, of a flock of 40 in n. Georgia, was almost certainly a misidentification. It appeared that feeder watchers were going to have a dismal winter, but that they would save money on sunflower seeds!

OBSERVERS—Robert Abbott, Anselm Atkins, Atlanta Audubon Society, Judy Bickett, Patrick Brisse, Bill Brokaw, Dick Brown, Allen Bryan, Kevin Calhoun, Susan Callaway (SuC), Steve Calver (SCa), Derek Carrigan (DkC), Derb Carter, Robin Carter, Jack Carusos, Hartsell Cash, J.E. Cely, Chapel Hill Bird Club, Mike Chapman (MCh), Arlene Clark, Donna Clark (DCI), Delma Coleman (DCo), Sam Cooper, R.L. Crawford, Maurice Crenshaw, P.J. Crutchfield, Kathy Darley, Ricky Davis, Celia Dean (CeD), Eric

Dean, Chris Depkin, David Disher, G. & M. Donahue (G&MD), Bruce Dralle (BDr), Paul DuMont, Barny Dunning, Caroline Eastman, Peggy Ferebee, Forsyth Audubon Society, Dennis Forsythe, Dorothy Foy (DFoy), Don & Pat Frey (D&PFR), John Fussell, Sidney Gauthreaux, Lex Glover, Gilbert Grant, Joe Hamilton, Tom Hankins, Dale Hardee, Bonnie Harris, Scott Hartley, Herb Hendrickson, Joel Hitt (JHi), Eileen Hutcheson, Nancy Iha, Leon Jernigan, George Jett, Terry Johnson, Tim Kalbach, Ferrell King, Kitty Kosh, Pete Laurie, Harry LeGrand, Bob Lewis, Merrill Lynch, Marcia Lyons (MaL), Herbert MacMurphy, Robert Manns (RMA), Frank McCamey, George McCoy, Joan McKearnan, Francis Michael (FMi), Debbie Mignogno, Peggy Moore, Randy Moore (RMO), Terry

Moore, Vaughn Morrison, Lynn Moseley, Rick Murray, Jeremy Nance, Bob Noffsinger, North Carolina State Museum, D. Oakley, Jim O'Donnell, John Paget, J.F. Parnell, Hunter Patterson, Taylor Piephoff, Will Post, Alfred Rad, Jay Robinson, Paul Rodewald Steve Ryan, Doug Shadwick, Jay Sheppard (JSh), Lon Slack, Harry Snavelly, Ramona Snavelly, Jonathan Steere, Paul Sykes, Lydia Thompson, Simon Thompson, Mike Tove, Greg Valpey, Bill Wagner, Margaret Wagner, Steve Wagner, Charlie Walters, Anne Waters, Vernon Waters, M.E. Whitfield, Harriet Whitsett, R.W. Whittington, Pete Worthington, David Wright, John Wright, Anne Wyatt (AWy), Peter Yawkey, Calvin Zippler.—**HARRY E. LeGRAND, JR., 331 Yadkin Dr., Raleigh, NC 27609.**

FLORIDA REGION

John C. Ogden



No one said it better than Howard Langridge, who described the winter of 1988–1989 as being "... as dry as a desiccated Dickcissel in the dungeons of the Dry Tortugas." Less colorfully stated, the same message came from throughout the Peninsula. For example, going into April, 1989, the preceding six months at the Miami airport were collectively the driest for this period of record since 1943. It was an unusually warm winter as well. Henry Stevenson suggested that Tallahassee may have had its warmest January of record, while most south Florida observers remarked that with one exception, winter simply did not occur. The exception came late, a fairly strong but relatively dry cold front that dropped temperatures into the mid 20s in central Florida, and down to the mid 30s as far south as Homestead, on the night of February 25. That front sadly tarnished the American Swallow-tailed

Kite's reputation as the harbinger of spring, especially in south Florida. The first kites had appeared only two or three days earlier at several locations along the Collier-Monroe coast (SSn).

Avian responses to an unusually warm and dry winter were apparent, but not overwhelmingly so. We had almost no waxwings, relatively few robins, and "northern" finches were almost nonexistent. Contrary to this pattern, however, the northern peninsula experienced unusually high numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets, and possibly Brown Creepers, while White-crowned Sparrows were mentioned by an unexpectedly high proportion of area editors from throughout the peninsula. The number of species that winter for the most part south of Florida, and reported this season as either occurring unusually far north or in unusually high numbers, seemed to me to be

somewhat modest (for example, see warblers, also relatively few tanagers or orioles were reported).

Another likely response to the weather, several waterbirds nested during mid-winter in the central and northern peninsula (see cormorants, herons, Wood Ducks). Waterfowl numbers were Regionally low, perhaps owing to the mild season, although the horror stories we hear regarding the chronically poor rates of nesting success by waterfowl, continent-wide, must also be part of that story. Dry conditions in the Everglades and Big Cypress regions resulted in no colony formation at the Corkscrew rookery, and in several late February – early March desertions of colonies by Great and Snowy egrets in Everglades National Park (JCO, GTB).

The most unexpected avian event was a substantial flight of large buteos into the southern peninsula, including many birds in unusually pale or dark plumages. Most were Red-tailed Hawks, apparently from northwestern populations. This flight also brought some that were either Rough-legged or Ferruginous hawks, or that looked enough like these two extremely rare Florida visitors that they fooled our corps of field watchers. As happened with the flight of western hummingbirds that we somewhat gracelessly absorbed last winter, the sudden appearance of a bunch of large raptors carrying a complex mix of unfamiliar plumages caught us unprepared. One result: I received too many detailed descriptions of large “pale-headed”/“all dark” buteos, with the expectation that I could be the final judge.

ABBREVIATIONS — E.N.P. = Everglades National Park; F O.S.R.C. = Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee; N Pen. = northern peninsula (north of about the latitude of St. Petersburg and Melbourne); S.Pen. = southern peninsula. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO STORKS — While no large numbers of Com. Loons appeared at the usual loon places—the highest counts were of 15 well offshore from Cape Canaveral Jan. 30 (JJ), and 13 at the Lake Worth pier Dec. 1 (HPL, GSH)—a locally record-breaking 56 were in e. Florida Bay Dec. 29 (JCO, AS *et al.*). The only rare grebe was an Eared, in a phosphate impoundment near Bartow Feb. 19 (PJF, PT). Also at the Lake Worth pier was one Cory’s Shearwater, extremely well seen, Dec. 1, for only the 3rd December sighting in *Palm Beach* (HPL, TT). Locally high inland counts of Am. White Pelicans were of 50 at the new Orlando Wilderness Park in east Orange Feb. 13 (DWF *et al.*), and over 2000 in the Polk phosphate impoundments Jan. 7 (PJF, PT). The winter’s only high count of N. Gannets was of 409 off the Lake Worth Pier Dec. 12 (HPL). At this same location was one ad. Masked Booby Dec. 6 (HPL, KG), while one Brown Booby was spotted 18 miles offshore from Cape Canaveral Dec. 12 (JJ *et al.*). Anhinga again appeared at Key West, with two on Feb. 3 (JO). One probable response to the warm winter was nesting by Double-crested Cormorants as far north as the phosphate pond at Occidental Chemical, *Hamilton*, where 13 nests contained incubating adults Dec. 28 (PDS).

Another possible response to the mild weather was mid-winter nesting by Great Blue Herons as far north as Bradenton, where pairs began in early November and had fledged young by mid-February (RTP). A high count of Reddish Egrets for Sarasota Bay was of five near Stephens Point about Dec. 19 (BAM). Although it did not match last winter’s high counts, the location was different for 138 Glossy Ibises in the Devil’s Garden area, *Hendry*, Feb. 4 (RCT). Approximately 600 pairs of Roseate Spoonbills successfully nested in several Florida Bay colonies, representing an increase of 100–150 pairs above the number that nested there the past 2–3 years (RBJ, GP). The drought deserves some of the credit for the spoonbills’ success, as rapidly dropping water levels on nearby mainland feeding grounds produced high concentrations of food

when nests contained young birds during January and February.

S.A.

Wood Storks, the birds that have become the soul of the s. Florida wetlands, once again showed a discouragingly unpromising nesting effort. Through March, only 400 pairs had initiated nesting in 3 small Everglades colonies. Nesting was initiated over a spread of weeks between early February and late March, with the chances of success being especially poor for the late starters. By mid-March, most of the Everglades in E.N.P. was dry, with the only substantial pool of surface water anywhere in the entire ecosystem being an unnatural impoundment in the southeastern Water Conservation Area 3A. Once again, biologically insensitive water management practices and a compartmentalized Everglades ecosystem have combined to prolong the tragically repetitious chain of years wherein wading birds have struck out! The mild winter, and poor conditions in the S. Pen., may explain the rare mid-winter presence of single Wood Storks in coastal *Wakulla*, Jan. 5 and Feb. 7 (DM, Venice Audubon Society).”

WATERFOWL — Although waterfowl numbers, for the most part, were Regionally unimpressive, what seemed to be a paradoxically large number of reports of our “flat-faced friends” (thanks, Frosty Anderson) produced a remarkably unpatterned mosaic of interesting records, statewide. One Tundra Swan was at St. Marks Light Dec. 17 (JEC, BLW). Snow Geese appeared on Duda Ranch, near Rockledge, with 18 on Dec. 3 (KB, JD, MH), on Merritt Island N.W.R. with seven on Jan. 18–19 (DS), and unusually far south, one (blue) near S. Venice Jan. 5–8 (HP *et al.*). The only Brant was one n of Sebastin, Jan. 1 (H & WD) & 22 (BDN, Tropical Audubon Society). In the rare puddle duck department were four Am Black Ducks, well seen in flight unusually far south at Loxahatchee N.W.R. Jan. 22 (BDN *et al.*), one Eurasian Wigeon at Merritt Island N.W.R. Feb. 1–4 (WH *et al.*, SR), and one ♂ Cinnamon Teal also at Merritt Island N.W.R. Jan. 15–Feb 4 (JJ *et al.*, SR). A high count of N. Shovelers was of a most impressive 3880 in the Polk phosphate impoundments Feb 19 (PJF, PT). Early Wood Duck nesting occurred at L. Georgia, Orlando, where a pair laid eggs beginning Feb. 12 (CTR) A locally large concentration of 75–100 Wood Ducks was at L. Davis, Orlando, in December and January (DWF), and one male wintered at Mrazek Pond in south E.N.P., where they are rare (JCO, m.ob.). Fulvous Whistling-Ducks apparently wintered in Orange, with 16 on L. Georgia Dec. 31 (CTR) and nine in the Orlando Wilderness Park Feb. 22 (DWF, Ss). The season’s high count for Fulvous was of 36 at Merritt Island N.W.R. Dec. 10 (DS). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, either escaped birds or their offspring, were again spotted along the lower Gulf Coast, this time 10 on a farm pond east of Sarasota Jan. 14 (BDN *et al.*).

Unusual in the Florida Keys, 10 Ring-necked Ducks were on Key West Dec. 11, with seven still there Feb. 3 (JO). The southernmost scoters in a non-scoter winter were 21 Blacks off Port Canaveral Dec. 30 (JJ), 23 Blacks at the Lake Worth pier Dec. 6 (HPL), and one Surf Scoter in n. Hillsboro Bay Dec 31 (RTP). Clearly the rarest duck anywhere in the Region this winter was one imm. ♂ **Harlequin Duck** at the Wards Bank jetties, *Duval*, Dec. 3–26 (EC, C & JH; subsequently studied by BJR, PCP, JHH). I do not know the history of the Harlequin here, but do not doubt that this must be one of the few ever reported anywhere in Florida. Not quite as rare, but nevertheless an exciting find, was one Oldsquaw near St. Marks Light Jan. 30 (HA, LH). Rare as far south as the central peninsula were six Buffleheads at Hudson Beach, *Pasco*, Feb 27 (SR), and 11 in the Polk impoundments Feb. 19 (PJF, PT) Those Polk phosphate impoundments continued to produce some of the highest waterfowl counts anywhere in the Region,

including a spectacular 7000 Ruddy Ducks Feb 19 (PJF, PT) Finally, a nice count of 184 Red-breasted Mergansers was seen migrating south at the Lake Worth pier Dec. 6 (HPL).

RAPTORS — Black-shouldered Kites, presumably on the way to becoming established nesters in the S. Pen., were spotted near S. Venice with one on Dec. 28 (S & AS), and in extreme s.w. Palm Beach with one Jan. 5 (WRH). Possibly in a drought-induced dispersal, Snail Kites appeared along I-75 in w. Lee with one Dec. 18 (RTP), two in the Big Cypress region north of mile marker 28 along Alligator Alley, Collier, Dec. 17 (*vide* RTP), and one near Noble Hammock in s.w. E.N.P., also Dec. 18 (*vide* JCO). The dates for these 3 observations were puzzlingly similar, although they reflect in part a "weekend effect." Cooper's Hawks are rare enough in extreme s. Florida that birds well seen are worth reporting. One was near Noble Hammock, E.N.P., Dec. 3 (PWS, SAS, CJ), and one was chasing shorebirds on Virginia Key mudflats, Miami, Feb. 4 (BDN, MR). At least two (one dark and one light) Short-tailed Hawks were repeatedly seen through portions of the winter hunting over mixed residential-agricultural areas along the north side of Homestead, Dade (JCO, PWS, SAS *et al*). These observations suggest that this species will tolerate certain unnatural environments; interestingly, the same area supports a small number of nesting Am. Swallow-tailed Kites in summer. The dark Short-tailed, in imm. plumage, showed its adaptability Feb. 25 when it was found perched in the top of a large tree on an entirely residential street, plucking a freshly killed Eur. Collared-Dove (DB, MB).

Seven different area editors, all in the central and southern Pen., reported high numbers and/or unusual plumages of Red-tailed Hawks. Among the latter were six to seven, minimally, that were described as pale, with especially whitish heads (*Glades and Okeechobee*, Feb. 3-20, RCT; *Martin*, Dec. 31, AW, PW; *Dade and Monroe* throughout the period, JCO, WRH), and one that was mostly blackish with white breast streakings (s.e. *Pasco*, Jan. 13, SR, PC). Descriptions of these plumages appeared to more closely fit those given in recent raptor guides for the "Krider's" and "Harlan's" forms, respectively, than for other choices. This raptor flight also produced one **Rough-legged Hawk**, and two or three Ferruginous Hawks! Thankfully, the Rough-legged, a strongly patterned bird, was reported with a good drawing and bountiful details Jan 5 near Highway 80 in north Hendry (HPL, VA *et al.*, full details to F.O.S.R.C.). Unfortunately, a lengthy description of the best seen of the Ferruginous, Feb. 19 in Polk (PJF, PT), did not to my mind unequivocally eliminate pale-plumaged Red-taileds; the observers themselves agreed that "no clear consensus" was reached by all who later saw this bird. The poorest case was for a "Ferruginous" reported with no details by an experienced Florida observer, who only saw the bird from a low-flying aircraft (name withheld to protect the guilty)! Finally, a few Swainson's Hawks were seen as usual, but including one that was well north of the normal wintering areas, Dec. 17 in east Orange (PH, FH, WT), and one far south in Key West Dec. 6 (JO).

CRANES TO ALCIDS — A high count for wintering Sandhill Cranes from central Florida was of 539 at Lake Alfred, Polk, Jan. 20 (ND). One late transient, or wintering, Lesser Golden-Plover was at Loxahatchee N.W.R. Dec. 7 (AW). A count of 20 Piping Plovers at Virginia Key, Miami, Jan. 1 furnished a local high number (MCW). The northernmost wintering Black-necked Stilts were one throughout the period at Port Canaveral (JJ *et al.*) and four in Polk Jan. 7 (PJF). At the latter location were 84 Am. Avocets Feb. 18 for a high winter count (CLG). Unusual wintering in the N. Pen., one Long-billed Curlew occurred throughout the period at Cedar Key (DCH, m.ob.). Rare, especially in the S. Pen., was one Purple Sandpiper near Doctors Pass, Naples Beach, from Dec. 14 through the period (JW, HC *et al.*, details to F.O.S.R.C.). A high count of dowitchers (sp.) from the interior was of 1120 in the Polk phosphate impoundments Feb. 19 (PJF, PT). Many

(most?) of these interior dowitchers may be Long-billed, as was reported for 30-50 s.e. of Lake Placid between early January and mid-February (PWS, SAS, FEL), identified by their distinctive callnotes. An Am. Woodcock was again located far south near Paradise Key, E.N.P., Feb. 5 (PWS, SAS), performing courtship flights at dusk.

The very rare **Common Black-headed Gull** was reported at Port Canaveral, with one immature Feb. 24 (JJ, KB). Unusual inland was one Bonaparte's Gull in the Tamiami Trail canal, Dade, Jan. 6 (PWS, SAS). Even rarer than the Black-headed was a bird described as a 2nd-winter plumaged **California Gull** (previous Florida records?) at the Pompano Beach landfill Feb. 25-26 (WG, BH, details to F.O.S.R.C.). This gull received prolonged study, and was compared with nearby Herring, Ring-billed, and Lesser Black-backed gulls. Speaking of the latter, they are now seen along the Atlantic coast of central and s. Florida, and Florida Bay, often enough in winter that I must become more selective in reviewing their reports. The high count for Lesser Black-backed this winter was of 14 at Pompano Beach landfill (WG). Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported from 4 locations from Titusville to Delray Beach between Dec. 2 and Jan. 28 (CP, RP, JJ *et al*). Although closely studied for 15 minutes, no plumage information was provided with a report of one Roseate Tern at Cedar Key Dec. 28 (BPM, WHA). A late Black Tern was in Polk Dec. 10 (PJF). One of the least expected birds in Florida, but one that periodically appears along our beaches, is the Dovekie. I do not recall anyone who has seen a healthy one, though, and this winter's record was no exception. One was found alive but "exhausted and dehydrated" at a Key Biscayne parking lot Dec. 7 (Jim Dowd), and taken to a bird "rehabilitator" (*vide* BDN). I have no other details.

PIGEONS TO WOODPECKERS — A question asked by Bill Smith (PWS) was whether White-crowned Pigeons left s. Florida at all this winter. Unquestionably White-crowns were much more conspicuous in numerous areas of south E.N.P. and in the Florida Keys than normally is the case in winter (PWS, SAS, JCO *et al.*). The main concentration was on n. Key Largo (MB), including a roost estimated to contain over 1000 pigeons during late January and early February (RBo)! The number of towns with established colonies of Eurasian Collared-Doves seems to be rapidly on the increase, including Lake Placid and Haines City (FEL) and Immokalee (*vide* THB). Bill Smith estimates the Homestead-Florida Keys "population" to now number in the many thousands! Although White-winged Doves are now common in s. Dade, the report of 215 as far north as Lake Placid Dec. 23 (FEL) was a real surprise to me. Again from Bill Smith, who seems to have an eye for columbids, comes the observation that Com Ground-Doves seem to be "fading" in *Dade* and *Monroe*. Many observers share his view, although no good ideas have been proposed to explain the near disappearance of this once common bird. Ground-doves have even become scarce in remote regions of E.N.P., where habitat changes have not occurred.

The Black-hooded Parakeet (a.k.a. Nanday Conure, *Nandayus nenday*)—reported from s. Jacksonville, with up to nine Jan. 27-Feb. 3 (JPC, PCP), and from 2 locations in e. Hillsborough, Dec. 31 and Jan. 8 (RTP)—may be the next psittacid to make a run at establishing a wide distribution in Florida. Smooth-billed Ani, like the ground-dove, has become very uncommon in s.e. *Dade* in agricultural areas where it once was common. The decline has been ascribed to severely cold winters in the late 1970s and early-mid 1980s, and to an increase in more intense agricultural practices. A few anis are still seen; one on Merritt Island N.W.R. Dec. 21 (DS) and one on No-Name Key, lower Florida Keys, Dec. 16 (PWS) were outside of the normal range. A Chuck-will's-widow was singing unusually early near Wekiva Springs State Park Feb. 22 (JWL, DMA). Following last winter's invasion by confusingly-plumaged western hummingbirds, this winter was relatively quiet. One Rufous Hummingbird was in Tallahassee Dec. 31 (JM), and one (possibly two) unidentified *Selasphorus* was

unusually far south near Delray Beach Jan 1 through the period (BH, m.ob.). A pleasingly high count of 35-40 Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered in an area of recently burned scrubby flatwoods at Archbold Biological Station, Highlands (FEL, m.ob.).

FLYCATCHERS TO CREEPERS — Rare anytime in winter, *Empidonax* flycatchers were described in detail from 2 locations. The first was also unusually far north, near Lake Placid, Dec. 23 (RM); it was suspected but not positively identified as a Least. The second was along the Snake Bight trail, E.N.P., Feb. 14-18, and was thought to be a Willow Flycatcher (HPL, GSH *et al.*, details to F.O.S.R.C.). Wintering Vermilion Flycatchers appeared at Paynes Prairie, Alachua, Dec. 18 (BPM *et al.*), Sun City Center, Hillsborough, through most of the winter (RTP *et al.*), and Flamingo, E.N.P., in late January (AMC). The 2nd report and first documented record in Florida for a **Cassin's Kingbird** came from Loxahatchee N.W.R., Dec. 17 through the period (PS, AW, m.ob.). Unlike the first, this one was well photographed (copies to F.O.S.R.C.). Somewhat higher than usual numbers of Western Kingbirds wintered w. of Homestead, 15-20 birds (PWS), while the number of locations reporting Scissor-tailed Flycatchers seemed greater than normal. Included in the latter were two Scissor-taileds that presumably were late fall transients near Medart, Wakulla, Dec. 3 (JG), one unusually far north for late winter, near Jacksonville, Feb. 6 (JPC), and a high local count of eight to 10 near Ruskin, Hillsborough, Dec. 3 (MW *et al.*).

Although most central and southern Florida observers thought that Purple Martins were slow to return, one arrived very early at Lake Placid Jan. 8 (FEL), and another was early in the Tallahassee Div., Lake Jackson, Leon, Jan. 24 (DPY). Northern Rough-winged Swallows apparently remained in the Region throughout this mild winter, as evidenced by two at St. Marks Light Dec. 17 (JEC) and 32 at Lakeport, Glades, Jan. 7 (PWS, SAS), followed by a flock of 155 on wires at the same Lakeport location Feb. 10 (RCT). When last year's Cave Swallow nesting site near Cutler Ridge, Dade, was first checked Feb. 15, two were found (PWS *et al.*); whether they had wintered there is not known. One of the few "northern" birds to reach the peninsula this winter showed up surprisingly far south: one Red-breasted Nuthatch in a pine thicket at Archbold Biological Station, Highlands, Dec. 4-8 and again Feb. 15 (TH, AB, FEL, GEW). Another northerner was the Brown Creeper, a species that is not reported every winter in the Region, but which appeared at 3 N. Pen. locations this year: Tallahassee, one from December through the period (DPY), Jacksonville, one from Jan. 23 through the period (JPC), and Gainesville, one Dec. 12 and on 3 later dates (DTF).

KINGLETS TO WARBLERS — The northern species that made the biggest impression on Florida observers was the Golden-crowned Kinglet. Higher than usual numbers were found around Tallahassee (HMS), Jacksonville (PCP), and Gainesville (BPM), and two made it as far south in the peninsula as Wekiva Springs S.P. Feb. 18 (CTR). Good written details were submitted with the report of one Bell's Vireo in the Coconut Grove area of Miami Dec. 17 (BDN).

Making sense of the numerous warbler reports is an always interesting, and sometimes brain-draining, exercise! This winter 11 different species were reported as being locally unusual, in most cases because a bird was farther north than expected. That number is no greater this winter than was reported for the same category one year ago, although it too was a warmish winter. As to abundance, the more experienced s. Florida observers offered differing opinions. A few saw increased numbers and locally high concentrations of species (HPL, BDN), including 16 species of warblers on the Snake Bight trail, E.N.P., Feb. 19 (BH, JH). Another (PWS) considered numbers noticeably low for most species, with this pattern somewhat moderated by an early surge of warblers in February.

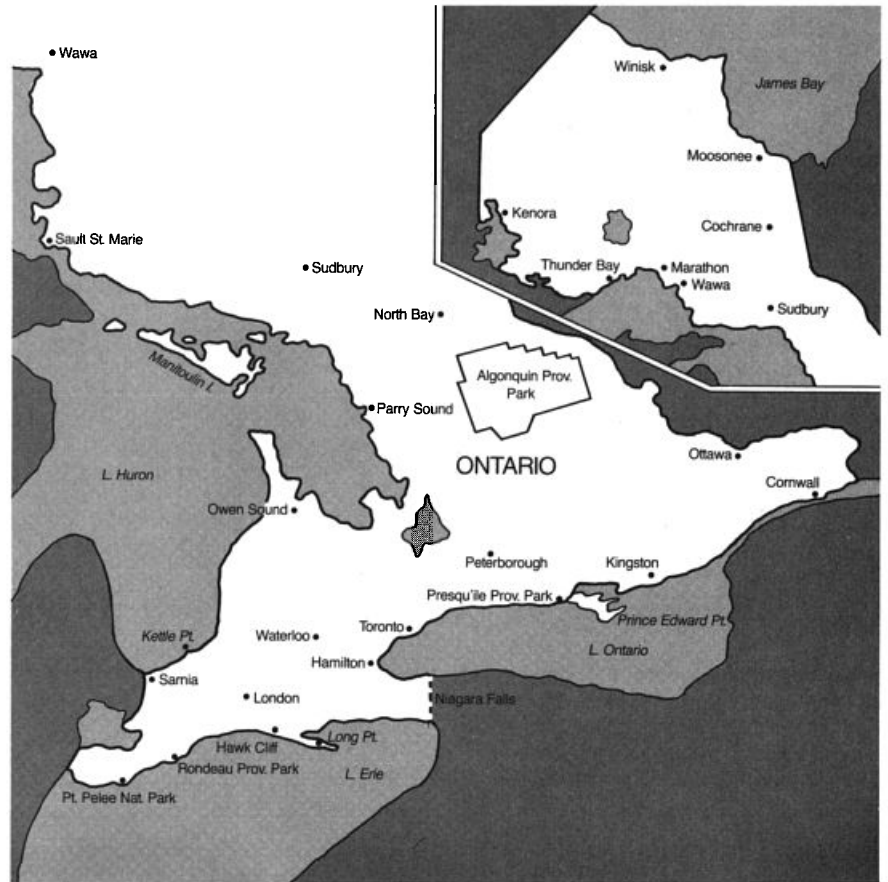
The warblers that were considered "farther north than usual," or fell into the "locally rare" category, were the following (pardon my somewhat boring presentation here): Blue-winged Warbler, two at Mrazek Pond, E.N.P., Jan. 20 (PWS, SAS); Tennessee Warbler, one very late at St. Mark's Light Dec. 10 (DSa), and one along Snake Bight trail, E.N.P., Feb. 26 (PWS); N. Parula, early arrival at St. Marks Light Feb. 18 (DSa), and early singing in the Orlando area Feb. 13 (DWF), Yellow Warbler, one unusually far north at Melbourne Jan. 3 (NS); Black-throated Blue Warbler, one at Gainesville Dec. 8 (DTF); Black-throated Gray Warbler, one at Snake Bight, E.N.P., Feb. 12-19 (HPL, TT, BH); Am. Redstart, one in Gainesville Dec. 18 (JWH *et al.*), and one at Merritt Island N.W.R. Dec. 28 (J, SJ); Ovenbird at Wakulla River, Wakulla, throughout the period (JHE); Louisiana Waterthrush at Snake Bight trail, E.N.P., Feb. 19 (BH, JH) & 26 (PWS); and Wilson's Warbler at 3 different locations in the Gainesville area Dec. 18 (BPM, m.ob.).

BANANAQUIT TO FINCHES — A Bananaquit discovered at Lloyd State Park near Dania Feb. 8 remained through the winter period (JB, m.ob., details to F.O.S.R.C.). A late Summer Tanager was in Gainesville Dec. 14 (BPM), and one spent the entire winter in my yard north of Homestead (JCO). Another in the "farther north than usual" category was one ♂ Painted Bunting at a s. Jacksonville feeder throughout the period (SAG). The F.O.S.R.C. received documentation of a Black-faced Grassquit seen at the St. Lucie Co. airport Dec. 18 (JT, *vide* HD), but not reported to me through the regular area editor network. Repeated searches of grassy fields west of Homestead produced minimum counts of 12 Grasshopper Sparrows, two Clay-colored Sparrows, one Lark Sparrow (singing on Feb. 7), and five White-crowned Sparrows (CAM, PWS, HPL, m.ob.). Elsewhere, a high count of 20 White-crowned came from Payne's Prairie Dec. 18 (JHH *et al.*), and two of the locally rare Lincoln's Sparrow were found in the same location Dec. 30 (MER). One Dark-eyed Junco w. of West Palm Beach Feb. 15 (HPL, GSH) furnished only the 3rd county record in 31 years of record (*vide* HPL); another junco was found near Orlando Dec. 17 (LM), where also rare. Almost unprecedented in the Florida Keys, one ♂ Boat-tailed Grackle was at an Islamorada feeder Feb. 19 (PWS). Further evidence that the Shiny Cowbird is here to stay (alas!), two males visited a feeder w. of Homestead from November until Jan. 20 (when singing), and one young male was e. of Homestead Dec. 23 (PWS, SAS *et al.*). After last year's invasion winter, the only Pine Siskins anywhere in the Region were near Tallahassee, with one Jan. 9 (DPY) and about 30 feeding on sweetgum seed Jan. 12 (TAM). American Goldfinches made it the length of the peninsula, but with the exception of a flock of 200 near Venice (S & AS), no large numbers were seen.

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ONTARIO REGION

Ron D. Weir



December began with mild weather over much of Ontario, but a cold snap mid-month chased many lingering migrants southwards. Fortunately, alternating warm and cold periods marked the rest of the season, making for the third successive easy winter for the birds in the south. However, the failure of owls and boreal finches to erupt from the north, combined with the scarcity of tarrying migrants, led most observers to consider this past season one of the poorest on record. Winter's dearth of activity was relieved by very early spring migration, which included single Horned Grebes February 15 at Pelee (AW) and Toronto (EJ), and 18 Mallards January 28, one Northern Pintail February 5, and three Lesser Scaup February 14—all at Pelee (AW).

Such mild winters provide an opportunity for some edge-of-range species to maintain numbers from the previous breeding season and expand their ranges northward. Mourning Dove, Carolina Wren, and Northern Cardinal did just that. However, Tufted Titmouse proved to be scarce, and numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers declined, but were still well above the ten-year winter average. Among the rarities seen were Northern Fulmar, Rock Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Great-tailed Grackle.

ABBREVIATIONS — Pelee = Point Pelee Nat'l Park and vicinity; P.E.Pt. = Prince Edward Point; Algonquin and Presqu'ile are Provincial Parks. Place names in *italics* denote counties.

LOONS TO HERONS — The 7 reports of Red-throated Loons were nearly double the 1982–1988 winter average of



Red-throated Loon at Dundas, Ontario, January 31, 1989. Photograph/Tim Sabo.

four. Singles were at P.E.Pt. Dec. 4 (K.F.N.), Bancroft Dec. 5 (found injured, B. Collins), Aldershot Dec. 24 (RD, KAM), Toronto Islands Dec. 26–Jan. 8 (JC, D. Pace, AJ), and along the lakeshore from Dundas to Stoney Creek Jan. 27–Feb. 19 (BW *et al.*). The two at Niagara-on-the-Lake Dec. 27 (AW, GBe *et al.*) were reduced to one Jan. 1–2. The Pied-billed Grebe along Manitoulin I. Dec. 15–16 was late (CTB) and one near Walpole I. Feb. 12 was thought to have overwintered. Only six Red-necked Grebes were noted, in sharp contrast to last winter's

93 The latest was the single at Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan 29-31 (KJR, AJS *et al*)

Ontario's first **Northern Fulmar** since 1985 came to ground at New Liskeard Dec. 14, and was taken to a veterinary clinic and released at Port Colborne Dec. 23 (GVL). Whether this individual was the fulmar found dead at Presqu'île Jan. 15 (BH, MJB, DM) is unknown at the time of writing. The latest Double-crested Cormorants were four in Hamilton Bay Dec. 26 (KAM, RCu). More than the usual number of Great Blue Herons spent the winter in the south. Extremely late were singles at 2 sites within Algonquin Dec. 21 (DL, RK), Smiths Falls Dec. 26, and Portland Dec. 28 (R.V.F.N.). Late by 2 months was the Black-crowned Night-Heron at Long Pt. Dec. 17 (TW), and two immatures tarried in e. Hamilton Bay to Dec. 26 (KAM, RWa).

WATERFOWL — Late geese included the lone Brant at Niagara-on-the-Lake to Dec. 31 (*vide* MEF) and three Canadas at Thunder Bay to Jan. 2 (NGE). Two Canadas wearing neck collars (numbered 9UF5 black on yellow, and YY28 white on orange) overwintered at Sarnia (DFR). The 16 reports of Wood Ducks were an increase over the average for the period, and birds were reported north to Westport and Manotick (AB-J, BMD). One Green-winged Teal tarried in Thunder Bay to Dec. 4 (NGE), and 155 were in the Dundas Marsh the same day (RCu). Loss of habitat in e. Hamilton Bay has cut drastically the number of overwintering waterfowl there (KAM). A pair of Am. Wigeon near Wildwood L. Dec. 1-Feb. 28 provided Oxford's first overwintering record (JMH, JSK). Late Ring-necked Ducks remained at Winona to Jan. 8 (KAM *et al.*), Pickering to Jan. 9 (*vide* JJB), and Presqu'île to Jan. 13 (SM). Only three King Eiders were noted, consistent with the species' poor flight last autumn. Singles were in the Oakville area Dec. 7-10 (DPK, JL), at Presqu'île Dec. 1 (EP), and at Niagara Falls Dec. 3-Feb. 4 (*vide* RFA). The six Harlequin Ducks compared with the 10-year winter average of five. The female in Lonely Bay, Manitoulin I. lingered to Dec. 3 (CTB) and a male and female appeared at Sarnia Dec. 11 (DFR). Long Point's 4th ever was a male at Turkey Pt. Dec. 22-23 (RR) and Toronto's male remained along the waterfront Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (*vide* MWD). A single was at Tobermory Dec. 21 (JBM).

The 16,700 Oldsquaw at P.E.Pt. Dec. 17 were concentrated inshore by a winter storm (K.F.N.). Other unusual concentrations of deep water divers were the 1000 Black Scoters and 4000 White-winged Scoters at P.E.Pt. Dec. 14 (DF), and 300 Surfs at the Toronto Islands Jan. 24 (RY). Eight Barrow's Goldeneyes were noted, with five in Ottawa Dec. 1-Feb. 28 and a high of three males at the Cornwall dam Feb. 19 (BMD). The 1971-1987 winter average is four sightings. The warm conditions of early December coaxed a Bufflehead to remain in Algonquin to Dec. 1 (RGT) and five others to stay at Thunder Bay to Dec. 4 (NGE). A ♀ Com. Merganser was still in Algonquin, where rare in winter, Jan. 2 (RGT, DCT). Four Ruddy Ducks remained in e. Hamilton Bay to Feb. 28 (KAM), and the singles at Puslinch L., Wellington, Dec. 1 (RVT) and P.E.Pt. Jan. 25 (RTS) were unusual for the dates.

VULTURES TO SHOREBIRDS — More than the usual number of Turkey Vultures lingered, the latest being singles at Kitchener and Port Rowan Dec. 17 (TC, GP, TS), Ivanhoe, Hastings, Dec. 28 (RTS), Wheatley Jan. 4-5 (AW *et al.*), and near Cayuga Jan. 29 (BWD, JBM *et al.*). The 61 Bald Eagle sightings in the south were normal numbers for recent years. Accipiter totals were also about normal with 39 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 18 Cooper's in the south plus 14 N. Goshawks s. of the breeding range. Noteworthy among this group was the single Sharp-shinned Feb. 16 & 19 in Thunder Bay (SO), where rare during winter, and seven N. Goshawks also in Thunder Bay through the period (NGE). Nine Red-shouldered Hawks were more than the average number for winter. A Red-tailed Hawk at Petrolia, Lambton, Dec. 4 was thought to be of the rufous subspecies *calurus* of the west

(AW, KJB) Single Golden Eagles were in Algonquin Dec. 3 (RGT), Pelee Dec. 11 (CML, EM), Port Hope Dec. 14 (ERM), Westport Dec. 22 (RBS, MB *et al.*), Dwight Jan. 1 (PK), Dorset Jan. 7 (MA), and Petroglyphs P.P. Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (*vide* DCS) These seven represented a normal number. Noteworthy among the typical 15 Merlins in the south were the three in the Long Pt. area Dec. 3-Jan. 7 (*vide* BC). The six Peregrine Falcons were about an average number. Two overwintered in Ottawa Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (BMD) and three were seen in the Toronto area Dec. 13-Jan. 28 (*vide* MWD, MM). An adult wearing a leg band remained in Burlington through January (*vide* KAM). Gyrfalcons thrilled observers in several locations. A white morph bird in Sudbury Dec. 24-Feb. 12 (CGB *et al.*) fed on Am. Black Ducks, and a gray morph individual was ensconced in Thunder Bay Dec. 26-Feb. 1 (NGE *et al.*). Two in dark plumage were together at Tobermory Dec. 21 (TL, JBM) and another appeared at Chaffeys Locks Jan. 20 (FP)

Overwintering rails are probably more numerous than our records indicate. This winter's included single Virginia Rails at Pelee Dec. 19-Feb. 5 (KFB, PAW *et al.*) and Kingston to Feb. 5 (MB). A Sora in Grenadier pond on Toronto's High Park was not seen after Dec. 19 (EJ, JL, DB). The six Sandhill Cranes at Long Pt. Nov. 26-Dec. 5 were the first ever in winter for that area (*vide* BC) and furnished the season's only report. Record late shorebirds included the Western Sandpiper in Oshawa's Second Marsh Dec. 1-3 (BH, DM) and the Least Sandpiper at Pelee to Dec. 9 (AW *et al.*). The strong autumn flight of Purple Sandpiper was felt in the winter period. Up to seven fed near Niagara Falls Dec. 4-Feb. 4 (*vide* RFA). The others were singles at Erieau Dec. 4 (KJB), which increased to two there Dec. 18-19 (AW, MWJ *et al.*), and Toronto's e. Headland Dec. 26-Jan. 1 (JC, D. Pace, AJ, HGC). The last of the Dunlin were two each in Oshawa's Second Marsh Dec. 1 (BH, DM) and at Pelee Dec. 8-9 (AW). The Red Phalarope in Sarnia Dec. 15 (SAC, DFR) furnished the only report and the first in winter since 1983-1984.

JAEGERS TO OWLS — Four imm. Pomarine Jaegers were blown to shore at Sarnia Dec. 11 and another appeared there Dec. 22 (DFR). The same northwesterlies forced seven imm. Parasitics off L. Huron at Sarnia Dec. 11, followed by two Dec. 15 (DFR, SAC). Another immature was in Niagara-on-the-Lake Dec. 27 (AW). Late departing Little Gulls were the 12 near Nanticoke, Long Pt., Dec. 15-Jan. 11 (MS), up to seven in the Niagara area Dec. 3-Jan. 27 (AGC, GBe *et al.*), and a lone adult at Erieau Jan. 31 (AW). The ad. Com. Black-headed Gull at Fort Erie Jan. 2 (AGC) brought to 19 the species' winter total over the past 26 winters. Midwinter concentrations of Bonaparte's Gulls included the 4500 at Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 9 (GBe), 135 adults at Erieau Jan. 31 (AW), and 60 adults at Wheatley harbour Feb. 2 (AW). The last two groups were exceptional for the dates. The **Mew Gull** in first-winter plumage at Wheatley (AB 41:425) Mar. 9-11, 1987 (AW) has now been accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee, and furnishes the 2nd record for the Pelee area. A possible California Gull in first-winter plumage was reported near Wildwood L., Oxford, Dec. 18 (JMH, JSK) and has been referred to the O.B.R.C. for decision. Numbers of white-winged gulls were again respectable at 79 Icelands (including 30 identified as Thayer's, now considered a race of Iceland Gull by WE Godfrey) and 155 Glaucous Gulls. The 13 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were more than the 1981-1987 winter average of eight. Up to three frequented Puslinch L. and Guelph L., Wellington, Dec. 2 & 6 (JEP, IR *et al.*) and two were regular at Niagara Falls Dec. 3-Jan. 1 (*vide* RFA). Three different birds remained at Sarnia Dec. 31-Jan. 17 (AHR, DFR) and the remaining singles were near Wildwood L. Dec. 12 (JMH), at Goderich Jan. 8 (TL, WT), Kingston Jan. 22-29 (RDW), west Toronto Feb. 4 (JW), and Pickering Feb. 26-28 (DJM *et al.*). Spillover from the autumn flight of Black-legged Kittiwakes included one at Fort Erie Dec. 3-27, which occasionally wandered to Niagara



Boreal Owl on Amherst Island, Ontario, February 12, 1989. Photograph/G. Naylor.

Falls [fide RFA], and an immature at Sarnia Dec. 15 (SAC, DFR).

High numbers of wintering Mourning Doves were noteworthy at Sault Ste. Marie, Englehart, Owen Sound, and Kingston. That the rehabilitation techniques for injured owls used by the Owl Research Rehabilitation Foundation are effective was demonstrated by the recovery at Smithville and Sherkston of two Great Horneds, 5 and 8 years after release. Both were originally found injured as fledglings in s. Ontario, trained to hunt, and then released (KMCK). The 42 reports of Snowy Owls represented a light flight that was distributed widely through the province. The only concentration reported was on Amherst I. where nine wintered (K.F.N.). Following last winter's irruption, an echo flight of N. Hawk-Owls occurred with six birds in the south. Singles were in Renfrew Dec. 25 (RJP), Carleton Place Jan. 1–Feb. 28 (fide BMD), Hepworth Jan. 9 & 25–26 (MR, DFD), Naphton Jan. 15–Feb. 11 (AGC et al.), Flinton Feb. 12 (MC), and Belleville Mar. 2 (DG). Other noteworthy occurrences involved two in Thunder Bay Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (NGE) and one at Matachewan in early December (LT). Great Grays invaded w. Ontario where 20 wintered in Thunder Bay (NGE) and two in Kenora (SRM). Others were singles in Sault Ste. Marie Jan. 8 (TDM) and Sudbury Feb. 1–

15 (RI). The seven in the south appeared at Merrickville in late November (BB), Manitoulin I. Dec. 16 (CTB), Huntsville Dec. 18 (JVM), Brockville in early January (JB), Algonquin Jan. 21 (MRu, DGd), Flinton Feb. 12 (MC), and Port Carling Feb. 18–28 (JJ). The seven Boreal Owls reported within the breeding range represented a good number for this hard-to-find owl. Birds were at Vermilion Bay, Atikokan, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and North Bay. The four in the south included one killed by a car in Ottawa Dec. 1 (KN), another there through January (RPH et al.), one in Petroglyphs P.P. Feb. 12 [fide MPW], and a single on Amherst I. Feb. 1–15 (EG, FA), which was harassed and chased away by perfunctory photographers.

WOODPECKERS TO WRENS — Numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers were lower at 26 birds, sharply fewer than occurred in the previous 2 winters. Nevertheless, the species appeared to be prospering as a result of several successive warm winters. Birds were well north to Manitoulin Jan. 1–31 (M & JH), Bella Lake, Muskoka, Jan. 16–Feb. 28 (JBo, RGT), Tobermory Dec. 19, and Kencardine Dec. 31 (TRM), and east to East Lake Jan. 12 (WC), Milford Jan. 19 (DBk), and Amherst I. Jan. 1–Feb. 28 (A & JS). The only report of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was of one overwintering in Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery (HK). The only Black-backed Woodpeckers south of the breeding range were two in Presqu'île Jan. 5–Feb. 29 (EP et al.) and another at Richmond Hill Feb. 26 (NM, DS). Many more N. Flickers were noted than is usual for winter. Among the many that overwintered successfully were five north to Peterborough (fide DCS) and 11 east to the Kingston area (K.F.N.). Extremely late E. Phoebes were singles at Pelee Dec. 2–3 (DPk et al.) and Ingersoll Dec. 13 (RS). These were upstaged by singles at Arkona, Kent, Dec. 1–Feb. 25 (PC) and Toronto Dec. 26–Feb. 12 (RY et al.). Tardy Tree Swallows were seven at Blenheim Dec. 2 (AW), and three and one at Strathroy Dec. 16 & 17 (JVR, WRJ). The only out-of-range Gray Jay noted was at Kingston Dec. 1 (MD, PP). An outstanding find was the **Rock Wren** in Etobicoke Feb. 12–28 (RD et al.) at a landfill site. The only previous records for the province were two specimens, from Niagara Dec. 7, 1964, and the Kenora area during October 1972 (RDJ). A tardy House Wren at Shrewsbury Dec. 18 furnished the only report (MW, AW).



Rock Wren at Etobicoke, Ontario, February 18, 1989. Photograph/Alan Wormington.



This Carolina Wren wintering at New Liskeard, Ontario, photographed January 14, 1989, was well north of usual limits. Photograph/R. Beach.

S.A.

For the 5th successive winter, Carolina Wren numbers have continued to rise, thanks to less severe weather conditions. From five in 1984-1985, numbers have increased annually to 10, 33+, 58+, and this winter 88+. Some 78+ of these were in the traditional southwest including Niagara. The one in Guelph Feb. 5-Mar. 3 (ALM) was Wellington's first in winter. Beyond this range were singles all winter in Oakville (DGN, NW), Kingston (VPM), Gelert, Haliburton (MW, RJP), Barrow Bay, Bruce (JWJ), and at feeders in Cobourg Dec. 1-Feb. 13 (ERM), New Liskeard Dec. 15-Feb. 15 (ph. DC), Pickering Dec. 10-Jan. 31 (MJB), Presqu'île Jan. 16 (HS, MRi), and Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 15-Feb. 15 (CS, SB). This species is one of a group that suffers drastic range contraction after a harsh Ontario winter.

KINGLETS TO WARBLERS — The lone Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Brighton Jan. 1 (HS) was n. of its normal range. Ontario's 10th Mountain Bluebird since 1978 and first ever for February remained near Arkona, Middlesex, Jan. 31-Feb. 19 (PC et al.). Single Townsend's Solitaires, rare in any season anywhere in the province, appeared at Marathon Dec. 17 (SO, NGE et al.) and Thunder Bay Dec. 28-Jan. 3 (AGH et al.). Hermit Thrushes were fewer than normal; lone birds were at Pelee Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (fide AW), Niagara-on-the-Lake Jan. 2 (fide RFA), and Stratford Feb. 25 (MPD). The usual mid-winter influx of Am. Robins to Pelee did not occur (AW), suggesting that they remained farther north. Birds were noted on Manitoulin I. Jan. 1-15 (GVH) and at Sudbury Jan. 1-Feb. 28 (J. Bell, ME et al.). The single at Matachewan Feb. 25 (LT) was early by a month and arrived on a warm front. Four Varied Thrushes were fewer than the 1977-1988 winter average of six. They were singles near Elliot Lake Dec. 14 (ph. P & GW et al.), at Vankoughnet near Bracebridge Dec. 19-Feb. 28 (S & HG), Manitoulin I. Jan. 16-Feb. 15 (I & JW, GG et al.), and Toronto Jan. 24 (TP). Tardy Gray Catbirds were in Thunder Bay Dec. 4 (NGE, JFF, SVP) and Atikokan Dec. 9 (DHE). Numbers of N. Mockingbirds were up sharply in the south and were far too many to list. The nine Brown Thrashers made a more usual number, noteworthy among which were singles at Red Rock Dec. 1-Jan. 31 (OC) and Peterborough Jan. 7-21 (WM). Bohemian Waxwings failed to move in any numbers s.e. of Manitoulin I. and Sudbury. Six made it to Merrickville Dec. 15 (BB), two were in Toronto Jan. 19-Feb. 15



Female Mountain Bluebird near Arkona, Ontario, photographed March 6, 1989. The narrow eye-ring, long wingtips, and relatively dark flanks can all be seen in this portrait. Photograph/Tim Sabo.



Varied Thrush near Elliot Lake, Ontario, December 14, 1988. The species is a rare but regular winter visitor to the province. Photograph/G. Wereley.

(DPk et al.), and one was at Pelee Dec. 19 (GTH, FB et al.). Northern Shrikes were in low numbers, possibly in response to an absence of finches.

One of the least likely warblers to appear in winter is **Black-throated Blue Warbler**, but a female visited a feeder in the area of Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery Jan. 13-Feb. 19 (NL, DPM et al.). More likely to turn up is **Yellow-throated Warbler**, singles of which were in Kincardine Nov. 11-Dec. 11 (AS) and Petrolia Dec. 8 (JT); a Palm Warbler was at Toronto's e. Headland Dec. 1-4 (AD, HK), and single Ovenbirds were at Port Stanley Dec. 11 (RJK) and Toronto's High Park Dec. 11 (VH). Two Com. Yellowthroats remained in the Dundas Marsh at least until Jan. 31 (fide KAM).

TANAGERS TO FINCHES — The ♀ Summer Tanager noted in the autumn report remained at a feeder near North Bay Nov. 26-Dec. 16 (ph. A & AJ, RGT). Northern Cardinals were reported in greatly increased numbers as the range of this species, an immigrant to Ontario in this century, continued to expand and consolidate. At least 33 overwintered on Manitoulin I. as did pairs in Sault Ste. Marie (B. Rosa) and Thunder Bay (NGE). The female in Sudbury was not seen after Jan. 31 (SL). The only Chipping Sparrows noted were singles at King City Dec. 26-27 (JM) and Port Rowan Jan. 7 (STP). A vagrant Lark Sparrow at Thunder Bay Dec. 4 (ph. NGE, JFF, SVP) was Ontario's first in winter since 1985-1986. Tardy Savannah Sparrows were singles at St. Ann's, Niagara, Dec. 18 (GM), Burlington Dec. 26 (W. Crins et al.), and Port

Royal Dec 31 (AW, JLR). A Harris' Sparrow remained at Arkona Dec 16–20 (SAC, DPa) and another at Turkey Pt. Feb. 7–12 was the 5th in winter for Long Pt. (RR).

The imm. ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird on Wolfe I. Dec. 12 (GY) was a surprise find, and an ad. male appeared at Leamington Dec. 19 (MLT, BDR). The lone Brewer's Blackbird at Turkey Pt. Feb. 4 (RR) was the first for the Long Pt. region in February. Ontario's 2nd **Great-tailed Grackle**, reported at Port Rowan last autumn, remained to Jan. 6 (*fide* BC). This winter's N. Oriole was an imm. male at a Vineland feeder Dec. 2–Jan. 12 (M & DC, MEF).

Pine Grosbeaks remained in the north with good numbers only as far south as Sudbury. They were irregular and scarce at lower latitudes, and the few that did appear were part of a light movement to the southeast in February reaching Algonquin (RGT) and Kingston (MB). However, Purple Finches were distributed widely throughout the south with highest numbers in Grey-Bruce. Their sudden appearance in Sault Ste. Marie in late February was probably from a movement from the southeast. The newly arrived House Finches in Sudbury last autumn were last seen Dec. 2 (SL). The ever erratic crossbills remained true to form. The Reds were common only in the pine stands along the east side of Algonquin (RGT), and the 13 other individuals reported were in widely separated locations from Atikokan, Thunder Bay, Killarney, Peterborough, Kingston, and Long Point. On the other hand, White-winged Crossbills were numerous throughout the north, and within Algonquin in the south. They even appeared irregularly but in low numbers s. to *Middlesex, Elgin, Waterloo, Wellington, Bruce, York, and Durham*. There was evident southward movement during February. Common Redpolls also stayed in the north, where they were regular only as far south as Sudbury. By late February, the species moved SE in large numbers reaching Sault Ste. Marie and Manitoulin I. Lesser numbers made it south to *Oxford, Durham, and Peterborough*. The only Hoary Redpolls were six at Thunder Bay Dec. 26–Feb. 19 (NGE) and a single in Algonquin Feb. 23 (MRu). Pine Siskins were absent nearly everywhere, but by late February a few appeared in North Bay and in counties of s.e. Ontario. Their origins were unknown. American Gold-finches remained common virtually everywhere in the south. Evening Grosbeaks remained in the northern boreal forests and only a few penetrated s. to Kingston, Oshawa, and Long Point.

CORRIGENDA — AB 42:1284, col. 1, line 23, "Summering Acadians were at Pelee. . .". Delete "Pelee" and insert into the

middle of line 26, "The early June sightings at Pelee were of spring migrants (AW)." AB 42 428, col. 2, line 21, replace May 1–14 with May 1–4; line 22, insert after Comber "May 14". AB 42:1283, col. 1, line 28, replace Huntingdon with Huntingford.

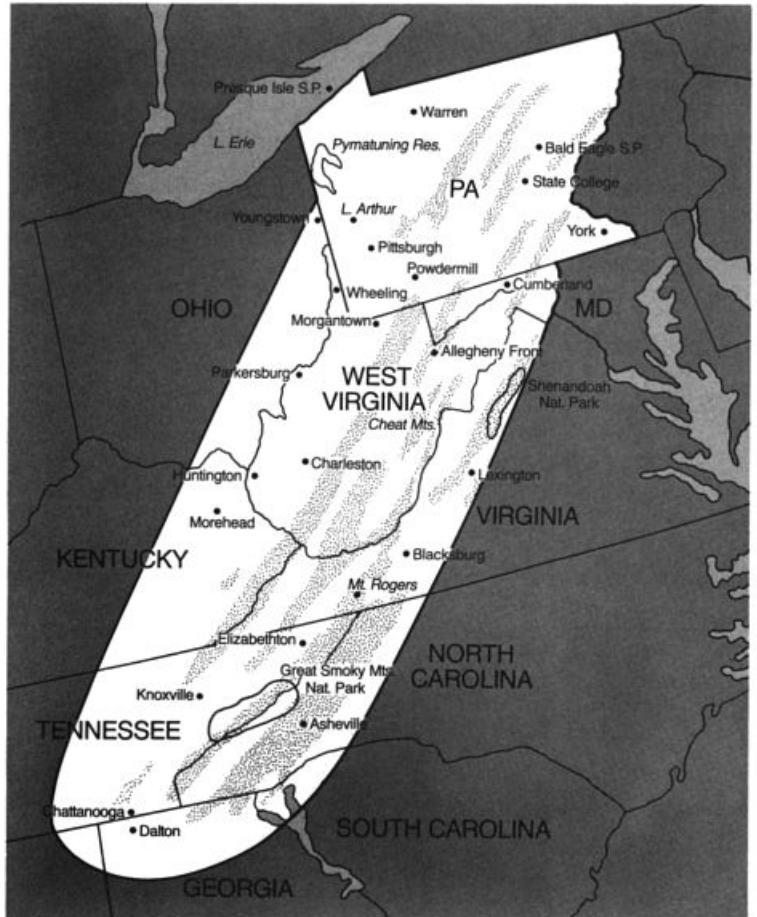
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APPALACHIAN REGION

George A. Hall



It was the strangest winter of recent times. The weather was mild and there were no birds. Or were there?

