

**STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS  
USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS**

**Abbreviations used in place names:**

In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties.

**Other abbreviations:**

Cr	Creek
Ft.	Fort
Hwy	Highway
I	Island or Isle
Is.	Islands or Isles
Jct.	Junction
km	kilometer(s)
L	Lake
mi	mile(s)
Mt.	Mountain or Mount
Mts.	Mountains
N.E.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point (not Port)
R.	River
Ref.	Refuge
Res.	Reservoir (not Reservation)
S.P.	State Park
W.M.A.	Wildlife Management Area

**Abbreviations used in the names of birds:**

Am.	American
Com.	Common
E	Eastern
Eur.	European or Eurasian
Mt.	Mountain
N.	Northern
S	Southern
W.	Western

**Other abbreviations and symbols referring to birds:**

ad.	adult
imm.	immature
juv.	juvenile or juvenile
sp.	species
†	means that written details were submitted for a sighting
*	means that a specimen was collected
♂	male
♀	female
CBC	Christmas Bird Count

# THE WINTER SEASON

December 1, 1992–February 28, 1993

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# ATLANTIC PROVINCES REGION

Ian A. McLaren

Here, as elsewhere, the unwelcome synergism of El Niño and Mt. Pinatubo produced record cold. Harbors froze where they hadn't in years and heavy snow accumulated, except in s.e. Newfoundland. Even open-sea areas became heaving sheets of brash ice. Nevertheless, birders were active and birds aplenty. It was an off year for irruptive Snowy Owls, Northern Shrikes, and winter finches. The regular woodland insectivores and brush sparrows held their own, but grassland sparrows and straggling warblers were in trouble. Rarities included two Eared and a Western grebe, Tufted Ducks, Black Vultures, a Sabine's Gull, and a Western Meadowlark.

**Abbreviations:** NB (*New Brunswick*); NS (*Nova Scotia*); PEI (*Prince Edward I.*); S.P.M. (*Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*). Place names in *italics* are counties.

## LOONS TO WATERFOWL

A surprising Pied-billed Grebe was inland on Petite Rivière, NS, Feb. 23 (SC). Horned Grebes were scarce outside Nova Scotia, but Red-necked Grebes were unusually abundant on Maritimes CBCs, reaching 150 off Miquelon, S.P.M., Feb. 18 (RE). Two Eared Grebes were near Halifax Dec. 12 (†Roger Foxall, BM) and again Jan. 6 (BIL), and a first fully satisfactory Western Grebe was at Ketch Harbor, NS, Dec. 16 (PM, †BS). Three N. Gannets were off Chebucto Head, near Halifax, NS, Jan. 23 (PM, BS). Double-crested Cormorants lingered at S.P.M., Dec. 16 (JCH), Charlottetown, PEI Jan. 15 (A. McGuigan), and Neil Harbor, NS, Jan. 16 (AM). Of only four post-CBC Great Blue Herons, the latest were seen Jan. 12 at Cocagne, NB, and Jan. 23 at Trenton, NS.

A Snow Goose was sighted near Wolfville, NS, Dec. 24–28 (v.o.). Large numbers of Canada Geese, as usual staying only in Nova Scotia, required famine relief during February. Urban dabblers included 30 N. Pintails in St. John's, NF, a N. Shoveler in Dartmouth, NS, a Gadwall in Trenton, NS, and a ♀ Eur. Wigeon in St. John's, NF. An imm. ♀ Tufted Duck was near Dartmouth, NS, through February (IM *et al.*), and a male Feb. 7 at N. River, PEI (SM *et al.*), was a provincial first. Diving ducks were generally scarcer than usual, although 1700 Greater Scaup wintered at Pictou-Trenton, NS.

There were three Lesser Scaup at North R., PEI, Dec. 5 (SM), five at Pictou, NS, Jan. 23 (CB, KM), and at least four through February near Halifax, NS (v.o.). Heavy ice off n.e. Newfoundland pushed ≤4000 Com. Eiders S to Cape Spear (BMct). Another 3000 appeared around S.P.M. (RE). King Eiders, ≤20 and mostly male, were seen off Cape Race, NF (BMct), but few were found elsewhere. Harlequin Ducks remained scarce, with reports of ±40 from the Region. About 10 Barrow's Goldeneyes were at the usual sites at Cocagne, NB, North R., PEI, and Bedford, NS. A few Hooded Mergansers and a Ruddy Duck in Nova Scotia stayed only until early January.

## DIURNAL RAPTORS

Following upon individuals last spring and autumn, ≥2 Black Vultures materialized in Nova Scotia. The first appeared Jan. 13–16 on the Graham Knuckles's porch at Green Bay, where it ate "dog food and peanut butter sandwiches (which it really liked) plus warm, freshly caught mice" (SC). The bird then moved 12 mi E for 2 days. Shortly after it (?) was seen 65 mi SW. A clearly different individual died in Stewiacke in mid-January (\*Acadia University). Finally, a weakened bird found Feb. 8 near Windsor, 50 mi n. of the first sighting, was captured for rehabilitation. A Turkey Vulture was observed at Tweedside, NB, Dec. 16–Jan. 20 (v.o.). The raptor census in King's, NS, Jan. 31 produced a record 442 Bald Eagles (*vide* JW), abandoning frozen coasts for poultry-farm offal. Fewer than usual post-CBC N. Harriers included one that stayed until Jan. 24 at St. John's, NF (latest ever, BMct). About 10 N. Goshawks at

the St. John's, NF, dump, were "about average" there (BMct).

For the first time in 5 winters, no imm. Broad-winged Hawks hazarded a stay in the Region. A record ±100 Red-tails were on the King's, NS, raptor census Jan. 31. Rough-legged numbers were "below average" in New Brunswick (DSC), and only ±4 were reported from elsewhere. The traditional ad. Golden Eagle was at Shepody Marsh, NB, Dec. 16+; two with ±10 Bald Eagles were found harassing geese at Martinique Beach Sanct., NS. Only four post-CBC Am. Kestrels and two Merlins, normally commoner, were reported. The obligatory ♂ Peregrine Falcon wintered at Saint John, NB (v.o.), and three others were noted at scattered locations. Gyrfalcons were featured for the 3rd winter around St. John's, NF, with 12–15 birds, mostly whites and grays (BMct). About nine were seen elsewhere in the Region.

## PARTRIDGE TO ALCIDS

For those interested in an expedition, there is a "robust Rock Ptarmigan population" on the Long Range Mts., NF (HD). The Ruffed Grouse was "near the top of its cycle" (DSC) in New Brunswick, but was scarce or under-reported in Nova Scotia. Wild Turkeys have been extirpated from Grand Manan I., NB (DSC).

An Am. Coot was seen on Sable I., NS, Dec. 24 (ZL) but, for the first winter since 1986–1987, none stayed in Dartmouth, NS. A Sandhill Crane was seen at Camp Aldershot, NS, Dec. 3 (*vide* JW). Dogged shorebirds included a Black-bellied Plover Feb. 14 at Little Harbor, NS, three Ruddy Turnstones until Jan. 17 at Miquelon, S.P.M., a Red Knot Jan.

17 at Miquelon, S.P.M. (latest since 1986, RE), fewer than usual Sanderlings and Dunlins in Nova Scotia, a late Com. Snipe at St.-Pierre, S.P.M., Jan. 20 (F. Luberly), and an Am. Woodcock at W. Pubnico, NS, until Jan. 18 (v.o.).

In Nova Scotia a Parasitic Jaeger sighted Dec. 20 off Chebucto Head (PM, †BS) was apparently a first for winter in the Region. Common Black-headed Gulls were absent from S.P.M. after early January, none remained by late February in St. John's, and numbers were below average in Nova Scotia (v.o.). No Bonaparte's Gulls were noted after late December. An ad. Mew (Com.) Gull wintered at St. John's, NF, and another at Dartmouth, NS. One hopes that collapse of fisheries will trouble the larger larids, but only in s.w. Newfoundland was it noted (HD) that "numbers dropped drastically," evidently through emigration. A first-winter Herring Gull Feb. 28 in St. John's, NF, looked like *L. argentatus argentatus* (BMct). Compared with *smithsonianus*, it had paler, scallier upperparts, and the





**Black Vulture at Green Bay, Nova Scotia, resting after a meal of dog food and peanut butter sandwiches, on January 15, 1993. Rare in the province and remarkably far north for the season. Photograph/Ian McLaren/VIREO.**

tail was basally whitish with narrow, dark bars, and broad, laterally diffuse terminal band. Mactavish also found two first-winter and one 2nd-winter Glaucous × Herring Gulls during January. Two ad. Lesser Black-Backeds wintered in St. John's, NF, ≥4 around Halifax, NS, one for the 11th winter, and one at Lockeport, NS. Among the rewards of sea-watches (PM, BS) off Chebucto Head, NS, were an ad. Sabine's Gull Dec. 20, furnishing a 3rd provincial winter record, and an Ivory Gull Jan. 23. Another Ivory Gull seen Jan. 25 at Rocky Harbor was the first in s.w. Newfoundland in a decade (*fide* HD). No Dovekie wrecks were reported, but there were counts of thousands from S.P.M. (RE) and Browns Bank, NS (Rd'E) Dec. 27. Notable was an estimate of 5000–10,000 Razorbills wintering around Grand Manan I., NB (BD).

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

In New Brunswick, Brian Dazell found diminished Mourning Dove numbers after storms and observed them roosting maladaptively in exposed alders, yet David Christie suggested that selection has produced birds with "fewer foot problems." Certainly they did well in the Maritimes, and five survived winter at St.-Pierre for an S.P.M. first (RE). A Monk Parakeet in Sussex, NB, may have been one that had summered 13 mi away (v.o.). Is a s. New England origin possible? In New Brunswick CBCs Snowy Owls were "below average in the south, average in the north" (DSC). Seven were noted in Newfoundland (HD), and a like number on S.P.M. (RE), but only three post-CBC birds reached Nova Scotia. A N. Hawk Owl reached Middleton, NS, Nov. 29 (L. Duncanson, ph.), and four wintered in New Brunswick. Up to 11 Short-eared Owls were around Grand Pré, NS, through January (v.o.). The few post-CBC Belted

Kingfishers included individuals Jan. 20 at Pleasant Grove, PEI, Jan. 10 at Cocagne, NB, and through February near Yarmouth, NS. Red-headed Woodpeckers were in *Cape Breton*, NS, mid-January (CM) and through winter at Yarmouth, NS (ER). Red-bellied Woodpeckers wintering after the autumn invasion included three in New Brunswick, one at Stanley Bridge, PEI, and one at Canning, NS. A record 18 post-CBC N. Flickers were reported in Nova Scotia, but none elsewhere.

#### CORVIDS TO WARBLERS

A few long-resident Am. Crows on Sable I., NS, were extirpated last year, but an explorer arrived in January (ZL). Black-capped Chickadees were "buoyant" in s.w. Newfoundland (HD) and "extremely numerous" in Nova Scotia (RS), and New Brunswick CBCs produced "the highest number per party-hour in 33 years analysed" (DSC). Numbers of the other regular insectivores were average or somewhat above. Two Winter Wrens were at Langlade, S.P.M., Feb. 12 (JCH). Newfoundland's 6th and 7th House Wrens were around St. John's in late December (BMct *et al.*); two in Nova Scotia then (v.o.) were firsts for winter. Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered into February at Durham Bridge, NB (W. Gammon) and Halifax, NS (v.o.). Eastern Bluebirds again wintered in Nova Scotia, eight in *King's* and five near Yarmouth. A Townsend's Solitaire at Apple River, NS, Nov. 26 (K. Spicer) can be added to last fall's trio. Flocks of hundreds of Am. Robins roamed Nova Scotia, but they were below average or scarce elsewhere. Varied Thrushes were at Yarmouth, NS, briefly in January and at Cherryfield, NS, through February (v.o.). At least two Brown Thrashers wintered in Nova Scotia and one at Desable, PEI (R. Macfarlane). The pattern of incursion of Bohemian

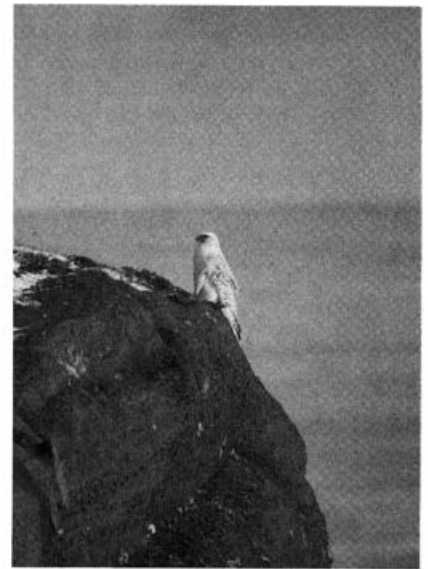


**Apparent hybrid Glaucous x Herring Gull in first-winter plumage at St. John's, Newfoundland, January 17, 1993. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.**

Waxwings is suggested by above-average numbers on N. New Brunswick CBCs and by large flocks later in winter in Nova Scotia. Cedar Waxwings were unusually numerous in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, two getting to Sable I., NS, Jan. 21–24 (ZL) and three

to Langlade, S.P.M., Feb. 12 (JCH). It was not a N. Shrike winter, with only one each reported from Newfoundland and S.P.M., none from Prince Edward Island, five from Nova Scotia, and "well below average" numbers (DSC) in New Brunswick.

It is surprising that any reverse-migrant warblers survived the winter. An Orange-crowned Warbler lasted until Jan. 1 in St. John's, NF, as did three until late January at Nova Scotia feeders. Yellow-rumped Warblers are routine along coastal Nova Scotia, but one remaining until Feb. 15 at St. John's, NF, supplied a 2nd latest provincial record (BMct). The previously reported Black-throated Gray and Yellow-throated warblers in St. John's, NF, were last seen Dec. 5. At least five Pine Warblers wintered in Nova Scotia and a like number in New Brunswick. A Blackpoll Warbler was seen in *Pictou*, NS, Dec. 2 (CB). A Black-and-white Warbler was



**White-morph Gyrfalcon at Cape Spear, Newfoundland, February 21, 1993. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.**

very late Jan. 1 in St. John's, NF (BMct). A Com. Yellowthroat noted Dec. 14 on Miquelon (JCH) was the latest ever on S.P.M. Wilson's Warblers were last seen Dec. 5 in St. John's, NF, and Dec. 20 (L. Cohrs) in Halifax, NS. The latest Yellow-breasted Chat was at St. John's, NF, feeders through December.

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A ♂ Western Tanager was at Murray Pt., *Pictou*, Dec. 2 (†CB). Five N. Cardinals in New Brunswick and six in Nova Scotia were fewer than usual. Dickcissels survived through January at Grand Desert and at Yarmouth, NS (v.o.). A Rufous-sided Towhee was in St. John's, NF, until at least Jan. 5, another wintered in Sussex, NB, and six at feeders were more than usual in Nova Scotia. At least seven Chipping Sparrows wintered in the Maritimes. Clay-colored Sparrows were found Dec. 5 in St. John's, NF, Nov. 30–Dec. 4 at Petite Rivière, NS (SC), and Dec. 11 at Sheffield Mills, NS (AM). Surprising numbers of wintering Field Sparrows were found, with one

at a feeder 30 mi w. of St. John's, NF, for the 4th provincial record, BMct); two at feeders in New Brunswick, including one on Deer I. through February; and  $\geq 7$  in Nova Scotia, some away from feeders. A Lark Sparrow at Cape Race, NF, Dec. 23 (C. Brown) was only the 2nd for the province in winter, and another stayed at a feeder in W. Pubnico, NS (v.o.). A Grasshopper Sparrow noted Jan. 2 at Cape Race, NF, was "too cold to move" (PL, JP). Other grassland sparrows suffered from snow and ice; e.g., of  $\pm 50$  Savannah and 5 Sharp-tailed sparrows at Rainbow Haven Beach, NS, in early December, none remained in late winter (IAM *et al.*). Brush sparrows did better, at least farther s. Usual species numbers were "above average" on New Brunswick CBCs (DSC), and White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were more common in Nova Scotia than for some years (DAC). Among them were five White-crowned Sparrows in the Maritimes during December, as well as Lincoln's Sparrows Jan. 11 at Cape Broyle, NF, until Jan. 20 in St. John's, NF, and through winter at W. Pennant, NS (v.o.). An "Oregon Junco" was on the Mactaquac, NB, in late December (*vide* DSC) and an apparent "pink-sided" at W. Pubnico, NS, Dec. 25 (Rd'E). Two juncos with white wing bars wintered in Halifax, NS; wing length and restricted white in the tail of a captive precluded true "white-winged" (IM, PM).

Fewer icterids than usual remained in the Maritimes. Again some observers looked for



**This first-winter Herring Gull at St. John's, Newfoundland, on February 22, 1993, was thought to represent the race *L. a. argentus*, normally found in northwestern Europe, Britain, and Iceland. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.**

Western Meadowlarks, one of which wintered at Gagetown, NB (E. Inch *et al.*). A meadowlark Dec. 19 at St. Brides, NF (PL, JP) and two in January in New Brunswick were too shy for identification, and only one of a dozen in Nova Scotia was apparently critically diagnosed as Eastern. Of five post-CBC N. Orioles in Nova Scotia, only one survived

until mid-February.

Southeast Newfoundland had the "worst finch year since the Vikings landed" (BMct). Pine Grosbeaks were "up" only in Nova Scotia (DAC), and Purple Finches were scarce everywhere. House Finches managed to flourish, with 113 on New Brunswick CBCs (DSC) and about a dozen wintering in Nova Scotia. Crossbills, Com. Redpolls, and Pine Siskins were uncommon everywhere; Eur. Goldfinches wintered Dec. 6+ at Sussex, NB (J. Candy *et al.*) and Jan. 27+ at S. Granville, PEI (M. Rodger *et al.*). Even in this Region a European source is implausible for such relatively short-distance migrants. Evening Grosbeaks were virtually absent from Newfoundland and well below average elsewhere.

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## QUEBEC REGION

Richard Yank and Yves Aubry

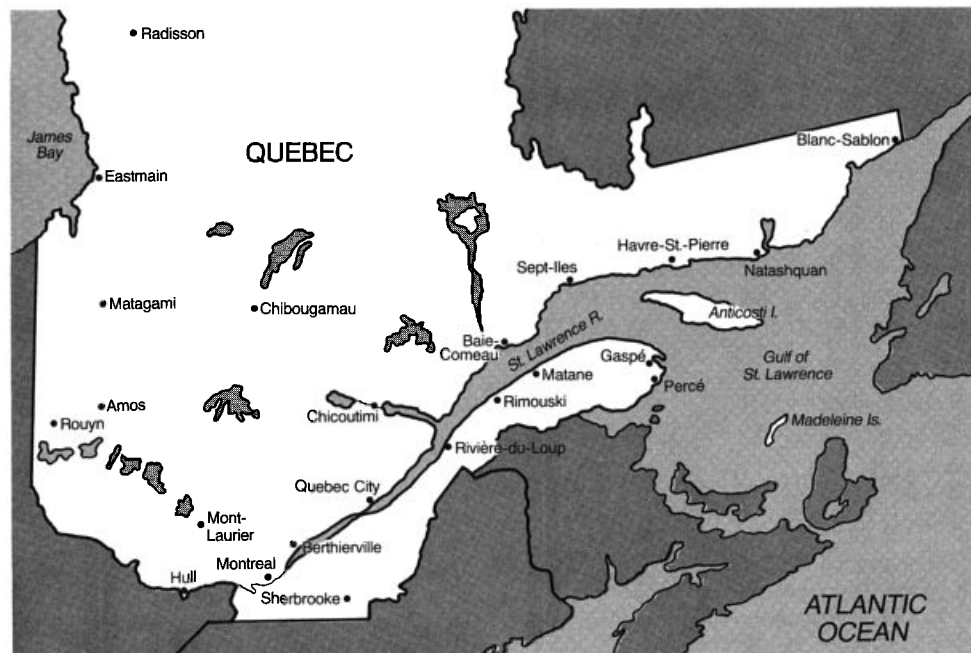
This was a winter of extremes. Eastern Quebec was cold throughout the period because of a westerly extension of the Icelandic low-pressure area that dominated Atlantic weather. Blanc-Sablon was nipped with average temperatures of 3.5°, 5.4°, and 6.2°C below normal during December, January, and February, respectively. Above-average temperatures were recorded for the western one-third of the province. During December and January, the area received much of its precipitation as rain borne by storms originating in the southwestern United States, spawned by El Niño. The rain prompted a good variety of species to tarry. By contrast, February was the coldest month on record, bringing several heavy snowstorms to southern parts of the province.

### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

A species rarely found inland in winter, two Com. Loons lingered on the Chicoutimi R., at Laterrière, until Jan. 17 (CC, GS), and another

wintered on Témiscouata L., for the 2nd consecutive year (Mba, RD). A lone Horned Grebe spotted on the Yamaska R., at Saint-Hyacinthe Jan. 16–18 (R. Roy, D. Roy), was record late, while a tardy Red-necked Grebe was picked up in poor condition at Laval Jan. 7 (*vide* S. David). Wandering up the St. Lawrence R., as regularly occurs in late fall, three imm. N. Gannets reached Beauharnois

Dec. 2 (DD *et al.*), while singles were noted the next day off Pointe-Claire, Montreal (M. Thabault), and Portneuf (CM). More unusual was a N. Fulmar, also at the latter site, Dec. 3 (CM). Although Great Blue Herons were still widely reported in late December, few were reported in the new year. One was found at Laval Jan. 23–27 (*vide* GL), and another survived the season at Cowansville, Missisquoi





(R. Deshaies, D. Deshaies). Also exceptionally late was a Black-crowned Night-Heron present on Notre-Dame I., *Montreal*, Dec. 16–20 (GZ, m.ob.).

The Tundra Swan well seen at Saint-Timothée, *Beauharnois*, Jan. 18 (RY), may well have been the unidentified swan sighted at Côte-Sainte-Catherine, *Laprairie*, the previous day (L. Galipeau). The bird was somewhat unexpected, as it constituted Quebec's first January record. A Mute Swan of undetermined origin frequented an area of open water on the Richelieu R. near Carignan Jan. 26+ (M. Smith, m.ob.). A few wild geese again overwintered at the Hemmingford zoo, where two Snow and 85 Canada geese remained (PB). Elsewhere an ad. Snow Goose was quite late at Sainte-Foy, *Quebec*, Dec. 29 (G. Dubé), while four Canada Geese lingered at Les Cèdres, *Soulanges*, Jan. 24 (BB, MM). Despite a frigid February, eight early Snow Geese were spotted in flight at Montreal Feb. 15 (C. Larocque), while 20 Canada Geese flew over Châteauguay earlier in the month (*vide* PB). By contrast, relatively few ducks were considered out of season. Most notable were a ♂ Blue-winged Teal that remained at Bonaventure Dec. 1 (JMP), an Am. Wigeon at Baie-Comeau until Dec. 31 (GB, C. Deschênes), and three Greater Scaup that wintered successfully at Rivière-des-Prairies, *L'Assomption* (M. Duchesnay).

#### DIURNAL RAPTORS TO GULLS

Typically absent from the province in mid-winter, N. Harriers provided evidence of a temperate January in extreme s. Quebec, with lone males at Saint-Constant, *Laprairie*, Jan. 17–30 (MBr, PB), and at L'Acadie, *Saint-Jean*, Jan. 28 (M. Arnaudin). Five Sharp-shinned Hawks in the Upper Saguenay/L. Saint-Jean region and two on the Magdalen Is. were more surprising, in view of the cold weather. As has become the norm in recent winters, about 15 Cooper's Hawks were sighted in s.w. Quebec. Feeders certainly appear to be contributing to the increased number of accipiters remaining in the Region during recent winters. An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk seen at Hudson, *Vaudreuil*, Jan. 12–21 (P. Tarassof, m.ob.) was worthy of mention, while Rough-legged Hawks were sighted farther N than usual, including four at L. Saint-Jean through January (*vide* GS), one at Cacouna Jan. 23 (J.L. Martel), two at La Pocatière, *Kamouraska*, all season (CA), and three on the Magdalen archipelago in January (M. Roussy, R. Gauthier). There were few large concentrations, with the exception of 28 at Saint-Barthélemy, *Berthier*, Dec. 28 (MLe, RT, KT). Gyrfalcons were found in higher-than-average numbers for the 3rd consecutive winter, with approximately 14 individuals reported S of 49°N. Unprecedentedly late shorebirds included a Sanderling at Pointe-au-Père until Dec. 1 (J.R. Pelletier, L. Brisson) and a White-rumped Sandpiper seen at Gros-Cap, *Magdalen Is.*, until Dec. 19 (m.ob., *vide* BL). Up to five Com. Snipes survived at Beauport, *Quebec* (J.F. Rousseau), and three at La



**Black-throated Sparrow at Plaisance, Quebec, in early December 1992. First record for the province. Photograph/J. Alary and R. Cantin.**

Pocatière (CA)—both regular wintering sites for this species. A first-year Franklin's Gull at Aylmer, *Gatineau*, Dec. 6 (M. Aubé, CR), provided the first December record for the province, while Thayer's Gulls were identified in unprecedented numbers, with single adults at Saint-Jean Dec. 4 (BB, MM), and at Saint-Romuald, *Lévis*, Dec. 10 (G. Lemelin), a first-year immature at La Pocatière Dec. 22 (CA), and at least 3 different birds in the Montreal area Dec. 12–Feb. 27 (PB, v.o.). The only Lesser Black-backed Gulls observed included up to four immatures at Pointe-du-Buisson, *Beauharnois*, Dec. 12–13 (PB, MBr *et al.*), but impressive inland concentrations of Greater Black-backed Gulls were viewed, with 925 at Chicoutimi Dec. 16 (CC), 500 at Aylmer Dec. 20 (JD, CR), and an estimated 2000 roosting nightly at Rivière-des-Prairies during February (GL). Also at Chicoutimi, a total of 700 Glaucous Gulls were counted Dec. 2 (CC). Record late by one day were 10 Black-legged Kittiwakes flying offshore at Petit-Gaspé Jan. 11 (S. Marchand).

#### DOVES TO WARBLERS

Noteworthy were 10 Mourning Doves at Chandler, *Gaspé* (C. Pelchat, JRL), and 13 on the Magdalen Is., sustained by feeders at Grand-Ruisseau (UD) and at Cap-aux-Meules (DGG). This was the best winter for Snowy Owls since 1987–1988. The Saguenay/L. Saint-Jean area hosted an estimated 50 birds (*vide* GS); peak counts elsewhere were of 9 at Rivière-Ouelle Dec. 1 (CA), 11 at Saint-Hubert Dec. 13 (*vide* DD), and 14 at Saint-Barthélemy Dec. 28 (RT, MLe, KT). Likely northbound, birds concentrated again in late February, with a remarkable 38 at Hébertville (C. Girard, M. Savard), 7 at Louiseville, *Maskinongé* (GL), and 5 at Saint-Clet (B. Lazoni), all seen Feb. 28. It was an above-average winter for N. Hawk Owls, with approximately 25 reported, but seven Great Gray and nine Boreal owls were unspectacular numbers. A

count of 10 N. Saw-whet Owls for the season was high; most unusual was one that overwintered on I. des Soeurs, *Montreal* (m.ob.), and two others that were found at Les Hauteurs, *Rimouski*, Feb. 2–11 (H. Claveau), and at Saint-Eusèbe, *Témiscouata*, Feb. 3 (MBa)—the latter possibly early migrants.

Surprisingly, no Belted Kingfishers overwintered. The only Red-bellied Woodpecker of the winter was a female that visited a feeder in Hinchinbrook, *Huntingdon*, during the latter part of February (*vide* DG), but several N. Flickers spent the season along the Lower St. Lawrence (*vide* PF), as did eight or more around Quebec City (*vide* LM). Small flocks of Horned Larks remained on the Gaspé Pen., where the species is irregular in winter (*vide* PP). Observers who visited boreal forests encountered Red-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets in good numbers. Twelve Carolina Wrens brightened the season, including two individuals well N of their normal range at Chicoutimi Dec. 20–Jan. 14 (D. Leblanc *et al.*) and at Baie-Comeau until Jan. 2 (GB).

An extraordinary concentration of  $\geq 23$  E. Bluebirds drew observers to Oka, *Deux-Montagnes*, Dec. 31–Jan. 17 (B. Lismonde, m.ob.)—the previous late departure record dating back to Nov. 22, 1942! Among frugivores, a Hermit Thrush was late at Saint-Stanislas-de-Kotska, *Beauharnois*, Jan. 16 (L. Goneau), as was another in the Montreal botanical gardens until Jan. 24 (GZ), while Am. Robins were widespread throughout the season. They were particularly numerous around Quebec City, where they found mountain-ash berries plentiful (*vide* LM), with as many as 150 at Cap-Tourmente Jan. 3 (C. Nadeau, J.F. Rail, P. Lapointe). A total of 14 N. Mockingbirds was similar to that of last winter, while single Brown Thrashers, rare in winter, were good finds at Montreal Jan. 9–12 (R. Guilette *et al.*), and at Philipsburg, *Missisquoi*, Jan. 21–Feb. 28 (J.G. Papineau, E. Rosenthal). Cedar Waxwings were widely reported in small numbers, but Bohemian Waxwings were scarce, except for a flock of 1500 sighted at Roberval, *L. Saint-Jean*, Jan. 17–19 (NB).

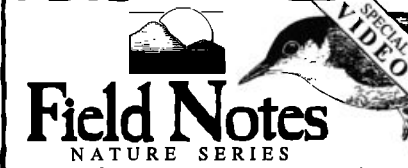
Warblers supplied considerable excitement. Not unexpected in an area having a mild winter were single Yellow-rumped Warblers sighted at Beauport and Cap-Saint-Ignace, *Montmagny* (*vide* LM), and at La Pocatière (CA), while single Pine Warblers were located at Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive, *Charlevoix*, Dec. 25 (H. Mead), and at Saint-Joseph, *Quebec*, Jan. 17 (M. Grenier). Quite exceptional were a record-late ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler, admired by many on I. des Soeurs Dec. 3–20 (PW, DD, m.ob.); the Region's 6th Yellow-throated Warbler, which briefly visited a Portneuf yard Dec. 13 (M. Darveau, C. Brodeur); our first wintering Ovenbird at Aylmer Dec. 18+ (T. Catterel, J.P. Artigau); and late Com. Yellowthroats at Longueuil Dec. 18–21, and at both Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague, *Beauharnois*, Dec. 21 (DD, PW), and Cabano, *Témiscouata*, the next day (MBa, RD).

## CARDINALINES TO FINCHES

A ♀ Rose-breasted Grosbeak was later than usual at Longueuil Dec. 22 (DD, PW), while adding to the fall Dickcissel sightings were birds at Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, *Terrebonne*, Dec. 1–12 (R. Archambault), and at Cap-Tourmente Dec. 13–19 (R. Gingras, D. Campeau), as well as one that suddenly appeared at Roberval Feb. 25 (Y. Fortin, NB), to furnish Quebec's first mid-winter record. This was an exceptional winter for emberizines. Two ♂ Rufous-sided Towhees were found wintering on the Gaspé Pen., at Chandler (P.E. Soucy) and at Grande-Rivière (G. Dupuis), while a Chipping Sparrow was seen at Charlesbourg, *Quebec*, until the end of January (R. Lepage). American Tree Sparrows wintered farther N than usual, including two all winter at Grand-Ruisseau (UD, S. Decoste) and 11 at Chandler Jan. 31 (JRL). Providing our first December record were two Vesper Sparrows studied at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle, *Saint-Jean*, Dec. 28–31 (R. Bellehumeur, J. Lavallée), but the bird of the season was a stunning **Black-throated Sparrow**, Quebec's first, that came to a yard in Plaisance, *Papineau*, Oct. 15–Jan. 27 (R. Cantin, J. Alarie). A Savannah Sparrow was observed at Hemmingford Jan. 14–19 (J. Hodges, D. Smith), and four different Fox Sparrows were detected at Lavernière, *Magdalen Is.*, Dec. 10–Feb. 21 (BL), at Repentigny, *L'Assomption*, Jan. 10–Feb. 10 (C. Gagnon *et al.*), at Hemmingford Feb. 7 (MBr *et al.*), and at Saint-Armand, *Missisquoi* (K. Kaiser); both Savannah and Fox sparrows are almost unknown in mid-winter. Song Sparrows wintering as far N as L. Saint-Jean and the Gaspé Pen. were less surprising, but a Lincoln's Sparrow at Lévis Jan. 3–Feb. 19, provided only the 3rd mid-winter record for the province (J. Lachance). A White-crowned Sparrow was unseasonal at Desbiens, *L. Saint-Jean*, Feb. 27 (*fide* GS), while a rare Harris' Sparrow overwintered at an Aylmer feeder Dec. 20–Feb. 28 (JD *et al.*). A Harris' also appeared at Rivière-Portneuf, *Saguenay*, Jan. 7 (M. Dixon, C. Dixon). Wintering White-throated Sparrows were widely reported, as were Dark-eyed Juncos. Good numbers of Lapland Longspurs were found in s. Quebec throughout the winter, including 225 at La Pocatière (CA) and a flock of 100 accompanying 150 Horned Larks near Sainte-Marthe, *Vaudreuil*, Feb. 8 (PB).

Icterids were widespread but not numerous, with the exception of 500 Brown-headed Cowbirds at Châteauguay Feb. 7 (PB), and 2000–3000 near Valleyfield (DG). Highlights elsewhere included a lone Brown-headed Cowbird and a pair of Red-winged Blackbirds that wintered at Cap-aux-Meules (DGG), a single Red-winged Blackbird at nearby Grande-Entrée Jan. 14–Feb. 26 (J.C. Richard), and a Rusty Blackbird at Bonaventure Feb. 10–26 (JMP). The most notable N. Orioles encountered were a male that visited a feeder at Bonaventure Dec. 2–24 (JMP) and another viewed at Baie-Comeau until Dec. 22 (GB).