At Pittsburgh December was slightly warmer than normal, January was very much warmer than normal, but February was slightly colder than normal. December and January were slightly drier than normal and February was much wetter than normal. Conditions at Erie, Pennsylvania, in the north and Knoxville, Tennessee, in the south were generally the same. The precipitation was almost entirely rain and there was only one heavy snowfall at Erie, none at Morgantown or Knoxville. There was no general freezeup of lakes except in the north.

Most people operating feeding stations complained that there were no birds, but trips afield showed that there were plenty of birds around; apparently the mild weather was keeping them away from the feeders. Many locations in the north reported record counts of many species on their Christmas Bird Counts. Observers in the south, however, had rather poor Christmas Counts, indicating that many individuals simply did not migrate as far south as usual.

The impression of few birds was in part created by the almost total absence of "Northern Invaders." Probably only those birders whose memory goes back to the 1940s could recall a winter season so deficient in Evening Grosbeaks or other northern finches.

Two new species were added to the Regional list and there was an unusual gull concentration on Lake Erie, but

despite the mild weather there were not many "half-hardy" strays lingering in the north.

The mild weather produced two interesting early breeding records. Recently-fledged young Mourning Doves were found at Johnson City, Tennessee, February 21 (RK), and an Eastern Bluebird nest with eggs was found February 16 at Sherando, Virginia (WM).

ABBREVIATIONS — B.E.S.P. = Bald Eagle State Park, Centre, PA; Ch.N.F. = Chattahoochee Natl. Forest, GA; C.F.H. = M.E. Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan, KY; P.N.R. = Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland, PA.; P.I.S.P. = Presque Isle State Park, Erie, PA; P.G.M.A. = Pymatuning Game Management Area, Crawford, PA. Place names in italics are counties.

LOONS TO WATERFOWL — The only reports of Com. Loons were of two that spent the whole period at Boone L., TN (RK), and one at the Gavin Power Plant, Gallia, OH, Feb. 11-18 (WA, MG). Pied-billed Grebes were more common than usual in winter. Three Horned Grebes were seen in Bath, VA, Feb. 22 (LT), and one made a crash landing in the back of a pickup truck at Alexandria, PA, Jan. 13 (ML). A Double-crested Cormorant was at the C.F.H., KY, Dec. 22 (FB), and one was in Pleasants, WV, Jan. 26 and later (JE).

Great Blue Herons occurred in numbers in most wetlands. Some high counts were of 126 on the Knoxville, TN, CBC Dec. 18 (JT), 50 wintering in Mercer, PA (EB), and 32 in Bath, VA, Jan. 17 (LT). On the other hand, they were uncommon in

the Huntington, WV, area (TI) and the three on the CBC at Linesville, PA, were considered low (RFL). Great Egrets were reported from Woodcock L., PA, Nov. 17-18 (RFL) and from Knoxville Dec. 18 (JT).

The mild weather and the abundance of open water allowed northern localities to have good waterfowl numbers. Thus 5000 ducks, mostly Am. Blacks and Mallards, were in Presque Isle Bay, Erie, PA, in early February (JM), and 1500 Mallards were on Quemahoning Res., Dec. 17 (AM). On the other hand, southern locations such as Waynesboro, VA (SR), Buncombe, NC (RRu), and Johnson City, TN (RK) had below normal numbers. The northbound flight was evident at many places by the 3rd week in February.

An unusual number of Tundra Swans remained in the Region through the winter. As many as 300 were present in Presque Isle Bay, PA (JM), and 15 wintering at McElhattan, PA, were local firsts (PS). Swans were moving south at Warren, PA, as late as Dec. 17 (TG), and at Cheat L., WV, Dec. 14 & 17 (AC). A new species for the Region (at least in modern times) was **Trumpeter Swan**, with singles reported from P.I.S.P., Dec. 17 through February (JM) and in Warren, PA (*vide* JG). These birds were wing-tagged, indicating that they were part of the Canadian Wildlife Service's program of reintroduction into the Great Lakes area. Mute Swans were reported from January to the end of the period at P.I.S.P. (JM), Dec. 18 at 2 locations in Crawford, PA (RFL), and from 2 locations in Allegheny, PA (JG).

A Greater White-fronted Goose was at Pymatuning L., PA, Jan. 21 (LW, HB, SM), and another was at the Gavin Power Plant, OH, Feb. 18 (WA, MG). Snow Geese were reported from Mosquito Creek Res., OH, Dec. 12 (NB), High Point L., PA, Dec. 2 (AM), North Park, PA, Dec. 22-Jan. 20 (JH, JC), Pymatuning L., PA, Jan. 7-22 (RFL *et al.*), and Procterville, OH, Jan. 27 (WA), the latter apparently a Blue x White intermediate. A probable escapee was a Barnacle Goose with Canadas at the P.G.M.A., Jan. 14-28 (BD). Six Brant at P.I.S.P., Dec. 31 (DP) were unusual for the winter season. The introduced Canada Goose continued to thrive: a flock of 500 wintered on the Ohio R. at East Liverpool, OH (NL), and 550 were seen in York, PA, Dec. 10 (RR), as well as smaller numbers in most other places.

There was good news for Am. Black Ducks, which were in better numbers than in recent years. Northern Pintails were more widely reported than usual as were Gadwalls. A **Harlequin Duck** at P.I.S.P. Jan. 1 furnished the 5th record there and one of few for Pennsylvania (J & BB). All three scoters were reported from P.I.S.P.: up to five Black Scoters Dec. 3-10 (JM) and two on Jan. 22 (JeS, JiS); up to four Surf Scoters Dec. 3-11 (JM); and up to five White-winged Scoters Dec. 3-Jan. 15 (JM). More unusual were six White-winged Scoters at Boone L., TN, Jan. 6 (BC) and one found stranded on a street in Roanoke, VA, Jan. 8 (BO). On Dec. 2 there were 3000 Com. Goldeneyes at Pymatuning L.; this number dropped to 20 after the freezeup in mid-December, and built back up to 300 in late February (RFL). Hooded Mergansers were in unusually good numbers, and Com. Mergansers were more widely reported than usual.

RAPTORS — All the regular raptors appeared to be in higher than usual numbers, and they certainly were more widespread than usual.

An unusually high total of 45 Black Vultures was counted in Meigs, TN, Jan. 1 (CN), and a count of 250+ was made at Boone L., Jan. 21 (RK). Two Turkey Vultures at P.N.R. Feb. 1 were the first reported there in winter (RM, RCL).

Ospreys were reported from the Ohio R. at East Liverpool, OH, in early December (NL), and one in Centre, PA, Jan. 21 furnished the first local winter record (CY). The resurgence of Bald Eagle numbers noted in the fall migration continued, as 18 different localities from L. Erie to Watauga L., TN, reported sightings of probably 75 eagles, with a high count of

32 total sightings of probably 11 birds at the C F H, KY (FB). Most of these birds were true winter residents, being reported over a period of time. After the rather heavy fall migration, an unusual number of N. Harriers wintered, occurring from n. Pennsylvania to n. Georgia. Both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks were reported as being numerous, with a typical comment being 26 Sharp-shinneds and 17 Cooper's reported by birders in the Pittsburgh area (JG), but there was only one N. Goshawk report: Cambridge Springs, PA, Jan. 1 (RFL).

Red-shouldered Hawks, rare winterers in this Region, were found at 2 locations in Crawford, PA, Dec. 22 (RFL), at B.E.S.P., Jan. 1 (GB, PS), and all winter at Niles, OH (CB). Red-tailed Hawks were in excellent numbers with 55 being an all-time high on the CBC at Clarksville, PA (RB). In February a total of 22 Red-tailed Hawk nests was counted within 100 yards of the highway along about 75 mi of Interstate 79 in w. Pennsylvania (ES). It was also an unusual year for Rough-legged Hawks, with 10 locations from n. Pennsylvania south to Highland, VA, reporting birds. Maximum numbers were four most of the winter at Pymatuning L., PA (RFL), three at Ligonier, PA (RM, RCL), and three at Blue Grass Valley, Highland, VA (LT). Golden Eagles were reported from Kinzua Res., PA (TG), Pymatuning L., PA (RFL), Ligonier, PA (RRo), Hardy and Tucker, WV (KF), Highland, VA, with a peak of six birds (LT), Haywood, NC, with two records (RRu), Blairsville, GA (DF), and Lookout Plateau, GA (HD). One was found dead, presumably poisoned by coyote bait, at Harman, WV, in December, and another was hit by a car near Marlinton, WV, in early March (JCr).

Most places reported Am. Kestrels in good numbers but at Clarksville, PA, the 14 counted on the CBC were felt to be low. A Merlin was seen in Allegheny, PA, Dec. 7 (TM); another was present at Erie, PA, from Dec. 31 to the end of the period (JM), and one was seen in Trumbull, OH, Jan. 12, probably the same bird reported in November (CB). Peregrine Falcons were reported from Cortland, OH, Dec. 3 (NB) and the Whitfield-Murray area of Georgia, Dec. 17 (HD).

CRANES TO GULLS — An injured Sandhill Crane was present at Erie, PA, from Dec. 31 to the end of the period (JM). A small flock of cranes spent the winter in the Hiawasee River Area of e. Tennessee (CN), and one bird was seen in the Lookout Plateau region of n. Georgia Jan. 28 (HD). Northward migration of cranes was noted in mid-February with several small flocks in the Dalton, GA, area (HD) and a flock of 100 in Loudoun, TN (JF).

A Lesser Golden-Plöver at Tellico L., TN, Dec. 4 furnished the first local December record (A & RH). Four Dunlin were seen at Boone L., TN, Dec. 31 (BC). Common Snipe wintering at State College, PA (MW) were unusual, as were others in Highland, VA, Dec. 2 (LT), at P.I.S.P., Dec. 17 (DS), and in York, PA, Dec. 10 (RR). A Red Phalarope was at P.I.S.P., Dec. 11 (JM).

It was a very good year for gulls. At Presque Isle Bay, PA, a dense population of gizzard shad attracted an estimated 500,000 gulls of 10 species with a peak in late December. This aggregation included some 300,000 Ring-billed Gulls, 150,000 Bonaparte's Gulls, 50,000 Herring Gulls, and 700 Great Black-backed Gulls (JM). The rarer species found there included: at least nine Little Gulls Dec. 16-Jan. 21 (EK); a **Common Black-headed Gull** Dec. 23 (+JM, EK), furnishing a 2nd Pennsylvania record; five Thayer's Gulls Dec. 4-Jan. 21 (JM, EK, JP); nine Iceland Gulls Dec. 16-Feb. 20 (JM *et al.*); seven Lesser Black-backed Gulls Dec. 7-Jan. 29 (JM *et al.*); 10-15 Glaucous Gulls Dec. 11 through February (JM, EK); and a bird thought to be a Glaucous x Herring hybrid Dec. 11-Jan. 1 (EK, JM). Elsewhere Ring-billed Gulls were quite numerous, with a high count of 3000 at Fort Loudoun L., TN (CN), but Herring Gulls were in low numbers. Bonaparte's Gulls were slightly above average at Boone L., TN (RK), and were found at Roanoke,



Lesser Black-backed Gull at Erie Public Dock, Erie County, Pennsylvania, December 11, 1988. Photograph/Jerry McWilliams.

VA, Feb. 7 (MD) and Point Pleasant, WV, Feb. 16 (TT). A Great Black-backed Gull at Conneaut L., PA, Dec. 18 was a local CBC first (RFL). A Black-legged Kittiwake was at Fort Loudoun L., TN, Nov. 30–Jan. 26 (RC, DSI).

DOVES TO WRENS — Mourning Dove populations continued to boom, and 224 (2nd highest local count) were listed on the CBC at Warren, PA (WH).

A Com. Barn-Owl on the Lock Haven CBC (PS) was unusual but the only other records came from the regular sites at Fishersville, VA (RS), and Johnson City, TN (FA). The only Snowy Owl reports came from Lamar, PA, Dec. 8–24 (G & PS) and Mt. Morris, PA, Dec. 11 (ND). Reclaimed strip mines have become the place to look for Short-eared Owls. The extensive area in Clarion, PA, produced six owls this winter (WFy). Two locations in Indiana, PA, had seven (MH); and an area near Steubenville, OH, had six or seven Jan. 25 (NL). Other sightings came from Pymatuning L., PA, Dec. 18 (RFL), and Fishersville, VA, with five on Feb. 13 (MNa). At least 12 N. Saw-whet Owls (as many as six in one day) were recorded at P.I.S.P., from Jan. 23 to the end of the period (JM et al.). The only other report was from Cabell, WV, Dec. 17 (WA).

There were six *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, all believed to be Rufous Hummingbirds, in the Region. Of the two discussed in the autumn report, the one at Salem, VA, remained until Dec. 12 (m.ob.), and the one at Parsons, WV, remained until mid-January (EH, KB). One was at Knoxville, TN, through the winter (JCh). One at Chattanooga, TN (LD), and one at Johnson City, TN (RK), were present at feeders from mid-October to early December, when they were captured and shipped to New Orleans by commercial airline. A 2nd bird was reported from Chattanooga (fide CN).

There were scattered reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers, but numbers remained low. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued their increase in the north. Lock Haven (PS), Pittsburgh (JV), and Clarksville, PA (RB), all reported record high counts of N. Flickers on the CBCs, and other locations also came in with high numbers.

Blairsville, GA, had an E. Phoebe Dec. 29 (DF), and one was in the highlands of Bath, VA, Jan. 17 (LT). The Lock Haven CBC listed a record high 869 Am. Crows. Fish Crows returned to State College, PA, Feb. 20 (JP). This relatively new population is the first in the Region away from the major river valleys. Common Ravens were reported from Letcher, KY (JBe), and near Blairsville, GA, Dec. 31 (WF); other reports came from n. Pennsylvania, with four birds in 3 locations near Warren (WH) and St. Marys (L & KC).

After a poor fall flight, wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost entirely missing. Eight Brown-headed Nuthatches were seen at Blairsville, GA, Dec. 29 (DF). Brown Creepers were in higher numbers than normal.

The Carolina Wren is doing well, and high CBC counts were followed by excellent survival to the end of the period. Reports of good numbers came from the n. Pennsylvania locations of Erie (JM), Meadville (RFL), St. Marys (LC), and Warren (WH). House Wrens were reported from Botetourt, VA, Dec. 18 (TF), and 2 different sites in Washington, TN, Jan. 11 & 26 (RK, BC). Even more unusual was the Marsh Wren on the CBC at Waynesboro, VA (CS).

KINGLETS TO WARBLERS — Both kinglet species were in below normal numbers at the Ch.N.F. (HD), but this probably represented failure of large numbers to migrate so far south, as most locations north of Georgia had excellent numbers. Both E. Bluebirds and Am. Robins were in high numbers throughout the season at most places. A new species for the Region, and a 2nd for Pennsylvania, was a **Mountain Bluebird** Jan. 24 near Hanover, PA (ph. DSH). Hermit Thrushes were numerous in the Elizabethton–Johnson City area of Tennessee (RK), and a few scattered reports came from farther north.

Gray Catbirds were reported at Huntingdon, PA, Dec. 18 (JP); Rockfish Gap, VA, Jan. 3 (SR); and Whitfield, GA, Dec. 17 (TD). Northern Mockingbirds continued to increase northward in w. Pennsylvania and were found as far north as Erie (MNO) and Crawford (MS). Brown Thrashers were at Randolph L., MD–WV, Feb. 2 (RR), Morehead, KY, Dec. 18–22 (FB), Botetourt, VA, Dec. 18 (TF), and Nelson, VA, Dec. 31 (TC), and there were four reports from the Elizabethton–Johnson City, TN, area (RK).

Eighty Water Pipits were seen at Boone L., TN, Jan. 30 (RK), but the only other report came from Mason, WV, Feb. 1 & 13 (TJ). There were a few scattered reports of Cedar Waxwings, but the only concentration was a flock of 100 at St. Marys, PA, Jan. 24–25 (LC). Northern Shrikes were seen at B.E.S.P., Nov. 28–Dec. 3, and another Jan. 16 (m.ob.); at Warren, PA, Dec. 10 (GBu); and at P.I.S.P., Dec. 7 to end of period (m.ob.). Loggerhead Shrikes were in slightly above average numbers at Johnson City, TN (RK), and other records came from Waynesboro, VA, Jan. 6 (SR), Murray, GA, Dec. 17 (HD), and Highland, VA, all winter (LT).

A Solitary Vireo was present in the Ch.N.F. during the late winter (HD). Yellow-rumped Warblers were in unusually high numbers in e. Tennessee, with 228 on the Norris CBC (CN), but in n. Georgia (HD) and northward they were very scarce; they were absent from the Erie CBC for the first time in 25 years (JM), probably owing to the poor bayberry crop. A Pine Warbler in Nelson, VA, Dec. 31 was noteworthy (TC) as was a Palm Warbler at Fincastle, VA, Jan. 28–Feb. 25, for a 2nd local winter record (BH). A Black-and-white Warbler was seen in Elk, PA, Dec. 11 (KC). Common Yellowthroats were found at P.I.S.P., Dec. 4 (EK) and Austin Springs, TN, Dec. 7 (RK).

TOWHEES TO FINCHES — Rufous-sided Towhees were uncommon at feeders, but birders who searched brushy habitat found them fairly numerous. American Tree Sparrow was almost unanimously considered to be in very low numbers although on the CBC at Clarksville, PA, numbers were well above average (RB). Two Chipping Sparrows were reported on the Beaver Creek, OH, CBC (NL). A Savannah Sparrow was in Washington, TN, Jan. 11 (RK). White-throated Sparrows were in lower numbers than normal at most places, and even Dark-eyed Juncos were reportedly low at some places. Two White-crowned Sparrows wintered at Jersey Shore, PA (PP), and one was at a feeder in Elk, PA, all winter (LC). The only report of Lapland Longspur was of a road kill near Tusseyville, PA, Feb. 12 (DB). Two Snow Buntings were seen on Allegheny Mt., Highland, VA, Jan. 23–28 (LT). The only other report was of 175 in Crawford, PA, in the normal winter range Dec. 18 (RCL).

Many areas reported higher than average numbers of various blackbirds during the winter, but the only large concentration was a roost of 200,000 of which 75% were Com. Grackles at Gallipolis Dam, WV, Jan. 29 (WA, MG). Rusty Blackbirds were reported more commonly than usual. The only N. Oriole report came from Knoxville from Dec. 18 to the end of the period (LF).

A single Red Crossbill was reported on the CBC at Huntingdon, PA (JP), and the only other reports came from the permanent stations on Shenandoah Mt., VA (LT), and the Ch.N.F., GA (HD). A few Pine Siskins were spotted at locations throughout the Region, but none of these sightings involved more than a few birds, and most places reported them to be missing entirely. Nor were Am. Goldfinches very common. Evening Grosbeaks were also essentially absent, being reported from 5 locations, one as far south as Whitfield, GA (TD).

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WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

David J. Powell



The weather this winter was divided into three parts, essentially corresponding to the three months of the season. December was mostly normal, in both temperature and snowfall, although the southern areas had less snow. January was a delight, with temperatures well above normal essentially throughout the month and throughout the Region. Minnesota was the exception in early January, as up to two feet of snow fell in northwestern Minnesota January 7–8 and extremely cold temperatures (down to -45) were felt January 9–10. Otherwise, it was balmy, with temperatures at the end of the month reaching the 60s in southern Michigan. However, there were several

significant snowfalls in the north, resulting in deep snow cover in many places. Winter returned with a vengeance in February throughout the Region, with snow, freezing rain, and cold temperatures. The first five days of the month produced severe cold in the north, with wind chills in the -50 to -70 degree range. Again toward the end of the month extremely cold temperatures were present, and winter lingered well into March. It was a sparse season for rarities, the best birds being Minnesota's second Brambling, Michigan's second Tufted Duck, and Wisconsin's third Ivory Gull. The other noteworthy items were the Great Gray Owl and Boreal Owl invasions in Minnesota

and the almost total absence of winter finches.

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

LOONS TO WATERFOWL — Common Loons lingered in all 3 states, with one seen until Jan. 22 near Duluth (AB *et al.*) quite unusual. A Red-necked Grebe was present at St. Joseph, Berrien, MI, until Jan. 1 (RS). Two Am. White Pelicans overwintered at Albert Lea, MN (m.ob.), presumably the same two that have remained there the last several winters. Double-crested Cormorants were not recorded in Wisconsin this winter, for the first time in years. They remained in normal numbers in Michigan, but one Jan. 1 at Two Harbors, Lake, MN (JL), and one well into January on Black Dog Lake in the Twin Cities (m.ob.) were very unusual for Minnesota. Great Blue Herons apparently overwintered in all 3 states.

— S.A. —

There were the usual few lingering Tundra Swans in the Region, but one has to wonder how many of these were actually Trumpeters—part of the flock reintroduced into Minnesota in recent years, some of which have wandered widely throughout the midwest. Whether or not a Trumpeter population is reestablished will not be known for several years, but it is known now that this project is clouding our understanding of how many and how often Tundra Swans overwinter (or oversummer) in Minnesota and surrounding states. Too many birders assume that any black-billed swan is a Tundra, and do not consider the equally likely possibility that it is one of the introduced Trumpeters.

Tundra Swans were seen in good numbers in early December in Michigan and Wisconsin, but numbers decreased rapidly thereafter. Dabblers were seen in normal numbers and at the usual locations in Michigan and Wisconsin; but 400 Am. Black Ducks Jan. 2 at the Muskegon Wastewater System, MI (DP, JG), was quite unusual in that it was almost a pure flock, with only a couple of Gadwall and one Mallard mixed in. A Eurasian Wigeon was present from late December into March at Drayton Plains, Oakland, MI (m.ob.). This bird generated a lively discussion as to whether it was an escapee or not, as it was seen in association with a large flock of domestics. The bird was unbanded, and flew well, so the origin will remain in dispute. This is a common problem when rare waterfowl are evaluated, and I know of no simple way to resolve the problem. Also generating discussion was Michigan's 2nd **Tufted Duck**, which was present from Jan. 10



Male Tufted Duck (with Mallards) at Belle Isle, Michigan, January 14, 1989. Second state record. Photograph/Allen Charrier.

into March at Belle Isle, Wayne (m.ob.), but the general feeling on this bird was that it was legitimate. A first-winter ♂ King Eider was at the Karn Plant, Bay, MI, Jan. 27–Feb. 22 (TW, CF, m.ob.). After last fall's good movement, Harlequin Ducks were seen in all 3 states: maximum of three on Jan. 2–4 at St. Joseph, Berrien, MI (RS, WB *et al.*); a young male at Duluth from mid-December into March (KE, JL, m.ob.); and two at Port Washington, WI, Dec. 16 (SS) and two on Dec. 31 at Sheboygan (D & MB), possibly the same two. An Oldsquaw at Madison Dec. 24–31 (PA) furnished the only inland report. Much more normal, but an excellent example of how hardy Oldsquaws are, was a flock of 40 on L. Superior at Whitefish Point, MI, Jan. 29 (HE, BP *et al.*). Black Scoters were reported from 2 Michigan and 2 Wisconsin locations. A White-winged Scoter at Grand Marais Dec. 17 (m.ob.) was considered to be very late. A Hooded Merganser found Feb. 11 near Ely, MN (SSc), furnished one of the few midwinter records for n. Minnesota.

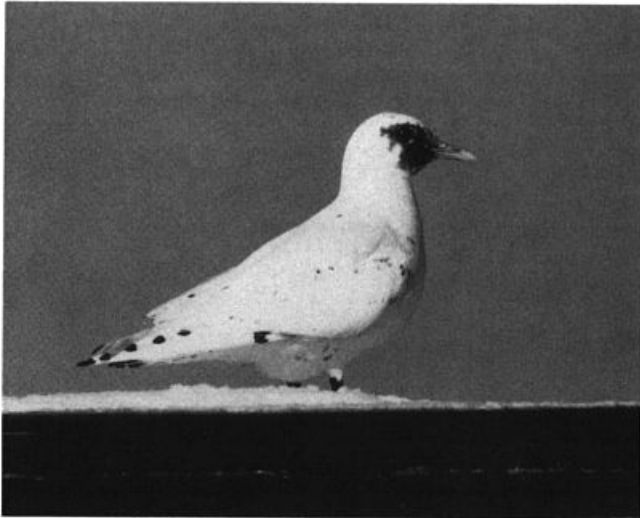
RAPTORS — Turkey Vultures were seen on the Willard, WI, CBC, and on Jan. 28 in Berrien, MI (KL), quite unusual for the Region. Amazingly, an Osprey was present along the Mississippi R. in Trempealeau, WI, and adjacent Minnesota until Jan. 27 (TH). Bald Eagle numbers were up in Minnesota, particularly in the north, where the species does not normally winter. The Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources winter eagle survey found 217 Bald Eagles, 101 in the Upper Pen., 89 in the northern Lower Pen., and 27 in the southern Lower Pen., up one from last year. Northern Harriers wintered in surprising numbers in Wisconsin, with individuals found in 10+ counties. Northern Goshawks were quite scarce in Michigan. Golden Eagles were seen in excellent numbers with one in Michigan, seven in Minnesota, and seven in Wisconsin.

Merlins were again reported in good numbers, with reports from 2 Michigan, 3 Minnesota, and 3 Wisconsin locations. Curiously, the Minnesota reports were all from the northern part of the state. There were 5 sightings of Peregrine Falcons, all in Minnesota. This species is normally absent in the winter, but now hatched birds are surviving and showing up at any time of the year, at least in e. Minnesota. The old ♀ Prairie Falcon that had wintered for the last 6 years at Rothsay W.M.A. did not show this year and is probably dead; however, one was seen Dec. 5 at Moorhead (S & DM) and one was at the Minneapolis airport in late December and early January (m.ob.). Two Gyrfalcons were found in Michigan, one at their most common Michigan location, the power plant in Sault Ste. Marie (m.ob.) from late December into March, and one Feb. 14 at a quarry near Alpena (RP).

GROUSE TO GULLS — After 2 consecutive winters of almost no reports from the formerly reliable spot on Lake, MN, County Road 2 (2.5–4.5 miles south of Highway 1), Spruce Grouse were again semi-reliable at dawn picking at salt/grit in the road; a peak of 16 was seen Jan. 15 (KE *et al.*). A Least Sandpiper Dec. 18 in Monroe, MI (PC, JH), was the latest known for Michigan.

A breeding-plumaged Franklin's Gull was present below the Prairie du Sac dam on the Wisconsin R. Dec. 21–26 (m.ob.), and probably the same bird was in Milwaukee Jan. 29 (MD *et al.*), for one of the few occurrences of this species in the winter in the Region. Thayer's Gulls were seen in all 3 states, with reports from one Michigan, one Minnesota, and 3 Wisconsin locations. Iceland Gulls were reported 8 times from 6 Michigan locations, comprising at least five different birds, more than the usual number of reports. In Minnesota, where the species is only casual, observers found an adult at Black Dog L. Dec. 5 (SC, KE), and another or the same individual in St. Paul Dec. 18–23 (m.ob.). Lesser Black-backed Gulls are becoming more common in the Region. This winter, Wisconsin observers found an adult below the Prairie du Sac dam

Dec. 14–30 (K & DL, A & SS et al.), only the 3rd or 4th for Wisconsin; Minnesota observers found a 3rd-winter bird at Black Dog L. through Dec. 10 (m.ob.), the 5th for Minnesota; and Michigan observers found three, bringing the Michigan total to about 15. Glaucous Gulls were seen in normal numbers, with the best concentrations being of 13 at Superior, WI, and 14 at Saginaw, MI. Great Black-backed Gulls away from their normal e. Michigan haunts were as follows: a first-winter bird at Black Dog L., MN, until Dec. 8 (m.ob.), only the 2nd away from Duluth and the first for the Twin Cities; two at Manitowoc, WI, Jan. 7 (CS); and singles on Dec. 14 and Jan. 9 at St. Joseph, Berrien, MI (RS), and Jan. 30 at Muskegon, MI (GW). A Black-legged Kittiwake was found dead Dec. 5 at New Buffalo, Berrien, MI (KM), and one was at Black Dog L., MN, Dec. 3–6 (m.ob.). The bird of the season was an absurdly tame immature **Ivory Gull** at Cedar Lake, St. Croix, WI, Jan. 7–10 (TS, m.ob.). The bird was fed by the ice fishermen and allowed close approach (providing frame-filling photos). Unfortunately, the weather was such that not as many people could get to see the bird as wanted to.



Ivory Gull in first-winter plumage at Cedar Lake, Wisconsin, January 10, 1989. Photograph/David B. Johnson.

OWLS TO WOODPECKERS — Common Barn-Owls were found at 2 Wisconsin locations, both in the northern part of the state, one alive (which subsequently died) and the other found dead. There were also rumors of one in Monroe, MI, where they were formerly found. This species has not done well in the Region for many years. The numbers of Snowy Owls found this winter were as low as at any time in recent memory: only two were in the Duluth-Superior area, and the maximum count in the Sault Ste. Marie area of Michigan's Upper Pen. was six. A N. Hawk-Owl spent the entire season in the Sault Ste. Marie area, but was difficult to find as it continually changed locations (PC, JG, RS). Minnesota had an average number of reports, but the hawk-owls did not stay in one place for more than a day or so, making relocating them extremely difficult. The best guess is that deep snow made hunting difficult, forcing the owls to keep moving, as the normal behavior of hawk-owls once located is to remain at the same location for days or weeks. Short-eared Owls were reported more often than normal in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but there were only 2 reports from Michigan.

The *Selasphorus* hummingbird in Berrien, MI, remained until Dec. 9 (RS), when it disappeared in subfreezing weather. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were found n. of normal in both

S.A.

Great Gray Owls and Boreal Owls provided much of the winter excitement in contrasting ways. Great Grays staged their 2nd largest Minnesota invasion, with about 100 individuals seen (the largest invasion was in 1983–1984, when 122 were seen), and staged their first Wisconsin invasion, with at least 20 seen [owls were still appearing into late March, so the final tally is not yet known]. Virtually all of the Minnesota sightings were in the n.e. quarter of the state (normally in invasion years, a few make it to s. Minnesota), and most appeared healthy, or at least few were found dead/sick/injured as was the case with the Boreal Owls. Also, most of the owls did not stay in one place for more than a day and could generally not be relocated by other birders on subsequent days. The opposite was true in Wisconsin, where eight individuals found in Douglas south and southwest of Superior commencing Jan. 6 (LS) remained until late February and were very dependable. Also, unlike other years, there were no Great Grays in Michigan.

Even more spectacular, in a depressing way, was the Boreal Owl invasion, which will certainly end up being the largest ever in winter in Minnesota. A total of 66 individuals was counted in the winter of 1977–1978, with all but one of these in n.e. Minnesota. Hundreds of birders from throughout North America came as a result, and Minnesota observers thought they would never see the likes of that event again. They were half right: this winter the birders never came in numbers, because the depressing part of all this is that the majority of the Boreals were found dead, injured, or sick from starvation. Again, as with the Great Grays, the owls were still turning up (mostly dead) in late March, but it is estimated that about 80 individuals will be counted once it is all added up. Almost all the sightings were in or near someone's yard, especially a yard with a bird feeder—again, prey was so hard to come by that the easiest place to find small mammals in winter was at spilled seeds around feeders. Several Boreals were seen uncharacteristically hunting in broad daylight, as hunger forced them out into the open. At least two Boreals were found in s. Minnesota, one in Kanabec in mid-March, and the other in a yard in a less-than-glamorous section of Minneapolis on Feb. 18 (SC). Away from Minnesota, single Boreal Owls were found dead in Eau Claire, WI (fide JP), and Delta, Emmet, and Cheboygan, MI (BE, CT, JM), and birds were found alive in Rogers City, MI, Feb. 28 (BG) and near Ashland, WI, Feb. 28 (DV et al.), the latter so weak it was falling off its perch. Verch started a feeding program with mice, and apparently this owl is surviving. Of the many found dead, two in Duluth were interesting: one was found dead on top of a dead flying squirrel—apparently the owl tried to prey on the squirrel and they both died in the struggle; the other was a dead owl found being eaten by another Boreal—it is unknown if the dead owl was killed by or just found dead by the other owl (then the live owl was picked up sick the next day, and later died of starvation).

Michigan and Minnesota. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Feb. 10 at Rushford, Fillmore, MN (ANP), apparently provided only the 2nd mid-winter sighting for Minnesota. Only one Three-toed Woodpecker was reported, in Lake of the Woods, MN. Black-backed Woodpeckers were also scarce, except at the Rapid River Burn Area, Delta, MI, where 19 were found (GN). More Pileated Woodpeckers than normal were reported in Minnesota.



Great Gray Owl in Douglas County, Wisconsin, January 1989. Photograph/Robbye Johnson.

FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS—An E. Phoebe was found on the Fort Atkinson, WI, CBC. A N. Rough-winged Swallow survived at a sewage treatment plant in Berrien Springs, Berrien, MI, until Dec. 15 (RS), a latest record ever. More Carolina Wrens were found than in recent years, with at least eight birds in Michigan and 10 in Wisconsin. A Carolina Wren found Feb. 16 in Coon Rapids, Anoka, MN, probably represented a successful overwintering, as one had been seen at the same location in the fall (m.ob.). Eastern Bluebirds were more common than normal in Michigan, and one Dec. 20 in Duluth (TWi, D & ME) was very late for n. Minnesota. Townsend's Solitaires were found at 3 Minnesota and one Wisconsin locations, about average. An Am. Robin Jan. 10 in Marquette, MI (RL), was n. of normal. Varied Thrushes were found at 2 Michigan, 6 Minnesota, and 7 Wisconsin locations, about average for this western stray.

Brown Thrashers overwintered at one Michigan and 2 Wisconsin locations, and one was well north in Minnesota's Aitkin Jan. 28 (WN). Cedar Waxwings were generally scarce, as were Bohemian Waxwings, except at Duluth, where 2168 were found on the CBC and fair numbers stayed all winter. Northern Shrikes were quite sparse except late in the winter in Chippewa, MI, where 12 were found Feb. 18 (RS et al.). A Loggerhead Shrike Feb. 25 at the Allegan S.G.A., MI (DP, BP, JG), was thought to be one of the local birds overwintering. The only non-Yellow-rumped Warbler found in the Region was an Ovenbird Jan. 1 in Muskegon, MI (FD).

CARDINALS TO SPARROWS—Northern Cardinals were found n. of normal in both Michigan and Minnesota, all at feeders. A "Spotted" Rufous-sided Towhee was in Milwaukee in January (MD). A towhee was also at a Mille Lacs feeder until Feb. 2 (fide WN). They are only casual in winter in Minnesota. American Tree Sparrows were considerably less common than normal in Michigan. Field Sparrows were also scarce in Michigan, with almost none reported. However, one until Feb. 10 in Willmar, MN, was regarded as quite unusual, as they are considered accidental in Minnesota in mid-winter. A Fox Sparrow Dec. 29 at Duluth (D & ME) was considered

very late. White-throated Sparrows were very scarce in Michigan, as were White-crowned Sparrows in Wisconsin. Harris' Sparrows overwintered at 2 Wisconsin feeders. Wisconsin observers found Lapland Longspurs in above-average numbers. Blackbirds were generally scarce, except in Berrien, MI, where 900+ grackles were seen in mid-December (RA, DP) and 600+ were still present in mid-January (JG, BP, DP), and in Monroe, MI, where 300+ Red-winged Blackbirds were found Feb. 1 (BP). Minnesota's and the Region's 2nd **Brambling** was at an East Grand Forks feeder from late December into March (AS et al.).

In addition to the owl invasion, this winter will primarily be remembered as a finch-less one. All the winter finches were very scarce essentially Regionwide. Pine Grosbeaks were very scarce, with no reports from s. parts of any of the 3 states. Purple Finches were scarce early in the season, and then became more scarce. It is easy to tell that House Finches are not "winter finches," because they are spreading like wildfire throughout the Region. There are now thousands present in Michigan, their numbers are increasing in Wisconsin, and they are occurring farther north in both states; and finally, they are regular in Minnesota, where they are firmly established in the s.e. quarter of the state. The first Minnesota nesting record for House Finch is now only a matter of time; indeed, it probably already took place: one St. Paul feeder had 24 individuals, and a suburban Minneapolis feeder had 29. There was only a scattering of Red Crossbill sightings in the Region, with only n. Minnesota approaching normal. The only winter finch that received a favorable report was White-winged Crossbill, which was present in good numbers in n. Minnesota and fair numbers late in the season in n. Wisconsin, but nowhere else. Common Redpolls "arrived" late in n. Wisconsin, when from a few to fair numbers were seen; but in the southern areas of the Region, essentially none appeared. The only Hoary Redpoll reports came from n. Minnesota. After last winter's record invasion, Pine Siskins held a record non-invasion, with very few present anywhere in the Region. American Goldfinches presented a mixed picture, with average or better numbers in Wisconsin, but fewer in both Michigan and Minnesota. And perhaps the most scarce of all was the Evening Grosbeak, with comments ranging from "none" to "the first time I've not had them." They were almost impossible to find anywhere. A **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** wintered with a "mass" of House Sparrows at a farm e. of River Falls, Pierce, WI (m.ob.), for one of the few state records.

CORRIGENDUM—I wish to correct the sighting information on the Black Rail seen last summer at Grand Haven, MI. The discoverers of this bird were inadvertently omitted in the sighting report. The bird was initially heard the night of June 10 by Cal and Carolyn Pomarius. They, along with John Will, Steve Minard, and Doug Klein, went to the location June 15, and were able to lure the bird into view and confirm its identification. It was thereafter seen by many.

CONTRIBUTORS (This editor wishes to thank the many individuals who submitted reports. The nature of this summary precludes listing every individual who sends in a report; therefore, only those observers with cited records are listed below. State editors are in boldface.)—Ray Adams, Phillip Ashman, Al Bolduc, Walter Booth, David & Margaret Brasser, Steve Carlson, Phil Chu, Feller DeWitt, Mary Donald, Bert Ebberts, **Kim Eckert** (Minnesota), Howard Einspahr, Dave & Molly Evans, Chip Francke, **Jim Granlund** (Michigan), Bill Grigg, Janet Hinshaw, Thomas Hunter, Ken Lebo, Karl & Dorothy Legler, Jim Lind, R. Lund, Joe McDonald, Steve & Diane Millard, Kip Miller, Ginny Nash, Warren Nelson, Rod Planck, Anne Marie Plunkett, Janine Polk, **David Powell** (Michigan), Bob Putman, Steve Schon (SSc), Ted Schmidt, Larry Semo, Al & Sue Shea (A & SS), Roy Smith, Charles Sontag, Scott Swengel, Charlotte Taylor, **Daryl Tessen** (Wisconsin), Dick Verch, Terry Walsh, George Wickstrom, Terry Wiens (TWi).—**DAVID J. POWELL**, Research Associate, Kalamazoo Nature Center, 7000 N. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

MIDDLE- WESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

Bruce G. Peterjohn



The series of relatively mild winters continued. December temperatures were fairly close to normal in most areas, while precipitation patterns varied from state to state. Snow cover was locally distributed and persisted for only a few days. January was downright balmy, averaging 8 to 10 degrees above normal. The only winter weather occurred in February, when below-normal temperatures froze most lakes. The northern states received some snow while torrential rainfall produced extensive flooding in portions of Kentucky.

As a result of the mild weather, open water was available in every state into early February, encouraging an unusual number and variety of waterbirds to remain into the winter season. Gulls generated the most excitement, although a number of unusual waterfowl were also noteworthy. For birders fortunate to live near lakes and rivers where waterfowl congregated, it was an eventful season. For those who live elsewhere, the winter was exceptionally dull. Most passerines were relatively scarce, and the mild open winter did not force them to congregate at feeders. With the exception of a moderate flight of Northern Shrikes, the invasive species were very rare or absent.

ABBREVIATIONS — C.O.W.R. = Crab Orchard Nat'l Wildlife Ref., IL; Say. Res. = Saylorville Res., IA; O.W.R. = Ottawa Nat'l Wildlife Ref., OH. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO HERONS — The latest Red-throated Loon remained along L. Erie through Dec. 3, and the largest movement of Commons totaled 74 at Miller Beach, IN, Dec. 1 (KB). Mild temperatures allowed a few Com. Loons to linger into January. The last loons were noted Jan. 19–28, but none wintered. Sixty Pied-billed Grebes at Turtle Creek Res., IN, Dec. 30 (CK) included some late migrants, while 25 at C.O.W.R., Feb. 8 (DRo) represented a sizable late winter flock for s. Illinois. Late movements of Horned Grebes totaled 100

at Kentucky L., KY, Dec. 7 (CP, JE) and 80 at Baldwin L., IL, Jan. 3 (RG). These flocks ultimately disappeared, with only small numbers wintering on s. lakes. Two Red-necked Grebes appeared in Ohio during December, where one Dec. 15 at East Fork Res. (TL, JB) was a casual visitor to the s.w. corner of the state. Following the trend of recent years, two Eared Grebes lingered along L. Erie until Dec. 10. Three late W. Grebes in St. Charles, MO, Dec. 10 (G & Tba) were surpassed by Missouri's first **Clark's Grebe**, a closely studied individual at Smithville Res., Nov. 27–Jan. 10 (RF, MM, †m.ob.).

Casual early winter visitors, single Am. White Pelicans remained through Dec. 17 in Henderson, IL (MB, LM), Dec. 22 near St. Joseph, MO (LG), Dec. 11–24 at Burlington, IA (CFu), and Dec. 30–Jan. 13 in Will, IL (JM). One was observed near LaPorte City, IA, into early February but disappeared with the advent of subfreezing temperatures (BBr, *fide* SD). As their populations have increased, Double-crested Cormorants have become fairly regular winter visitors, remaining as long as open water is available. Wintering cormorants were reported from every state with maxima of 12 at Cleveland throughout the period (m.ob.), nine at Louisville Jan. 25 (LRa), seven in Will, IL, through Feb. 16 (JM), and three at Davenport, IA, until Feb. 19 (P, m.ob.). Great Blue Herons were widespread although numbers were generally reduced by February. Noteworthy winter flocks totaled 112 at O.W.R. Dec. 4 (m.ob.) and 75–100 near Lawrenceburg, IN, during late February (PW et al.). Black-crowned Night-Herons were detected at traditional winter haunts in Chicago and Horseshoe Lake, IL, and Toledo, OH. Two were casual winter visitors at Louisville through Dec. 18, while one at Spring L. Conservation Area, IL, Dec. 10–Jan. 1 (LA) was unexpected.

WATERFOWL — Wintering waterfowl were more widely distributed than normal, reflecting the availability of open water in most areas. Late migrant Tundra Swans included flocks of 91 in Elkhart, IN, Dec. 14 (BB, RT) and 19 in Mason,

IL, Jan. 2 (LA). Wintering swans appeared in every state, with at least 12 reports including flocks of 10 at Princeton-LeClaire, IA (P et al.), five at C.O.W.R. (SO, m.ob.), and five at Pickerington, OH (JF, m.ob.). Two swans were noted in Mercer, KY, Jan. 8-9 (WKe, FL) and one Feb. 27 at Mingo N.W.R., MO (HF), where they are casual visitors. The introduced Trumpeter Swan wandered to s.e. Missouri while at least 13 individuals were scattered across Iowa. Feral Mute Swans appeared in every state as they continue to increase rapidly as winter visitors.

Unprecedented numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese were reported this winter. Sightings from every state included flocks of seven in Mason, IL, Jan. 22 (LA), five wintering at Ballard W.M.A., KY, and four at Keokuk, IA, through Jan. 21 (BW, fide SD). Single White-fronteds near Springboro, OH, Jan. 2-4 (TLI, †SU) and Springfield, OH, Jan. 22-28 (DO, ph.), three at Hueston Woods S.P., OH, Jan. 17-28 (BH, JS, †m.ob.), and five in Cook, IL, Dec. 19 (†CWe) were thought to be members of the Greenland race, a race that is possibly becoming a rare but fairly regular winter visitor to this Region. Fifteen White-fronteds near Lawrenceburg, IN, Feb. 26 (m.ob.) were early spring migrants. Snow Geese were plentiful in w. Iowa during January, where 153,000 were tallied at DeSoto N.W.R. Jan. 10 (TBr). They departed by the end of the month. Other flocks included 15,000 wintering at Ballard W.M.A., KY (CW). A few Ross' Geese were mixed among the Snow Geese. Three reports from the w. states peaked at 12 at DeSoto N.W.R., IA (m.ob.), while five were discovered near Ballard W.M.A., KY, Feb. 12 (BP et al.). Four Illinois reports included one Ross' Goose at Waukegan Dec. 5-7 (†DJo, ph.), a first for the Chicago area. Ohio had to be content with a Ross' x Snow hybrid wintering at Hoover Res. (†J, MG, ph.). Exceptional in Iowa at any season, a **Brant** was a welcome visitor to DeSoto N.W.R. Dec. 19-Jan. 3 (DR, †m.ob., ph.). Wintering Canada Geese peaked with 55,000 at Ballard W.M.A. and 692,000 on refuges in s. Illinois.

The expected concentrations of Am. Black Ducks and Mallards developed in most states. Other puddle ducks were widespread in small numbers. The most noteworthy flocks were of 55 N. Shovelers at C.O.W.R., Jan. 1-7 (DRo, BD), 18-22 shovelers at DeSoto N.W.R., IA, Jan. 2-10 (m.ob.), 700 Gadwalls at Kentucky L., KY, Jan. 13 (CP), and 600 Gadwalls at Spring L. Conservation Area, IL, Dec. 3 (MB).



Ohio birders, awaiting the appearance of Ross' Goose in their state, found this apparent first-winter Ross' x Snow Goose hybrid wintering at Hoover Reservoir. Bill shape, and amount of dusky marking in the plumage, appear intermediate between the two species. Photograph/Mary Gustafson.

Wintering diving ducks were relatively scarce along the Mississippi R. but expected numbers appeared along L. Erie. Canvasbacks were plentiful along the Cleveland-Lorain lakefront, where flocks of 1000-3000 congregated after mid-January. The only other large wintering flock totaled 500 at Alton, IL-MO (RG). The mild weather allowed 125-400 Ring-necked Ducks to winter at L. Pewee, KY (JHn), an unusually large number for this Region. Scattered inland reports of Greater Scaup included a remarkable 63 at C.O.W.R., Jan. 21-22 (DRo, TF). Harlequin Ducks staged an unprecedented movement, with seven to 10 along the Cleveland-Lorain lakefront, three to five at Chicago, and three along L. Michigan in n.w. Indiana. These ducks appeared and disappeared at Great Lakes sites throughout the winter, and the number of individuals involved in this flight is not precisely known. Only small numbers of Oldsquaw were scattered along both Great Lakes. Inland reports from every state produced 15 sightings, an above-average total.

At least two Black Scoters wintered along the Cleveland-Lorain lakefront, where there are few confirmed records after Jan. 1. Even more noteworthy was a single Black Scoter near Lawrenceburg, IN, Jan. 17-19 (PW et al.). Late migrant Surf Scoters included three at Barkley L., KY, Dec. 9 (BP) and one at W. Okobojo L., IA, Dec. 3-5 (†ET). Wintering reports were limited to at least three intermittently observed at Lorain, OH, and one at L. Charleston, IL, Jan. 30-Feb. 5 (†RB, BHu). Our most numerous wintering scoters, White-winged peaked with 19 at Cleveland Jan. 9 (WK). Small numbers scattered across 11 inland locations represented above-average numbers. Common Goldeneyes were numerous in Illinois but generally scarce elsewhere. Spring migration produced 2500 goldeneyes along the Mississippi R. near St. Louis Feb. 19 (RG, Jea) and 1800 in Lorain, OH, Feb. 28 (VF). A ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneye** joined the other unusual waterfowl at DeSoto N.W.R., Jan. 2-8 (LPa, TBr, †m.ob., ph.), establishing Iowa's 2nd confirmed record. Flocks of 250 Hooded Mergansers at Barkley L., KY, Jan. 22 (BP) and 310 at C.O.W.R., Jan. 10 (BD, DRo) were large mid-winter concentrations. Common Mergansers elicited mixed reports but were locally plentiful in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and along L. Erie. The largest flock was an estimated 10,000 at Powerton, IL, Jan. 8 (LA), while 2000-6100 were estimated from several other locations. Ruddy Ducks were uniformly scarce after early January.

HAWKS TO SHOREBIRDS — The largest Black Vulture roosts totaled 85 in Taney, MO, Dec. 3 (JHa) and 50 in Johnson, IL, Jan. 22 (TF). In addition to established roosts, 250 Turkey Vultures were noted in Johnson, IL, Jan. 22 (TF). Lingering vultures appeared north to Booneville, IA, in December, and Broken Ridge S.F., IL, in January. Ospreys were represented by late migrants in Ohio at Caesar Creek Res. Dec. 4 (G & MK) and near Xenia Dec. 6 (JH), plus an early migrant at Mingo N.W.R., MO, Feb. 27 (HF). Bald Eagles reached record or near-record levels on mid-winter surveys, with totals of 1225 in Illinois, 1011 in Missouri, 206 in Kentucky, 93 in Indiana, and 42 in Ohio. Several pairs were possibly constructing nests in Indiana, the only state now lacking breeding pairs in this Region. Wintering N. Harriers were generally scarce, although suitable habitats supported 40+ in Madison, OH (MA), and 25+ in Ohio, KY (KC). At the nadir of their cycle, N. Goshawks were scarce with only 8 scattered reports south to Columbus, OH, Feb. 23 (MG).

An impressive 198 Red-tailed Hawks were tallied in Vernon and Barton, MO, Dec. 30 (MR). A well described "Kriders" Red-tailed was unusual in e. Ohio at Tuscarawas Feb. 18 (†ES). A Ferruginous Hawk in Fremont Jan. 17 was closely studied (†RS), providing one of few acceptable records for Iowa. Rough-legged Hawks were widely distributed in small numbers, producing maxima of 15 in Kentucky and Indiana. Golden Eagles are increasing as winter residents, with at least 18 reports east to Kentucky and Illinois. After the CBC period,

documented Merlins were limited to singles at Sioux Center, IA, Jan. 1 (†JV), Glenwood, IA, Jan. 1 (†DR, ph.), and Columbus, OH, Jan. 30 (†MG). Peregrine Falcons were represented by the resident pair at Toledo, OH, a wintering individual at Kansas City, and 2 reports from Indiana. A wintering **Prairie Falcon** in Ohio, KY (†m.ob., ph. BMo), established the first record for Kentucky, while another in Gibson Feb. 26 (†KB, DJ et al.) may have furnished Indiana's 3rd confirmed sighting. A single Prairie Falcon near Clinton L., IL, Feb. 4 (†MD, †RP) was also noteworthy. There were 2 reports each in Iowa and Missouri, where they are rare but regular winter residents.

Gray Partridge continue to spread south in Iowa with reports from Warren (JSi) and near Burlington (CFu). A Ruffed Grouse at New Richmond Dec. 8 (MP) was outside its normal s.w. Ohio range. Northern Bobwhite remained scarce at most localities, although reports from Cerro Gordo were noteworthy for n. Iowa. The only winter rail report was of a Sora on a s. Illinois CBC. The mild weather allowed Am. Coots to winter in exceptional numbers, with an estimated 50,000 on Kentucky L. (CP), 3000 at Turtle Creek Res., IN, Feb. 9 (CK), and 725 at C.O.W.R. Jan. 21 (DRo). Migrant flocks of Sandhill Cranes passed over Kentucky and s.w. Ohio Dec. 3-8, and one remained in Illinois until Dec. 30. Unusual in Iowa during winter, two were observed near Spirit L. Dec. 12-28 (DH, ET), three remained near Burlington through Feb. 11 (CFu), and one wintered in Polk (SD, m.ob.). Early spring migrants returned to Porter, IN, by Feb. 11 (CF, SB) and Ballard W.M.A. during February (CW).

Few shorebirds lingered into the winter season. A hardy Ruddy Turnstone survived at Lorain, OH, until Feb. 22 (m.ob.), only the 2nd turnstone to have overwintered in the state. The last Sanderling reported was along L. Erie Dec. 4, and Least Sandpipers lingered in Kentucky until Dec. 16. Late migrant Dunlin at Say. Res., IA, Dec. 9 (SD, BE), Raccoon L., IN, Dec. 17-19 (†AB et al.), and near Waukegan, IL, through Jan. 1 (JN) were locally noteworthy. A Dunlin also remained at Lorain, OH, until Feb. 3 (m.ob.) and may have overwintered. Wintering Am. Woodcock were displaying at Land-between-the-Lakes Jan. 21 and were "relatively conspicuous" at other w. Kentucky locations during the end of the month (BP). Singles were also noted in s. Illinois at Makanda Jan. 25 (CPa) and Johnson Jan. 29 (TF). The first migrants appeared north to Pickaway, OH, Feb. 21 (fide JF) and Seneca, OH, Feb. 28 (TB). A Red Phalarope remained at Cleveland through Jan. 31 (m.ob.), providing one of few mid-winter records for Ohio.



Red Phalarope at Cleveland, Ohio, January 15, 1989. Although late migrants are often noted in December, true mid-winter records inland are quite rare. Photograph/Larry Rosche.

JAEGERS, GULLS — The late fall movement of Pomarine jaegers along L. Erie continued into early winter. As many as three Pomarines were periodically encountered along the Cleveland lakefront through Jan. 14 (LR, RHa, m.ob.), although just a handful of wandering individuals may have been responsible for all of the observations. The only other jaeger report was of an unidentified individual on L. Michigan in n.w. Indiana Dec. 1.

Gulls produced the most excitement this winter, with an incredible 16 species recorded. Franklin's Gulls at 2 Iowa locations through Dec. 11 and three at Big Lakes S.P., MO, Dec. 23-27 (†MR et al.) were very late migrants. Accidental anywhere after December, the only acceptable mid-winter sighting was of an adult Franklin's wandering along the Illinois R. between Grundy, IL, Jan. 2 (†JM) and N. Pekin Feb. 26 (KR). Little Gulls were restricted to L. Erie, where as many as nine congregated at Cleveland through Feb. 12. This fall's **Common Black-headed Gull** at Clinton L., IL, was last observed there Jan. 22 (MD). It then apparently wandered to L. Gibson Feb. 19-28 (DJ, †m.ob., ph.), establishing the 4th record for Indiana. Large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls remained at Cleveland through Feb. 5, with estimates varying between 10,000-25,000 individuals. They largely disappeared by Feb. 12, with only a few remaining into March. Flocks of 445 Bonaparte's at Louisville Feb. 4 and 700 at Kentucky L. Feb. 12 (BP) were unprecedented winter concentrations for Kentucky. Only small numbers were reported elsewhere after early December.

Ohio's 3rd **Mew Gull** was a first-winter individual of the North American race that intermittently appeared at Eastlake Dec. 11-25 (†LR, †RH et al.). The ubiquitous Ring-billed Gull wintered in impressive numbers at several inland locations, with 20,000 at Carlyle L., IL, Jan. 16, 10,000+ roosting on the w. Kentucky lakes, and 6000 at Peoria, IL (LA). The mid-winter presence of California Gulls along L. Erie was supported by an adult wintering at Cleveland (m.ob., ph.) and another at Lorain Feb. 25 (†J, †MG). This fall's imm. California Gull at L. Gibson, IN, remained into January (DJ, m.ob.). The mild weather allowed Herring Gulls to remain in n. portions of the Region, although Illinois experienced an influx during February. While 25,000+ congregated at various L. Erie locations and 6000 wintered at Peoria, no more than 300 gathered at the evening roosts in w. Kentucky.

Small numbers of Thayer's Gulls were scattered among the gull flocks along both Great Lakes and the Illinois R. south to



Adult Common Black-headed Gull in Gibson County, Indiana, February 21, 1989. Fourth state record. Photograph/Michael R. Brown.

Peoria. Few wandered farther south, with two in the Alton, IL-MO, area and a similar number on the w. Kentucky lakes after Dec. 9. An imm. Thayer's at Davenport Feb. 18-26 (†P, m.ob.) provided one of few acceptable records for Iowa. Similar small numbers of Iceland Gulls were scattered along the Great Lakes. Inland reports were limited to one or two Iceland Gulls scattered along the Illinois R. south to L. Chautauqua (m.ob.) and two along the Maumee R. at Waterville, OH, Jan. 3 (TK). The expanding Lesser Black-backed Gull appeared in every state, with a maximum of four along the Cleveland-Lorain lakefront. Away from the Great Lakes, singles wintered in the Alton, IL-MO, area (RG), L. Gibson, IN (DJ), and along the Illinois R. near Peoria (†LA, m.ob.). They were also discovered at Say. Res., Dec. 4 (†SD), Kentucky L., KY, Jan. 22-28 (BP et al.), and Waterville, OH, through Feb. 5 (TK).

S.A.

Certainly the Regional highlight of the winter was the appearance of an adult **Slaty-backed Gull** along the Mississippi R. at Davenport, IA-Moline, IL. Initially discovered Feb. 12 (†ABa), this gull attracted a multitude of observers through Feb. 21. It established the 2nd Regional record, approximately 200 mi from the site of the 1984 record in the St. Louis area. While the characteristics of the 1989 gull were not identical to those of the 1984 gull, the differences were fairly minor and subjective, and did not necessarily preclude the possibility that only one individual was responsible for both records.

Glaucon Gulls peaked at six along L. Erie while as many as four were widely reported along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers south to Alton, IL-MO. Only one wandered to w. Kentucky, while two at Waterville Jan. 3 (TK) were unusual in Ohio away from L. Erie. Single Great Black-backed Gulls were scattered along L. Michigan. They are becoming regular winter visitors along the Mississippi and Illinois river systems, as evidenced by one in the Davenport, IA-Moline, IL area, Dec. 18-28 (P, †Fu et al.), at least three different birds intermittently observed in the Peoria area (m.ob.), and one in the Alton, IL-MO, area. An ad. Great Black-backed wandered south Jan. 22-Feb. 12 to Kentucky L., KY (BP, ph.), where there are few previous records. An imm. Black-legged Kittiwake wintered along the Lorain-Cleveland lakefront, while a carefully described adult was a remarkable find in Erie, OH, Jan. 24 (†RW). Another kittiwake lingered along L. Michigan through Jan. 7. Inland kittiwakes visited Red Rock Res., IA, Dec. 6-17 (†A, m.ob.) and Louisville Feb. 17-18 (†D, DS); they are casual visitors to both states. Last but certainly not least, a first-year **Sabine's Gull** was a surprising winter visitor at Cleveland. Initially discovered Jan. 21 (KA, JP), it was closely observed and photographed by many as it remained into March, establishing one of very few confirmed winter records for North America.

OWLS TO SHRIKES — A total of 5 reports of Com. Barn-Owls was representative of their Regional winter status during recent years. It was a poor year for Snowy Owls with a total of only 12 reported from the n. states. They wandered south to Henderson, IL (LM, MB), and Morrow, OH (MW, fide MG). Small numbers of Long-eared Owls were detected in every state except Indiana. A total of 29 Long-eareds wintering in Polk, Dallas, and Boone, IA (SD), was exceptional. Since there are few recent winter records from Kentucky, three in Ohio and five in Muhlenberg were noteworthy (KC, BP, m.ob.). Short-eared Owls were widely distributed in slightly improved numbers. The largest concentration was of 50+ wintering in Madison, OH (MA). Wintering groups of 31 in Ohio and 10-11 at 2 Muhlenberg sites (KC, BP) were unprecedented for Kentucky. The 23 wintering N. Saw-whet Owls in Polk,

Dallas, and Boone, IA (SD), were not representative of the remainder of the Region. Single Saw-whets were discovered at 6 Ohio locations while there were only single reports from the other states. Seldom recorded from Kentucky, one was discovered in Muhlenberg Jan. 28 (BP).

A hummingbird remaining at Cincinnati until Dec. 8 (fide AW) was never positively identified. Red-headed Woodpeckers were locally scarce, but the other woodpeckers were reported in normal numbers. Wintering Red-bellieds were unexpected in w. Iowa at Sioux Center (JV), and Pileateds continued to expand west through the state. The mild weather enticed a few E. Phoebes to remain north of their normal winter range. In Ohio, one wintered in Pike (DM), while another in Hocking and three in Ross (fide JF) probably overwintered. Another phoebe remained in Bell, KY, through Feb. 3 (BP). Since snow cover was sparse, Horned Larks generally remained in small flocks. The only concentrations totaled 1000-4000 in Illinois. Large Am. Crow roosts were restricted to traditional sites in Lucas, OH, Springfield, OH, and Ames, IA. Carolina Chickadees wintered in Seneca, OH (TB), an indication of their gradual northward expansion in the state. Following the fall's poor showing, Red-breasted Nuthatches were universally scarce.

Carolina Wrens have stabilized in southern areas, but continued to improve elsewhere. A very late nest with eggs was discovered in Brown, OH, Dec. 8 (JR). A Bewick's Wren in St. Francois Dec. 3 (HF) was unexpected in s.e. Missouri, while a House Wren in Holt Jan. 4 (LG) was exceptional in the n.w. corner of the state. Few Winter Wrens were reported. The only lingering Marsh Wrens were reported on 2 Illinois CBCs. Kinglets elicited few comments, although there were hints that Golden-crowned were scarce at several localities. After expected numbers on CBCs, the only Ruby-crowned Kinglet report was from Fairfield, OH, Feb. 11 (fide JF). Most observers had positive comments for E. Bluebirds, including some impressive totals on CBCs in the n. portion of the Region. Wintering Hermit Thrushes were decidedly scarce. American Robins were widespread in "above average" numbers in Missouri, "generally small numbers" in Indiana, and local concentrations of 100-250+ elsewhere. The largest flocks were most prevalent in December and February. Only two Varied Thrushes were reported, with wintering individuals in Des Moines, IA (EA, m.ob.), and Westlake, OH (FG, m.ob., ph.). Most noteworthy of 6 reports of Gray Catbirds were singles in Lake, IL, Jan. 1 (TBo), Dallas, IA, through Jan. 15 (SD), and Tuscarawas, OH, until Feb. 11 (†ES). The only report of Bohemian Waxwings was of four at Sioux Center, IA, Dec. 14 (JV). Cedar Waxwings were generally plentiful in Missouri. Elsewhere flocks were locally distributed during December and largely disappeared in January, but small numbers returned in February. Northern Shrikes staged their best movement since 1986. There were 5-7 reports from each northern state. Casual visitors to n. Missouri, single N. Shrikes were documented from James Reed W.M.A., Dec. 10 (†MM) and Atchison Dec. 24 (†MR). Northerns in Adams, IN (TH, LP) and Vermilion, IL (†RC) were also south of their normal range. The status of Loggerhead Shrikes remained unchanged with most sightings from s. areas.



Northern Shrike near Joliet, Illinois, December 28, 1988. Photograph/ Joe B. Milosevich.

WARBLERS TO FINCHES — A Tennessee Warbler at St. Louis Nov. 29–Dec. 4 was exceptionally late (LH, RG), but surprisingly few other warblers lingered into winter. Yellow-rumpeds were plentiful in Missouri, Kentucky, and s. Illinois, but scarce elsewhere. The only report of a Pine Warbler was of one wintering at a Worthington, OH, feeder for the 2nd consecutive year (BM). Sightings of other lingering warblers were limited to two Palms on an Indiana CBC, a Bay-breasted on an Illinois CBC, and December Com. Yellowthroats in Ohio and Illinois. A surprising number of Indigo Buntings lingered into early winter with singles on 2 s. Illinois CBCs, four on a Kentucky CBC, and one in Allen, IN, Jan. 8 (†SH).

Continuing the trend of recent winters, numbers of most sparrows were distressingly low. Perhaps a drought-induced shortage of seeds contributed to this year's scarcity of Am. Tree Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Lingered Chipping Sparrows were reported from Ohio at Columbus Jan. 12 (†BC) and Pike Feb. 9–14 (DM, TBn, ph.). The only late Vesper Sparrow detected was on an Illinois CBC. Grassland sparrows were also scarce, with only a few Savannahs at traditional locations. The highlight of the lack-luster season for wintering passerines was Illinois' 3rd **Golden-crowned Sparrow**, photographed at Green R. Conservation Area Feb. 20–28 (†JK, m.ob.). Harris' Sparrows were not reported east of the Mississippi R. this winter. The lack of snow cover produced few concentrations of Lapland Longspurs, such as 2000 near DeSoto N.W.R., IA, Jan. 8 (LPa, BPa) and flocks of 200–500 in Illinois. Only small numbers appeared elsewhere. Snow Buntings were equally inconspicuous. Flocks of 150–500+ were reported from Ohio and Indiana, but the species totaled fewer than 75 in other n. states. One bunting also appeared in n.w. Missouri.

Large blackbird roosts failed to develop in Kentucky, another indication of their declining numbers within the Region. While small numbers of W. Meadowlarks regularly winter in portions of Illinois, five in Massac Jan. 28 (DRo) were unexpected in the s. counties. The only Yellow-headed Blackbird noted was in Lake, OH, Feb. 26–28 (VF). Brewer's Blackbirds remained in Iowa and Illinois through the CBC period, with the largest flocks totaling 30 at Homer, IL, Dec. 1–2 (JSm) and 15 in Warren, IA, Dec. 30 (AJ). Great-tailed Grackles completely vacated Missouri and Iowa this winter. The only lingering N. Oriole appeared in Erie, OH, Dec. 10 (EL).

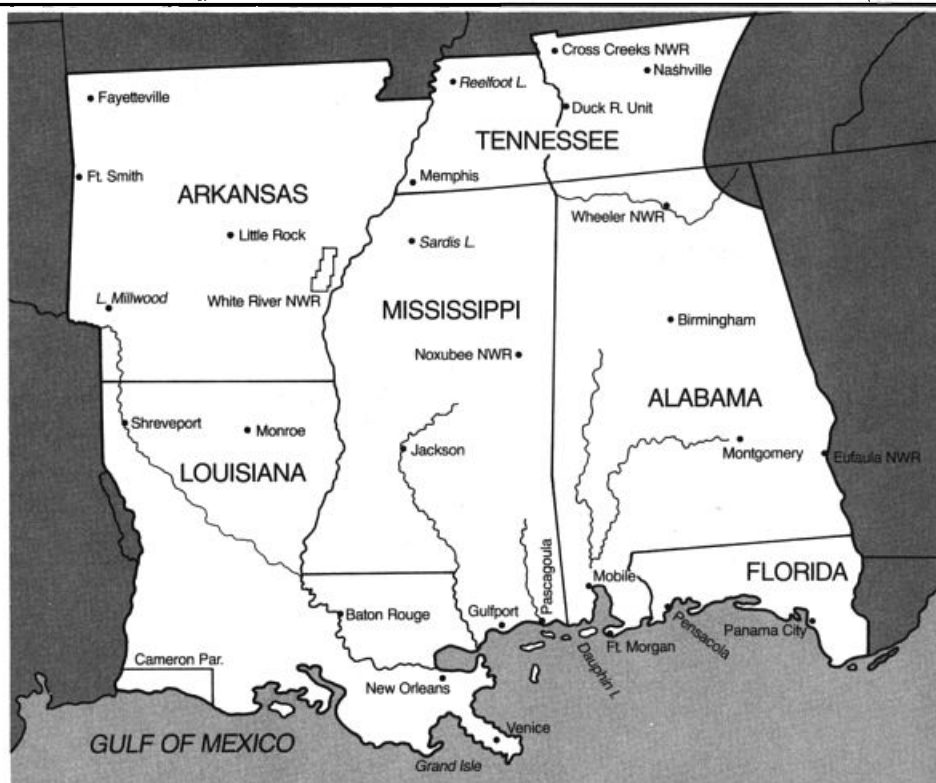
It was the poorest year in a decade for winter finches. Purple Finches were numerous only in Missouri and locally

in Illinois, where flocks of 40–90 were reported. They were especially scarce in Ohio and Indiana. Iowa's House Finches are increasing quite rapidly, as evidenced by 110 wintering in Des Moines (m.ob.) and 30 at Fairfield Dec. 24 (DPo). Only small numbers were reported from Missouri west to St. Joseph. Red Crossbills were limited to a maximum of 15 at 5 scattered locations in Iowa and singles at 2 sites in Illinois. White-winged Crossbills were restricted to Iowa, with 3 reports of four or fewer individuals. Common Redpolls essentially did not move south. There were only "a few" reports from Iowa and 2 isolated sightings in Illinois. Even Pine Siskins were very scarce, although individuals and small flocks of five to 17 appeared in every state except Missouri. Evening Grosbeaks were limited to flocks of 15 or fewer at 3–5 locations in Kentucky, Indiana, and Iowa.

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CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

David P. Muth



Regionwide the season was mild and generally dry. Snowfall was light in Arkansas and Tennessee. Some cold weather and precipitation came during two brief frontal episodes in February, bringing flooding to parts of Tennessee. This weather, however, arrived too late to seriously affect the patterns of wintering bird populations.

Golden-crowned Kinglets were the only birds reported in higher than average numbers Regionwide. Other boreal invaders were virtually absent. Seed-eaters were in low numbers throughout. Numbers of fruit-eaters and insect-eaters were very low in the south, but were unusually high to the north. Fish-eaters and rodent-eaters staged a good showing north and south.

In years past I have used this space to plead with birders to document and report all important sightings, including those seen during Christmas Bird Counts. Unfortunately, I have had little effect. As an example, Louisiana's second Varied Thrush was reported at the Sabine Refuge Christmas Count, and it was apparently seen the following day by a significant percentage of the state's best birders. Unfortunately, I received not a single report of this bird. Observers will search for it in vain in this summary.

LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS — The exceptionally rare Red-throated Loon was reported from 2 locations. One was far inland in Davidson, TN, Feb. 26 (DRJ). Another was found on the Mississippi coast during the Hancock CBC Dec. 28 (TH), and it, or another, was near there Jan. 14 (HS, PD, JAT). As has become the pattern in recent years, a couple of Pacific/Arctic Loons were reported from the easternmost coast of the Region. Both were in protected waters, as opposed to the Gulf itself. The first was found during the Pensacola, FL, CBC Dec. 17 (JP, DB et al.). The 2nd was in Bon Secour Bay, AL, Jan. 19 (TAI). An impressive 1490 Pied-billed Grebes were counted in Limestone, AL, Jan. 22 (GDJ), on the Tennessee "River." Also impressive were 58 Horned Grebes far north and west at Beaver Lake Dam in Carroll, AR Feb. 11 (MMI), where they are reported as regular. Again following the pattern of recent years were Eared Grebes, wintering east of their regular range in New Orleans, Mississippi, and n.w. Florida. One at Wheeler N.W.R., AL, Dec. 24 (JML), and another in Jefferson, AL, Feb. 21 (TAI, FD'A) were still more unexpected.

A non-pelagic, not-storm-related sighting of any shearwater in this Region is exceedingly rare, so any single-observer report has to be viewed with caution. Such a sighting of a **Sooty Shearwater** in Mississippi Sound Dec. 27 (JAT) would be, if accepted by the M.R.B.C., Mississippi's 2nd record. Two small black and white shearwaters were separately reported during the Gulf Shores, AL, CBC Dec. 31 (GDJ, PT). If shearwaters from shore are incredible, an ad. **White-tailed Tropicbird** borders on the miraculous, but it's difficult to imagine what else it could have been feeding offshore at Navarre Beach, Escambia, FL, Jan. 27 (B & MS). Pelagic surprises continued with the report of an ad. Masked Booby seen from Dauphin I. Feb. 21 (A & ADM), for Alabama's first February record. Northern Gannets continue to increase in the Gulf. Two hours of observation during the Gulf Shores, AL, CBC netted a count of 550 flying eastward. From Ft. Morgan, AL, Jan. 19, 258 were seen feeding offshore (TAI). Although late arriving off Louisiana's coast, by the end of the season they were commonplace. A record 270 were counted from Fourchon Beach, Lafourche, LA, Feb. 26 (RDP, LO'M, DPM), all but one flying steadily westward.

High numbers of Am. White Pelicans were unexpectedly inland in Louisiana and Arkansas, following the pattern of the last 2 winters. The recovery of Brown Pelicans on the n. Gulf continues. Their numbers were "up dramatically" in Mississippi (JAT), and they were again widely reported in s.w. Louisiana and New Orleans, where they had been absent for 30 years. Other fish-eaters continue to thrive as well, as witness the numerous reports of large inland concentrations

of Double-crested Cormorants from around the Region. The Olivaceous Cormorant is an abundant permanent resident of coastal s.w. Louisiana. Strays to the north and east of this restricted range are surprisingly rare, considering that no habitat barrier exists. Unexpected, then, were two seen during the Lafayette, LA, CBC Jan. 2 (SPG). Perhaps taking advantage of the 3rd mild winter in a row, numbers of Anhingas were again high in Louisiana. More unusual was one at Eufaula N.W.R., AL, Jan. 19 (CK, GS). Louisiana's first coastal winter sighting of a **Magnificent Frigatebird** was during the Grand Isle CBC Jan. 2 (AS).

HERONS TO DUCKS — Unusually high numbers of Great Egrets were reported by several observers in n. Louisiana, n. Mississippi, and Arkansas. Quite far north were single Cattle Egrets found during CBCs in Lonoke, AR, Dec. 18 (H & MP), and Hardin, TN, Dec. 23 (DJS). Also north were single Black-crowned Night-Herons on the Lonoke CBC (LP) and the Little Rock, AR, CBC Dec. 17 (LP). Reports of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons came from the usual s.e. Louisiana locations, but 17 at Eufaula N.W.R. Jan. 19 were surprising (CK, GS). A stray White-faced Ibis was seen in Chicot, AR, Jan. 27 (DRS).

A few reports were received of the rarely wintering Fulvous Whistling-Duck from c. and s.w. Louisiana. Large numbers of returning migrants were seen in Cameron Feb. 27 (SWC, DLD). The apparent invasion of Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continued. At Lacassine N.W.R., where they have been regular the last several winters, four were seen Dec. 3 (CS, PW), and 47 were observed during the Pine Prairie, LA, CBC Dec. 18 (BF, CB). Tundra Swans were scarce. Two were at Cross Creeks N.W.R., TN, Dec. 2 (DWB), one was at Yazoo N.W.R., MS, Feb. 12 (TSc), and 11 were in Lonoke, AR, Jan. 16 (MW, CB, VR). Geese are wintering everywhere, with White-fronteds and Ross' causing the most surprises. Greater White-fronted Geese winter abundantly in s.w. Louisiana, but the trend in recent winters has been for numbers to be seen north and east of there throughout the Region, and this winter was no exception. Most surprising were those seen in Okaloosa, FL, Jan. 5 (RAD), for a first January and 8th overall local record. Last winter, unprecedented numbers of Ross' Geese were observed in the rice fields of central Louisiana, and others were noted sporadically around the Region. This winter, they were back, but numbers were not restricted to the rice fields—they were noted in flocks of Snow Geese from extreme s.w. to n.e. Louisiana with a regularity that astonished observers. In Arkansas, there were 5 reports of 12 individuals from across the state. Tennessee's 4th **Ross' Goose** was an adult in Lawrence Jan. 8–17 (DJS). Alabama's 4th was at Eufaula N.W.R. Feb. 17–22 (HK, GA, et al.). One is forced to conclude that something besides increased observer effort is going on. Canada Geese continued to show up in c. and s.w. Louisiana in numbers unheard-of a few short years ago.

Two Cinnamon Teal were reported: one ad. male at Centerton Fish Hatchery, Benton, AR, Feb. 21–25 (ERL), and one at Lacassine N.W.R., Cameron, LA, Dec. 3 (PW, CS). A ♂ Redhead was at the Centerton Hatchery, where considered rare, Jan. 14–Feb. 19. A female was perhaps a late migrant in Webster, MS, Dec. 15 (TSc). Greater Scaup staged what can only be described as an invasion. Reports were received from scattered localities in 5 states. For instance, Greater Scaup normally comprise less than one per cent of the scaup rafts on Lake Pontchartrain, but this year some rafts contained as much as 25% Greater.

The distribution of the three scoters in this Region is difficult to categorize. Discernable coastal peaks seem evident in spring and fall, implying migration to some unknown southern location, but the few that remain throughout the winter present no clear patterns as to species or distribution. Birds seen outside the migratory period were: single Surf Scoters on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain during the New Orleans CBC Dec. 26 (BMM, RDP, NN, GC), and on the north

shore during the St. Tammany CBC Dec. 30 (JiH), and six at Rutherford Beach in Cameron, LA, Feb. 5 (DLD, SWC, CM); four Black Scoters on Bon Secour Bay, AL, Jan. 19 (TAI); and lone White-winged Scoters on L. Oktibbeha, MS, Dec. 8 through February, and on L. Porter Miller in W. Jefferson, AL, Feb. 2–28 (LNT, TAI, FD'A). Common Goldeneyes were fairly widespread and in good numbers for this normally scarce and erratic winterer. There were but two reports of Com. Merganser: a lone female that slummed on Bayou St. John in New Orleans with park Mallards and piebald Muscovies Jan. 4–Feb. 18 (G & AS, m.ob.), and five on the Tennessee R. in Waterloo, AL, Feb. 19 (GDJ, DGJ).

OSPREYS TO CRANES — Ospreys, like other fish-eaters, continue to recover. Nesting in Louisiana has been sporadic, and there is probably more nesting going on than we know about in the state's vast wetlands, so heartening but not surprising is the report of at least one nest in the Atchafalaya's Upper Flat Lake, occupied for perhaps 4 years (DF, CF). Another heartening development among raptors is the continued surge of Black-shouldered Kites into the Region. Six pairs are reported from s.e. Mississippi (JAT). Reports from s.w. Louisiana are too many to enumerate, but a new location came from the heavily birded St. John in the southeast during the Reserve CBC Dec. 31 (KS, MH). Finally, two **Black-shouldered Kites** found during the Texarkana CBC Dec. 17 (D & DeL), provided the 4th record for Arkansas. Good news con-

S.A.

In the "Scratch-Your-Head Department" comes this news: on Dec. 4 at Peveto Beach in Cameron, LA, MJM and CR saw an ad. **Harris' Hawk**. Two days later and 250 mi farther east, CD and DR saw and photographed an ad. **Harris' Hawk** near Pascagoula in Jackson, MS. Neither state has had a reliable record since Audubon described the species from a specimen supposedly obtained in either Louisiana or Mississippi between Bayou Sara and Nat'chez. Since the habitat in that area is unsuitable, the provenance of the specimen is forever in doubt. Either of the present records might be dismissable alone—this is a popular hawk with falconers. But the coincidence is striking, and might signify some unexplained movement. Certainly, there is no more likely place than coastal s.w. Louisiana in the eastern United States that a stray might be found. Unfortunately, there is no hard evidence that the species is anything but sedentary.



Harris' Hawk at the Pascagoula River Marsh, Mississippi, December 6, 1988. The question of this bird's origins stirred much debate. Photograph/Charles Dalmas and David Ruple.

cerning Bald Eagles as well—there were widespread reports from around the Region of both northern birds wintering inland at reservoirs and lakes, and of the recovery of our nesting S. Bald Eagles. More reports than usual were received from coastal Alabama and n.w. Florida, and we can only hope this represents potential range expansions of southern breeders. In Louisiana, an all-time high 41 nests were counted by personnel of the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (fide RM). Once again, the only report of a N. Goshawk was from Tennessee, in Shelby Jan. 9–20 (DV, MGW).

Two very late Swainson's Hawks were found on CBCs: at Crowley Dec. 16 (SWC) and at Reserve Dec. 31 (DBC, JK, PMc) Both were light-morph immatures. It was a good winter for rodent eaters, generally. Red-tailed Hawks were numerous. The all-time national high CBC count of 742 was achieved on the first-ever Crowley, LA, CBC in the rice country. Rough-legged Hawks staged a strong invasion of Tennessee with eight reported from 7 locations; genuinely rare sightings were during the New Orleans CBC Dec. 31 (PMc, JS) and at Gulf Islands Nat'l Seashore, FL, Jan. 28 (DB, JB). Only three Golden Eagles were reported Regionwide. Two were in Arkansas, during the Buffalo R. East CBC Dec. 16 (RMc) and at Holla Bend N.W.R. Dec. 27 (DRH, CMi). One was in extreme n.e. Louisiana, on the Texas N.W.R. CBC Jan. 3 (DBC, KeO, KO). A scatter of Merlins was reported north of the coast. Arkansas' 5th and 6th records of **Prairie Falcons** involved singles at Holla Bend N.W.R. Dec. 27 (CMi) and in Benton Jan. 13 (JN et al.).

A Com. Moorhen was a first for mid-winter in n.w. Louisiana Jan. 18 (CLy). Large numbers of Sandhill Cranes wintered in Pickett and Putnam, TN (m.ob.), and strays were noted in Memphis Dec. 19 (EJR) and Lawrence Dec. 29 through February (DKS, m.ob.). Up to three were at Wheeler N.W.R., AL, Jan. 19–22 (m.ob.). In Louisiana, a state high 235 were at their traditional location in Rapides near Cheneyville Feb. 1 (DP, CBu). Strays were sighted in St. James Jan. 1 (fide JVR) and 13 were in Calcasieu Feb. 12 (KVR), for respective first parish records. Joining the long list of this season's amazing reports, and deserving perhaps the place of honor, was a surprisingly well described large white crane seen Jan. 4, 14, & 15 near False River in Pointe Coupee, LA by JB, a non-birder, hunter, and outdoorsman. If accepted as a Whooping Crane by the L.O.S.B.R.C. it would constitute the state's first record since the capture of the last wild individual of the sedentary flock near White Lake on March 11, 1950.

SHOREBIRDS — Coastal observers in Louisiana and Florida reported good numbers of Snowy Plovers. Although not found on any coastal Louisiana CBCs, Wilson's Plovers had returned to Rutherford Beach in the southwest by Feb. 8 (DLD, SWC, CM) and to Fourchon Beach in the southeast by Feb. 26 (RDP, LO'M, DPM). These were very early returns, and could be construed to imply wintering somewhere along the Gulf Coast. Piping Plover numbers did not seem unusual on Louisiana beaches. Eight were found on the Perdido Bay, FL, CBC Dec. 28, and one was at Pensacola Beach Feb. 11–15 (CLK, m.ob.). In a season of fancy shorebirds, this one probably takes the prize: a **Mountain Plover** at Grenada Lake, MS, from Dec. 17 sporadically to Jan. 10 (MD, GK), for a first winter record for the Region and the first ever for that state. A Black-necked Stilt near Mobile, AL, Jan. 21 was the first ever seen in January and only the 2nd in winter for the state.

A Spotted Sandpiper was a rare winter visitor in Memphis Feb. 9–11 (JRW). Eight at the Greenville, AL, Sewage Lagoon furnished an inland winter high count for the state (CK). Two Long-billed Curlews along the Mobile Causeway Jan. 1 (GDJ, DGJ) repeated last winter's rare occurrence. A Pectoral Sandpiper at Ft. Walton Beach, FL, Dec. 16–23 (DW, RAD, JP) was the first there for December. One found during the Reserve, LA, CBC Dec. 31 (RDP, GC) provided s.e. Louisiana's 2nd winter sighting. Returning migrants were noted Feb. 26 in

Lafayette, LA (KVR, DSt) **Purple Sandpipers** staged a small invasion of the central Gulf Coast, as evidenced by the discovery of four individuals. Two were at Gulfport, MS, Dec. 3 through February (JAT, v.o.). These were the 4th and 5th for Mississippi. About 250 mi to the west, in Cameron, LA, the other two were discovered. The first, on the rocks at East Jetty, was found during the Sabine N.W.R. CBC Dec. 17 (DLD, JSt), and again Jan. 28 (SS). This 3rd state record was in the same place as the first record, found Apr. 4, 1974. On Dec. 18, the 4th state record was found (CKe, CS, PW, m.ob.) in the same rip-rap where the 2nd state record had been found Jan. 12, 1984.

An unprecedented flock of 91 Stilt Sandpipers was counted near Mobile Jan. 15 (RAD, SD, PT). As was the case last winter, extensive coverage of the rice fields of s.c. Louisiana revealed the presence of small numbers of Stilt Sandpipers. Twenty-three were found during the Crowley CBC Dec. 16, and other small groups were found both before and after, to as late as Feb. 13 (CB, DP) in Lafayette. Participants in the Crowley CBC counted about 22,000 shorebirds of 14 species, despite generally dry conditions, indicating that this is an important wintering area for the group. The most outstanding rarities were two **Ruffs**, for Louisiana's 8th (DWi, KVR, DPa, PM, MG), and 9th (AS, GS, JiH, BMM, DPM: also Dec. 18, v.o.) records. The last six all have been recorded within 10 mi of each other in flooded rice fields since Feb. 7, 1988. (Note that the Apr. 30 sighting was Louisiana's 5th record, not 4th record. See AB 42:447). Northwest Florida's first winter records of Short-billed Dowitchers were three in downtown Pensacola Dec. 15-Jan. 4 (RAD, PT), and 11 at the Ft. Walton Beach Sewage Ponds Dec. 16-23 (DW, RAD, PT). Louisiana's 4th winter **Wilson's Phalarope** was discovered Jan. 29 (JW *et al.*), in, of course, a Vermillion rice field.

JAEGERS TO TERNS — A jaeger, thought to be a Pomarine, was found on Lake Shelby during the Gulf Shores, AL, CBC Dec. 30. A Pomarine was found during the Sabine, LA, CBC Dec. 17 (DLD, JS), and a jaeger seen from shore Jan. 10 (RB) and Feb. 27 (DLD) may have been this bird. Two unidentified jaegers were east of there at Rutherford Beach Feb. 27 as well (DLD). A jaeger, thought to be a Parasitic, was seen in Mississippi Sound Feb. 3 (TS).

A Laughing Gull reported from Sardis L. Jan. 20 would furnish only the 2nd winter record for n. Mississippi (MD, JAT). Remarkably, 5 states reported a wintering Franklin's Gull. A first-winter bird was in Memphis, TN, Dec. 3-Feb. 12 (JRW). Another first-winter individual at New Orleans Dec. 4-Feb. 8 provided s.e. Louisiana's 2nd winter record (DPM, GC, RDP, m.ob.). Another in the same plumage was at Sardis L., MS, Dec. 7-Mar. 7 (MD *et al.*). Yet another bird in first-winter plumage spent at least a day in Okaloosa, FL, Dec. 2 (D & JB). One cannot help but note the similarity of arrival dates for all these individuals. The oddball was an adult at Ft Morgan, AL, Jan. 19 (TAI). Bonaparte's Gulls were reported in high numbers at inland lakes throughout the Region. The highest number reported was 1200 at Wilson Dam, AL, Feb. 19 (GDJ). Inland numbers of Ring-billed Gulls were also reported as high. Two **California Gulls** were found in Louisiana. The first, at a dump near New Orleans Feb. 19 (SWC *et al.*), provided s.e. Louisiana's first record. The 2nd was in Cameron Feb. 28 (SWC, DLD).

The once rare Lesser Black-backed Gull continued to be encountered with increasing frequency. An adult was on the Gulfport, MS, beach Dec. 1-Jan. 3, perhaps the same individual present for 6 winters (JAT). Two were in New Orleans: one on the lake Dec. 4-Feb. 11 (DPM, GC, RDP), and another at the dump, Feb. 11 (GS) & 19 (DLD *et al.*). Finally, a bird was found on the Venice CBC Dec. 28 (DBC, JMc, MA), for a first **Plaquemines, LA**, record. A Glaucous Gull was in Franklin, TN, on Woods Reservoir Jan. 7-26 (TJW, DD, m.ob.). Another was spotted briefly during the Guntersville, AL, CBC

Dec 26 (MSG, JG) Three Great Black-backed Gulls were seen Regionwide during the period. A first-year bird at Paris Landing S.P. Dec. 15 provided w. Tennessee's 2nd record (DJS). At least one was in Guntersville, AL, Jan. 12-Feb. 2 (AM *et al.*) in first-winter plumage. An immaculate breeding-plumaged adult in Lafourche, LA, Feb. 26, may have been a returning migrant, as none had been seen there all winter. Numerous Forster's Terns were reported inland Regionwide, as were numbers of Caspian Terns in the Baton Rouge area. The best tern of the winter was a Black Tern at Navarre Beach in Escambia, FL, Jan. 28 (JPa, CB, LG).

DOVES TO FLYCATCHERS — Two sightings of White-winged Dove were of a bird or birds far afield on the Gulf Shores CBC, Baldwin, AL, Dec. 31 (DW) and at Perdido Pass Feb. 26 (GDJ). Two Groove-billed Anis were also found on that CBC (CLK). The species is definitely down in Louisiana at former winter strongholds. Common Barn-Owls were north on the Fort Smith and Texarkana, AR, CBCs Dec. 17 (BB, D & DeL). Another was in Clarksville, TN, Jan. 12 (DWB). Two Long-eared Owls were found at Holla Bend N.W.R. Dec. 27 (DRH, CMi), and four were there Jan. 20 (H & MP). At another Arkansas location, in Craighead, one was picked up dead Dec. 6, and on Jan. 3-4 two were found alive at the same location (N & CL). One Long-eared was found within sight of the Gulf during the Sabine N.W.R. CBC Dec. 17 (SWC). Sixteen Short-eared Owls were reported from 4 Tennessee counties; four were reported from 3 locations in 2 Mississippi counties; and seven from 5 locations in 3 Louisiana parishes—an above-average year. A Lesser Nighthawk in lower Plaquemines, LA, Dec. 11 was a surprise (NN, GC, RDP, DPM). Another was found during the Sabine CBC Dec. 17 (JVR). A nighthawk, probably of this species, was at Oak Grove in Cameron, LA, Jan. 3 (CKe). A lost Chuck-will's-widow was in a downtown New Orleans parking garage Dec. 1 (CS). The usual few were found on s. Louisiana CBCs. More unexpected was one flushed from a thicket at Fort Morgan, AL, Jan. 21 (GF). Only one Whip-poor-will was reported, from near Venice, LA, Dec. 11 (NN, GC). At least two **Vaux's Swifts**, first found during the fall, remained in St. John, LA, until Dec. 24 (RJS).

It was another good hummingbird winter, and it was apparent from the number of reports that the fever is spreading to other parts of the Region from Louisiana. A Buff-bellied Hummingbird returned to a yard in Hancock, MS, Nov. 30-Feb. 28 (LyS, m.ob.), as did one to my yard in New Orleans for the entire period. Other Buff-bellieds were scattered in moderate numbers around s. Louisiana. A late Ruby-throated was in my yard Dec. 3-8, another was near the New Orleans lakefront Dec. 22 (JS), and a 3rd wintered in Reserve Nov. 26-Mar. 31 (RJS). Even more unusual was a Ruby-throated in Baton Rouge Jan. 5 (PMc, *L.S.U.M.N.S.). Wintering Ruby-throateds are much rarer than Black-chinned, Rufous, and perhaps even Buff-bellied in this Region. Black-chinned Hummingbirds reported from outside Louisiana were two imm. males in Biloxi, MS, Dec. 4-Feb. 28 (GM, BS, banded), and a young male in Pensacola, FL, Dec. 17 (JP, CLK), for a 6th area record. An imm. ♂ **Anna's Hummingbird** in Baton Rouge, LA, Dec. 12-Feb. 28 (PMc, m.ob.) was the prize hummingbird of the season. It was an average year for Rufous Hummingbirds in Louisiana. On the Mississippi coast nine were banded at feeders (BS), and a 10th, an ad. male, was seen (MT). Farther north, one was banded in Bolivar Feb. 11 (B & MS) and another was in Starkville Jan. 18 to March (TSC, B & MS, banded). One imm. male was in N. Little Rock, AR, Jan. 6 through February (RC, PF, banded) and two were in Little Rock Dec. 12-26 (PF, banded, BSh). A Rufous found in Nashville, TN, Dec. 15 succumbed on Dec. 17 (*fide* MLB). And, finally, two **Selasphorus** were in Destin, FL, from November to Dec. 20 when one was banded by the Sargents and proved to be Rufous. Unidentified **Selasphorus** were in Little Rock Dec. 17 (BSh) and in Kosciusko, MS, Nov. 7-Feb. 11 (*fide* JAT). However, just in case anyone is tempted to get complacent about

the genus, consider yet another Louisiana Allen's Hummingbird, an ad. male in Baton Rouge, present from September to Feb. 15 (PMc).

Twelve Vermilion Flycatchers were reported from across Louisiana. A female was in Hancock, MS, Dec. 28-Jan. 4 (JAT et al.). Three Ash-throated Flycatchers were reported from Louisiana: on the Crowley CBC Dec. 16 (DLD, SWC), on the Johnson's Bayou CBC Dec. 18 (JVR), and from Lafayette Jan. 14 (DP, CBu). There were eight Scissor-tailed Flycatchers reported from around Louisiana, an above-average season. More unusual was one in Biloxi, MS, Dec. 20-Feb. 3 (GM, JAT).

SWALLOWS TO WARBLERS — A Tree Swallow was late Dec. 2-3 in Putnam, TN (SJS, BHS). One in Jefferson, AL, was early Feb. 17 (AM). Four seen on the Shreveport, LA, CBC Dec. 26 (JMc), and two near there Dec. 31 (WS) were very far north. An impressive 500,000 Tree Swallows were estimated on the S. Hancock, MS, CBC Dec. 28. A Barn Swallow was also quite late in Putnam, TN, Dec. 2 (SJS, BHS). Very late birds were in Okaloosa, FL, Dec. 23 (JP); on the Houma, LA, CBC Jan. 3 (PA); and near Mobile, AL, Jan. 15 (PT, RAD). American Crows in an established Nashville, TN, roost were estimated at 30,000 Dec. 26 (CGD). A grand total of eight Red-breasted Nuthatches was reported Regionwide. It was not an invasion year. A **Rock Wren** was found in the rocks below Beaver Dam in Carroll, AR, Jan. 21 (F & JR), for one of the very few Regional records. Bewick's Wrens were reported from only 3 Mississippi counties (MD, G & SK), 2 Arkansas counties (B & PL), and 2 Louisiana parishes (RBH, PDi, CLY, HJ) House Wrens were north Dec. 3 in Washington, AR (MMI), and Jan. 25 in Montgomery, TN (AHH). A Marsh Wren in Benton, AR, Jan. 14-21 (MMI) was very unusual.

Joining the list of northerly lingering insectivores was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Faulkner, AR, Dec. 17 (TC, BH). Numerous observers in the southern half of the Region remarked on the scarcity of Am. Robins, but not to worry, there were plenty elsewhere. On Jan. 6, a flock in Davidson, TN, was estimated at 100,000 (DFV). A flock in Baxter, AR, grew from about 17,500 on Feb. 12 to 74,000 on Feb. 25 (PEH). Somewhat farther south, a flock in Iberville, LA, was conservatively estimated at 25,000 Feb. 6 (DLD, SWC). Water Pipits were also staying north in Washington Dec. 3 and Benton, AR, Feb. 19 (MMI). As has been the case for several years, they were scarce near the coast. Numbers of Cedar Waxwings in Louisiana and n.w. Florida were way down, but Alabama and Tennessee reported higher than normal numbers, perhaps indicating that they remained north with other fruit-eaters. Did they do so because it never got really cold or because food supplies were abundant?

A White-eyed Vireo at Noxubee N.W.R., MS, Jan. 22 was unusual so far north (TSc). Observers commented that Solitary Vireos were more common than usual this winter. At Eufaula N.W.R., AL, a state inland high of 12 was counted Jan. 19 (CK, GS).

A **Tennessee Warbler** found during the Baton Rouge, LA, CBC Dec. 18 (SWC) would be unusual enough on the coast but was unprecedented so far inland. A Nashville Warbler was reported without details from Cameron, LA, Jan. 16 & 30 (RB). The warbler of the season was a **Virginia's Warbler** found during the Sabine CBC Dec. 17 (SWC) for a Louisiana and Regional first (*L.S.U.M.N.S.). A Yellow Warbler was way north during the Pine Prairie, LA, CBC Dec. 18 (BO). A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** found during the Johnson Bayou, LA, CBC, Dec. 18 (KVR, JiH) was also unprecedented. One "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler was found in coastal Cameron, LA, during the Creole CBC Dec. 16 (BO). A very rare Black-throated Gray Warbler was found during the Pine Prairie, LA, CBC Dec. 18 (BV, JW). A surprising four Yellow-throated Warblers were found during the St. Tammany, LA, CBC Dec. 30. One was still present in Fountainebleau S.P. Feb. 19 (GC). A few more were reported from other s.e. Louisiana

CBCs. A Prairie Warbler was unexpected on the Hancock, MS, CBC Dec. 28 (TH). Two hundred Palm Warblers at Eufaula N.W.R. Jan. 19 (CK, GS) represented an Alabama, and perhaps a Regional, all-time high. An Am. Redstart in Gulf Breeze, FL, Feb. 15 was an excellent find (JB). Four Ovenbirds were reported from s. Louisiana. One found at Grand Isle Dec. 18 was still present to at least Jan. 22, and perhaps to Mar. 25 (m.ob.). One of the very few Regional winter records of **Hooded Warbler** was obtained during the Johnson Bayou, LA, CBC Dec. 18 (PMc, PS, *L.S.U.M.N.S.). It was a good year for Wilson's Warblers in s. Louisiana, where they are regular, but two were far north on the Tensas N.W.R. CBC Jan. 3 (PMc, SWC). Birds found east of the regular range were at Ft Morgan, AL, Jan. 21 (TAI) for a 4th area seasonal record, and at Ft. Pickens, FL, Dec. 28-Mar. 1 (DB, DW) for a 5th area winter record.

TANAGERS TO FINCHES — Five Summer Tanagers were reported from Louisiana for the winter, an above-average number. Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found: one on the New Orleans CBC Dec. 26 (DBC, JK) and another across the lake in Fountainebleau S.P., St. Tammany, Jan. 19 (CEG). More unusual was a Black-headed Grosbeak found during the Venice, LA, CBC Dec. 28 (AS). The usual assortment of scattered Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo and Painted buntings was reported from s.e. Louisiana, but an Indigo found during the Tensas CBC Jan. 3 was unexpected (DPa, DLD).

Rufous-crowned Sparrows were again present near their breeding grounds at Mt. Nebo in Yell, AR, an area from which they apparently do not withdraw in winter (*vide* BSh). (See AB 42:278). American Tree Sparrows made it no farther south than Benton, AR, Dec. 3 (MMI), and 3 Tennessee counties Lawrence Dec. 29 (CAS); Henry Feb. 18 (five) (DWB); and Lake Feb. 26 (33) (MLG). The only Clay-colored Sparrow was reported from Hancock, MS, Jan. 3 (JAT). A Henslow's Sparrow in Ashley, AR, was north Dec. 31 (BSh). Lincoln's Sparrows north and east of their regular winter range in s.w. Louisiana were found Dec. 3 and Feb. 4 in separate Washington, AR, locations, and Carroll, AR, Feb. 11 (MMI); in Webster, MS, Jan. 26 (TSc); and in Lawrence, TN, Dec. 29 (DJS, DKS). The only Harris' Sparrow reported outside of Arkansas or n. Louisiana, where expected, was one in Calcasieu, LA, on the Gum Cove Rd. Feb. 6 (SWC, DLD, CM). Lapland Longspurs were not in high numbers in the mild winter, but were found on several Louisiana CBCs. Unusual were three on the Yazoo N.W.R. Feb. 12 (TSc), and 48 in Montgomery, TN, Jan. 15 (DWB). Five Smith's Longspurs were found at the Shreveport Airport Dec. 26 (CLY, HJ), the only known location in Louisiana where they are remotely reliable. Up to 13 were very far east in Memphis Dec. 3-Feb. 28 (MD, JRW).

Meadowlarks in n.w. Louisiana were carefully scrutinized this season, and a number of Westerns were detected (CLY, HJ). Birds found farther south and east were: one singing bird heard during the Crowley, LA, CBC Dec. 16 (DLD), and two singing birds in Rapides, LA, Feb. 19 (MJM). One Yellow-headed Blackbird was found Feb. 5 at a feeder in Lafourche, LA (RBe). Thirteen Brewer's Blackbirds were found around Lawrence, TN, Dec. 29 through February (DJS). Two Bronzed Cowbirds were reported away from the immediate vicinity of New Orleans, in Thibodeaux, Lafourche, Jan. 17-Feb. 6 (RBe), and, more surprisingly, on the Baton Rouge CBC Dec. 19 (DLD, SWC). For the 3rd year in a row, uptown New Orleans hosted wintering Orchard Orioles. The first showed up at sugar feeders in my yard Nov. 24 and eventually was eaten by a cat Jan. 25 (remains to L.S.U.M.N.S.). I suspected, based upon its predictable habits, that this was the same bird that had spent the previous winter in my neighborhood as an immature. To my astonishment, a second, much warier ad male appeared Feb. 4-7. The usual "Baltimore" N. Oriole reports were received for s. Louisiana. The only "Bullock's" was a female, another apparent return, in the company of the Orchard and a ♂ "Baltimore" in my yard (Oct. 26-Jan. 22).

It was another very poor winter for Purple Finches Region-wide. House Finches, however, continued undeterred, with Arkansas receiving the brunt of the onslaught. In Tennessee, they were noted not just at feeders, but for the first time they were regularly encountered in the field (fide DfV). They also made it as far south as Natchitoches and Baton Rouge, LA. Two Red Crossbills were in Ashley, AR, Dec. 31 (BSH). A **Common Redpoll** was found during one of the season's only real cold snaps in Jefferson, AL, Feb. 7 (BS). After last winter's record invasion of Pine Siskins, observers across the Region stocked up on thistle seeds awaiting the inevitable echo invasion. The seeds will have to keep until next year, because Pine Siskins were conspicuously absent this winter.

ADDENDUM — Received too late to include in last year's report was the sighting of n.w. Florida's 2nd **Varied Thrush** in Panama City, Jan. 9-30, 1988 (WJB).

CORRIGENDA — The Black-chinned Hummingbird reported last winter from Escambia, FL (AB 42:277) should have been credited to JP. The **Bell's Vireo** (AB 42:278) should have been bold-faced. The **Arctic Terns** reported in AB 42:1302 should have been bold-faced. They were the first records for Louisiana and the Region.

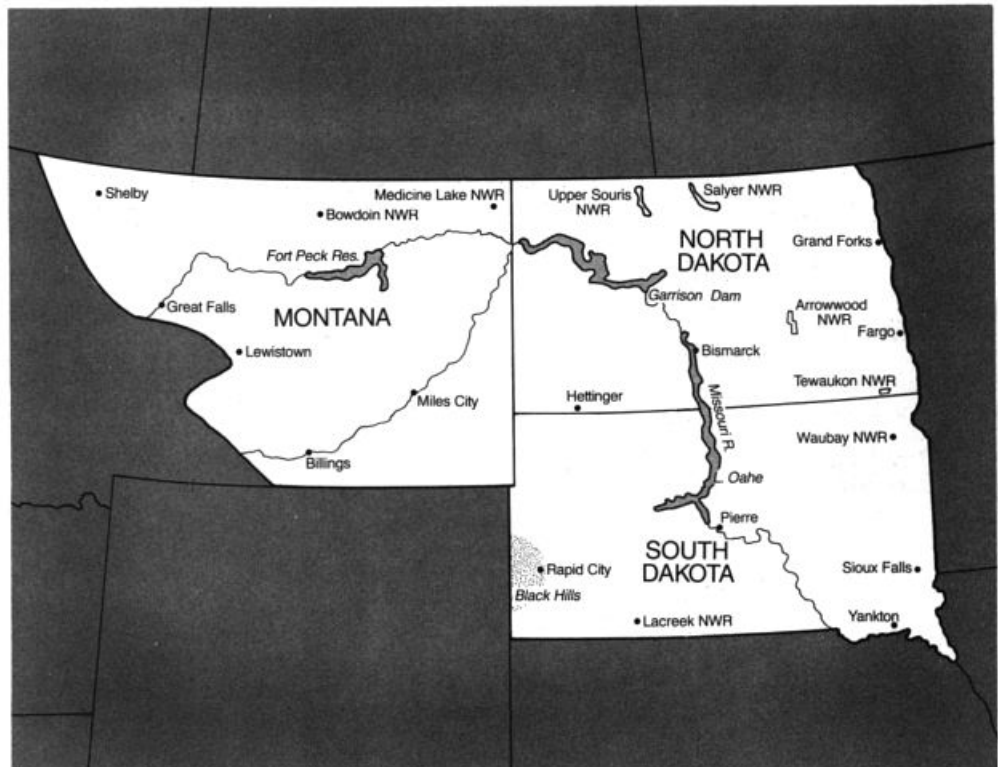
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We regret that the Prairie Province Region was not received by press time.

NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

David O. Lambeth



Record snowfalls for January fell in the Red River Valley of North Dakota and precipitation was 50% above average for January and February in Glasgow, Montana. Unfortunately, however, the snow pack on the Missouri Coteau had sublimed before spring began, and potholes there will likely remain dry. Northeastern South Dakota received enough precipitation to cause spring flooding, but the western half of the state continues to be drought-stricken. Temperatures were mild during the first half of the period, and miserably cold thereafter—thanks to the likes of the Siberian Express that spread over the continent in early February! The highs in Billings on February 1–3 were lower than the previous record lows for those days!! Overall, it was a particularly bleak winter for birders. Northern finches were scarce everywhere. The numbers of permanent residents were down at many feeding stations and some observers found a number of dead birds in their yards after the snow melted. The crop of berries, pine cones, and crabapples was unusually poor.

SPECIES ASSOCIATED WITH OPEN WATER, GREBS TO KINGFISHERS — Three major factors determine the Regional distribution of open water, and consequently these species: First, average temperatures increase not only north to south, but also east to west. Thus Fort Peck, MT, is more than 10 degrees warmer than Grand Forks, while Billings is nearly 25 degrees warmer. Second, the westerly areas experience “chinooks” during which temperatures rise rapidly and snow cover disappears. Third, the outflows of dams on the Missouri River and its tributaries provide open water for many miles downstream, and the accompanying reservoirs remain open all winter in South Dakota, until Jan. 1 in the case of Lake Sakakawea in North Dakota, and somewhat later yet at Fort Peck. Below I will describe how birdlife changes east to west, from Grand Forks to Shelby, MT, and then southeastward to the Yellowtail Dam near Billings.

Areas of open water in e. North Dakota are practically nonexistent. The state’s latest Great Blue Heron was in the tiny outflow below the dam at Icelandic State Park Jan. 2 (HD), and fifty Mallards wintered in Fargo, thanks to aerators which kept water open on a small lake. Two hundred miles farther west at Garrison Dam (GB, RM), 40 Canada Geese remained through at least Feb. 2, several thousand Mallards overwintered and fed in fields as much as 35 miles away, a Redhead was present through Dec. 18, and approximately 200 Com. Goldeneyes and 100 Com. Mergansers wintered below the dam. Three Am. Coots seen Dec. 3 on L. Sakakawea provided North Dakota’s third-latest date. The **Little Gull** there (see the Fall report) remained through Dec. 26 when the main reservoir froze over. Two Thayer’s Gulls, a Glaucous Gull, and 400 Herring Gulls all left between Dec. 18–26. A flock of Snow Geese heading south over Bismarck Dec. 23 (DR) set a new late date.

Still farther west at Ft. Peck, MT, a Double-crested Cormorant was last seen Jan. 30. Species overwintering there (CC) included 15 Canada Geese, several thousand Mallards, 500 Com. Goldeneyes, 100 Com. Mergansers, 30 Am. Coots, and a Com. Snipe. Two Glaucous Gulls and 100 Herring Gulls left just after the severe cold spell of Jan. 2.

Nearly 500 Mallards wintered in the Malta area, foraging in feedlots and loafing on open riffles of the Milk River and at warm springs (DP, JS). Below Tiber Dam on the Marias River, e. of Shelby, six Tundra Swans, 1000 Canada Geese, 1500 Mallards, and three Belted Kingfishers wintered (HM).

George Kelly submitted records for the area of the Yellowtail Dam on the Big Horn River, s.e. of Billings. Three Pied-billed Grebes stayed through December and four W. Grebes wintered. Wintering waterfowl included a Tundra Swan, 2000 Canada Geese, 5000 Mallards, a N. Pintail, 400 Gadwall, 400 Am. Wigeon, four Canvasbacks, six Redheads, 70 Ring-neckeds, 70 Lesser Scaup, three Oldsquaw, 1500 Com. Goldeneyes, 12 Barrow’s Goldeneyes, two Hooded Mergansers,

and 100 Com Mergansers Four Am Coots, “many” Killdeer, and several Belted Kingfishers also wintered

In South Dakota, a W. Grebe lingered at Oahe Dam through Dec. 9 (DT) and eight Snow Geese were in Lake, Jan. 6 (BH). Observations in Yankton (WH) included 18 wintering Green-winged Teal, an Am. Black Duck Feb. 11, a Greater Scaup Jan. 10, and a Red-breasted Merganser Dec. 20. A Franklin’s Gull was at Gavin’s Pt. Dam Dec. 13–24 (WH, BH). Single Thayer’s Gulls were present Dec. 9 at Oahe (DT) and Dec. 17 at Gavins Point Dam (ph. BJR). Single Glaucous Gulls were seen Dec. 1–20 in Yankton (WH), Dec. 9 at Oahe (DT), and Jan. 8 at Ft. Randall Dam (BH). A Black-legged Kittiwake was seen Dec. 1–24 at Gavins Pt. Dam in Yankton (WH). Documentation and photos (BJR) of a gull identified as an Iceland Gull at Gavins Pt. Dam are under review by the South Dakota records committee and will provide the first state record, if accepted (BH, R & SVS, BJR).