Contributors did not consider this an invasion year for northern finches. Pine Gros-



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beaks were reported in small groups, except in boreal forests near Quebec City (*fide* LM), along the North Shore (*fide* GC), and along the Lower St. Lawrence (*fide* PF), where they were termed abundant, but Purple Finches remained farther N than in recent years, found all season as far N as Abitibi (*fide* EV), L. Saint-Jean (*fide* GS), and Quebec City (*fide* LM). White-winged Crossbills were considered common in the Laurentians (M. Sokolyk), in the Quebec City area (*fide* LM), at L. Saint-Jean (*fide* GS), and in the Lower St. Lawrence (*fide* PF). Redpolls were generally scarce. High numbers of Pine Siskins wintered at L. Saint-Jean (*fide* GS) and at Quebec City (*fide* LM), while Am. Goldfinches were numerous in most areas, many at feeders on the Gaspé Pen. (*fide* PP) and the Magdalen Is. (*fide* BL). Evening Grosbeaks drew few comments from observers in w. and c. Quebec, and few were found in the St. Lawrence lowlands; they were reported in "average" numbers along the Lower St. Lawrence (*fide* PF), but a few did reach the Magdalen Is., where they are irregular (*fide* BL).

## EXOTICS

Single Eur. Goldfinches brightened feeders in December at Montreal (GZ) and at Bellefeuille, *Terrebonne* (L. Lemieux).

**Corrigenda:** The Great Egret reported at Biencourt during Spring 1992 should be deleted (AB 46:391). A belated report was received of a **Yellow-throated Warbler** seen and photographed at Sept-Iles Oct. 5–9, 1991 (S. Landry).

**Contributors and observers (area editors in bold-face):** C. Auchu, Y. Bachand, P. Bannon, B. Barnhurst, M. Beaulieu (MBa), M. Bertrand (MBr), N. Biner, G. Bouchard, J. Brisson, C. Cormier, G. Cyr, D. Daigneault, U. Decoste, R. Deschênes, J. Dubois, P. Fradette, D.G. Gaudet, D. Gervais, D. Jauvin, G. Lachaine, M. Lalancette, B. Leblanc, J. R. Lepage, M. Lepage (MLE), C. Marcotte, M. McIntosh, L. Messely, J.M. Pitre, P. Poulin, C. Rimmer, G. Savard, K. Turgeon, R. Turgeon, E. Van de Wall, P. Wery, G. Zenaitis—**RICHARD YANK**, 566 Chester Rd., Beaconsfield PQ, H9W 3K1; and **YVES AUBRY**, Canadian Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 10100, Sainte-Foy PQ, G1V 4H5.

## NEW ENGLAND REGION

Blair Nikula

The winter of 1992–1993 in New England was characterized by abrupt extremes. Averaged over the season, though, it was very close to normal—at least in Boston—where temperatures were within a fraction of a degree of normal and precipitation was up by 2–3 inches.

December was mild and wet. The most significant event of the month, indeed the season, was a powerful northeaster that developed in classic fashion off the Carolinas and moved north up the coast, impacting New England Dec. 11–13. Although the storm actually stalled and died just to the south, its effects were considerable, particularly in south-central New England, where 2–3 feet of snow fell, and along the eastern coast, where winds reached hurricane force Dec. 12 (78 mph peak in Boston). The tempest produced a memorable seabird show, one of the best ever witnessed by several veteran observers. Red Phalaropes were the major players, but fulmars, skuas, jaegers, and alcids figured prominently as well. January was pleasantly mild and dry, with temperatures almost 4°F above average. The larger lakes remained ice free well into the month, and bare ground was the rule, rather than the exception, even in many northern areas. Winter finally arrived with a vengeance in February, dropping temperatures (-3.2°F) and a profusion of snow throughout the Region.

Although a good variety of half-hardies remained to test their mettle, the number of such individuals seemed noticeably lower than in the 2 previous mild winters. Perhaps cooler-than-normal late fall weather dissuaded many potential lingerers, but those that did remain often survived deep into the season. The weather was undoubtedly beneficial to many species that have been increasing of late, such as Gadwalls, Turkey Vultures, Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens, and Eastern Bluebirds. Winter frugivores, such as American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Gray Catbirds, were plentiful, but irruptives, with the exception of Snowy Owls, stayed home this year; boreal finches were fewer than perhaps at any time this century. Also conspicuously scarce this season were Am. Coots and several species of duck.

Outstanding among the season's vagrants were several Black Vultures, Connecticut's first Ash-throated Flycatcher, multiple Painted Buntings on Cape Cod, a Green-tailed Towhee in New Hampshire, Rhode Island's first LeConte's Sparrow, and the Region's first Lesser Goldfinch.

**Abbreviations:** CCL&PWS (*Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey*); F.E. (*First Encounter Beach, Eastham, MA*); M.V. (*Martha's Vineyard*); S.N. (*Sandy Neck Beach, Barnstable, MA*).

## LOONS TO HERONS

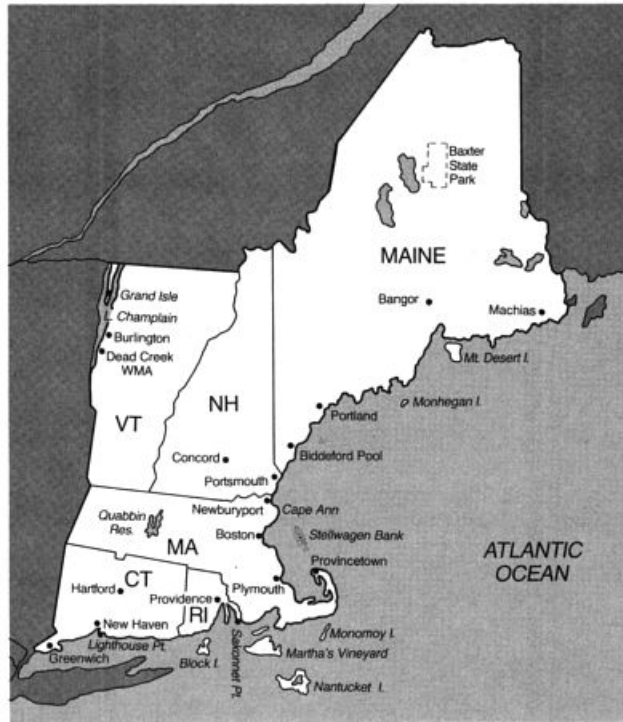
Single Pacific-type loons were identified at Plum I., Dec. 27 (M. Lynch *et al.*) and in Provincetown, MA, Feb. 7 (G. Martin *et al.*). Common Loons were widely reported in good numbers from Maine to Massachusetts, and 300 late migrants flew past S.N., Dec. 13 (TC *et al.*). By contrast, Red-throated Loons were scarce. A count of 63 Pied-billed Grebes on 305 ponds covered by the CCL&PWS Dec. 5-6, was the most tallied for that survey since 1987 (C.C.B.C.), but only a handful were reported from elsewhere in the Region. Indicative of the temperate first half of the season was a Pied-billed at Charlotte Ferry, VT, as late as Feb. 2 (JP). The only noteworthy concentration of Horned Grebes was in Boston Harbor, where 184 were tallied Jan. 24 (T.A.S.L.); in w. Massachusetts, a peak of six at Quabbin before ice-up was categorized as "very few" (SK). Red-necked Grebes were very scarce, the expected late-winter buildup apparently failing to materialize at all this year; indeed, the largest count of the season came during the December storm, when 51 flew past S.N., Dec. 13 (RAF *et al.*). Rounding out the grebe list were an Eared in Mattapoisett, MA, Dec. 31 (ph., RB), and the venerable Western, seen sporadically in Georgetown, ME, the 16th consecutive winter in that area (*vide* JD).

Northern Fulmars have not been easy to come by in recent years, but the December gale blew 115 past Rockport, MA, Dec. 11 (RSH), and >50 past F.E., Dec. 13 (SAP *et al.*). Also at the latter site, Dec. 13, were a late Greater Shearwater (BN *et al.*) and an unidentified large shearwater (WRP *et al.*). Gannets apparently moved through the Region early this year, as the only significant concentration was 2000 on Nantucket, Dec. 4 (JPa); even the December gale failed to produce counts much in excess of 100. Two Double-crested Cormorants remained as far north as Champlain Bridge, VT, through ice-up (*vide* JP).

Apparently unique after the first of the year was an Am. Bittern on Nantucket, Feb. 14 (T. Loring). Tardy Great Egrets were at Greenwich Pt., CT, Dec. 8 (B. O'Toole); in Centerville, MA, Dec. 27 (R. Jenkins); on M.V., Jan. 1-3 (v.o.); in Barnstable, MA, Jan. 2 (*vide* JS); and in Stamford Jan. 17 (SMa). Snowy Egrets were found in Hyannis, MA, Dec. 21 (PT), and in Dennis, MA, Jan. 1 (*vide* JS). Rarest of the dilatory herons this season was an ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Stamford, CT, Dec. 23 (D. Provencher).

## WATERFOWL

A Tundra Swan appeared in Provincetown, MA, Dec. 5 (K. Jones); two were at the Scituate Reservoir, RI, Jan. 3 (A. Strauss *et al.*), and



another was at the traditional site on M.V., through at least early January. Mute Swans continue their inexorable increase: Numbers on the Connecticut DEP mid-winter waterfowl survey were up 18% (*vide* BK); 255 were present at Wachemoket Cove, RI, Dec. 18 (DE), and 226 on the CCL&PWS was a record high on that 9-year survey (C.C.B.C.). Single White-fronted Geese were present in S. Wellfleet, MA, Dec. 5 (SAP *et al.*), and in New Bedford, MA, Dec. 15-Jan. 31 (D. Zimmerman), while six Barnacle Geese in Wallingford, CT, Jan. 30 (SMa *et al.*) generated the usual quandary over their origins. In recent years, a few Snow Geese have persisted into the winter, but this year only five were reported



**Male Lesser Goldfinch (of the black-backed form) at Georgetown, Maine, February 17, 1993. First record for the state and for the Region. Photograph/Denny Abbott.**

ed; puzzling, however, was the report of 100 flying over Piermont, NH, on the curious date of Feb. 14 (T. & S. Sears).

For the 2nd consecutive year, a Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal appeared in White Brook, RI, Jan. 9-Feb. 7 (R. Sunn *et al.*). Few tears will be shed over the inexplicable news that the 1180 Mallards on the CCL&PWS constituted a 9-year low. A record low for Am. Black Ducks on that survey is considerably more disturbing. Winter Blue-winged Teals have recently been discovered with some frequency; this year a female was studied at close range in Providence Jan. 9 (DE), and a male on Nantucket Jan. 10 (E. Ray).

In contrast to many of the puddle duck populations Regionwide, Gadwalls are doing just fine, as indicated by a total of 529 birds in Massachusetts, 293 of which were in Seekonk Jan. 9 (H. Willoughby), and 107 in Yarmouth Jan. 23 (BN).

Eurasian Wigeons numbered perhaps as many as three in Connecticut, two to four in Rhode Island, and eight in Massachusetts. The bulk of the Region's wintering Am. Wigeons apparently congregated in Upper Narragansett Bay, where 968 were present Jan. 9 (DE).

Canvasback is another duck that has recently declined demonstrably; in Rhode Island and s.e. Massachusetts, where the bulk of the Region's birds winter, a maximum of 400 in Little Compton, RI, Dec. 2 (DE), was but a shadow of peaks of a few years ago. Red-heads remained hard to find, except on Nantucket, where a peak of 33 was noted Jan. 16 (E. Andrews). A ♂ Tufted Duck entertained many observers in Greenwich Harbor, CT, Jan. 2-Feb. 28 (*vide* BK). By far the largest concentration of Greater Scaup was in West Haven, CT, where ≥8000 were present in January (SMa *et al.*).

King Eiders were as scarce as at any time in recent memory, with only five in Massachusetts and six or so in Maine. After a decade or more of dramatic increases along the s. New England coast, Harlequin Ducks seem to have hit a plateau; the peak at Sachuest Pt., RI, was only 45 birds (J. Murphy), the 3rd consecutive year of decline since the record 83 of 3 years ago, while in Maine the peak at Ogunquit was 32, down from last year's 49 (*vide* JD). A few Oldsquaws often show up on the larger inland lakes during fall migration, but singles at Shelburne Bay, VT, Jan. 21 (D. Cargill), and at Holyoke, MA, Feb. 2-28 (*vide* SK), were most unusual mid-winter occurrences. Likewise, four White-winged Scoters in Hadley, MA, Jan. 16-17 (P. Yeskie), were aseasonal and indicative of the ice-free conditions. Red-breasted Merganser numbers were well below normal, with a high count of only 1023 in Boston Harbor, Jan. 24 (T.A.S.L.). Encouraging, though perhaps simply a reflection of the qui-

escent weather, were counts of 175 Ruddy Ducks in Middletown, RI, Jan. 1 (RB), and >80 in Framingham, MA, Dec. 9 (KH).

#### HAWKS AND VULTURES

Single Black Vultures were sighted on M.V., Dec. 5 (G. Ben David), and in Cohasset, MA, Dec. 20 (TC), but as many as five, a record high for the Region, were sighted in New Milford, CT, Dec. 19–Jan. 16 (B. Devine *et al.*). This species is still a legitimate rarity throughout most of New England, despite recent increases to the south. Wintering Turkey Vultures were more numerous than ever: Emerson reports a “virtual explosion” in Rhode Island, where the population in the s.w. corner of the state peaked at 30 birds in Alton Jan. 30 (D. Kraus). In e. Massachusetts, at least 22 vultures were observed January to early February, while one was seen farther N in N. Ferrisburg, VT, Dec. 15 (T. Cecchini), and up to five were found in Turner, ME, through late January (JD). The only lingering Osprey reported was in Milford, MA, Dec. 6 (CQ). Totals of Bald Eagles on the annual mid-winter survey included 61 in Connecticut (*vide* BK), a record 70 in Massachusetts, and 12 in Vermont (*vide* V.I.N.S.).

Both Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s hawks remained numerous. Northern Goshawk numbers appeared average at best, although “very good numbers” were noted in Vermont (JP). Red-shouldered Hawks again wintered in numbers in the southern half of the Region, with more than two dozen reported; some of the breeding birds in s. New England seem to have become almost year-round residents. An almost pure white Red-tailed Hawk was seen in Barrington, RI, Dec. 19–27 (BG *et al.*). Rough-legged Hawks were very scarce virtually throughout the Region, with the exception of w. Massachusetts, where numbers were considered “average” (SK). The peak count of Rough-leggeds was in the Addison/Bridport area of Vermont, where 11 were counted Feb. 3 (JP). As usual, a Golden Eagle wintered in the Quabbin, MA, area (*vide* SK), while another was found in Old Lyme, CT, Jan. 10 (Sma *et al.*).

American Kestrels continued to be distressingly scarce, and rather few Merlins were reported, except in w. Massachusetts, where four was “more than usual” (SK). Peregrine Falcons likewise seemed somewhat less numerous than in recent winters, particularly along the coast. Two Gyrfalcons, a gray bird in the Addison/Bridport area, VT, Jan. 8–Feb. 9 (R. Olsen, m.ob.), and one reported without details from Sorrento, ME, Feb. 10 (J. Murnane, *vide* WT), constituted barely a shadow of last years’ flight.

#### COOTS TO SHOREBIRDS

American Coots remained in alarmingly low numbers, as evidenced by a paltry, 9 year low of three on the CCL&PWS (versus a high of 175 in 1984). Even in Plymouth, MA, the recent Regional stronghold for the species, the peak of 123 coots Feb. 27 (MR *et al.*) was only about half that of recent levels there. A coot

seen at Charlotte Ferry, VT, Feb. 2 (JP), was very late at that latitude.

Despite seemingly favorable conditions, shorebirds once again provided few highlights. Late Semipalmated Plovers were seen at Rye, NH, Dec. 5 (SMi *et al.*), and at Harkness S.P., CT, Jan. 10 (Sma *et al.*). Apparently very few Greater Yellowlegs tarried this year, with the only reports after the first of the year of a single bird in Winthrop, MA, Jan. 3 (MR *et al.*), and of six in Hyannis Jan. 8 (S. Clifton). Very late Spotted Sandpipers teetered in Centerville, MA, Dec. 10 (RP), and in W. Newbury, MA, Dec. 18 (RSH). Groups of 20–40+ Ruddy Turnstones often overwinter at 3 or 4 favored coastal locations between s. Maine and Rhode Island, but counts at those sites this year failed to exceed a dozen birds.

#### S.A.

Red Phalaropes winter regularly in the Gulf Stream off the mid-Atlantic coast, with substantial concentrations often occurring in December (Lee, D.S., 1987, *Wilson Bull.* 99:116–121; Lee, D.S., 1986, *AB* 40:409–412). Occasional stragglers generally appear in New England in early winter, so the sighting of six phalaropes among the many storm-driven seabirds passing Rockport, MA, Dec. 11 (RSH) was not surprising.

The storm continued to rage, and none was seen the next day from various vantage points along the s. Cape Cod Bay shore, until late afternoon—when a startling accumulation of 2400 turned up along the Sandwich shore in the s.w. corner of the bay (SAP *et al.*). Just one day later, Dec. 13, unparalleled masses were present along the entire s. bay shore, with >10,000 estimated to have passed S.N. in less than 2 hours (SAP *et al.*), while 4500 were noted at F.E. (P. Bailey *et al.*)! At least a couple of flocks were even seen flying overland, 1 or 2 miles in from the coast. By early Dec. 14, only about 100 phalaropes were still present at F.E. (BN), but 500 were seen sitting on a calm sea off Sandwich, Dec. 15 (JS). Although several dead or dying phalaropes were picked up, mortality seemed surprisingly minimal. We can only guess at the total number of birds involved in this spectacle, but the event was clearly of a magnitude never previously recorded in the Region.

#### JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

Numbers of tardy jaegers were evident in Cape Cod Bay during the stormy weather of December. Following the passage of a weak storm, >25 jaegers (sp.) were noted at F.E., Dec. 6 (BN). The big blow produced 31 jaegers (sp.) at S.N., Dec. 12 (RP *et al.*), and three Pomarines there the following day (SAP *et al.*), while at F.E., 10 Pomarines and 20 jaegers (sp.) were seen Dec. 13 (m.ob.), as well as four jaegers (sp.), Dec. 14 (BN *et al.*). Virtually all jaegers in the northeast after mid-November

are Pomarines, but a Parasitic was reported, without details, from Cape Elizabeth, ME, Dec. 2 (*vide* WT). Skuas during “the” storm included two Greats at S.N., Dec. 13 (R. Donovan *et al.*); three Greats and five skuas (sp.) at F.E., Dec. 13 (SAP *et al.*); and three to four skuas (sp.) at F.E., Dec. 14 (BN *et al.*).

An ad. Little Gull on M.V., Dec. 5 (G. Daniels), was apparently unique this season. A Com. Black-headed Gull in Burlington, Jan. 19–27 (TG, m.ob.) was Vermont’s 4th, while elsewhere there were several in Maine; >27 in Massachusetts, with a peak of 21 in Winthrop Dec. 20 (v.o.); nine in Rhode Island, with a peak of six at Watchemoket Cove Feb. 5 (*vide* DE); and two in Connecticut (*vide* BK). An ad. Mew Gull spent Dec. 20–Feb. 28 in Winthrop, MA (SAP *et al.*), the only one of its species to be reported this season, as was a Thayer’s Gull in S. Portland, ME, Jan 10–11 (LB *et al.*). Most curious, but unfortunately lacking any details, was a reported Herring × Ring-billed Gull present throughout the period in Southbury, CT (R. Naylor); I can find no precedence for such a hybrid. An ad. Great Black-backed × Herring Gull in Lynn, MA, Dec. 24 and Feb. 13 (J. Quigley), was a more typical cross. A near-record number of winter Lesser Black-backed Gulls included one in Vermont, at least 10 in Massachusetts, and ≥6 in Connecticut. A Black-legged Kittiwake was sighted on L. Champlain at Addison, VT, Dec. 2 (TG), and sizable numbers were blown in by the December storm—1320 in Rockport, MA, Dec. 11 (RSH); “thousands” at S.N. (RP) and 800 in one hour at Dennis, MA, Dec. 12 (BN); and 1500 at F.E., Dec. 13 (BN *et al.*). Other than these sightings, there was a dearth of kittiwakes, in sharp contrast to their abundance of the 1970s and early 1980s.

A total of about 30 Dovekies in Massachusetts in December included >15 at F.E., Dec. 13 (SAP *et al.*); the only others in the Region were singles at 2 sites in Maine and one in Rhode Island. Five Com. Murres identified flying past Rockport, MA, Dec. 11 (RSH), was a good count for this normally tough-to-find alcid; the four to five others reported were all seen in Massachusetts, as were six of the Region’s eight Thick-billed Murres. Razorbills, the Region’s bread-and-butter alcid over the past decade or so, were relatively scarce, except during the December storm, when 1565 were at Rockport Dec. 11 (RSH) and 275 at F.E., Dec. 13 (SAP *et al.*). Another >800 unidentified large alcids at F.E., Dec. 13, as well as 350 seen there the following day (BN *et al.*), probably represented most, if not all, of this species. At Cape Elizabeth, ME, 85 storm-driven Razorbills were tallied in 6 hours Dec. 13 (LB). Ten Atlantic Puffins at F.E., Dec. 13 (WRP *et al.*), comprised one of the largest totals ever recorded in the Region away from their breeding grounds.

#### OWLS TO FLYCATCHERS

Snowy Owls were present in well-above-average numbers, though noticeably below last year’s exceptional levels. A very crude estimate of statewide totals includes >14 in

Maine,  $\geq 2$  in New Hampshire, only one in Vermont;  $>35$  in Massachusetts;  $\geq 4$  in Rhode Island; and at least one in Connecticut. At Boston's Logan Airport, 19 birds were banded (versus 36 last year) out of an estimated winter total of 26 birds; the daily peak at that location was eight owls Dec. 20 (N. Smith). In contrast to last year's booty, no N. Hawk Owls or Boreal Owls were detected, and suggestive but inconclusive details were submitted for the only reported Great Gray Owl, a bird in Strafford, NH, on 3 dates Dec. 17–Jan. 3. Two Long-eared Owls in Vermont, 10 in Massachusetts, and five in Connecticut constituted a fairly good showing for this most elusive strigid. Short-eareds were once again few and far between, with meager totals of one each in New Hampshire and Vermont, two in Maine, six in Massachusetts, and four or so in Rhode Island.

The ♀ imm.-plumaged hummingbird in a Surry, ME, greenhouse since early October remained—both in the greenhouse and unidentified. Plans were to keep the bird captive until spring, in hopes that it would molt into a recognizable plumage. Four Red-headed Woodpeckers remained in Bridport, VT, where they nested successfully last year, while five others were seen in Massachusetts, and a single in Georgetown, ME (K. Patterson). Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to increase:  $\geq 14$  were reported from the northern 3 states, and a small population explosion was evident in Rhode Island and on Cape Cod. The latest of several Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers after the first of the year was one in Watertown, MA, Feb. 25 (N. Dane). Several Black-backed Woodpeckers were found in extreme n. New England, but apparently none wandered south.

Half a dozen E. Phoebes tarried as late as early January in Massachusetts, and one endured to Feb. 7 in New Milford, CT (A. Dimmitt). Connecticut's first Ash-throated Flycatcher delighted many in Stamford Dec. 20–Jan. 15 (T. Burke, m.ob.).

#### SWALLOWS TO SHRIKES

A Tree Swallow in Brewster, MA, Dec. 18 (MR *et al.*) was the only representative of its clan this season. American Crows at the traditional Framingham, MA, roost peaked at a far-below-average 2500, but  $>8000$  were estimated at another roost in Lawrence, MA, some 30 mi to the north (E. Taylor). A Fish Crow in Hampton, NH, Jan. 23 (P. Hunt *et al.*), was unusually far north for the season, and a "record-high" six birds were seen at 4 sites in w. Massachusetts (SK). However, the Framingham roost hosted only 200 Fish Crows, Jan. 3 (KH *et al.*), a fraction of recent peaks there; Rhode Island's largest wintering flock in Buttonwoods Park consisted of 60 birds, Feb. 11 (R. Gee).

A Boreal Chickadee in S. Londonderry, VT, Dec. 13 and Jan. 12 (W. Norse), was the only one to stray even slightly S this winter, and the southernmost reported in the Region in several years. Carolina Wren populations continued to surge to higher levels, although

no obvious northward expansion was obvious this year. Winter Wrens were numerous again, as demonstrated by a "well-above-average" total of 36 in w. Massachusetts (SK). Many Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered, two surviving into February in Massachusetts. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher first discovered in mid-November at Trustom N.W.R., RI, was last seen there Dec. 1 (BG *et al.*).

Eastern Bluebirds remained in healthy numbers throughout the s. two-thirds of the Region, while Hermit Thrushes were plentiful in s. coastal sections but apparently scarce to absent elsewhere. Flocks of Am. Robins, often in the range of 100–200 birds, were much in evidence across the s. two-thirds of the Region as well. For the first time in  $>20$  years, no Varied Thrushes were reported. A Brown Thrasher in Springfield, NH, Feb. 16 (C. Bruss), was notable for latitude and date. American Pipits apparently found the snow-free conditions favorable, as 15 were unearthed in Dartmouth, MA, Jan. 1 (MB); nine in Middleboro, MA, Feb. 11 (S. Bolton); and one on Deer I., ME, Feb. 9 (R. Hildreth).

Bohemian Waxwings were few and confined to extreme n. New England, except for  $\leq 9$  in Enfield, NH. There is typically a strong correlation between wintering populations of robins and Cedar Waxwings, as both key in to the same fruiting plants, and this year was no exception. Flocks of waxwings numbering  $\leq 200$  birds, with a maximum of 500, were widely reported in Massachusetts, while smaller flocks were scattered across the remaining two-thirds of the Region. Northern Shrikes were about as rare as ever: only two were found in Connecticut (*vide* BK), apparently none in Rhode Island, only seven in Massachusetts, and just a handful in the n. 3 states.

#### VIREOS TO TOWHEES

A late White-eyed Vireo was seen in Westport, MA, Dec. 1–4 (F. Thurber). An Orange-crowned Warbler at a feeder in Spruce Head, ME, Dec. 1–Feb. 13+ (R. Ruby-Burggraff *et al.*) was unusually far north; as usual, several others were found in s. New England, the latest Feb. 2. Tardy among the season's 14 species of warbler were a Nashville on Nantucket Dec. 6 (JPa); a Yellow on the St. Albans, VT, CBC, Dec. 20 (†E. Alton *et al.*); a Cape May on the Dummerston, VT, CBC, Dec. 20 (F. Hunt, †W. Nichols *et al.*); a Black-throated Blue in Taunton, MA, Dec. 5 (J. Sweeney); and a Wilson's in Marblehead, MA, Dec. 1 (TA). Three Ovenbirds tarried in Massachusetts: in Boston Dec. 8 (B. Bochan); in Mashpee Dec. 9 (F. LeBaron); and in Charleston Dec. 17 (K. Folsom).

The Yellow-throated Warbler first found in Burlington, VT, Nov. 25, remained through Dec. 31 (F. Grassley, v.o.). Most startling among this winter's late parulids, and following two birds on Cape Cod CBCs in December, was a N. Waterthrush in Sandwich, MA, on the astonishing date of Feb. 28 (PT *et al.*). Fewer than usual Yellow-breasted Chats were found in December; of the six reported after the first of the year, the latest was seen at

Sachuest, RI, Feb. 7 (CP)

A W. Tanager was observed visiting a feeder in Berkley, MA, Jan. 1–Feb. 28 (J. Ketner, v.o.). An invasion of Painted Buntings, perhaps involving as many as four different ad males, reached Cape Cod, beginning in late November: the first in Sandwich Nov. 22–28 (R. Smith, v.o.); the second (?) briefly in W. Barnstable a few miles to the east Nov. 29 (M. Fuller, *vide* BN); another in Brewster Nov. 25–Feb. 28 (ph., A. Furman, v.o.); and the last in Hyannis Dec. 21–Feb. 15 (ph., D. Stewart, m.ob.). Despite a good fall flight, few Dickcissels remained into the winter, with one in Rhode Island and about six in Massachusetts. Brief but convincing details were submitted for a Green-tailed Towhee at a Keene, NH, feeder Dec. 10 & 12 (†D. Maynard).

#### SPARROWS TO ORIOLES

Chipping Sparrows are now wintering with such regularity that many are probably unreported; northernmost this season was a bird at Norridgewock, ME, Feb. 10–18 (W. Sumner), while 15 in Brewster, MA, Jan. 3 (A. King), was a sizable winter flock. Six Clay-colored Sparrows were found in Massachusetts: singles in Falmouth Dec. 19 (BN *et al.*) and Hadley Dec. 22 (P. Champlin); and  $\leq 4$  throughout the period among an extraordinary sparrow assemblage in Sandwich (PT *et al.*). Other peak sparrow counts in Sandwich during February were 35 Fields, three Vespers,  $>80$  Savannahs, one Grasshopper Feb. 19–28 (PT), 120 Songs, and six White-crowned (PT, RAF *et al.*). Unfortunately, access to this site, a private farm, is limited. Additional Vesper Sparrows numbered two in Middleboro, MA, Jan. 17 (J. Hoye *et al.*), and one in Addison, VT, Jan. 26 (†JP).

A Lark Sparrow on Nantucket Jan. 2–4 (RS *et al.*) was unique this season, as was a very cooperative LeConte's Sparrow, Rhode Island's first, in Middletown Jan. 21–Feb. 28 (ph., D. Finizia, m.ob.). A few "Ipswich" Sparrows regularly winter in scattered coastal locales, but a maximum of eight in S. Dartmouth, MA, Jan. 1–2 (TA *et al.*), was an unusual concentration. Fox Sparrows were in above-average numbers in Massachusetts and Vermont, where a "gray-headed" individual was reported from Randolph, Dec. 10 (M. Herwig, *vide* JP). Yet another sparrow that has become almost routine in the early winter is Lincoln's, this winter's sightings included one in Connecticut and four in Massachusetts; the latest were two birds in N. Dartmouth, MA, Jan. 15 (MB), and a single in E. Gloucester, MA, Jan. 16 (C. Leahy). Scattered reports of White-crowned Sparrows in the s. 3 states included a maximum of 12 in Portsmouth, RI, Jan. 16 (DE *et al.*). "Oregon" Juncos were detected in S. Wellfleet, MA, Dec. 5 (SAP *et al.*), and in W. Roxbury, MA, Feb. 6 (RAF *et al.*).

Encouraging totals of E. Meadowlarks included  $>33$  at 2 sites in Connecticut; many reports in Massachusetts, with a high count of 46 in Middleboro Jan. 17 (Gd'E); five at 2 sites in Maine; and a single bird in Bridport, VT, Jan. 24 (T. Hall *et al.*). Several N. Orioles sur-



vived into the second half of the season, including at least one in Maine and three in New Hampshire. "Bullock's" Orioles were identified in Watertown, MA, Dec. 6–26 (JH) and in Plymouth, MA, Dec. 29 (J. Arwood).

#### WINTER FINCHES

Winter finches had an abysmal showing, as bad as, if not worse than, that of the pitiful 1988–1989 season. Pine Grosbeaks were almost nonexistent, even in northernmost locales; a report of 15 in Williamsburg, MA, Feb. 28, was anomalous (*fide* SK). Purple Finches were described as "scarce" in Maine (JD) and were once again virtually absent from the s. coastal plain; elsewhere, however, they were fairly widespread, with some flocks containing >50 birds. Crossbills were found only in extreme n. Maine, where a "few" of both species were present (*fide* JD) and, curiously, in Massachusetts, where four Reds were detected at 2 sites in the w. part of the state and a single White-winged in W. Newbury Feb. 5 (RSH); neither species was reported from New Hampshire or Vermont!

The few Com. Redpolls reported were, oddly, found mostly in Connecticut, where 35 birds at 3 sites included 30 in Simsbury Feb. 23–24 (D. Girardin, *fide* BK). There were none in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, or Vermont; only 13 at 2 sites in New Hampshire (*fide* DDL); and an unspecified number at just 2 sites in Maine (*fide* JD). Pine Siskins were absent from Rhode Island, at only one site (15 birds) in Connecticut, and at 4 sites (37 birds total) in Massachusetts, while across n. New England they were very few and far between. The bird of the season was the Region's first Lesser Goldfinch, a male of the dark-backed form, in Georgetown, ME, Dec. 15–Feb. 28 (ph., J. & L. Frank, m.ob.). This apparently is one of only 3 or 4 records from anywhere east of the Mississippi. Although most likely a wild bird, can the provenance of any wayward finch ever be entirely above suspicion? Evening Grosbeaks were absent from Rhode Island, at only one site (three birds) in Connecticut, in a few scattered locales in interior Massachusetts, and in well-below-average numbers across n. New England.

**Corrigenda:** The 243 grebes in Boston Harbor, Nov. 22, 1992, were Horned, not Red-necked.

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## HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

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

The winter season started off with temperatures and precipitation well above normal. The major event was the powerful nor'easter of December 12 that wreaked havoc along the coastlines of the Region, especially in northern New Jersey and Long Island. Buffalo averaged 3.3 and 5.9 degrees above normal for the first 2 months, but the ample precipitation fell mostly as rain during January. The Syracuse area received more than 10 feet of snow for the season, a good foot-and-a-half above normal. Philadelphia, in the south, experienced an equally mild early winter, although February was much colder throughout the Region. On average, it was a nearly normal winter. The only major snowstorm blew in as the blizzard of 1993, well after the end of the reporting period.

Despite the chilly temperatures of the fall, the moderate early winter produced exceptional numbers of half-hardy migrants lingering into the season and even successfully wintering in a surprising number of cases. A modest number of rarities provided some excitement to an otherwise dull season. Unusual waterfowl were well represented, but alcids other than Razorbills were scarce close to shore (though in good numbers offshore) and the rarer gulls were hard to find after the excitement of late November–early December in the Niagara Falls area died down. Winter finches were again virtually nonexistent, except in parts of upstate New York, where minor incursions of both species of crossbill resulted in apparent breeding records.