RAPTORS — A pair of Bald Eagles nested this past summer in Cavalier (*fide* RH), the first breeding record in 65 years for the e. half of North Dakota. An adult was on this site in late February (RH) and early March (SL). Bald Eagles peaked in late December at 28 adults and eight immatures at Ft. Peck, where they were apparently attracted by the large numbers of ciscoes coming through the turbines (CC). The number of wintering Sharp-shinned Hawks is surely up; each area editor received reports of their preying on birds at feeders. There were only 4 reports of N. Goshawk. Five Rough-legged Hawks were seen near Grenora, ND, Dec. 16 (T & TN). Ten Am Kestrels wintered in the Yellowtail Dam area. Several Merlins worked backyard feeders in Grand Forks, where the frequency of wintering has increased dramatically in the last ten years. Peregrines were seen in Montana at Hailstone N.W.R. Feb. 14 (LM), Antelope Feb. 20, and Westby Feb. 23 (T & TN). An immature white-morph **Gyrfalcon** was photographed 20 mi s. of Ft. Peck by Chuck Carlson Feb. 18, and another white-morph bird was observed at Bowdoin N.W.R. Jan. 30 (GN). A gray-morph Gyrfalcon probably wintered in the Garrison Dam area (GB, RM). Gyrfalcons were also seen in Bottineau, ND (DD), and in South Dakota at Shade Hill Res Dec. 25 (D & CG) and Prairie City Jan. 28 (GH). For the 7th winter, a Prairie Falcon (the same bird?) roosted in the 6th-floor window at Grand Forks. It disappeared 6 weeks ahead of “schedule” in early January after a major snowstorm (*fide* RL).

DOVES TO WARBLERS — Two in an initial flock of 10 Mourning Doves survived the winter at a feeder in Grand Forks (DS). An E. Screech-Owl seen for several days in a barn near Malta was later found dead nearby (DP). Two birds that appeared to be of the pale “arctic” form of the Great Horned Owl were in courtship in February below Tiber Dam (HM) and one of a nesting pair near Westby, MT, also appeared to be of this almost white form (T & TN). Snowy Owls were scarce in most areas. A Barred Owl was found dead Feb. 23 in Fargo (JO). The total number of reports for Short-eared Owls was 20; all 6 reports in w. North Dakota fell between Dec. 27–31. A N. Saw-whet Owl was present in Brown, SD, Dec. 17 (DGP), and one with an apparently full stomach was found frozen in Minot Feb. 11 (*fide* GB). In North Dakota, Red-bellied Woodpeckers were present in Fargo (RH), in Grand Forks until after a severe storm in early January (JM), near Minot from January through March (GB), and throughout the period in Hettinger (D & CG). The Minot record was the most northwesterly one for the state.

It was the best winter in years for Horned Larks in w. North Dakota. A Gray Jay appeared briefly Jan. 7 at a feeder in Grand Forks (DS). A few Com. Ravens wintered in the Yellowtail Dam area. A Black-capped Chickadee at Ft. Peck acquired an all-white tail in February after losing its tail feathers in January (CC). A Winter Wren was seen Jan. 4 in Lawrence, SD (DB). The numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Bohemian Waxwings were far below

those expected in average years. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was seen Jan. 21 in Fall River, SD (RP). A Brown Thrasher appeared at a feeder near Bismarck Jan. 13 (RR). The number of N. Shrikes was about normal. A report of a White-eyed Vireo in Sanborn, SD, Dec. 2 (BR) is under review by the records committee. A Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen Dec. 2 in Fall River, SD (RP).

SPARROWS TO FINCHES—American Tree Sparrows wintered in higher numbers than usual at some locales in w. North Dakota and Montana. A Rufous-sided Towhee in Brown, Jan. 28 (DGP) provided a rare winter record for n. South Dakota. A White-crowned Sparrow was at a feeder in Bismarck in early December and a White-throated Sparrow appeared there later in the month (BQ). A White-throated Sparrow in Lawrence (DB) provided the first winter record for w. South Dakota. Snow Buntings, Red-winged and Rusty blackbirds, and Com. Grackles were present in lower numbers than usual. Four W. Meadowlarks in the Yellowtail Dam area disappeared in February. The only finch to be widely distributed in good numbers was Purple Finch, with counts at feeders exceeding 20 at Fargo and Bismarck. House Finches

proved they can survive a North Dakota winter—three to five wintered at the same feeder in Fargo where they brought young last summer (MS). Pine Siskins were seen sporadically and only in numbers of one to five. In recent years, at least, they were numerous by the end of winter if not earlier. Pine Grosbeaks were absent, and there was only the occasional sighting of either crossbill species or of Evening Grosbeak. Redpolls were seen in low numbers, and in e. North Dakota at least, they moved in after the snow storms in early January.

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SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

Joseph A. Grzybowski



Thank goodness for the gulls, and a few other extralimitals, for most observers described the birding as dull otherwise. There was the usual mix of impressions about the general abundances of many species, but all agreed that this was a worse than poor year for northern cardinaline finches. Also in general agreement, commenting observers thought Red-headed Woodpecker and, pos-

sibly, Blue Jay numbers to be low—perhaps an effect of a poor acorn crop.

To the north, observers noted normal numbers of many species from raptors to some passerines. Boyd and the Padelfords commented that species such as Golden-crowned Kinglets, robins, and Cedar Waxwings were numerous in central Kansas and eastern Nebraska. Farther

south, the general impression was that these same species, and others such as creepers and sparrows, were present but scarce. Janzen commented that duck numbers were very low in Wichita, Kansas. And, while observers in Kansas and Nebraska thought raptors were present in about normal numbers, some birders in central and eastern Oklahoma felt that raptors made a poor showing.

The warm weather of December and January made observers anticipate an early spring—until February, when cold fronts dipped temperatures across the Region, and dumped snow south into Oklahoma. The drought effects from summer and the late winter cold and local snows may have taken a yet-unrealized toll on already dampened populations of many species. Quite possibly, others simply wintered farther north.

LOONS TO HERONS—Common Loons were still migrating through the Region in December. Thirty were noted Dec. 1 on Lake Tenkiller, Sequoyah (JCH et al.), and one lingered Jan. 22 in Linn, KS (MM). Undoubtedly, the find of the season was an imm. **Yellow-billed Loon** discovered Dec. 11 on Lake Yahola, Tulsa, by Pat Seibert and Jo Loyd. It was subsequently photographed and seen by many observers through Dec. 20, and may have been present until early January. This constitutes the first Oklahoma and first Regional record for this species. A W. Grebe was noted on Lake Hefner, Oklahoma, Dec. 1 (JGN, JW), and the latest was seen Dec. 10 on Sutherland Res., Lincoln, NE (RCR, DJR).

Two Am. White Pelicans lingered to the locally late date of Dec. 9 in Morrill, NE (RCR, DJR). Pelicans wintered in Sedgwick, KS (PJ), and Wagoner, OK (JM). Among other records, a high count of 15 was noted in Coffey, KS, Jan. 15–22 (LM, MM, BF). Most unusual was a **Brown Pelican** Dec. 17–23 photographed at the Kerr Res. Lock and Dam, e. Oklahoma (BD, JM et al.), for only the 3rd well-documented sighting in Oklahoma.

Also late were four Double-crested Cormorants Dec. 10 in Lincoln, NE (RCR, DJR). A Black-crowned Night-Heron in Payne, OK, Dec. 17 (JCo) was among a surprisingly few winter period reports.

WATERFOWL, RAPTORS—With the recent occurrences of Trumpeter Swans in the Region, all swans need to be scrutinized carefully. Five to six such Tundra Swans were noted Jan. 15–Feb. 28 in Washington, OK (ED, SM et al.). A probable Tundra Swan was noted Feb. 5 at Tulsa (JC). Ross' Geese were reported again from Sequoyah and Wagoner, OK. Additional records included two Dec. 3 at Desoto N.W.R., Washington, NE (AG), one in Coffey, KS, Dec. 11 (LM, MM), three Feb. 18 at Marais Des Cygnes W.M.A., Linn, KS (LM et al.), and one Feb. 15–16 in Sedgwick, KS (fide DK). Highly unusual was a **Brant** at Desoto N.W.R., NE, in early January (AG) that split its time between Regions, but was mostly on the low side of the Missouri River.

It seems as if fewer Am. Black Ducks are being noted in the Region. The 5 reports received this season were for Douglas, NE, Dec. 25 (BJR) & 31 (RC, AR), Coffey, KS, Jan. 15 (LM, MM, BF), Boone, NE, Jan. 20 (WM), and Adair, OK, Feb. 12 (MMI).

Late were two Cinnamon Teal Dec. 17 in Oklahoma (HH). Eight N. Shovelers lingered until Dec. 10 in Lincoln, NE (RCR, DJR), and three wintered in Sedgwick, KS (PJ). Canvasbacks and Ring-necked Ducks were noted increasing in Oklahoma by Jan. 21 (JGN, MO), probably beginning to move north.

From among the less common and rare diving ducks in the Region, Greater Scaup were more commonly reported in Oklahoma and Tulsa this winter than usual. Oldsquaws, also uncommon, were reported in small numbers in n.e. Oklahoma and Nebraska. A White-winged Scoter, always noteworthy in the Region, was seen Dec. 17 in Oklahoma (EW et al.). The very rare Barrow's Goldeneye was reported Jan. 1–8 at Desoto N.W.R., Washington, NE (TB et al.), and at Lake Ogallala, Keith, NE, Jan. 14 (RCR, DJR). Perhaps antithetical,

15,000–20,000 Common Mergansers were still well north in the Region Dec. 10 in Lincoln, NE (RCR, DJR).

Turkey Vultures arrived by at least Feb. 25 in the Wichita Mountains N.W.R., Comanche, OK (WA). High counts of Bald Eagles for the Region were of 45 Dec. 17 at a roost in Osage, OK, and 60 Jan. 15 in Coffey, KS (fide LM). Accipiter reports seemed slim, and this observer personally noted few this winter. A Golden Eagle, rare in e. Kansas, was observed Jan. 22 in Linn (MM, BF). Another was noted Dec. 17 near the Arkansas state line in Leflore, OK (BB). Only four Merlins were reported for the period.

PHEASANT TO TERNS—A Ring-necked Pheasant was observed out of range in the mesquite country near Eldorado, Jackson, OK (JM et al.). A Sandhill Crane was still present Dec. 5 in Canadian, OK (SM, MO), and one in Muskogee, OK, Dec. 6 (JM) was east of most occurrences in Oklahoma. Several flocks of cranes were already arriving on the Platte River in Nebraska Jan. 22, the earliest in more than 20 years (GH, fide BP, LP).

A light morph ad. Pomarine Jaeger at Winfield City Pond, Cowley, KS, Dec. 14 (SM) was both surprising and seasonally late for this rare species in the Region. Franklin's Gull, the abundant plains migrant, winters well south of U.S. borders—right?! Well, this winter, adults in breeding plumage were reported at a number of localities north to Gavin's Pt. Dam, Cedar, NE, Dec. 13–17 (BJR, MB), Lancaster, NE, Dec. 25 & 26 (BJR, BP, LP), and Lincoln, NE, Jan. 14 (RCR), with several dozen at John Redwood Res., Coffey, KS, Jan. 29 (PJ). Other December, January, and February reports of one to 11 birds were scattered through the Region. Bonaparte's Gulls were also more numerous into January this winter with 125 still in Coffey, KS, Jan. 15 (LM, MM, BF).

A well documented **Great Black-backed Gull**, believed in 3rd-winter plumage, was carefully studied Jan. 14 on Sutherland Res., Lincoln, NE (RCR). Perhaps this was the same bird as the one in 2nd-winter plumage observed there the previous winter. Thayer's Gulls in first-winter plumage still appear to be popular finds, although with less enthusiasm in some circles. A pale gull in first-winter plumage observed Dec. 4 (EB, MB) & 11 (TB) on the Gavin's Point Dam, Cedar, NE, and identified as an Iceland Gull, is pictured here. Gull enthusiasts can undoubtedly argue between Iceland and Thayer's. In print, I will not. And, a now-adult **Lesser Black-**



This pale-winged gull was photographed at Gavin's Point Dam, Nebraska, on December 11, 1988. Its wing pattern was reminiscent of Iceland Gull, but some other points (like the dark patch around the eye) suggested a pale Thayer's Gull. Photograph/B. J. Rose.



Royal Tern (with Ring-billed Gulls) near Lake Hefner, Oklahoma City, January 8, 1989. First Oklahoma record. Photograph/Diane Newell.

backed Gull was noted beginning Jan. 24 for the 6th year running at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma (JGN et al.). This bird usually appears about this time, and may spend part of the winter farther south.

Glaucous Gulls made a good showing with at least 12 individuals reported in all 3 states. A first-winter **Black-legged Kittiwake** was found and photographed at Gavin's Point Dam, Cedar, NE, Nov. 26–Dec. 4 (EB, MB), and another was observed at Lake Overholser, Oklahoma, Feb. 18–Mar. 14 (JGN, MO, SM et al.).

A **Royal Tern** in first-winter plumage was discovered Jan. 1 in Oklahoma (JGN et al.). It rested for periods in the morning and evening among Ring-billed Gulls on a parking lot at Lake Hefner, and was last observed Jan. 19. This constitutes the first record of this species for Oklahoma.

OWLS TO FINCHES—A Burrowing Owl made it back to its gutter home under a UPS entry driveway in Cleveland, OK, for the 2nd consecutive year (JAG, PB). The first Purple Martins appeared Feb. 24 in Comanche, OK (BBo).

A Rock Wren, rare in the eastern half of the Region, was noted among the talus at Tenkiller Dam, Sequoyah, OK, Dec. 18 (JN). A Winter Wren was found Dec. 11 in Keith, NE, for one of only a few records for n.w. Nebraska (RCR, DJR).

Mountain Bluebirds made a good showing in central Kansas with 200 at Lake Afton, Sedgwick (DK). They were observed east to Oklahoma, Dec. 17 (PM, NK, SM), and Seward, NE, Dec. 31 (JG). Farther north and west, a few were still present in Keith, NE, on Jan. 14 (RCR, DJR).

A **Varied Thrush** appeared Feb. 6 and remained through to March in Wichita, KS (fide DK). Very late was a Yellow-rumped Warbler in Boone, NE (WM).

Everyone said all normally occurring species of sparrows were present but scarce, including the individuals reporting 150 Song Sparrows in Osage, OK, Jan. 15 (BG, MD). Towhees were notably conspicuous by their absence (!) at Wichita, KS (DK), and Washington, OK (MD). White-crowned Sparrows seemed more abundant than usual in Wichita (PJ) and western Kansas (LM), while Harris' Sparrows were unusually scarce.

Among only a few winter records, Chipping Sparrows were present in McCurtain, OK, Jan. 9 & 20 and Feb. 14 (BH). Unusual in the w. Oklahoma panhandle, one to two Field Sparrows were observed near Kenton, Cimarron, Dec. 29 and Jan. 1 (JS). A Vesper Sparrow Feb. 12 in Reno, KS (DK), was

north of usual winter limits. A report of a Sharp-tailed Sparrow in Creek, OK, Dec. 13 (JH), if accepted by the Oklahoma Bird Records Committee, was most unusual in being either the latest fall record or the only wintering record for the species in Oklahoma. About 1600 Smith's Longspurs were observed in Tulsa Jan. 14 (TM et al.). A lone Snow Bunting made it south to Butler, KS, Jan. 12 (DK et al.).

Almost no Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, or Evening Grosbeaks, and only low numbers of Am. Goldfinches, were present Regionwide. No redpolls appeared in n.w. Nebraska, but it was a better than average year there for Rosy Finches, with 50 noted Dec. 23 in Sioux (RCR, DJR). Two Com. Redpolls were noted at separate localities in Sumner, KS (fide DK). And Red Crossbills were common and nesting by late February on the Ponderosa Pine escarpments in Dawes, NE (RCR, DJR). Finally, House Finches from east and west continued to trudge toward each other with two in Oklahoma Dec. 14–19 (NK et al.), six Dec. 22 in North Platte, NE (SF), one in Johnson, KS, Feb. 20 (MM), and up to nine in Tulsa Feb. 1 (E & KH).

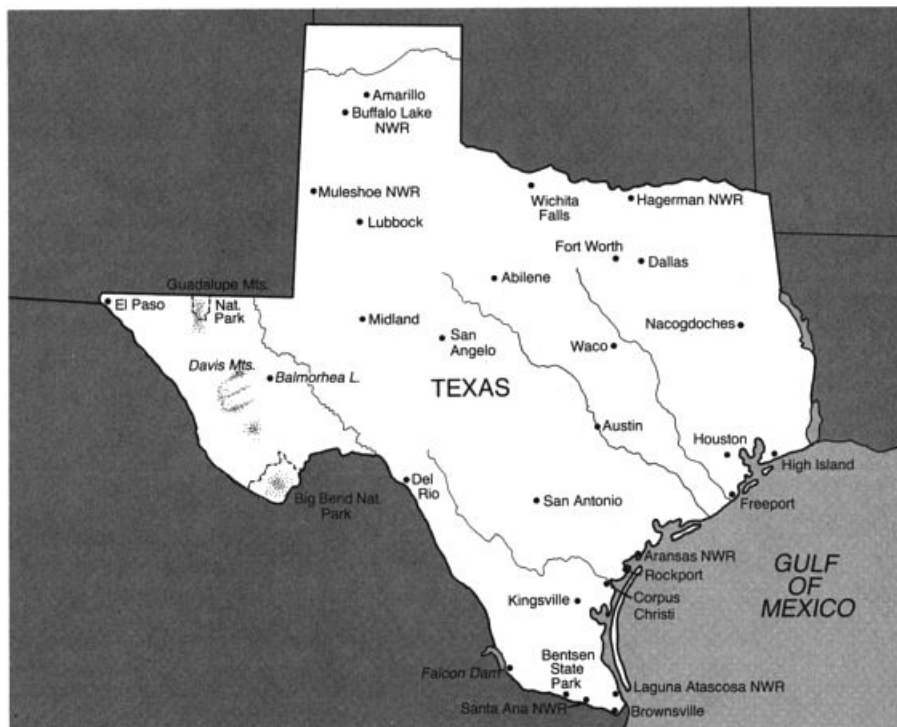
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TEXAS REGION

Greg W. Lasley and
Chuck Sexton



Although northern parts of the state were wetter than average for the winter, over most of Texas December continued the weather pattern of the previous year with above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall. As an example, Nacogdoches ended up 12 inches below their normal rainfall of about 50 inches, and Austin ended the year with 19 inches of rain, just over half of its average of 36 inches. Lake Sam Rayburn was at its lowest level ever. Salinities at coastal bays were correspondingly high. On the central coast, this caused a daily “commute” between saltwater and freshwater areas for many waterfowl, with the result that mortalities from power lines over or adjacent to wetland areas began taking a great toll. The concentration of waterfowl owing to drought conditions also contributed to a deadly avian epidemic on the upper coast (see details below). January was warm and, thankfully, wetter in many areas, but the moisture missed key locations such as the Concho Valley and interior south Texas. Wintering species that normally arrive with the first strong cold fronts of January, such as robins and waxwings, essentially never appeared, and cyclical invaders were virtually absent everywhere. As a result, not only were portions of west Texas and the western Edwards Plateau relatively quiet, as can often be the case, but even the woodlands of east Texas provided rather bland fare this winter.

The first few days of February brought a “Siberian Express” that brought temperature drops of 40 to 50 degrees F within a few hours at many locations as it blasted through the state. Temperatures in the Panhandle plunged to below zero and Houston went into a record cold spell (111 hours below freezing). Record cold temperatures were widespread over most of the state but El Paso was spared and the Lower Rio Grande Valley was not hard hit. The freeze nipped early blooming plants on the coast that had

been fooled by the earlier mild weather. Sleet and freezing rain inhibited birding activity and travel in many areas, thus direct observations of avian responses during the harshest weather were relatively few. The cold snap seemed not to bring arrivals of wintering birds but rather resulted in greatly increased activity at bird feeders everywhere. Hummingbirds attempting to winter along the coast, as might be expected, were hard hit. The cold temperatures also killed millions of fish in coastal bays such as St. Charles and Aransas Bay; thousands of pelicans and cormorants became gluttons for a brief time. It will be interesting to see what effect, if any, the fish kill will have on colonial waterbird productivity this year.

Observer activity was seemingly slight in the Panhandle but rarities in north-central Texas brought heightened activity there. The Lower Rio Grande Valley had its usual high level of visitation, but the lack of rarities this winter undoubtedly prevented an even higher level of interest in that area. Vast areas of east, central, and west Texas were again covered by a relatively small handful of keen, active observers. What would our coverage be without them?!

ABBREVIATIONS—G.M.N.P. = Guadalupe Mountains Nat'l Park; L.R.G.V. = Lower Rio Grande Valley; T.B.R.C. = Texas Bird Records Committee; U.T.C. = Upper Texas Coast. The following are shortened names for respective state or national parks, national wildlife refuges, etc.: Aransas, Attwater, Bentsen, Big Bend, Goose I., Hagerman, Hueco Tanks, Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, Santa Ana, and Welder.

LOONS TO IBISES—From one to five **Red-throated Loons** were well described and photographed Jan. 10–28 (HG) from L. Texoma. There are only about 8 currently accepted records of this species in Texas, but it is probably more regular than previously expected. Likewise, records of Arctic/Pacific Loons continue to mount: A bird found dead in El Paso Dec.

7 (ph. BZ, JDo) exhibited the complete dark ventral strap characteristic of Pacific and only rarely observed in Arctic, and another presumed Pacific (as opposed to Arctic) discovered Dec. 26 on Galveston's Offat's Bayou lingered through the period (SWi, TE et al., †to T.B.R.C.). Common Loons were largely absent from n.c. Texas (CH), and were rather scarce on the U.T.C. (TE), but concentrations of 35 at Lake O' the Pines Dec. 29 (KN) and up to 25 at L. Tawakoni were notable.

Least Grebes were strangely absent from the Kingsville area (N & PP) and were generally scarce at many L.R.G.V. locations as well (M & RF et al.). An exception was Santa Ana, where Least Grebes were quite common through the period owing to increased water levels on the refuge lakes from hurricane Gilbert's rains last fall. Least Grebe is a less-than-annual visitor to the U.T.C., so individuals at Brazos Bend S.P., Dec. 3 (DR, ph., JBa, m.ob.) and Brazoria N.W.R., Jan. 7 (ph., JBa) were notable. Horned Grebes were observed more frequently than normal both in the Panhandle and in the central and southern portions of the state. A **Red-necked Grebe** was observed in Lubbock Jan. 5 & 7 (ML, †to T.B.R.C.). Presumably this was a different bird than any of the five reported there in September, as none was reported in the interval. Wintering Eared Grebes peaked at about 850 individuals at L. Calaveras and L. Braunig near San Antonio (WS) during the period. Rare (for n.c. Texas) *Aechmophorus* grebes turned up singly at Mountain Creek L., Dallas, Dec. 4 (MH) and L. Weatherford Jan. 5-9 (SC, JSt, RP). The latter, an obvious Western Grebe, provided a first record for Parker. Elsewhere, notable W. Grebe records included one at Falfurrias Feb. 4 (AO), one at Aransas Feb. 11 (BJ), and seven on L. Buchanan Feb. 10 (E & KM). Two Clark's Grebes were present with up to 18 W. Grebes at L. Balmorhea throughout the winter.

A few N. Gannets were routinely reported by shore-bound observers during the period from the U.T.C. and c. coast. More notable was a dying N. Gannet found Feb. 17 on the beach at Boca Chica, within sight of Mexico (GL, VE, AF, *to Texas A & M), where the status of the species is still questionable. Another gannet was seen flying south into Mexican waters at the same time and date. American White Pelicans were mentioned by observers from virtually all over the state as being more common this winter. Unusual records included 150 at Cleburne Jan. 29 (CE), and an injured bird photographed at Bardwell Res. near Ennis Feb. 9 (GL). The latter furnished a first winter record for *Ellis*. Elsewhere, 510 pelicans wintered at L. Sam Rayburn (DW) and 500 at Braunig L. (WS), and smaller numbers were recorded at inland lakes in such unusual locations as *Hudspeth*, *Reeves*, *Pecos*, *Panola*, *Rains*, *Marion*, and elsewhere (m.ob.). Over 1500 Am. White Pelicans wintered at San Luis Pass, *Galveston/Brazoria* (TE). Several hundred Brown Pelicans were at Longreef I. in Aransas Bay Feb. 9 feeding on fish that were dying after the sudden cold snap (JG).

Double-crested Cormorants continued to winter in increased numbers at many locations from n.c. Texas to the coast (m.ob.). Olivaceous Cormorant, a rare wintering species in the Trans-Pecos area, was recorded in *Reeves* and *Hudspeth* during February (BZ, ML). A sprinkling of Great Egrets and Little Blue Herons lingered into the 2nd week of January in n.c. Texas, until cold weather presumably drove them farther south (CH). Two Little Blues and two Tricolored Herons wintered at San Antonio's Mitchell L. (WS). Unusual for numbers were 13 Black-crowned Night-Herons at Lubbock Feb. 11 (ML). A group of six White-faced Ibises wintered at Feather L. in El Paso (JS et al.); there are only 2 previous winter records for the Trans-Pecos area (BZ).

WATERFOWL — Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were generally scarce throughout s. Texas this winter, with just a few reported at isolated locations. Of interest, however, were 12 seen in Copano Bay with Redheads Dec. 29 (TSc). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks received mixed reviews from various

An avian cholera epidemic swept through the coastal prairies of parts of s. Texas this winter, resulting in a significant loss of birds. Cathy Foster of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service summarized the event: "Areas most affected included Attwater, the Eagle Lake prairie, Katy prairie, Garwood prairie, and the Brazoria prairie. A total of 7332 to 7500 birds succumbed to the disease. Primary amongst the suspected causes of the outbreak was the extreme drought conditions that have plagued southeast Texas. Of secondary importance is the reduction in number and size of wetlands that are currently available for migratory waterfowl. With the highly successful nesting season for geese in 1988, more birds were forced to roost in fewer and smaller sites. This type of overcrowding is highly conducive to the transmission of communicable diseases.

"It is felt that the cholera epidemic started as early as Nov. 30, with clean-up and disposal of affected birds continuing on until Jan. 10. In all, 7166 geese died, comprising 97.7% of the birds affected (Snow 75.8%, Greater White-fronted 18%, Canada 1.1%, and Ross' .1%). Ducks then made up 1.5%, with 108 individuals dying. Other waterbirds comprised .6%, with 45 deaths from Am. Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, White-faced Ibis, White Ibis, Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret, and Tricolored Heron. Other birds made up the remaining .2%; these were a single Great-tailed Grackle, a Red-tailed Hawk, and the first documented Crested Caracara death due to avian cholera."

parts of the state. The Palmers reported that there were virtually none seen in Kingsville this season. Likewise, several observers were unable to locate any in the L.R.G.V. during the period. Notable exceptions to these reports included a flock of 700 seen at Brownsville Jan. 21 (OC), and an impressive count of 1200 on Eagle L., Jan. 30 (BZ, RB). The species also continued to wander away from its typical range; they are now regular in *Walker*, where six were observed in Huntsville Dec. 17 (RMO).

Six Tundra Swans were found on a playa s. of Tahoka, Lynn, Dec. 26 (J & FE) and Jan. 19 (JSn). Elsewhere, Tundra Swans returned to a *Chambers* pond with four present Jan. 2 through the period. A single Tundra Swan appeared at *Brazoria* N.W.R. Dec. 3 (DMu, MM), providing an unusual record for that county. Palmer noted that huge numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese were in the Kingsville area in late December, but few before or after. A lone Greater White-fronted, rare in the Trans-Pecos, frequented L. Balmorhea throughout the period (ML). Ross' Geese were certainly more conspicuous than normal this past season. There have been some questions whether the species is actually more common in Texas than in previous years or whether observers are simply looking harder for them. They were reported regularly in Snow Goose flocks virtually statewide. At Falfurrias, O'Neil carefully described a rare blue-morph Ross' Dec. 2. There was a scattering of Muscovy Duck reports along the Rio Grande this season, none well documented. Observers are again reminded that the T.B.R.C. and these editors request complete details on any report of presumed wild Muscovies in Texas.

A pair of "Mexican" Ducks at Salineño Jan. 10 (JD) may not have been pure Mexican as the drake seemed to show a trace of Mallard coloration. A presumed hybrid Mallard x N. Pintail was carefully documented by Clark Dec. 18 on Mustang I A Blue-winged Teal at Nacogdoches Feb. 9 should be considered an early spring migrant; the species does not normally winter in inland e. Texas (DW). In contrast to last year, Cinnamon Teal were absent in Kingsville (N & PP), and at nearby Falfurrias, O'Neil reported that it was the first winter in many years that he has not seen them. In contrast, the species was locally abundant at the Sabal Palm Grove in Brownsville, and

at San Antonio, Bender saw more Cinnamon Teal than ever before. The 550 Canvasbacks on L. Sam Rayburn Feb. 27 (DF, CSh) made a large group for that area, as did 230 at Rockport Jan. 21 (CC). Redheads were in excellent numbers at many coastal and inland areas of far s. Texas (m.ob.). Greater Scaup are not typically common anywhere in Texas, but reports this season would tend to dispute that. Lone Greater Scaups at L. Tawakoni Dec. 4 (RK, GH, JN) and at North L. near Dallas Dec. 18–22 (RR, BG) furnished unusual records for n.c. Texas. In the Trans-Pecos, where the species is casual, a pair of Greater Scaup appeared in El Paso Dec. 9 (BZ, JD). Four Greaters were at L. Balmorhea Feb. 21 (ML) and another was at Ft. Hancock Res., Feb. 17–24 (BZ, JDo). Elsewhere, noteworthy Greater Scaup records included two at Lorenzo, Crosby, Dec. 20–Jan. 3 (ML), one at Lubbock Jan. 16 (WO), and several around Kingsville Jan. 7 and later (N & PP) for a new Kleberg record. The species was also reported from numerous other locations. A diver on L. Murvaul, Panola, Jan. 7–8, first thought to be a possible Tufted Duck, was later decided to be an *Aythya* hybrid (KN, DB).

An Oldsquaw in Corpus Christi Bay Jan. 30 (JG) was a good find, and one at Aransas Feb. 25 (TS, BJ) apparently provided a first refuge record. Although scoters were unusually scarce at most coastal locations (WG *et al.*) there were a few interesting records. Two Surf Scoters were on L. Murvaul, Panola, Jan. 2–11 (SLo, m.ob.), and two more were on L. Sam Rayburn Jan. 27 (DF, CSh). The species is extremely rare in e. Texas away from the coast. Elsewhere, a Black Scoter and a Surf Scoter at Cayo del Gruyo in Kleberg Feb. 23–28 (PP, AO, m.ob.) were also rare. Hooded Mergansers made news at several locations. A flock of 108 Hoodeds at San Jacinto S.P., Dec. 17 was a remarkable U.T.C. convergence (DMu, SP), and 11 wintering at Midland was the largest number ever seen there (FW). At Falfurrias O'Neil counted 37 Hooded Mergansers during January and February and there were four different Hoodeds in El Paso and Hudspeth during the period (BZ, JS). A pair of Hoodeds near Falcon Dam Jan. 10 (L & RN, JD) was also of interest. Over 190 Red-breasted Mergansers were counted Dec. 31 on L. Tawakoni (RK *et al.*), a high number for mid-winter in n.c. Texas (*fide* CH). A pair of Red-breasteds wintering at Ft. Hancock in the Trans-Pecos was unusual (BZ, JDo), as was a pair in Lubbock Dec. 4–Jan. 28 (L.E.A.S.). Large numbers of Ruddy Ducks often assemble at Aransas in late winter; Clark counted flocks of up to 900 there during January.

RAPTORS — Hook-billed Kites were less obvious in the L R G.V. this season, but could still be found with some searching. Only one Hook-billed was present at the Salineño/Falcon Dam area this winter as compared with the five or more that could be found there in recent seasons (L & RN, m.ob.). A Bald Eagle survey conducted by Texas Parks and Wildlife showed that 199 eagles wintered in Texas this season. This compares with 143 in 1988 and 78 in 1987. The most noteworthy eagle reports to us included one soaring over Ft. Hancock Feb. 17 (BZ, JDo), providing only the 2nd Hudspeth record, and three that were reported wintering in the Davis Mountains (PE). Among the many Bald Eagle reports was an interesting account of an eagle making a pass at a nutria near Granbury in January. The nutria was able to thwart the attack by standing up in the shallow water and confronting the eagle head-on (B & CCR)! A Northern Goshawk was seen at Big Bend Jan. 20 (FO, EI, †to T.B.R.C.). There are few accepted records of this Texas rarity despite many undocumented reports.

Single Harris' Hawks at Freeport Dec. 18 (ph. GL, CJ, m.ob.) and at Attwater Jan. 30 (BZ, RB) were a bit out of place. An ad Gray Hawk was at Salineño during most of December (L & RN), one was at Santa Ana Feb. 17 (CGo), and another delighted m.ob. at Anzalduas during January and February. An imm. Red-shouldered Hawk at Midland Feb. 10 through the period (FW, D & JMe) provided a first winter record for

that area. Stilwell reported an incredible sight near a poultry farm in Kleberg Dec. 29 when he observed 15 White-tailed Hawks, 20 Harris' Hawks, 25 Crested Caracaras, and over 70 vultures in sight at one time! Red-tailed Hawks were reported to be unusually abundant virtually statewide. An interesting "Fuertes" race Red-tailed Hawk with a totally black face was photographed in Kenedy Feb. 18 (JEC). Rare "Krider's" Red-taileds were described near Goose I., Dec. 5 (CC) and at Victoria Jan. 28 (D & RM). A Ferruginous Hawk in Nacogdoches Dec. 9–23 represented only the 2nd record for e. Texas (D & MaW, m.ob.). Elsewhere, Ferruginous Hawks were thought to be more plentiful than normal in many s. and c. Texas areas. A dark-morph Ferruginous was a rare find near Kingsville Feb. 12 (CC, PP).

Crested Caracaras feeding on geese killed by the cholera epidemic gathered in unprecedented concentrations. Over 100 caracaras were counted on the Attwater CBC alone (*fide* TE). Caracaras were in larger numbers than normal in s. Texas as well. A total of 36 was seen at one time near Kingsville Dec. 18, and another group of 23 was seen there Feb. 7 (*fide* PP). An unusual record was provided by a caracara near L. Benbrook Jan. 7, furnishing one of the few recent records from Tarrant (NC, B & MS, MPa *et al.*). Merlins seemed to winter in somewhat higher numbers statewide and staged a minor invasion in a few areas. Seven in El Paso and Hudspeth during December and January created much excitement (BZ, JD). Details on an Aplomado Falcon reported Feb. 6 near Post in Garza (VG) have been forwarded to the T.B.R.C. There has not been a fully accepted record of a naturally-occurring vagrant of the species in Texas since 1949, despite persistent reports. Peregrine Falcons were regularly reported from many coastal areas but one seen regularly at Bentsen during the period was unusual. Prairie Falcons made news when they wintered at Hagerman (KH, HG) and Attwater (*fide* CF, m.ob.) In Kingsville, Palmer reported 5 separate sightings of Prairie Falcons during the season, a notable record, and another Prairie Falcon at L. Benbrook Dec. 23 (*fide* MJ) may have been a bird seen there last fall.

CRANES TO SHOREBIRDS — An ad. ♀ Whooping Crane was shot and killed by a goose hunter on San Jose I. Jan. 3. Approximately 132 Whooping Cranes were present in the Aransas area in late winter.

A Black-bellied Plover at L. Sam Rayburn Jan. 27 (DF, CSh) provided the first mid-winter record of this maritime shorebird in e. Texas. A roosting flock of 172 Piping Plovers was discovered near dusk on a wind tidal flat near the mouth of the Rio Grande at Boca Chica Feb. 17 (VE, GL, AF, ph.). To our knowledge this is the largest concentration of the species ever reported in Texas. Elsewhere, eight Piping Plovers at Indian Point Park Dec. 24 (A & MC) and 35 counted along Mustang I., Jan. 31 (BZ, RB) were noteworthy. Mountain Plovers were conspicuous in several areas this winter; 60 were near Odum Dec. 17 (JG, BBa), 12 were at New Braunfels Jan. 23 (E & KM), and 56–70 were seen in late February by m.ob. near Sinton. A flock of 16 Mountain Plovers w. of Falfurrias Feb. 9 (AO) furnished the first Brooks record in at least 12 years.

Although Am. Oystercatchers are known to nest early, Grantham was surprised to find a nest with 2 eggs on Longreef I. in Aransas Bay Feb. 9. Low water levels in the Rio Grande provided excellent shorebird habitat in El Paso and Hudspeth. Consequently, several species (Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, Spotted Sandpiper) took advantage of the conditions and wintered in unprecedented numbers (BZ, m.ob.). Lesser Yellowlegs arrived at L. Sam Rayburn Feb. 17, the previous early spring arrival date for e. Texas was Feb. 27 (DF, CSh). Solitary Sandpiper winters in small numbers in many areas of s. Texas. Records this winter included birds in Freeport, Santa Ana, Brownsville, Austin, Gonzales, and Donna from December through February (m.ob.). Clark

counted 340 Marbled Godwits at Rockport Dec. 12, an impressive concentration. Pectoral Sandpiper records abounded this winter; up to six were in the Falfurrias area during January (AO), one was at McAllen Jan. 28 (KK), one arrived very early at L. Sam Rayburn Feb. 10 (DF, CSh), and another was at Welder Feb. 23 (CC). A Dunlin frequented Feather L. throughout January for only the 3rd El Paso winter record (JS et al.). Stilt Sandpipers are regular wintering birds in the L.R.G.V., but 500 at McAllen Jan. 28 was an exceptional flock (KK). Two hundred Long-billed Dowitchers were probing the edge of melting ice on a Midland pond Feb. 7, a large number for any time of year in that area (FW). Two Am. Woodcocks flushed Jan. 15 from bottomland at Mineral Wells S.P. (TR, CH) represented the westernmost sighting reported. Another stray woodcock was at Cleburne Feb. 19 (CE).

JAEGERS TO SKIMMERS — Two Pomarine Jaegers were discovered in Galveston Dec. 26 (TE), and an imm. Parasitic Jaeger chased Laughing Gulls at Port Aransas Feb. 7 (CC). There were several undocumented jaeger reports on the coast and inland during the period; the T.B.R.C. requests details on any Texas jaeger records. Unusual records were established with breeding-plumaged Franklin's Gulls at L. Mexia, Limestone, Dec. 17 (JMu), Ft. Worth Jan. 4 (CH, MP), and at San Antonio Jan. 8 (MH). Other out-of-season Franklin's included four at Mountain Creek L., Dec. 4 (MH), and one at Hagerman Jan. 3 (BG, PB).

North-central Texas nearly cornered the market on inland gull reports this season. During December and January no fewer than nine species were drawn to a single Dallas reservoir, Mountain Creek L. There were even a couple of reports of seven gull species there on one day alone! Among the gems there was an ad. **Little Gull** Dec. 6–17 (ph. MH, CH, KN, m.ob.). Another (or the same?) ad. Little Gull briefly visited White Rock L. in Dallas Dec. 9, 15 mi n.e. (†CP), and details of an imm. Little Gull at Mountain Creek L. Dec. 15 & 30 (MH et al.) have been submitted to the T.B.R.C. Remarkably, another (or the same?) ad. Little Gull was discovered Jan. 9 at L. Waco, McLennan (†JMu), where it delighted m.ob. through Mar. 2. Details of a Com. Black-headed Gull seen briefly at L. Waco Dec. 25 (JMu) have been submitted to the T.B.R.C. There is only one previous Texas record. Bonaparte's Gulls were in higher than normal numbers in most n.c. Texas areas (fide CH), but not commented on in other regions of the state. A first-winter **Mew Gull** was identified among several thousand Ring-billeds frequenting a Ft. Worth landfill Dec. 14 (CH) and was studied and photographed by m.ob. through Jan. 4. Another first-winter Mew Gull was identified at L. Balmorhea Feb. 20–21 (ph., †ML). If accepted these 2 records would represent only the 2nd and 3rd for Texas. A first-winter **California Gull** was sporadically reported from Mountain Creek L., Dec. 14 (MH) and again Dec. 26 and Jan. 21 (†KN). A gull believed to be this same individual was described at the landfill in e. Ft. Worth Dec. 16 (†CH, MP). A 2nd-winter California Gull was carefully described from the Brownsville dump Feb. 12 (BW). Details of a first-winter Thayer's Gull at L. Murvaul Jan. 2–8 and four first-winter Thayer's at Mountain Creek L., Jan. 21 (KN) have been forwarded to the T.B.R.C. If accepted, the L. Murvaul record would represent the first for n.e. Texas.

A first refuge record was provided by a 3rd-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull at Aransas Dec. 31–Feb. 9 (ph. BJ, m.ob.). Other Lesser Black-backed were reported at the Kennedy Causeway, Aransas, Jan. 1 & 2 (A & MC), and an adult was photographed at the Brownsville dump Jan. 11 (JD). "The" Port Aransas Lesser Black-backed remained through the period, and another returned to San Luis Pass Jan. 7 for a 2nd winter season (TE). A first-winter Glaucous Gull at Austin Dec. 8 (ph. GL) provided the first record for that area and one of very few inland records in Texas. A first-winter Glaucous at San Bernard N.W.R. Dec. 20 (MB) was possibly the same



Black-legged Kittiwake in first-winter plumage at Mountain Creek Lake, Dallas County, Texas, December 23, 1989. Photograph/Steve Metz.

one photographed at nearby Freeport Jan. 3 (MH). A large black-backed gull (sp.) was at Seadrift, Calhoun, Feb. 24 (D & RM). The bird was probably a Great Black-backed, but the submitted description does not clearly eliminate all other possibilities. Most cooperative was a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake that entertained many as it fished the warm water channel at Mountain Creek L., Dec. 6 (ph. MH) to Jan. 17 (ph. CH, SM, KN, m.ob.); at times it begged from the fishermen! Another imm. Black-legged Kittiwake was photographed at Aransas Pass Jan. 12–26 (E & NA). And finally, an excellent description and drawing were submitted of a juv. Sabine's Gull at Mountain Creek L., Dec. 10 (KN). This would represent the first December record for Texas if accepted by the T.B.R.C. Several Black Skimmers visited Bentsen Feb. 16 (L & RG); we have had several reports at this same location in the past several years.

PIGEONS TO WOODPECKERS — From four to six Red-billed Pigeons were around Salineño all season, and up to 37 were counted in the Zapata area in February (L & RN). Four Inca Doves in an Amarillo yard in late January were unexpected (JE). A pair of **Ruddy Ground-Doves** in Brownsville Jan. 7 was very well described (FO, EI, †to T.B.R.C.). Several reports of this species elsewhere this season were problematic. At least two White-tipped Doves remained in Falfurrias during the season.

The controversy over the origin of the L.R.G.V. Green Parakeets and Red-crowned Parrots raged on. Both the "naturally occurring" and "released/escapee" camps have valid points. Here, we will merely report the numbers: Green Parakeets were reported regularly in flocks of up to 70 individuals in McAllen throughout the period (SWe, m.ob.), with up to 30 seen in Brownsville (m.ob.). Nineteen were also counted in Laredo Feb. 14 (MH), nine were seen in Harlingen Dec. 28 (OC), and three were in Corpus Christi during mid-January (JG). Up to 100 Red-crowned Parrots were in Brownsville, 36 were in Harlingen (OC), and 20 or more were in McAllen

during the period (m.ob.). Elsewhere, a few Red-crowned Parrots were reported in Portland, Corpus Christi, and even New Braunfels. A presumed-escapee Red-masked Parakeet, first reported in the fall, remained in McAllen at least into late January (SWe, m.ob.). A few Red-lore Parrots, White-fronted Parrots, and various other exotics also were seen in Brownsville and McAllen.

Groove-billed Anis were virtually absent on the coast this winter, and only a few were noted at various L.R.G.V. locations. Unusual W. Screech-Owl records were provided by a bird at Hueco Tanks S.P. Dec. 31 (JS), for only a 3rd El Paso record, and another at Lubbock Jan. 15 (WO, GJ). An unsuccessful search was made for a Snowy Owl reported by a farmer near Kress, Swisher, Jan. 31 (JR, KS). The farmer's description of the bird and its behavior indicated it was probably a correct identification; the last of the 3 accepted Texas records was in 1955. Up to two Ferruginous Pygmy-Owls remained all season below Falcon Dam, where they were seen regularly (m.ob.). At least 2 pairs of Elf Owls



Long-eared Owl at Bentsen State Park, Texas, February 1, 1989. Photograph/Kevin T. Karlson.

wintered at Bentsen (m ob), and a dead Elf Owl was found at Santa Ana Jan. 31 (KK). A very rare record was provided by a **Spotted Owl** photographed as it roosted in a residential backyard of El Paso Jan. 2 (RL, fide JS). From the presence of pellets found beneath the roost site it appears the owl may have been there for over a month. A Long-eared Owl at Attwater Jan. 30 (BZ, RB) probably furnished a first refuge record. Elsewhere, Long-eared Owls were noteworthy in El Paso Dec. 17 (JS) and in Swisher Feb. 4 (JR, KS). Another interesting Long-eared owl record was provided by a bird at Bentsen Jan. 15–Feb. 22 (m.ob.). This bird was seen in the same spot as a bird that wintered in 1985–1986, and was suspected to be the same individual. Impressive numbers of Short-eared Owls were seen at several c. coast locations in December and January (E & NA, JG). Grantham reported notable concentrations seen on Matagorda I. during December. For 137 years the island has been a “cattle ranch grazed like a golf course,” but for the past 2 years there have been no cattle on the lower end and apparently the small rodent population has exploded. It was not uncommon to see six to eight Short-eareds hunting while observing from any one location. Details of a possible N. Saw-whet Owl at Dallas Dec. 7 (RS) have been submitted to the T.B.R.C.

As in the winter of 1982–1983, White-throated Swifts were observed in Palo Duro Canyon S.P.; two to three were seen there in early to mid-December (m.ob.), and farther down-canyon one was seen at Quitaque, Briscoe, Jan. 1 (KS, JR). A White-throated Swift in College Station Jan. 10 was exceptional (KA, RBe). The cold snap of early February forced hummingbirds wintering in Corpus Christi to seek alternate food supplies (JG); many flooded to area yards with feeders. Grantham, for example, had seven different Rufous, one Broad-tailed, and up to five Buff-bellied hummingbirds in his yard at one time. Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were largely absent this season from the L.R.G.V. and Kingsville, where only a few were seen (OC, PP et al.). Elsewhere, Black-chinned Hummingbirds made news at Lubbock Dec. 6 (AWF), Falfurrias Jan. 13–Feb. 18 (CC, AO, PP), and Kingsville Feb. 22 (PP). Anna's Hummingbirds were noted in many areas, including at least five that wintered in El Paso (BZ et al.), one at San Marcos Dec. 19–29 (DH), one at Victoria Dec. 29–Jan. 1 (D & RM), several at Kingsville from early December through February (MT, PP et al.), and one in Austin Feb. 5.

Two Ringed Kingfishers remained in Austin from the fall and were last reported Jan. 26. Ringed Kingfishers continued to wander to other locations as well; one was at Falfurrias Jan. 5 (AO) and another was at Laredo Feb. 15 (ph. MH). Bryan noted a marked decrease in woodpeckers in general and Golden-fronteds in particular at Ft. Clark Springs in Kinney as compared to last year. An out-of-place Red-headed Woodpecker remained in Kingsville through the season; it has been present there for over a year. In n.c. Texas, Red-headeds showed a marked increase over last year with record numbers tallied on several area CBCs. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and N. Flickers were conspicuously absent from most c. coast locations (JG), and both species were low in Austin, San Antonio, and elsewhere. A first Austin area record was established when a Red-naped Sapsucker was photographed there Dec. 25–26 (D & GLam). Most sapsuckers in Midland this winter were Red-naped, but the relative abundance of each remains largely unknown there, as well as in other areas of the state (FW, m.ob.).

FLYCATCHERS TO WRENS— A Least Flycatcher was identified at Santa Ana Feb. 18 (RH) and an Empidonax sp. was at Aransas Jan. 2 (BJ). A Dusky Flycatcher was described from s.e. Hudspeth Feb. 3 with detailed notes on plumage and vocalizations (JDo). Very few winter records for the state exist. A Black Phoebe remained at Falcon Dam Jan. 1–31 (TSC, m.ob.), and another was at Anzalduas Dam Jan. 10 (FO); the species is not regularly expected in the L.R.G.V. A Black

Phoebe at Midland Jan 15 through February provided a first winter record for that area (FW, JMe). An E. Phoebe wintered at El Paso, where the species is a casual migrant (BZ, JDo). Unusual records of Say's Phoebe included one at Anahuac Jan. 2-4 (JBe, FO) and another that wintered at Brownsville (M & RF). Couch's Kingbirds wintered in larger numbers than normal in the L.R.G.V.; they were actually fairly common at locations such as Santa Ana, Bentsen, Falcon Dam, and elsewhere. A silent Couch's/Tropical Kingbird was at Alice Feb. 26 (CC). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers made news at several locations: one appeared Jan. 1 in Houston (TE) for a rare inland U.T.C. winter record, and very early spring migrants were in Walker Feb. 21 (JF) and at Edgewood, Van Zandt, Feb. 25 (RK). Certainly one of the most exciting rarities of the season was an imm. **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** near Ricardo, Kleberg, Dec. 18-26 (TKW, RA, TA, ph. PP, GL). Like the 1984-1985 Texas Fork-tailed, the Ricardo bird was thought probably to be of the n. race *T. s. monachus* (fide J.V. Remsen). This occurrence will represent the 5th accepted Texas record. A ♀-plumaged Rose-throated Becard delighted visitors to Bentsen Dec. 26 through February (tm.ob., ph. JD).

Three Tree Swallows at Midland Feb. 18 (RMS, GG) provided a 4th area winter record (fide FW). Other swallow species, less expected in winter than Tree Swallow, continued to surprise Texas observers. Single Bank Swallows were seen at Mitchell L. Dec. 18 and Jan. 17 (MH, WS), and five were seen at Anzalduas Dam Jan. 13 (JD). A Cliff Swallow at Baffin Bay Dec. 3 surprised Palmer, but even more unusual were six seen Dec. 10 in Nueces (CC) and up to 16 seen at Welder several times during late December (GB, SBa, m.ob.). Wintering Cave Swallows were present again this winter with 180 at Mitchell L. Dec. 9, 265 there Dec. 18 (MH), 11-50 seen at Welder Jan. 8-17 (fide SBa), 15 in Kingsville Jan. 21 (N & PP), and up to 400 counted between McAllen and Alice Feb. 5 (BZ, RB). There were scattered reports of smaller numbers at various other locations in the L.R.G.V. and elsewhere. Barn Swallows were seen in ones and twos throughout the winter at many s. Texas locations, but one lingering in Dallas until Dec. 17 set a new late date for that area (fide CH).

An unusual record was provided by three Mexican Crows Jan. 12 at Chapeño, Starr (FO, EI), well away from their normal range. The species is typically only seen at or near the Brownsville dump. A confused Mountain Chickadee in residential El Paso Feb. 26 was the sole participant in this year's montane "invasion" (or lack thereof) in the Trans-Pecos (JD). Virtually the only Red-breasted Nuthatch reported in Texas this winter was a lone bird at a feeder in Sherman throughout the season (SL, fide KH). None was reported from the e. Texas pineywoods (DW). Thirty White-breasted Nuthatches at L. Tawakoni Dec. 31 made a record number for the area (RK). Elsewhere, several White-breasted Nuthatches wintered in Amarillo (T), KS), and five near Paris Jan. 21 were noteworthy (D & LB). Brown Creepers were very hard to find this winter, virtually absent in most areas. One at Banquete, Nueces, during January (MC, CC, m.ob.) furnished a rare coastal bend record. A "Brown-throated" House Wren was described at Big Bend Jan. 16 (FO, EI). This subspecies nests 40 mi. away in Mexico's Sierra del Carmen, but the form has never been documented from Texas.

DIPPER TO SHRIKES—An American Dipper photographed at G.M.N.P. Jan. 2 (OO) was thought to be the same bird seen there in October. The area of McKittrick Canyon where the bird was located was restricted from general visitation, and the only 2 visits there by park staff (Oct. 23 and Jan. 2) each yielded the dipper. The record will represent the 5th accepted for Texas. Golden-crowned Kinglets, after staging a major flight this past fall, remained common in e. and s. Texas all winter—all the more interesting, as Grantham noted, since so many other less-cold-tolerant species failed to show up.

In the Panhandle, Seyffert noted that both Eastern and Mountain bluebirds were fairly common in the canyonlands, but unexpected were seven W. Bluebirds in Palo Duro Canyon S.P. Jan. 22 (CH, TR). Farther south in the Trans-Pecos, Olsen reported an impressive invasion of all three bluebird species with 400 Mountains, 300 Westerns, and 90 Easterns wintering in G.M.N.P. In contrast, the El Paso area had a modest influx of Westerns, but none of the other two species (BZ). Farther east, the flock of 12 W. Bluebirds reported in the fall at Kickapoo, Kinney, remained in that area until Feb. 26 (KB), and up to 100 Mountain Bluebirds were in n. Kinney during the period. Thirty Mountain Bluebirds near Fredericksburg Jan. 21 were the easternmost reported (CS). Hermit Thrushes were reported in very low numbers virtually statewide. In contrast to the "invasion" last year, Clay-colored Robins were all but absent. The resident pair at Bentsen was present, but the only other individual reported was a single bird at Santa Ana Dec. 19 (TW, MHi). American Robins were almost non-existent all over s. Texas. In locations such as Aransas, Corpus Christi, Austin, and San Antonio, where robins typically winter in huge numbers, observers had to search hard to find even one. "Fewest robins I've ever seen" was a common expression among s. Texas birders.

A Gray Catbird Jan. 16 in Big Bend (FO, EI) was notable not only for the date, but the location as well. Sage Thrashers made a fairly strong easterly movement during the period. The species was originally noted in fall in increased numbers at Kickapoo, and it remained common there through mid-February (KB). Elsewhere, Graber noted four Sage Thrashers Dec. 2-4 in Nolan, where in 15 years of regular visits he had not seen the species. O'Neil observed four Sage Thrashers in Falfurrias during the period, one was in Frio Dec. 23 (E & KM), one was at San Antonio's Mitchell L. Jan. 2 (LGo), one was in Austin Jan. 6 (fide EK), one was in Salineño Feb. 2 & 10-11 (L & RN), and one was at Falcon Feb. 16 (CGo). In contrast, the species was considered in low numbers in the Midland area (FW). Single Curve-billed Thrashers Jan. 15 in Erath near Gordon (KMo) and Jan. 23 in Hood near Granbury (B & CCr) provided not only first records for their respective counties, but also only the 2nd and 3rd winter sightings for n.c. Texas (fide CH). Of the handful of Curve-billed Thrasher records in n.c. Texas, most have occurred this decade, suggesting a possible range expansion is taking place (CH).