Among the outstanding rarities were the Region's, and New Jersey's, first Rock Wren and New York's first Spotted Redshank. Other goodies included Black-throated Sparrow in New Jersey, Harris' Sparrow and Painted Bunting in Pennsylvania, and a possible Black-backed Wagtail in New York.

**Abbreviations:** Bombay Hook (*Bombay Hook, N.W.R., near Smyrna, DE*); Brig (*Brigantine Unit, Forsythe N.W.R., Atlantic, NJ*); Cape Henlopen (*Cape Henlopen S.P. Sussex, DE*); Dunkirk (*Dunkirk Harbor, Chautauqua, NY*); Indian R. (*Indian River Inlet, Sussex, DE*); LI (*Long Island*); Manasquan Inlet (*Manasquan Inlet, Monmouth-Ocean, NJ*); Montauk (*Montauk Point and vicinity, Long Island, NY*); Sandy Hook (*Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway Nat'l Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ*); CBC (*Christmas Bird Count*). Place names in *italics* are counties.



**Say's Phoebe at Eckville, Pennsylvania, January 5, 1993. Photograph/Rick Wiltraut.**

#### LOONS TO HERONS

Unlike last year, there were not many reports of loons lingering away from their usual wintering grounds. Individual Red-throated Loons at Beltsville L., *Carbon, Dec. 17* (B. Silfics), and at Peace Valley, *Bucks, PA, Dec. 31–Jan. 2* (AM), were noteworthy. The only Pacific Loon was at Manasquan, first located Feb. 7 (J. McKee), and seen sporadically into April.

Red-necked Grebes were found in the highest numbers in years in the s. part of the Region, including two in Delaware, 13 in New Jersey (several on inland CBCs), and about eight in New York, mostly at Montauk. Four reports of the increasingly regular Eared Grebe came from coastal New Jersey, Montauk, and upstate New York—one at Dunkirk Dec. 31 and Feb. 19 (B. Robinson, TM), and one at Sodus Pt., *Wayne, Jan. 2–3* (DSh, DT, MDa).

A N. Fulmar that flew past the Derby Hill, *Oswego, NY*, hawkwatch on L. Ontario, Dec. 3, was the 4th for the Oneida Lake Basin (JHa). Great Cormorants continue to spread away from the coast, this season again reaching up the Hudson R. to *Rockland* and *Dutchess* in New York, but also as far NW as Beltsville L., *Carbon, PA, Dec. 20*, for a first county record (RW, m.ob.). The growing Delaware R. wintering population numbered several dozen and contributed first CBC records at Trenton, Northwestern *Gloucester*, and at Salem, NJ.

The mild early winter again tempted several herons and egrets to linger late and even attempt to overwinter. Least Bitterns tried to spend the season at Cape May Point, where they are common breeders, with as many as four seen Feb. 5 (JDo); unfortunately, the more extreme weather of late February and early March led to the demise of several. A Great Egret on the Harrisburg CBC, Dec. 19, probably didn't stay, but two at Rogers Ref., Princeton, Jan. 19, were clearly not planning to migrate (RJB). Thirteen wintered at



Short's Beach, *Sussex*, DE (WWF), as apparently had a Tricolored Heron at Indian R. (APE, CC).

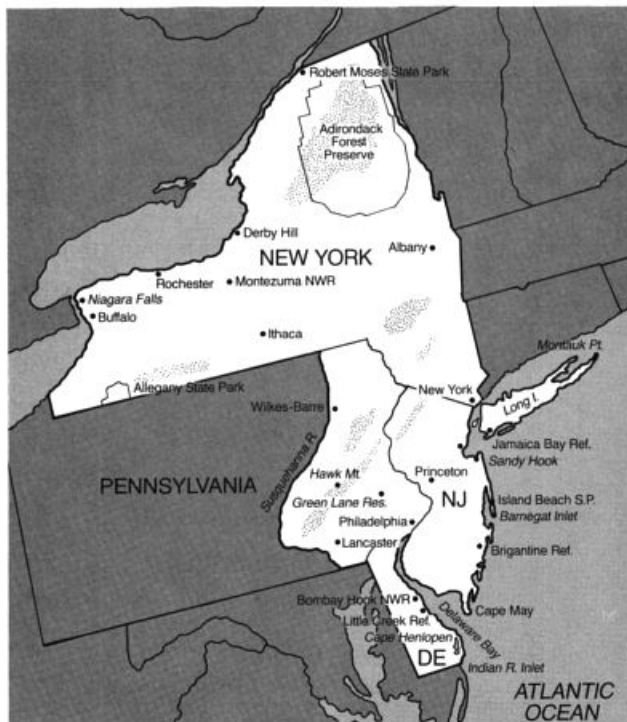
#### WATERFOWL

A wing-tagged swan observed along the Wading R., *Burlington*, NJ, Jan. 15, turned out to be a Trumpeter Swan released in December as a part of the growing Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program (*vide* PS). Although a few of these birds have previously been seen in w. New York, this appears to be the first Regional report away from the Great Lakes; there will likely be others. Seven reports of Greater White-fronted Goose was typical for a season, with only Delaware failing to register one; details were lacking for all but an immature in *Suffolk*, LI (JJR, BK).

An extraordinary five Ross' Geese made the season roundup—amazing when one considers that even a single winter Ross' would have been greeted with great skepticism 15 years ago. Two were holdovers from the fall, one at Point au Roche S.P., *Clinton*, NY, to Dec. 3, and a rare blue morph bird at Brig to Dec. 7 (DSi). Mid-winter birds were at Watermill, *Suffolk*, LI, Jan. 30–Feb. 1 (TL, J. Griffin) and at Broadkill Beach, *Sussex*, DE, Jan. 23 (CDC, ES, JS). An estimated 100,000 Snow Geese wintered near Odessa, *New Castle*, DE, with another 50,000 at Prime Hook N.W.R., *Sussex*, DE (DNREC).

A Green-winged (Eurasian) Teal was at Jamaica Bay, Dec. 19, for the local CBC; in Pennsylvania, one was seen at Harrisburg, Jan. 16 (D. Henise), and a returning drake wintered at Peace Valley (AM). A Cinnamon Teal of unknown origin was at Short's Beach, Feb. 27–28 (WWF, *et al.*); it will be reviewed by the DOS records committee. It was a very good season for Eur. Wigeons, with  $\geq 17$  on Long Island, six in New Jersey, one in *Lancaster*, PA (JHe), and one at Port Mahon, DE. Last winter's influx of Tufted Ducks into s.e. New York was echoed this year with the reappearance of the drake at Rye, *Westchester*, Dec. 27 and Jan. 17 (TWB) and three birds in *Suffolk*, LI. A drake at Manorville, Jan. 12 (JC), was seen the next day in the company of a female (JJR); another drake at E. Hampton, Jan. 23, was probably a different bird (JJR).

A large flock of Com. Eiders at Montauk throughout the winter peaked at about 1000 birds, Jan. 12 (*vide* TWB); small groups were seen as far S as Cape May. Small flocks of King Eiders numbered  $\leq 6$  at Barnegat Light; one was noted in Buffalo harbor in early January. Neither species seems to have reached Delaware. The usual scattering of Harlequin Ducks was noted at regular concentration points along the coast; noteworthy inland records came from Phoenix, on the Oswego R., n. of Syracuse, Jan. 7–27 (m.ob.), and Sodus Point, Feb. 28 (R.&R. Shone).



Hybrid Com. Goldeneye  $\times$  Hooded Merganser drakes were discovered at Nummy I., *Cape May*, NJ, Dec. 2 (FM), and at Black Rock Canal, Buffalo, Jan. 23 (B. Chilton). The ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye returned to the Throgs Neck Bridge, *Bronx*, for a 3rd winter; other females were found at Moriches Bay, *Suffolk*, LI, Jan. 17 (JC), and at Rye, Feb. 28 (TWB). The only drake was far upstate on Lake Champlain, *Clinton*, Jan. 17 (C. & J. Hess).

#### RAPTORS

An Osprey apparently wintered along the Susquehanna River west of Owego, *Tioga*, NY, where it was seen on several dates in January and February (*vide* MDo). Another was seen at Bombay Hook, Jan. 6, and a north-bound bird was seen heading up the Delaware River at New Hope, *Bucks*, PA, Jan. 28 (*vide* AH). Bald Eagles continue to increase throughout the Region and are reported in such numbers as to be beyond the scope of this account to itemize.

A Broad-winged Hawk was reported by a veteran observer at Doodletown, *Rockland*, NY, Jan. 4 on a winter bird census (ET). Yet another Broad-winged, an adult, wintered around a high school in Medford, *Burlington*, NJ, where it was seen from early January+ (J. Palumbo *et al.*). The recent increase in frequency of wintering Merlins continued, although in somewhat reduced numbers from last year's record totals. Individuals spent their 3rd consecutive winter in Buffalo and Syracuse, and another was far upstate at Point au Roche S.P., December–January. At least four others were reported after the New Year in the north, plus several on Long Island and a dozen on New Jersey CBCs.

Two Gyrfalcons, one brown and one gray, were seen near the e. end of Lake Erie, *Erie*, NY, in early January, and another one or two

(possibly the same birds) were near the L. Ontario shore at Yates, *Orleans*, late February (v.o.). The previously reported white Gyr on n. L. Champlain was seen at several spots sporadically through Jan. 6+, while a gray Gyrfalcon was seen in the New York section of the Ferrisburg, VT, CBC. A gray bird at Jones Beach, LI, Feb. 15, was suspected of being a Gyrfalcon  $\times$  Peregrine hybrid (M. Phillip, SS). The only other report came from the *Cumberland*, NJ, CBC, Jan. 1, a gray bird seen along the Cohansy R. (P. Guris *et al.*).

#### RAILS TO SHOREBIRDS

An interesting mix of Clapper, King, and Virginia rails were active and calling on the morning of the Middletown, DE, CBC at Hangman's Cr., *New Castle* (WJW). Two different Com. Moorhens at Rochester in January were extremely rare winter visitors, one of them at Mendon Ponds, where a Sora wintered as well (MDa, DT). A Sandhill Crane discovered on the *Cumberland*, NJ, CBC, Jan. 1, was still present near Bridgeton, Jan. 26 (CSS, B. Caril), while another was discovered by octogenarian Dorothy McIlroy and the C.C.B.C., at King Ferry, *Cayuga*, NY, Jan. 19–21.

Large numbers of Am. Oystercatchers wintered again, including a peak 102 at Brig I., *Atlantic*, NJ, Jan. 15 (JDo). An Am. Avocet at Bombay Hook, Jan. 24, was apparently trying to winter (S. Lawrence), and both species of yellowleg were outstanding for the Wilmington CBC. The shorebird of the season was a cooperative Spotted Redshank discovered at a roadside boat basin in Brooklyn, Dec. 6, by John Yrizarry, who was scouting for the upcoming CBC. After playing hard to get for a few weeks, the bird settled into a routine (ph., m.ob.) through February. This is the first confirmed record for New York (beyond one unconfirmed published sight record from 1977), and the 4th for the Region, the previous 3 from Brig.

A pair of Marbled Godwits were at Brig. I. for the Oceanville CBC, and modest numbers of W. Sandpipers wintered at various coastal locations. More unusual were a small flock of 6–17 Least that spent most of the season at Nummy I., Dec. 8–Feb. 2 (JDo, VE), and a single bird at Port Mahon, Feb. 27–28 (CDC, APE). A Pectoral Sandpiper found on the Bombay Hook CBC, Dec. 26 (NP), was exceptional, though not unprecedented, but a Stilt Sandpiper at Cape Henlopen, Dec. 20, provided a first winter record for the state (ES). Up to seven Long-billed Dowitchers wintered at Massapequa Preserve, *Nassau*, LI.

#### JAEGERS TO ALCIDES

Three jaeger reports came from upstate New York: a Parasitic, Dec. 4 (W. Symonds), and an unidentified jaeger, Dec. 20 (Rochester

CBC), both at Hamlin Beach, *Monroe*, and another jaeger (sp.) at Ft. Niagara on New Year's Day (WDn, DD). The closure of landfills continues to lead to a drastic reduction of gulls wintering at former hotspots, such as L. Cayuga, the Syracuse area, and the Hackensack Meadowlands of n. New Jersey. Consequently, white-winged gulls have become somewhat harder to find, but the premier rarities of the family were mainly holdovers from the fall season at Niagara R.

Little Gulls were scarce along the Niagara R., with a maximum of only five—one or two individuals on Long Island in December, and two to three at Cape May in January. Common Black-headed Gulls were also poorly represented but included one that wintered at a mall in Bridgehampton, *Suffolk*, LI (JJR, BK), a couple in Delaware, about six in New Jersey (one a first for *Camden*, Feb. 4, *fide CDC*), and one in Pennsylvania. The latter bird was present at the Oxford, *Chester*, sewage ponds, Jan. 22+, apparently furnishing the first state record away from a major lake or river (G. Saunders, m.ob.).

A *Mew Gull* (Pacific Coast ssp.), perhaps the same bird previously found along the Niagara R., was observed at Dunkirk, Dec. 3 (B. Sundell), while another individual (nominant European ssp.) was found at the Moses-Saunders Dam, near Massena, *St. Lawrence*, NY Dec. 27 & 29 (†DSi, C. Bonde, C. Wratten). The previously reported *California Gull* and *Slaty-backed Gull* at the Niagara R. gorge were seen again on the New York side of the river on a couple of dates in early December. Lesser Black-backed were again widely distributed, but only scattered ones and twos of the white-winged gulls could be found. Up to three Iceland Gulls were present in early December at Blue Marsh L., *Berks*, PA, site of so much gull excitement last winter, and a Glaucous was an outstanding find for the Philadelphia Mid-winter Bird Census, Jan. 17.

Black-backed Kittiwakes occurred far from their usual open-country haunts—three at Derby Hill, Dec. 3 (JHa), and singles at the Niagara R., Dec. 12 and again Jan. 30 (WDn, DD). Most extraordinary was one at Marcus Hook, *Delaware*, PA, on the Delaware R., near Philadelphia, Dec. 11 (RMS). A Caspian Tern was extremely late at Rochester, Dec. 4 (CTC), as were two Black Skimmers that lingered at Jamaica Bay until Dec. 20 and a pair of skimmers at Cape May Point, Jan. 5 (JDo). A flock of 30–35 Forster's Terns at Indian R. stayed as late as Jan. 31 (WWF).

A number of reports of less common alcids filtered in, mostly from boat trips well offshore. A Com. Murre came almost to shore at Montauk, Jan. 2 (A. Ott), and eight oiled birds were treated by a local rehabilitation center. A Feb. 15 boat trip out of Cape May came up with four Com. Murres in New Jersey waters, and with what would be Delaware's first, if accepted by the state records committee, about 23 mi e. of Cape Henlopen (CDC *et al.*). The same trip provided the season's only Atlantic Puffin off Cape May.



**Black-throated Sparrow at Cherry Hill, New Jersey, in December 1992. Third state record. Photograph/Pat Lowman.**

A whale watch out of Brielle, Jan. 24, hailed the only Thick-billed Murres (LL, RD), and a subsequent trip produced two more Commons (no date available). Razor-bills were scattered along the coast from Montauk to Indian R., mainly in ones and twos; 30 were observed at Montauk, Dec. 12 (BK), and >250 flew by the point in early January (TL).

#### OWLS TO GNATCATCHERS

It was a poor year for the migrant owls, although fair numbers of Snowy Owls were W of Rochester; about a dozen were on Long Island and eight or so in New Jersey, but most did not linger at one place >1–2 days. Exceptions were a Snowy Owl near Smyrna, *Kent*, DE, near Bombay Hook, December–January, and another at Cape Henlopen, Jan. 21+. A *Northern Hawk Owl* was seen around L. Placid all winter (*fide* JMCP).

The Cayuga area Short-eared Owl census turned up >37 birds in late February (NB), and a calling N. Saw-whet at Connecticut Hill, near Ithaca, NY, Feb. 28, was in a possible nesting location (L. Elliot). Few Saw-whets were found elsewhere, including traditional winter concentration spots at Thoro-fare and Palmyra, NJ (TBa).

A *Say's Phoebe* near Hawk Mt., Eckville, *Berks*, Jan. 4–15 pumped an amazing 5th record for the county (T. Lecky, ph. RW, m.ob.); several of these records may represent the same bird returning in different (but not consecutive) years. Eastern Phoebes were widely represented on CBCs in the s. part of the Region, a few lingering through January, and single W. Kingbirds were at Cedar Beach, LI, Dec. 9, and on the Brooklyn CBC, Dec. 19.

A flock of ≤19 Tree Swallows wintered at Greece in suburban Rochester, and numerous others were found along the coast all season. Far from the Adirondacks was a Gray Jay at a tree farm in Springwater, *Livingston*, NY, for

just one day in late February (H. Hamilton *et al.*, *fide* RGS); there is one previous record from the same location.

The bird of the season in New Jersey was a *Rock Wren*—the first for the state and the Region, and long overdue. The typically tame individual was discovered by Sibley at Cape May Point, Dec. 5. Although it managed to elude CBC counters, the wren entertained the multitudes as it foraged around new housing construction almost daily through the end of the period (DSi, m.ob.). Often reported on CBCs, particularly in the s. part of the Region, three House Wrens that spent the entire winter at Hidden Valley Ranch, Cape May, were exceptional (JDo).

Sedge Wrens on the Barnegat and Belleplain, NJ, CBCs, represented the only occurrences of the season, while a Marsh Wren wintering at Rogers Ref., Princeton, NJ, Feb. 5, was the only one reported after the CBC period (B. Dodelson). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was a highlight of the Harrisburg, PA, CBC, and another was found on the Lancaster, PA, CBC, for the 2nd consecutive year.

#### THRUSHES TO WARBLERS

A Wood Thrush reappeared for a 2nd winter at the same *Bergen*, NJ, park, for the Hackensack-Ridgewood CBC (J. Traynor), and another was seen in Central Park, New York City, Jan. 28–Feb. 6 (ph., T. Fiori *et al.*). Potentially the most exciting, but unfortunately uncooperative, bird of the season was a wagtail, believed to be a Black-backed Wagtail, that flew by 3 observers who were looking for the Spotted Redshank at Plumb Beach, Brooklyn, Dec. 21. Details and sketches of the bird, seen at close range, but only in flight, have been submitted to NYSARC (†DSi, K. Karlson, B. Lewis).

A Bohemian Waxwing, discovered on the S. *Nassau*, LI, CBC, was seen Jan. 3–6 (m.ob.). After a couple of big invasion years, this was, unsurprisingly, not a N. Shrike year; however, a Loggerhead Shrike returned to Broadkill Beach, *Sussex*, DE, for a 4th consecutive winter (m.ob.). A White-eyed Vireo discovered at Higbee Beach, Cape May, Feb. 9, must have spent the winter there (JDo), but one seen on the Montauk CBC, Dec. 19, was not relocated. More outrageous was a Philadelphia Vireo encountered on the Sandy Hook, NJ, CBC, Dec. 19. Viewed at leisure for 15 minutes at distances as close as 6 feet, by 2 observers thoroughly familiar with the species, the record is as hard to dispute as it is unprecedented (RD, J. Bussman *et al.*).

The mild early winter apparently encouraged a number of warblers to linger late. In addition to the usual scattering of Orange-crowns, Nashville Warblers were found on 2 New Jersey CBCs, and a Yellow Warbler was at Cape May, Dec. 15 (JDo). A Black-throated Blue at Cape May, Dec. 2, was outdone by another on the Orient, LI, CBC, Jan. 2 (M. Hemmerick). An Ovenbird at a Harding, *Luzerne*, PA, feeder was killed by a cat, Dec. 24 (J. Hoyson, J. Shoemaker), but another spent all of January at a Greece, *Monroe*, NY, feeder (F. Dobson). A Wilson's Warbler was

spied at a park in *Monmouth*, NJ, for most of December (RD, TBa), and Yellow-breasted Chats were widely reported on CBCs, with several wintering at Cape May.

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A Summer Tanager regularly visited the Rancocas Nature Center Feeder in Burlington, NJ, early December–Jan. 2 (F. Coleman *et al.*). Two **Painted Buntings** in one winter were unprecedented—the first a female discovered at the Montauk town dump, Dec. 19, last seen Dec. 28 (A. Baldelli, D. Mizrahi), and the 2nd a male at a feeder in Broomall, *Chester*, PA, Feb. 11+, seen by those with the patience for a long wait (T. Reeves, m.ob.). Dickcissels wintered at Pt. Lookout, *Nassau*, LI, and at Barnegat Light, NJ.

Both Clay-colored and Lark sparrows continued their recent trend of winter appearances. One Clay-colored was on the Cape May CBC, another was at Clinton, *Hunterdon*, NJ, Jan. 3 (E. Patton), and a 3rd wintered at Dix W.M.A., *Cumberland*, NJ, Jan. 2+ (JDo *et al.*). The only Lark Sparrow seen was at Sandy Hook, Feb. 6 (PB, L. Mack), but the outstanding sparrow was New Jersey's 3rd **Black-throated Sparrow** at a Cherry Hill, *Camden*, feeder, Dec. 12–mid-February (P. Lowman *et al.*). Unfortunately, this find was not accessible to most area birders after initial problems with trespassers.

Late-lingering sparrows included a Grasshopper Sparrow in *Salem*, NJ, Jan. 3 (TBa, WDa), an out-of-habitat Sharp-tailed on the n.w. *Hunterdon*, NJ, CBC, a Lincoln's on the *Westchester*, NY, CBC, and another Lincoln's at Brandywine Cr. S.P., DE, Jan. 10 (A. Guarente). A **Harris' Sparrow** visited a feeder in Cochranville, *Chester*, PA, Feb. 12+ (L. Sharp, m.ob.), and another was discovered by an observer searching for the Gyrfalcon at Yates, *Orleans*, NY, Feb. 26+ (B. Ewald *et al.*) Four Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintering in *Salem*, NJ, two near Smyrna, DE, Dec. 12 (B&N Murphy), and ≤5 in *Lancaster*, PA, was a near-normal showing. The Brewer's Blackbird flock near Bombay Hook hit a high count of 225, Dec. 27, but only one report, of five birds, came from the recent hotspot of Ft. Elfsborg, *Salem*, NJ, Jan. 15 (WDa). Two to four Brewer's were at Assunpink W.M.A., *Monmouth*, NJ, Dec. 12–Jan. 26 (TBa *et al.*); more unusual was an individual at a Tupper

L, NY, feeder in the heart of the Adirondacks (C. Delehanty).

Although once again not a winter finch year over most of the Region, a minor incursion of both crossbill species occurred in scattered areas of upstate New York, and in several cases they apparently stayed to nest. Red Crossbills were seen nest building in Phillips Cr. State Forest, *Allegany*, NY, in January (WdN, EB); others were present for extended periods, believed to be nesting at Fabius, *Onondaga*, and in n. *Chenango*. White-winged Crossbills were at the same site in *Chenango* (D. Messineo) and at Boylston, *Oswego* (NB). Cornell's Project FeederWatch suggests that the decline in Evening Grosbeaks may simply reflect a return to more normal numbers, after the boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, in response to the now-waning spruce budworm outbreak on its breeding grounds (*vide* JMCP).

Whatever the reason, grosbeak numbers continue to decline, although readers are reminded that this species only became a breeder and regular winter visitor in the northeast during the past 50 years.

#### EXOTICS

The escaped Com. Crane that first appeared in Dutchess, NY, in April 1991, resurfaced in Salem, NJ, discovered by birders, Feb. 15. Apparently, the bird had been present for 2 months (G. & V. Nixon *et al.*) and was still being viewed in March.

#### CORRIGENDA

The Red Crossbills reported in *AB* (46:1125) were at Golden Hills State Forest, *Cattaraugus*, NY, not at Golden Hill S.P., *Niagara*.

**Observers (subregional compilers in boldface):** Robert Andrie (Buffalo area), John Askildsen (Lower Hudson Valley, NY: 202 Miller-town Rd., Bedford, NY 10506), Peter Bacinski (coastal NJ: 260 Page Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071), Tom Bailey (TBa), Irving Black (n.e. NJ: Eagle Rock Village, Bldg. 26, Apt. 8B, Budd Lake, NJ 07828), R.J. Blicharz, Frank Bonnano (Rockland, NY: 71 Richard Court, Pomona, NY 10970), Ned Brinkley (Cayuga Basin, NY), Elizabeth Brooks, T.W. Burke (New York Rare Bird Alert), Colin D. Campbell (CDC), Carolyn D. Cass (CTC), James Clinton, Cornell Campus Bird Club

(C C B C), William D'Anna (WdN), Ward Dasey (WdA, s.w. NJ: 29 Ark Rd., Medford, NJ 08055), Mike Davids (MDa), Rick Ditch, Dean DiTommaso, Delmar Ornithological Society (DOS), Mary Dobinski (Susquehanna Region, NY: 7 Spencer Dr., Oneonta, NY 13820), Jim Dowdell (JDo), A.P. Ednie (*New Castle and Kent*, DE: 59 Lawson Ave., Claymont, DE 19703), Vincent Elia, W.W. French (*Sussex*, DE: Carr. Rt. 3, Box 1144, Lewes, DE 19958), K.C. Griffith (Genesee Region, NY: 61 Grandview Ln., Rochester, NY 14612), Barb & Frank Haas, Jim Hanyak (JHa), David Harrison (n.w. NJ: 126 Westchester Terr., Annandale, NJ 08801), Jonathan Heller (JHe), Armas Hill, Gene Huggins (GHu), Oneida Lake Basin, NY: 1065 Westmoreland, Syracuse, NY 13210), Rich Kane, Bob Kurtz, Laurie Larson (n.-c. NJ: 90 N. Stanworth Dr., Princeton, NJ 08540), Tony Lauro, R.E. Long (St. Lawrence, NY: 2807 Citation Dr., Pompey, NY 13138), Alan A. Mapes (Hudson-Mohawk Region, NY: Five Rivers Center, Game Farm Rd., Delmar, NY 12054), Fred Mears, C.K. Melin (Finger Lakes Region, NY: 449 Irish Settlement Rd., Freeville, NY 13068), August Mirabella, B.L. Morris (e. PA: Muhlenberg St., Allentown, PA 18104), Terry Mosher, Bill & Naomi Murphy, New York State Avian Rarity Committee (N.Y.S.A.R.C.), J.M.C. Peterson (Adirondack-Champlain Region, NY: Discovery Farm, RD 1, Elizabethtown, NY 12932), Nick Pulcinella, William Reid (n.e. PAA: 73 W. Ross St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702), Gerald Rising (Niagara Frontier, NY: 295 Robinhill Dr., Williamsville, NY 14221), J.J. Ruscica, Sy Schiff (Long Island: 603 Mead Terr., S Hempstead, NY 11550), R.M. Schutsky, Dominic Sherony (DSh), David Sibley (DSi), Ellen Short, R.G. Spahn (Genesee Ornithological Society), Clay Sutton, Pat Sutton, Joe Swertinski, Dave Tetlow, Ed Treacy, W.J. Wayne, Rick Wiltraut, Al Wollin (Long Island: 4 Meadow Ln., Rockville Center, NY 11570), R.P. Yunick. Many other observers who sent reports to us or to their Regional compilers could not be listed, but their contributions are gratefully acknowledged.—WILLIAM J. BOYLE, JR., 12 Glenwood Rd., Denville, NJ 07834; ROBERT O. PAXTON, 460 Riverside Dr., Apt. 72, New York, NY 10027; and DAVID A. CUTLER, 1110 Rock Creek Dr., Wyncote, PA 19095.

## MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

Henry T. Armistead

This was another mild winter with good numbers of half-hardy lingerers, such as herons, Blue-winged Teals, Eastern Phoebe, and Pine Warblers, and Chipping Sparrows. Coverage and reporting were excellent for fish-eating species, waterfowl, and gulls, as

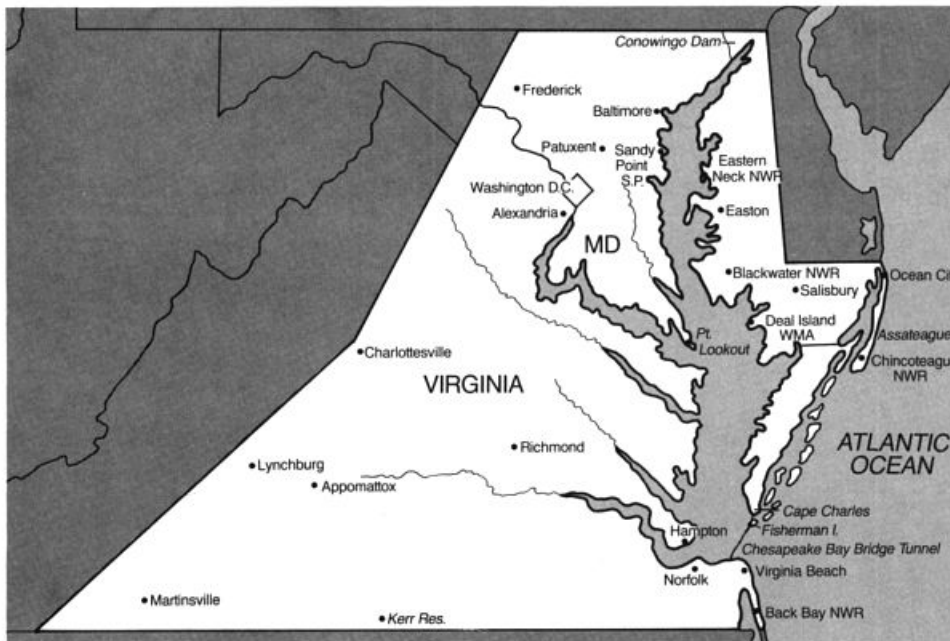
well as for pelagic trips. Apparently the result of a crash of capelin populations farther north, alcids staged another remarkable invasion. Numbers were mediocre for northern raptors and very poor, yet again, for northern finches.

**Abbreviations:** Assat. (*Assateague I., MD*); Back Bay (*Back Bay N.W.R., VA*); Balt. (*Baltimore, MD*); the Bay (*Chesapeake Bay*); Black. (*Blackwater N.W.R., MD*); C.B.B.T. (*Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel, VA*); Chinc. (*Chincoteague N.W.R., VA*); Craney (*Craney I. Disposal Area, Portsmouth, VA*); D.C. (*Wash-*

*ington, D.C.*); Deal (*Deal I. W.M.A., MD*); E.S. (*Eastern Shore of MD or VA*); O.C. (*Ocean City, MD*); Susq. (*lower Susquehanna R., MD*). Place names, counties, dates, and banded birds may appear in *italics*.

#### LOONS TO IBISES

Red-throated Loons passed O.C. at a rate of 150/hr Dec. 6 (MO), and 200 were there Dec 4 along with 400 N. Gannets (MO, MH) Excellent counts for Piedmont, VA, were four Red-throated and 45 Com. loons on the Kerr Res. CBC Jan. 3, plus 105 Horned and 42 Pied-billed grebes (BP *et al.*). Common



Green-backed Herons. Back Bay CBC furnished a winter Regional record, with 34 Cattle Egrets, seen at 3 locations, Dec. 28. Deal continued to be the star heron spot in the otherwise usually bleak ardeid winter that is MD, with a record winter count of 112 Tricolored Herons plus four Am. Bitterns, nine Snowy Egrets, and two Glossy Ibises Jan. 23 (MO). Outstanding was a Wood Stork present for several days in Norfolk and seen Dec. 17 near the intersection of I64 and Tidewater Dr. (DD), a first Regional winter record.