Sprague's Pipits are rarely found wintering in n.c. Texas, so one found sharing fields with Smith's Longspurs at L. Tawakoni from early December through Jan. 29 was indeed noteworthy (RK et al.). Sprague's Pipits were unusually common around Nacogdoches in the early winter. David Wolf commented, "Could this be in response to the drought? Our pastures were shorter and drier than most years, creating better habitat. Or perhaps they were displaced from c. Texas where there was hardly any grass in the pastures." Except for a few isolated spots in n.c. Texas, Cedar Waxwings were virtually nonexistent statewide. As with Am. Robins, observers were still waiting at the end of the winter season for waxwings to arrive. A Phainopepla at Sonora Jan. 21 (FO, EI) provided one of the easternmost records ever for this state. Single N. Shrikes at G.M.N.P., Jan. 2 (ML) for a first park record and at Palo Duro Canyon, Randall, Jan. 22 (CH, TR) were the only ones reported.

VIREOS, WARBLERS—A Solitary Vireo at G.M.N.P. Dec. 24 furnished a notable winter record (RRe). A Tropical Parula in Corpus Christi, first discovered in November, wintered successfully and was still present Feb. 25 (JG, CC et al.) In general, Yellow-rumped Warblers did not really move into deep s. Texas until after the early February cold snap. Black-throated Gray and Black-throated Green warblers wintered in above-average numbers in the L.R.G.V., where both species were reported by many observers. Pine Warblers, presumably

dispersing from pineywoods to the east, are becoming fairly regular in n.c. Texas in winter (CH), but a Pine Warbler that wandered w. to Midland Jan. 25–Feb. 28 (RMS, m.ob.) provided only the 2nd record for that area (fide FW). A Prairie Warbler at Corpus Christi Dec. 8 (GBu) was an unexpected winter surprise and a Bay-breasted Warbler in Waller Jan. 14 (BBe) was extraordinary in both its inland location and its late date. Single Am. Redstarts in Calhoun Jan. 4 (E & NA), Palo Pinto Feb. 20, and Corpus Christi Feb. 25 (JG) were noteworthy. A MacGillivray's Warbler on Galveston I. Jan. 21 represented only the 2nd winter record for the species on the U.T.C. (TE).

TANAGERS TO FINCHES — A W. Tanager lingered in Brazoria until Jan. 17 (DWi). In contrast to the five present last winter, the only Crimson-collared Grosbeak report submitted was of one heard calling Dec. 17 at Santa Ana (MF); reports of the species elsewhere in the L.R.G.V. this winter were not documented. A ♂ Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Portland Jan. 16 (D & BBA, JG) was unexpected, and single Black-headed Grosbeaks at Woodville in January and February (CCW), Falfurrias Feb. 18–28 (AO), and Goose I. Feb. 20 (ph. CGo) were noteworthy. The lack of Blue Buntings again illustrated the difference between last winter and this; the only one reported was a female at Bentsen Dec. 20 (†TW, MH). Up to three Lazuli Buntings again visited the Swartz's feeder in Corpus Christi this winter (CC, m.ob.); we wonder why this particular feeder has attracted the species now for several years. One to two Lazuli Buntings at Bentsen Feb. 1–8 (KK, L & RG, MH, m.ob.) were out-of-place, and a ♂ Painted Bunting there during January and February was a colorful sight for visitors. Indigo Buntings sometimes winter in small numbers along the coast and in the L.R.G.V., but one in Boerne Dec. 31 (CB, SWie) was not expected. From one to eight White-collared Seedeaters were again around San Ygnacio during the period.

Wintering sparrows were described as "abundant" or "at an all time low" depending on where you were in Texas. In general, sparrows were plentiful in e. Texas, but sparse in central and parts of s. Texas. In the San Angelo area, Maxwell and Tarter estimated the sparrow population down by 80% from normal, and in Midland, Frances Williams summed up the situation by saying "the common species were still common, but the uncommon ones were absent or in extremely low numbers." On the U.T.C., Eubanks reported that the higher than normal sparrow counts there were mainly owing to three species—Vesper, Song, and Harris' (JM, TE). A Bachman's Sparrow in w. Harris Jan. 1–14 (KT, m.ob.) furnished the first U.T.C. record in over a decade. Chipping Sparrows were unusually abundant in n.c. Texas, especially during February, but unremarkable elsewhere (CH). An amazing concentration of 5000 Brewer's Sparrows was seen at Hueco Tanks Dec. 30 (ML).

The only Lark Buntings reported in n.c. Texas were six to eight near Granbury Feb. 27 (B & CCR), and "a few" remained in w. Harris Dec. 17 through the period (fide TE). The low numbers in those areas were likely because it seemed as if every Lark Bunting in the world was swarming the brushlands of south and west Texas this winter. Frances Williams described "rivers" of Lark Buntings flowing across roads from one field to the next in Midland, and flocks of 1000–6000 were commonly seen around Kingsville, Falfurrias, and Alice (N & PP, AO, m.ob.). The species was also common in the Trans-Pecos, where flocks of 800–1000 were commonplace (BZ), and a few Lark Buntings even showed up in Bentsen S.P. Feb. 1 (KK et al.).

Rarely found in winter in n.c. Texas, a Grasshopper Sparrow at L. Benbrook Jan. 30 was interesting (WC). Several Grasshopper Sparrows were also in the L. Tawakoni area Dec. 31 (fide RK), and another in El Paso Feb. 23 provided only the 3rd area record (BZ, JDo). Henslow's Sparrows went unre-

ported again this winter David Wolf noted that the species, formerly regular (albeit in small numbers) in Nacogdoches, has not been seen there in over a decade. Since the demise of the breeding population in Houston in the early 1980s, Henslow's Sparrows have not been reported with confidence from the U.T.C. either (TE).

Harris' Sparrows moved farther east than normal and were seen at Nacogdoches, Lake O' The Pines, and on the U.T.C. on several occasions (SLo, KN, TE, m.ob.), and a Harris' Sparrow in El Paso Jan. 1 (BZ, JDo) was well w. of its typical range. In their usual wintering range Harris' Sparrows were unusually abundant in Johnson (CE) and record numbers were tallied in McKinney (fide AV). At Waco and Austin the species was less common than normal (LiB, EK, m.ob.). In general, longspurs were less common than normal in n.c. Texas and were seldom mentioned by observers in other areas.

Hundreds of E. Meadowlarks are routinely reported by most observers on trips across the entire L.R.G.V., but Dunn reported that all meadowlarks he observed in the area were Westerns, except for three Easterns at Laguna Atascosa. He asks, "Does anyone really look at meadowlarks in the winter" to see what species we are actually dealing with. At Corpus Christi, Grantham reported that the only W. Meadowlark he observed there was a single bird Feb. 25, and in n.c. Texas, Haynie suspected that the many W. Meadowlarks reported in that area in February were mostly migrants since none, or at least very few, were detected earlier in the winter despite careful searching. Two Rusty Blackbirds at El Paso Dec. 6 (ph. BZ, JDo) provided a 3rd county record, and a group of 125 Com. Grackles at Laredo Feb. 14 and 75 at Del Rio Feb. 20 (ph. MH) were unexpected. A Hooded Oriole in San Ygnacio Jan. 10 (JD) and Feb. 20 (RH) provided an interesting winter record, and a "Baltimore" N. Oriole there Jan. 2 was out of place (TSc). Mild weather may have enticed a "Bullock's" N. Oriole to spend the winter at El Paso (ph. BZ, JDo). No other winter records for this species exist for the Trans-Pecos.



Common Redpoll at Glen Rose, Texas, February 11, 1989. Third state record. Photograph/Greg Lasley.

In a season nearly devoid of Pine Siskins and other winter finches, it was truly a marvel when a **Common Redpoll** appeared Jan. 7 at a backyard feeder near Glen Rose, Somervell (OB, JSt, CCR), remaining through Mar. 1 (ph., †CH, RP, CE, CS, GL, m.ob.). It was seen by nearly 180 observers and provided only the 3rd record for Texas, the first to be documented with photographs. Pine Siskins, as already mentioned, were few and far between statewide and were completely absent in most areas.

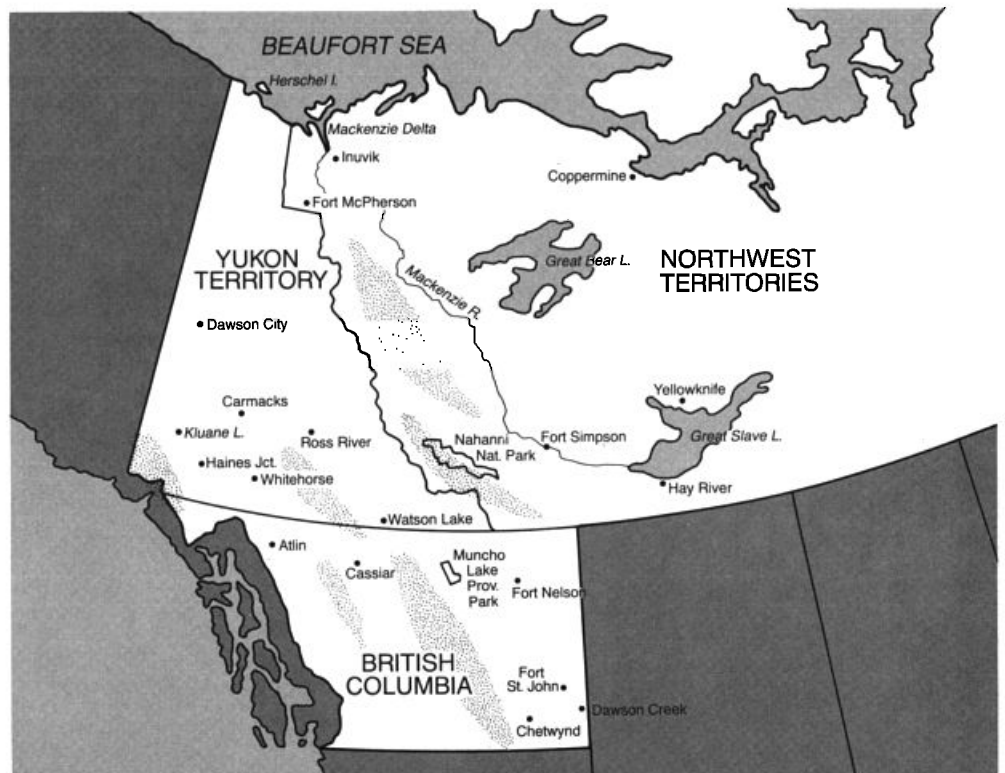
ADDENDUM — No doubt a victim of hurricane Gilbert, a banded Sooty Tern was recovered Sept. 18 from Cedar Creek L. near Dallas (KSt, RW). As Steigman related, the tern had been banded as an adult on the Dry Tortugas June 6, 1967, and was estimated by the bander, Dr. Bill Robertson, to be at least 26 years of age! The current longevity record for Sooty Tern is held by two birds recovered by Robertson 32 years after their banding.

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NORTH- WESTERN CANADA REGION

Chris Siddle



After a mild December, moderate to severe temperature plunges were experienced by most of the Region during a series of outbreaks of the "Siberian Express" in late January and February. Snow cover was about normal. Forty-four species were reported, about an average for the past decade, even though few observers submitted observations.

ABBREVIATIONS — F.S.J. = Fort St. John.

LOONS TO GROUSE — A loon (sp.) seen at Marsh L. (McClintock Bay) on Dec. 17 provided the first Yukon winter loon record (HG). As usual a few Mallards wintered along the Peace River s. of F.S.J. During a mild spell three were seen flying near the F.S.J. Airport on Dec. 29 (GP). Also as usual there were a couple of Common Goldeneye reports from open water spots. Three males were on the Yukon River near Lewes Dam, Whitehorse, Dec. 18 (DR, KR) and two to three males and two females were at the same locale on Dec. 19 (HG). Another first Yukon winter record was furnished by a ♀ **Bufflehead** seen on Marsh L. on Dec. 18 (HG, GJ, CM). A second female, or perhaps the same bird, was on the Yukon R. near Lewes Dam the next day (HG). Four Yukon records of wintering Common Mergansers were submitted, the latest being of a male and two females on the Yukon R. at Whitehorse on Jan. 8 (HG).

At least one adult Bald Eagle was seen between F.S.J. and Hudson Hope Dec. 4-17 (CS). The Dec. 4 adult was feeding at a pile of moose guts, as were two Golden Eagles and 30 ravens. An immature Northern Goshawk was seen n.w. of Dawson Creek on Dec. 31, and an adult was at Charlie L. on Feb. 5 (CS) Golden Eagles wintered along the south facing slopes of the Peace River. Two adults and an immature were at piles of moose entrails near the Halfway R. and Highway 29 on Dec. 4. An unaged bird was perched beside Highway 97 east of Chetwynd, BC, Feb. 24 (CS). A huge, gray, very swift-flying falcon (sp.) near North Pine, just n. of F.S.J., Jan. 8 was probably a gray morph Gyrfalcon, but distance prevented a positive identification (CS, DC).

Spruce Grouse were seen regularly near Whitehorse while Ruffed Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse were both uncommon near F.S.J. The record high count of 10 Ruffed Grouse on the F.S.J. Christmas Bird Count was due mainly to a covey of seven coming to one feeder at dusk on Dec. 18 (RAD).

OWLS TO RAVENS — The only Snowy Owl reported was one near North Pine, a few km. n. of F.S.J. Dec. 18 and Jan. 2 (CS) Northern Hawk-Owls were more frequent than they have been since the winter of 1982-1983, especially along the Upper Cache Road midway between F.S.J. and Hudson Hope, BC. Two or three hawk-owls were seen along the Upper Cache Rd. on Dec. 4; three were there on Dec. 11; four were there on Dec. 17. Another hawk-owl was seen near the Farrell Cr. bridge, Hwy 29, on Dec. 4 & 17, and another hawk-owl was seen along the Alaska Hwy at about Mile 35 Dec. 28-Jan. 1 (CS) The only Great Gray Owl was spotted near Cecil L. just e. of F.S.J. on Dec. 18 (JJ). A N. Saw-whet Owl, an uncommon winterer, was seen near Dawson Creek in early December (LS)

A Pileated Woodpecker appeared at a Charlie L. feeder on Dec. 4 (ML), for one of very few winter records for the Peace region. Gray Jays were as omnipresent as usual while Blue Jays, restricted to the Peace River country, seemed to decline a little in population. Only seven were tallied on the F.S.J. Christmas Bird Count. This is down from the 15 counted on the 1987 CBC. Common Ravens are common northern birds. Thirty feeding on a pile of moose offal near the Halfway R. between F.S.J. and Hudson Hope, BC, on Dec. 4 were expected (CS). How to explain only three ravens on the entire F.S.J. Christmas Count of Dec. 18? Perhaps the usual 60 or so ravens that normally cruise around the city had found a major source of food and had congregated out of the count circle.

NUTHATCHES TO FINCHES — The White-breasted Nuthatch continued its expansion northwestwards into northern British Columbia. One was recorded n.e. of Hudson Hope on Dec. 17 (CS, PK), and three came to a feeder near Charlie L. all winter (ML). A Brown Creeper at F.S.J. on Dec. 18 furnished a rare record (CS). American Dippers wintered along the Yukon R. near Whitehorse (DR, KR, HG) and one was along the Pine River west of Chetwynd Feb. 24 (CS).

Bohemian Waxwings were reported from both the Yukon and northern BC, the largest flock being of 434 at F.S.J. on Dec. 18 (CS). Northern Shrikes were not reported this winter from the Yukon but F.S.J. got two on its Christmas Bird Count Dec. 18 (CS). European Starlings occur each winter in F.S.J. The count of 51 was 20 higher than usual during this winter's CBC (CS). A Dark-eyed Junco, very rare in the Yukon in winter, stayed at a Whitehorse feeder from Dec. 3 to Jan. 14 (HG). Snow Buntings were scarcer than usual in the Peace River country. The only large flock encountered was one of 450 on Dec. 4 along the Upper Cache Rd. (CS). Three small flocks of Rosy Finches were seen on the eastern side of the Pine Pass west of Chetwynd in early December (LS). Pine Grosbeaks were commonly reported throughout the Region in small numbers, but White-winged Crossbills were very uncommon. Only two were seen during the entire reporting period at F.S.J. (CS). Redpolls of both species were also uncommon, more so than from any other winter reporting period for at least the past decade. Evening Grosbeak numbers were half what they normally are in the F.S.J. area.

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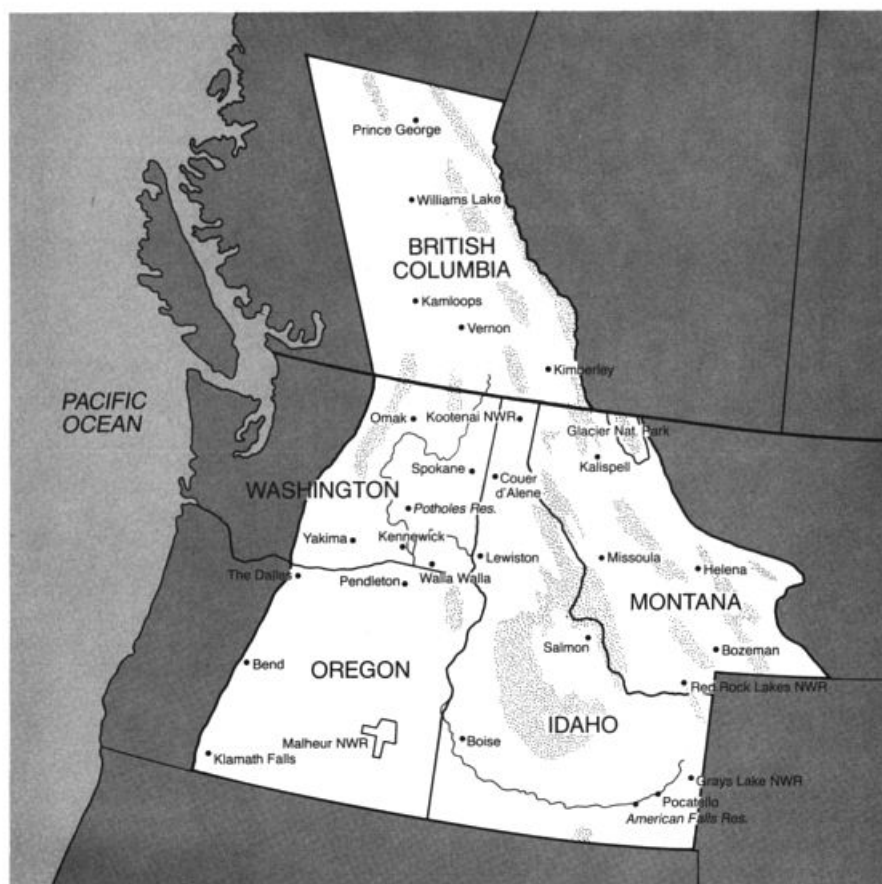
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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN— INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

Thomas H. Rogers



Winter in the Region continued the drought of summer and the mostly dry autumn. December was decidedly dry and somewhat cooler than normal. January continued the dry trend in most localities but was abnormally warm. February brought the big surprise, with the season's coldest temperatures, well below zero in many areas. Precipitation conditions varied from dry to wet.

Mild conditions during most of the season allowed many a semihardy species to linger and even to winter. The deep freeze of February closed much water habitat, drove out water birds or caused their shifting to open water, and delayed the arrival of some early spring migrants. Opinions differed as to the effects of the frigid weather, probably in part because of the great diversity existing in such a large Region. A good many observers did mention that bird numbers were down. Mild conditions may have enabled birds to remain dispersed but the severe February weather did not seem to reverse the situation. In general observers reported few or no northern and mountain visitors, which presumably found weather and food supply favorable nearer their breeding grounds.

ABBREVIATIONS — Malheur = Malheur Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Princeton, OR.

LOONS TO HERONS — Hayden L., ID, had a Pacific Loon Jan. 19–20 (PH). Vernon, BC, was treated to two Yellow-billed Loons Dec. 18 (fide RRH). Also there in late January were 200 Horned Grebes, a large number (PR). Notable were

a few Red-necked Grebes on the Wenatchee, WA, CBC; on L. Chelan, WA (KB, VB); at Walla Walla, WA (SM, TS); and on Coeur d'Alene L., ID (JP, DP).

Two W. Grebes were sighted on L. McDonald, Glacier N.P., MT, Jan. 20 (DT). Up to 22 Am. White Pelicans were noted wintering in the Pasco, WA, area and a few did so in the American Falls, ID, vicinity. A few at Malheur, OR, appeared unable to fly and all died, apparently owing to starvation. Double-crested Cormorants wintered in the Pasco area. Some 250 congregated below Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake R. e. of Pasco Feb. 5 (MD). One was sighted at Coeur d'Alene L. Dec. 10 (LT) and Jan. 7 (SHS et al.), and another was at Chelan Falls, WA, Feb. 19 (EH, S.A.S.). An Am. Bittern was seen on several days in January at Columbia N.W.R., Othello, WA (WRR). Rocky Coulee just n. of Moses Lake, WA, had a Great Egret for apparently the Columbia Basin's first winter record (S). Single Cattle Egrets were noted along Frenchman Hills Wasteway, Grant, WA (GS), and near George, WA (TL), in November. Over 100 wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons were sighted at Hagerman N.W.R., Hagerman, ID, Jan. 26 (B & CW, CHT), and more than 25 were at Moses L. Jan. 12 (RF). The species wintered in some numbers in the Pasco area (HH, REW). One was seen at Malheur Dec. 19 for one of the few winter records there (CDL).

WATERFOWL — Two Tundra Swans on the Wenatchee R. at Leavenworth, WA, were unusual (PC), as were a few near Thorp, WA (AS, m.ob.). The Kamloops–Okanagan Valley, BC, area reported 403 Tundra Swans Jan. 8 and the Kamloops–

S Thompson R area had 116 Trumpeter Swans that day for the largest wintering population yet recorded there (RRH) Highest count of Trumpeters for the winter at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., Lima, MT, was 397 (JB). Over 450 were counted at Harriman S.P. near Island Park, ID. After Henrys Fork of the Snake R. there froze over because of lack of water, 34 Trumpeters were found dead (JS). Three Trumpeters were believed to have wintered at L. Helena in Montana (BK, GH) and 30+ swans at Cold Springs N.W.R., Umatilla, OR, were believed to be of this species (SM, TS). Most of Malheur's Trumpeters left in December but 33 were counted Jan. 6.

Waterfowl at Columbia N.W.R. peaked the 2nd week of December, when about 100,000 were counted on Royal Lake. Canada Geese numbered 40,000 at Saddle Mountain N.W.R., w of Othello, Dec. 7. Freezing waters late in the winter drove most of the waterfowl from these refuges to the Columbia R. Noteworthy were single Greater White-fronted Geese at Kamloops Dec. 18 (RRH); at Vernon, BC, all winter (PR); at Richland, WA, Dec. 6; on McNary N.W.R., Burbank, WA, Feb. 5 & 9 (MD, MLD, REW); and at Enterprise, OR, Jan. 8 (PS). Singles of the species also appeared at Bend, OR (TC), and Wasco, OR (PM, LW). One identified as the large "Tule" race was at McNary N.W.R., Burbank, Feb. 5 (MD). A few N. Pintail wintered at Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, MT, and on the Kootenai R. at Bonners Ferry, ID. Single Eur. Wigeons appeared at Lewiston, ID, and in Oregon at Bend, Summer L., and Mosier. One male wintered at Walla Walla and another was at Cold Springs N.W.R., Hermiston, OR, Feb. 25.

A ♂ Harlequin Duck along the Clark Fork R. w. of Missoula, MT, most of the winter (PLW, m.ob.) and a female on the Bitterroot R. n. of Hamilton, MT (WRG, CFM), reportedly made the latilong's first winter sightings. Likewise a male on Shuswap L., Salmon Arm, BC, furnished that area's first winter record (RRH). Sightings of single Oldsquaws were made at Summer L. (MA, CM) and at Haystack Res., Madras, OR (TC, LR); on Hayden L., ID (WH, JP, DP, CV); and on the Columbia R. near Wenatchee, WA (MH). Haystack Res. had an imm. Surf Scoter Dec. 31 (TC, CM, LR). Two White-winged Scoters were sighted on the Bruneau, ID, CBC (AL), and the species was found on the Snake R. near Grandview, ID. One appeared at Summer Lake W.M.A., OR (MA), and one was found dead at Orondo, WA (GB, FW). A ♂ Red-breasted Merganser was at the Hood R. mouth, OR, in mid-January (DA, PM, LW), and another was at Lewiston, ID, Dec. 3 (JP, DP).

VULTURES TO GULLS — A remarkable winter record, if correct, was of seven Turkey Vultures soaring over Moses Coulee n. of Quincy, WA, Jan. 7 (RD, *fide* RF). An Osprey seen Feb. 9 at Lyons Ferry Fish Hatchery, Perry, WA, apparently wintered (MD, MLD). Bald Eagle numbers were especially good in c. Washington. A wing-tagged ♀ Bald Eagle wintered for at least the 3rd year on the Salmon R. n. of Challis, ID (LHa), and an imm. bird tagged at Glacier N.P. in 1988 was sighted at Kettle Falls, WA, Jan. 6 (RF). A Ferruginous Hawk near Touchet, WA, Feb. 5 was meticulously described (MD, MLD, SM). A sighting of two was near Waitsburg, WA, Dec. 15 (CSe, CSw). Malheur had an imm. Ferruginous Dec. 1 & 19 (SF) Totals for falcon sightings were: Am. Kestrel, many; Merlin, 12+; Peregrine, 4; Gyrfalcon, 12; and Prairie, 9+.

Wild Turkeys numbered 15 at Lost Prairie, 3 mi n.w. of Flora, OR, Jan. 8 (PS), and up to nine were seen in the Black Butte area n.w. of Sisters, OR (LR). A few were found in the Alpowa Cr. vicinity w. of Clarkston, WA (DES, RM).

Two Virginia Rails were located at a marsh at Mabton, WA, Mar. 2 (BR, GR) and one was at a marsh 4 mi w. of Joseph, OR, Dec. 18 (MK, LL, PS). Eight Sandhill Cranes were sighted along the Payette R. near Letha, ID, Dec. 5 (CS). Sandhills at Malheur were first seen Feb. 24, a late date, possibly because of cold, snowy conditions between there and California wintering areas. They were unreported elsewhere.

Two Greater Yellowlegs were noted at West Pond, Lewis-ton, Jan. 21 (JP, DP) and at Swallows Park, Clarkston, the next day (WH, CV). Four were found along the Umatilla R. in n. Oregon Jan. 2 (DHe, SM, ASk). A W. Sandpiper and a Least Sandpiper were found along the Snake R. near Eagle Rock, s.w. of American Falls, ID, Jan. 14 & 16 (CHT, DS). The Yakima R. delta, Richland, had 12 of the latter species along with seven Dunlin and one Long-billed Dowitcher Feb. 27 (REW). A Pectoral Sandpiper in the Burton-Nakusp area of s.e. British Columbia made the first winter record there (GD), and four Dunlin wintered at Kamloops, surviving -30°C weather (RRH).

Among wintering gulls at Richland a Mew Gull appeared Dec. 19 and Jan. 29 (REW). The chief concentrations of Herring Gulls were at Richland, and at Libby Dam upriver from Libby, MT, where 50+, along with a Ring-billed and a California Gull, fed on fish injured passing through turbines (MSw) A winter sighting of a California Gull at L. Billy Chinook w of Madras, OR, was noteworthy, as was one on Mirror Pond, Bend. Unusual were single Herring Gulls at Chief Joseph Dam, Bridgeport, WA, Feb. 19 (EH, S.A.S.), Moses L. Feb. 27 (BR, GR), and Summer Lake W.M.A. in late February (AA, MA, SS). Richland had 5 sightings of single Thayer's Gulls, very rare there (REW). An ad. W. Gull photographed at L. Ewana, Klamath Falls, OR, Jan. 14 was a real rarity (RE, SS). A Glaucous-winged sighted at Malheur Dec. 19 was the refuge's first, and likely the first for s.e. Oregon (AMH, MS). Kamloops had three Glaucous-winged Gulls, and Vernon had one in December (RRH). A first-winter Glaucous-winged and an adult and an imm. Glaucous Gull were sighted Jan. 7 at the Coeur d'Alene landfill (WH, CV, DP, JP, ES, SHS). A first-winter Glaucous at the Polson, MT, dump Jan. 15 was apparently a latilong first (DH, DT), and one, supposedly a latilong first, was reported without details in the Kalispell, MT, area (*fide* PLW). One ad. Glaucous appeared at the Yakima R. delta Jan. 29 (REW) and one was at Lower Monumental Dam s. of Kahlotus, WA, Jan. 28 (MD). A photographed and well-documented **Great Black-backed Gull** at Kamloops, BC, made the province's first inland record (RRH, SR, SRa, confirmed by Earl Godfrey).

OWLS TO FLYCATCHERS — Common Barn-Owls frequented a marsh unit at Columbia N.W.R. in January (WRR) and one flushed from a canal bank s. of Quincy, WA, Jan. 11 (JT). The birds appeared to be holding their own in the Walla Walla area. One barn-owl on Michaud Flats n. of Pocatello, ID, made Trost's first sighting in years. In January two N Hawk-Owls were found at Williams L., BC, and one was at Vernon Jan. 20 (*fide* RRH). A Burrowing Owl was sighted near Quincy Jan. 11 (JT), and one at Winchester, WA, Jan. 25 was using a burrow through snow into an unoccupied rabbit's den (DC). A Barred Owl visited Lewiston Dec. 20-21 (MSc, LS, C.B.) and another appeared in Pullman, WA, Jan. 13 (JP, DP) Single Great Gray Owls were reported on 3 occasions in February in the Kamloops area (TGo, RRH) and one was found dead under an electrical transformer s.w. of Bridgeport, WA, Jan. 29 (MHa). One near Helena Jan. 20 was the latilong's overdue first (BN). Northern Saw-whet Owls were commonly seen at Kootenai N.W.R. (LN). One Saw-whet was found at Sun Mt. Lodge near Winthrop, WA (GG, EH, S.A.S.); one stayed at Walla Walla, and another was sighted near Waitsburg, WA (MD); one appeared near a Boise, ID, feeder Dec. 10 (JSm), and one was sighted s.w. of Meridian, ID, Feb. 5 (ESp) Some others of the species did not fare so well, for one was found dead at Richland (REW), one was killed by a car in Ellensburg (GC), and two were found dead along the road in Cloverdale, OR (LR).

Two Anna's Hummingbirds at Kamloops Dec. 23-25 (RRH) and one in Hood River Jan. 1-14 (DA) furnished the species' only reports. Twelve Lewis' Woodpeckers were found in their

usual nesting areas among the oaks e of Goldendale, WA, Mar 2 (BR, GR) Vernon's Red-breasted Sapsucker Jan 8 made the Okanagan Valley's 5th record (CG). Another was in Madras Feb. 2 (DHi, HHi). A ♂ Williamson's Sapsucker at L. Chatcolet w. of St. Maries, ID, Dec. 27 may have furnished the state's first winter record (SHS, KS, CS, KS). White-headed Woodpeckers were present at Bald Butte, 20 mi w.n.w. of Burns, OR, Feb. 20 (CC). A Say's Phoebe was sighted near Letha, ID, Dec. 16 (CS), and another was along the Snake R. above Buffalo Rapids s. of Lewiston Jan. 14 (C.B.). Otherwise the species was noted arriving Feb. 24-28 from c. Oregon to the Okanagan of British Columbia.

JAYS TO WARBLERS — Pinyon Jays were seen on Sage Hen Summit, 9 mi w. of Burns, Dec. 17. The species apparently occurs regularly in this general area in winter (LH, *fide* CDL). Clark's Nutcrackers numbering 100+ were feeding from ponderosa pine cones near Conconully, WA, Dec. 17 (RF). An unusually high number of the species wintered around Helena (GH). A Chestnut-backed Chickadee, rare e. of the Cascades in Oregon, was sighted at Tumalo Mt. w. of Bend Feb. 11 (CM). The species wintered in some numbers at feeders at Walla Walla. Two late Rock Wrens were found at Frenchglen Dec. 18 (CDL), and one in Webber Canyon s. of Benton City, WA, Jan. 25 supposedly wintered (REW). At least three Canyon Wrens wintered in the vicinity of Perma, MT (DSt, DT *et al*). A few Bewick's Wrens were seen in the Asotin vicinity Dec. 3 (C.B.) and Jan. 28 (MK, OM), and at Moscow, ID, Dec. 17 (JP, DP). Malheur had its 2nd winter record of W. Bluebird when one appeared near Frenchglen Dec. 18 (CDL). Twenty of this species were sighted at Kendrick, ID, Jan. 11 (CCo). A few Mt. Bluebirds wintered in the Pocatello area. Most remarkable was a report of Swainson's Thrush at Sorrento, BC, Dec. 20 for the area's first winter sighting (RRH). Hermit Thrushes wintered in normal numbers in the Richland area, e.g., three were seen at the Yakima R. delta Jan. 6 (REW), and one appeared at Walla Walla Feb. 4 (SM). One feeding on ice-covered Benson Pond, Malheur, supplied the refuge's first winter record (AMH, CDL). One was at Washington State University's research station s. of Orondo, WA, Feb. 5 and another appeared near Pocatello Dec. 17 (JT, VT). Kamloops was visited by a N. Mockingbird Feb. 27 (EM).

By far the largest concentrations of Bohemian Waxwings were reported at Kamloops and Penticton, few or none appearing south of the border until February. About 1000 were counted from Orondo to L. Chelan, WA, Feb. 19-20. Elsewhere numbers were relatively sparse. None was reported from Idaho and only very few from w. Montana. Only a sparse scattering of Cedar Waxwings was reported except for 653 on the Blitzen Valley, OR, CBC and 100 at the Tricities Jan. 22 (AS). Spokane's CBC counted 37 N. Shrikes—the 33-year average is 10. The species was little mentioned elsewhere. Six Loggerhead Shrikes were present near Frenchglen Dec. 18 and a northbound migrant appeared at Malheur Field Station Feb. 24 (CDL). One was sighted near Cloverdale, OR, Jan. 15 (LR) and one appeared w. of Walla Walla Dec. 11 (HW). Four were counted Dec. 23 on the Bruneau, ID, CBC (AL).

An Orange-crowned Warbler at Sorrento, BC, Dec. 20 made the first interior winter record for the province (RRH). One was sighted at Richland Dec. 17, and two at Pasco Dec. 18 and Jan. 11 (REW). In Idaho one appeared in Boise Dec. 23 (AL) and one was along the Portneuf R. near Pocatello Dec. 18 (DTa). Lone Yellow-rumped Warblers put in appearances at Oliver, Vernon, and Kamloops (first winter records there) in January (DB, PR, RRH). Lewiston had one Dec. 10 and Clarkston found 10 on Dec. 20 (JP, DP). At Dixon, MT, two appeared Dec. 9 (DT), and one was sighted at Wenatchee Feb. 2 (JT).

SPARROWS TO BLACKBIRDS — Remarkable was a Chipping Sparrow at a Missoula feeder Dec. 18-Jan. 13, after which it disappeared, probably caught by a N. Pygmy-Owl

(DT) Moses L. had a Savannah Sparrow Feb 18 for the only report (EH, S A S) Single Fox Sparrows were reported from Oliver Dec. 28 (*fide* RRH) and at a Leavenworth feeder (*fide* RF), and three were on the Wenatchee CBC. A very late Lincoln's Sparrow was near the Portneuf R. Dec. 17 (JTi, VT). The only White-throated Sparrows reported were at the trout farm n. of Pocatello Dec. 17 (*fide* CHT) and at Ft. Boise W.M.A., Canyon, ID (AL). In addition to the usual wintering White-crowned Sparrows in e. Washington and Oregon, a few Golden-crowned Sparrows were noted: three at Richland Dec. 2 and one Jan. 17 (REW), and one at Parker, WA, Mar. 2 (BR, GR). A few Harris' Sparrows were noted in s. Idaho, e. Oregon and Washington, and s. interior British Columbia. One in Bend was the first reported there since 1977 (*fide* TC). Another was seen in Wasco, OR, Jan. 21 (PM, LW). Snow Buntings were almost completely absent. Single Lapland Longspurs were noted near Mansfield, WA, Jan. 26 (DW) and at Hart L., Hart Mt. National Antelope Ref., OR, Dec. 31 (MA, AA).

A few Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintered near Othello (WRR) and one was sighted at McNary N.W.R. Feb. 5 (MD, MLD). A few Yellow-headed were wintering with other blackbirds, including a few Brown-headed Cowbirds, near a cattle feedlot outside of Jerome, ID (CW, CHT). Two Rusty Blackbirds stayed in Kamloops Dec. 1-31 (SR, RRH), and one was at Oliver Dec. 28-Feb. 26 (DB). Walla Walla College farm was visited by one Dec. 30 (KK). A Brown-headed Cowbird was sighted in Vernon in mid-February (PR) and three appeared in the Oliver area Jan. 15 (DB). Several were found with other blackbirds near Warden, WA, Mar. 1 (BR, GR).

FINCHES — A well-described and photographed **Brambling** visited a Vernon, BC, feeder Feb. 2 & 12 (*fide* PR). Three ♂ Purple Finches were present in Lakeview Feb. 10-17 (MA, AA), and five females were carefully identified near Waterville, WA, Feb. 5 (AS). The species was reported near Hayden L., ID (KBo, RCB), and at Thompson L. near Harrison, ID (JWN). Cassin's Finch numbers were high in the Missoula area during the February sub-zero weather. They also showed high, even record-breaking, winter numbers in the Penticton-Vaseux, BC, area and at Spokane, Walla Walla, Cle Elum, and the Leavenworth-L. Wenatchee area, Washington. A few Purple Finches were believed to be mixed with them at Leavenworth. Red Crossbill sightings were sparse, the most impressive being of 300 in the s. Okanagan, BC, in late December. The Loup Loup summit area w. of Okanogan, WA, had "many" Feb. 11 (AS). A single Red Crossbill at Umatilla Dec. 28 was notable (TG). Common Redpoll sightings were very meager, although 370 were counted in the Shuswap L. area, BC. American Goldfinches, which winter at Helena only about one year in 10, frequented a feeder there Dec. 27-Feb. 27 (ASc). The largest concentrations of Evening Grosbeaks appeared at Prince George and Williams L., BC, in the Spokane area, and at Helena. At the latter locality, hundreds, along with many House Sparrows, were found dead in December, mostly in the vicinity of feeders. Investigation ruled out pesticide- or herbicide-treated seed, but *Salmonella* poisoning was indicated for the House Sparrows.

CORRIGENDA — In AB 42:464, line 26 of the 2nd column should read "A ♀ Red-breasted Merganser at the Yakima R. mouth . . .", not an Oldsquaw. The photo of a ♂ Hooded Oriole, AB 42:372, was taken by Bob Gabriel, not Tom Crabtree.

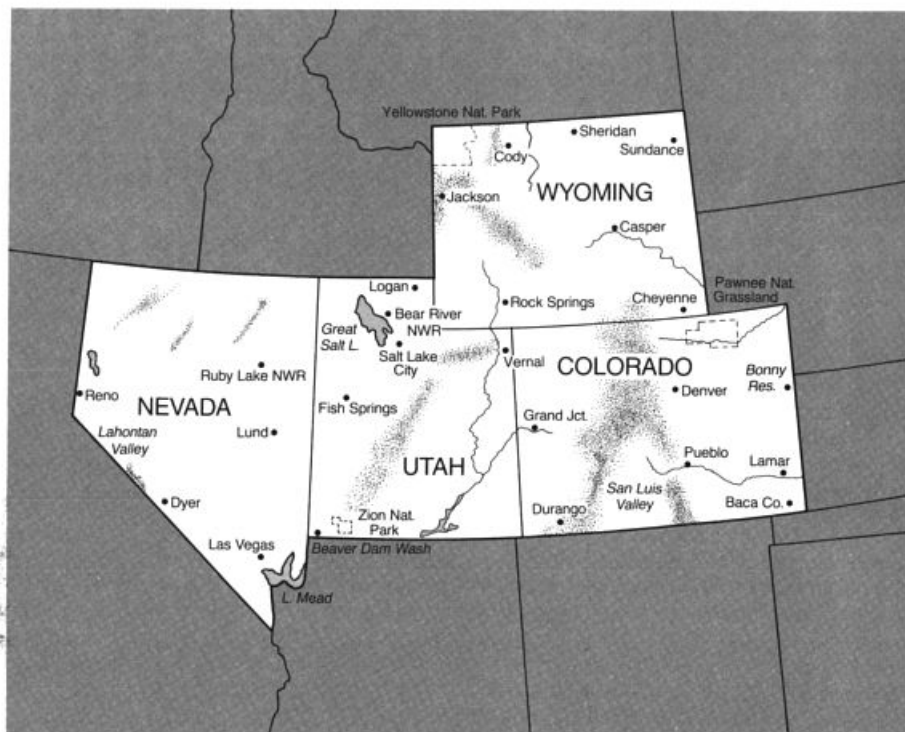
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MOUNTAIN WEST REGION

Hugh E. Kingery



A bland assortment of birds characterized the winter, despite mild weather early in the season. In late January a series of major snowstorms and very cold weather drove out wintering waterfowl but did not reciprocate with an influx of northern species. Zarki described Yellowstone National Park's cold and snow as the "first normal winter in ten years." Yellowstone reported the coldest temperature: -50 degrees in early February (JZ). Because of the extreme cold, the marshes at Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge froze 20 inches thick (SB). Snow cover in the mountains persisted deeper and longer than usual.

Engelmann Spruce in the Colorado high country provided a counterpoint to the cold: a bumper cone crop (also seen on Colorado Blue Spruce at lower elevation riparian zones) attracted legions of conifer seed feeders like crossbills, nuthatches, Pine Siskins, and Pine Grosbeaks. The Indian Peaks Winter Bird Count (conducted seasonally west of Boulder, Colorado) doubled its average count, to 14 birds/count hour. Conifer seed-eaters and chickadees accounted for most of the increase (DH, DB).

Many observers commented on a shortage of various incursive species. Redpolls and waxwings did not come south of northern Wyoming (but then, redpolls rarely do, and waxwings only come down every other year or so). Siskins went to the high country and solitaires may have

too, but we do not know where American Tree Sparrows, Harris' Sparrows, Cassin's Finches, and Evening Grosbeaks went.

ABBREVIATIONS — † = Written description on file with R.E.; †† = Written description on file with state or local records committee; # = no written description received; I.P.B.C. = Indian Peaks Winter Bird Count; L/L/B/L = Longmont/Lyons/Berthoud/Loveland area, CO, using Foothills Audubon Club records; S.S.G.S.L. = South Shore, Great Salt Lake, UT.

LOONS TO IBISES — Two Red-throated Loons stopped at L. Mead, NV, Feb. 10 (DF, J & MC). Common Loons stayed to Dec. 31 at Reno (EK) and Rawhide Power Plant reservoir near Windsor, CO (DL, WH), and four migrants had arrived at Pyramid L., NV, Feb. 17 (RM). Rawhide's Yellow-billed Loon (see Fall report) remained through Jan. 18 (DL, WH), and a Red-necked Grebe stayed there until Jan. 20 (DL, WH, m.ob.). Several locations had W. Grebes in December. In January, L/L/B/L tallied eight W. Grebes, and Casper and Glenrock, WY, had two and one respectively (M.A.S., RCR). At Quail Creek Res. near St. George, UT, about 20 spent the winter, along with 10 Clark's Grebes (SH). On Feb. 17 Pyramid L. had early migrants: 40 Clark's Grebes and only two West-erns (RM).

An Am. White Pelican appeared at Pueblo Jan. 1 (WL, JR). The first pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants to return to Stillwater both showed up Feb. 13—average return dates

are Apr 3 and Mar 24, respectively (TB) For the 2nd year, cormorants (two) wintered at a warm Boulder, CO, power plant pond (B.A.S.). At Las Vegas, six White-faced Ibises in December declined to two in February, but those two did winter (MC).

WATERFOWL — On Dec. 8, Stillwater counted 7910 ducks (4615 of them Com. Mergansers), 1975 Tundra Swans (12% imm.), and 2630 Canada Geese. At Monte Vista and Alamosa refuges, CO, 22,000 ducks wintered—20,000 of them Mallards. Avian cholera, found at Monte Vista Nov. 26 and still ongoing, took 2500 birds, fewer than the 6000 that had died the previous year (RS).

At Ruby Lake N.W.R., 15 Tundra and 19 Trumpeter swans wintered—about normal (SB). The September tri-state survey counted 600 Trumpeters in Wyoming (T.S.S.); an aerial survey Jan. 12 counted 261 (DLo). The Trumpeter that arrived at Pueblo Nov. 28 spent the winter (DS, m.ob.), and two other **Trumpeter Swans** stopped Dec. 3–4 at Walsenburg (#DS). A surprising Regional total of 26 Greater White-fronted Geese included January birds at 5 Colorado locations. By Feb. 26, 18,000 Snow Geese had arrived at 2 reservoirs in the Arkansas Valley near Ordway and Hasty, CO; other reservoirs probably had many more.

Cinnamon Teal arrived on schedule Feb. 26; “when they arrived at Grand Jct., CO, Dexter found them all in the Colorado R., because their usual ponds and lakes were still frozen solid” (DM). At S.S.G.S.L., 1000–2000 N. Shovelers wintered, and several hundred wintered along the S. Platte R. in Denver. Rare ducks included one Greater Scaup at Denver (“at the traditional location, found by the traditional observer, DN”—DM), plus one at Pyramid L. Feb. 17 and eight at Walker L., NV, Feb. 21 (both RM); an Oldsquaw at Rawhide Jan. 21–29 (DL, JP); and one imm. ♂ White-winged Scoter that wintered at Rawhide (WH, DL, RR), and one Jan. 15–20 at

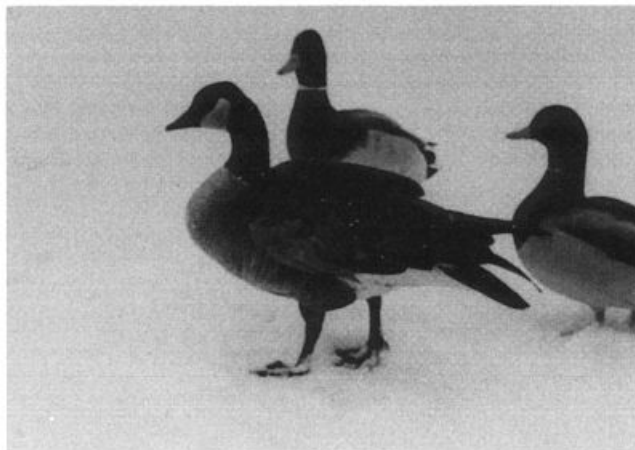
S.A.

This winter, Denverites discovered the two faces of Rocky Mountain Arsenal, which used to manufacture nerve gas and pesticides. Its 27 square miles includes large tracts of healthy prairie, ponds, marshes, and riparian habitat. It also has one of most severe land and water pollution problems in the country. With the chemical plant closed, the Army has started a huge Superfund-type cleanup of waste ponds and pesticide pollution.

The healthy part (mostly acquired for a buffer zone) supports thousands of prairie dogs, most unaffected by the poisons. This winter the prairie dogs supported at least 200 Ferruginous Hawks. Thirty Bald Eagles roosted through the winter in a stand of tall cottonwoods, birds that fed both on and off the Arsenal. The Barr L. Bald Eagles, identified by radio tags, fed on the Arsenal. Small numbers of nine other raptor species also wintered.

Besides birds, the Arsenal sports deer, coyote, badgers, etc. A tour there, as one enthusiast put it, produces a “wildlife show just like on TV.” Researchers attribute the large wildlife population to the prey base, the compact shape and large size, plus a minimum of human disturbance (PG, ML, D.A.S.).

Proposals for the Arsenal’s future (after the massive cleanup) abound. Denver officials want to build a huge new airport nearby, or alternatively to expand the present one. Both proposals would encroach on important wildlife sites: the new airport would send planes over, and a highway too close to, Barr Lake (an important migration, wintering, and nesting area for the Denver area), and an expanded old one would poke runways into the Arsenal. Denver’s Urban Wildlife Partnership (D.A.S. et al.) has proposed setting up the Arsenal as a wildlife park. Is it an impossible dream?



Apparent Lesser Canada Goose (*B. c. parvipes*) at Reno, Nevada, February 2, 1989. Photograph/Edward Kurtz.

S.S.G.S.L. (NR, T & PS). When Great Salt L. had higher water, observers found them frequently; now they may have gone to less accessible parts of the lake, or fewer may be there (ES).

RAPTORS — A January 8 trip w. of Salt Lake City found the desert virtually devoid of birdlife, possibly because of heavy snow cover (ES). In contrast, a Feb. 12 raptor trip in the Grant Jct. area counted 13 raptor species, including 23 Bald Eagles and 10 Red-tailed Hawks. An early Turkey Vulture arrived at Stillwater Ref. Feb. 22 (average Mar. 19–TB). Bald Eagle counts included 40–50 Jan. 31 in Nevada’s Lahontan Valley, 55 along the Colorado R. from the Utah/Colorado line downstream through Canyonlands N.P., 65 along the Weber River and East Canyon near Morgan, UT, 77 on Jan. 15 at Monte Vista N.W.R., 23 at Bonny Res., CO, Feb. 26, and a total of 45 counted all winter at L/L/B/L, cf. 24 last year. A pair of Bald Eagles set up a territory for the 3rd year at Barr L., near Denver. One bird seen periodically at Bonny Res. provided the only observation of a N. Goshawk on the plains.

In the Denver area, prairie dog populations attracted surprising numbers of Ferruginous Hawks. Wheeler found 25–30 wintering in one 5 square mi area near Thornton. Ten wintered at Cedar City, UT, twice the usual number (SH).

Rough-legged Hawk distributions varied: more common in the s. part of the Region (except Las Vegas), three times as many at Stillwater as last year, twice last year’s numbers at Boulder and L/L/B/L, more at Ruby Valley and Monte Vista, and the first records for Moab, UT. Normal numbers occurred in Wyoming, but many fewer in n.e. Colorado from Denver north and northeast (e.g., 11 on D.F.O. trips cf. 25–78 the last four winters). For the 2nd year Merlin reports increased (116+), especially in e. Colorado.

RAILS TO WOODPECKERS — A Virginia Rail at Yellowstone Dec. 7 (+BS) and a Sora at Denver Jan. 14–27 (CWK) provided rare winter records. By Feb. 15, 3000 Sandhill Cranes had arrived at Monte Vista N.W.R.; the cholera plague killed four, but it appeared that the few Whooping Cranes in the flock would survive (RS).

American Avocets arrived beginning Feb. 22 at Las Vegas, Stillwater (average date Mar. 29—TB), and Farmington Bay, UT (CK, ES). The dates seemed early but last year they arrived on similar dates. The Region reported 11 Greater Yellowlegs, at Las Vegas, Great Salt L., and Grand Junction. Las Vegas had a Dunlin Jan. 19 and Feb. 13, plus four wintering Long-billed Dowitchers (J & MC). A Wilson’s Phalarope startled observers on Jan. 8 at S.S.G.S.L. (ES, CK, ph.).

Denver had a 2nd Mew Gull to add to its fall bird (last seen Dec. 4), this one Jan. 4–10 at Wheat Ridge (D.F.O., JR et al.).

Reno reported only two Herring Gulls Feb 2 (+EK). The only Glaucous Gulls reported were four at S S G S L Jan 10-20 (ES, CK, TS), one at Hasty, CO, Feb. 26 (+MJ), and an immature described well but seen for only 15 seconds on Feb. 17 at Pyramid L., NV (RM); Nevada has very few records. Las Vegas reported two Black-legged Kittiwakes Jan. 2 (J & MC).

Levad conducted a census of riparian habitats around Grand Jct. for W. Screech-Owls and found an impressive 98 at 91 locations. Reports of N. Pygmy-Owls doubled, and included the first for n.e. Wyoming (Sheridan Dec. 28—BM), and two to three coming to feeders in Glenwood Springs, CO (not for seeds but for seed-eaters—VZ). Utahans found Great Gray Owls at 2 locations near Bear L., on the Idaho border; one Jan. 20-28 and the other Feb. 10-16 (+DJ, PS, BW). Two Anna's Hummingbirds wintered at Las Vegas for the 3rd winter, and one was seen at Davis Dam, NV, Jan. 21 and Feb. 18 (J & MC). In Colorado two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered (Boulder and Ft. Collins) and single-day observations came from Lyons Dec. 19 and Pueblo Feb. 18. A Red-breasted Sapsucker was at Reno Feb. 19 (EK).

KINGBIRDS TO WAXWINGS — A pair of Cassin's Kingbirds reportedly wintered at Las Vegas (J & MC). Common Ravens have expanded in the Sheridan area. From a range restricted to the Big Horn Mountains 1966-1979, small numbers have now begun to winter on the e. side of the Big Horns and on the nearby plains (HD). Near Evergreen, CO, Reiner banded an amazing 25 ravens over the winter—so many she wondered if the clever birds could pry off the bands with their beaks. The I.P.B.C. counted 586 Mt. Chickadees Jan. 20, an average of 7.5/hour, the highest in its 5-year history. Denver had at least two and probably four Carolina Wrens Dec. 24-Feb. 9; at least two survived the siege of below-zero weather (MP, MA, JM). These and the one found in September at Holly, last seen Dec. 17 (MJ), furnished the first Colorado records in 14 years.

At Grand Jct., 200 Mt. Bluebirds wintered, apparently sustained entirely by fruits of the introduced Russian Olive tree (CD). January birds occurred at Stillwater and at Pueblo, La Junta (38 on Jan. 4), Baca, and Boulder, CO. Most plains locations, from Sheridan to the Colorado Front Range, had few Townsend's Solitaires; apparently they stayed in the mountains, for Eagle, CO, had 4 times the usual number. Unusual winter Hermit Thrushes stopped at Ft. Collins Dec. 15 (AC), Pueblo Jan. 23 (+DS), and Las Vegas Feb. 1-5 (VM). Several sites had big numbers of robins—Cody and Sundance, WY, L/L/B/L, and Eagle; many of the Region's winter robins are evidently migrants from more northerly populations. Single Varied Thrushes spent most of the winter at Manitou Springs, CO (Dec. 17-Jan. 27—CL) and Cedar City, UT (Dec. 16-Jan. 21—SH). Observers found five N. Mockingbirds (two last year), at Salt Lake City, Pueblo, Two Buttes, CO, and n.e. Colorado—but only four Brown Thrashers (15 last year), wintering at Cheyenne and Indian Peaks plus one or two at Colorado City, CO. At Grant Jct., 200 Water Pipits wintered, and others were found in e. Colorado at Denver, Florence, and Weld. The Region had almost no Bohemian Waxwings, except in Yellowstone (1180 counted on 3 dates). Jackson and Sheridan, WY, had a few, 40 came to Cedar City, UT, for one day, and n. Colorado reported 3 observations of 11.