#### WATERFOWL

Mute Swans continued to take over the Bay in MD, with a record 500 at St. Michaels CBC Dec. 20, and small numbers of pioneers in other areas, such as nine at Williamsburg CBC Dec. 20. There goes the neighborhood. Single Greater

Loons lingered in increased numbers on the upper Bay; a record 33 at St. Michaels, MD, CBC Dec. 20 (CM *et al.*) were seen by 8 of 10 parties, with record highs on several other CBCs. Along the coast, loon counts were mediocre. A total of 289 Pied-billed Grebes at Brooke, VA, CBC Dec. 21 was a near-record maximum for the Region (DBS *et al.*). It surpassed the cumulative total for the 45 years of this count, attributable to the spread of the exotic aquatic plant *Hydrilla*. Not all introductions are bad—it just seems that way. Other highs were 83 at Cape Charles, VA, CBC Dec. 27 (HTA *et al.*); 50 at Loch Raven Res. n. of Balt., Feb. 28 (SWS); and 69 in the Balt. area Jan. 16 (RFR *et al.*), clearly a good winter for Pied-billeds. Hit single grebes were Red-neckeds at C.B.B.T., Dec. 31 (MG, BPj) and at O.C., Jan. 3 & 19 (JGR, DC), as well as an Eared at Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31 (TG). Always electrifying Regionally, N. Fulmar sightings included five Feb. 6, with 2 humpback whales and 50 com. dolphins thrown into the bargain (BP, KHB), one plus four Manx Shearwaters Feb. 14 (BW, GP), and four Mar. 2 (KHB) off Virginia Beach. For the first time, small numbers of N. Gannets overwintered in the c. Bay in MD with a few on CBCs at Pt. Lookout Dec. 27 (EW) and at Jug Bay Dec. 19 (BB). Even more interesting records came in later, including 10 in Honga R., *Dorchester*, Feb. 5 (SD); two in Claiborne, *Talbot*, Jan. 17 (LMD); three in *Calvert*, MD, Jan. 17 (RFR); and one at Patuxent Naval Air Station, Jan. 9 and Feb. 8 (KR), but coastal counts were unimpressive. Two Am. White Pelicans spent the winter at Chinc. (m.ob.), but two at Williamsburg CBC Dec. 20 were unexpected Dec. 20 (BT). Only a few decades ago, they were accidental Regionally. Brown Pelicans continued to consolidate, with a record Regional winter tally of 170 at Little Cr. CBC, evidently a piscivore paradise, Dec. 31 (PWS *et al.*), plus 1518 N. Gannets, 2020 Double-crested Cormorants, and 44



**Adult male Harlequin Duck at Ocean City, Maryland, December 13, 1992. Photograph/Michael O'Brien.**

Great Egrets; 32 Brown Pelicans were seen at nearby Craney Feb. 17 (DMt). As Brinkley opines about Norfolk: "The pelicans now make us a bona fide sultry southern city." Record numbers of Great Cormorants were in VA at C.B.B.T., with 71 Feb. 9 (DS) and 65 Jan. 31 (GA, CCW) and providing first records for Williamsburg and Wachapreague CBCs. Double-crested Cormorants continued to linger longer in winter on the upper Bay in MD, with 35 at Great Shoals Light, *Wicomico*, Feb. 7 (RFR) and eight at Rock Run CBC plus 203 Great Blue Herons, Dec. 27 (DK). Tallies far inland in VA of 33 Double-crested plus an Am. Bittern at Kerr Res. CBC Jan. 3 and six at Staunton R. S.P., Dec. 19 (JCB) were also significant. Both cormorants have had a long-term upswing in this Region. From Chinc. CBC Dec. 30 (TK) came counts of 44 Great Egrets and four

White-fronted Geese were at 5 spots, including one near Wachapreague, VA, in mid-January (GR). Snow Geese continued to increase in MD with such estimates as 66,580 plus a Ross' Goose in the O.C. area CBC Dec. 29 (BD *et al.*) and 25,000 at Ruthsburg Jan. 19 (J&PG). Other Ross' were at Black. (two) through the winter (SHD, BPj, MG, ph.) and Back Bay Dec. 28–Jan. 6 (GA *et al.*). Brants were in abysmal numbers on the VA coast, with record lows of 145 and 919 on the Cape Charles and Chinc. CBCs, respectively. Hutchin's Geese, which may soon be split from other Canada Geese, were seen at 4 localities, all in MD (MO, J&PG). Top counts from Chinc. were 1653 Am. Black Ducks and 2399 N. Pintails Feb. 17; and 641 Gadwalls and 582 N. Shovelers Feb. 25 (IWA). Excellent numbers of Blue-winged Teals were seen coastally, such as 35 at Deal Jan. 23 (MO) and 23 at Back Bay CBC Dec. 28, with one at Kerr Res. CBC Jan. 3 and another inland at Howard, MD, December and Feb. 6 (JS, BO, SS *et al.*)—a good winter for them, as sometimes none is seen. On the Potomac R., good *Hydrilla*-boosted counts at Brooke CBC Dec. 21, were 540 Gadwalls, 522 Tundra Swans, 350 Am. Wigeons, and 900 Canvasbacks. One to two Eur. Wigeons were at Deal throughout the period (OJ, SHD, B&ES, BPj, MG). Excellent totals in the Balt. area were 5175 Canvasbacks, 10,170 Ruddy Ducks, and 912 Ring-necked Ducks Jan. 16 (RFR *et al.*). Czaplak counted 1050 Ring-neckeds at Little Seneca Res., MD, Jan. 4. This was a good winter for the three jetty duck species, with six Com. Eiders at O.C. in Jan–February (WHH, MO, MH, JBk, SHD), plus a stray at Wachapreague CBC, Dec. 19 (CCW)—new for that site. King Eiders ( $\leq 6$ ) were at C.B.B.T. through the winter (GM, DS, TG, BL *et al.*), as were six Harlequin Ducks January–February (GM, CRV, JMA, BL *et al.*). A 2nd record for Harford, MD, always a rarity on the Bay away from the coast, was a Harlequin Jan.



**Common Black-headed Gull, adult in winter plumage, at Conowingo Dam, Maryland, December 13, 1992. The black on the underside of the primaries is apparent here. Photograph/Mary Gustafson.**

20–28 at Aberdeen Proving Ground (JW, DK, NS *et al.*). Scoters were in low numbers on the sea, except for 492 White-wingeds at Wachapreague CBC Dec. 19 (GA, HTA, CCW, MS), a high count for the scarcest of the three on the coast. Good totals for the c. Bay in MD were 4000 Oldsquaws, 2000 Buffleheads, and 600 Com. Goldeneyes at Bellevue on the glass-calm Choptank R., Jan. 23 (HTA, PSr). Best Hooded Merganser counts were 302 at Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31; 294 at Chinc. CBC Dec. 30; and 111 in inland *Carroll*, MD, Jan. 23 (RFR *et al.*). At Rock Run CBC Dec. 27, along the lower Susq., 8184 Com. Mergansers were reported Dec. 27 (DLK *et al.*), a record Regional count. Red-breasted Mergansers were abundant coastally, with 7500 at False Cape S.P., VA, Dec. 2 (DS). For a group in such great decline on so many fronts, waterfowl continue to manifest many impressive counts in this Region in spite of such disasters as the massive die-off of submerged aquatic vegetation in the Bay and at Back Bay. But many species are still in trouble. Compare the total of 52 Ruddy Ducks at the D.C. CBC Dec. 19 (JBk *et al.*) with the record 9611 in 1962.

#### RAPTORS TO RAILS

Turkey Vultures were in record numbers with 722 at Triadelphia CBC near D.C., Dec. 26 (F&NS *et al.*) and 542 at Salisbury CBC Jan. 2 (CRV *et al.*) in MD. A few Ospreys continued to linger, such as one at Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31 (CB), marking the area's 7th consecutive year, while Back Bay hosted a single Osprey Jan. 11 (DD), and an early one was seen near Salisbury Feb. 27 (C&DB). Bald Eagles appeared in only fair numbers, compared with the booming standards of recent years. The Jan 14–17 Bald Eagle count in a MS state survey of 3 key areas (GDT *et al.*) was 121, against the 263 observed in January 1990. The new

roost at Black. had 59 Jan. 15 (BG), and 51 were at this refuge Jan. 24 (HTA, CM). Ten were inland at Kerr Res., Feb. 27 (BP, MPn); 36 at Rock Run CBC Dec. 27, along with an Osprey, 179 Black and 248 Turkey vultures, and 84 Red-tailed Hawks; and 32 at the Crisfield, MD, CBC Dec. 30 (CRV). The only N. Goshawk reports were of singles in MD at U. of MD Central Farm in *Howard*, Dec. 4 (MC) and at Betterton Feb. 14 (CG). Unique was a Broad-winged Hawk at Dismal Swamp N.W.R. CBC Jan. 3 (DS, TG). Two Golden Eagles were at Black., Dec. 24 (DC). Six Merlins were at the Back Bay CBC Dec. 28 (PWS *et al.*). The continued decline of N. Bobwhite is underscored by a wretched total of seven on the D.C. CBC Dec. 19 (cf. 264 in 1962) and none on the Crisfield CBC Dec. 30, this latter a fairly prime E.S. location. Ring-necked Pheasants are also declining, although established introduced birds reached a new high of 30 at the S. *Dorchester*, MD, CBC Dec. 31 (CSR *et al.*; previous high 14). A Black Rail was seen at Wachapreague, Dec. 8 & 19 (GR, GA, CCW, MS), flushed from the upper saltmarsh. The best railing was at Back Bay CBC Dec. 28, with four Clappers, 16 Kings, five Soras, 21 Virginias, and two Com. Gallinules, although seven Virginias and 802 Am. Coots in the Balt. area were of interest Jan. 16 (RFR *et al.*). A Sora materialized at Patuxent Naval Air Station Jan. 8 (KR). A Com. Moorhen overwintered near O.C. (DM, RFR, MH, MO, JSp), most unusual for MD. At Loch Raven Res. n. of Balt., Simon saw 600 Am. Coots Dec. 6 and Feb. 13 & 27. Formerly countless thousands wintered at Back Bay, which has become an ecological disaster since the aquatic vegetation died out there.

#### SHOREBIRDS

True to form, the most interesting shorebirds were found on the E. S. of VA, with its vast saltmarshes and tidal flats. At Cape Charles CBC, Dec. 27, 308 Black-bellied and 27 Semipalmated Plovers, 87 Greater Yellowlegs, 45 Marbled Godwits, a Least Sandpiper, and 37 Short-billed Dowitchers were seen. The Wachapreague CBC slightly farther north tallied eight Red Knots, 260 Black-bellied and three Semipalmated plovers, and 201 W. Sandpipers (IWA *et al.*). At Willis Wharf, Dyke saw 18 Marbled Godwits and 45 Willlets Feb. 20, and three Whimbrels were at Oyster, Jan. 17 (BP, HFD, GP); these latter 2 sites are accessible by mainland roads, whereas the Cape Charles and Wachapreague flats must be reached by boat. Beseet by dense fog, the Chinc. CBC, normally superb for shorebirds, could boast but 43 Greater Yellowlegs, a Least Sandpiper, and 18 Short-billed Dowitchers among its notables, Dec. 30. Vaughn saw a Red Knot at Wallops I., Feb. 5, and Hoffman saw one at O.C., Jan. 23 Other good VA shorebirds from non-E.S. areas were two Am. Avocets at Craney Feb. 17 (DMt); a Spotted Sandpiper far inland at Staunton R. S.P., Dec. 19–27, Jan. 2, and Feb. 20 (JCB *et al.*); another at Kerr Res., early to mid-February (JB, FC); a Red Phalarope off VA Beach Jan. 23

(GP); and 1823 Sanderlings at Back Bay/False Cape S.P., Dec. 5 (DS). In MD, notable sightings included eight W. Sandpipers at Back R. e. of Balt., Jan. 2 (EJS); five late Least Sandpipers at Bayside Rd., *Worcester*, Dec. 12 (MO); 8–11 Lesser Yellowlegs at Deal Jan. 23–February (SHD); 24 Greater plus six Lesser yellowlegs and 25 Least Sandpipers at Assat., Dec. 4 (MO); 40 Am. Oystercatchers at O.C., Feb. 6 (JBk); and 362 Killdeers at the Crisfield CBC Dec. 30.

#### JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

This was an excellent winter for this group. For jaegers, a Pomarine was at O.C., Jan. 8 (C&DB), and a Parasitic was at the mouth of the Rappahannock R., VA, Nov. 29, harassing gulls and terns (DD). Pelagic trips off VA Beach (KHB, BP *et al.*) were highly successful, with two Great Skuas, 213 Black-legged Kittiwakes, a Razorbill, and three Dovekies



**Iceland Gull in first-winter plumage at Ocean City, Maryland, December 13, 1992. Photograph/Michael O'Brien.**

Jan. 15; 114 kittiwakes and one Razorbill Jan. 23; a Great Skua, a Glaucous Gull, 100 kittiwakes, and 30 Razorbills Feb. 6; 70 kittiwakes, 27 Razorbills, and seven Dovekies Feb. 14; and a Great Skua, eight kittiwakes, and 62 Razorbills Mar 2. A Razorbill was seen from shore at O.C. and Assat., Jan. 17–24 (DC, SHD, OJ, MO, FD). Laughing Gulls were scarce at their usual winter stronghold in s. VA, yet 452 were seen at the Jug Bay, MD, CBC Dec. 19 (PM). A suspected Ring-billed × Laughing Gull hybrid was at O.C., Dec. 28 (MO), perhaps the same bird seen there during fall 1990 and spring 1991—very interesting, especially since their respective breeding ranges do not come even close to overlapping. Six Little Gulls were at VA Beach Jan. 23 (BP), and singles were seen sporadically at O.C., Dec. 4–Jan. 22 (SHD, OJ, DC, MO). Single Com. Black-headed Gulls were in MD at O.C., Feb. 15 (SHD), at Susq., Dec. 13–Jan. 8 (BPj, MG, *et al.*, ph.), and at Crownsville Jan. 7–18 (WM, EMW, JLS *et al.*). Extraordinary was a Bonaparte's Gull in breeding plumage at Back R. e. of Balt., Jan. 2 & 16 (EJS), and 214 were far inland at the Kerr Res. CBC Jan. 3. Indicative of how fine a winter this was for gulls is the report of 4000 Ring-billed, 6000 Herring, a Yellow-legged (*Larus cachinnans*), an Iceland, and 11 Lesser Black-backed gulls at



the Laytonsville, MD, landfill Jan. 16 (MO, PO, DC *et al.*). Two California Gulls were identified: one at D.C., Jan. 16 (OJ, WM, ph.) and one at Laytonsville Jan. 15 & 23 (DC, PO, GM). The Yellow-legged Gull (believed to be just one bird) was seen intermittently at both D.C. and Laytonsville Jan. 9–Mar. 6 (OJ *et al.*). So-called Thayer's Gulls were carefully observed at Susq., D.C., near Nassawadox, VA, and at Laytonsville (BPj *et al.*). Iceland Gulls were detected at 6 places, with  $\geq 9$  individuals seen in the greater DC area (DC *et al.*) and Glaucous Gulls were also at 6 sites. Lesser Black-backed Gull reports came from  $\geq 25$  localities, including seven at Triadelphia CBC Dec. 26; seven at Back Bay/False Cape S.P., Dec. 5, with 10 late Royal Terns (DS); 11 on the D.C. CBC Dec. 19; and eight at Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31. A most unexpected find was a Black-legged Kittiwake at Susq., Dec. 13–14 (BPj, EB, MG, ph.). Ten Black Skimmers were at Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31, the best place for them in the Region in winter, but they are far from regular here.

#### DOVES TO SHRIKES

The top Mourning Dove count was 1494 at Newport News CBC Dec. 19 (TK *et al.*). The most interesting owl records included two Long-eareds at Stillpond, Kent, MD, Feb. 8–April (FLP), a Snowy at Back Bay early Dec.–Dec. 25 (*fide* EMW), and 18 Barns at Nokesville, VA, CBC Dec. 20 (KHB *et al.*). Red-headed Woodpeckers are commonest regionally in the s. VA Piedmont, as evidenced by 68 at Banister R. W.M.A., Dec. 20 (JCB *et al.*) compared with 13 farther n. at Nokesville CBC, Dec. 20. This was a good flycatcher winter, with robust numbers of E. Phoebe, an Ash-throated at Cape Charles CBC Dec. 27 (4th record for this CBC), and another at Black., Dec. 4–5 (OJ, DC *et al.*, ph.), 30 years to the day since the last MD record and 4th for state; a ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher near Nassawadox, VA, Jan. 15–Feb. 27 (DS, TG, m.ob., ph.), providing a first VA record; and a W. Kingbird, whose sojourn generally coincided with that of the Vermilion, a few miles away at Indiantown Rd. (JMA *et al.*). In S. Frederick, MD, 1700 Horned Larks were seen Feb. 21 (MO). Carolina Wrens were in excellent numbers after several mild winters, with record counts of 529 on the D.C. CBC Dec. 19. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were at 3 VA sites: Brooke CBC Dec. 21; Kerr Res. CBC Jan. 3 (BP, GP); and Williamsburg Jan. 17 & 25 (BT). Eastern Bluebirds continued to boom with record totals for some CBCs, such as a bonus 823 at Mathews, VA, Jan. 3 (MP *et al.*). The troubled Loggerhead Shrike was found only at Emmitsburg, MD (RFR), Loudoun, VA (BH), Nokesville, and Kerr Res. CBC, where there were nine, Jan. 3.

#### VIREOS TO WARBLERS

In MD White-eyed Vireos were at Lothian, Anne Arundel, Nov. 27 and Dec. 13 & 19 (PM) and near O.C., Dec. 29 (CRV *et al.*), for the 3rd CBC record there. In s. VA, where they are more expected, six White-eyed with seven

Solitary vireos were seen on the new and unique Dismal Swamp CBC Jan. 3 (DS, TG *et al.*), and six Solitaries were seen on the Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31. Best warblers were in VA, with a Nashville at Annandale most of December (DKn), a Cape May at Manassas Jan. 2 (AW, *fide* EMW), an Ovenbird at Lucketts Jan. 3 (GH, *fide* EMW), and a Wilson's Warbler on the D.C. CBC Dec. 19 (RLH) & 20 (OJ). A Black-throated Green Warbler near Laurel, MD, Jan. 6, furnished a first Regional winter record (GG). There were 5 sightings of the more expected Black-and-white Warbler. Dyke found a Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler at Deal Feb. 14.

#### GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES

Unique feeder birds in MD were a ♂ Blue Grosbeak in Chestertown Feb. 11 (PMr, *fide* J&PG) and a Painted Bunting at Berlin Feb. 15–28 (MHu, SHD, CRV, ph.). Chipping Sparrows were in good seasonal numbers, especially coastally, with 114 on the Salisbury CBC Jan. 2, and 82 near Shad Landing Feb. 13 (MO) in MD. Single Lark Sparrows were at Ridgely, Caroline, MD, Feb. 26–27 (MO, GDT, SAS *et al.*, ph.) and Indiantown Park, VA, January–February (VBK, DFA *et al.*). A Grasshopper Sparrow was at Kiptopeke, VA, Dec. 27 (BP, HFD, GP). Le Conte's Sparrows were seen at 3 VA localities: two at Back Bay CBC Dec. 28–Jan. 6 (CCW, MS *et al.*); one at Little Cr. CBC Dec. 31 (TRB), for the 3rd count record; and one near Williamsburg, Jan. 18 (BW). Lincoln's Sparrows were observed at 4 locations, all in MD (MO, PM,



**Black-legged Kittiwake in first-winter plumage at Conowingo Dam, Maryland, December 13, 1992. Photograph/Mary Gustafson.**

DC) and, refreshingly, none on CBCs. This was an excellent winter for Snow Buntings and also Lapland Longspurs, with a maximum of 24 in S. Frederick, MD, Jan. 17 (MO). Best blackbirds were an ad. ♂ Yellow-headed at Salisbury Jan. 23 (MO) and Brewer's, with  $\leq 20$  at Nokesville Dec. 5 (KHB) and  $\leq 3$  in the Stockton, MD, area in December and January (MO, MH, OJ). House Finches continued to expand and increase, the highest count 2147 Dec. 20 on the St. Michaels CBC,



**Lark Sparrow near Ridgely, Maryland, February 27, 1993. Photograph/Michael O'Brien.**

MD, a CBC that is almost half water. Northern finches and Red-breasted Nuthatches had yet another very poor winter here.

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## FLORIDA REGION

Richard L. West and  
Noel Wamer

After the considerable changes wrought by *Andrew*, one would hope that nature would have spared the coast a hard winter. Not so; we have had more and stronger cold fronts than usual along the southwest coast. There was further erosion in the sandbar and beach areas in southern *Collier*, leading to a presumed decrease and stress in the bird populations observed there. The rains, wind, and cold of the fronts certainly played a big part in the failure of the Wood Stork colony at Corkscrew (THB). Palm Beach County had the fourth wettest winter in history as gulf storms swept across the peninsula forcing water releases from the Water Management District and preventing the drawdown of feeding pools used by Wood Stork and herons. These storms may have led to the high numbers of Gannets and Common Loons near the coasts, the scattered sightings of jaegers, the loon and gannet kill along the southeast coast, and the first Thick-billed Murre record. By contrast, the Tampa area northward enjoyed an extremely mild winter, with only three weather systems bringing overnight lows of less than 40°F in Tampa. In terms of birds this led to the poorest winter ever at the Stedmans' *Sarasota* banding station, and to a poor winter for ducks in the Miami area. Winter invasions were nil, with few Purple Finches and Pine Siskins reported. Robins and waxwings were common in north Florida but most did not reach the southern peninsula until February.

Even cursory analyses of long-standing Christmas Bird Counts can yield important trend information, especially if party hours remain relatively stable. Ted Below's analysis of the Naples CBC is very informative and supports information from other parts of the species' ranges (Table 1).

**Table 1 Summary of population changes: Naples Christmas Bird Count—30 years**

Decreases	Increases
Lesser Scaup	Killdeer
Northern Bobwhite	Laughing Gull
Wilson's Plover	Mourning Dove
Black Skimmer	American Crow
Common Ground-Dove	Fish Crow
Loggerhead Shrike	Starling
Painted Bunting	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Eastern Meadowlark	Common Yellowthroat
House Sparrow	Brown-headed Cowbird

**Abbreviations:** A.B.S. (*Archbold Biological Station, Highlands Co.*); E.N.P. (*Everglades N.P.*); D.I. (*Dog I., Franklin Co.*); P.P.M. (*Polk County Phosphate Mines*); S.Pr. (*State Preserve*); S.M.N.W.R. (*St. Marks N.W.R., Wakulla Co.*); S.R.A. (*State Recreational Area*); S.R.C. (*Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee*).

### LOONS TO MERGANSERS

Only two Red-throated Loons were reported, one near D.I. Jan. 25 (DE, LM) and another off *St. Johns*, Feb. 7, but 200 Com. Loons were in a raft in *St. George Sound, Franklin*, Jan. 4 (DE, LM). Farther south, Com. Loons were scarce (THB) except for the numbers of dead that washed up on the s.e. coast (JMB). A peak number of 360 Pied-billed Grebes were wintering at the P.P.M. (PJF), but a pair in Key West were already feeding three young by Jan. 21 (JAO). The only Horned Grebes reported were 20 off D.I., a very low count (DE, LM). Eared Grebe numbers have been down the past few winters, so a count of four at the P.P.M., Jan. 31 is considered good (PJF). An imm. Brown Booby, rarely seen from land, hung around Ft. Worth Beach Jan. 6–16 (GSH *et al.*), and another flew by D.I., Jan. 11 (DE, LM). Northern Gannets must have been more common than usual this winter, with ±1000 off New Smyrna Beach Jan. 18 (PJF, DMF, RK), hundreds off *Dania, Broward*, Dec. 26 (JLB, ER), and 250 e. of D.I., Jan. 17 (DE, LM). Both Howard Langridge and Jane Brooks reported dead Gannets washing up on the s.e. coast in January. A late, large migration of 520 Am. White Pelicans passed D.I. in 3 groups Dec. 11 (DE, LM). Double-crested Cormorants have increased spectacularly on their n.e. breeding grounds, and 1000 were wintering in *St. George Sound, Franklin*, Dec. 18 (DE, LM), and 7000 in the P.P.M., Dec. 25 (PJF). All 426 Wood Stork nests at Corkscrew Sanctuary failed, perhaps related to why a record 163 were seen on the Venice area CBC Dec. 26 (S&AS).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continue to spread in Florida; six were found in the Venice area CBC (*fide* Stedman). The few reports of unusual wintering ducks include lone Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in w. *Pasco*, Jan. 2 (M&HS) and at S.M.N.W.R., Jan. 29 (CG) and a Cinnamon Teal at Merritt I. N.W.R., *Brevard*, through early December (HR *et al.*). Reports of some wintering sea ducks were more common than usual, including a ♀ Com. Eider in Jetty Perk, *Brevard*, Dec. 5, where a pair was found Jan. 3 (MH, WB), and an imm. ♂ Com. Eider in Nassua Sound, *Duval*, Feb. 3+ (CAI, m.ob.), and an imm. ♂ Oldsquaw at S.M.N.W.R., Dec. 6–19 (JR, m.ob.). A flock of seven Surf Scoters were off Cedar Key, *Levy*, Dec. 15 (BPM, DCH), and two wintered much farther s. in Rookery Bay

*Collier*, Dec. 16–Jan. 3 (THB); single White-winged Scoters were found off *St. Lucie*, Dec. 2 (JMB), off *Pinellas*, Dec. 3–19 (KDN, BRP), and in S.M.N.W.R., Feb. 14 (PF). A high of 2150 Hooded Mergansers were found in the P.P.M., Dec. 26 (PJF).

### KITES TO COOTS

An unusual winter appearance of an Am Swallow-tailed Kite was reported from n. *Duval*, Jan. 17 (PJR), but the news was dominated by the dispersing Black-shouldered Kites. A pair first reported w. of W. Palm Beach Jan. 17 (BHH) was later suspected of nesting when seen nearby, Jan. 23 & 30 (*fide* HPL); another pair was first seen in *Broward*, Jan. 29, and the female was found Feb. 28 on a nest in an orange tree near *Davie* (JLB). Further dispersion was marked by individuals seen Feb. 1 s.e. of L. Placid, *Highlands* (DF, CF) and Feb. 17 in Big Cypress National Preserve, *Collier* (THB). A ♂ Snail Kite seen from U.S. 1 s. of Florida City Feb. 27 (JLB, UF) was in an area of the Everglades in which the species is rarely reported. Six February reports of eight Short-tailed Hawks suggest that they are on the move or are setting up breeding territories by then. The northernmost comes from *Gilcrest*, Feb. 9 (JTK), and three were found in *Arbuckle S.F., Polk* (ME), where another was sighted Feb. 13 (JF) & 14 (BCo, LCo, m.ob.) A sub-adult Golden Eagle was identified in *Loxahatchee N.W.R.*, Jan. 30, for which cautious but convincing notes were submitted (†LCh, JG); one was also seen Dec. 11 farther n. in *Alachua* (BBR), more normal for this rare winter visitor.

A Black Rail was found Dec. 19 in S.M.N.W.R. (JBa) where it may be regular though rarely reported. A much more common rallid is the Am. Coot, which attained a peak number of 14,000 in the P.P.M., Dec. 26 (PJF).

### SHOREBIRDS TO MURRES

Ninety-five Piping Plovers were observed in *Honeymoon I. S.R.A., Pinellas*, Feb. 11 (M&ST). A high-tide roost of 92 Piping Plovers counted on D.I., Feb. 21 (DE, LM) underscores the importance of the *Franklin* bays to this species in winter. High counts of 25 Snowy Plovers Jan. 17 at *Honeymoon I., Pinellas* (PJF, RK), as well as 19 seen Jan. 20 at D.I. (DE, LM) point to remaining numbers. A possible indication of early northward migration was signaled by the appearance of 12 Black-necked Stilts in the lower keys Feb. 12 (JAO) and five of them at *Tavernier* Feb. 27 (JLB, UF). Reports were received of rare winter occurrences of lone Solitary Sandpipers at Ft. Lauderdale Dec. 18 (DF), in *Polk*, Dec. 19 (CGe), and calling over A.B.S., Jan. 18 (GW, RB). An unprecedented wintering Hudsonian Godwit turned up at S.M.N.W.R., Dec

8-Jan. 3 (CG, m.ob., video BA, ph. JEC, †RAD to S.R.C.). High winter counts of 65 at Coot Bay Jan. 3 (GM) and 21 at Honeymoon I., Jan. 17 (PJF, RK) suggest that Whimbrels may still be increasing since their decimation by market hunting. A rare Curlew Sandpiper was reported from Ft. Clinch S.P., *Nassau*, Feb. 22 (BB). A good winter peak of 205 Stilt Sandpipers was found at the P.P.M. (PJF).

Six reports of Parasitic Jaegers were received; the more significant Gulf reports were of one seen from D.I., Jan. 11 and two Feb. 1 (DE, LM), and one seen from Redington Beach, *Pinellas*, Jan. 16 (KDN, BRP). An uncommon imm. Com. Black-headed Gull was reported flying with Bonaparte's Gulls at Riviera Beach, *Palm Beach*, Feb. 6+ (KE, m.ob.). The increasing Lesser Black Backed Gull was reported from 5 locales around the coast, but the only report of multiple birds was of two at Marco Sandbar, *Collier*, Dec. 6 (THB). The only white-winged gull reported from the Region was a Glaucous found at Sebastian Inlet Dec. 2 (DD). A minimum of five Great Black-Backed Gulls wintered in s. *Pinellas* (LSA, KDN), while immatures found at D.I., Dec. 28 (ph. DE, LM) and inland at Paynes Prairie S.Pr., *Alachua*, Jan. 1 (JHH, BPM) also constitute good records. Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported at Longboat Key *Sarasota*, Jan. 8 (ph. JDU) and Riviera Beach *Palm Beach*, Feb. 7 (CP). Forster's Tern, common in winter near Marco I., was reported down 81% this winter from a 20-year average (THB). A Thick-billed Murre found injured on Hobe Sound Highway *Palm Beach*, Dec. 6 (JS, ph. KC, RE, \*A.B.S.) provided the first Florida record for this species.

#### ANIS TO WOODPECKERS

Single Smooth-billed Anis, now becoming scarce, were found n. to Tierra Verde, *Pinellas*, Jan. 2 (LAH, MJH) and Paynes Prairie S.P., Jan. 28 & 31 (JEW). Groove-billed Anis invaded from the w., including two to Alligator L., *Columbia* (RH, *fide* BPM), 6-8 on D.I. in mid-January (DE, LM), 3-5 wintering at S.M.N.W.R. (RC *et al.*), and four at Shell I., *Wakulla*, Dec. 19 (JC, KN).

A returning Chuck-will's-widow netted in *Sarasota*, Feb. 16 (S&AS) was found beating another netted on D.I., Feb. 28 (DE, LM), both furnishing early records. The only northern owls reported were a Short-Eared at S.M.N.W.R., Dec. 10 (TM) and a Long-eared found in cassia, *Lake*, Dec. 8 (KP) that died Dec. 11 (*fide* HK). Up to six Vaux's Swifts roosted on the University of Florida campus, Gainesville, Jan. 19-Feb. 8; identified by voice, they were also tape-recorded for confirmation (TAW).

Four species of hummingbird were found



in Florida this winter. A Buff-bellied Hummingbird appeared for the 4th winter at a Ft. Lauderdale feeder (B&TC), arriving Dec. 23. A Black-chinned Hummingbird remained autumn-Dec. 8 at a Tallahassee feeder (NW), and two males were in *Pasco*, Dec. 21-January (DR, video to S.R.C., BHA), for the first county record (*fide* BPr). A ♂ Ruby-throated Hummingbird located in Tallahassee Feb. 25 may have been an early arrival (TM); others were glimpsed wintering around the state. A Rufous Hummingbird visited Tallahassee Jan. 14 (BS), and a female was found in *Broward*, Feb. 6 (WB *et al.*). The Red-headed Woodpecker migration may have been stronger than usual, with two found Dec. 19 in *Pinellas*, where they have recently been absent (LSA, BA), and 14 found in L. Arbuckle S.F., *Polk*, Feb. 19 (PJF, m.ob.).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO ROBINS

Single Least Flycatchers at Oakland Park, *Broward*, Dec. 13 and the Seminole Indian Reservation, *Hendry*, Dec. 26 (both JLB) were n. of their normal wintering range. Although considered rare in n. *Polk*, three Great-crested Flycatchers were at the Lake Arbuckle S.F., Jan. 9 (LCo, BCo), and three more were in another part of the forest Feb. 19 (PJF). A high count of 14 Great-crested were w. of Boca Raton, *Palm Beach*, Jan. 30 (BHH). Two more reports of the increasingly recognized Brown-Crested Flycatcher have been added this winter—one in Mahogany Hammock, *Dade*, Jan. 3 (*fide* LCo) and another in Flamingo Feb. 8 (WB *et al.*). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers lingered N of their normal wintering range, with one at S.M.N.W.R., Dec. 12 & 19 (JL, m.ob.), one Dec. 17-20 and two Jan. 12-Feb. 28, at Tierra Verde, *Pinellas* (SCB, m.ob.), and one at Babson Park, *Polk*,

Jan. 12 (CGE). High counts of wintering Scissor-taileds included seven at Canal Point, *Palm Beach*, Dec. 17 (CW) and 11 observed Dec. 20 at Key West (JAO). A Tree Swallow roost estimated in excess of one million birds occupied the marshes w. of Titusville Dec. 10-Jan. 15 (DS, BBr, DD *et al.*).

Nine Fish Crows were at Boca Chica Key, *Monroe*, Dec. 9 (JAO), where they may have nested during the past summer. A ♀ E. Bluebird at Ft. Desoto Park, *Pinellas*, Dec. 1-7 (MSW) was just the 2nd recorded there. The Swainson's Thrush at Ft. Pierce Inlet S.R.A., Dec. 14 (†JMB, SB) may have been a late migrant. High numbers of Am. Robins were present in the n. portion of the Region—15,000 en route to roost on the Little St. Marys R., *Nassau*, Dec. 10 (RTP, WG), 70,000 near Cedar Key, *Levy*, (v.o.), and 14,000 over downtown Gainesville Jan. 27 (GA).

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

A very late Tennessee Warbler was at Ft. Desoto Park Dec. 3 (MSW).

Three Nashville Warblers were reported: individuals w. of Boca Raton Jan. 30 (BHH) and in Miami Feb. 6 (WB *et al.*) were in typical locations for wintering birds, but one at D.I., Dec. 18 (DE, LM, TL) may have been a late migrant. Among the more unusual warblers reported during the period were a Chestnut-sided at Tallahassee Jan. 1 (†JC, KN), single Magnolias at L. Placid, *Highlands*, Dec. 23 (DE, B&MK) and at Miami Feb. 6 (WB *et al.*), a Black-throated Gray at Toteekeegee Yungiee Park, Hollywood, Jan. 17+ (JDI, WG, v.o.), a Bay-breasted at Blue Springs S.P., *Volusia*, Dec. 28 (AK), a Black-throated Green at Avon Park Bombing Range, *Polk*, Dec. 10 (DF), and a Prothonotary at E.N.P., *Monroe*, Jan. 3. A single day count of 12 Am. Redstarts west of Boca Raton Jan. 30 was very high. A total of nine Wilson's Warblers were reported from *Palm Beach* (v.o.), while the only others reported were individuals at Paynes Prairie S.Pr., *Alachua*, Dec. 1-20 (RKR, m.ob.) and in *Broward*, Jan. 6 (JLB). Perhaps unprecedented in winter were two species of tanager, Summer and Western, on the same day w. of Boca Raton Jan. 20 (BHH). Another Summer Tanager was in Jacksonville Dec. 26 (ph. JAW) and a ♀ W. Tanager was reported in Naples Feb. 20 (VM). A Black-headed Grosbeak at Wellington Jan. 11 and Feb. 27 (†HPL, BHH, FJB, GSH) provided the first record for *Palm Beach*. Blue Grosbeaks are more frequently wintering in s. Florida this season, with six individuals reported from 3 locations in *Palm Beach*, Jan. 3-Feb. 27 (v.o.); even more unusual were two in e. *Pasco*, Feb. 9-18 (SCB *et al.*) and two in *Alachua*, Jan. 10 (JHH). Also rare in e. *Pasco* were four Indigo Buntings Feb. 7-11 and two Painted Buntings Jan. 28-Feb. 11 both (SCB *et al.*). Another Painted Bunting was in L. Wales, *Polk*, Jan. 24 (PT). Sixteen

Vesper Sparrows was a locally high count at L. Wales Jan. 18 (PT), and one in *Dade*, Dec. 19 (ML) was locally very rare. Grasshopper Sparrows were widely reported, with five at L. Wales and Auburndale in *Polk*, Dec. 27 and Jan. 24, respectively (PT). Single LeConte's Sparrows were at Honeymoon I. S.R.A. Jan. 23–Feb. 13 (KDN, BRP, m.ob.) and at the Springhill S.T.P. in Tallahassee Feb. 2 (GMk). Three White-throated Sparrows were rather far south in e. *Pasco*, Feb. 11–15 (SCB *et al.*). A single Brewer's Blackbird at Florida City Jan. 4 (MC) and 12 Com. Grackles at Key West Jan. 15 (JAO) were both considered unusual at these locations. Wintering Shiny Cowbirds included two at Florida City Jan. 4 and 30–40 at a feeder near Rookery Bay, *Collier*, for most of the season (JM). The wintering group of Bronzed Cowbirds returned to the Skyview Golf Club in Lakeland, where six were present Dec. 17+ (LCo, BCo, m.ob.), and five more wintered at McJunkin Dairy, *Highlands*, December–Feb. 3 (GW, BPr *et al.*). House Finches are becoming established near Gainesville, where eight were seen Dec. 31 (RKR). Very few winter finches were reported. The only report received of Pine Siskin was one at Tallahassee Feb. 17 (JEC), and three Purple Finches wintering at a Wakllua feeder (JHE) constituted the only report received.