WARBLERS TO FINCHES — The Region reported four species of warblers. An Orange-crowned stayed in a Las Vegas yard Feb. 1-5 (VM). A handful of Yellow-rumped Warblers wintered in Cedar City (with the Varied Thrush), Grant Jct., and Pueblo, and one was seen in Boulder Jan. 2 & 21 (BK). A Pine Warbler patronized the same suet feeder in Denver where one had wintered 1986-1987, but for a shorter stay this year, Feb. 14-20 (PF). A Com. Yellowthroat remained at Brighton, CO, Jan. 8-31 (+L & MR).

A ♀ N. Cardinal stopped briefly in Colorado City Dec. 4 (DS). Logan had a December Green-tailed Towhee (KA). Rufous-sided Towhees wintered for the first time in Eagle and

Glenwood Spgs (JM, RP). Colorado had its 2nd winter record of Rufous-crowned Sparrow, with two in Baca Jan 1 (MJ), they may winter in this comparatively remote area, where they also breed. Wintering Am. Tree Sparrows dropped substantially along the Colorado Front Range at Denver (119 total counted on D.F.O. trips, cf. 141-257 the previous 4 winters), L/L/B/L (180, cf. 496 last year), and Evergreen. One White-throated and one Golden-crowned Sparrow wintered at Logan (AS, AS), and a Golden-crowned perhaps wintered at Denver Dec. 1-Jan. 15 (D.F.O.). Single Golden-crowned appeared at Reno Dec. 31, and in February at Carson City, NV, and Ft Morgan, CO. Seekers of the Bear L., UT, Great Gray Owls found a flock of 70 Snow Buntings Jan. 25-29. At the same latitude, 20-25 were at Rawlins, WY, Dec. 23 and Jan. 2 (RCR), and 25 at Jackson Res., CO, Jan. 14 (MM). Casper reported only a few.

Great-tailed Grackles continue to become better established: five wintered at Ruby Valley, NV (CB), 60 at Cedar City (SH), and 13 at Grand Junction. Common Grackles, only a few, wintered in Sheridan, Cheyenne, and La Junta. Other reports came from Jackson, WY, Denver, Loveland, and Ft Collins. At Pueblo five to 10 Brown-headed Cowbirds wintered, and January birds were seen at Grand Jct. and Salt Lake City. Rosy Finches flocked to their usual haunts, but also E to Sundance (thousands to Jan. 20—JA) and Van Tassel, WY, on the Nebraska line (50 Dec. 23—RCR), although no other e Wyoming or e. Colorado sites reported them.

Pine Grosbeaks decked the Engelmann Spruce cones: e.g., 25 on the I.P.B.C. Jan. 20, and 55 on Loveland Pass Feb. 18 (HK, UK). Cassin's Finches seemed down all over Utah (ES) and scarce in Colorado (53 counted at L/L/B/L, cf. 371 last year—F.A.C.), although one was far s.e. in Baca Jan. 1 (MJ). Widespread Red Crossbills began to show signs of nesting in the high country, apparently stimulated by the spruce cone crop. Reports came from Jackson, Grand Jct., Cameron Pass, CO, and Indian Peaks. With the Reds was a handful of White-wingeds: one on I.P.B.C. and 6 pairs seen at Cameron Pass, one gathering nesting material. Colorado has no nesting records for White-winged Crossbills. The Region reported fewer than 20 Com. Redpolls. Pine Siskins forsook the Colorado plains and Utah's Salt Lake basin. At Ogden, UT, Killpack banded only 147 siskins (1168 last winter). Normal numbers wintered in Wyoming and the Colorado mountains. Evening Grosbeaks were relatively scarce, with no more than half their usual numbers throughout the Region. At Big Horn, WY, the aggressive grosbeaks seemed cowed by super-aggressive, and super-numerous, Rosy Finches.

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SOUTHWEST REGION

Arizona

Gary Rosenberg and
David Stejskal



This winter was characterized weatherwise by above-normal temperatures and below-normal rainfall, and birdwise by the lack of any noticeable invasions of those typically invading species (*i.e.*, finches, corvids, bluebirds, gulls, etc.). It seems almost fitting that during a winter that on the surface seemed lacking in interesting bird movements, Arizona should experience an unprecedented invasion of Northern Shrikes, record at least three species previously unknown for winter in the state, and rack up such an impressive list of rarities as to rival just about any winter season. At second glance, we guess it was not such a dull season after all.

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. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO WATERFOWL — Pacific Loon, considered regular in winter along the L.C.R., was reported only once this season: one was at L. Havasu Jan. 30 through the end of the period (DS, SGa *et al.*). Horned Grebe is also a rare but regular winter visitor to the L.C.R., thus one at Katherine's Landing, L. Mohave, and two more on L. Havasu Jan. 30 were more or less expected (DS, SGa). More unusual was one at Firebird Lake s. of Phoenix Jan. 24 (DS). A Clark's Grebe on Patagonia L. Jan. 29 (TC) added to our growing knowledge of the distribution patterns of this species and Western Grebe. A high concentration of 2750+ *Aechmophorus* sp. grebes at Roosevelt Lake Feb. 21 was unusual away from the L.C.R. (GM).

Numbers of Am. White Pelicans wintering on Alamo L., n.w. of Phoenix, increased from 39 on Dec. 11 to nearly 80 there Feb. 17 (TG *et al.*). Another 40 were reported from P.R.D. through the end of January (m.ob.); this species is normally quite rare and irregular in winter away from the L.C.R. An imm. Brown Pelican at P.R.D. Dec. 11 (TG) may have been the same individual that was found there in Au-

gust; there are very few winter records in Arizona for this regular summer visitor. An imm. Double-crested Cormorant at Watson L. near Prescott through mid-January (CT) was thought to be a bird that had hatched locally. No fewer than 11 Olivaceous Cormorants were reported from the Region this winter including up to seven at Patagonia L. Jan. 15–Feb. 28 (BZ, C. Edwards *et al.*), one at Kino Springs Feb. 9–19 (DS, JC *et al.*), and another possible near Portal at Willow Tank Feb. 20–22 (ph. RM, W & SSp, A. Bolle). More significant was one at P.R.D. Jan. 12–13 (RBo, BZ) and two there Jan. 29 (SGa); there was only one previous *Maricopa* record. As during last winter, large numbers (20–40) of Great and Snowy egrets were present along the Salt R. in s.w. Phoenix throughout the period (m.ob.). More unusual were 20+ White-faced Ibises found along the Salt R. Jan. 1 (RBr, DS) and seven there Feb. 2 (DS); this species, although common during migration, is a very sparse winter visitor away from the L.C.R.

Reports of Tundra Swan are scarce in the state, thus one in Chino Valley Jan. 14 (B. Sullivan, *fide* BT), and two near Camp Verde Feb. 8 (V. Vaughn) were noteworthy. An imm. Greater White-fronted Goose at Canyon L., e. of Phoenix, Dec. 10–Jan. 15 (RBr *et al.*), and an adult at Palominas Ranch throughout the period (TC *et al.*) were both noteworthy in that this species appears regular only in concentrations of wintering geese on the L.C.R. Also unusual away from the L.C.R. were two reports of Ross' Goose, one at Picacho Res. Dec. 10 (J. Higgins) and another at Gila Farms Pond, s. of Phoenix, Jan. 1–4 (SGa). Forty-two Wood Ducks along Oak Creek near Cornville Jan. 16 (CL) made an incredibly high concentration of a species that is normally found in Arizona in ones or twos; similarly high concentrations have been reported from the Verde River just to the south of Oak Creek (JC). Greater Scaup were more widely reported from around the state than normal with a male at P.R.D. Jan. 9 (LH), two at Firebird L., s. of Phoenix, Jan. 24. (DS), one at Fountain Hills Jan. 25 (BD, LH), and a male and two females on Lake Havasu, where they are more regular, Jan. 30 (DS, SGa).

The only report this winter of Oldsquaw was of a female-plumaged bird at Gila Farms Pond Jan. 1 (SGa), most Arizona records have occurred on the L.C.R. Barrow's Goldeneyes seem to be on the decline within the state in recent years with only 10 reported this winter (compared with up to 60 along the L.C.R. during the late 1970s); four were below Davis Dam Jan. 30 (SGa, DS), one female was on L. Havasu Jan. 30 (SGa, DS), and five were below Parker Dam Feb. 12 (TC, M. Norris). Fewer reports of this species in recent years may be partly owing to decreased coverage of the L.C.R. All three species of merganser were present statewide in larger numbers than usual. Common Mergansers were especially numerous at some odd localities: 42 were seen s. of Charleston on the upper S.P.R. Jan. 5 (DK); 200 were at Peck's L. Jan. 12 (VG); 15-17 were at Patagonia L. Jan. 29 into March (TC, KK, LHK); and another 41 at Cook's L. on the lower S.P.R. Feb. 20 (GM) possibly represented the same flock reported upriver in January. Red-breasted Mergansers are quite unusual in winter away from the L.C.R. and the larger desert lakes in central Arizona, so a female at Many Farms L. Dec. 12 (GR, DS), an ad male at Prescott Dec. 17 to mid-January (CT), and another female on Patagonia L. Feb. 28 (C. Edwards) were all noteworthy. The Many Farms L. bird represented the first winter record for n.e. Arizona. A real surprise was a bird appearing to be a ♂ Red-breasted Merganser x Ring-necked Duck hybrid at Prescott Dec. 17-30 (†CT, ph. J. Paris).

RAPTORS — Ospreys appeared more numerous this winter in s.e. Arizona with at least six reported. Black-shouldered Kites continued to be widely sighted throughout s. Arizona, although this season brought few reports from the southeastern portion of the state; at least ten individuals were reported to us this season. Bald Eagles are uncommon winter visitors along the larger rivers and lakes throughout Arizona but records are sparse from the southeastern portion of the state; one adult was north of Elfrida from late November through at least late January (GR, TC et al.) with two immatures joining it by Jan. 28, one immature was at P.R.D. Jan. 13 (BZ), one adult was at Willcox Jan. 23 (GM), and another immature was at Elgin Feb. 4 (Z. Stolts). Two pairs of the endangered breeding race were found nesting near Alamo L. with each nest containing one chick as of Feb. 17 (CT, TG et al.).

A very early report of two Com. Black-Hawks came from Deer Pass Ranch near Sedona Feb. 10 (T. Hager); normal arrival dates for this species at nesting localities within the state are usually around mid-March. A report of a Gray Hawk from Phoenix Feb. 13 (JH) probably represented a very early migrant. A subadult **Red-shouldered Hawk** found in the town of Arivaca on the Buenos Aires N.W.R. Christmas Bird Count Dec. 20 (SM, GR, WR) remained at least until Jan. 1 (BS); there are still fewer than 10 Arizona records. Rough-legged Hawks seemed more prevalent throughout the state this winter with at least six reported at scattered localities throughout southern Arizona. Most unusual was a concentration of up to 12 on Black Mesa near Kayenta during the entire period (CL). Three Crested Caracaras were reported from the normal locality at the Sells dump Jan. 13 (BZ) but two extralimital records were noteworthy: one was along Arivaca Creek near the town of Arivaca Dec. 20 (WR, GR) while another was seen off and on around Sierra Vista Dec. 8-Jan. 3 (DK et al.). Merlins and Peregrines were reported in higher than normal numbers throughout the state.

CRANES TO KINGFISHERS — Another report of an adult Whooping Crane was received from 15 mi north of Willcox Feb. 8 (†M. Price). As with the first report, the bird was with Sandhill Cranes and was almost assuredly from the introduced population that winters along the Rio Grande in central New Mexico. The concentration of Sandhill Cranes wintering in the Sulphur Springs Valley appeared up from

past years with an estimated 7000 present in the McNeal area throughout December (GR et al.) Mountain Plovers were late arriving in the Sulphur Springs Valley, where none was found in early December, but at least 180 were found there by the end of January (m.ob.). Winter reports of Am. Avocet included two at Alamo L. Dec. 11 (TG) and two along the Salt River in s.w. Phoenix Jan. 2 (RBr, DS). A Western Sandpiper at Tucson Dec. 11-Feb. 15 (RD, KK, LHK) and another s. of Avondale Feb. 2 (†DS) were among the few believable winter records for the state. Although the species is reported practically every winter, many of the reports seem to involve misidentified Least Sandpipers. Three Least Sandpipers at Kayenta Dec. 13-17 (DS, GR, CL) were very late for that far north in Arizona. A very late Pectoral Sandpiper Dec. 4 at Buenos Aires N.W.R. (DS et al.) represented only the 2nd December record for the state. Dunlins are rare winter visitors in southern Arizona, two were at Chandler Dec. 15 (DS), one was at Alamo L. Jan. 14 (RF), and one was at Nogales Feb. 2 (GM) with another or the same individual present there Feb. 16 (JB).

It was a very poor gull year in Arizona, undoubtedly owing to the lack of adequate coverage on the L.C.R. Away from the river only one locality produced any gulls of interest, Painted Rock Dam. One Bonaparte's and two California gulls were there Jan. 7 (RF), as well as an ad. Herring there Jan. 29 (RF). At one time Forster's Tern was considered a rare winter visitor in Arizona but in recent years they have proven to be common on the L.C.R. This year the pattern continued with 20+ on Lake Havasu Jan. 30 (DS, SGa) and another 17+ north of Yuma Feb. 11-12 (TC, M. Norris).

Fifteen Band-tailed Pigeons were present Dec. 17-Jan. 15 s.e. of Prescott, where they are very rare in winter. Almost unbelievable were another four **Ruddy Ground-Doves** in southern Arizona this winter: one was found on the Yuma CBC Dec. 17, another was photographed at Lukeville Jan. 2-3 (J. Gallagher), while two others (a male and female) remained near Nogales Jan. 15-Feb. 19 (ph. BZ et al.). During the past 5 years no fewer than 12 records have been established in Arizona alone (not to mention the numerous records from California, New Mexico, and Texas!), all from fall or winter, clearly supporting the natural expansion of this species into the southwestern United States. At this point we consider it highly unlikely that all these records could pertain to escaped birds.

The Spotted Owl found in lower Sabino Canyon last fall was sighted irregularly throughout the period (m.ob.). A Short-eared Owl w. of Rough Rock, Apache, Jan. 8 (CL) may have represented the first winter record for n.e. Arizona. Amazing was a N. Saw-whet Owl found at Armenta Ranch Ruins, Organ Pipe Cactus N.M., Dec. 13 (ph. L. Norris et al.), establishing only the 2nd record of this species in the lower Sonoran zone in Arizona. One had been found freshly dead at Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, some 60-70 miles to the south, on Nov. 12, 1977, during an invasion winter. However, there was no other indication within Arizona that 1988-1989 was an irruption year for this species. A Com. Poorwill was heard calling on Mt. Lemmon Feb. 18 (JK), but it is impossible to determine whether this represents an early migrant or a locally overwintering individual. A very late Broad-billed Hummingbird was at a Tucson feeder Dec. 28 (GG). Both Magnificent and Blue-throated hummingbirds remained at feeders in s.e. Arizona throughout the period in about normal numbers (m.ob.). A *Selasphorus* sp. was present at a feeder in Prescott Dec. 17-25 (†G. Prehmus, fide BT), establishing a first Prescott winter record for the genus. At least one ♂ Green Kingfisher remained along the San Pedro River all period in the general vicinity of where this species nested last summer (TC et al.), and one female was near Arivaca Dec. 20 through February (GR, WR, m.ob.).

WOODPECKERS TO SHRIKES — Lewis' Woodpeckers were more scarce than in normal years in northern Arizona, two s. of Prescott Dec. 16-Feb. 15 (CT) were the only ones

reported from that part of the state. The only Yellow-bellied Sapsucker report this winter was of an ad male at Patagonia Jan. 17–Feb. 11 (RBo *et al.*). As with Yellow-bellieds, Red-breasted Sapsucker has proven to be a rare but regular winter visitor to the state; one was along the Hassayampa River Dec. 11 (TG), one was along the Salt River n.e. of Phoenix Jan. 19 (DS), and another was reported from Alamo L. Jan. 14 (RF). When viewing a possible Red-breasted Sapsucker in the Southwest, one should keep in mind the possibility of hybrids between Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsucker; these hybrids are known from Arizona, and have added confusion to the identification of true Red-breasted within the state. Only one “Yellow-shafted” Flicker was reported this winter, a female at Many Farms Dec. 12 (GR, DS).

A N. Beardless-Tyrannulet at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum Feb. 28 (CT) was a bit north of this species' normal winter distribution in Arizona. Unprecedented was an Olive-sided Flycatcher at the B.T.A. Jan. 8–9 (ph. KK, LHK *et al.*) providing a first winter record for the state, and only one of a few valid winter records for the United States. More regular were 2 sightings of Greater Pewee from the Tucson vicinity; one was along Sabino Creek Dec. 15–18 (WR, GR) while another was found at Evergreen Cemetery Feb. 8 (JB). A calling Least Flycatcher was reported from the B.T.A. Dec. 8–19 (†CT); although this species has proven to be a somewhat regular winter visitor to s. California, this sighting appears to be the first believable winter sighting for Arizona. Both Hammond's and Dusky flycatchers were present in higher than normal numbers throughout southern Arizona; an unprecedented 17 calling Hammond's were reported from the Ramsey Canyon CBC. At least four Eastern Phoebes were found in s. Arizona throughout the period. A Cassin's Kingbird at Green Valley Jan. 15 (DK *et al.*) was most likely a locally wintering bird. Two there Feb. 16 (JB) also may have been wintering; there are virtually no reports of this species from January and February in Arizona.

A Pygmy Nuthatch was seen excavating a cavity in Rustler Park on the early date of Feb. 24 (RM). Six Cactus Wrens at 5000 feet s. of Jerome Feb. 18 (CT) furnished a new local record. An American Dipper s. of Prescott Dec. 10–13 (G. Prehmus) was at an unusual locality. Only one Golden-crowned Kinglet was reported from the lowlands, along the upper S.P.R. Jan. 5 (DK). Few bluebirds were present in s. Arizona at the beginning of the winter, but by late January flocks of both Westerns and Mountains were scattered around the southern portion of the state. Two Rufous-backed Robins were present at Patagonia from Jan. 14 into March (m.ob.); this species continues to be a rare and irregular winter visitor to the state. Another at Prescott Dec. 10–Jan. 6 (†M. Minkler, †CT) provided only the 2nd record for n. Arizona. Another irregular wanderer to the state is Varied Thrush; one found at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum last fall was still present Dec. 20 (D. Zimmerman). Virtually unknown from the winter season, a Gray Catbird was reported from the Tucson Mountains foothills Nov. 24–Dec. 18 (S. Levy, *fide* GM). The only Brown Thrasher report during the period was of one south of St. David Jan. 5 (TC).

Seemingly unprecedented numbers of Northern Shrikes were reported this winter from northern Arizona, where they have been considered regular but uncommon winter visitants.



At least 47 individuals were seen throughout the period in the Kayenta–Black Mesa area (CL) During a loop through northeast Arizona in mid-December (DS, GR), seven were seen in a 3-day period. Our impression was that Northerns were somewhat preferring areas of pinyon-juniper, while the lower areas of grassland were occupied primarily by Loggerheads. In this invasion year it was only fitting to secure the southernmost record for the United States: one immature was found near Palominas outside of Sierra Vista Dec. 17 (GR, WR) and remained until at least Feb. 16 (m.ob.).

WARBLERS TO FINCHES — Rare in winter, especially away from the L.C.R., a Yellow Warbler was at Picacho Res Jan. 8 (KK, LHK). A Black-throated Blue Warbler at Ash Spring, Chiricahua Mts., Dec. 6 (RM) provided one of the few winter records for the state. There are very few late winter records of Townsend's Warbler in Arizona despite numerous December records, thus one along lower Camp Creek Feb. 12 was of interest (JW, CB *et al.*). A Palm Warbler found on the Yuma CBC Dec. 17 represented only about the 4th winter record for Arizona. Only one Black-and-white Warbler was reported during the period; one was in Pima Canyon Dec. 22 (B. Schiebe). Fewer than normal Am. Redstarts were found this winter with only two reported. The Worm-eating Warbler found in a Tempe yard last November was still present Mar. 5 (K. Groschupf); this represents only the 2nd wintering individual for Arizona. Two Olive Warblers at Granite Basin Dec. 17 (CT) were very late for such a northern locality.

Extremely scarce in winter, an imm. ♂ Summer Tanager was found in N. Phoenix Dec. 29 (RBr). Unprecedented for winter in Arizona was the ♀-plumaged **Scarlet Tanager** found along the Salt River Dec. 19 (†DS); unfortunately the bird could not be located later and further documented. A Western Tanager was found on the Ramsey Canyon CBC Dec. 17 (D Kibbe) and another was at the B.T.A. Jan. 2 (JB); there are only a handful of winter records for the state. Also very unusual for winter was the occurrence of a ♀-plumaged Rose-breasted Grosbeak along the upper S.P.R. Dec. 17 (†TC, DS, J Paton). Apparently the same individual was heard calling Dec. 30 (DK). Three wintering Blue Grosbeaks were seen Jan. 29 along Sonoita Creek near Patagonia (TC) where they are probably regular winter residents during warmer years.

Ever since Five-striped Sparrows were found wintering in small numbers at the same localities that they had nested in 1977 and 1978, it has been a source of puzzlement as to what degree the Arizona population pulls out during the winter, and how many overwinter. This year six were found at the bottom of Sycamore Canyon, a regular nesting locality, during only a cursory search Dec. 22 (SM, GR). Given the difficulty involved in searching proper Five-striped habitat (impenetrable steep hillsides of thorn-scrub) thoroughly, and that the birds are not very vocal (some calls are difficult to distinguish from Rufous-crowned calls), it is not surprising that there are very few winter records and that the population is believed to retract into Mexico. With an intensified winter survey we might find that the population does not leave at all.

A Grasshopper Sparrow in the Prescott Valley Dec. 17 (J Paris) provided a first local winter record. A Fox Sparrow was present at B.T.A. Jan. 8–Feb. 7; this species is still a sparse winter visitor in southern Arizona. Golden-crowned Sparrows were found at 4 localities in southern Arizona this winter, one was present at B.T.A. from late October until at least Jan. 9 (m.ob.), one was near Portal Dec. 31 (W & SSp), one was in Lukeville Jan. 3 (ph. J. Gallagher), and one was in West Sedona Feb. 7 (S. Clemenz). Harris' Sparrows were found in about normal numbers; an adult was at Petrified Forest N.P. Headquarters Dec. 11 (DS, GR), one was along Oak Creek Jan. 15 (W. Turner), and another was in s.e. Arizona n. of Fairbank on the upper S.P.R. Jan. 3 (DK).

A large concentration of at least 300+ McCown's Longspurs was found in the Sulphur Springs Valley Dec. 2 (GR); in recent

years a large flock has been found wintering in the same general area n of Elfrida An unusually northerly wintering Yellow-headed Blackbird was found at Kayenta Feb. 15 (CL). This blackbird winters locally in southern Arizona and has been found once in winter in extreme s. Utah. Great-tailed Grackles continued their steady increase and spread to the north with a high winter total of 111 found Dec. 17 at Prescott (CT), where they have never been that common. A ♂ **Streak-backed Oriole** returned for the 2nd year in a row to a feeder in Green Valley and was present for the entire period (m.ob.). An ad. ♂ N. (Bullock's) Oriole was found with a broken wing at Patagonia Dec. 4 (RF *et al.*) and survived until at least Feb. 11 (TC). The only Purple Finches reported during the period were two from the upper S.P.R. Jan. 26 (DK). A ♂ Cassin's Finch was found in the same general area Jan. 3 (DK). Three more Cassin's Finches were found along Oak Creek Jan. 19–Feb. 8 (V. Todd). Red Crossbills were found nesting in Whitetail Canyon, Santa Catalina Mts., Feb. 13 (D. Lee); this species has been known to nest in the Tucson area during the past. Unusual was the report of two Lawrence's Goldfinches Jan. 11 s. of St. David in a flock of over a hundred other goldfinches and siskins. What was unusual about this record was that when they are present, they are usually widespread, not just restricted to one isolated report. Goldfinches and siskins, very scarce early in the season, increased in numbers throughout southeastern Arizona toward the end of the period.

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New Mexico

John P. Hubbard

ABBREVIATIONS — Bosque Refuge = Bosque del Apache Nat'l Wildlife Refuge; C.C.N.P. = Carlsbad Caverns Nat'l Park; E B L. = Elephant Butte Lake. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO WATERFOWL — Notable was a Com. Loon at Morgan L. (a cooling-reservoir in San Juan for a power plant) Feb. 3, along with about 50 *Aechmophorus* grebes—including 10 Clark's (PJ). Up to 49 Am. White Pelicans were at L. McMillan, Eddy, in December, with 63 Feb. 5 and 300 on Feb. 25 (M. Medrano, SW). Northerly were six Double-crested Cormorants at Morgan L. Feb. 3 (PJ) and one at Las Vegas N.W.R. Dec. 3 & 10 (CR *et al.*), while also notable was one at Sunland Park, Dona Ana, Dec. 9 (JD, BZ). At least 750 Olivaceous Cormorants were on Caballo L. Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*) for the highest state count ever; one to two were at Bosque Refuge Dec. 26–Feb. 25 (RT), and six were at Las Cruces Dec.

20 (BZ) Great Blue Herons were attending empty nests at Glenwood on the early date of Feb. 27 (JH) Late were a Great Egret near Redrock, Grant, Dec. 24 (AF) and five White-faced Ibises at Mangas Springs, Grant, Dec. 16 (RF).

Swans, probably all Tundras, included singles near Aztec Dec. 18 (J & JR) and at Navajo L. Dec. 14 (DM), plus five-seven near Clayton Dec. 7–26 (W. Cook *et al.*) and Las Vegas Dec. 12 (DM). Notable "white" (or Snow/Ross') geese included up to 32 in the Farmington area Dec. 14–Feb. 3 (DM *et al.*), 25 at Maxwell N.W.R. Jan. 21 (JH *et al.*), 89 at La Cueva, Mora, Dec. 3–Jan. 2 (CR *et al.*), 750 at Las Vegas N.W.R. Dec. 12–Feb. 18 (DM *et al.*), 37,722 at Bosque Refuge Dec. 15, 75 near Deming Jan. 6 (DM), 28 at Sunland Park through the period (JD, BZ), and 20 near Tularosa Feb. 21 (J & NH). Noteworthy Ross' included about 60 at Las Vegas N.W.R. Dec. 10 (CR *et al.*), six at La Cueva Jan. 2 (JH *et al.*), and singles at Farmington Feb. 3 (PJ), near Cliff Dec. 27 (RF *et al.*), Las Cruces through the period, and Santa Teresa, Dona Ana, Jan. 4 (JD, BZ). Notable Canada Geese included 17,500+ in the Farmington area Dec. 14 (DM), up to 47 at Zuni Dec. 10–Feb. 18 (DC *et al.*), 80 in the Cliff area in December (RF *et al.*), 28 at Sunland Park Jan. 25 (JD, BZ), and about 10 near Rattlesnake Springs, Eddy, Jan. 16 (S. Fedorchak *et al.*).

The highest state count ever of Wood Ducks was of 142 at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS *et al.*), with other notable reports of 15–20 at Farmington Feb. 3 (PJ) and near Mesilla Dec. 17 (BZ *et al.*). Early was a ♂ Cinnamon Teal at Rattlesnake Springs Jan. 20 (CC). New Mexico's first confirmed **Eurasian Wigeon** was a male at Santa Teresa Jan. 4–Feb. 27 (JD *et al.*, ph. BZ) More Greater Scaup than usual were reported, with one to three at Cochiti L. Dec. 13 (JH *et al.*), Las Vegas N.W.R. Dec. 3 (JD, CR), Caballo Dam Dec. 20 (JD, BZ), and Evans L. Jan. 19–22 and Feb. 3 (DZ *et al.*, ph.). Very unusual were one to two ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneyes** (associated with a female that may have been this species) at Bosque Refuge Feb. 11 (PB, RT) & 23 (R. Drewien); a ♀ goldeneye with a short, yellow bill at Las Vegas N.W.R. Feb. 18 (PI, CR) was also likely this species. A high total of 286 Com. Goldeneyes was in the L. McMillan/Avalon area Dec. 29 (*fide* SW), while other notable reports were of birds at Santa Teresa (JD, BZ) and near Tularosa (G. Smith) Jan. 2–4. Hooded Mergansers were rather widespread, with maxima of 10 in the Roswell area Dec. 17 (SB *et al.*) and Las Vegas Feb. 18 (PI, CR). Highs for Com Mergansers included 8908 at Caballo L., 7250 at L. McMillan, 6912 at E.B.L., and 4286 at Conchas L. Jan. 3–6, plus 674 at Cochiti L. Dec. 15 (DM). More Red-breasted Mergansers than usual were reported, with the high of 80 at Loving Dec. 31 (SW *et al.*); others included 11 at Roswell Dec. 17 (SB *et al.*) and one to three at Cochiti L. in December (PI *et al.*) and Caballo L. Dec. 20–Feb. 8 (BZ *et al.*).

RAPTORS TO HUMMINGBIRDS — Very early was a Turkey Vulture reported near Tularosa Feb. 22 (G. Bloys). A Black-shouldered Kite was near Alamogordo Dec. 21–Jan. 5 (K. Jenness *et al.*) and another s. of Hachita Dec. 8 (D. Barker, C. Painter). Notable were single Bald Eagles near Portales Feb. 10 (W. Robertson) and Rodeo Dec. 30 (RS *et al.*); an immature killed a Great Blue Heron near Cliff Jan. 15 (RF). Unusual was a Harris' Hawk in Albuquerque in January (HS *et al.*, ph. LG), also noteworthy were up to three in the Deming area Feb. 9 & 11 (H. Williams *et al.*) and four near Alamogordo Dec. 31 (RJ *et al.*). A score of Merlins was reported over the western two-thirds of the state (v.o.).

About 60 N. Bobwhites were at Rattlesnake Springs Dec. 17 (SW *et al.*); these may in part have been the result of introduction by man, and one near Alamogordo in the period (G. Flinn *et al.*) certainly was. Seven to eight Scaled Quail were at Zuni Dec. 17 (JT) and Bluewater L. Jan. 2 (DC *et al.*), where the species is very local. A Com. Moorhen was at Percha Dam Dec. 21 (CR). Unusual were two Sandhill Cranes near Rodeo

Jan 2 (RS *et al.*), other reports included about 15 at Maxwell NWR Jan 21 (JH *et al.*), up to 405 in the Cliff area Dec 3–Feb. 23 (RF *et al.*), 42 flying east over Mangas Springs Feb. 19 (RF), and about 100 wintering in the Redrock area (AF). Thirteen Whooping Cranes wintered in the Rio Grande Valley, plus apparently one or two in Chihuahua (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Northerly were a Greater Yellowlegs at Morgan L. Feb. 3 (PJ), a Spotted Sandpiper at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS *et al.*), and a Long-billed Curlew at Loving Dec. 31 (SW *et al.*), plus 18 Long-billed Dowitchers at Bosque Refuge Jan. 14 (PB, RT). Up to 200 Bonaparte's Gulls were at L. McMillan in December, plus 49 at Loving Dec. 31 (SW *et al.*) and up to eight at Caballo L. Dec. 20–Jan. 5 (BZ *et al.*). About 1500 Ring-billed Gulls were at Caballo L. in December (BZ *et al.*), while peripheral were up to six birds at Morgan L. Feb. 3 (PJ), Zuni Dec. 15 and Feb. 18 (JT), and Evans L. Dec. 24–27 (RF). Highly unusual was an imm. **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Cochiti Dam Dec. 11 (PI, CR), while also notable were an ad. California Gull at E.B.L. Jan. 5 and an imm. Thayer's Gull there Dec. 26–Jan. 5 (PJ, JS, ph.), plus an ad. Herring Gull near Mesilla Feb. 13 (JD, BZ).

Two probable Band-tailed Pigeons were in the Sandia Mts. Feb. 23 (HS). December highs for White-winged Doves were of 20–24 at Socorro (PJ *et al.*), Alamogordo (RJ *et al.*), and in the L. McMillan/Avalon area (*vide* SW). Also notable were singles at Mangas Springs Feb. 26 & 28 (RF) and near Tularosa Feb. 7 (J & NH), plus birds singing at Truth or Consequences (D. Miller) and Carlsbad (SW) as early as mid-January. A fledgling Mourning Dove was reported at Carlsbad on the early date of Mar. 21 (*vide* SW). The vagrant Inca Dove at Santa Fe was still present through Feb. 27 (LH); one to four were also at Socorro (PJ *et al.*), near Redrock (AF), Tularosa (J & NH), and in the Alamogordo area (W. Wells *et al.*) in the period. Sixteen Com. Barn-Owls were at a roost near Mesilla Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*), while also notable was a N. Pygmy-Owl in the Peloncillo Mts. near Rodeo Dec. 30 (RS *et al.*). A Spotted Owl in the Florida Mts. Feb. 5 (ph. J. Boyd) was a first for that range. Four Short-eared Owls were reported, including one w. of Magdalena Jan. 14 (PJ, JS, ph.). More reports than usual were received of White-throated Swifts, with records from Eddy to Dona Ana (v.o.). An imm. ♂ Anna's Hummingbird was in Post Office Canyon in the Peloncillo Mts. in December (RS *et al.*), and a bird possibly of this species was in Albuquerque through Feb. 20 (G. & J. Spicer *et al.*, ph.).

WOODPECKERS TO THRUSHES — Very unusual was an imm. Red-headed Woodpecker in the Sandia Mts. Dec. 8 (D. Brondy) & 13 (HS). An ad. male probable Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was in Dona Ana Feb. 20 and an immature possibly of this species Jan. 2 (JD, BZ). Easterly/southerly were single Downy Woodpeckers at Tucumcari Jan. 16 (CR) and Roswell Dec. 17 (SB *et al.*). Westerly were single Yellow-shafted (Northern) Flickers near Bloomfield Feb. 5 (J & JR) and in s. Dona Ana (JD, BZ). Unusual was an *Empidonax* at Rattlesnake Springs Dec. 21 (ph. LG). Very early was a Say's Phoebe incubating eggs at Carlsbad Feb. 27 (SW). The only lower-elevation reports of Steller's Jays were of seven birds at Alameda Dec. 18 (J. Phillips) and near Tularosa Jan. 2 (J & NH). Unusual were two Blue Jays near Bloomfield Dec. 27–Feb. 28 (J & JR), while the bird at Santa Fe was present through the period (LH); two were also at Tucumcari Jan. 16 (CR). Notable were 55 Am. Crows in the Farmington area Dec. 17 (AN *et al.*), 13,314 at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS *et al.*), 50–60 at Mangas Springs Dec. 28–Jan. 31 and Feb. 28 (RF), and in the Silver City area in December (RF *et al.*). The most northerly report of Chihuahuan Raven in the Rio Grande Valley

area to date was established by two calling w. of Albuquerque at Petroglyph SP Dec. 17 and Jan. 21 (LG), other records of note were of one to two near Los Lunas Dec. 26 (BO) and in the Mangas Springs–Buckhorn area through the period (RF *et al.*).

Noteworthy were three Black-capped Chickadees in the Sandia Mts. Dec. 31 (K. Anderson *et al.*), while lowland reports of Mountain Chickadees included two to three at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS *et al.*) and C.C.N.P. Dec. 17 (*vide* PC) A Verdin was s. of Cliff Dec. 31 (RF *et al.*), while also notable were single Red-breasted Nuthatches at Zuni Dec. 17 (JT) and Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS *et al.*) and a Pygmy Nuthatch at Espanola Dec. 26 (BL *et al.*). Single Winter Wrens were in the Sandia Mts. (P. Steel), at Percha Dam (CR), s. Dona Ana (JD, BZ), and C.C.N.P. (*vide* PC) in late December and/or early January. Northerly was a Cactus Wren at Roswell Dec. 17 (E & G. Schooley), while also notable were two Am. Dippers at Bluewater L. Jan. 2 (DC *et al.*). Lowland Golden-crowned Kinglets were one to two at Farmington Jan. 5–6 (B. Carr), and at Albuquerque (HS *et al.*), L. Avalon/McMillan, and Loving (SW *et al.*) in December. Unusual was a probable Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Espanola Dec. 26 and earlier (BL *et al.*), plus a gnatcatcher (sp.) at Rattlesnake Springs Dec. 25 (CC).

Eastern Bluebirds invaded the Rio Grande Valley between Albuquerque and Anthony (v.o.), with highs of 40+ at Percha Dam Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*) and up to 30 near Socorro Feb. 8 (PB) A straggler was near Cliff Dec. 31 (RF *et al.*), whereas the high in the Pecos Valley area was of 80 at Roswell Dec. 17 (SB *et al.*). Other species of bluebirds were fairly widespread (m.ob.), with Westerns very common only in the Silver City area in December (RF *et al.*) but scarce in such areas as the San Juan Valley (PJ *et al.*) and the Zuni Mts. (DC *et al.*). Mountain Bluebirds were also numerous in the Silver City area (RF *et al.*) and moderately common in such areas as e. of Raton Jan. 21 (JH *et al.*), around the Magdalena Mts. in January and February (PJ), and near Caballo L. (BZ *et al.*) and at C.C.N.P. (SW *et al.*) in December. Townsend's Solitaires were generally scarce in most areas, with highs including 46 at Zuni Dec. 17 (JT *et al.*) and 43 at Santa Fe Dec. 18 (PI *et al.*). A Hermit Thrush at 7500 ft in the Sandia Mts. (HS) was quite high for winter, while northerly were singles at Farmington Dec. 17 (AN *et al.*) and Zuni Dec. 15–17 (JT). American Robins were numerous from Farmington (AN *et al.*) to the Silver City area (RF *et al.*), but elsewhere numbers were generally low to moderate—e.g., only three in the Rodeo area Dec. 30 (RS *et al.*). Very unusual was a **Varied Thrush** at Carlsbad from January through the period (S. Swayze *et al.*, ph. SW), representing about the 4th confirmed record for the state.

MOCKINGBIRDS TO LONGSPURS — Northerly was a N. Mockingbird at Pajarito Village, Santa Fe, through at least Feb. 1 (E. Espinoza), while also notable was a Curve-billed Thrasher at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS *et al.*). Cedar Waxwings were moderately common in the Farmington area (AN *et al.*), and 20 were at Roswell in December (SB *et al.*); otherwise the species was sparse in the state. The largest N. Shrike eruption since 1977–1978 occurred in New Mexico, with the 14 records including singles at Zuni (JT) and Isleta (J. Black). Extraordinary was a probable Bell's Vireo at Percha Dam Dec. 27 (PJ), for the first reliable winter record for the state. One to two Orange-crowned Warblers were at Percha Dam in December and near Mesilla Dec. 17–27 (BZ *et al.*), and two "Myrtles" were at Zuni Dec. 15–21 (JT) and Tucumcari L. Jan. 16 (CR) A first winter record for the state was of a **Townsend's Warbler** at Santa Fe Dec. 18 (LH). Single Com. Yellowthroats were at Percha Dam Dec. 20–21 and near Mesilla Dec. 17 (BZ *et al.*).

Northern Cardinals persisted at Rattlesnake Springs, with the high of four Dec. 17 (*vide* PC); two were also near Rodeo Dec. 30 (RS *et al.*). Northerly Pyrrhuloxias were singles near Socorro through the period (PB) and near Cliff Dec. 31 (RF *et al.*)



Indigo Bunting at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico, December 1988. First winter record for the state. Photograph/Lee Marlatt.

al.), while a high of four was at Roswell Dec. 17 (SB et al.). Extraordinary were New Mexico's first winter records of **Blue Grosbeak** at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (ph. S. Cox) and **Indigo Bunting** at Bitter Lake N.W.R. Dec. 21–26 (S. Marlatt et al., ph.). Northerly was a Green-tailed Towhee at Corrales Dec. 18 (LG et al.). More winter reports than usual were received of Cassin's Sparrows, including one to two near Rodeo Dec. 30 (RS et al.), Hachita Dec. 18 (R. Dickerman), Percha Dam Dec. 20 (BZ et al.), and Artesia Feb. 25 (SW). Southerly was an Am. Tree Sparrow at Zuni Dec. 17 (JT), while northerly Chipping Sparrows were 12 at Farmington Dec. 17 (AN et al.), one at Las Vegas Dec. 31 (CR), and eight banded at Albuquerque Feb. 11 (CH et al.). Other northerly sparrows were a Sage Sparrow near Las Vegas Feb. 25 (CR), up to five Black-throateds and two Sages in the w. Sandia Mts. in December and January (HS), a Black-throated near Moriarty Feb. 26 (PI et al.), several Savannahs banded at Albuquerque Feb. 19 and later (CH et al.), and a Lincoln's at Santa Fe Dec. 21 (LH).

Notable Swamp Sparrows included up to three at Zuni Dec. 11–Feb. 26 (DC, JT), singles at Albuquerque Jan. 28 (LG) and Tucumcari Jan. 16 (CR), up to four at Mangas Springs Jan. 8–11 (RF et al.), and 12 at Percha Dam Dec. 20 (BZ et al.). High counts of White-throated Sparrows were of 12 at Percha Dam Dec. 20 (BZ et al.), up to eight at Rattlesnake Springs Feb. 2 (JB, LG), and six at Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS et al.). Unusual was a dark-lored White-crowned Sparrow (probably of the race *oriantha*) at Zuni Dec. 17 (JT); this form usually winters s. of New Mexico. Even more unusual there on the same day was an Oregon (Dark-eyed) Junco with a streaked back and reduced white in the tail, suggesting a possible hybrid—e.g., with a *Zonotrichia* sparrow (JT). South of the usual range was a White-winged (Dark-eyed) Junco near Bluewater L. Jan. 2 (G. Hodge), while also notable were a *cismontanus*-type junco at Santa Fe Feb. 19 (JH) and six Slate-coloreds banded at Albuquerque Jan. 28–29 (CH et al.). A few McCown's Longspurs were reported between Los Lunas and s. Dona Ana (v.o.), plus three with several hundred Chestnut-collareds near Datil Feb. 4 (PJ, JS).

ICTERIDS TO CARDUELINES — Northerly E. Meadowlarks were up to four at Zuni Jan. 1 and in February (DC) and one singing in Embudito Canyon in the Sandia Mts. Jan. 10

(HS) Up to 24 Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintered at Zuni (JT et al.), as did up to 16 Great-tailed Grackles at Glenwood (JH et al.). Other significant records of the latter species were of 10 at Los Ojos, Rio Arriba, four at Las Vegas Dec. 30–31 (PI et al.), up to 27 at Zuni Dec. 15–19 and Feb. 11 & 18 (JT et al.), and 27 at Bluewater, Cibola, Dec. 10–Feb. 26 (DC). One to two Com. Grackles were at Zuni Dec. 31–Feb. 28, plus a Brown-headed Cowbird on Dec. 31 (DC). Highly unusual were two imm. Scott's Orioles at Columbus Jan. 4–5 (JB, C. Black) and a male at Owen's Farm, Dona Ana, through Jan. 14 (BZ et al., ph.).

Most of the relatively few Cassin's Finches were in montane areas, with submontane records including up to 11 in Santa Fe Feb. 9 (LH), Zuni Dec. 17 and Feb. 20 (JT), Bluewater L. Jan. 2–3 (DC et al.), Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS et al.), near Cliff Dec. 31 (RF et al.), and Alamogordo Feb. 15 (GF et al.). Pine Siskins were generally widespread, mainly in low to moderate numbers (m.ob.). Unusual was a ♀ Lawrence's Goldfinch near Mesilla Dec. 27 (BO), while notable reports of Lesser Goldfinch included 49 at Zuni Dec. 17 (JT) and one at Pleasanton Feb. 26 (JH). Evening Grosbeaks were reported in the Sangre de Cristo, Sandia, and Sacramento mountains (v.o.), with submontane records including 17 birds at Farmington Dec. 17 (AN et al.), 170 at Española Dec. 26 (BL et al.), 15+ at Santa Fe Feb. 19 (JH), 55 at Las Vegas Dec. 30–31 (PI et al.), and four in Albuquerque Dec. 18 (HS et al.).

ADDENDUM — A ♂ **Elegant Trogon** was reported and well-described at Pueblo Park, between Glenwood and Reserve, May 28, 1988 (D. Goodfellow et al.); the species is a vagrant in the area.

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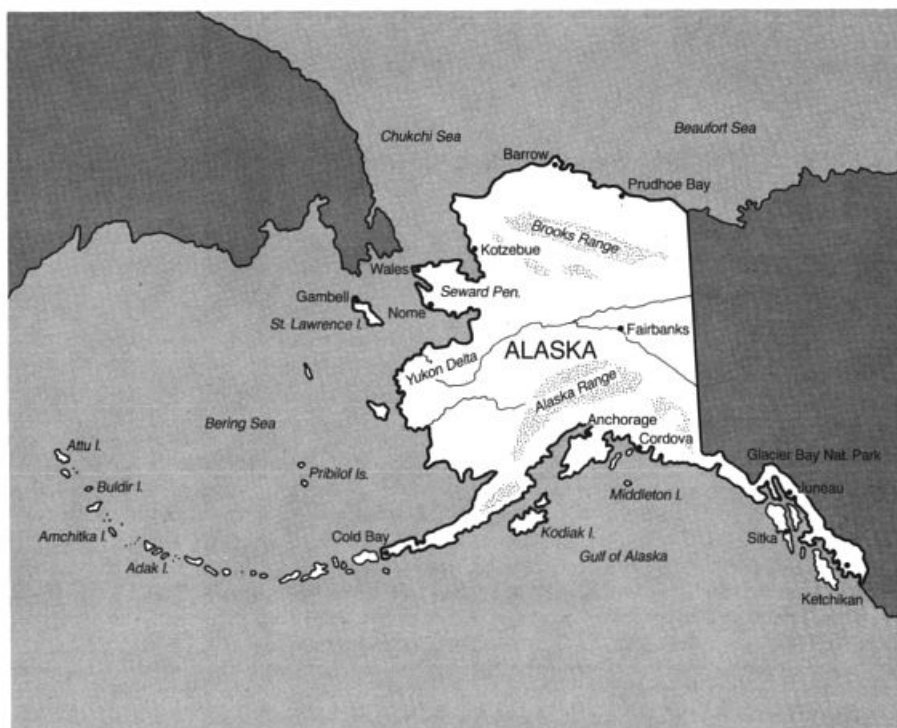
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ALASKA REGION

T. G. Tobish, Jr., and
M. E. Isleib



Winter 1988–1989 was far more interesting because of weather extremes than for unique bird movements or records. For the seventh year in a row, a mild fall continued into December. The three month period December to February produced remarkable temperature contrasts. January began with mild conditions until the 14th, when the entire state was besieged with the now infamous “Omega Block,” a massive high pressure system that, by the 27th and 28th, brought the barometric pressure to a record North American high of 31.85. Dozens of reporting stations broke record low temperatures, from the eastern Aleutians through the Interior. Most unusual was the associated northerly wind, at places consistent at 50 knots for days, that ravaged most of the Region. As dramatic as this weather system became, its effect on bird populations was sporadic. In Southcoastal Alaska, semi-hardy lingerers like Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-crowned Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco were hit hard, and Trumpeter Swans suffered losses near Cordova. Dead seabirds were reported in a few bays in the eastern Aleutians after the record cold, and observers there felt that weather stressed winter seabird populations. Temperatures moderated dramatically into February, except in Southeast where the weakening high pressure brought the driest month ever on record for that area.

ABBREVIATIONS — Details (†) and photographs (ph.) referenced here are on file at University of Alaska Museum.

GREBES TO COOTS — Western Grebe numbers peaked at 319 birds at the s. end of Mitkof I. Dec. 4 (PJW). The winter Unimak I. survey of the non-migratory Tundra Swan population tallied a record low 41 birds Jan. 17 (CPD). Normal mid-winter counts there reach 400+ birds, and numbers from 1988–1989 indicate a 48% decline of this population. The only Whooper Swan report for the season included two adults at Adak Dec. 14 & 19 (JPF et al.). At Cordova’s Eyak Lake and River system, Trumpeter Swan numbers peaked at 130 in

early January but declined to 30 birds in February (RF). Dead Trumpeter Swans were reported there and near Petersburg (PJW) after the cold siege. Overwintering Emperor Geese and Brant were counted in average numbers Jan. 17 in the Izembek Lagoon area, 1760 and 3910 respectively (CPD). Three Emperor Geese wintered in Orca Inlet, s. of Cordova, into mid-February (RF).

Observers from Southcoastal, the Interior, and Southeast remarked on the abundance (and in the Interior simply the presence) of dabbling ducks, notably Mallards. Southcoastal birders made record high counts of Mallards in December at Anchorage (2000+) and at Kodiak (854), while 19 wintered on patches of power plant cooling ponds in Fairbanks. Ice-free pockets of water supported 70+ Mallards at Clearwater Lake in e. Interior Feb. 9 (RJK, PJB) and up to 18 on Jatahmund Lake s.e. of Tok Feb. 19 (TJD). More noteworthy were “several” drake N. Pintails at the Clearwater Lake pools Feb. 9 (RJK, PJB), for a first Interior mid-winter record. A count of 854 Gadwalls on the Dec. 17 Kodiak CBC was the highest ever there (RAM). Kodiak is the center of abundance for Gadwall in winter in the Region. Eurasian Wigeon were reported at regular wintering areas, at Adak, Amchitka, Kodiak, and Petersburg (GVB, RAM, PJW), with a maximum of 12 at Amchitka Feb. 28 (DD). Wintering Canvasbacks peaked at 11 at Adak (JPF) Feb. 3, and one wintered at Petersburg (PJW) and four at Juneau (MEI). Sixteen Tufted Ducks at Adak Feb. 3 made an above-average count for the season (JPF). Twenty-five King Eiders at Seward Dec. 26 (DWS) were unexpected since the species is casual east of Kodiak. Up to 11 Steller’s Eiders overwintered to at least Feb. 25 at Seward (DWS, RLS), an area beyond the eastern edge of the species’ normal winter range, which extends to Kodiak. Farther west near Cold Bay, near the Steller’s Eider’s center of winter abundance, a very low count of 9200 was taken Jan. 17 (CPD, RW). Five Buffleheads at some Fairbanks cooling ponds Dec. 17 (*fide* PDM) represented an exceptional count there; it was not determined if these birds remained all season. Two Am. Coots at Sitka all season (KH) and one near Petersburg (PJW) through the period furnished the only reports.

HAWKS TO GROUSE — Up to five Bald Eagles in the warm water Clearwater Lake/Clear Creek area near Delta Junction Feb. 9 (RJK, PJB) were in an area where the species has wintered previously and where it is considered annual and rare at that season (see Ritchie and Ambrose 1987, *Can. Field-Nat.* 101:86–87). Single N. Harriers wintered at Kodiak Jan 11–Feb. 18 (RAM, DEM) and at Adak I. Jan. 9–Feb. 8 (GVB, JPF, EM). This raptor is quite rare and not annual in winter on Alaska's Pacific coast between Adak and SE Alaska. Golden Eagles made an impressive winter showing. Four different adults were found at the limits of the species' range in SW Alaska, where it is a rare resident, between c. Unimak I and n.e. of Cold Bay in mid-January (CPD, RW). Single adults in the Chugach Mts. above Anchorage Dec. 17 (DWS) and at the n. end of Healy Canyon n. of Denali N.P. Feb. 26 (TGT) provided first local records and were likely overwintering birds. The very few Alaska mainland winter records away from the N. Gulf Coast likely coincide with Willow Ptarmigan population highs. Gyrfalcons also benefited from the abundance of Willow Ptarmigan n. of Kotzebue all season where singles could be found daily into February (WRU). This falcon is casual on the mainland in winter away from the immediate N. Gulf Coast.

The Willow Ptarmigan high cycle continued to grow this winter, at Kotzebue, where Uhl and others counted 1023 Jan. 3 (WRU) and in the w. Interior, at Galena, where Osborne found hundreds at least before the January cold (TOO). Both observers felt that the population was greater than in winter 1987–1988.

SHOREBIRDS TO OWLS — Single tardy Spotted Sandpipers were located at Petersburg Dec. 10 (PJW) and near Juneau Dec. 17 (MEI). Two January records from Cordova are the only reports of this species later than December in Alaska. Quite late were 69 Bonaparte's Gulls in Petersburg's Wrangell Narrows Dec. 11 (PJW). Normal late dates for southbound Bonaparte's Gulls rarely surpass the first few days of December. MacIntosh reported a significant increase in winter gull numbers at Kodiak this season. CBC totals there in mid-December of Mew, Glaucous-winged, and Black-legged Kittiwakes dwarfed previous highs. This large gull concentration included at least four Thayer's Gulls Jan. 3 (RAM). Kodiak observers attributed these concentrations to increased winter fish processing, which includes dumping of millions of pounds of fish offal into nearby Chiniak Bay. At least one Black-legged Kittiwake ventured north in Cook Inlet to Anchorage Dec. 17 (GJT) after a storm passage there for a first Upper Cook Inlet winter record. This same storm deposited a Com. Murre at Anchorage's Ship Creek Dec. 16–17 (TGT, RLS), for Upper Cook Inlet's 4th winter record. Amazing was an ad. Black Guillemot found dead in a Glenallen parking lot in mid-December (REM, *U.A.M.). This was inland Alaska's 4th record of this alcid that normally ranges in winter in very small numbers in ice pack leads between the Chukchi and s. Bering Seas (see AB 38:348).

Reports of up to two Great Gray Owls each came in from Galena Feb. 19 (TOO) and Wasilla Jan. 5 & 16 (DC). The species is annual in winter in both of these areas. Short-eared Owls made an impressive showing, especially given the weather extremes this season. Singles were found at Adak Jan 7–9 and Feb. 3 (GVB, JPF), near Palmer Feb. 23 for Upper Cook Inlet's 5th winter record (JL), and on Juneau's Mendenhall Wetlands all season (MEI).

CORVIDS TO FINCHES — An adventuresome Black-billed Magpie that survived the season at Ambler (DW, *fide* WRU) provided the northernmost and westernmost winter report for Alaska. Except for McLenegan's questionable 1889

record from n.w. Alaska (see Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959), there are no Alaska winter records n. of Fairbanks, where the species is casual. A Chestnut-backed Chickadee appeared at a Girdwood feeder Dec. 23 (TGT *et al.*) and was joined by a 2nd bird in early March (DM). Although this chickadee is resident in the Sitka Spruce-W. Hemlock forests of SC Alaska, it is confined to the immediate coastal fringe and is uncommon in n.w. Prince William Sound roughly 40 km over the mountains from Girdwood Valley. There is no prior Cook Inlet record north of the Homer area. Red-breasted Nuthatches peaked at 54 in Anchorage Dec. 17 (m.ob.), a new Alaska high count. A Townsend's Solitaire, casual in winter, spent January at Sitka (KH). The Sitka area also provided a lingering Hermit Thrush Jan. 1 (KH) that eclipsed last winter's mid-December records. Nine Am. Robins at Anchorage to late December (MRD) and at least 30 at Seward Jan. 7 (RLS) were both new high counts for these locales; only one was found in Anchorage after the January cold. At least 15 Am. Robins at Kodiak Dec. 23 (RAM) provided one of Kodiak's highest winter totals; all disappeared the next day.