**Thick-billed Murre found injured on Hobe Sound Highway, Florida, December 6, 1992. First state record. Photograph/ Ken Christensen.**

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## ONTARIO REGION

*Ron Ridout*

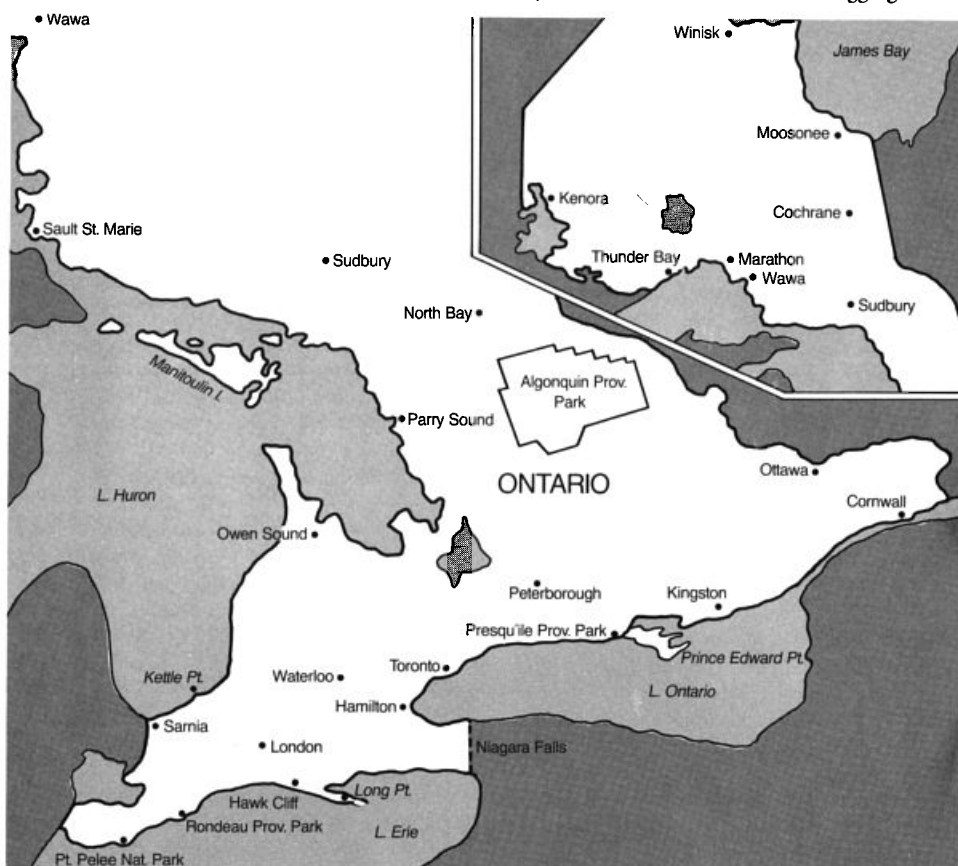
After several years of warmer-than-normal winters, most of Ontario experienced conditions closer to the long-term average. Observers in the south lamented "a hard winter," while northerners shrugged and said, "welcome back to reality." Actually, December was slightly milder than average, allowing many birds to linger late. By the new year, temperatures began to plunge, and February was 8 degrees colder on average in the south than it was in 1992. For the first time in several years, there was no measurable migration by the end of February.

The annual late winter buildup of diving ducks occurred on the west end of Lake Ontario. With the exception of Snowy Owls, northern raptors came no farther south than central Ontario during the period. Establishing a pattern for the irruptive winter finches was difficult. Evening and Pine Grosbeaks were non-existent, but a few scattered sightings of both crossbills were noted in late February in the south. All species of the group showed good numbers in the north, with the exception of redpolls, reported

only sporadically. Rarities included several Tufted Ducks, Slaty-backed Gull, and Western Tanager.

During this seemingly endless winter, it seems appropriate to acknowledge the effort of the previous editor of this Region. Ron

Weir began his term as Ontario's editor during the equally long, cold winter of 1981–1982, and for 42 consecutive seasons, up to the spring of 1992, he chronicled this vast Region's birdlife, never missing a deadline. We are indebted to him for his unflagging enthu-



siasm for the task and for the wealth of information that he so ably documented. As the new Regional Editor, I am particularly grateful for the support Ron has given me during my first year on the job.

**Abbreviations:** Pelee (*Pt. Pelee N.P. and vicinity*); P.E.Pt. (*Prince Edward Pt.*); Algonquin and Presqu'île are Provincial Parks. Place names in *italics* refer to counties or Regional municipalities.

#### LOONS TO HERONS

Following the large autumn flight of Red-throated Loons, 25 birds, five times the 10-year average, lingered into December. Highest counts were four at Kettle Pt., Dec. 5 (AR) and Burlington Dec. 17 (RD, AW). The most northerly was grounded on a highway at Englehart Dec. 5 (LT), and the latest was at Toronto Jan. 16 (HK, RY). At least 13 Com. Loons remained into January with three at Colpoy's Bay, *Bruce*, Jan. 1 (SG) and five, which overwintered at Hamilton (m.ob.), the most notable. Single Pied-billed Grebes wintered at Lakefield (RP) and to early February at Taquanyah C.A., *Haldimand* (JM, m.ob.), while one on the E. Thames R., *Oxford*, Feb. 7 (JMH) furnished that county's first February record. Two Horned Grebes at Colpoy's Bay Jan. 1 (SG) were well n. for the date. A Red-necked Grebe at Manitoulin Is., Dec. 19 (JN) was late that far N, while one on the Grand R. at Brantford Jan. 3 (WL) was unusual for the location.

No fewer than 31 Double-crested Cormorants remained into the winter, with five well n. to Manitoulin Is., Dec. 19 (*vide* CB), and seven wintered at Hamilton (m.ob.). An Am. Bittern at Westport Dec. 22 (JKW *et al.*) was startling that far north. A lone Great Blue Heron at Ottawa Jan. 1 (MJ) was very late, and six at Wildwood L., *Oxford*, Jan. 16 (RF, DB) were a large number for the locale at that date. Twenty-one Black-crowned Night-Herons lingered late from Pickering Jan. 10 (DGa), south, with highs of six at Queenston Jan. 1 (WD, DD) and 10 along Red Hill Cr. in Hamilton through the winter (m.ob.).

#### WATERFOWL

The annual L. Ontario mid-winter waterfowl inventory Jan. 10 tallied a record-high 99,226 individuals of 34 species along the nearshore waters from Kingston to Niagara. Leading totals were 22,303 Oldsquaws, 21,640 Canada Geese, 13,905 Mallards, and 11,445 Greater Scaup. All this despite winds of 30–45 mph and temperatures of 15–0°F (WE). Tundra Swans remained in high numbers into the period, with 5181 at Long Pt., Dec. 4 (RK) and 1400 still in *Kent* in early January (SC). The annual Mute Swan in W. Guilford was frozen out by Dec. 25 (RP). Two Greater White-fronted Geese remained at Bradley's Marsh, *Kent*, Nov. 6–Jan. 6 (JH). Snow Geese were reported in many places across the south. One at Ottawa Jan. 1 (BD) provided that area's first January record, while flocks of 40 at both Merrickville Dec. 19 (JC) and Bradley's

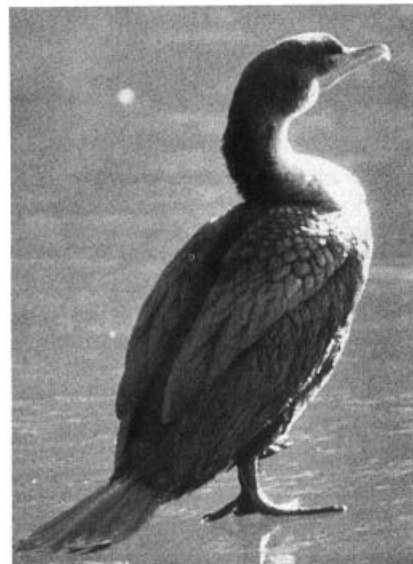
Marsh through December (m.ob.) were exceptional. Among the 17 Wood Duck records, individuals at Pembroke Dec. 19 (MF), Havilland Bay, *Algoma*, Jan. 4 (EC), and Ottawa Jan. 21 (BD) were rare so far north. A ♂ Green-winged Teal at Pelee Jan. 17 (AW) furnished that area's first wintering record, while a male at Hamilton Jan. 28 (AW) was notable there. Northern Pintails at Hamilton peaked at 32 birds Jan. 28 (AW), and a female that wintered at Manotick was rare for that region (BD). Lingered Blue-winged Teals were seen at Hamilton's Windemere Basin Dec. 3 (RD) and at Kingston Dec. 20 (SH). Of the 43 N. Shovelers at Toronto's High Park Dec. 4, 26 were still present Feb. 28 (RY). Up to 37 Am. Wigeons wintered along the Toronto waterfront (EJ), while a male at Wheatley Jan. 18 (AW) gave Pelee its 2nd wintering record.

A count of 4920 Canvasbacks at Long Pt., Dec. 4 (RK) had dwindled to 175 by Jan. 8 (DM). At Presqu'île, a flock of 60 observed Jan. 23 (CG) was noteworthy. The Dec. 4 waterfowl census at Long Pt. also recorded 3100 Redheads, 564 Ring-neckeds, and 450 Ruddy's (RK). A remarkable *four* Tufted Ducks were discovered on w. L. Ontario, with a male at Hamilton's Windemere Basin Dec. 14–February (AW, m.ob.), a female at various locations in Hamilton harbor Jan. 15–28 (RC, m.ob.), a banded female at Bluffer's Park *Toronto*, Jan. 14 (JMa), and a male there Jan. 19 (DSt, JGi).

#### S.A.

The buildup of diving duck numbers along the w. L. Ontario waterfront in late winter has become an annual phenomenon not easily explained. Speculation that the flocks are feeding heavily on Zebra Mussels, which have recently invaded the Great Lakes, is plausible for some of the species involved, but studies elsewhere seem to indicate that not all species present in large numbers on L. Ontario are heavy mussel feeders. By late February, numbers in the w. basin of the lake included 15,000 Greater Scaup, 13,000 White-winged Scoters, and 10,000 Common Goldeneyes (m.ob.). Mixed among these flocks were five King Eiders Feb. 28 (RD, m.ob.), five Black Scoters, and three Surf Scoters Feb. 27 (WS, m.ob.).

Other King Eiders were singles at Presqu'île Dec. 13 & 18 (SHa, v.o.); Winona Dec. 16–Jan. 17 (WS, m.ob.); L. St. Clair Jan. 1 (SC); Kettle Pt., Feb. 2 (AR); and two at Port Weller, *Niagara*, Dec. 20 (RD, BC, KM, GN). Five Harlequin Ducks included individuals at Sault Ste. Marie throughout the winter (m.ob.); Kettle Pt., Dec. 19 (*vide* RTy); a female at Ajax and Pickering Dec. 26 and Jan. 1 (JF, THo); a male at Toronto Jan. 10–14 & 16 (v.o.); and a female at Burlington Jan. 15–Feb. 28 (WL). A count of 20,500 Old-



**Immature Double-crested Cormorant at Wheatley Provincial Park, Ontario, December 21, 1992. Photograph/Alan Wormington.**

squaws at P.E.Pt., Dec. 19 (K.F.N.) was exceptional. Notable numbers of scoters away from w. L. Ontario included nine Blacks and 55 Surfs at Pelee Dec. 21 (m.ob.) & 12 (AW *et al.*), respectively, and 1850 White-wingeds at P.E.Pt., Dec. 19 (K.F.N.). Single Barrow's Goldeneyes were at Cornwall Dec. 28 (*vide* BD); Oakville Jan. 8–Feb. 28 (DP); and Lakefield Feb. 9 & 21 (TB, PB). Four different birds were reported at Ottawa throughout the winter (BD, m.ob.).

#### VULTURES TO SHOREBIRDS

Turkey Vulture sightings in winter continue to increase across s. and c. Ontario. The most northerly of the  $\geq 12$  birds reported were at Manitoulin Is., Dec. 20 (YF). Several were seen in January and February, likely overwintering birds. The continued strong numbers of Bald Eagles, 117 across the province, are solid evidence of the species' reestablishment in the Region. A high of 31 birds wintering along the St. Lawrence R. in *Leeds Grenville* (K.F.N.) was particularly noteworthy. The 35 N. Goshawks in the south were a strong influx for the 2nd consecutive winter. Red-shouldered Hawks well n. included one at Mindemoya until Dec. 19 (GG, JL *et al.*) and another at Owen Sound Dec. 27 (DF). An albino Red-tailed Hawk at Lowville Feb. 20 (WS, m.ob.) was a rare sight, as were 60 Red-tails together at a chicken-processing plant near Hagersville Jan. 15 (JM, v.o.). Seven Golden Eagles matched the 10-year average. Singles were at Niagara Falls Dec. 4 (IR); Dorset Jan. 8 (RP); Webbwood Jan. 8–10 (JL); Petroglyphs P.P., Jan. 16 (GC); Franktown Jan. 20 (D&HMa); and Port Elgin Feb. 19 (B&DF); singles were found at Port Ryerse Feb. 6 (C&SW) and Port Dover Feb. 23 (RG). Representing a continued winter increase, 20 Merlins were sighted across the south with one N to Kincardine Jan. 2 (*vide* MP). Winter presence of Peregrines was also strong, with individuals at Queenston Dec. 2

(RR); one all winter at Ottawa (m.ob.); Peterborough Dec. 8 (RB); Vankleek Hill Dec. 27 (*fide* VH); a banded bird well N at Westfort, *Thunder Bay*, Jan. 3 (NE, AH); Cayuga Jan. 10 (EM); and Port Rowan Jan. 21 (DBr, LE). Nineteen Gyrfalcons were seen across the province, the majority in c. and n. Regions. Individuals in the south were at Floradale Dec. 14 (SG), Cayuga Dec. 28 (G&PR), and Kingston Jan. 31 (RDW).

Hunters reported several Willow Ptarmigans in the Moosonee area in December (JT). The species occasionally moves into the s. James Bay region in winter. The lone Virginia Rail was at Long Pt., Dec. 19 (BJ, JHe, RCo). A Com. Moorhen at Dundas Dec. 21+ (BW, v.o.) was exceptional. Sandhill Crane records included one quite late at Sheguiandah Dec. 6 (GG) and two through December at Port Royal (CP, v.o.). A White-rumped Sandpiper



Remarkable away from the tropics at this season was this Veery at Toronto, Ontario, on January 2, 1993. Photograph/Alan Warmington.

at the Nonquon lagoons Dec. 1 (MB) furnished *Durham's* first winter record. Away from Niagara Falls, one Purple Sandpiper was at Erieau Dec. 20 (KB), while four different birds were seen at Presqu'ile Dec. 1-22 (DSh, MR, v.o.). Late single Dunlins were observed at Niagara Falls Dec. 1 (AW, v.o.); Hamilton Dec. 5-26 (KM, v.o.); Pelee Dec. 21 (TH); and Port Weller, *Niagara*, Jan. 2 (IR). Red Phalaropes included one at Niagara Falls Dec. 1-3 (v.o.) and two different birds at Presqu'ile Dec. 3 & 17-22 (MR).

#### GULLS TO OWLS

Three sightings of an imm. Pomarine Jaeger, at both Port Weller, *Niagara*, Dec. 20 (RD, BC, KM, GN) and Burlington Dec. 28 (AW) & 31 (RD), may have been of the same bird. The imm. Laughing Gull reported last period at Belwood L., *Wellington*, remained until Dec. 2 (m.ob.), while another imm. bird seen at Queenston Jan. 24 (DM), moved across L. Ontario to Toronto Jan. 26-Feb. 2 (RY,

m.ob.). Two Mew Gulls included the bird first reported last period on the Niagara R., which remained until Dec. 4 (†AW *et al.*), and another at Cornwall, Dec. 29 (*fide* SGa). First reported Nov. 29, the ad. California Gull on the Niagara R. remained through the winter (v.o.). Lesser Black-backed Gulls totaled 26, with 7 birds on the Niagara R. in early December (m.ob.) the highest count. The last verified sighting of the Slaty-backed Gull on the Niagara R. was Dec. 7 (DM, DS), though there were undocumented reports until the end of December. Impressive numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls were 536 at Hamilton Jan. 20 (AW) and 1320 at Ottawa Dec. 20 (L&BD). Lone Black-legged Kittiwakes included one at the Niagara R., Dec. 3 (DMi) and Jan. 30 (DD), one found dead at Hamilton Dec. 16 (RD), and one at Cedar Cr., *Essex*, Dec. 19 (*fide* PP). Two Caspian Terns, one each at Whitby Dec. 20 (DT, RRu) and Toronto Jan. 13 (DG), were remarkable. Two Mourning Doves at Moosonee Dec. 6 (SS, EH, JT) were well north of range in winter. Snowy Owls, though fewer than last winter, were widespread across the province, with the highest concentrations in the Kingston and Ottawa areas. Northern Hawk Owls and Great Grays remained in the north for the most part. The most southerly of 25 N. Hawk Owls was at Picton Dec. 19-Feb. 21 (AB, J&SB), while of 25 Great Grays, one at Marmora in early December (RPr) was farthest south. A Boreal Owl was seen briefly at Presqu'ile Jan. 2 (TO).

#### WOODPECKERS TO WRENS

Red-headed Woodpeckers continue to decline, while Red-bellieds expand their range. Seven Red-headeds compared to 95 Red-bellieds were reported. The most northerly Red-bellied was at Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 19 (*fide* RCa). Separate Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were at Toronto Dec. 15-Jan. 3 (HK) and Dec. 27 (AA); Burlington Dec. 28-Feb. 28 (KM, v.o.); St. Williams Jan. 11-Feb. 23 (RR, JMc, v.o.); and Hamilton Jan. 19 (GP). A lone Three-toed Woodpecker appeared at Presqu'ile Dec. 9 (C&JG, m.ob.) and spent the winter, returning faithfully to the same roost hole each night at dusk. Black-backed Woodpeckers invaded the south with ≥12 extralimital sightings. Four separate individuals at Walsingham Dec. 12-Feb. 19 (m.ob.) were farthest south. Lingering E. Phoebes were at Long Pt. (D&RGo) and Waterloo (*fide* RS), both Dec. 19, St. Catharines Dec. 20 (*fide* MEH), while one at Turkey Pt., Jan. 2 (MC) and Feb. 14 (RD, BC) attempted to winter. Two Tree Swallows at Dorland Dec. 5 (KH) were record late for that location, while one Rough-winged Swallow remained at Niagara Falls until Dec. 1 (m.ob.). Three Tufted Titmice at Rocksprings Feb. 28 (PD) were well beyond their normal range in the province. Carolina Wren numbers on CBCs remained stable from 1991, with 237 tallied, though the population may have suffered later during the heavy snow and cold in February in the south. Very late House Wrens were at Niagara Falls



Male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Elgin, Ontario, December 16, 1992. Photograph/Robert A. Hubert.

Dec. 6 (DGa); Burlington Dec. 16 (WS, JD); and Richmond Hill (JMy) and Cedar Cr., *Essex* (*fide* PP) Dec. 19.

#### THRUSHES TO WAXWINGS

A Townsend's Solitaire strayed to Thunder Bay Dec. 5-26 (NE, m.ob.); it was possibly the same bird that reappeared there Jan. 17-Feb. 28 (JW, m.ob.). Another was at Toronto Dec. 2-Feb. 28 (RY, m.ob.). All the *catharus* thrushes that summer in Ontario were recorded in December. A Veery remained at Toronto Dec. 27-Jan. 10 (RY, PSS, v.o.), a Gray-cheeked Thrush at Peterborough Dec. 20-21 (G&HRO), a Swainson's Thrush at Normandale Dec. 12-21 (C&SW, v.o.), and Hermit Thrushes lingered in good numbers, with 20-30 wintering at Pelee alone (AW, v.o.) and as far north as Kingston Dec. 20 (*fide* PG). A Wood Thrush at Pelee Jan. 5 (WS, JD) supplied the park's 2nd winter record. Nine Varied Thrushes reported were above the long-term average of six per winter. Singles included a male at Trout L., early December (RTa); a male at Kaministiquia *Thunder Bay*, Dec. 13 (J&RLi); a male at Bolsover, Dec. 15-Feb. 28 (JS, m.ob.); one at Nipigon mid-December (NE); a female at Callander Dec. 27-Feb. 28 (GD, RTa); a female at Thunder Bay Dec. 30 (PK, m.ob.); one at Ice L., Dec. 31 (*fide* DBa); a male at Pelee Jan. 5-31 (JD, WS, v.o.); and a male at London Jan. 17-Feb. 28 (JMn, m.ob.). At least eight Gray Catbirds lingered with one at Arnprior Dec. 26 (*fide* MRu) exceptional. A N. Mockingbird at Thunder Bay Dec. 26 (NE) was the farthest N, while of several Brown Thrashers on CBCs in the north, one at Ignace Dec. 20 (*fide* AH) was outstanding. For the most part, Bohemian Waxwings were not numerous, though a group of 400 at Thunder Bay Dec. 24 (NE) was notable.

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Orange-crowned Warblers lingered at Toronto Dec. 7 (KK) and at Morpeth (PPr) and Blenheim (SC, KB) Dec. 20. A Nashville Warbler at Pelee Dec. 6-Jan. 6 (AW, v.o.) was



record late, and another at Ottawa Dec. 20 (MG) provided the first December record for the area. A fresh road-killed Yellow Warbler at Brighton Dec. 3 (DTy) represented one of the few winter records ever for the province. A ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler near Port Stanley Dec. 14-16 (ph. RH) was surviving on cornmeal worms at a feeder. Many of the Yellow-rumped reports were well into January and February. Fifteen at Pelee Jan. 16 (AW) and nine at P.E.Pt., Jan. 20 (MR, AB) were noteworthy. One Pine Warbler lingered at Amherstburg Dec. 14 (AW), while two separate birds attempted to winter, one at Guelph Dec. 6-Feb. 27 (JP, JHo) and the other at Toronto Dec. 13+ (HK). The lone Palm Warbler was near Townsend Dec. 20-21 (*fide* MS). A Wilson's Warbler at Toronto Dec. 7 (KK) was exceptionally rare. The Summer Tanager last seen at Thornhill Nov. 19, reappeared for



Western Tanager at Wainfleet, Ontario, December 6, 1992. Photograph/Kayo Roy.

one day Dec. 10 (THn). A ♀ W. Tanager was at a feeder near Wainfleet Dec. 3-7 (MCu, m.ob.) before being captured and transported to an avian rehabilitator in Toronto. Individual Rose-breasted Grosbeaks carried at Berford L., Bruce, Dec. 1-Jan. 8 (RGr, JJ, SG, v.o.), at Pelee Dec. 12-31 (SMA, v.o.), and at Chaffey's Locks Jan. 22 and Feb. 7-13 (JLa). The only Dickcissel was at a feeder in Walpole Twp., Haldimand, Dec. 20 (J&SM). At least 56 Rufous-sided Towhees were seen, many of which wintered, the most northerly at Heyden (EC). Single Am. Tree Sparrows at Marathon Dec. 19 (*fide* WC) and Atikokan Jan. 2 (DE) were well n. of their usual winter range. A remarkable 41 Chipping Sparrows were recorded, with a high count of 12 at Pelee Dec. 21 (m.ob.). Single Lark Sparrows included one in autumn at Corner Marsh, Durham, that remained until Dec. 1 (MSP, m.ob.) and one at Guelph Dec. 5-Feb. 23 (LL, m.ob.). A Grasshopper Sparrow at Toronto Dec. 12 (MR, HK) gave the province its 2nd winter record. Equally outstanding was a Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Pelee Dec. 21 (AW), record

late for that area. Late Lincoln's Sparrows included singles at Selkirk P.P., Haldimand, Dec. 7 (WS, JD) and Blenheim Dec. 12 (SC) and two at Kettle Pt., Dec. 19 (*fide* RTy). Both Harris' Sparrows were in the north, with one at Marathon Dec. 19 (NE, WC) and the other at Espanola Feb. 1-28 (R&WFa). Yellow-headed Blackbirds included one at Pelee Dec. 21 (G&PGe, KBo) and two at Wallaceburg Dec. 27 (*fide* KB). Twenty-six Brewer's Blackbirds were reported, with a high of 13 at St. Clair N.W.A., Kent, Jan. 2 (*fide* PAW) and one well n. at Ear Falls Dec. 28 (*fide* DSa). Two separate N. Orioles were seen, one at Port Colborne Jan. 3 (*fide* DC) and one at Mississauga Jan. 5-Feb. 28 (J&EHa, m.ob.). A lone Com. Grackle wintered far n. at Moosonee Dec. 20+ (IJ). With most Pine Grosbeaks remaining in the north, eight at Richmond Hill Jan. 10 (JCB) was noteworthy. Reversing the situation, a House Finch at Algonquin Dec. 31 (RT, WCr) was equally notable. Both crossbills were numerous across the n. regions of the province. White-winged staged a minor movement south in mid- to late winter, with four as far S as Turkey Pt., Jan. 30 (RR), while Reds were more sporadic in numbers and timing, with seven at Normandale Dec. 13 (DS, DM *et al.*) the farthest south. Common Redpolls seemed erratic everywhere. Single Hoary Redpolls were reported at New Liskeard (*fide* SWe) and Pembroke (*fide* MFI), Dec. 19 and at Moosonee Feb. 5 & 20 (EH), while four were at Wawa Jan. 3 (*fide* PS). Observers everywhere lamented the very low numbers of Evening Grosbeaks.

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# APPALACHIAN REGION

George A. Hall

It was a season of contrasts, for weather and birds alike. Except for a short period of very cold weather that brought snow throughout the Region in late December, the early season was quite mild. January was much warmer than usual and had normal precipitation. The mild weather continued through early February, but real winter returned in the second half of the month. This severe weather brought the season's lowest temperatures, together with some heavy snowfall that continued into March.

During the mild early season, birds apparently were widely dispersed, with little incentive to visit feeders. Many observers commented on the lack of birds, but those who spent much time afield had excellent finds; in fact, record counts for numerous species were set by the time CBC time rolled around. Of particular note were the myriad reports of large populations of such permanent residents as woodpeckers of several species, chickadees, and Tufted Titmice. With the advent of the severe weather, feeders were well occupied.

A few southbound migrants were still evident in early December and, as the mild weather continued during December and January, unusual winter records were furnished. Because no single region had very many of these, most observers called it a dull season, but the true variety becomes apparent only with the compilation of this summary. The earliest of the northbound spring migrants arrived in time to be greeted by the cold, snowy weather. The ultimate effect remains to be determined.

What has happened to the so-called "Northern Finches"? It was another winter without an influx of substantial numbers of these species. Snowy Owls staged the best movement in recent years, and more Northern Shrikes were reported than usual. The cardueline finches remained scarce, except for the American Goldfinch, not normally considered a northern invader.

The Appalachian country lost its premier naturalist and ecologist in the passing of Maurice Brooks in January, in his 93rd year. Maurice was the first Regional Editor for Appalachia; he had served in that capacity for 10 years. All students, not only of birds, but of any phase of natural history, in this hill and mountain country remain forever in his debt.

**Abbreviations:** B.E.S.P. (*Bald Eagle S.P., Centre Co., PA*); Ch.N.F. (*Chattahoochee N.F., GA*); G.L.O.R. (*Gallipolis Locks, Ohio R., Mason Co., WV*); M.C.E.H. (*Minor Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan Co., KY*); O.R.I. (*Ohio R. Is. N.W.R., Parkersburg, WV*); P.I.S.P. (*Presque Isle S.P., Erie Co., PA*); P.N.R. (*Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., PA*). Place names in *italics* are counties.

## LOONS TO WATERFOWL

Two Red-throated Loons at P.I.S.P., Dec. 18 (JM) were noteworthy, as was one sighted at Rocky Gap S.P., MD, Jan. 19 (MT). The Pacific Loon noted in the fall report remained at P.I.S.P. until Dec. 2+ (JM). A good fall flight of Com. Loons continued into December. Three wintered at Watauga L., TN (RK), and five spent the winter at Cave Run L., Rowan, KY (FB). Horned Grebes were widely reported, but there were no large concentrations. A Red-necked Grebe was found at Pymatuning L., PA, Feb. 14 (RFL). Five Double-crested Cormorants wintered near Kingsport, TN (RK), and one lingered at Conneaut L., PA, Dec. 28-Jan. 15 (RFL, RCL).

The open weather of early winter resulted in more than the usual reports of Great Blue Herons, but numbers were below normal at M.C.E.H. (FB). Arrival of herons at the *Mercer*, PA, heronries was delayed until after Mar. 1 by the late February freeze (EB). The only Great Egret was at M.C.E.H., Dec. 54 (FB). Green-backed Herons at Stuart's Draft, VA, Jan. 17 (CC) and at Warren, PA, Jan. 22 (CP, DDo) were unusual sightings for winter. Ten Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at Kingsport, TN (RK), and a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was seen in *Washington*, TN, Jan. 11 (JB).

Waterfowl numbers, particularly of diving

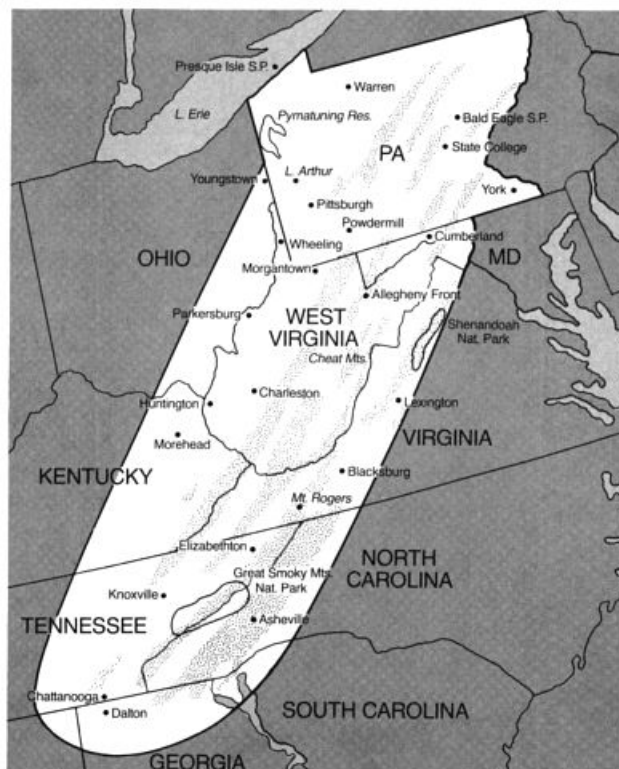
ducks, were almost universally low, attributed by some observers to the mild early season weather and to the lack of freeze-up to the north. This was particularly true of the Com. Goldeneye, for which only 17, instead of the usual  $\geq 3000$ , were found on the Linesville, PA, CBC (RFL); only a single Goldeneye was seen all season in the Huntington, WV, area (MG). In e. Tennessee, the decline of dabbling ducks over the past few years to only 10% of former numbers may be attributable to the T.V.A. policy of removing the weeds from the lakes (JPa).

Tundra Swans in the north were recorded in all 3 months, with 167 counted in *Crawford*, PA, Dec. 20 (RFL), and a flock of 52 over Warren, OH, Jan. 1 (CB). More unusual were reports from s. Pennsylvania, with 20 at Ligonier Dec. 7 (AS, *fide* RCL) and 10 and 26, respectively, at *Somerset*, Dec. 20 & 26 (AM). A Mute Swan was at seen at P.I.S.P., Dec. 3-Feb. 14+ (Je&JiS), and another at L. Moomaw, *Augusta*, VA, Jan. 16 (LH). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen in *Frederick*, VA, Dec. 14 (RSI). Snow Geese were reported at *Centre*, PA, Dec. 8 (K&JJ); at Pymatuning L., PA, Dec. 13 & 20 (RFL) and Feb. 5 (DS); and at *Sullivan*, TN, ca. Nov. 15-Dec. 15 $\pm$  (RK). A Brant was seen at P.I.S.P., Dec. 3 (Ji&JeS). Canada Geese continue to thrive at most places. Noteworthy were the 197 on the Blairsville, GA, CBC (DF). At Pymatuning L., PA., numbers ranged from 6750 Dec. 20, to 9000 Feb. 5 (RFL).

The Tufted Duck noted in the fall report from Pymatuning L., PA, remained until Jan. 9+ (RFL). A Greater Scaup at M.C.E.H., Jan. 31 (FB) was unusual for this inland location. One ♀ and two ♂ **King Eiders** were at P.I.S.P., Jan. 2-20 (JM). The only report of Oldsquaws came from Pymatuning L., PA, Dec. 13 (RFL). A Black Scoter at P.I.S.P., Dec. 13, and small flocks of White-winged Scoters there Dec. 1-13 and Feb. 15 (JM) were the only reports of these species, but Surf Scoters were reported from P.I.S.P., Dec. 12-18 (JM) and from Warren, PA, Jan. 2 (BH) and Salt Fork S.P., OH, Jan. 2 (JPe). A **Barrow's Goldeneye** appeared at P.I.S.P., Feb. 13-20 (JM). An exotic record of unknown origin was the **Chiloe Wigeon** at Pymatuning L. (ph.) Feb. 15 (RFL, AM).

## HAWKS TO OWLS

Turkey Vultures wintered in greater-than-normal numbers, including a first true winter record for *Erie*, PA (LM). Black Vultures were reported at Harrisonburg, VA, Feb. 11 (CZ), Summersville, WV, Jan. 15 (MG), and O.R.I., Mar. 12 (PM). The only Osprey report came from *Centre*, PA, Jan. 16, supplying the 3rd winter record for that area (GG). Bald Eagles were widely reported from L. Erie in the north to Watauga L., TN, in the south.



Adult birds outnumbered immatures by a ratio of  $\geq 3 : 1$ . At M.V.F.H., numbers were the lowest in 10 years (FB), possibly a reflection of the mild weather to the north. The pair nesting at Mosquito L., OH, was believed to be incubating Feb. 28 (D&JH).

Wintering N. Harrier numbers were above average. The only N. Goshawk reports were from Blackwater Falls S.P., WV, Dec. 21 (SR) and Lander, PA, Jan. 16 (CP). Cooper's Hawks fared slightly better, and Red-shoulders were found in well-above-normal numbers, with one feeding regularly on suet at a feeder in Sheffield, PA (CN). By contrast, Red-taileds were in below-normal numbers, as were Rough-leggeds, in *Erie*, PA, where only 1–2 were reported (JeS, DW). Other records came from *Trumbull*, OH (NB, J&DH), and from *Cumberland* and *Franklin*, PA (*vide* DHe). More unusual were reports from *Wood*, WV (KC) and *Cabell*, WV (WA, SS).

Golden Eagles observed in *Centre*, PA, Dec. 6 & 12 were probably late migrants, but Jan. 31 and Feb. 18 provided unusual winter records (JP). One was found shot in *Huntington*, PA, Feb. 24 (*vide* JP). The only other report came from the regular wintering area in *Highland*, VA, Feb. 20 (RS).

The mild open weather of the early period reduced roadside sightings of Am. Kestrels, but overall numbers were good. In *Washington*, TN, 40 were counted in an 80-mi road transect (RK). Peregrines were reported at Winchester, VA, December–January (RSi); G.L.O.R., Jan. 21–Feb. 25 (WA, MG); Elizabethton, TN, Dec. 19 (GW); and Boone L., TN, Feb. 14 (RK).

Ruffed Grouse were scarce in *Cabell*, WV, but Wild Turkeys were more abundant than ever before in this century (LW). Turkeys in *Trumbull*, OH, Dec. 29 (CB) were an unusual find that far north in Ohio. The N. Bobwhite picture was the reverse, almost non-existent in most areas, but the Waynesboro, VA, CBC listed a total of 26 (RS). A Virginia Rail in *Rockingham*, VA, Dec. 1–12 (RSi) was noteworthy. Sandhill Cranes at Ch.N.F., Dec 5 were still moving S, but those noted Feb. 4–7 may have been wintering birds (HD), as was one in nearby *Whitfield*, GA, Jan. 27 (VG). Cranes wintered in some numbers on Hiwassee I. and at nearby Hiwassee Wildlife Ref. near Chattanooga, TN, where 4500 migrants delighted Feb. 27 (JPa).

Two late shorebirds were the Dunlin at P.I.S.P., Dec. 23 (DS) and the Least Sandpiper in *Washington*, TN, Jan. 14, providing the 2nd local January record (RK, DHu). Wintering Com. Snipes in *Centre*, PA (JP), *Rockingham*, VA (CZ), and n.e. Tennessee were found in below-normal numbers (RK). American Woodcocks were engaged in courtship at Beech Fork S.P., WV, Feb. 7 (MG).

Unusual numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were reported from the s. part of the Region, at L. Shenandoah, VA (CZ), at *Cabell*, WV (WA), M.C.F.H., with as many as 75 (FB), at Boone L. TN, with  $\leq 21$  (RK), and at *Murray*, GA (HD, JPa). By Feb. 15, P.I.S.P. displayed



**Young male King Eider at Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania, January 18, 1993.**  
Photograph/Jerry McWilliams.

only about 500 gulls (JM), but concentrations of 200–300 Ring-billeds were seen at many spots. These groups included more Herring Gulls than usual for this inland area. As usual, P.I.S.P. reported some of the rarer, but now fairly regular, species: Iceland Gull Dec. 8 (JiS) and Jan. 24 (JM), Little Gull Dec. 24 (JM); Lesser Black-backed Gull (3 individuals) Dec. 10–Feb. 11 (JM), and Glaucous Gull (8–9) Dec. 5–Feb. 12 (JM, DHo). Unusual reports from s.e. Tennessee included *Iceland Gull*, Chickamauga L., Dec. 12, for the 2nd state record, and a *Lesser Black-backed Gull* at Nickajack L., Feb. 27, furnishing what is possibly the 4th record for the state (JPa). Greater Black-backed were reported from 3 unusual inland locations: Warren, PA, Feb. 3, a 2nd local record (TG); Meadville, PA, Feb. 13 (RFL); and *Cumberland*, PA (DHe). An out-of-season Caspian Tern was seen at Chickamauga L., TN, Jan. 22 (GL).

The only Barn Owl report came from Jersey Shore, PA, Jan. 18, marking the first local record in several years (G&PS).

The Region experienced its best year for Snowy Owls in recent history. Reports came from Edinboro, PA, Jan. 14 (JHo, WS); P.I.S.P., Jan 29–31 (JM); Pymatuning L., PA, Dec. 28 (RCL); State College, PA, Feb. 19 (PW, RC); Greencastle, PA, early December (KG); *Fayette*, PA, early December–Feb. 15 (*vide* RCL); *Frederick*, VA, Dec. 7–Feb. 6 (RSi); and Winchester, VA, early December (RSi). Long-eared Owls were found at P.I.S.P., Dec. 12–Jan. 2 (DHo, DD); Moraine S.P., PA, Feb. 22–28 (DD); and Staunton, VA, Dec. 28 (SR). The recovered surface mines in *Jefferson*, OH, had 4–5 Short-eared Owls, Jan 19–Feb. 7 (MA); the only other reports were of one sighted Dec. 27 and two Jan. 28 in *Fayette*, PA (AC) and in *Cumberland*, PA, Feb. 20 (DHe, RHe). Reports of N. Saw-whet Owls came only from n. Pennsylvania: 4–5 P.I.S.P., Dec. 5–Feb. 12 (DD), two at

B.E.S.P., Jan. 3 (JP, EZ), one at Moraine S.P., Feb. 15–28 (DD), and one found dead at Pittsfield, PA, Jan. 1 (DW).

#### HUMMINGBIRDS TO SHRIKES

The Rufous Hummingbird reported in the fall report at Edinboro, PA, was last seen Jan. 24 (JeS). Record CBC counts of Red-bellied and Pileated woodpeckers and of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the Ligonier, PA, area were chalked up to increased tree kills from the Gypsy moth infestation and to recent droughts (RCL). Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to do well in the north, and the report of increasing numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers in *Adams*, PA (KG) was certainly welcome.

The E. Phoebe at P.I.S.P., Feb. 13–20 (DP) established the first Erie winter record, buttressed by unusual January reports from *Cumberland*, MD (MT), Morgantown, WV (LG), and Harrisonburg, VA (CZ). Three Tree Swallows at *Cumberland*, MD, Feb. 9 were quite early (MT). The Wheeling, WV, CBC came up with 17,000 Am. Crows (*vide* LW). Fish Crows wintered in *Rockingham*, VA (CZ) and *Centre*, PA (JP). In *Somerset*, PA, Com. Ravens had returned to last year's nest site on the abandoned mine building by Feb. 5 (AM). The Rector, PA, CBC had record tallies of such permanent residents as Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, and Tufted Titmice. There were few reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches, and none was evident on the breeding grounds on Roan Mt., TN (RK).

Carolina Wren populations were high during December and January, even in n. Pennsylvania. The effect of the severe winter weather experienced late February–early March remains to be seen. House Wrens were reported in Tennessee at Elizabethton Dec. 20 and *Hawkins*, Jan. 22 (RK). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet at P.I.S.P., Jan. 2 (DPo) was unusual. This species wintered at P.N.R. (RCL) and in the George Washington N.E., VA (CZ). Eastern Bluebirds were widely reported in good numbers, even in the north. Hermit Thrushes were present at P.I.S.P. until Feb. 15+ (LM, DD) and were unusually numerous in *Centre*, PA, with CBC counts of 26 at State College and nine at B.E.S.P. (JP). December and January had few reports of Am. Robins, but large numbers began to appear in late February, e.g., a count of 500 in downtown Weston, WV, Feb. 27 (LW).

The only report of a Gray Catbird came from Linesville, PA, providing the 2nd winter record Dec. 20 (RFL). Mid-winter Brown Thrashers were found at Elizabethton, TN (RK) and at P.I.S.P., Feb. 24 (JM). Cedar Waxwings were more common than in most winters, with small flocks noted in *Trumbull*, OH (CB); Clarksville, PA (RB); Front Royal, VA (RA); Elizabethton, TN (RK); and *Rowan*, KY (FB). **Northern Shrikes** were reported at several locations: P.I.S.P., Dec. 3–Feb. 17, with 1–2 sightings (JiS); Lander, PA, Jan. 2 (DW); Jones Mills, *Westmoreland*, PA (RCL); and *Erie N.W.R.*, PA, Jan. 3 and Pymatuning L., PA, Jan. 8 (RFL). The Re-

gional stronghold of the Loggerhead Shrike remains the Great Appalachian Valley, with reports from Gettysburg and Mercersburg, PA (KG), *Rockbridge* and *Botetourt*, VA (SR), and *Murray*, GA (HD). In n.e. Tennessee, an 80-mi road transect yielded 10 Loggerheads, slightly above average, Dec. 2, dropping to four by Feb. 21 (RK, DHu).

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Yellow-rumped Warblers were present in above-average numbers, as far north as State College, PA (JP). Belated warbler reports were beyond expected, including Orange-crowned Warbler, Huntington, WV, Jan. 6+ (WA, MK); N. Parula, Vienna, WV, Jan. 21 (*fide* JE); Magnolia Warbler, Carter's L., GA, Dec. 5 (*fide* TM), Pine Warbler, coming daily to a suet feeder at Waynesboro, VA (GK); Palm Warbler, Johnson City, TN, Jan. 9 & 30 (RK) and Elizabethton, TN, two Feb. 6 (JB); Com. Yellowthroats on the B.E.S.P. CBC Jan. 3 (*fide* JP) and P.I.S.P. until Jan. 23 (EK); and



**Undoubtedly an escapee, but an attractive one, was this male Chiloee Wigeon at Pymatuning Lake, Pennsylvania, February 15, 1993. Photograph/Anthony Marich, Jr.**

Wilson's Warbler (ph.), at Carlisle, PA, Feb. 25 (JSt *et al.*)

Many observers held N. Cardinals to be in low numbers, but this impression seems to have come from feeder watches early in the season; witness the record 290 listed on the CBC at P.N.R. (RCL), where few had come to feeders. The advent of severe weather in late February brought normal numbers to feeders. Two Dickcissels were listed on the *Augusta*, VA, CBC Dec. 19 (H&BL).

The only report of Rufous-sided Towhee was of one wintering at P.N.R. (RCL). American Tree Sparrows were reported in better numbers than in most recent years. Song Sparrows were generally in low numbers, and White-throated Sparrows brought mixed reports. Unusual winter records included Chipping Sparrows, found all winter at P.N.R. feeders (RCL), at 2 feeder spots in *Centre*, PA,



**Remarkable for the season was this Wilson's Warbler near Carlisle, Pennsylvania, February 27, 1993. Photograph/Don Henise.**

Dec. 20 (BB, GG), Waynesboro, VA, Dec. 10 (GK), and *Berkeley*, WV, Feb. 7 (BHo); Savannah Sparrow, Jersey Shore, PA, Jan. 2 (G&PS); Lincoln's Sparrow, Rector, PA, CBC providing the 2nd winter record (DK); and Swamp Sparrow, *Rockingham*, VA, Jan. 19 (CZ). Vesper Sparrows in *Washington*, TN, Feb. 2 were thought to be early migrants (RK, DHu). An "Oregon" Junco was present Nov. 10+ in *Rockingham*, VA (CM), where another was seen Feb. 21 (CZ). Three Lapland Longspurs were at P.I.S.P., Dec. 8 (JiS), 1-2 were in *Cumberland*, PA, Feb. 17-26 (DHe), and one kept company with Snow Buntings at Chambersburg, PA, late February (KG). The only other reports of Snow Buntings came from South Avis, PA, Jan. 21 & 24 (P&GS), State College, PA, Feb. 24 (TF), and *Cumberland*, PA, Dec. 11 & 12 and Feb. 16 (DHe).

Blackbirds were rather uncommon through the winter; both Red-winged Blackbirds and Com. Grackles arrived the last 2 weeks of February, just in time to hit the only severe weather of the winter. By contrast, E. Meadowlarks were more numerous than usual, wintering as far north as *Warren*, PA (TG). A noteworthy four Rusty Blackbirds appeared at Pymatuning L., PA, Jan. 15 (RFL), and a pair of Brewer's Blackbirds in *Washington*, TN, Dec. 6 (RK) was most unusual for both season and location.

The finch of the season was the Am. Goldfinch, in unusually high numbers throughout the Region. The House Finch report was mixed. Numbers at Canfield, OH (NB) and Morgantown, WV (GAH) were far below normal, but a roost at Ona, WV, had  $\geq 3000$  birds (LW), and CBC records were set with 554 at Clarksville, PA (RB) and 16 at Blairsville, GA (DF). Purple Finches were uniformly uncommon. Reports of Pine Siskins in very small numbers came from ar-

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eas throughout the Region but hardly constituted an invasion. A single report of a Red Crossbill came from Roane Mt., TN, Dec. 18 (FA), and a flock of 12 Evening Grosbeaks at N. Warren, PA, Dec. 6 (MY) represented the only report for the species.

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# WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

James Granlund

During the winter of 1992–1993, all 3 states had a mild first 3 weeks of December, followed by colder, harsher weather by Christmas. January brought a return to milder but wetter weather. This pattern continued through the first 2–3 weeks of February, only to terminate abruptly by end of month. Real winter reached many portions of the Region in late February and early March. In summary, temperatures were average to above average and precipitation above average in most localities.

The theme of the season was low numbers of birds but good diversity of species. Rarities included Mew Gulls in both Michigan and Wisconsin, Anna's Hummingbird, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Western Tanager in Wisconsin, and Black-throated Sparrow in Minnesota. Notable in the category of rare but regular were Townsend's Solitaires in Minnesota and Michigan, Three-toed Woodpeckers in Minnesota, and Harlequin Ducks and Northern Hawk Owls in all 3 states. Unusual late fall migrants included Northern Orioles throughout the Region, Ovenbirds in both Michigan and Wisconsin, and several sparrow species in the triad. To avoid duplication, CBC data are used sparingly in the following accounts.

## LOONS TO WATERFOWL

Common Loons lingered into December in both Michigan and Wisconsin and resurfaced in each state by February. Both Horned and Pied-billed grebes were reported from Michi-

gan and Wisconsin. The only reports for Red-necked and Eared grebes were of lingering individuals into early December at Madison, WI. Two American White Pelicans overwintered in both Dakota, MN, and Green Bay, Wisconsin. The Wisconsin record constituted the first time this species has overwintered. As has been more frequent over the past few years, Double-crested Cormorants overwintered in all 3 states. Great Blue Herons overwintered at scattered locations, but one in the Cedar Cr. Natural Area, Anoka, MN, was unusual (JH). Seven Black-crowned Night-Herons overwintered in Michigan at the Ford Rouge Plant, Wayne (JF), while another lingered until Jan. 8 at the Karn Plant, Bay (MW). An unmarked, free-flying Whooper Swan was reported Feb. 20 in Dakota, MN (BF). It was determined that local aviculturalists had previously released this species as well as other hybrid swans, adding to our swan identification woes. Trumpeter Swans continue to increase in Michigan and Minnesota, this season reported from several locations in the former and a high total of 44 overwintered in Sherburne in the latter. Tundra Swans overwintered in locations in Michigan and Wisconsin; however,  $\geq 1000$  observed Dec. 19 in Trempealeau, WI (TH) is worthy of note. A migrating Greater White-fronted Goose, Dec. 14, in Lyon (HK) provided a record late date for Minnesota, while another lingered in Michigan Dec. 1–26 mainly at Belle Is., Wayne (JF). A Brant appeared at New Buffalo, MI, November–Dec. 1+ (KM). A  $\delta$  Blue-winged Teal reported Feb. 8 at Grand Mere L., Berrien, MI (RS) was either a very early migrant or a rare overwintering individual. Northern Shovelers have wintered in increased numbers in Michigan within the past few years; this season, reports come from 7 counties. A  $\delta$  Eur. Wigeon at Grand Haven, Ottawa, MI, was seen by many observers,

Dec. 27+. Like others of this species, this individual was extremely tame, causing observers to speculate about the bird's origin. Another was seen Jan. 30 (KO *et al.*) and Feb. 3 (MM) at Erie Metropark, Wayne, presumably the same individual present there in the fall. Nearly all normal species of ducks overwintered in each of the 3 states. The only eider report for the Region was of a  $\text{f}$  eider species Feb. 6 near Arcadia, Manistee, MI (BA). Harlequin Ducks in Wisconsin were reported at Milwaukee, Kaukauna, until Feb. 19 and in Menasha Dec. 6–Jan. 21. In Michigan, an ad. male was seen sporadically between Sault Ste. Marie Ontario and Michigan, and another was seen Jan. 19–20 in New Buffalo, Berrien (KM). In Minnesota, a male overwintered in Ottertail (SM, DM). Scoters appear to be remaining on the Great Lakes in better numbers over the past few winters. This was particularly evident in Michigan, where White-winged Scoters were reported from 6 coastal counties, including a maximum of 310 overwintering near Arcadia, Manistee (BA). At the same location, an amazing 416 Oldsquaws and 360 Com. Goldeneyes were recorded. As the shallow reef is close to shore, the ducks may have been attracted by the recent outbreak of Zebra Mussels in the area. Also in Michigan, Black Scoters were reported Dec. 14 in New Buffalo, Berrien (KM), as well as four Jan. 9 near Manistee (TB) while two Surf Scoters were reported Feb. 13 near Arcadia, Manistee (BA). All 3 species of scoter were reported in Wisconsin: Blacks, Dec. 3 at Sauk City and Feb. 27–28 at Milwaukee; Surfs, Dec. 16–17 at Kaukauna and three Feb. 27–28 at Milwaukee; and White-wingeds, early December in Madison, Feb. 1 in Iron, and Feb. 7 with 27–28 at Milwaukee. A  $\delta$  Barrow's Goldeneye returned to Elk Rapids, Antrim, MI, Dec. 10 (DJ) and was seen sporadically through January. The return of most migrating ducks was delayed by the onset of bad weather in late February; however, Wisconsin reported an influx of 1500 Greater Scaup Feb. 27–28 in Milwaukee (MK).

## RAPTORS

A Turkey Vulture lingered late in Michigan with an individual observed Dec. 21 at Warren Dunes S.P., Berrien (RS). This species had not returned to Michigan or Minnesota by the end of the period; however, one was seen, Feb. 20, in Racine, WI (PS), very early for that location. Bald Eagles were reported in good numbers from both Michigan and Minnesota, with increased numbers wintering in the n. portions of the latter. Sharp-shinned Hawks were more common in Michigan this winter, particularly in the n. portion of the state, while N. Goshawks were reported in good numbers in the s. portion. A Swainson's Hawk report Jan. 31 in Ionia, MI (JW) is pending review



by the M.B.R.C.; if accepted, it would constitute the first winter record of this species in the Region. Rough-legged Hawks were reported as scarce in Minnesota. Golden Eagles were reported from all 3 states; Minnesota had noteworthy records from *Otertail*, Jan. 10 (SM, DM), from *Renville*, Jan. 16 & 18 (RJ, KB), and from *Norman*, Jan. 17, while Wisconsin reported three in *Monroe* (EE *et al.*), several in *Grant*, and individuals in *Sauk* and *Buffalo*. Michigan had only 2 reports, one Feb. 6 in *Allegan* (FS, JWi) and another Dec. 9–Jan. 30 at the Shiawassee N.W.R., *Saginaw* (DP, MW, BG). Merlins occurred in above-average numbers in Michigan, with reports from 6 counties. A Peregrine Falcon seen Jan. 6 in Grand Rapids, *Kent*, MI (JWi) was possibly a bird “hacked”



**Mew Gull [center] at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, February 3, 1993. Photograph/Brian Boldt.**

at the location. Gyrfalcons reported from Wisconsin included individuals observed Jan. 9 in *Algoma* (KG) and Feb. 15 in *Ozaukee* (DG). In Minnesota, an adult was reported sporadically Dec. 26–Jan. 17, *Aiken* (WN *et al.*), while in Michigan had ≥2 individuals in Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa* (JG, DE, m.ob.). The only Prairie Falcon report for the Region was an individual Jan. 1 and Feb. 7 in *Clay*, MN (LF, CF).

#### RAILS TO GULLS

Sandhill Cranes remained well into December in Michigan and Wisconsin and had not returned by period's end. A tardy **Baird's Sandpiper** was present Dec. 19 at the Muskegon Wastewater System, *Muskegon*, MI (PC, TW). Exceptional for Michigan were reports of a **Purple Sandpiper** Jan. 3–4 and of two Jan. 8 at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (RS, VJ, KM). Common Snipes overwintered in all 3 states, but the individual seen Jan. 16 in *Cook*, MN (DN) was n. of normal range. A Franklin's Gull, Dec. 3, in St. Joseph, *Berrien*, MI (RS) was quite late, while four Bonaparte's seen Dec. 15 in *Dakota*, MN (RG) pro-

vided a new record-late date for the state. **Mew Gulls** staged a mini-invasion along L. Michigan during the season. Wisconsin reported two intermittently, February–March at Milwaukee and another at Racine Jan. 31+ (m.ob.). Michigan had reports of adults, Jan. 1 at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (KM) while another was seen Jan. 24–28 (KT, DMc, FS, JWi) at Holland, *Ottawa*. The 2 former records would constitute only the 3rd and 4th Michigan records if accepted by the M.B.R.C. Thayer's Gulls were reported in Wisconsin along the harbors of L. Michigan, especially Milwaukee, and from L. Superior in *Superior*. In Minnesota a first-winter bird was reported through January on Black Dog L., *Dakota* (m.ob.), while in Michigan a single report of another first-winter bird came from the New Buffalo area, *Berrien* (KM, KT). Wisconsin reported a few Iceland Gulls along the shoreline of L. Superior and L. Michigan; Minnesota had only a single report, from the *Goodhue/Wabasha* area Dec. 4 (KB). Lesser Black-backed Gull reports included one through Dec. 22 in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota (KB *et al.*); Michigan had reports of one adult Dec. 2–Jan. 12 on L. Lansing, *Ingham* (MJ, BC), another Dec. 13–15 at Bay City, *Bay* (RW), and Jan. 30 at Erie Metropark, *Wayne* (KO *et al.*). Increased numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls were reported on L. Michigan in both Michigan and Wisconsin, while Minnesota had a report from *St. Louis*, Dec. 16 (KE). The only Black-legged Kittiwakes reported for the Region came from Michigan, with first-winter individuals seen Dec. 3 at St. Joseph, *Berrien* (RS) and Dec. 13 on the *Saginaw R.*, *Bay*, MI (JS).

#### OWLS TO WOODPECKERS

The number of owls during the season pales in comparison with last year, but Snowy Owls were reported in good numbers in all 3 states. There were at least two N. Hawk Owls in the Sault Ste. Marie area in Michigan (DE, WPa), while about a dozen birds were reported in n.e. Minnesota. Unprecedented were reports from Wisconsin for the 3rd consecutive year. These records included individuals seen Jan. 7–Feb. 27 in *Superior* (LS, RJ *et al.*), January–February near Phelps (BR *et al.*), and at Pelican L. (m.ob.). In Michigan, ≥16 Great Gray Owls were present around Sault Ste. Marie (DE), and Minnesota reported 18 from its traditional sites. Only a single Boreal Owl was reported from *Chippewa*, MI; just three were in Minnesota—a single Jan. 7 near Duluth (KE) and two birds found dead near Grand Marias and Biwabik. For the 2nd consecutive year, Wisconsin had a wintering **Anna's Hummingbird**, this year's bird surviving until Jan. 4 in Racine (WP). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered throughout the Region; however, the immature seen in *Washington*, (TBe, EB) provided only the 2nd confirmed Sapsucker record for Minnesota. Six Three-toed Woodpeckers were reported in the extreme n.c. and n.e. parts of Minnesota, more than had been recorded since winter 1985–1986. Black-backed Woodpeckers were

reported in average numbers from both Michigan and Minnesota.

#### SWALLOWS TO WARBLERS

A Tree Swallow lingered in Michigan until Dec. 12 at the Three Oaks Sewage Ponds, *Berrien* (RS, WB, JRo). Carolina Wrens continue to expand in Michigan, reported from 13 counties; the species is also doing well in Wisconsin. Winter Wrens apparently wintered in above-average numbers in all 3 states; a Marsh Wren seen Feb. 20+ in *Washington*, WI, was very unusual (RD). Ruby-crowned Kinglets overwintered in *Berrien* (RS) and lingered well into December in Wisconsin. A Golden-crowned Kinglet alighted Jan. 29 in *Roseau*, MN (PS), for the 2nd consecutive year. **Townsend's Solitaires** made a minor in-



**Townsend's Solitaire in Chippewa County, Michigan, on February 10, 1993. Part of a mini-invasion to the Western Great Lakes this season. Photograph/Dave Evers.**

vasion into the Region, with 11 reports from Minnesota mainly along the North Shore of L. Superior; singles were seen in *Wright*, Dec. 20 (AB), in *Yellow Medicine*, Jan. 16 & 31 (RJ *et al.*), and in *Ramsey*, Feb. 3+ (KB). Michigan had reports until Feb. 16 in Grand Marias, *Alger* (DPa, WP) and Feb. 10 in *Chippewa* (DE), while one was found in Wisconsin Feb. 5 at Devil's L. S.P. (PS). Varied Thrushes were reported from 11 counties in Minnesota, while Michigan had only 2 reports, one Feb. 16 in *L'Anse*, *Baraga* (KT) and one Feb. 19–21 at Higgins L. S.P., *Roscommon* (BSet *al.*). Wisconsin had reports from *LaCrosse* through the period (JU), in January at Lake Mills January–Feb. 9 in *Price* (MH) and Jan. 15+ in *Marathon* (DB). A Gray Catbird Jan. 11 in Rockford, *Kent*, MI (GW) was very late. Northern Mockingbirds remained in good numbers in both Michigan and Wisconsin, with an individual overwintering in Sault Ste. Marie, MI (KO) well n. of normal. Brown Thrashers also remained in both states. Bohemian Waxwings were scarce throughout the Region; the only large flock reported



numbered 500, Jan. 16, in *Roseau* (SM, DM). Northern Shrike numbers seemed about average in Michigan and Minnesota, whereas Wisconsin reported a poor flight. Unusual were two Loggerhead Shrike reports in Michigan, one Jan. 15 at Sleepy Hollow S.P., *Clinton* (MP) and another Feb. 2 in *Lapeer* (MP). A Nashville Warbler coming to a feeder in *Racine*, WI, Dec. 11–12, was very late. Yellow-rumps lingered, probably overwintering in *Berrien*, *Kalamazoo*, and *Wayne*, MI, and in *Sauk*, WI (DL, KL) and staying as late as Jan. 8 in Duluth (KE) and Jan. 18 at *Yellow Medicine* (KB), in Minnesota. Less common in Michigan was a Pine Warbler, found Jan. 8 in Dearborn, *Wayne* (JF, DW). Remarkably, **Ovenbirds** remained until Jan. 17 in *Milwaukee*, WI (m.ob.) and Jan. 9+ in Dearborn, *Wayne*, MI (KO, JF, BCo, BCr).

#### TANAGERS TO WEAVER FINCHES

A **Western Tanager** coming to a feeder at Whitefish Bay, *Milwaukee*, Jan. 29+, provided the first Wisconsin winter record. A Rufous-sided Towhee of the western "spotted" race overwintered in Madison, providing Wisconsin's 4th record of this form. American Tree Sparrows were quite scarce in Michigan. Rare in Michigan during the winter, Chipping Sparrows apparently overwintered in both *Ingham* (MJ) and *Lenawee* (KO). The **Black-throated Sparrow** present in Minnesota during November was last seen in *Wilkin*, Dec. 27. Vesper Sparrows were seen until Jan. 14 in *Columbia*, WI (KBU) and Jan. 15 in *Hillsdale* (JR). Savannahs lingered very late and perhaps overwintered, with reports Jan. 17 in *Ozaukee* and Jan. 18 in *Dane*, WI (KBU), while in Minnesota a bird remained at a feeder through mid-February, unprecedented for that state. Notable was the overwintering Fox Sparrow in *Berrien*, MI (RS). Swamp Sparrow records Dec. 22 in *Dakota* (KB) and Jan. 9 along Purgatory Cr. (SC) and Bass Ponds (TT) in *Hennipin* provided unusual records for Minnesota. Wisconsin's **Golden-crowned Sparrow** appeared November+ at *Sheboygan* (m.ob.). A Yellow-headed Blackbird remained until Jan. 9+ in *Monroe*, MI (KO). Eastern Meadowlarks possibly overwintered in the Saginaw Bay area of Michigan, while both Easterns and Westerns were reported as overwintering in *Iowa*, WI. Amazingly, N. Orioles were reported from all 3 states. In Michigan an individual remained through the period in *Clinton* (GB), while Minnesota played host until Dec. 1 in Duluth (*fide* KE). The Wisconsin record was of the "**Bullock's**" Oriole present Dec. 19–20 in *Milwaukee* (DG, DT, RSu). Pine Grosbeaks and Redpolls were nearly absent from the Region with a few reported in the very n. portions of the states. Purple Finches were seen in fair numbers in n. Michigan. Red Crossbills were scarce in Minnesota but were found in fair numbers in n.w. Wisconsin and in the e. Upper Peninsula of Michigan. White-winged Crossbills were abundant in the Sault Ste. Marie area of Michigan but in fair numbers in n.e. Wisconsin and scarce in Minnesota.



**Far from its usual desert haunts was this Black-throated Sparrow in Wilken County, Minnesota, December 2, 1992. Present since November, it provided a third state record. Photograph/Peder Svingen/VIREO.**

Good numbers of Am. Goldfinches and Pine Siskins at scattered locations were reported. Evening Grosbeaks were very scarce in Wisconsin and in average numbers in Michigan.

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## MIDDLE WESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

*Kenneth J. Brock*

This season dispelled the widely accepted notion that winter birding is always boring in the Middle Western Prairie Region. No fewer than 6 first state records were established, with 3 in Indiana and one each in Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio. Accompanying these rarities were a sufficient number of other "good birds" to satiate all but the most greedy frost-belt birders.

Temperatures were unusually mild through January; winter finally arrived in mid-February. Taking full advantage of the warm early winter, a remarkable array of birds lingered farther north than usual; first winter records were established in every state. Especially notable among these were unusual numbers of shorebirds and warblers. The mild conditions may also explain the absence of many regular boreal passerines (e.g., Red-breasted Nuthatches and winter finches) across the Region.

A most interesting phenomenon was the appearance of almost a dozen western vagrants within the Region. The explanation for this invasion remains problematic; however, its magnitude is certainly atypical, if not unprecedented.

Gulls furnished a major component of the season. Present in great numbers and remarkable diversity, with 15 species reported, gulls permeated virtually every corner of the Region. The largest accumulation was an estimated 20,000 at Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, Missouri, Feb. 13, following a fish kill, but counts of 1000 birds came from every state except Kentucky.

**Abbreviations:** L. Cal. (*L. Calumet, Chicago*); R.E.D.A. (*Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO*); Spfld. (*Springfield, MO*).

#### LOONS TO IBISES

Single Red-throated Loons were recorded in Chicago, Dec. 6 (*fide* RB), L. Barkely, KY, Dec. 19 (DP), and *Hamilton*, OH, Dec. 29 (BS *fide* NK). The fall Pacific Loon at L. Spfld. lingered until Dec. (DBo), and another was identified at Clinton L., IL, Dec. 20 (†DBo). Small numbers of Com. Loons were reported across the Region; the most notable report consisted of six observed over Tuscarawrus, OH, Jan. 1 (ES). Almost certainly in response to the mild temperatures, unusually high numbers of Pied-billed and Horned grebes wintered; the largest count of lingering Pied-billeds was 32 in *Gibson*, IN (GBo). For the 2nd consecutive year, an Eared Grebe wintered at L. Spfld. (DBo), and 5 additional reports came from s. Illinois. The only other Eared Grebe wintered on Freeman L., KY, (RHe, m.ob.). A W. Grebe lingered in *Gibson*, IN, late November–Dec. 19 (GBo), and an-





other was reported at Carlyle L., IL, Dec. 13 (KM).