A surprisingly hardy Yellow-rumped Warbler spent December and most of January at an Anchorage peanut butter feeder (JA, RLS, DFD *ph.*) before succumbing to -40° nights sometime around Jan. 25. The 3 previous Regional winter reports of this warbler came from December; this was the Anchorage area's 2nd winter sighting. Last fall's Juneau **Chipping Sparrow** (see fall) remained all season with a junco flock in the Juneau area (MWS) and became the Region's first winter record. This *Spizella* is apparently scarce in winter north of c. California. For the first time in many years Lincoln's Sparrow went unreported from the Region. Other sparrow highlights included a Golden-crowned at Anchorage all season (DFD), up to five Harris' Sparrows in the Juneau area in December with one remaining all season there (MEI), and one Am. Tree Sparrow at Palmer through December (*fide* MTB) that provided a first local winter record.

The winter distribution of Snow Bunting away from the immediate N. Gulf Coast, where the species is rare in small numbers, is poorly known. Apparently small flocks attempt to winter locally in coastal beach rye flats in Upper Cook Inlet, at Kenai where six birds were found Dec. 17 (MAM), and at Anchorage where a few lingered all season (*fide* TGT). North of Anchorage, small groups totalling 125 birds were seen in the Pt. MacKenzie dairy farms Feb. 19 (RLS, TGT). An imm. **Brown-headed Cowbird** lingered in Juneau with a Red-winged Blackbird flock to the last few days of December (MEI). There are few winter records for the Region of this rare fall visitor to SE Alaska. Three Brambling reports were above average this season. One at Kodiak Dec. 4–5 (JBA, +RAM) provided a 2nd island record, and singles were also found at Sitka in December and January (KH) and at Juneau Jan. 11 (GEH, MEI, RBW). This Palearctic finch may well be found to be annual in winter in either SE or SC Alaska given the recent flurry of winter reports.

Winter finches staged a collective retreat from the Region as only Common Redpoll was found in close to average numbers and in widespread distribution. Losses or declines were not attributable to the "Omega Block," however, since low numbers or species' absences were noted from the start of the season. Pine Grosbeak was reported as scarce throughout the Region and throughout the season. Red Crossbills were rare and reported from Kodiak in December and from Juneau, Petersburg, and Gustavus in small numbers only (RAM, MEI, PJW, BBP). Except for a few scattered flocks up the lower Kobuk R. valley (WRU) and at a few SE sites (MEI, PJW, BBP), White-winged Crossbill was noted by most observers for its conspicuous and complete absence from most localities. Common Redpoll flocks began to appear in average numbers at most SC areas in early December (m.ob.), but they were way down in the c. Interior after last year's record highs (PDM) and none was found in the Kotzebue area (WRU). A few Common Redpoll flocks arrived in Juneau (the first in three years) in late January (MEI), but none reached other SE

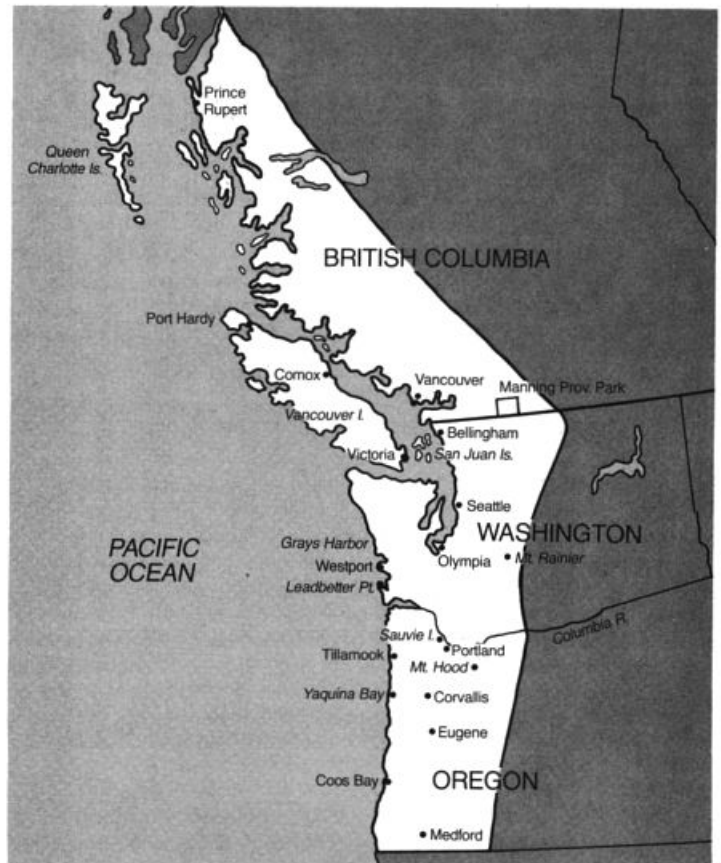
reporting areas Pine Siskins were largely absent from SC Alaska, except at Kodiak where numbers declined after the January freeze (RAM), and from n. SE Alaska. Small siskin flocks could be found s. of Petersburg through the season.

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NORTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

Bill Tweit



The winter of 1988–1989 in the Pacific Northwest was marked by two extraordinary occurrences: a major oil spill and a major freeze. Some 231,000 gallons of oil were spilled when an oil barge collided with its tug at the mouth of the Grays Harbor estuary on the Washington coast on December 22nd. Oil and oiled birds washed up on beaches from northern Oregon to mid Vancouver Island. Alcids appeared to be the hardest hit. Counts of salvaged specimens from the Washington coast were received from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (JAt) and the Burke Museum at the University of Washington (DP), and are cited below. These counts do not include birds recovered from Oregon or British Columbia beaches, or even all of the Washington beaches. Many victims of the spill probably never washed ashore.

The freeze, caused by the very strong Arctic high pressure system that moved south in the first week of February, brought snow and record low temperatures, winds and severe wind-chill factors to all parts of the Region, except southernmost Oregon. In southern Puget Sound,

fairly thick ice formed on salt water. Observers reported Western Grebes and dabbling ducks frozen into the ice on salt water as well as fresh water areas, and loons and grebes trapped in narrow leads of open water among the ice.

Five species of falcons could be found at one location in one day on the Samish River flats, in northern Puget Sound, Skagit County, Washington. The raptor populations wintering in this area and the nearby Skagit River flats were censused this winter for the first time using a Christmas Bird Count format, coordinated by Bud Anderson of the Falcon Research Group. The results, which are incorporated in this report, are not comparable with previous years as there had been no previous censuses of this type. Hopefully this survey will continue.

The last two winters have been notable for the magnitude of reports of lingering species; this winter represented a return to more expected levels even before the big freeze.

The report from Victoria, Vancouver Island, was not received for inclusion in this column.

ABBREVIATIONS — S F W R C = Skagit Flats Winter Raptor Census, WA, S J C R = South jetty of the Columbia R., OR, V. I. = Vancouver Island, BC. Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO EGRETS — As happened last winter, Red-throated Loons were found in unusual numbers on inland waters, with nine reports along the Columbia R. (HN, Denise Caldwell) and birds at Salem (Glen Lindeman) and Forest Grove, OR (Joe Evanich). Two Pacific Loons wintered inland at Forest Grove (VT, Donna Lusthoff) and there was one sighting on the Columbia R. at Portland (JJ). Eleven Red-throated, 50 Pacific, and three Common loons were part of the known oil spill mortality (DP, JAt). The six Yellow-billed Loon reports were below the long-term average, but not for the recent past. There was one from Oregon, off Manzanita, Tillamook, Feb. 5 (Durrel Kapan), and two Washington reports on Feb. 4 at Seattle (Keith Carpenter) and Feb. 11 at Point Roberts (Mark Oberle, Gerald Poynter). During December, singles were noted in British Columbia in the lower Fraser R. on Dec. 4 (Brian Self) and throughout the month at Stanley Park, Vancouver (Mike Toochin *et al.*). The only January report was of a bird at Saltspring I. in the Gulf Islands, BC, on the 21st (RTo *et al.*). Five Horned, six Red-necked, and 820 Western grebes were part of the reported oil spill mortality (DP, JAt).

S.A.

Winter identification of Clark's Grebes from W. Grebes has become a major problem in the Vancouver area. A significant number of the Clark's Grebe reports in this area may be erroneous. It seems that even though the two species are readily identifiable in breeding plumage, there are a few "intermediate" individuals in winter showing head patterns between typical Western and typical Clark's. Some of these have been called Clark's by some observers, Western by others, and hybrids (?) by still others. The identification literature offers little help, either failing to describe seasonal variation in plumage, or implying that there is none. More research is needed! (WW)

There were 6 reports of apparently two Clark's Grebes from the Vancouver area. The one report substantiated by details from West Vancouver Dec. 16 (BK) described a bird in a plumage similar to breeding plumage. Six birds were noted, none with details, from Oregon: two found oiled at Cannon Beach, Clatsop, Jan. 13 (*fide* HN), one at Tillamook Bay Feb. 26 (RG), one on the lower Coos River Jan. 22 (LT), and inland singles at N. Portland Jan. 29 (JJ) and Foster Res., Linn, Feb. 19 (LW, PMu). There are still no locales in the Region where Clark's can be expected.

Some 78 N. Fulmars, one Sooty and 28 Short-tailed shearwaters, and two Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels (DP, JAt) were among the reported victims of the oil spill. Otherwise, there were 3 reports of live Short-tailed Shearwaters along the Oregon coast in December (David Irons, Tim Shelmerdine, Gerard Lillie), and 100+ were seen off Bandon Jan. 8 (DF). One Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was found dead at the S.J.C.R. Jan. 25 (MP). These were average numbers of live tubenose sightings for the Region. The only report of Brown Pelican was of one (unaged) on Puget Sound in Pierce from Jan. 1 to Feb. 4 (*fide* TB); record numbers were found during the winter of 1987-1988.

One Double-crested, seven Brandt's, and five Pelagic cormorants were salvaged from the oil spill (DP, JAt). Double-crested Cormorants are showing increasing numbers in Marion in the Willamette Valley (BB). The number of Great Egrets reported this fall was lower than usual, and wintering numbers were also lower. One lingered until Dec. 11 in the lower Fraser R., BC (BL), for the 3rd winter record for the area. There were only 2 Washington reports (G & WH, AR), down from 7 and 5 the previous two winters. As usual, large numbers were found only along the southern Oregon coast (DF).

After only one report this fall, unexpected numbers of Cattle Egrets were found during December and early January. There were two in s.w. Washington (Ruth McCausland, AR) and four from the n.w. Oregon coast (MP, BTi, SJ, TS). The latest and farthest north was one Jan. 7 at Delta, BC (BL). At least two Green-backed Herons were present until Jan. 15 in the Vancouver, BC, area (B & PS, George Smith, BK), where they are casual in winter.

WATERFOWL — Tundra Swan numbers seemed to be reduced in n.w. Oregon (HN). Up to 1000 Snow Geese wintered on Sauvie I., OR (HN). This is the only locale in the Region where wintering numbers this large are found, other than the river deltas of n. Puget Sound and the lower Georgia Strait. Four Ross' Geese were seen with the Sauvie I. Snow Geese on Feb. 28 (HN); they are rare in western Oregon. Five Emperor Geese were reported from the s. Oregon coast (JG, LT, John Crocker) and one was at Quamichan L. on V. I. (WW). The Regional average for the last few years has been about six.

The 16 reports of Eur. Green-winged Teal, including 7 from Oregon, 3 from Washington, and 6 from the Vancouver, BC, area, were twice the recent average. Two Green-winged Teal were among the oil spill victims (DP), and they and N. Shovelers were found frozen in the ice when the freeze hit n. Oregon (BB). The 'summer' teal are appearing more often in winter in the Pacific Northwest. Blue-winged Teal, which are very rare in winter, were found in Washington on Dec. 3 at Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark (Nancy Ellifrit, *fide* WC) and Dec 31 at Nisqually N.W.R., Thurston (BSc, *fide* TB), and in Oregon on Sauvie I. Feb. 11 (Sheri Erickson) and at Beaverton, Washington, Feb. 24 and later (Stefan Blair). Cinnamon Teal, now reported annually, were found in exceptional numbers. Three wintered until Jan. 15 at Reifel I., BC (JJ). In Washington, a pair was at Nisqually N.W.R. throughout December (BSc, *fide* TB). In Oregon, 34 individuals were reported, including 24 wintering at the Astoria Sewage Ponds, Clatsop (MP). With these numbers, it becomes difficult to sort out the first migrants. In western Oregon, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, and N. Pintail were all in good to excellent numbers (HN, DF) before the freeze. The only effect of the freeze appeared to be that they concentrated on the remaining open fresh water. In Washington, where there was little open fresh water, the numbers of Mallards and Am. Wigeon on Puget Sound increased greatly (VN).

An imm. ♂ Tufted Duck was noted at Blackie Spit, Surrey, BC, Jan. 29 (Tom Hanrahan, RTo). An ad. ♂ Tufted was on Orcas I., WA, from Jan. 1 (Andy Stepnowski) to Jan. 29. A first-winter male was at the Monmouth Sewage Ponds, Polk, from Jan. 2 on (RG), and a male was on the lower Columbia R. near Svenson, Clatsop, OR, from Jan. 25 on (MP). This is the usual number of reports of this species. The hybrid ♂ Tufted Duck x scaup reappeared in Seattle on Jan. 8 for its 3rd winter (Ruth Taylor, EH). A King Eider seen at Dungeness Spit, Clallam, Dec. 27 (†MK) furnished the 13th report for Washington. Diving duck specimens salvaged from the oil spill included one Greater Scaup, one Harlequin Duck, and one Oldsquaw; 28 Black, 135 Surf, and 685 White-winged scoters; and 10 Bufflehead. These White-winged Scoters represented almost 9% of the specimens received. The preponderance of White-winged over Surf Scoters in the mortality is surprising, as White-winged were not thought to be that much more abundant than Surfs in the affected areas.

RAPTORS — There were four reports of wintering Turkey Vultures, which is about average. Two were seen in the San Juan Is., WA (Ward Beecher, ML), and two more in Oregon, near Lebanon, Linn (Jeff Harding, *fide* ME) and at the Yachats River, Lincoln (Ethel Reed, *fide* DFa). Four Osprey reports from western Oregon (Annie Briggs, Bob Hanauska, Bob O'Brien) and one from Olympia, WA (B & GR) were also about

average Nineteen Black-shouldered Kites were reported from s.w. Washington, with the farthest north being a pair at Nisqually N.W.R., Thurston (Verna Timm). Last winter's 16 reports had been the highest ever for the state, and 12 the winter before that also set a record. In Oregon there were at least 58 kites noted, not including CBC totals. Kites seemed to be even more numerous than usual along the coast (HN, DF, SH). Bald Eagle numbers along the Oregon coast were at normal levels, or a bit above (HN). In Washington, 200 were counted along one stretch of the Nooksack R., Whatcom, Jan. 6 (Doug Dobbins, *fide* TW). Normally, only 250 winter in the watershed. With 269 censused, Bald Eagle was the most common raptor in the S.F.W.R.C. (BA). Northern Harrier was a distant third on the S.F.W.R.C., with 93 reported (BA). There were good numbers of harriers this winter in w. Oregon (HN). The 40 reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk, 37 of Cooper's Hawk, and 7 of N. Goshawk were all well below the usual number of reports for each species. Cooper's numbers were thought to be unusually low in w. Oregon this winter (HN, JJ).

At least 14 reports of Red-shouldered Hawks from s.w. Oregon this winter, including two north to the Fern Ridge Res. area, Lane, Dec. 3 (SH, ME, TM), was two more than last winter's record number. They were reported north to Coos on the coast, and in the interior from Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas. Red-tailed Hawk was the 2nd most common raptor on the S.F.W.R.C.; 228 were counted, of which five were identified as *harlanii* (BA). It was a good winter for Rough-legged Hawks. Seventy-two were counted on the S.F.W.R.C. (BA), and numbers were reported south to the Willamette Valley (HN). Fifty Merlin reports (in addition to the five from the S.F.W.R.C.) and 35 Peregrine reports (with an additional five from the S.F.W.R.C.) were both well below recent years' totals. Gyrfalcons and Prairie Falcons, however, were both in average numbers. There were four Gyrs in n.w. Washington, three sightings in the Vancouver area, and one along the Oregon coast at Cape Meares, Tillamook (Nick Lethaby). Four Prairies were reported from n.w. Washington, one wintered in the Vancouver, BC, area (m.ob.) for the 2nd record for that area, and seven were reported from the w. Oregon interior.

RAILS TO SANDPIPERS — The Sora reports included one Jan. 7 at Reifel I., BC (†JL), where they are very rare in winter, and two on the Oregon coast where they are regular in winter (JG, MP, LT). Three Sandhill Cranes remained until Dec. 24 at Delta, BC (JL, Rick Toochin), well north of their usual wintering area along the Columbia R. The O.D.F.W. winter shorebird survey found 39 Snowy Plovers on Bayocean Spit, Tillamook, Jan. 7 (Joe Pesek, *fide* ME), the highest winter count ever for this location. After the big freeze, counts from this spot ranged from zero (CR) to four later in the month (RG). Counts of Semipalmated Plovers along the Washington coast were lower than those of the last 2 winters, but one at Iona I., BC, Feb. 4 (†Martin Gebauer) furnished the 5th or 6th winter record for the Vancouver area. During the early February freeze, HN noted a high mortality of Killdeer on the Oregon outer coast.

No Greater Yellowlegs were reported in the Vancouver area after the freeze (*fide* DK); up to 24 had been reported immediately prior. Willets were noted only at their usual wintering locations: Port Angeles (SS) and Willapa Bay (BS) in Washington and Yaquina Bay (Laimons Osis) in Oregon. A Whimbrel wintering at Surrey, BC (†WW *et al.*) for the 2nd winter record in the Vancouver area also disappeared at the end of January, just before the freeze. Elsewhere, Whimbrels wintered only at their usual locations: three at Port Angeles (BT) and one at Tokeland on Willapa Bay (G & WH). The flock of wintering large shorebirds at Tokeland included 20 Long-billed Curlew and 150 Marbled Godwits (TB). This is the only locale in the Region where either species winters in numbers.

There were 10 reports of Ruddy Turnstone, fewer than last winter but still more than normal. There were three reports of Red Knots. One at Delta, BC, Dec. 10 (†BL) provided the 3rd winter record for the Vancouver, BC, area; the other two had no details. Small numbers of Least Sandpipers were reported north to the Vancouver, BC, area, about as usual. Western Sandpipers were almost unreported, except from the Vancouver area where up to 93 were seen in December (*fide* DK). There was only one report after that, indicating they may have left the area. Flocks of Long-billed Dowitchers were noted before and after the freeze, from Vancouver, BC, south. Red Phalaropes did not appear onshore in numbers: two were at Ocean Shores, WA, Dec. 3 (Patrick & Ruth Sullivan), two were at Boiler Bay, Lincoln, and some were at the S.J.C.R. Feb. 5 (MP).

LARIDS, ALCIDS — Two Pomarine Jaegers at Ocean Shores, WA, Feb. 10 (G & WH) and one at Nehalem Sewage Ponds, Tillamook, Jan. 15 (SJ, TS) represented an average number of winter records for Pomarines. The imm. **Franklin's Gull** found at the Monmouth Sewage Ponds, Polk, OR, Dec. 27 on the Dallas CBC only stayed for one additional day (RG), for the 2nd or 3rd Oregon winter record. An ad. Little Gull seen with Bonapartes at Point No Point, Kitsap, WA, Jan. 26–27 (†VN, †Hank Vail) provided one of very few winter records for the Region. The adult **Common Black-headed Gull** at Vancouver found during the fall was seen until Dec. 17 (†WW), for the first British Columbia winter record.

Only a few gull specimens were salvaged from the oil spill in Washington (DP, JAt): eight Mew, one Herring, one Thayer's, 26 Westerns, 61 Glaucous-wingeds, 15 Western x Glaucous-winged hybrids, and 34 Black-legged Kittiwakes. However, a Jan. 13 survey of gulls at the Elwha R. mouth in the Strait of Juan de Fuca (BT), well inshore from the oiled waters, showed that 25% of the Mews and over 3% of the Glaucous-wingeds showed oil on their plumage. Surveys of the large gulls at the dump near Olympia, WA, on two dates in January found at least eight adults that appeared to be Glaucous-winged x Herring Gulls (†DF). Birds appearing to be of this hybrid combination have been occasionally reported from this site in past years. Reports of 14 Glaucous Gulls, 10 of which were from Washington and British Columbia, were about average. Prior to the early February storm, there were only 3 reports of five-plus kittiwakes along the coast. After the storm, 30 were at S.J.C.R. Feb. 8 (HN) and 500 were at Ocean Shores, WA, Feb. 10 (G & WH). Inland, one was found freshly dead at the Monmouth Sewage Ponds, Polk, OR, Feb. 15 (*fide* HN). An oiled **Red-legged Kittiwake** that was recovered off the beach at Rockaway Beach, Tillamook, Jan. 16 (*fide* HN) died at a rehab. center. This was the 7th record for Oregon.

No fewer than 5876 Com. Murre specimens were recovered from the oil spill in Washington alone (DP, JAt), and many were salvaged in Oregon as well (HN). Just 5 days before the spill, 7000+ murrees were counted flying north along the coast at Grays Harbor (BT, EH); obviously very large numbers of murrees were in the area and vulnerable to the spill. Other oiled alcids in Washington included: one **Thick-billed Murre**, nine Marbled and nine Ancient murrelets, 165 Cassin's Auklets, five **Parakeet Auklets**, 42 Rhinoceros Auklets, eight Tufted Puffins, and eight **Horned Puffins**. Surprisingly, there were no Pigeon Guillemots reported. The Thick-billed Murre was only the 2nd specimen for the state, and there are very few recent records for Parakeet Auklet and Horned Puffin. Apparently, five **Horned Puffins** were salvaged in Oregon (*fide* HN) and several **Parakeet Auklets** in British Columbia (*fide* Mike Force). Large numbers of Ancient Murrelets were in the eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca during December and early January. Six hundred were seen off Victoria, V.I., Dec. 14 (WW), and 102 were moving SE past Point No Point, Kitsap, WA, Dec. 10 (VN) into Puget Sound. The last reports were of

100+ off Point Wilson, Jefferson, WA, Jan 14 (BT, BS) and 18 off Point Roberts, Whatcom, WA, Jan 29 (BL)

OWLS TO WRENS — Only two Snowy Owls were reported. One wintered along Boundary Bay, BC (*fide* DK) and one was on the Samish Flats, Skagit, WA, on Feb. 18 only (TW). This was even fewer than the four individuals of last winter, and the lowest Regional count in recent memory. Only 11 N. Pygmy-Owls were noted, below average. Burrowing Owls, rare but regular winterers in w. Oregon, were noted at 3 traditional locations for them: the Eugene airport (TM), the Corvallis airport (ME), and w. of White City, Jackson (June Babcock, *fide* MM). One seen Feb. 1 & 5, when it was taken in a weakened condition to a rescue clinic in Delta, BC (K. Ernsley, *fide* DK), provided the 2nd Vancouver area record since 1983, and followed a wintering record last year. A Great Gray Owl that appeared for one day in Vancouver, Jan. 8 (Richard Cannings), and another reported from Langley, s.e. of Vancouver, Jan. 1 (Glen Ryder) furnished the only reports. Nine sightings of Long-eared Owls from 6 locations equalled last winter's impressive numbers. Moderate numbers of Short-eared Owls were reported. The total was 57, but south of the Vancouver, BC, area the most seen in any locale was five.

Anna's Hummingbirds were reported to have survived the freeze, even in the Vancouver, BC, area (Valerie Parker, *fide* DK). An Anna's in Port Angeles, WA, Jan. 25 (†Peter & Ann Burr) provided the first *Clallam* record. A ♂ **Costa's Hummingbird** wintered at a North Bend, Coos, feeder, and was last seen Feb. 18 (LT), for the 9th record for western Oregon. Returning Rufous Hummingbirds were later than the last 2 years. After one was seen Feb. 2 in the Coos Bay, OR, area (Jack Thomas) there were no further records until singles were seen on the Oregon coast at Astoria, *Clatsop*, Feb. 21 (MP) and Yaquina Bay, *Lincoln*, Feb. 25 (Wes & Florence Bell). Severe winter weather usually precipitates movement of Red-breasted Sapsuckers into the lowlands. Increased numbers were noted at Vancouver, BC (*fide* DK), the Skagit flats (EH, Robert Ashbaugh), Seattle (KA, RTh), San Juan I. (ML), and Vancouver, WA (*fide* WC). Most reports were of five or fewer, but 30 were seen in a single park in West Vancouver, BC, Feb. 5 (BK).

Three Say's Phoebes in Jackson, OR (MM, Richard Erickson) in January and early February were in an area where a few winter. One at West Point, Seattle, Feb. 26 (TRh) was the first of an unusual spring flight (see spring report). A Tree Swallow at Tillamook, OR, Jan. 8 was apparently wintering (JJ), which is highly unusual for this species in the Region. Tree Swallow migration had been earlier than usual the last 2 years. This year, the first Oregon sightings did not come until the last days of January: the 28th in Portland (Mike Houck) and the 29th at Agate Lake, Jackson (HS). The first Washington record was Feb. 16 (BT) and the first British Columbia record Feb. 22 (RP, *fide* DK). Undoubtedly, the freeze impacted their northward migration, as it did that of Violet-green Swallows. By the end of February, Violet-greens had been reported only once: one near Coquille, Coos, OR, Feb. 11 (LT). Normally, they are widespread by the end of the month. Four Barn Swallows lingered as late as Dec. 15 at Delta, BC (JI *et al.*). Unusual numbers of Horned Larks were noted in Marion and Polk in the Willamette Valley immediately before and during the cold snap (BB).

A small invasion of Steller's Jays was noted in the Seattle area, in conjunction with the freeze (KA). Common Ravens were noted 3 times this season in lowland areas of southern Puget Sound, where they are normally unknown (John Gatchet, Jon Jensen, Ted Mallory). They are regular in the north Puget Sound lowlands; their absence in nearby areas of south Sound is puzzling. Mountain Chickadee, an incursive species in the Region, went unreported this winter. Rock Wrens, scarce winterers, were noted at Vancouver, Dec. 1 to Feb. 5 (WW *et al.*), and Dec. 24 at Yaquina Head, OR (Anthony Floyd).

THRUSHES TO WARBLERS — Early sightings of W Bluebirds in Washington included two seen Jan 13 in Cowlitz (Sherry & Arden Hagen, *fide* WC) and one Feb. 1-4 in Pierce (Eileen Orcutt, *fide* TB). Then, there were no sightings of flocks in Washington until the end of February (George Walter, AR), later than usual. There were 7 sightings of Townsend's Solitaire, all from Washington and British Columbia. This is about the normal number for a winter. The cold spell in February concentrated numbers of Hermit Thrushes along roadways in the Coos Bay area in s. Oregon (LT), otherwise they were sparingly reported. Varied Thrushes appeared in some parts of the lowlands in very large numbers during and after the cold snap. They seemed most numerous in areas along saltwater, such as Coos and Yaquina Bays, OR, the San Juan Is., and Point No Point, WA (LT, DFa, ML, VN). Mortality in these areas was conspicuous, with many reports of roadkills and of birds seen weakly foraging. Lesser numbers, but still well above normal, were noted in the Willamette Valley (BB) and the Seattle and Tacoma areas (KA, TB). There was only one N. Mockingbird reported in the Region, in early December near Salem (*fide* BB). Usually, there are around 5 reports, with several staying through the winter. A **Brown Thrasher** wintering in a yard northeast of Salem, OR, from early December until Feb. 24 (†LW, †PMu, BB) represented the 4th record for western Oregon.

Bohemian Waxwings were very scarce, with only 2 reports all winter: one in December in Waldport, *Lincoln*, OR (Roy Lowe) and 15 just before the freeze on Jan. 29 in Seattle (KA). Cedar Waxwings were uncommon in western Oregon (HN) and in the Seattle area (RTh), but were more common than usual in the San Juan Is., WA, before the freeze (ML). A **Phainopepla** found by Bill, Zanah, Doug, and Nancy Stotz on Dec. 22 near Gold Hill, Jackson, OR, spent the next month and a half occupying a small Oregon White Oak loaded with mistletoe (†DF, †LW, †PMu). This bird, apparently an imm. male, was last seen Feb. 8 (MM). It furnished the first record for the Region and the 2nd for Oregon; the first record was in 1957 in Harney, OR. Northern Shrike numbers were down somewhat in all parts of the Region. Loggerhead Shrikes appeared twice: Jan. 4 at Agate Lake, Jackson, OR (HS) and Feb. 3-6 at Delta, BC (†BK, †B & PS); they are accidental at any season in the Region.

A Yellow Warbler lingered until Dec. 23 in Portland (JG, CR). The last winter record was in 1983. A ♂ **Black-throated Blue Warbler** that appeared in Powers, Coos, OR, in early January (Dave Shea, *fide* LT) disappeared by Jan. 31. This was the 2nd winter record, and the 6th at any season, for w. Oregon. A Black-throated Gray Warbler wintering on the Univ. of Washington campus in Seattle was probably the same individual that was there last year (RTh). It died during the cold snap (*Burke Museum). A ♂ Black-throated Gray Warbler was also seen in Portland until Jan. 25 (JG). Townsend's Warblers were widely reported in Oregon (HN), but in only small numbers in w. Washington and not at all in British Columbia. There were seven Palm Warblers noted. Five of those were December reports, from Saanich, V.I. (†J.B. Tatum), Ocean Shores (EH) and Seattle, WA (†BS), and Astoria, OR (MP). These were probably not wintering birds, as most were in continuously birded areas. In Oregon, Palms apparently wintered at Yaquina Bay (Robert Olson, *fide* DFa) and at Coos Bay (LT). Five Com. Yellowthroats were reported from Washington and British Columbia, where they are casual winterers. They were near Delta, BC, Feb. 11-26 (†BL), and in Washington in Kent, King (†DF), Marysville, *Snohomish* (Scott Atkinson), Bow, Skagit (GRa), and Federal Way, King (Ilene Marckx, *fide* TB).

BUNTINGS TO FINCHES — A ♂ **Dickcissel** was in Astoria, *Clatsop*, from Dec. 10 (†MP) to Jan. 15, for at least the 3rd Oregon record. Possibly the same bird appeared in Manzanita, *Tillamook*, 35 mi down the coast from Astoria, Jan 27

to the end of the period (HN, †LW, †PMu) Ten Am Tree Sparrows in the Vancouver, BC, area (*fide* DK) and one at the Forest Grove Sewage Ponds, Washington, OR, Jan. 27–29 (VT) was about normal for the Region, although there are usually some sightings from Washington as well. A Chipping Sparrow at the Forest Grove Sewage ponds Jan. 27 (†DF) was very unusual; well documented winter records are scarce. Washington's 2nd winter **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found Dec. 3 on the Samish Flats, Skagit (†BS). It remained until the end of the period (m.ob.). In Oregon, where there are more winter records, a Clay-colored wintered at the same North Bend feeder as last winter (BG, LT). After 2 years of high abundance, counts of Savannah and Lincoln's sparrows dropped to more normal levels. Swamp Sparrow numbers were also well below those of the last 2 winters. There were no British Columbia reports, only one Washington report (†BS) and 7 reports from Oregon (although more were reported on Oregon CBCs). Five reports of White-throated Sparrow north of Oregon were also a bit low. In w. Oregon, they were widespread in good numbers (HN). Only four reports of Harris' Sparrow, two in British Columbia and one each from Oregon and Washington, made the lowest total in many years.

There were no reports of Lapland Longspurs, a sporadic winterer, other than a few on CBCs. An ad. **Rustic Bunting** found Dec. 11 (†EH) at the Kent Sewage Ponds, King, WA, was in exactly the same location as the bird that wintered there in 1986–1987. The inescapable conclusion is that it is the same individual, and Washington observers are speculating about where it spent 1987–1988. The site is intensively birded, so if it wintered locally that season, it used a different territory. This year, as previously, the bunting remained through the end of the period. Small numbers of Snow Buntings wintered along the outer coast. The largest flock was of 50 at Bayocean Spit, Tillamook, OR, Jan. 1 (BTi, *fide* BB).

There were at least 5 reports of Yellow-headed Blackbirds from the Vancouver, BC, area (†Pat Miller, †JL, †BL, JI, Audrey Ostrom), where they are very rare winterers, and only one from the rest of the Region, in Coos Bay, OR (BG). There were

no Rusty Blackbird reports this winter, after much higher than usual numbers the previous 2 winters. Two reports of N. Orioles, both with no details, came from Ashland, Jackson, and Newport, Lincoln, in Oregon. Both appeared at hummingbird feeders in early February. If the reports are correct, the correlation with the freeze is probably not accidental.

A ♂ **Brambling** was seen Dec. 28 to Jan. 1 just north of Steilacoom, Pierce (†MK), for the 4th record for Washington. Red Crossbills were noted as common only on the San Juan Is. (DP, Tom Hahn) and the nearby n. Olympic Peninsula (SS). They were scarce in the Seattle area (RTh) and southwestern Washington (BT), and throughout western Oregon (HN). Small numbers of Com. Redpolls were seen throughout the winter in the Vancouver, BC, area, more than in the last 2 winters. One at a Seattle feeder from Feb. 25 to the end of the period (EH, m.ob.) was rare that far south. Both Pine Siskins and Am Goldfinches were patchily distributed. In w. Oregon, both species were in lower numbers than usual (HN). Good numbers of siskins were reported from the n. Olympic Peninsula (SS) and northwestern Washington (TW). Well above average numbers of goldfinches wintered in the Vancouver to Bellingham area (TW, DK). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce throughout the Region.

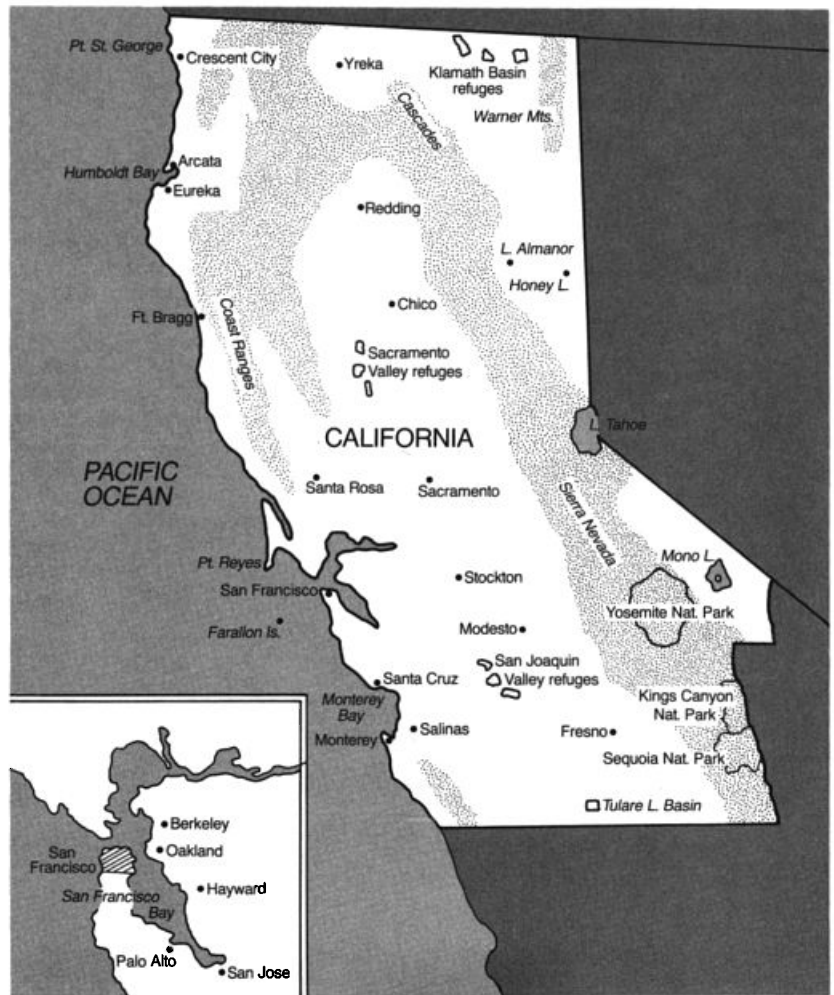
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MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

David G. Yee,
Richard A. Erickson,
Alan D. Barron, and
Stephen F. Bailey



Offshore cruises continued to shed light on the status of our deep-water dwelling species. On land our third straight drought season prevailed. This may have been the cause of certain waterfowl species concentrating in big numbers on what little water was available. Among landbirds, the fall trend of few montane irruptives—especially Red-breasted Nuthatch, thrushes, and finches—persisted through the winter. It was a poor season for overwintering insectivores and rarities.

We are grateful to Kurt F. Campbell for compiling the landbird reports for Yee's analysis.

ABBREVIATIONS—C.B.R.C. = California Bird Records Committee; C.V. = Central Valley; F.I. = Southeast Farallon Island; S.F. = San Francisco; ph. = photo on file with Regional Editors. All records from F.I. should be credited to Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory (P.R.B.O.). Place names in *italics* are counties.

LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS—In December, loons (and Double-crested Cormorants) rapidly accumulated on ponds and reservoirs along the east slope of the Santa Cruz Mts., Santa Clara, then disappeared in early January. Reports totaled 29 Red-throateds, five Pacifics, and 12 Commons, with Shoreline L. hosting the most (nine, four, and five respectively). Unlike the influx of 1983–1984, there was no obvious storm cause and no loons appeared farther east in the county. An ad. Yellow-billed Loon at Crescent City Dec. 13 furnished Del Norte's 2nd record (†ADB). Red-necked Grebes were back

in healthy numbers after a low year. The highest counts were 47 on the Pt. Reyes CBC Dec. 17 (*fide* DWm) and 21 at Shelter Cove, Humboldt, Jan. 4 (R. Sutherland). One on L. Shastina Dec. 17 (RE) was the latest ever for Siskiyou.

Single Laysan Albatrosses were near Cordell Bank, Marin, Dec. 4 (DN, TCo), off Pt. Pinos about Dec. 5 (N. Lemon), and off Big Sur Dec. 26 (RT). These were eclipsed by the 45 Laysans recorded on an oceanographic cruise from 140 mi s.w. of Pt. Arena, Mendocino, to 74 mi s.w. of Punta Gorda, Humboldt, Dec. 8, compared with only 10 Black-footeds (PP, LS). This cruise track also produced three Mottled Petrels, all in Mendocino (LS, †PP). A Flesh-footed Shearwater 30 mi off Pillar Pt. Feb. 2 (BS) was the first in winter for San Mateo. A Brandt's Cormorant on Shoreline L. Dec. 9–21 (PLN, †DLSu, m.ob.) represented the only recent Santa Clara record. The unseasonal frigatebird that buzzed F.I. Dec. 16 was not identified to species, but presumably was Magnificent.

HERONS TO WATERFOWL—A Least Bittern at L. Merced, S.F., Jan. 28 (DPM) was among few ever found on the coast of our Region, especially in winter. A Snowy Egret x Little Blue Heron was present all Period at Charleston Slough, Santa Clara (WGB *et al.*). A White-faced Ibis in the Elkhorn Slough/Salinas R. mouth area Dec. 4–Jan. 4 (CKf, DR *et al.*) was believed to be the same individual present since September. Surprisingly, there are 3 previous January–March records from coastal Monterey in the early 1980s (Roberson, 1985 *Monterey Birds*. Monterey Peninsula Aud. Soc.).

The 38,667 Tundra Swans on the Stockton CBC Dec. 17 more than doubled the previous high (DGY *et al.*), and broke the North American CBC record (see AB 40:1075). A **Whooper Swan** on Venice I., San Joaquin, Dec. 16 (†M/JL) was with thousands of migratory waterfowl and would seem every bit as valid as California's only previously accepted record (Jan. 17-19, 1984 near Grimes, Colusa). Another at Mountain Lake Park, S.F., Jan. 28 had been present some time and was assumed feral (JM). There have been rumors of captive Whoopers in wild situations (we've received no details prior to this), and considerable discontent ever since the C.B.R.C. decision on the Grimes bird. Observers are doing a disservice when they fail to place their observations and documentation on file with us and/or the C.B.R.C. because they have decided a record is invalid. Only after an analysis of *all* sightings, and possible sightings, can the best judgment be made on problematic records such as these.

Another C.B.R.C. review species, Trumpeter Swan, was reported largely without details. An immature was reported at L. Almanor, Plumas, Dec. 29 (MDH) and two immatures were seen and heard at Honey Lake W.A., Lassen, Jan. 2-3 (JTr, †TDM *et al.*). One picked up dead on Venice I., San Joaquin, Jan. 20 as part of a fowl cholera cleanup was identified in the hand by state Fish & Game personnel but was not saved (*fide* BED) and an adult just w. of Nelson, Butte, Feb. 10 (JHS) was traced to the Lower Mackenzie District of the Yukon by its red collar with white alphanumeric markings (*fide* BED). Reports continuing to lack adequate documentation should ultimately be rejected by the C.B.R.C., but this policy seems not yet to be fully implemented.

A Ross' Goose at Calero Res. Jan. 12 (DLSu) was Santa Clara's 2nd; four others were reported from the coast. A count of 27,000 was made at Merced N.W.R. Jan. 27 (GZ). Three blue Ross' Geese and six blue Snow x Ross' Geese were reported from the C.V., but an apparent family group at Sacramento N.W.R., Glenn, Nov. 20 and Feb. 12 (M/JL) illustrated how difficult it can be to assign names to these birds. A ♂ blue Snow x Ross' Goose and a ♀ white Ross' Goose were accompanied by two blue young. One young was "turning into archetypical blue Ross'" and the other into "something slightly less than archetypical." Inland Brant were found near Nicolaus Jan. 26 (Sutter's first—BED) and s. of Durham, Butte, Feb. 21 (JHS). Single Cackling Canada Geese (race *minima*) were found on the coast at Hayward Regional Shoreline Dec. 29 (RJR), the Pajaro R. mouth Dec. 21 (RFT), and Elkhorn Slough Jan. 1 (DR *et al.*). Aside from a small number that regularly travel through *Del Norte* with Aleutian Canada Geese (race *leucopareia*), this form is quite rare on the coast.

Six Eurasian Green-winged Teal were found, two in the Sacramento Valley and four on south S.F. Bay. A bird showing characteristics of both the American and Eurasian forms was at Palo Alto Baylands Feb. 4 (JM). Another intermediate form was the Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal at Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Feb. 16 (†PJM). Eight Eur. Wigeon near Ft. Dick, *Del Norte*, Dec. 11 bested last year's record five there (ADB); 13 were w. of Nelson, Butte, Feb. 15 (JHS). Eurasian x Am. Wigeon were reported again: one near Ft. Dick Dec. 18 (ADB) and one at L. Solano, Solano/Yolo (date?—ECB).

Aerial and ground counts of Ring-necked Ducks on Dec. 7 totaled 44,000 at Butte Sink W.A., Sutter (BED *et al.*), a record California count. A ♂ Ring-necked Duck x scaup sp. in Oakland Feb. 18 was back for at least its 5th winter there (JM). Four Tufted Ducks were reported: a male found Nov. 21 and a female found Nov. 26 visited several S.F. lakes before settling for most of the winter at the old Sutrø Baths (DPM, †JM, †ph. SFB, m.ob.); a male was at Mallard Res., *Contra Costa*, Dec. 31 (†RJR *et al.*); and a male was at the Smith R. estuary Jan. 17-Feb. 11 for its 2nd winter (†ADB, †LPL *et al.*). The season's only King Eider, an imm. male, was at Moss Landing Dec. 9-Jan. 9 (†DEG *et al.*). Point St. George, *Del Norte*, produced another record high Black Scoter count: 253 on Dec. 18 (ADB). A Surf Scoter at the Hollister sewage ponds

Dec. 28 was San Benito's first (KVV) and one at the Modesto sewage ponds Jan. 24 (RMcN) was Stanislaus' second. A count of 193 Hooded Mergansers on L. Frey, Solano, Jan. 9 (M. Berner) nearly doubled the previous state high count.

RAPTORS—Most raptors were reported in unusually high numbers, especially Rough-legged Hawk and Merlin. One or two Black-shouldered Kites appeared around Edge-wood, Siskiyou, Dec. 17 and Jan. 18 (MFRb). Four N. Goshawks were very rare in the S.F. Bay area: at S.F. Zoo Dec. 4 (A Indelicato), over Tiburon Dec. 31 (†BHj), on Mt. Diablo, *Contra Costa*, Dec. 31-Jan. 14 (†JM, †RJR, B. Chilson, KGH), and at Castle Rock S.P., Santa Cruz, Feb. 22 (DLSu). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk wintered in the S.F. Presidio Dec. 21-Feb. 13 (RS, m.ob.), while an adult was over Golden Gate Park, S.F., Feb. 11 and an unaged bird was by Mt. San Bruno, San Mateo, Dec. 23 (both ASH).

In an amazing continuation of the annual trend of latest- and earliest-ever Swainson's Hawks in the Delta, San Joaquin, this year credible reports completely spanned the winter months (DGY, GEW *et al.*), with the shocker being nine together on King I. Jan. 15 (M/JL)! I (SFB) am prompted to speculate that this species may now winter in the Delta. Three of four "Harlan's" Hawk reports had details: in Solano Jan. 7 (†MBG), in San Joaquin Feb. 4 (†DGY), and in Sacramento Feb. 5 and Mar. 12 (†TDM). Even farther from the species' normal range than the fall 1987 Mono bird, an elusive Crested Caracara e. of Grenada, Siskiyou, Oct. 21-Mar. 12 will surely provoke similar controversy on its origin (M. & B. Machado, ph. B. Balfrey, m.ob.). It appeared to be a 2nd-winter bird, of the northern subspecies expected of either an escaped captive or a wild vagrant (†ADB, †RE, †MFRb).

GROUSE TO SHOREBIRDS—Ruffed Grouse drumming reaches its peak in March and April in our Region, and our records show sporadic post-breeding drumming until August, so a male hard at it Jan. 29 along Dunn Creek, n e *Del Norte* (ADB) was certainly early. Sandhill Cranes are rare coastally in our Region; one slightly inland at Shoreline Lake Dec. 12 (JY, AL) furnished the 2nd Santa Clara record.

A Greater Yellowlegs at Mono Lake Dec. 18 (E. King) and one near Mammoth Jan. 1 (B. Johnston) furnished the first winter records for Mono. A Ruddy Turnstone at the Modesto sewage ponds Feb. 17-20 (†HMR, ERC) provided only the 2nd winter record from the Region's interior. At this same site was a Sanderling Dec. 21-Feb. 21 (†HMR *et al.*). A late Pectoral Sandpiper was in the Arcata Bottoms, *Humboldt*, Dec. 4 (M Morris). Stretching inner S.F. Bay wintering to the limit were four Short-billed Dowitchers at Suisun Marsh, Solano, Dec. 19 (G. Clifton). Yet another winter period Wilson's Phalarope was found, with one at the Salinas R. mouth Dec. 15 (†DEG) that could not be found thereafter.

GULLS TO ALCIDS—Three wintering Franklin's Gulls were slightly more than average. November's ad. Little Gull frequented 3 more sites in San Joaquin throughout the period (†AME, †A. Kratter, m.ob.), and it flew into Sacramento Dec. 17 (MDC) for the first non-San Joaquin C.V. record. Santa Clara's 4th Heermann's Gull was a 2nd-winter bird at Palo Alto Dec. 19 (TAC, PLN). Massive feeding flocks of gulls on the Monterey Bay (pelagic) CBC Dec. 29 represented record highs for six species, even though thousands of distant gulls went unidentified: 2990 Heermann's, 6710 Californias, 434 Herrings, 43 Thayer's, 6200 Westerns, and 395 Glaucous-wingeds (R. Norden, SFB, DLSH). Both the 3rd-winter W. Gull and the first-winter Glaucous-winged x W. Gull at Lucerne, Clear L., Dec. 3 (both †RAE) were Lake firsts. Apparent hybrid

adults of expected but seldom-identified combinations were the Glaucous x Herring Gull at the Sacramento R., Sacramento, Dec. 1 (†RAE) and the Glaucous x Glaucous-winged Gull at Mallard Res., Contra Costa, Dec. 31-Jan. 1 (†RJR). Of 16 Glaucous Gulls, four inland birds included an adult at Modesto sewage ponds, Stanislaus, Feb. 19 (†ph. ERC).

One tardy Elegant Tern inhabited Half Moon Bay, San Mateo, Dec. 4-17 (†GHF, KGH, BS). A Com. Murre flew in to Shoreline L. Dec. 19 (A. Kratter, M. Rogers) but did not stay. Three Parakeet Auklets plus five "probables" from 130 to 78 mi off Mendocino Dec. 8 (LS, †PP) were among the very few healthy individuals ever seen in California waters, but they may have been at the eastern edge of this species' likely normal winter range in the North Pacific Gyre (PP).

DOVES TO WOODPECKERS — A White-winged Dove in S.F. Dec. 3 (DPM) likely was a late fall bird, but one in Arcata Dec. 11-Jan. 10 (I. Krestensen et al.) may have represented one of our few truly wintering individuals. A Mourning Dove at Mono Lake Dec. 18 (ES) established a December first for Mono. The Barred Owl at Howland Hill, Del Norte, was still present as of Feb. 22 (†ADB). Our strongest showing of Short-eared Owl in 4 years produced 26 coastal reports of 100+ birds with high numbers reported from the interior as well.

Perhaps the bird of the season was the roadkilled **Chuck-will's-widow** found near Loleta, Humboldt, during the period Dec. 12-16 (J. Aggan, *Humboldt State Univ.), for the state's 2nd record. A ♂ Costa's Hummingbird at Clear Lake Jan. 14-28 (C. McKenny et al.) was Lake's first. In modifying past statements (AB 39:207 & 42:317), the now annual occurrence of identifiable Rufous Hummingbirds during early February (two coastal birds this year) implies the beginning of Regional spring movement since nearly all "wintering" *Selasphorus* sp. are unidentifiable immatures (two coastal December birds this year). Unprecedentedly, more Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported than Red-naped Sapsuckers by a 5:3 ratio (there's nothing like an AOU split!). Among the former were the following singles: Siskiyou's first near Grenada Dec. 8-17 (RE, NEC, †MFRb), near Arcata Dec. 17 (J. Allen), the San Jose CBC Dec. 18 (C. Otahal), Monterey Dec. 27 (†BJW—Monterey's 3rd), and Solano's fall bird Jan. 16-Feb. 21 (†MBG, DL). A Red-breasted Sapsucker at Lee Vining Jan. 5-13 was a January first for the Mono Basin (ES). Four apparent Red-breasted x Red-naped Sapsuckers were also reported: Arastradero Preserve, Santa Clara, Dec. 6-19 (†PLN); Tiburon, Marin Dec. 31 (†BHi); and one each at Gateway Oaks Jan. 18 and Reichmuth Park Jan. 31 in Sacramento (both †TDM).

FLYCATCHERS TO VIREOS — An Empidonax flycatcher found in Redwood Regional Park, Alameda, Dec. 13-Jan. 17 (RJR, †JM, †HG) was identified as a **Hammond's Flycatcher** after careful study. It was probably the same bird from last year. Two coastal W. Flycatchers was average. Most vagrant Black Phoebe sightings in the Great Basin are for spring or fall, so one at Mono Lake Jan. 27 (S. Schmidt) was considered a first in winter for the Mono Basin. A very rare Ash-throated Flycatcher was found near Pajaro, Monterey, Jan. 1-2 (I. Manici, †PJM). Wandering chickadees included a Mountain Chickadee in Trinidad Dec. 10 (GSL) and a Chestnut-backed at Del Valle Regional Park, Alameda, Feb. 22 (ALE). Also displaced were a White-breasted Nuthatch at High Divide Dec. 18-Jan. 26 (GSL, ADB) and a House Wren near Ft. Dick Dec. 14-18 (RAE, ADB), both Del Norte, and Rock Wrens near Stockton (two) Dec. 17 (DGY et al.) and at the Albany Landfill, Alameda, Dec. 18 (JM). Now possibly resident, the Canyon Wren in Pine Canyon, Contra Costa, was still present Jan. 3 (†KGH).

The newly established W. Bluebird frontier in Lee Vining had three spring arrivals Feb. 25 (ES). Mountain Bluebird was the only thrush well reported (35 reports along interior valley edges), including one at Modoc N.W.R. Feb. 14 (EckB). Brown



Brown Thrasher at Bodega, California, January 3, 1989. Photograph/Dan Nelson.

Thrashers unexpectedly wintered in Bodega Jan. 2-14 (BDP, ph. DN et al.) and F.I. (Oct. 30 into March) but the **Bendire's Thrasher** near Acampo, San Joaquin, expectedly wintered until Mar. 11 (DGY). Probably the most scrutinized bird of the season was the imm. **White/Black-backed Wagtail** at Moss Landing Dec. 23-Jan. 21 (†DEG, †JM, ph.†DR, m.ob.). Usually these first-year birds are indistinguishable in the field but a number of the bird's traits strongly suggested White Wagtail of the race *ocularis*. Unfortunately, the bird left before molting into its distinguishing adult plumage. If confirmed by the C.B.R.C. as a White Wagtail it would represent a first for the Region. Readers interested in the White/Black-backed super-species complex are referred to Morlan (1981, Status and identification of forms of White Wagtail in W. North America. *Continental Birdlife* 2:2:37-50). Our only Bohemian Waxwings were two to five birds at Somes Bar, w. Siskiyou, Feb. 7-9 (JSe), an area where few, if any, have ever been reported. Northern Shrikes abounded with 24 birds reported, including two in the C.V.: Los Banos W.M.A., Merced, Jan. 21-Feb. 25 (B. Dyer, m.ob.) and near Davis Jan. 31-Feb. 26 (BMx, m.ob.). Our single Solitary Vireo (race *cassinii*) was along Pescadero Creek Dec. 31 (PJM), San Mateo's first in winter.

WARBLERS TO TANAGERS — Three coastal Tennessee Warblers made our lowest total in 10 years, but 31+ coastal Nashville Warblers added points to their winter average. Dendoica fans in the C.V. commented on the paucity of Black-throated Gray Warblers, contrasting with the abundance of 14 Townsend's Warblers (TDM, HMR), while a Hermit Warbler at American R. Parkway, Sacramento, Dec. 11 (GEw) was a nice bonus. A healthy 37 Palm Warblers were reported. Leading the entourage were one inland at the Hollister Sewage Ponds Dec. 28 (†KVV), for San Benito's first, and an individual of the e. race *hypochrysea* in Tiburon, Marin, Dec. 25-31 (†DAH, †JCo).

Inland Black-and-white Warblers included one in Davis Dec. 12 (MP), and Butte's first in Chico Dec. 30-Jan. 20 (JHS). Four Am. Redstarts dotted the central coast. The parulid treat of the season was the Region's 3rd wintering **Worm-eating Warbler** in Pescadero Jan. 2-16 (†JAC, †m.ob.). Another 15 mi north in Half Moon Bay Dec. 3 (†PJM) may well have been the same bird. A N. Waterthrush at Pt. Reyes Station Dec. 17 (JW) was probably a tardy fall bird but one near Ferndale, Humboldt, Jan. 1 (RLeV) may have been attempting to winter. A wintering Wilson's Warbler in Sacramento Dec. 1-Jan. 1 (TDM, GEw) was a C.V. rarity. The ♂ Summer Tanager returned for his 4th winter along Corralitos Cr., Santa Cruz, Nov. 7-Jan. 28 (BMMo, JMS), and seven W. Tanagers were found including three in late January.

GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES — Our only Rose-breasted Grosbeak was in Berkeley Feb. 5-24 (M. Craig et al.), while three Black-headed Grosbeaks were holiday specials: singles at Menlo Park Dec. 24-28 (PJM), Año Nuevo Point Dec. 27-

28 (GJS), and Hayward Jan 1 (RPD) A Brown Towhee at Arcata Feb 22 (B Widowson) was casual that far north along the coast. A concentration of 30 Am. Tree Sparrows at Modoc N.W.R. Feb. 18 (EckB) was our highest on record. Fifteen Chipping Sparrows near Acampo, San Joaquin, Dec. 15 (DGY) were where 13 had wintered last year, but Clay-colored Sparrows at Half Moon Bay Dec. 9 (RSTh) and Arcata Dec. 17-20 (R.S. & A.W. Lockett et al.) were evidently late fall birds. A Lark Sparrow in S.F. on Jan. 15 was "rare here at any season" (JM). Several *canescens/nevadensis* type Sage Sparrows in e. Stanislaus Dec. 28 and Feb. 25 confirmed wintering in the area (HMR).

The Region was dazzled by its first wintering **Le Conte's Sparrow** near Ft. Dick, Del Norte, Jan. 5-Feb. 11 (†RAE, †ADB, †GSL, †LPL, ph. RE et al.). Four Sharp-tailed Sparrows were reported including San Mateo's first at Pescadero Marsh Dec. 21-Jan. 28 (†GHT, BS). For the 3rd straight winter, high numbers of Swamp and White-throated sparrows were reported: 52 and 45 respectively. Coastally, the former has definitely outgrown its vagrant label, but it is still considered as such in the interior where only two were found: Bract Tract, San Joaquin, Dec. 17 (†T. Schantz) and Brush L., Stanislaus, Jan. 2 (†T. Poole). In addition to S.F.'s wintering Harris' Sparrow Oct. 23-Feb. 11 (m.ob.) there were three others: San Luis N.W.R. Dec. 9 (B. Diedericks), Lee Vining Dec. 11-Feb. 21 (ES), and American R. Parkway, Sacramento, Feb. 5 and later (DoM, †TDM et al.). The "Gray-headed" Junco in McKinleyville loitered through the period (RLeV) while the Moraga bird said goodbyes Dec. 18 (GA).

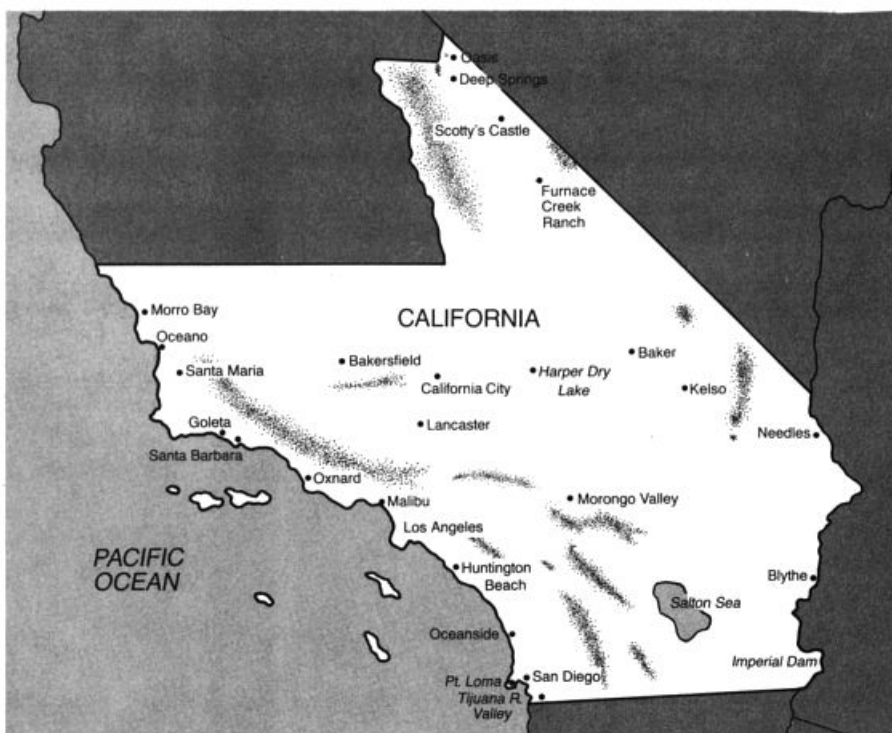
A **McCown's Longspur** made the Del Norte list near Ft. Dick Dec. 30-Jan. 18 (ADB, †GSL, †LPL, ph. R.S. Lockett). It was only the 4th in the Region this decade and the first to winter along our coast. Lapland Longspurs (100+) were again attracted to Gazelle Flats, Siskiyou, Dec. 29 (RE, MFRb) but had vanished by Jan. 20. A W. Meadowlark at Mono Lake Dec. 18 (E. King) furnished one of few winter records for that locale. The Moss Landing area produced a Rusty Blackbird for one tantalizing day Jan. 23 (KH, JM, PP). The tenacious pair of Great-tailed Grackles was still at S.F.'s Aquatic Park Dec. 21 (B. Hogan). While Pacific Grove was enjoying its wintering Orchard Oriole (through Feb. 26—DR), another male visited the Sunset District of S.F. Jan. 21-29 (B. Berg et al.). Our only Hooded Oriole was in Alamo, Contra Costa, Dec. 29-Jan. 11 (†JMR et al.). A normal six N. Orioles were uncovered along the coast with only two identified as "Bul-

lock's" Purple Finch, Red Crossbill, and Pine Siskin continued to be scarce throughout the Region, especially in the lowlands. Evening Grosbeak was basically a ditto; however, 2000+ on the L. Almanor CBC, Plumas, Dec. 29 (HG et al.) provided our highest winter concentration on record and caused one to sigh in bewilderment.

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SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

Guy McCaskie



The winter of 1988–1989 was relatively mild with below-average rainfall, but with an unusual cold spell during January. Bird activity during the winter was somewhat uneventful. Many of our regularly wintering species appeared to be in lower than normal numbers, and there were no influxes of species from the north. American Robins were scarcer than during most recent winters, and Cedar Waxwings were present in only very small numbers and absent from some areas. Mountain species such as Red-breasted Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees were virtually unrecorded in the coastal lowlands, where small numbers can be found most winters, and Purple Finches did not appear to move from their nesting areas. Most of the rarities—such as the Ruff in San Diego County, the Thick-billed Kingbird in Orange County, and the Grace's Warbler in Ventura County—were birds apparently returning to localities where they had spent previous winters, but a Common Pochard in San Bernardino County represented a potential addition to the California State List.

ABBREVIATIONS — F.C.R. = Furnace Creek Ranch in Death Valley, Inyo; S.C.R.E. = Santa Clara River Estuary near Ventura, Ventura; S.E.S.S. = south end of the Salton Sea, Imperial. Place names in italics are counties. As virtually all rarities found in s. California are seen by numerous observers, only the observer initially identifying the bird is included. Documentation is on file 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.

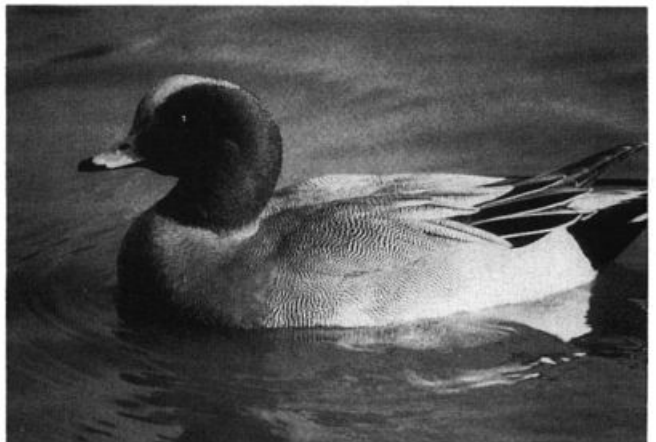
LOONS TO HERONS — Two Pacific Loons were found inland on L. Palmdale, Los Angeles, Dec. 3 (MHe), with one remaining through Mar. 17; another on L. Silverwood in the San Bernardino Mts. Jan. 16 (MAP) was among very few ever to be found in San Bernardino away from the Colorado R.; and three were together on L. Perris, Riverside, Dec. 5, with one still present Jan. 10 (RMcK). A Com. Loon at Silver Lakes near Helendale, San Bernardino, Feb. 11–18 (EAC) was at an unusual locality for mid-winter. The **Least Grebe** found near Niland, Imperial, Nov. 19 remained through Dec. 24 (MAP). Up to two Horned Grebes present at Silver Lakes near Helendale Jan. 16–Feb. 18 (MAP) were inland and away from any of the larger bodies of fresh water, and 25 on L. Perris Dec. 1 (RMcK) indicated just how numerous this species can be on some of the larger fresh-water lakes.

Two Laysan Albatrosses were seen well offshore with one at 31° 30'N–121° 30'W Jan. 24 (KS) and the other at 32° 00'N–123° 50'W Jan. 29 (BR). Northern Fulmars were present in numbers south to Pt. Conception, Santa Barbara, as indicated by the presence of 125 at 34° 40'N–121° 20'W Feb. 2 (BR). A Cook's Petrel, obviously regular far off the California coast, was at 30° 20'N–122° 20'W Jan. 23 (KS) and three more were at 30° 00'N–124° 00'W on Jan. 24 (KS). A Pink-footed Shearwater, quite rare in s. California waters during the winter, was seen off Long Beach Feb. 26 (KLG) and three more were seen off San Diego Mar. 6 (JO'B). The presence of a Short-tailed Shearwater near Santa Cruz I. Dec. 12 (MAH), three off Santa Barbara Dec. 31 (JLD), two off Long Beach Feb. 26 (REW), seven off Oceanside, San Diego, Dec. 24 (DP), and one more off San Diego Dec. 17 (DP) indicated that small numbers of these birds were present in s. California waters during the winter. A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, very rare in s. California waters, landed on a research vessel at 32° 30'N–122° 50'W on Jan. 29 (BR). A Red-billed Tropicbird, considered very rare in winter this far north, was at 32° 20'N–121° 30'W on Jan. 28 (BR). At least three Brown Pelicans were present on the Salton Sea all winter (RMcK), and another seen to land on a dirt dike near Brawley, Imperial, Feb. 11 (GMcC) was unexpected considering the time of the year.

Up to four ad. Little Blue Herons were present around s. San Diego Bay throughout the winter (EC), but the species went unreported elsewhere in the Region. The imm. Tricolored Heron found on s. San Diego Bay Nov. 28 was present through Dec. 17 (EC). The ad. Reddish Egret present on s. San Diego Bay since Sept. 11 was present through at least Feb. 7 (JO'B); the immature present at the mouth of the Tijuana R., San Diego, since Aug. 3 remained through Nov. 26 (EC), and the other found at the mouth of the San Diego R. Nov. 20 was still present Apr. 8 (MT). Some 6000 White-faced Ibises in the area south of Brawley Jan. 29 (REW) made an unusually large concentration. Two Wood Storks, casual along the coast nowadays, were seen in flight over Guajome L. near Oceanside Feb. 19 (L & DS).

WATERFOWL — A total of four Tundra Swans at the Santa Ynez R. mouth, Santa Barbara, Dec. 23–Jan. 13 (KH) and one near Lancaster, Los Angeles, Dec. 17 (JKA) were the southernmost to be reported this winter. A total of 20 Greater White-fronted Geese, now rare as wintering birds in s. California, were found along the coast, and another was present inland on Los Serranos L. near Chino, San Bernardino, Jan. 8–21 (MAP). Eleven Ross' Geese were found wintering along the coast, and another was inland, away from S.E.S.S., at Silver Lakes near Helendale Jan. 11–Feb. 18 (EAC). The ♂ Eur. Green-winged Teal found in Goleta, Santa Barbara, Nov. 24 was present through Feb. 4 (AB), having spent its 8th winter at this locality, another was in Orange, Orange, Jan. 8 (DRW), and a 3rd was at the mouth of the San Diego R. Feb. 4–Mar. 12 (GMcC). A ♂ Blue-winged Teal in El Centro, Imperial, Jan. 28 (DRW) was in an area where few have been found during the winter. Eurasian Wigeon appeared to be present in above-average numbers with at least 25 individuals reported during the period. A ♂ Eurasian Wigeon x American Wigeon was carefully identified on Swan L. near Mira Loma, Riverside, Jan. 8–21 (MAP) and another was well seen on s. San Diego Bay Dec. 10 (GMcC), this hybrid combination now being found in s. California almost every year.

A ♂ **Common Pochard**, the first to be found along the Pacific Coast south of Alaska, was at Silver Lakes near Helendale Feb. 11–17 (RP) and was felt by many to be a genuine vagrant from Asia. The only Tufted Ducks found this winter were a female in Saticoy, Ventura, Feb. 4–Mar. 5 (LRB) and a male on the Elderberry Forebay of Castaic Res., Los Angeles, Dec. 4 (KLG). Only seven Oldsquaws were reported, but these included one as far south as Newport Bay Jan. 2–16 (DRW) and another on San Diego Bay Feb. 19–Mar. 19 (CGE). A Black Scoter at Point Mugu, Ventura, all winter (JSR), another in Oceanside Feb. 4–19 (GMcC), and a 3rd on s. San Diego Bay Nov. 20–Feb. 21 (JO'B) were the only ones found south of



Adult male Eurasian Wigeon in Lompoc, California. The winter of 1988–1989 saw above-average numbers of this species wintering in southern California. Photograph/Matt Heindel.

Santa Barbara. An imm. ♂ Surf Scoter on L. Silverwood Jan. 16 (MAP) and three more near S.E.S.S. Jan. 29 (RC) were inland, as was a White-winged Scoter on L. Palmdale Dec. 4 (NBB), but 19 together in the center of the Salton Sea Feb. 25 (RMcK) was unprecedented. Up to four Hooded Mergansers in Santee, San Diego, Dec. 1–Mar. 18 (EP) and two seen near Brawley Jan. 29 (REW) were relatively far south for this species. Three Red-breasted Mergansers, rare inland in winter, were on the Elderberry Forebay of Castaic Res. Dec. 4 (KLG) and another was at Silver Lakes near Hesperia Feb. 16–18 (MAP).

RAPTORS TO SHOREBIRDS — Black-shouldered Kites were again present in the Imperial Valley south of the Salton Sea with at least five individuals found during the period (JLD, REW, GMcC), indicating the species is increasing in numbers as a winter visitor to s.e. California. Single imm. Bald Eagles at Point Mugu Dec. 11 (RJM), Upper Newport Bay Jan. 29 (BED), China Lake, Kern, Dec. 3 (RAH), and Harper Dry Lake northwest of Barstow, San Bernardino, Dec. 3 (PB) were all away from regular areas of winter occurrence. A Red-shouldered Hawk present in Niland, Imperial, throughout the winter (GMcC) and another in nearby Brawley Jan. 28 (GMcC) were both in an area where the species is considered very rare. An imm. Swainson's Hawk, accidental in winter, was well seen in Goleta Feb. 1 (LRB), but one over San Marcos, San Diego, Feb. 25 (DMcK) was probably an exceptionally early spring migrant. A "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk, rarely found here in s. California, was photographed near Ridgecrest, Kern, Dec. 30–Jan. 2 (DB) and another was present near Brawley Jan. 29–Feb. 11 (REW). Small numbers of Rough-legged Hawks were scattered throughout the Region, with two at L. Henshaw, San Diego, and at least three more around the S.E.S.S. during most of the winter (CGE, JLD, GMcC) being the southernmost. A Merlin near Tustin, Orange, Nov. 29–Dec. 22 (DRW) was a black individual of the rarely found race *suckleyi*.

The only wintering Lesser Golden-Plovers, all believed to be of the Asiatic form *fulva*, were three near Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, throughout the period (PEL), up to eight on n. Vandenberg A.F.B., Santa Barbara, Sept. 27–Mar. 3 (KH), and as many as 12 together at Seal Beach, Orange, Jan. 29 through the end of the period (DRW). A Black Oystercatcher seen off and on in La Jolla, San Diego, Jan. 6–Feb. 3 (B & IM) was in an area where few are recorded. A Whimbrel at S.E.S.S. Jan. 29 (REW) was the first ever to be found there in winter. A Sanderling, previously unrecorded inland in winter away from the Salton Sea, was near Taft, Kern, Dec. 30 (MOC). Up to 60 Stilt Sandpipers were found during the period around S.E.S.S. (REW) where small numbers regularly winter. The ♂ Ruff spending its 7th winter on s. San Diego Bay was still present Mar. 19 (GMcC), and the two found in El Centro Nov. 20 remained through the winter with the male still present Mar. 4 (GMcC).

GULLS TO ALCIDS — A first-winter Franklin's Gull on Laguna Res. in Laguna Hills, Orange, Dec. 4 (JT) was presumed to be a late fall migrant, but one in Fullerton, Orange, Jan. 9–22 (DRW) was undoubtedly wintering locally, and another at S.E.S.S. Jan. 29 (DA) was the first to be found in that area in winter. About 1000 Mew Gulls along the Santa Ana R. in Orange throughout the winter (DRW) made an unusual concentration for this far south, and an immature inland on L. Silverwood Jan. 16–21 (MAP) was one of very few ever found in San Bernardino. A Herring Gull on L. Palmdale Jan. 21 (MHe) was in an area where this species is considered very rare. Two or three Thayer's Gulls were inland around S.E.S.S. during the winter as is normal, but a first-winter bird on L. Cachuma, Santa Barbara, Feb. 21 (PEL) was considered most unusual. At least two Glaucous-winged Gulls were around S.E.S.S. during the winter (GMcC), and another was on L.

Cachuma, where considered very rare, Mar. 1 (JEL). The only Glaucous Gulls reported this winter were two different first-winter birds on n. Vandenberg A.F.B., one Dec. 29 (KH) and the other Jan. 7 (KH). Black-legged Kittiwakes reached s. California waters as indicated by at least 170 seen during a scientific cruise off the coast between Jan. 24 and Feb. 2 (BR, KS), 17 seen off San Diego Feb. 19 (CGE), and smaller numbers found elsewhere along the coast, but a first-winter bird 15 mi inland along the San Gabriel R. in Pico Rivera, Los Angeles, Jan. 6 (JS) was exceptional. An Elegant Tern at Doheny State Beach, Orange, Dec. 29–31 (DRW) was an exceptionally late fall straggler. Black Skimmers wintered farther north than usual with up to 21 present at Point Mugu during the period (REW), up to seven in Santa Barbara Jan. 28–Mar. 1 (A & JC), and single birds in Goleta Dec. 23 (fide KB) and Feb. 22 (JEL). A Cassin's Auklet found alive on a Santa Barbara parking lot 3 mi inland from the beach Feb. 10 (ECO) was unprecedented. A Tufted Puffin, exceptionally rare in s. California waters, was far off the coast at 32° 10'N–121° 50'W Jan. 28 (BR) and another was near Santa Barbara I. Feb. 26 (KLG).

DOVES TO SWALLOWS — The introduced Spotted Dove is now established as far north as Lompoc, Santa Barbara, where a number of individuals have been reported during the past year (fide AA). Up to six White-winged Doves, very rare in winter along the coast, spent the period in Goleta with four still present Mar. 25 (PEL). Two Inca Doves at F.C.R. Dec. 30 (FT), with one remaining Jan. 6–Mar. 5 (AS), were exceptionally far north. The two ♀ Ruddy Ground-Doves present at F.C.R. at the end of November were still there Apr. 2 (JO'B). A Short-eared Owl at S.E.S.S. Dec. 28 (CH) was in an area where few indeed have been found in recent years. Twenty Vaux's Swifts near Oceanside Feb. 4 (GMcC) were undoubtedly wintering locally. A ♂ Costa's Hummingbird present throughout the winter in Ridgecrest (DM) was able to survive temperatures dropping down into the teens. Lewis' Woodpeckers appeared to be scarcer than normal with five at L. Silverwood Jan. 16–21 (MAP) being the southernmost reported. The ad. Red-headed Woodpecker found in Goleta Sept. 14 was still present Mar. 28 (KB). A ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Westlake Village, Los Angeles, Dec. 18–31 (JR) and another male was in San Marino, Los Angeles, Dec. 10–11 (DC), this species being a rare straggler to California. A Red-breasted Sapsucker of the nominate form *ruber*, casual



This adult male Costa's Hummingbird wintered in Ridgecrest, California, December 1988 to February 1989. Photograph/Don Moore.

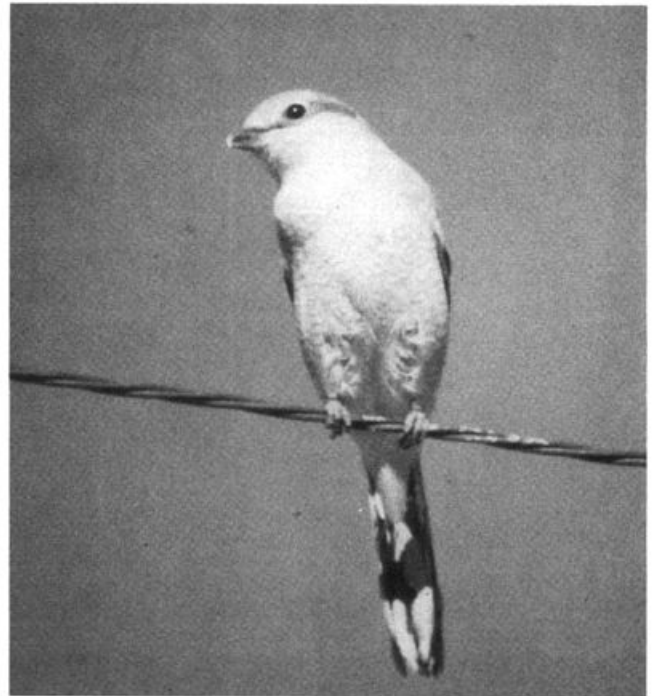
at best in s. California, was near Glennville in the Greenhorn Mts., Kern, Jan. 26 (JW).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher in Santa Barbara Dec. 31–Feb. 3 (BS) was evidently the same bird found here each of the past 4 winters. A Greater Pewee present in San Diego Dec. 6–Feb. 15 (B & IM) was apparently the same bird present here last winter. A Hammond's Flycatcher, casual in winter, present in Goleta Dec. 29–Jan. 29 (RPH) was undoubtedly the same bird as present here last winter. Six Gray Flycatchers were reported with single individuals near Ventura Jan. 8 (RJM), in Orange Dec. 18–Jan. 5 (CJ), at Coto de Caza, Orange, Jan. 12 (HLJ), Rubidoux, Riverside, Nov. 25–Jan. 21 (MAP), Riverside Feb. 11 (CMcG), and in Borrego Springs, San Diego, Feb. 19 (D & MH), this species formerly being more numerous in s. California in winter. The only W. Flycatchers reported this winter were single birds in Santa Barbara Nov. 6–Dec. 31 (RPH) and Dec. 29 (AME), one in San Marino Feb. 5–18 (KLG), another in Irvine, Orange, Dec. 24–Jan. 15 (LRH), and one in Mission Viejo, Orange, Dec. 17–18 (BED). The E. Phoebe found in Santa Barbara Nov. 8 remained through Jan. 12 (TEW), another was in San Marino Dec. 10–Jan. 8 (DC), and a 3rd at S.E.S.S. Dec. 18 (MAP) was undoubtedly the same bird present here all of last winter. Only four Vermilion Flycatchers were reported along the coast with one at Point Mugu all winter (JSR) being the northernmost, but one at Harper Dry Lake Dec. 10 (EAC) and three more near Victorville, San Bernardino, Dec. 26 (MAP) were relatively far north for the interior. The only Ash-throated Flycatchers reported this winter were one in Riverside Dec. 19 (C-TL) and another in Long Beach, Los Angeles, Dec. 15–Jan. 14 (BO'C). A Tropical Kingbird, very rare to casual in winter, was on n. Vandenberg A.F.B. Dec. 24–Mar. 12 (KH) and another in Goleta Sept. 25–Mar. 27 (HPR) was evidently the same bird as present here during the past 2 winters. A Cassin's Kingbird at Finney L. near S.E.S.S. Jan. 29 (RC) was one of very few ever found away from the coastal lowlands in winter. The **Thick-billed Kingbird** near Tustin on Nov. 29 remained through at least Mar. 5 (DRW), having now spent 7 winters at this location. A Barn Swallow was over L. Cachuma Jan. 28 (MHe), two were in Irvine Feb. 5 (DRW), and two more were near Imperial Beach, San Diego, the same day (GMcC), the latter looking very worn and judged to have wintered locally.

JAYS TO VIREOS—Two Steller's Jays on La Cumbre Peak near Santa Barbara Jan. 2 (KA) were at an unusually low elevation, particularly during a winter when corvids did not appear to be on the move. Three Brown Creepers in coastal Orange during the winter (DRW) and another in Santee Jan. 1 (GMcC) were unexpected considering the paucity of mountain birds in the lowlands. A Winter Wren, rare in the southern portion of this Region, was in El Torro, Orange, Dec. 17 (BED), and another was along the upper San Jacinto R. in the San Jacinto Mts., Riverside, Jan. 28 (RRV). The presence of five Sage Thrashers at Harper Dry Lake Dec. 10 (AEC) might indicate small numbers winter at this location. A Brown Thrasher, a very rare straggler to California, was in Irvine Dec. 11–Feb. 18 (RRV). The **White Wagtail** that returned to near Oxnard, Ventura, Oct. 16 for its 2nd winter was still present Mar. 4 (RJM). After the appearance of three N. Shrikes in the n.e. portion of the Region during the late fall, small numbers continued to move into the area as indicated by the presence of an immature at Galileo Hill, Kern, Nov. 6–Jan. 2 with two there on the latter date (JW), an adult photographed in Ridgecrest Jan. 2 (JW), an immature at China Lake Dec. 9–Feb. 25 (RH), another immature at Harper Dry Lake Dec. 10 (M & RC), and an immature exceptionally far south photographed at S.E.S.S. Jan. 22–29 (MK). Ten Solitary Vireos were reported this winter, all but the one at Yaqui Wells in e. San Diego Feb. 11 (D & MH) being along the coast, and all but a



Immature Northern Shrike at Galileo Hill, California, December 3, 1988. Photograph/Matt Heindel.



Immature Northern Shrike exceptionally far south, near the south end of the Salton Sea, California, January 29, 1989 Photograph/Bob Pintner.

cassinii in Goleta Dec. 4–Jan. 29 (RPH) and another at Lake Forrest, Orange, being of the gray interior form *plumbeus*. A Warbling Vireo, exceptionally rare in winter, was in Santa Barbara Dec. 30–Jan. 2 (BA) and another was in Arcadia, Los Angeles, Dec. 4 (DC), both possibly being very late fall migrants.

WOOD WARBLERS— A Tennessee Warbler in Santa Barbara Dec. 6 (AB) could well have been a very late fall migrant, but another there Dec. 31–Jan. 1 (KA), one in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Nov. 30–Mar. 10 (TEW), and a 3rd in Corona del Mar, Orange, Dec. 24–Feb. 5 (LRH) all undoubtedly wintered locally. Twenty Nashville Warblers along the coast was about average for the winter, but one in Niland, Imperial, Feb. 1 (RMcK) was unexpected. A Virginia's Warbler at Finney L. near S.E.S.S. Feb. 17 (GB) was the first to be found away from the immediate coast in winter. A N. Parula in San Diego Dec. 17–Jan. 7 (DH) was undoubtedly the same bird as found here last winter. Twenty Yellow Warblers along the coast were fewer than expected. A Chestnut-sided Warbler was found in Arcadia Dec. 30 (RMcK), and another at S.E.S.S. Dec. 18 (MAP) was undoubtedly wintering locally. A ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler in Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles, Feb. 9–19 (*fide* KLG) was one of about 10 ever to be found wintering in California. Only 15 Black-throated Gray Warblers were reported along the coast, and two or three spent the entire winter inland near Bakersfield (MOC), where also regular at this time of the year. The only Hermit Warblers reported this winter were one on Santa Cruz I. Dec. 10 (MAH) and another on n. Vandenberg A.F.B. Dec. 18–31 (KH). A ♂ Blackburnian Warbler in Santee Dec. 26 (DC) was probably a very late fall migrant, since much searching failed to produce additional sightings.

The ♂ Grace's Warbler that appeared in Ventura Nov. 6 for its 5th winter was still present at the end of the period (JSR). Three Pine Warblers were present in s. California this winter with a male at Morro Bay Dec. 20–Feb. 3 (MHa), a female in Santa Barbara Dec. 31–Feb. 28 (BS), and a male photographed in Yorba Linda, Orange, Jan. 14 through at least Apr. 1 (MHe). A total of 10 Palm Warblers along the coast was about average for winter. Eleven Black-and-white Warblers were found along the coast this winter, with seven of these in the Santa Barbara area. Six Am. Redstarts were found along the coast, where quite rare in winter, but four or five were around S.E.S.S. where small numbers regularly winter. Four N. Waterthrushes were found with single birds at Santa Barbara Dec. 14 (PEL), S.C.R.E. Dec. 11–18 (JSR), Point Mugu throughout the period (JSR), and near Imperial Beach during January and February (JO). A ♂ MacGillivray's Warbler in Huntington Beach, Orange, Oct. 24–Mar. 19 (DRW) was undoubtedly the same bird that had been present here during the past 3 winters. A ♂ Hooded Warbler in Coronado, San Diego, Dec. 11–Mar. 18 (GMcC) was only the 2nd ever to be found wintering in California. Twenty Wilson's Warblers along the coast appeared to be about average for winter. A Painted Redstart in Santa Maria Oct. 22–Mar. 5 (KH) was undoubtedly the same bird as present here last winter.

TANAGERS TO LONGSPURS— A ♂ Hepatic Tanager in Santa Barbara Nov. 5–Mar. 18 (KB) was evidently the same bird that has spent the past 6 winters in this area. Summer Tanagers were much scarcer than normal, with one in Santa Barbara Dec. 30–Mar. 12 (KA), another in Ventura all winter (JSR), a young male in San Marino Dec. 10–Feb. 18 (DC), and a 4th in Huntington Beach Jan. 1 (MAP) being the only ones reported. Likewise, W. Tanagers were scarcer than usual with only 21 reported during the period. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Goleta Dec. 7 (KB) could well have been a late fall migrant, but one at Heritage Ranch, San Luis Obispo, Jan. 3–7 (TB), two together in Santa Barbara Nov. 28–Jan. 22 (JD), another in Santa Barbara Jan. 8–23 (LE), and a 5th photographed in La Jolla Feb. 26 (MG) were all undoubtedly wintering birds. A Blue Grosbeak in Anaheim Dec. 3 (DRW) was exceptionally late and could well have been attempting to winter locally. An ad. ♂ Painted Bunting (with plumage color suggesting dietary deficiency associated with captivity) was frequenting a feeder in Santa Barbara Feb. 14–Mar. 14 (JMcC), and another male (in perfect plumage) was caught and banded in Camarillo, Ventura, Jan. 3 (JWa); in the past similar birds have been



Le Conte's Sparrow at China Lake, California, December 3, 1988. Photograph/David Blue.

considered escapees, but, considering the number of fall records, it should not be considered out of the question that genuine vagrants could be present in winter.

More than the average number of Green-tailed Towhees were found wintering in coastal San Diego, and single birds were present as far north as near San Marcos Pass above Santa Barbara Feb. 20–Mar. 1 (DS) and on the Cuesta Ridge in San Luis Obispo Dec. 17–30 (GPS). A Black-throated Sparrow in Orange Dec. 3–11 (JB) and another in Coronado Dec. 11 (JO) were both along the coast where considered rare, especially so in winter. A Lark Bunting at Quail L., Los Angeles, another in Chula Vista, San Diego, Mar. 5–24 (RR), and four together near Holtville, Imperial, Feb. 17 (RMcK) were all more than likely wintering locally. "Large-billed" Savannah Sparrows, *A. s. rostratus*, remained around coastal marshes in the San Diego area into mid-February, with two seen at Bolsa Chica Jan. 11 (LRH), nine found in the Seal Beach marshes Jan. 15 (LRH), and another as far north as the S.C.R.E. Feb. 11 (RJM) being to the north of San Diego. A Grasshopper Sparrow at Crystal Cove State Park, Orange, Feb. 1 (RH) was away from known areas of normal occurrence. The **Le Conte's Sparrow** found at China Lake Nov. 27 remained through Jan. 2 (RAH) to give us the first winter record for s. California. Twelve Swamp Sparrows along the coast appeared to be about average, and another was inland near Victorville Dec. 26 (MAP). Eighteen White-throated Sparrows found during the period appeared slightly fewer than normal, but the only Harris' Sparrows to be found were a single bird in Whitewater Canyon, Riverside, Dec. 12–23 (DCH) and another at Doheny State Park Dec. 26–Mar. 11 (DT). The only longspurs found during the winter were 18–20 Chestnut-collared Longspurs at S.E.S.S., Feb. 1–2 (RMcK).

BLACKBIRDS, FINCHES— Up to ten Tricolored Blackbirds at Harper Dry Lake Feb. 4–8 (EAC) were relatively far out onto the desert where few are recorded. A Rusty Blackbird at China Lake Dec. 4–6 (JLD) and another at S.C.R.E. Dec. 7 (RJM) were more than likely late fall migrants rather than wintering birds. Great-tailed Grackles continued to increase in numbers along the coast with up to 35 around Imperial Beach throughout the period (GMcC), single birds along the coast of Orange Feb. 23 (RR) & 26 (BP), three at L. Casitas, Ventura, throughout the winter (RJM), another in Ventura during the same period (RJM), one in Santa Barbara Dec. 22–Feb. 5 (JB), and one more in Oceano, San Luis Obispo, for the entire winter (MHa). Five Orchard Orioles were found this winter with one in Goleta Dec. 10 (PEL), a female in Ventura all winter (RJM), an ad. male in Irvine Nov. 27–Apr. 9 (LRH),

an imm. male at Doheny State Park Dec. 27–Jan. 22 (BED), and an ad. male in Imperial Beach Dec. 30–Mar. 11 (BC); this species is found along the coast in small numbers every winter. A Hooded Oriole, very rare in winter, was in Santa Barbara Jan. 29 (PB), three were together in San Marino all winter (DC), and another was in Newport Beach Jan. 1–Feb. 5 (BED). Northern Orioles appeared scarcer than normal with only 40 reported, but this included single “Baltimore” Orioles in Carpinteria Mar. 10 (TEW), Ventura throughout the winter (RJM), San Marino Dec. 19–26 (DC), Doheny State Park Dec. 27–Jan. 22 (BED), and Coronado Dec. 18–29 (EC). Since Scott’s Orioles are rare along the coast in winter, single birds in Santa Barbara Dec. 28 (JEL), Santa Paula, Ventura, Feb. 5 (RJM), and O’Neill Regional Park, Orange, Dec. 18 (DRW) were of interest.

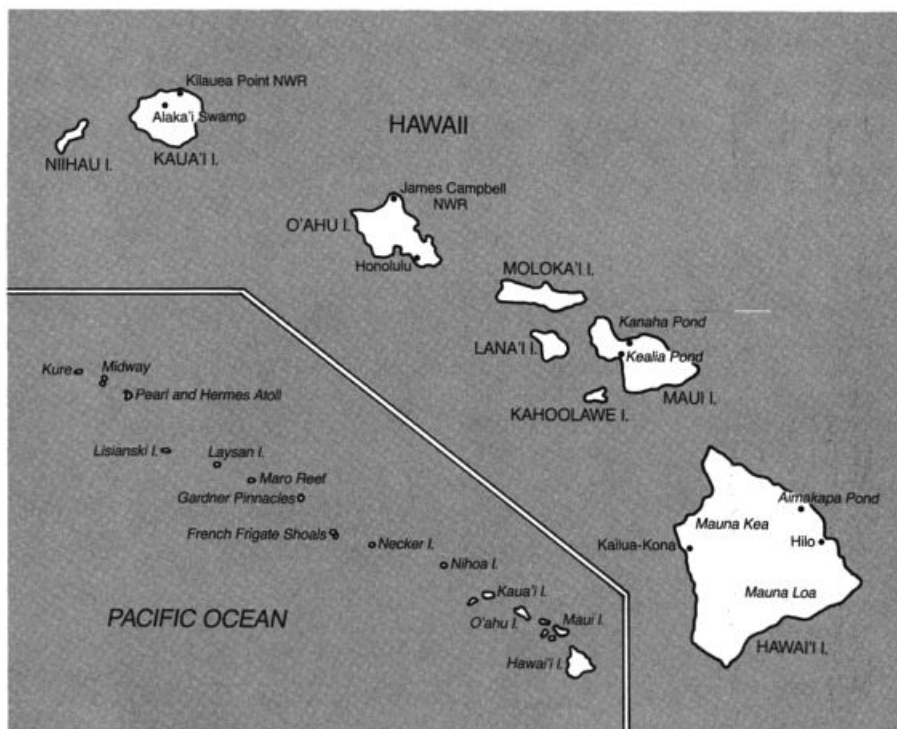
Two Purple Finches at Desert Center, Riverside, Dec. 29 (RMcK) were totally unexpected, particularly during this winter when virtually none were to be found along the coast away from known breeding localities. The only Red Crossbills reported this winter were up to twelve on Figueroa Mt. near Santa Barbara Dec. 26–Mar. 24 (KA).

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HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

Robert L. Pyle



Above normal rainfall throughout the winter months on all islands except O’ahu has stimulated good vegetation growth and brought favorable conditions for early spring nesting. Two seabird species began nesting activities very early on Kaua’i, and juveniles of several native forestbirds were seen on Hawai’i Island, indicating successful nesting there this season. Laysan Albatrosses nesting on Kaua’i suffered a catastrophe; and life for the species ‘O’o’a may at last have flickered out.

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., O’ahu; K.P.N.W.R. = Kilauea Point Nat’l Wildlife Ref., Kaua’i; BPBM = prefix for Bishop Museum specimen numbers; HRBP = prefix for Hawaii Rare Bird Documentary Photograph numbers.

ALBATROSSES TO FRIGATEBIRDS—Laysan Albatrosses returning to their nesting colony at K.P.N.W.R. got off

to a good start with a record 30 nesting attempts (= single egg laid) this season. Eleven of these were in the new Crater Hill and Mokolea Pt. areas added to the Refuge last summer. But, during a six-night period in mid-February, all chicks disappeared with hardly a trace. Dogs have been the major predators heretofore, but all nesting areas on the Refuge are dog-proofed with double fencing and the one carcass found was evidently not a dog-kill (DM). Owls or cats may have been the culprits.

On O'ahu, only 18 new individuals had been banded at Dillingham Airfield by mid-March (compared to more than 70 last year) and very few banded birds from prior years had been seen. This significant decrease is attributed to a "hazing" program begun last year by U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Animal Damage Control personnel to try to dissuade these large birds from settling where they are a serious hazard to small planes and gliders that use the airfield (GM).

A **Northern Fulmar** found freshly dead on Kailua Beach, O., Jan. 15 (ML, BPBM-177191) furnished the 2nd recent O'ahu record of this species, a very rare vagrant to the state. The earlier bird was found alive on an O'ahu beach in December 1987, and died in captivity 5 days later (BPBM-175993). Both were of the dark morph.

During a 3-hour transit of Alenuihaha Channel from Lahaina, M., to Kailua-Kona, H., Jan. 19, RD recorded one Dark-rumped (Hawaiian) Petrel (*Endangered*), four **White-necked Petrels**, one possible Black-winged Petrel, and one Newell's Shearwater (*Threatened*), along with six Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. All birds except two of the Wedge-taileds were heading north. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were first heard back at K.P.N.W.R. Feb. 22, some 2-3 weeks earlier than in any year in the past ten (DM).

A vagrant **Red-billed Tropicbird** from the American coast was observed and photographed at Tern I., F.F.S., Jan. 23-29 (KM, KN, JM, HRBP-832). Two specimens 40 years apart from Nihoa and French Frigate Shoals, and one reported sighting at K.P.N.W.R. in 1983, were the only prior records for Hawaii. Red-footed Boobies in the colony at K.P.N.W.R. started socializing in November and were actively courting and collecting nest materials by early December, 2 months earlier than normal (DM).

Another ad. ♂ Lesser Frigatebird spent late January and February at Tern I., F.F.S. (KN, DH, HRBP-833). A female was seen closely in flight along the Maui coast just n. of Kealia Pond Jan. 18 (RD). Prior to the 1980s, only two vagrant records were known for the state (both at Kure at the far n.w. end of the chain). Then individuals began turning up at Tern I., and now they can almost be classed as occasional there.

WATERFOWL — Five nesting pairs of Nene (Hawaiian Goose, *Endangered*) incubating a total of 18 eggs were found in Haleakala Crater, M., Dec. 15. A month later, two goslings with parents were seen there (CN). In trying to get this species to reproduce well in the wild, the problem has not been with nesting and egg fertility, but in raising hatchlings successfully to maturity. On Kaua'i, in the little population of Nene introduced at Kipukai, 3 nests were reported in December and one brood of three goslings was seen Jan. 23 (TT).

A pair of Koloa (Hawaiian Duck, *Endangered*) was seen courting at Kanaha Pond, M., Jan. 28 (FD). The species has been reported only recently on Maui, perhaps from recent introduction or possibly expansion from the successful reintroduction to O'ahu. On Kaua'i, the only island where the original wild population has persisted, a pair was flushed Feb. 14 from a waterfall plunge pool at 4400 ft elevation deep in the Alakai wilderness (AE, RD).

Migrant ducks, mostly N. Pintails and N. Shovelers, remained low in numbers throughout the winter, thus continuing the year-to-year decline evident over the past decade. Two ♀ Gadwalls, rare stragglers to Hawaii, were seen at Aīmakapa Pond, H., Dec. 19 (BM) and at nearby Makalawena

Pond Jan 2 (RD) A ♂ Redhead, rare in the state, was reported at Kealia Pond, M., Dec. 19 (AE, FD), perhaps the same one seen in Hilo, H., a month earlier. A flock of 23 *Aythya* ducks seen repeatedly through the winter at J.C.N.W.R. and nearby Amorient Aquafarm was mostly Lesser Scaup, but contained a fine pair of Tufted Ducks, three Greater Scaup, a ♀ Canvas-back, and one or two Ring-necked Ducks (PD, AE *et al.*). All the latter are uncommon in Hawaii. A ♀ goldeneye first found on a reservoir near Koloa, K., Jan. 27 was identified tentatively as a Barrow's (TT). Several observers studied it at a distance Feb. 4 & 10 and concurred in the identification (TT, AE, RD, TP). There are no prior records of Barrow's Goldeneye in the state, and only 2 records of Com. Goldeneye, both in the past 2 years.

FALCONS TO OWLS — Peregrine Falcons, formerly considered rare stragglers to Hawaii, are now turning up here every winter. This year one roosted on a crane at Pearl Harbor shipyard beginning in early December, was later caught and held captive illegally for a month, was confiscated by wildlife authorities Feb. 27, and is now recuperating at Honolulu Zoo. One was observed well at Tern I., F.F.S., Dec. 20 to Jan 2 (KM, KN, JM), and one was seen briefly near Kawainui Marsh, O., Feb. 23 (AE). A Killdeer, a rare straggler to Hawaii, was discovered at Mokule'ia settling ponds, O., Jan. 5 (PD) and remained through season's end.

A good sprinkling of gull reports this winter included single Bonaparte's Gulls at Ki'i Unit, J.C.N.W.R. (WD, PD, AE) and Hanapepe Salt Ponds, K. (BE), and single Ring-billeds at Ki'i and at Kawaihae, H. (RD), Mana Base Pond, K. (TT), and at Manele Bay, Lana'i I. (AM). Reports of a probable Glaucous-winged Gull came from 2 localities in coastal Honolulu (SS, BC) and 2 localities on the windward coast (KM, RL) during December and early January. One or more Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported in the Kahuku area from Dec. 21 (WD) into February (m.ob.), including five, an extraordinary number, at Kahuku Point Pond on the waterbird survey Jan. 27. A report of five "large white gulls" at Pacific Missile Range, K., Mar. 18 (SP, *fide* BE) might possibly have involved the O'ahu Glaucous-wingeds starting back north as a group.

A Caspian Tern was seen regularly at Kealia Pond, M., from Dec. 19 (AE) to as late as Feb. 3 (FD, CV), and one (the same?) was at Ki'i Ponds, O., from Feb. 5 into March (AE, TH). The **Great Crested Tern** resident at Pa'akai Pond, O., since October remained at least into March (AE). Up to 15 Blue-gray Noddies coming to roost nightly during December at Tern I., F.F.S., made an unprecedented concentration there (KN). The species is rarely recorded at Tern I., although a few are resident at La Perouse Pinnacle, some 12 km distant. A White Tern reported in flight at Anaeho'omaluu Bay, H., Jan. 17 (TL) furnished one of the very few reports of this species on any of the main islands other than O'ahu.

The little Zebra Doves congregating to feed on new grassy areas at Lihue Airport, K., have become a hazard to flight operations. More than 4000 were removed by federal Animal Damage Control personnel during February (GM). Up to four Hawaiian (Short-eared) Owls (Pueo) were seen or heard barking in the Waiau R. area deep in the Alaka'i wilderness Feb 13-15 (AE, RD). A vagrant Short-eared Owl of unknown (Asiatic or Hawaiian) origin was seen at Tern I., F.F.S., Dec 4 & 9 (KN).

HAWAIIAN ENDEMIC FORESTBIRDS — The state Forestry & Wildlife survey of three areas in the Alaka'i wilderness Feb. 12-17 had excellent weather but disappointing results. Only 3 observations (2 definite, one tentative) of the Kama'o were recorded, all in one area where many more had been recorded on the previous survey. Eight Puaiohi were sighted or heard in the 3 areas. One ♂ 'O'u and a possible female were seen Feb. 16, and one heard the next day. No Nuku pu'u or Kaua'i 'Akialoa were recorded. The more numerous species were found in about expected numbers.

On a happier note, encouraging numbers of juvenile dre-

panids, including the Endangered Hawai'i Creeper and 'Akaiapola'au, were seen during January and February in the Hakalau N.W.R., H. [JL], giving hope that this new forestbird

S.A.

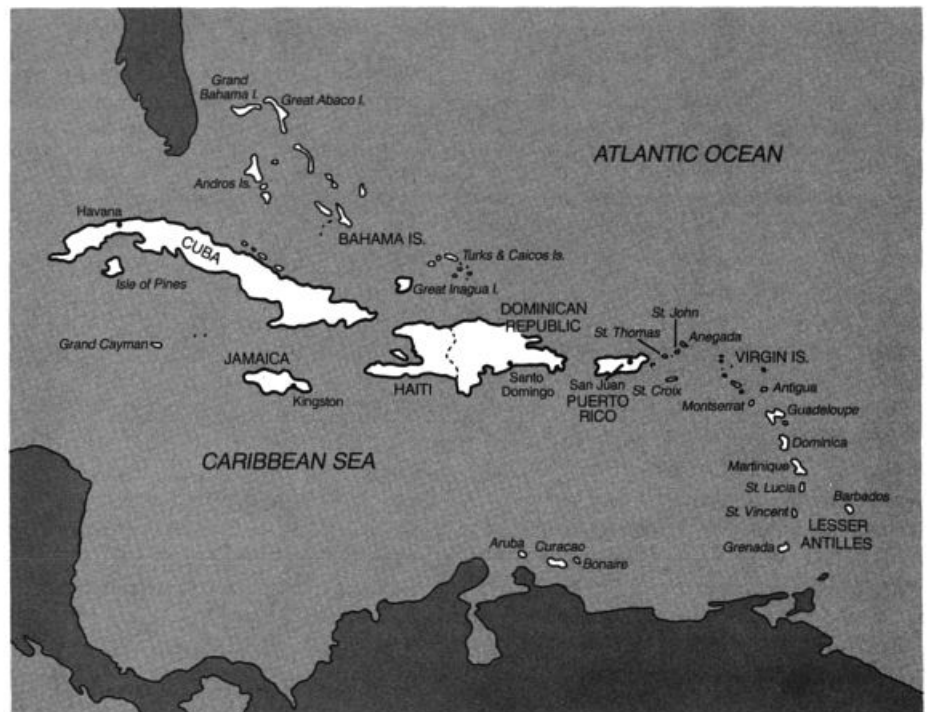
Perhaps saddest of all, the Alaka'i survey failed to record any sighting or audio observation of the famed 'O'o'a'a, although the haunt of the last known individual (see AB 37:915) was monitored almost continuously during the period. It may well be that the final observations of this species by human eyes and ears have already been recorded.

Refuge may help some of these unique species to remain extant.

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WEST INDIES REGION

Robert L. Norton



Rainfall in the Virgin Islands (as measured at Cruz Bay, St. John) was above normal by 19% for December, 37% for January, and 42% for February, for a net gain of 21% for the season. Rainfall on the normally dry areas of East End, St. John, and Hodges Creek, on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, exceeded four inches in January.

ABBREVIATIONS — P.R. = Puerto Rico; U.S.V.I. = United States Virgin Islands.

PELICANS TO GULLS — Reports of dead or dying Brown Pelicans included 14 from w. Puerto Rico and three from St. Croix (fide JP). Fishermen said they could approach pelicans to within touching distance before the birds attempted to fly; the source of the problem could not be immediately determined. Large schools of bait fish (*Herangula* spp.), the principal prey of pelicans, have been more difficult to locate in the Virgin Islands in recent years, and this no doubt affects pelicans and other inshore-feeding piscivores more visibly than pelagic feeders.

A carefully described Reddish Egret on St. John, U.S.V.I., Dec. 18 (RB, fide GW) was a local first. A pair of Redheads on an ephemeral pond on Eleuthera, Bahamas, Feb. 13 (JS) provided one of the few records for that island. A count of 1500+ Lesser Scaup on Lake Cunningham, New Providence, Dec. 13 (PWS, SAS) established a new high for the Bahamas.

A Merlin at Layou River, Dominica, Mar. 8 (RLN) furnished one of the few reports for the mid Lesser Antilles. Two Peregrine Falcons, one larger than the other, were circling in display behavior over Maya Hill, Tortola, Jan. 4 (RLN). At the same location two Ospreys were seen Jan. 13, and at least one remained through February (RLN). A Whimbrel was noted at the El Faro saltpan, Cabo Rojo, P.R., Jan. 28 (PWS, SAS). At a pond near Guanica, P.R., a count of 5000 small sandpipers was mostly made up of the under-reported Western Sandpiper (PWS, SAS). A Ring-billed Gull was at Deep Water Cay, Grand Bahama I., Jan. 13-15 (MW), and one at Road Harbor, Tortola, Feb. 19 (RLN) coincided with the arrival of a cruise ship from Puerto Rico.

PIGEONS TO FINCHES — The endangered Puerto Rican Plain Pigeon was not encountered by the Smiths in two

visits to Cidra, one of the pigeon's former centers of abundance. Two Key West Quail-Doves were noted Jan. 13–15 at Deep Water Cay, Grand Bahama I. (MW); another was observed Feb. 13 at Eleuthera, one of the few locations in the central Bahamas where the species is found (JS). A specialty of Cuba and the central Bahamas is the infrequently-reported Great Lizard-Cuckoo, which JS recorded Feb. 14 at Eleuthera. Two Short-eared Owls were surprising in xeric forest at Guanica Forest, P.R., where they were seen in the predawn hours of Jan. 29 (PWS, SAS). Also at Guanica Forest, the endemic Puerto Rican Nightjar (once thought to be extinct) was noted to be more vocal in the early morning than in the evening on Jan. 27–28 (PWS, SAS).

Apparently the Caribbean Elaenia, a flycatcher of the Lesser Antilles and other islands in the Caribbean, is successfully making inroads to the Greater Antillean region; it has spread through the Virgin Islands in the last century. Reportedly it is aggressive in encounters with the endemic Puerto Rican Flycatcher (*Myiarchus antillarum*) of the greater P.R. region. Both species coexist on St. John, U.S.V.I., where the Elaenia is by far the more common of the two (RLN).

Several Caribbean Martins were noted Jan. 28 at San German, P.R. (PWS, SAS), and 10 martins were seen Feb. 4 at Road Town, Tortola (RLN), heralding the beginning of spring migration in the Region. Two N. Rough-winged Swallows studied near the dump at Las Arenas (PWS, SAS) may have provided the first record for s.w. Puerto Rico. An unbanded, apparently ad. male Kirtland's Warbler was carefully observed north of Governor's Harbor, Eleuthera, Feb. 14, by an observer familiar with the species from fieldwork in Michigan (JS). Sykes had noted one at this location in February 1985 (fide JS). Could this be a repeat on wintering territory? Three Blackpoll Warblers at Cable Beach, New Providence, Dec. 12 (PWS, SAS) were considered late migrants. Two wintering Indigo Buntings were noted Jan. 13–15 at Deep Water Cay, Grand Bahama I. (MW). Cuban Grassquits, introduced several years ago to New Providence, were noted there again at Cable Beach on Dec. 12 (PWS, SAS).

ADDENDA — Time and space did not allow for GL's interesting report on birds seen at St. Lucia last fall. Among the more notable observations were a small-looking Osprey (possibly *P. h. haliaetus* of the Old World) seen at Anse Chastanet Nov. 2 as well as the expected *P. h. carolinensis*; Peregrine Falcon at the same date and locale; an Eared Dove at Anse Chastanet Nov. 6; eight St. Lucia Parrots in or near Edmund Forest Reserve Nov. 3; an unidentified nightjar (probably Rufous Nightjar, since Chuck-will's-widow has not been recorded from Dominica); one Black Swift near a seacliff at Anse Chastanet Nov. 6; three Cave Swallows at Anse Chastanet Nov. 7; and a single St. Lucia Black Finch at Edmund Forest on Nov. 3.

Paul Butler recently recounted an incident several years ago in which a native St. Lucian showed him a dead prefluffed Osprey, with feathers still in pin sheaths. The specimen was not saved, however. There have been several reports of Ospreys attempting to nest in the Virgin Islands (indeed, I have examined a rudimentary nest at Krause Lagoon, St. Croix), but this is the first reported evidence of the species actually rearing offspring in this part of the Region. A young, oversummering Osprey in the tropics may attempt nesting with a more or less mature mate, but sustaining 'housekeeping chores' is problematic in an environment where inshore marine productivity is sporadic and competition for fish is keen.

CORRIGENDUM — In AB 42: 486, DS reported one Jamaican Blackbird at milepost 20 of Newcastle Road, not 20 of this species on Hardwar Gap Road.

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