The Chicago area's first winter Am. White Pelican records were recorded in February. Two were discovered at Michigan City harbor, IN, Feb. 7 (ASiet al.); one of these was subsequently injured and died in a veterinarian's office. The other pelican was reported sporadically along the Indiana lakefront through Feb. 22 and at L. Cal., Feb. 27 (JL). Great Blue Heron numbers reflected extensive open water during the warm weather. The highest counts were 110 Dec. 17 in *Dearborn*, IN (PWh, JB) and 58 Jan. 3 at Ottawa N.W.R., OH (EP). Two Great Egrets remained at Riverlands C.A., MO, until Jan. 17 (KK). Groups of 1-4 Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at 2 n.e. Illinois locations, where they are becoming regular (WM, JM). More remarkable was an accumulation of 27 Black-crowns at Lorain, OH, Jan. 17 (DD).

#### WATERFOWL

Following several years of dismal reports, a winter waterfowl survey in Missouri yielded waterfowl numbers exceeding anything recorded over the past decade. Highlights included 570,000 Snow Geese, 304,344 Mallards, 1800 N. Pintails, 22,500 Ring-necked Ducks, and 200 Com. Mergansers (DHu).

Modest numbers of Tundra Swans were recorded in every state except Kentucky; the highest counts were 14 at Muscatatuck N.W.R., IN, Jan. 23 (DG) and 11 at Ottawa N.W.R., Jan. 3 (EP). Groups of 1-4 Trumpeter Swans appeared in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri; banded individuals among the Illinois and Iowa groups indicated that the birds were from the Wisconsin flock. The Region's peak Greater White-fronted Goose count consisted of 40 in *Union*, IL, Jan. 1 (RD). East of the Mississippi R., an imm. **Ross' Goose** was found at Union County C.A., IL, Dec. 24



**Ross' Goose (with Canada Geese) at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio, February 9, 1993. Photograph/John Nicholl.**

(VKI, CW et al.), and another wandered eastward to Ottawa N.W.R., Feb. 9 & 28 (RBr, JNi, ph.), where this species is accidental. Single Brants were recorded in Lorain, OH, Dec. 19 (*fide* PJ) and at Union County C.A., IL, Dec. 24 (VKI, CW et al.). The Canada Goose population is approaching the nuisance level. Regional numbers peaked Jan. 19, when the Illinois Department of Conservation tallied 597,000 in s. Illinois (RWh).

Open water enticed many ducks to remain n. of their normal winter range. Notable dabbling counts included 4585 Am. Black Ducks Dec. 16, 127,000 Mallards Dec. 8, and 6100 N. Pintails Dec. 8, along a 175-mi section of the Illinois R. Valley (MGe). Counts exceeding 1000 birds in Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri suggest that the Gadwall is prospering.

A ♂ Eur. Wigeon at Clinton L., IL, Dec. 20 (†RCh) provided the Region's only record. Canvasback reports ranged from very poor in Ohio (*fide* LR) to quite impressive in Illinois, where 17,000 were counted along the Illinois R. Valley Dec. 8 (MGe). Inland Greater Scaup reports included three at L. Gage, n.e. IN, Dec. 6-12 (JHa) and ≤27 at L. Jacomo, MO (BF), where this species rang up its 7th consecutive winter.

The only eider report consisted of a singleton, unidentified as to species, seen off Miller Beach, IN, Dec. 11 (KB). Harlequin Ducks and Oldsquaws were scarce. The most noteworthy reports of the latter were away from the Great Lakes; inland records included five in Illinois, three in Iowa, one in Missouri, and two in Ohio. The most frequently reported scoter was the Surf Scoter, with records from every state except Kentucky and Missouri. The highest count was

30, made on L. Erie in Rocky R., OH, Jan. 3 (CH). Notable inland sightings included 2 at Spfld., Dec. 27-Jan. 6 (DBo), 2 at Montrose, IA, Dec. 13 (SD), and 2 at Hoover Res., OH, December-January (KA). White-winged Scoters were hard to find; the most noteworthy report consisted of 2 on the Ohio R. at Shippingport I., KY, Dec. 19 (ASm et al.). An ad. ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneye** at the Avon L. power plant, *Lorain*, Feb. 28-Mar. 1 (†CH, LR, m.ob.), provided excitement for Ohio birders. An impressive 20,620 Com. Goldeneyes were counted along a 175-mi stretch of the Illinois R. Valley Jan. 5 (MGe). Hooded Mergansers were reported in every state; the highest count, by far, was 900 at Chautauqua, IL, Jan. 5 (MGe). Common Mergansers peaked in Iowa Dec. 13, when 10,000+ were counted on Red Rock Res. (SD) and in Illinois Jan. 5, when a census produced 16,935 along the lower Illinois R. Valley (MGe).

#### VULTURES TO CRANES

Black Vulture counts were average in all states except Ohio, where an expanding population produced an impressive 49 in *Knox*, Feb. 14 (BG, ph.). Turkey Vultures wintered farther n. than normal, providing December records as far n. as *Lake* and *Steuben*, IN. Maximum counts included 200-300 at Leiber Recreation Area, IN, Dec. 28 (JCs) and 150 in *Knox*, OH, Feb. 14 (BG, ph.). The Region's only Ospreys appeared at L. Lemon, IN, Dec. 3 (AP) and along I-55 near Caruthersville, MO, Dec. 20 (PM). Mid-winter Bald Eagle counts yielded impressive results. Tallies included 146 in Indiana Feb. 9 & 10 (JCs), 572 in the Linear R. Valley, IA, no dates given (PP), and 2394 in Missouri, no dates given (JW). Northern Harriers were well represented, with peak counts of 64 in *Pulaski*, IL, Jan. 10 (TF, JDe), 22-25 in *Ohio*, KY, Feb. 6 (KC, B.B.C. field trip), and 22 in *Knox*, IL, Jan. 23



**Slaty-backed Gull at Lorain, Ohio, February 8, 1993. Apparently this same bird was found nearby in December 1992, providing a first state record. Photograph/John Pogacnik.**

(MBm). Though detectable, the anticipated N. Goshawk invasion was quite modest, with only 29 reports. Rough-legged Hawks were scarce in every state except Missouri, where they were deemed numerous. Golden Eagle numbers were near normal in every state except Indiana, where a count of 11 birds for the season was unusually high. The Regional tally for Merlins was 20, exceeding recent winter totals. Peregrine Falcons were reported in all 6 states, most presumably released. It was a good season for Prairie Falcons, with 17 reports from 4 states. The most noteworthy of these wintered (Dec. 6–Feb. 6) at the Peabody Homestead Surface Mine in *Ohio*, KY, (†DP m.ob.). Prairie Falcons have wintered at this mine for the past several years (*fide* BM).

Illinois Greater Prairie Chicken numbers are dangerously low (*fide* RD); a Feb. 27 count in *Marion*, produced only 9 (MSi). A ♀ Greater Prairie Chicken was caught Dec. 11 by a dog near Larchwood, IA (ME, *fide* JDi). The hen was speculated to have been a wild bird from South Dakota (JDi). The submission of few N. Bobwhite reports suggests that this species remains scarce. A dead Virginia Rail was found in *Hamilton*, OH, Dec. 15 (NM, *fide* NK). Live Virginia Rail sightings included four at Illinois Beach S.P., Jan. 1 (JNe) and three that wintered at Theodore Marsh in Crest Hill, IL (JM, ph.). American Coots were recorded in every state; the highest count was 1000± in *Calloway*, KY, Feb. 5 (CP). December Sandhill Cranes were observed in Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Ohio. The latter record consisted of 75 birds standing on ice at Rocky Fork S.P., Dec. 8 (LG ph.).

#### SHOREBIRDS

A plethora of winter shorebird records accompanied the mild temperatures and open water. Perhaps the most remarkable was a **Willet** identified at Jonathan Cr., KY, Feb. 28 (CP), which provided a first winter record for

the state. Almost as remarkable was a **W. Sandpiper** that lingered at the same location until Feb. 10 (CP, DP). Three to six Least Sandpipers remained at Gibson, IN, until Dec. 16 (GBo), with two photographed Dec. 24 (JHa). The season's only **Purple Sandpiper** appeared Jan. 2 in Cleveland, OH (EM, m.ob.). The Jonathan Cr., KY, site sported 4–19 **Dunlins** throughout the winter (CP, DP), providing the first February record for that state. **Dunlins** were also recorded in *Lake*, IL, Feb. 13–14 (JNe) and in *Gibson*, IN, Dec. 27 (GBo) and Feb. 23 (†MBn). The latter constituted a first February record for Indiana. **Common Snipes** were present in every state, the peak count 18 in Union, IL, Jan. 3 (JDe, BK). Most interesting was a dead **Am. Woodcock**, found beneath a **Peregrine** roost in Cincinnati, OH, Feb. 4 (JHy, *fide* NK). The Region's only **Red Phalarope** appeared in January at Eastlake, OH (TBr).

#### GULLS

Even when compared to last year's superb gull report, this winter's list is outstanding. Lingerer Franklin's Gulls were reported Dec. 1



**Mountain Bluebird in Gibson County, Indiana, February 13, 1993. First state record. Photograph/Jim Campbell.**

in St. Charles, MO (JVB) and in Hueston Woods, OH (MRw *et al.*). Six Franklin's were seen at Jonathan Cr., KY, Dec. 22, 24, & 25 (CP, DP). An ad. **Little Gull**, present in Spfld. since fall, remained until Dec. 20 (DBo). Another adult was seen at Fairport Harbor, OH, Jan. 1 (RH, m.ob.), and three **Little Gulls** were among the ≥3000 **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Lorain, OH, Jan. 10 (TBr, WKI). The largest accumulation of **Ring-billed Gulls** consisted of 11,300 at Carlyle L., IL, Dec. 20 (KM). **Mew Gulls** appear to have become regular winter visitors to the Region, with adults sighted Dec. 3 in Illinois at both Joliet (JM, ph.) and Waukegan (ASK, JNe). A first-year **California Gull** was at Spfld., Dec. 5 (DBo), and adults were reported Dec. 7 at Fairport Harbor, OH (†JP), Dec. 12 at Clinton L., IL (RCh), and Feb. 25–27 in *Tazewell*, IL (KR).

Seemingly ubiquitous, a total of 79 **Thayer's Gulls** appeared in every state except Kentucky. The largest tally came from Illinois, where 57 birds were aged at 65% adult, 25% first winter, and 10% second winter; many of these sightings came from inland locations. It was a spectacular winter for **Iceland Gulls**. Totals from their normal range on the Great Lakes included six from Illinois, three from Indiana, and eight from Ohio. Remarkably, five were also reported in Iowa, where **Iceland**s were accidental just a few years ago. Single **Iceland**s also appeared at R.E.D.A., Feb. 6 & 13 (DBe, PS, m.ob.). **Lesser Black-backed**s followed the pattern described for the two previous species with 15 in Illinois, two in Indiana (including the wintering bird in *Gibson* once again), three in Iowa, five in Missouri, and 10 in Ohio. Ohio's first, and the Region's third, **Slaty-backed Gull** was at Eastlake Dec. 28–29 (BPj, MGU, m.ob.) and at Lorain Feb. 8 (JP, ph.). Interestingly, the tint of this bird's mantle was quite pale, much nearer the darkness of a **Herring Gull**'s mantle than that of a **Great Black-backed**. This observation stimulated the discoverers to investigate this matter with the following results.

#### S.A.

A recent examination of skins at the U.S. National Museum demonstrated a wider range of variability in **Slaty-backed Gull** mantle color than has been described in the literature. The palest mantle is only slightly darker than that of the darkest **California Gull**, while the mantle of the darkest individuals is slightly paler than that of **Great Black-backed**s. These specimens reinforced the importance of the underwing pattern for the identification of **Slaty-backed**s. This species has smoky gray webs to the outer 3–4 primaries that are darker than the remainder of the underwing—but never black as occurs on **Herring Gulls** and hybrids of **Herring Gulls**. An article describing this information in greater detail is in preparation (BPj, MGU).

The 2nd-year **Glaucous Winged Gull** photographed in Chicago last fall remained until Dec. 12. Following this report, two birds in 3rd-year plumage were reported in c. Illinois: one at Decatur Feb. 19–20 (†MD, †RP, †RCh) and the other in *Peoria*, Feb. 27–28 (†LA). February accounts apparently describe different birds, as one had a dark iris and the other yellow. Although the documentations appear rather convincing, the likelihood that the first three **Glaucous-winged Gulls** ever to occur e. of the Mississippi R. would randomly appear within 3 months at sites separated by <200 mi plumbs the limits of plausibility. This is especially true, as two of the birds were in 3rd-year plumage (the rarest plumage). It is conceivable that these occurrences were not random (*i.e.*, somehow human assisted). It is also possible that the vi-

cissitudes of gull hybridization or aberration may have produced previously unrecognized plumages and structural features that mimic those of Glaucous-winged Gulls. Or perhaps a few Glaucous-winged stragglers regularly winter in the Midwest but have simply been overlooked in the past. One thing is certain, however, additional information is required before the Glaucous-winged Gull status in the Midwest is clearly understood.

The Region's 90 Glaucous Gull records were distributed across every state. State totals ranged from 45 in Illinois (aged as 47% first-year, 10% 2nd-year, and 42% adult), to a single first-year bird seen Dec. 19 at Barkely Dam, KY (DP), where this species is rare. The westward expansion of Great Black-backed Gulls across the Region continued, with one at R.E.D.A. Jan. 17 (PJ *et al.*) and a first-year bird at Bettenforf, IA, Feb. 28 (JF). Farther east, Ohio was awash with Great Black-backed, as 100–500 could be found at any location along the L. Erie shoreline (LR). Inland imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported Dec. 9, below the dam at Red Rock Res., IA (SD), on Clearfork Res., OH, Dec. 19–20 (†JHe), and at Spfld., Dec. 27–Feb. 4 (DBo).

#### TERNS TO WOODPECKERS

Three Forster's Terns lingered at Jonathan Cr., KY, until Dec. 19 (DP), where they are extremely rare in winter. Barn Owls were observed at Cleveland, OH, Dec. 19 (LR, RHa) and at Madisonville, KY, Dec. 29 (DHa, *vide* JHn). The winter Snowy Owl flight was deemed average by most contributors; some 13 birds were scattered across every state except Kentucky. Noteworthy among these were one at Mark Twain N.W.R., MO, in November (*vide* BJ) and another in *Licking*, central OH, that remained Jan. 16–Feb. 1 (KA). The 54 Long-eared Owls reported for the Region constitutes an excellent total; the highest counts consisted of 15 near Bolchow, MO, Jan. 30 (DM) and 10 in *Cook*, IL, Feb. 7 (WSe). Short-eared Owls were widespread, with 84 reported. Counts of 27 from Illinois and 25 in Kentucky were encouraging, but numbers were down in Indiana and Ohio. Northern Saw-whet Owls appeared in every state except Kentucky; state tallies included five in Illinois, one in Indiana, seven in Iowa, two in Missouri, and three in Ohio.

A ♂ **Rufous Hummingbird**, present at a Bloomington, IN, feeder since fall, came to the attention of birders Jan. 2 (DWh). The bird, representing a first confirmed record for Indiana, was still present Jan. 12, when it moved to an inaccessible feeder (†AB, m.ob.). An imm./♀ *Selasphorus* hummingbird also visited a Columbia, MO, feeder Dec. 30 (TBk). Attesting to the general availability of open water, Belted Kingfishers were reported in every state. Small numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers were widespread; the highest counts included 50 that wintered in Shades S.P., IN (AB) and 23 in *Winnebago*, IL, Jan. 2 (DWi). Most observers held Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers to be more common than normal;

the highest count was four in *Union*, IL, Jan. 31 (RD). Northern Flickers were widespread, and one of the "red-shafted" form was observed at Long Branch L., MO, Dec. 27 (SH *et al.*). A count of 18 Pileated Woodpeckers in *Randolph*, IN, Dec. 20 (LC), reflected the recent population expansion. Perhaps in response to the mild conditions in early February, a pair of Pileateds in *Trimble*, KY, was also observed beginning courtship Feb. 10 (JA).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO KINGLETS

Despite mild winter conditions, E. Phoebe numbers were below normal, with singletons reported from only 3 states. The largest Horned Lark flocks appeared: in *DeWitt*, IL, where 5000 were seen Feb. 27 (MD, RP), between *Dallas* and *Crawford*, IA, where 2800 were counted Feb. 26 (RCe), and in Hamilton, OH, where 2000 were found Feb. 28 (MSe, *vide* NK). Late Tree Swallows included



Gray Catbird in Will County, Illinois, January 15, 1993. Photograph/ Joe B. Milosevich.

one supplying Iowa's first winter record at Rathbun Res., Dec. 5 (TJ), one at Rend L., IL, Dec. 16 (JDe), and one in *St. Clair*, IL, Dec. 20 (KM). The most remarkable report, however, was of two in the latter county Jan. 15 (JVB), providing the Region's 3rd January record. By far the largest Am. Crow count occurred at a Keokuk, IA, roost, where 30,000 wintered (RCe). Red-breasted Nuthatches continued to boycott the Region, with only a handful of reports. By contrast, Brown Creepers were well represented, with an impressive 46 reported in *Winnebago*, IL, Dec. 19 (DWi) and four at Ottawa N.W.R., Jan. 3 (EP). A Rock Wren remaining at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Jan. 14+ (RD, TF, JDe, ph., m.ob.) provided a pleasant surprise for Illinois birders. Three December Marsh Wrens were recorded in Illinois; one of these remained to winter at Sangchris S.P., IL (DBo). Both Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglet numbers were generally good. The maximum Golden-crowned count was 42 in *Winnebago*, IL, Dec. 19 (DWi). Noteworthy

Ruby-crowned reports included six that wintered in *Sangamon*, IL, (DBo) and one in Cleveland, OH, Dec. 16 (TL).

#### BLUEBIRDS TO SHRIKES

Mountain Bluebirds made an impressive showing with 3 records. One unfortunate died after crashing into a Chillicothe, MO, window Dec. 30 (*vide* BJ\*), a female was found at Big Creek S.P., IA, Jan. 4 (GBr), and a female was discovered inside the Gibson Co. Power Plant facility Feb. 13–15 (†JCa, ph., m.ob.) constituted Indiana's first record. Another long overdue Indiana first was logged Jan. 2 when the state's first **Townsend's Solitaire** was identified at Dune Acres (†RWy, †BW). Two Solitaires also wintered in *Cerro Gordo*, IA, near Rock Falls (PWi, m.ob.), where they are rare but regular. One of the Region's few winter Swainson's Thrush records was made Dec. 27 in *Cook*, IL (LB, DJ). Hermit Thrushes were present in above-normal numbers and wintered farther n. than usual. Both Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher numbers were up for the season; Catbirds lingered as far n. as *Will*, IL, where one was photographed Jan. 15 (JM, RRe). Illinois' first **Curve-billed Thrasher** was discovered Dec. 16 at Rend L. (TF, JDe, JL, ph., m.ob.). Much to the delight of Illinois birders, this very cooperative bird lingered until Jan. 24. American Pipits were reported from only 3 states, the highest counts 36 in *Highland*, OH, Feb. 27 (SW, *vide* NK) and 20 in *Gibson*, IN, Dec. 19 (JHa, GBo). Missouri's first winter Sprague's Pipit was flushed from Monegaw Prairie, *St. Clair*, Dec. 29 (MRb). The Region's only Bohemian Waxwing reports consisted of two in a yard in Cherokee, IA, Feb. 10 (DBi) and one in *Winnebago*, IL, Feb. 20 (†ABh). Small Cedar Waxwing flocks were recorded in every state, but individual counts rarely exceeded 100 individuals. A total of 15 N. Shrikes was about average for the Region. The most impressive of the 13 Loggerhead Shrike reports was a count of five at Carlyle L., IL, Feb. 28 (KM).

#### VIREOS TO WARBLERS

Among the lingering passerine were a White-eyed Vireo at Cape Guardau, MO, Dec. 23 (ID) and Illinois' first December Solitary Vireo at Spfld., Dec. 10 & 11 (DBo). A dozen warbler species were reported across the Region, with a major concentration in *Holmes*, OH. Vying for top honors as January's best warbler were Illinois' 2nd-winter N. Parula in *Vermillion*, Jan. 1 (MD, RP, ph.) and a Cape May Warbler in Terre Haute, IN, Jan. 16 (†MBn, ph.). Yellow-rumpeds enjoyed a great season in the n. states. Notable high counts included 20 at both Huntington and Salamonie Res., IN, Feb. 20 (JHa, FH) and 15 that wintered near Rathbun Res., IA (TJ, RCu). Without doubt the best warbler of the season was a ♂ **Black-throated Gray Warbler** that graced the Emily Pasquale residence in Georgetown, OH, Nov. 25–Feb. 16 (†DBr, ph., m.ob.), providing Ohio's first winter record. Ohio's 2nd winter Yellow-throated

Warbler resided in *Holmes*, Feb. 2–20 (LY, BG, ph.). Remarkably, Pine Warblers were reported from every state except Missouri; the peak count was eight at Barkley Dam, KY, Dec. 19 (DP), and one straggler visited a feeder in Hamilton, extreme n.e. Indiana, Dec. 7–Feb. 16 (JHa, RRA, ph.). Completely unexpected was a Prairie Warbler at Carlisle, KY, Nov. 30–Feb. 3 (VKI, WKi); this individual provided the first February record for the Region. A Palm Warbler was present in *Holmes*, OH, Jan. 18–Feb. 20 (EM, BG, ph.); photos show extensive yellow on the underparts, suggesting that this individual belonged to the eastern race. An Ovenbird in Akron, OH, Dec. 6 (WSt) was considered late, and another remained at the Asherwood Nature Center, IN, from Jan. 10, until it was found dead Feb. 18 (JS, *vide* JHa).

#### GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were recorded at 2 locations: an imm. male was in *LaSalle*, IL, Feb. 6–24 (CW), and a winter male visited a Marshalltown, IA, feeder Thanksgiving–Jan. 28 (JK, *vide* MPr). Lingering Dickcissels appeared in *Sangamon*, IL, Dec. 14 (DBo) and in *Menard*, IL, Jan. 30+ (VKI). Ohio's 4th Green-tailed Towhee spent Jan. 10–Feb. 28 in Amherst Township (WA, †RHn, †CH, BG, ph., m.ob.).

Most winter sparrows were recorded in typical numbers. The general consensus that Am. Tree Sparrow numbers were up across the Region was substantiated by a Feb. 28 count in *Johnson* and *Louisa*, IA, that produced 400–1000 birds (RHo). Four documented Chipping Sparrow sightings came from the n. states, suggesting that this species lingered farther n. than normal. These records, all singletons, are for *Winnabago*, IL, Dec. 27 (†DWi), *Holmes*, OH, Dec. 24–Jan. 3



**Cape May Warbler out of season at Terre Haute, Indiana, January 16, 1993. Photograph/Michael Ray Brown.**

(†ES), Marshall, IN, Jan. 8–20 (†AB), and *Holmes*, OH, Jan. 30–Feb. 14 (†LY, EM). Missouri's first Black-throated Sparrow frequented a roadside ditch 8 mi w. of Skidmore, Jan. 15–20 (DE, KG, ph., m.ob.). This bird, an adult, frequently associated with Am. Tree Sparrows. Savannah Sparrows were reported in 3 states, the largest accumulation 30 wintering at R.E.D.A. (CA, m.ob.). The Region's only Le Conte's Sparrow reports consisted of

singletons from *Jackson*, IL, Jan. 30 (RD) and from Kentucky Dam, KY, Dec. 19 (DP). Following last spring's first state record, Missouri's 2nd and 3rd Golden-crowned Sparrows arrived at Terry residence 2.5 mi e. of Columbia, in late November and were still present Mar. 13 (†PM *et al.*). Harris' Sparrows, e. of their normal Iowa range, occurred as follows: one in Mason City Jan. 18–19 (CF *et al.*), an immature at Grammer Grove W.M.A., Feb. 3 (MPr), and three at Mystic Feb. 28 (TJ). Small numbers of Lapland Longspurs were recorded in every state, with high counts of 700 in *Sangamon*, IL, Jan. 10 (DBo) and 600 at Bilby Ranch Conservation Area, MO, Jan. 16 (DE). The Region's only Smith's Longspur reports consisted of 11 from extreme w. Missouri. Moderate to low Snow Bunting counts came from every state except Kentucky, with a maximum of 700–900 in Dickinson, IA, Jan. 18 (DBi). Believe it or not, a Rippey, IA, feeder attracted 10 Snow Buntings and three Lapland Longspurs during the winter (SR).

The only sizable Red-winged Blackbird flock consisted of 17,000 at L. Cal., Feb. 28 (WM). Often difficult to identify in winter, a W. Meadowlark was detected in Knox, IL, Dec. 31 and Jan. 17 (MBm). Yellow-headed Blackbirds were recorded at 3 locations: a female or immature in Stark, OH, Jan. 6 (†WSa), one found among a mixed blackbird flock in *Kossuth*, IA, Jan. 14 (MK), and a female at a Wadsworth, OH, feeder Feb. 13 (IB). Winter Brewer's Blackbirds are extremely rare in Kentucky, making the report of a single bird at a *Grayson*, KY, feeder Feb. 26 (KC, HC) noteworthy. An albino and a white-headed partial albino Com. Grackle appeared at a feeder in n. Boone, MO, Feb. 11 (BC). The largest Great-tailed Grackle concentration consisted of 25 near a Jackson, MO, farmhouse Feb. 6 (*vide* BJ). The only confirmed N. Oriole report was of a breeding-plumed ♂ "Baltimore" at Blue Springs, MO, Dec. 6 (BF).

The decline of winter finches noted in recent years continued unabated this season; indeed, the shortage became even more acute. Small numbers of Purple Finches were widespread, but no count exceeded 30 birds. Red Crossbills appeared in 4 states, the largest flock consisting of 30 at Sand Ridge S.F., IL, Dec. 5+ (LA). A female straggled southward to *Pulaski*, KY, where it appeared at a feeder Feb. 26–27 (JE). The total White-winged Crossbill report consisted of one at Sand Ridge S.F., IL, Dec. 11 (KR) and a flock of six in Iowa City, IA, Dec. 29 (TK). The only Com. Redpoll report was of "a few" at Sioux Center, IA, feeders mid-January to Feb. 8 (JVD); token Pine Siskin counts came from 5 states. The Region's only Evening Grosbeak was a single bird at Clinton, L., IL, Dec. 12 (RCh). Spfld. Eur. Tree Sparrow population appears to be expanding, with the appearance of 25 Jan. 18 (DBo).

**Corrigenda:** Delete the five Oldsquaw reported May 30 at Little Cedar Pt. N.W.R.,



**Yellow-throated Warbler in Holmes County, Ohio, February 2, 1993. Second winter record for the state. Photograph/Bruce Glick.**

OH (AB 46:429). In the same report, the Piping Plover at Conneaut, OH, Apr. 25–26, was seen by R. Hannikman, not R. Harlan. In reference to Sandhill Cranes, the final sentence in the Waterfowl to Cranes section of the summer report (AB 46:1141), should read, "A family group was also found at Willow Slough W.M.A. in n.w. Indiana (*vide* JSC)." Also in the summer report, the Black-throated Blue Warbler at Big Oak Tree S.P., MO, Jun. 25 (AB 46:1143), should be credited to Mr. and Mrs. Scheibe.

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Wykes (RWy), L. Yoder. Many other individuals who could not be personally acknowledged also submitted notes to the various state reports.—**KENNETH J. BROCK, Department of Geosciences, Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408.**

## CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

Stephen J. Stedman

Winter was warm for the third consecutive year. Observers were consequently afield in droves and discovered some remarkable birds. Nowhere were discoveries more remarkable than in Louisiana, and nowhere in Louisiana than in Plaquemines parish, notably near Venice and Ft. Jackson—vagrant traps supreme.

Hummingbirds inundated the coast and penetrated well inland, providing the hallmark of the winter. Collared-Dove sightings increased, including two well inland; this species gives every indication of massive regional colonization during the next decade. *Myiarchus* flycatchers staged a conspicuous invasion. These matters and many more were well documented by a large cadre of cooperative observers. To them, thanks and good birding.

**Abbreviation:** p.a. (pending acceptance [by the state bird records committee]).

### LOONS TO SPOONBILLS

The lone Red-throated Loon report described one in *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 13 (†CK). A single Pacific Loon, Mississippi's 6th, visited *Desota* Dec. 27–31 (MG, †GCK, JRW, TH, MD); two in *Baldwin* Jan. 2 (†GDJ, †DC *et al.*) constituted Alabama's 11th record (p.a. A.L.B.R.C.); and one showed up in *Chicot*, AR, Feb. 6 & 8 (†DM, DS, p.a. A.R.B.R.C.).

Inland concentrations of Horned Grebes included 300 in *Dekalb*, TN, Dec. 13 (SJS), 58 in *Henry*, TN, Dec. 22 (DMY, RH), 100 in *Clay*, TN, Jan. 16 (SJS *et al.*), and 150 in *Benton*, AR, Jan. 23 (MM, RD). The only reported Red-necked Grebe, found in *Panola*, Dec. 22 (†GCK), provided Mississippi's 8th record. Eared Grebes appeared in 2 Louisiana parishes, 3 Arkansas counties, 3 inland Mississippi counties, and the 2 southernmost Alabama counties. The season's only W. Grebe, detected Dec. 20 in *Cameron*, LA (CS, PW, DD, SC), was carefully distinguished from Clark's.

Alabama's first winter record of Greater Shearwater occurred Dec. 31 and Jan. 3, when one appeared in *Baldwin* (†ALM, ADM, p.a. A.L.B.R.C.). Flocks of late eastward-migrating White Pelicans were noted during January in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Florida; ≤36

wintered in *Lafayette*, MS (VT, GCK *et al.*). Brown Pelican reports were scarce except from Louisiana, where the species continues to recover its former range, as indicated by 31 in *Cameron* Jan. 28 (RB) and 14 on L. Pontchartrain during January and February (DMu); silence elsewhere presumably indicates the species' continuing prosperity.

The only far-inland Green-backed Heron was encountered Dec. 13 & 18 in *Putnam*, TN (SJS, BHS). A first local December record was provided by a Glossy Ibis in *Santa Rosa*, FL, Dec. 21 (RAD, LD), while a Roseate Spoonbill in *Orleans*, LA, Dec. 26 (GS, RSe) was the lone representative of its kind.

### DUCKS

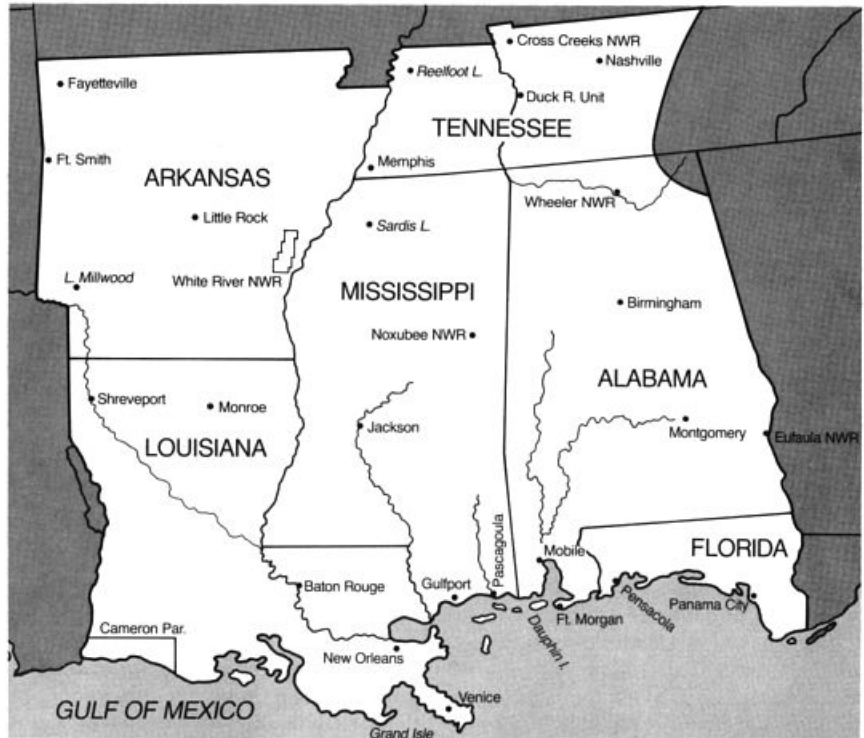
Sightings of whistling-ducks emanated only from Louisiana, including 115 Black-bellied in *Evangeline* Dec. 20 (WF, GB), eight others in *Vermilion* Feb. 13 (AK), and 13 Fulvous in *Orleans* Dec. 26 (RHa, JH). Five Tundra Swans arrived in *Lauderdale*, TN, Dec. 5, to stay a full month (JRW); an adult reposed in *Cleburne*, AR, Dec. 24–Feb. 27 (ph., MP *et al.*); four immatures stopped briefly in *Lafayette*, MS, Dec. 29 (VT); and one immature stayed with equal brevity in *Washington*, MS, Jan. 10 (GCJ, SK).

A new Tennessee high count of Greater White-fronted Geese was established Jan. 26,

when 230 were sighted in *Lake* (WGC), but that count was eclipsed by 1700 in *LeFlore*, MS, Dec. 16 & 18 (TLS, GCK). Tennessee's 4th Ross' Goose appeared Jan. 27 in *Lake* (JRW, TW, DMc); Alabama's 8th, 9th, and 10th sightings were duly recorded in *Limestone*, *Clarke*, and *Perry* counties, respectively (*vide* GDJ); several Ross' in *LeFlore* and *Tunica* left Mississippi with more than a dozen records (TLS, GCK, JRW).

Dabbling ducks brought forth few newsworthy comments. Exceptions to this perennial rule of thumb included mention of 56 Wood Ducks in *Escambia*, FL, Dec. 3 (RAD), providing an all-time area maximum; 15,000 Green-winged Teals in *Vermilion*, LA, Feb. 20 (JK), considered an exceptional aggregation; and small numbers of Blue-winged Teal in interior Mississippi and n. Arkansas, deemed unusual in both states.

Diving ducks elicited greater comment, another Regional rule of thumb. Besides just 2 reports of Redhead and about 20 of Greater Scaup, all involving fewer than 30 birds, 7 records of single Oldsquaws were submitted: four in Mississippi, and one each in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Alabama. Single Surf Scoters appeared in *Orleans*, LA, Dec. 26 (GG, CS) and *Oktibbeha*, MS, Jan. 13–Feb. 20 (TLS *et al.*), a mid-winter first for the latter area; and five visited Wapanocca NWR, AR,





Dec. 21 (KJB). A White-winged Scoter stayed Dec. 6–Feb. 28 on L. Millwood, *Little River*, AR (LH, CM *et al.*), the first scoter ever to winter there; another appeared Jan. 19 in *Putnam*, TN (SJS, DLC, TR), providing the first local winter record; the only other report involved a single in *Okaloosa*, FL, Dec. 15 (JP). A Com. Merganser in *Yalobusha*, MS, Dec. 13 (GCK, JRW) was a rarity.

#### DIURNAL RAPTORS

Early migrating Am. Swallow-tailed Kites were represented by two in *Walton*, FL, Feb. 25 (TF, *fide* DW) and one in *Plaquemines*, LA, Feb. 27 (JS). At least five White-tailed Kites were reported from *Cameron* and *Vermilion*, LA (VR, MMu, JK *et al.*), but nowhere else in the Region. The Bald Eagle concentration at Dale Hollow L., *Clay* and *Pickett*, TN, reputedly numbered >90 during December (*fide* SJS), vying with the Reelfoot L. concentration for largest reported local group; the species continues to increase in coastal Louisiana and n.w. Florida.

Among the season's more curious sightings was the Sharp-shinned Hawk which gave a boomerang a "good hard chase" in *Arkansas*, AR, Jan. 3 (KY, SY); whether in desperation or in fun was undetermined. The only other notable *Accipiter* report discussed a N. Goshawk in *Shelby*, TN, Jan. 21 (JRW).

An ad. *Harris'* Hawk of undetermined, but suspect, origin was well studied in *Calcasieu*, LA, Dec. 11 (†RBR, RB), while an ad. Swainson's Hawk of unsuspecting origin was detected Dec. 17 in *Acadia*, LA (†RSt, MW). Rough-legged Hawk numbers were decidedly down, with just a single report, from Tennessee. Golden Eagle sightings numbered four, two from Louisiana and one each from Mississippi and Tennessee.

Merlin sightings came from 4 Arkansas counties, a good inland showing. Prairie Falcons had a fine season: one in *Marshall*, AL, Jan. 7+ (JD, *fide* GDJ) was likely the same bird present during winters since 1985; another in *Yalobusha*, MS, Dec. 1–Jan. 22 (†GCK, JD *et al.*) was probably a returnee from the previous winter; sites in *Pope* and *Benton*, AR, also hosted this falcon Dec. 21 (HP, MP *et al.*) and Jan. 30 (KG, MM), respectively.

#### CRANES TO PHALAROPE

Seventeen Sandhill Cranes in *Arkansas*, AR, Jan. 20–22 (KY, SY *et al.*) constituted the largest flock in that state since 1911; five were unusual in *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 26 (RAD, LD); an ad. and a flock of 12 were unexpected in *Lafayette* and *Madison*, MS, Jan. 24 (MD, VT) and Feb. 3–10 (TLS, WT *et al.*), respectively; flocks of 38 and 26 in *Rapides* and *Jefferson Davis*, LA, Jan. 16 (JK) and Feb. 2–18 (RB) were also unusual; early migrants were in *Putnam*, TN, Feb. 8 (RWS).

Six Snowy Plovers in *Cameron*, LA, Feb. 27 (JK *et al.*); 230 in *Escambia*, FL, during early December (RAD); 37 in *Bay*, FL (TM), during the season; and several in *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 30 (SJS) were the only ones reported. A tally of 2000 Am. Avocets was counted at *Cam-*



**Prairie Falcon at Enid Lake, Mississippi, December 26, 1992. Photograph/Jon L. Dunn.**

*eron*, LA, Jan. 24 and Feb. 27 (JK *et al.*).

Interior sightings of shorebirds normally wintering only on the coast were numerous, reflecting the mild winter. However, a Pectoral Sandpiper in *Shelby*, TN, Jan. 16, 18, & 24 (JRW, MGW *et al.*) would have been unusual even on the coast. A Ruff in *Acadia*, LA, Dec. 17 (†SC, DD) and a Wilson's Phalarope in *Vermilion*, LA, Feb. 13 (ph. AK) merit mention.

#### JAEGERS TO TERNS

An unidentified jaeger at Dauphin Is., AL, Feb. 9 (CW) was the only bird of its genus reported. Alabama's 4th and 5th Little Gulls appeared in *Perry* and *Lawrence*, Jan. 2 (†MO, p.a. A.L.B.R.C.) and Jan. 7–30 (†SM, GM, JD *et al.*, p.a. A.L.B.R.C.), respectively; another visited *Chicot*, AR, Feb. 8 & 14–15 (DS *et al.*). The 2nd California Gull for s.e. Louisiana was discovered Dec. 26 in *St. Bernard* (SC, DD). A first-year Iceland Gull in *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 30–Feb. 27 (WB, RAD *et al.*) was well studied. One imm. and four ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen in 3 Louisiana parishes (SC, DD, KVR, DMu, PY, †AK) late December–early January; an adult in *France*, AL, Dec. 17–Jan. 14 was Alabama's 5th (†ALM, p.a. A.L.B.R.C.); the one in Biloxi, MS (JD), returned for the 10th winter.

Certainly the season's most tantalizing bird was the probable *Slaty-backed Gull* appearing Feb. 13–26 in *Tunica*, MS (ph., †JRW, †GCK *et al.*). A first-year immature, the bird displayed characteristics consistent with the few descriptions of imm. Slaty-backed I found; photographs, reviewed by Dan Gibson (University of Alaska), also lent credence to the identification. Intriguingly, the bird carried a steel band, apparently not recently used on gulls by U.S. banders (DB, *fide* JRW).

At least one Glaucous Gull appeared in *St. Bernard*, LA, Jan. 9 (JD, †DMu) and Feb. 6 (SC, DD); another in *Tunica* Jan. 23–29

(JRW, †GCK *et al.*) was Mississippi's 7th. Single, first-year Great Black-backed Gulls visited *Hardin*, TN (JRW); *St. Bernard*, LA (†DMu, JD); *Mobile*, AL (ph. †CK); *Pensacola Beach*, FL (CW); and *Gulf* FL (JH). For the 4th consecutive winter *Panola*, MS, hosted an imm. Black-legged Kittiwake, this one staying Dec. 8–Jan. 23 (MD, †GCK, ph. JD); Alabama's 6th (p.a. A.L.B.R.C.) remained in *Colbert* and *Lawrence* Dec. 5–Feb. 28 (BG, ph. ALM, †SMC, †SM). An unidentified "crested" tern puzzled observers Dec. 24–Jan. 12 in *Lauderdale*, AL (ALM, MO), where even Royal Terns would be considered accidental.

#### DOVES TO GOATSUCKERS

The Eur. Collared-Dove continues its population and range expansions in the Region's coastal zone, where it remains local and rare, though that status certainly will not continue long. Besides sightings in coastal Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana, including new locations in *Bay* and *Gulf*, FL (WB), and *Baldwin*, AL (AF, RR), collared-doves were reported in *Montgomery*, AL (LG), where they were noted last summer, and for the first time in *Limestone*, AL, where one sighted Feb. 6 (MB, *fide* GDJ, p.a. A.L.B.R.C.) was just 40 km s. of Tennessee. If the expansion pattern exhibited by this dove in peninsular Florida holds true as it expands its range, most medium to large urban centers in the Region will probably be colonized by century's end.

Concentrations of 50 White-winged Doves in *Calcasieu* and *Plaquemines*, LA, Jan. 15 (PC) and Feb. 16 (RB), respectively, were notable. Common Ground-Doves were unusually common, with two in *Lauderdale*, TN, Jan. 16 (MGW *et al.*); two in *Shelby*, TN, Feb. 3–18 (JRW, CB); four in *Yalobusha*, MS, Dec. 17 (GCK, TLS); and two in *Tunica*, MS, Feb. 6 & 24 (CB, VR, HD, BW).

A population of Monk Parakeets estimated at 80–150 individuals is established in a 24-sq-mi area of New Orleans (RRu). The only Groove-billed Anis reported outside Louisiana were at the Pascagoula R. Marsh, MS, Dec. 27 (KJB). Burrowing Owls in *Mississippi*, AR, Feb. 26–28 (EP *et al.*), continuing a fall 1992 record, and in *Walton*, FL, Feb. 11 (*fide* DW) were rare. The only Short-eared Owls reported were in *Vermilion*, LA, Feb. 27 (JK); *Lake*, TN, Jan. 27 (JRW); *Noxubee*, MS, Dec. 11 (TLS); and *Tunica*, MS, Jan. 30 (MD). A Com. Nighthawk was late in *Shelby*, TN, Dec. 3 (JRW); another wintered in *East Baton Rouge*, LA (AK, SC, \*L.S.U.M.N.S.).

#### HUMMINGBIRDS

Nine species of hummingbird wintered in the Region, many in exceptional numbers. A bander in Louisiana experienced her best banding year ever (NN), but claimed that even *that* superlative failed to indicate the awesome magnitude of the hummer invasion. In Alabama and Mississippi, many hummingbirds formerly considered vagrants, but now expected constituents of the winter avifauna, were banded (B&MS). Arkansas

experienced its best hummingbird winter ever, recording 4 species. The only geographic exception to the blizzard of nectar-suckers was Tennessee, where none materialized.

A rough count of hummingbirds observed, by *minimum* number of individuals in each state, follows: Broad-billed—two in LA; Buff-bellied—15 in LA, two in MS, and one



**Ash-throated Flycatcher in Noxubee County, Mississippi, in February 1993. Third state record. Photograph/Jeff R. Wilson.**

in AR that provided a state record and remained all season in *White* (ph. MP, HP); Ruby-throated—nine in LA and one in FL/AL; Black-Chinned—15 + 3 *Archilochus* sp. in LA, two in AL, three in MS, and one in AR; Anna's—three in LA, one in AR, banded, providing a 2nd state record, that was present all season in *Faulkner* (MJ *et al.*); Calliope—two in LA and two in MS, furnishing 2nd and 3rd state records; Broad-tailed—six in LA; Rufous—25 in LA, four in AL, one in MS, and three in AR; Allen's—two in LA, and one in AL, for the 3rd state record; Rufous/Allen's—14 in LA, one in MS, and one in FL (1); and hummingbird sp.—12 in LA.

#### FLYCATCHERS TO THRUSHES

A Least Flycatcher identified by call in *Plaquemines*, LA, Feb. 23 (DMu) was the only one reported, though an *Empidonax* sp. turned up in *Vermilion*, LA, Jan. 16 (videotape GBr, PC). *Rapides* and *Cameron*, LA, hosted a Say's Phoebe apiece, the former Feb. 6–13 (†JI *et al.*) and the latter Jan. 30 until at least Feb. 27 (MMu *et al.*). Single Vermilion Flycatchers, one on the *Washington*, MS, CBC and present until Jan. 23 (GCK) and another staked out in *Hancock*, MS (JD), were the species' only representatives not located in Louisiana. An Ash-throated Flycatcher stayed in *Noxubee* Feb. 6–25 (†TLS, ph. JRW *et al.*), providing Mississippi's 3rd record; in Louisiana at least one was in *Cameron* throughout the period (†DMu, †A&GS), one visited *Vermilion*, Dec. 17 (videotape KVR), and one found a home in *Plaquemines* Jan. 16 (†DMu, SC, DD, PY,

\*L.S.U.M.N.S.). Three Brown-crested Flycatchers also found homes in *Plaquemines*, LA, Jan. 16 (SC, DD, PY, †DMu, \*L.S.U.M.N.S.), and *two more* were noted there Feb. 23 (†DMu). *Myiarchus* sp. that may have been Ash-throateds were sighted in *Evangeline* and *Calcasieu*, LA, Dec. 20 (RSt) and Jan. 18 (RB), respectively. A Great Kiskadee wintered in *Vermilion*, LA (ph. WE). Scissor-tailed Flycatchers were sighted in 3 Louisiana parishes and *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 30 (WB).

Well n. of its usual winter haunts, a Barn Swallow visited *Henry*, TN, Jan. 13 (TW). Three Bewick's Wrens were reported, including a single in *Lowndes*, MS, Jan. 10–30 (TLS) and different birds in *Benton*, AR, Jan. 17 (MM) and Feb. 6 (RD). A Northern Wheatear, residing in *Acadia*, Dec. 17–Feb. 27+ (videotape SC, DD *et al.*) and establishing Louisiana's 3rd record, delighted numerous observers, as did a Mountain Bluebird in the same parish Jan. 3–Feb. 27+ (MMu *et al.*).

#### VIREOS TO DICKCISSEL

A Bell's Vireo, appearing in *Plaquemines*, LA, Jan. 3 (ph. KVR *et al.*), was seen again Jan. 22 (AS). Lingering late in *Clay*, AL, Dec. 2 (RS) was a Tennessee Warbler; another may have been wintering when seen Jan. 2 in *Iberville*, LA (SC, DD). Single Yellow Warblers and Black-throated Grays were in *Plaquemines*, LA, Jan. 3 (PW) and Dec. 24 (KJB), respectively; another Black-throated Gray intermittently regaled observers in *Cameron*, LA, most of the season (RSt, RB *et al.*). A Prairie Warbler found Jan. 2 on the Gulf Shores CBC provided Alabama's 3rd winter record (JVP, TWe). American Redstarts in *Lafourche* and *Plaquemines*, LA, Dec. 20 (MR) and Jan. 3 (KVR) were the only ones reported. Three reports each of Ovenbird and N. Waterthrush came from Louisiana.

A ♂ MacGillivray's Warbler, Louisiana's 8th, was well studied in (where else?) *Plaquemines*, Feb. 23 (PY, †DMu). Rare during winter along the Gulf Coast, a Yellow-breasted Chat was counted on the Gulf Shores, AL, CBC Jan. 2 (†RAD, LD).

Single Summer Tanagers in *East Baton Rouge*, LA, Dec. 22 (GL, KVR *et al.*) and New Orleans Jan. 17–18 (DMu) were the only ones reported. Western Tanagers were considered rare when noted on the Arkabutla, MS, CBC Dec. 27 (MG) and when photographed in *Rankin*, MS, Feb. 27–28 (WT *et al.*).

Providing the first January record for the locale, a Blue Grosbeak stopped off in *Santa Rosa*, FL, Jan. 13 (RAD). Indigo Buntings were reported from 5 Louisiana parishes, as well as *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 30 (RAD, PT) and *Putnam*, TN, Feb. 6 (SJS, BHS). Painted Bunting reports came only from 3 parishes in Louisiana, which issued two Dickcissel reports as well; the latter species appeared in *Baldwin*, AL, Jan. 23 (WBr) and in *Bolivar*, MS, Feb. 22 (NH) as well.

#### SPARROWS TO GROSBILLS

Rufous-crowned Sparrows remained on Mt.

Nebo in *Yell*, AR, Dec. 21 and Feb. 20 (WS *et al.*). American Tree Sparrows were reported only from *Lake* and *Madison*, TN (*vide MGW*). A Clay-colored Sparrow in *Vermilion*, LA, Feb. 7 (videotape GBr *et al.*) was noteworthy. Lark Sparrows were represented by one in *Shelby*, TN, Dec. 21 (SNM); another in *Polk*, AR, Dec. 16 (LA); and three on the Pine Prairie, LA, CBC Dec. 20 (DP).

Henslow's Sparrows in *Vernon*, LA, Jan. 4 (CSh) and Ft. Morgan, AL, Feb. 3 (CW) were newsworthy, while eight in DeSoto N.F., MS, Feb. 5 (CW) represented quite a healthy concentration. Harris' Sparrows were reported from 2 Arkansas counties and 2 Louisiana parishes. Lapland Longspurs were represented by state high counts of 19 in *Limestone*, AL, Feb. 28 (SMc); 100+ on the Crowley, LA, CBC Dec. 17 (*vide DMu*); and a whopping 1900 in *Tunica*, MS, Jan. 16 (JRW). Twenty-seven Smith's Longspurs at the Stuttgart Airport in *Prairie*, AR, Feb. 7 (WS *et al.*) were at a traditional site, but one was considered rare in *Benton*, AR, Feb. 28 (MM), as was another in *Bolivar*, MS, Dec. 18 (GCK).

Western Meadowlark numbers were noteworthy, with one in *Benton*, AR, Jan. 30 (MM), four in *Tunica*, MS, Feb. 13 (JRW, GCK), and ≤21 in *Shelby*, TN, during December (JRW). Bronzed Cowbirds were deemed more abundant than usual this winter in *Jefferson*, LA (NN), where ≤15 wintered at a single site. Many N. Orioles were reported from Louisiana; one in *Oktibbeha*, MS, throughout the season (RL, MC, TLS) and another in *Tate*, MS, Dec. 28 (JRW, GCK) were considered rare.

Purple Finches were again decidedly uncommon everywhere in the Region. House Finches were not reported much except from s. Louisiana, w. Arkansas, and n.w. Florida—"frontier" sites at which the species continues to increase. Red Crossbills were represented by only one individual on the Noxubee, MS, CBC Dec. 19 (GCK). Pine Siskins were scarce as ever; Evening Grosbeaks, merely a mirage.

**Corrigenda:** In AB 47, Spring 1993 issue, the S.A. on p. 106 should read "The 2nd Regional Record for Broad-billed Hummingbird came Oct. 12–13, when a ♀ (*not* ♂-type) bird was observed..."

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## PRAIRIE PROVINCES REGION

*Rudolf F. Koes and Peter Taylor*

After a fairly mild start, very cold weather engulfed the Region from mid-December to mid-January. Conditions for the balance of the season were less severe but still generally cold, except for a mild week around the end of January. In eastern Manitoba, snow accumulated steadily through November and December, then remained throughout the period. Farther west, snow cover was lighter, much of it disappearing in February. Overall, it was a dull birding season. Most flocking passerines were scarce or patchily distributed at best, while a promising crop of straggling waterbirds was soon frozen out.

**Abbreviations:** AB (*Alberta*); MB (*Manitoba*); SK (*Saskatchewan*).

### LOONS TO GULLS

A Com. Loon at Lac du Bonnet, MB, still had ample open water when last seen Dec. 12 (PT); the same day, one was trapped by ice on the Bow R. in Calgary, and "tobogganed" its

way almost a ½-mi to freedom (RD, BOu)! A less inventive Yellow-billed Loon in Edmonton was rescued by a scuba diver and released at L. Wabamun, late December (GL *et al.*, ph.), and another lingered at Gardiner Dam, SK, Nov. 28–Dec. 22 (RKR, MHy, BG, JP *et al.*).

A Tundra Swan lingered at Echo L., SK, about Dec. 5–15 (RKR, RH, MHy, SSh), and another paused at St.-Georges, MB, Dec. 12 (PT). Three Trumpeter Swans were at Waterton Lakes N.P., Dec. 12 (*fide* TD). More than 3000 Canada Geese remained in Medicine Hat, AB, through December, but most left in early January (DBO).

A Green-winged Teal was a CBC first at Lethbridge, Dec. 19 (LBt). Two Am. Black Ducks wintered for the 4th consecutive year at Regina (RE, RKR, CB). Two record winter counts of Mallards were reported in Alberta: ≥24,000 in Calgary in mid-December (IH) and 1000 on the Oldman R. near Taber Dec. 19 (LBt). Estimated Mallard totals at Gardiner Dam were 1600, Jan. 17 (FR) and ≥2000 Feb. 2 (BL). Few other waterfowl were reported beyond mid-December, even in Calgary. Unusual sightings included an Oldsquaw at Estevan, SK, Dec. 4 (WH), Manitoba's first winter Harlequin Duck at Pinawa Dec. 5 (PT *et al.*), and four White-winged Scoters at Lac du Bonnet Dec. 1 (RP, DBy).

Mid-winter reports of adult Bald Eagles in-

cluded four at Gardiner Dam Jan. 17 (FR) and three at River Hills, MB, Feb. 5 (BN). Sharpshinned Hawks were reported in Alberta at Edmonton Dec. 6 (*fide* PM) & 19 and Jan. 19 at Taber (LBt) and Jan. 18 near Lethbridge (RMu). Northern Goshawk reports totaled 10 in Saskatchewan and 15 in Manitoba, indicating some movement out of the boreal forest. Gyrfalcon sightings included four in Manitoba, eight in Saskatchewan, and >19 in Alberta, including a white bird near Cochrane, AB, Feb. 28 (JS, MSt). Prairie Falcons were seen mating in Medicine Hat as early as Jan. 10 (BV).

Gray Partridges were very scarce: 120 on nine of 22 Manitoba CBCs, contrasted with 432 in Winnipeg alone in 1988, while 709 on 33 Saskatchewan counts was a 10-year low; the species was also scarce in Alberta. The cool, wet summer and high Red Fox populations likely contributed to these low numbers. Ruffed and Sharp-tailed grouse were also generally scarce. Four Killdeer lingered at Taber L., AB, to Dec. 11 (LBt). February 28 was a strange date for a Ring-billed Gull at Spruce Grove, AB; overwintering seems likely (VB, *fide* PM). More normal was a Glaucous Gull at Gardiner Dam Dec. 5, (SSh), and four remained at Nipawin, SK, to Dec. 10 (WH).

### OWLS TO WOODPECKERS

An E. Screech-Owl called in Winnipeg at temperatures down to -17°F in January and February, confounding our owl-finding theories (RKO). The highest Snowy Owl counts were 17 Dec. 6 and 14 Jan. 24, within 100 km, near Elie, MB (BN), plus nine within 70 km from Gardiner Dam to Hanley, SK, Jan. 17 (FR). Snowy Owl pellets retrieved e. of Libau, MB, contained ≤21 rodent skulls apiece (BN)!

Twelve N. Hawk Owls were reported in s. Manitoba, two on the Thompson, MB, CBC, three in the Edmonton area, and only one in Saskatchewan—all a far cry from last winter's invasion. Great Gray Owls were reported in "fair numbers" in central Alberta (*fide* PM); s.e. Manitoba sightings were limited to the Libau and Maple Cr. areas (m.ob., *fide* BN), and the only Saskatchewan reports came



from Armit Dec 24 (WH) and the Candle L area (BL).

Exceptional numbers of Short-eared Owls concentrated about 10 mi e. of Calgary (m.ob.), with a peak count of 23 Feb. 20 (TK); six were seen s.e. of Milestone, SK, Dec. 12 & 15 (CB, MBa, RMo). The only reported Boreal Owl was at Kleefeld, MB, Feb. 11 (CP, DF). One N. Saw-whet Owl was found at Weyburn, SK, Jan. 19 (NP), and one died in a barn near Whitemouth, MB, Feb. 18 (BOP, PT). Two Three-toed Woodpeckers visited a dead spruce tree in Medicine Hat in late December (*vide* DBo), and one wandered widely in Wascana Park, Regina, early November–Jan. 17+ (RKr, CB *et al.*). Another Wascana woodpecker, a Red-shafted Flicker, was seen Dec. 11 (CB) and found dead in a nest box in late January (RE). A few other N. Flickers overwintered in cities in each province.

#### CORVIDS TO WARBLERS

Clark's Nutcrackers were seen near L. Wabamun, AB: one Jan. 29 and two Feb. 8 (*vide* PM). White-breasted Nuthatches seem to be on the increase across s. Saskatchewan to Medicine Hat, AB (m.ob.). Forty-one Am. Dippers concentrated along 1 mi of the Kananaskis R. s.e. of Canmore, AB, Dec. 31 (PS).

Townsend's Solitaire reports were well above average: three in the Calgary area (TK *et al.*), three in Medicine Hat (DBo), and "a few" overwintering in Edmonton (PM), as were ≥2 in Regina (KB, RKr, FL *et al.*) and one in Saskatoon (FR). Other single Townsend's Solitaires were seen near Douglas P.P., SK, Dec. 20 (FR), at Swift Current, SK, in December (*vide* CB); at Seven Sisters dam, MB, Nov. 29–Dec. 7 (GG, RKO, PT *et al.*) and near Kleefeld, MB, Nov. 21–Dec. 30 (T&EW, DF *et al.*). Varied Thrushes appeared in Calgary Dec. 23–26 (JS), Edmonton, to Jan. 23+ (AB), Moose Jaw, SK, Dec. 2 & 7 (E&JA), and Swift Current, SK, in December (*vide* CB). In Manitoba, four Varied Thrushes were reported, and individuals overwintered in Winnipeg (J&LG) and Ashern (MP, MSi).

Bohemian Waxwings were generally scarce, but almost 2500 were tallied on 3 CBCs in w.c. Manitoba (Dauphin, Minnedosa, and Swan R.); the only other high count was 500 in Saskatoon, Feb. 20 (FR). About 50 Cedar Waxwings overwintered in Saskatoon (SSh) and several flocks of ≤40 stayed in Win-

nipeg (RKO). Five errant Cape May Warblers appeared in Calgary in November, and two lingered into December—one seen with a Yellow-rumped Dec. 18 (NC), and one found dead Dec. 19 (JV, sp.). Amazingly, a Yellow-rumped Warbler survived in Calgary on a high-energy diet of fruitcake (NC *et al.*); other individuals were seen in Calgary Dec. 17 & 31 (RW) and in Claresholm, AB, Jan. 9 (GN).

#### CARDINALS TO HOUSE SPARROW

A ♂ Northern Cardinal overwintered at Ft. Saskatchewan, AB, Oct. 31+ (ph. LG), and a female overwintered at Ponoka, AB (BB, m.ob.). A ♀ "Spotted" Rufous-sided Towhee at Beynon (MBi, RS, MHR) was an exceptional overwintering record in Alberta.

A Fox Sparrow in Pinawa since Dec. 5 survived a window strike Jan. 27 and was still going strong Mar. 23 (L&CC, PT). Other unusual sparrows included a Song near Lac du Bonnet, Jan. 2 (PT), a Lincoln's at White-wood, SK, Dec. 11–18 (ph. JP), single overwintering White-throats at Prince Albert, SK (BL and Ardrossan, AB (DBr), and a White-crowned at Pike L. P.P., SK, Jan. 2 (SSh). Increasingly frequent at winter feeders, Harris' Sparrows were seen in all 3 provinces; the 5 reports included one overwintering at Lethbridge (*vide* TD).

Snow Bunting was the 2nd most abundant species on Manitoban CBCs, and several flocks of 500–1000 were reported in Saskatchewan, mainly in December. Distribution was patchy, however, with some observers finding them scarce. The Taber "blackbird farm" had nine Red-winged Blackbirds all winter, six Yellow-headed until mid-December, and 15 Brewer's Feb. 23+ (LBt). The highest Rusty Blackbird counts were 13 in the Spring Valley area, SK, Dec. 18 (FB) and 15 on the CBC in Carberry, MB, Dec. 27.

A Rosy Finch visited Cold L., AB, in February (*vide* PM). Pine Grosbeaks were common only at the edge of the boreal forest, from Pinawa, MB, to Prince Albert, SK. Counts of eight Purple Finches at Weyburn, Jan. 31 (NP) and 14 at Victoria Beach, MB, Jan. 16 (DF *et al.*) were unusual. The House Finch saga continues with overwintering records in all 3 provinces: four in Regina (KS, BJ), three in Weyburn (LBr), three or four in Altona, MB (MK *et al.*), and two in Cardston, AB (SSi, LBt). Three CBC records were provided in Manitoba.

A few small flocks of White-winged Crossbills visited s.e. Manitoba, Jan. 10–Feb. 20. Common Redpolls were uncommon Region-wide, with few flocks exceeding 20 birds. Hoary Redpolls were extremely scarce, but 20 were seen near Good Spirit L., SK, Jan. 1 (BA). By contrast, Pine Siskins were abundant in s.w. Manitoba in early winter; numbers declined there, but increased dramatically in s.e. Manitoba around the end of January, when flocks of 10–30 birds arrived at many feeders. This mid-winter redistribution may have been triggered by an exceptionally mild spell. Small flocks of Am. Goldfinches were seen across s. Manitoba from Bird's Hill P.P. to Brandon. Evening Grosbeaks were again largely confined to the fringes of the boreal forest, mainly in Manitoba. Low numbers of House Sparrows were noted away from urban centers in Saskatchewan and s.e. Manitoba. This finding indicates at least some local movement of this sedentary bird during hard winters—or, perhaps they're getting out of the way before the House Finches arrive!

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## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

Gordon Berkey

After five consecutive mild winters, temperatures were close to the long-term average. The first part of December was mild, but mid-December through mid-January saw wide-

spread sub-20°F temperatures. This cold spell brought ample snow cover that remained over most of the eastern part of the Region, but dry conditions continued in Montana. Late January was mild, and much of the snow cover had dissipated, but February was colder, unlike recent years when late winter was much above normal.

Mild fall weather enabled a few semi-hardy species to survive into late December and helped a terribly lost Inca Dove in Mandan last until Dec. 24. Several hardy species de-

creased after the cold snowy late December period, apparently pushed farther southward. Many observers commented on the lack of diversity of species; most of this perceived lack was probably due to another poor showing of finches.

#### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

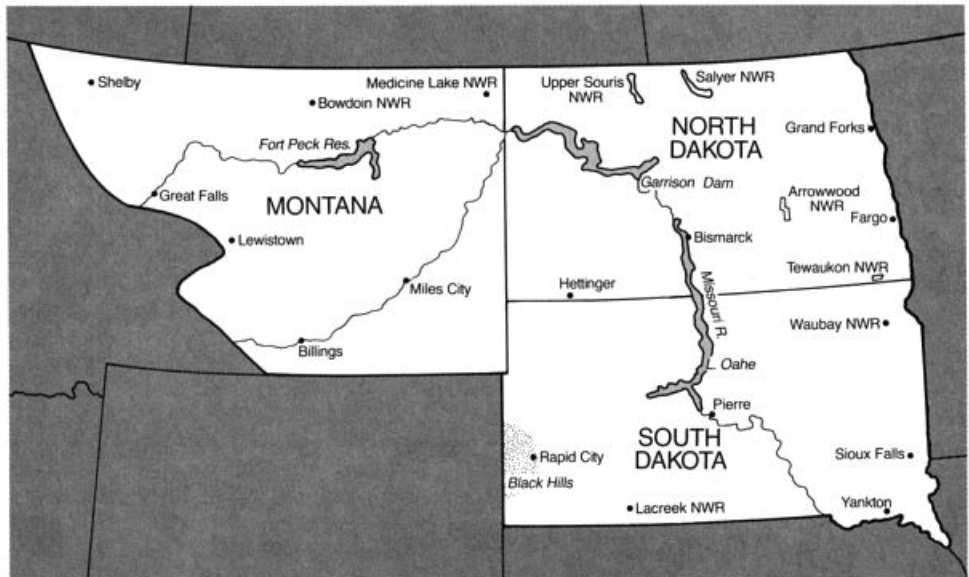
A Com. Loon lingered on L. Elwell, MT, through Dec. 19 but was not seen later (HM). A Pied-billed Grebe was seen in Fall R., SD, on the late date of Jan. 2, and a probable win-

tering Ross' Goose was in Brookings Jan. 30 (JSP). An Am. White Pelican was seen flying up the Yellowstone R. at Miles City on Christmas Day, after a week of very cold weather (CL). A Green-winged Teal at Garrison Dam Dec. 12 was late (GB), as was an Am. Wigeon in Grand Forks Dec. 17 (EF). An Am. Black Duck wintered at L. Yankton, SD (SVS). An Oldsquaw was in Yankton, Dec. 8-15, and one at Garrison Dam, ND, Jan. 23 & 24 (RM) may have been moving through at that late date, as none had been seen there since Dec. 6. Once again a Barrow's Goldeneye wintered Canyon L., SD (NW). Of five Red-breasted Mergansers at Ft. Peck Dec. 10, a pair spent the winter (CC).

Considerable Bald Eagle migration occurred in Montana and N. Dakota through the early part of the CBC period, but the cold snap caused most to continue S, and fewer wintered along the Missouri below Ft. Peck and Garrison Dams. Sharp-shinned Hawks stayed at 4 S. Dakota sites, at Hettinger, ND (D&CG), and at Malta, MT (MTS). The Malta bird became trapped in a lumber warehouse and was netted and released at nearby Bowdoin N.W.R. Goshawks were present in fair but unexceptional numbers. The proportion of adults was relatively high, perhaps indicative of poor reproduction the previous cool summer. Rough-legged Hawks were low in the Chester, NT, vicinity, but a trip from Billings to Yellowtail Dam Jan. 1, netted a count of 26. A Golden Eagle was found on a still-quivering yearling pronghorn n. of Pompey's Pillar, MT, Feb. 23 (WR). It had apparently brought its much larger prey down by breaking its back. Mid-winter Peregrine Falcons were in Bismarck, Jan. 7 (AP) and in Pennington, SD, Feb. 14 (MM). A total of 11 Gyrfalcons, including seven from N. Dakota, two from Montana, and two in Stanley, SD, Dec. 12 (J&RP), were reported. White birds were seen at Bismarck in early February (TL) and n. of Hazen, ND, Feb. 10 (BD).

#### GALLINIDS TO WOODPECKERS

Pheasant numbers remained high in N. Dakota; 1636 on the Long L. CBC nearly doubled the previous state record. A Franklin's and a California gull were late at Oahe Dam, SD, Dec. 5 (BH); the latter was the latest ever for the state. Herring Gulls were last seen Dec. 27 at Garrison Dam and about Jan. 1 at Ft. Peck. The Iceland Gull, Nov. 29+ was seen again at Garrison Dam Dec. 6 (RM). Mourning Doves seldom survive the winter so far north, but one made it at Thompson, ND (RLR). An amazingly tough, though misdirected, Inca Dove that arrived at the Mandan, ND, feeder of Frank and Gladys Brazda in November survived temperatures below -20°F until last seen Dec. 24 (FG, RNR, GB). Birders were not aware of



it until just before the CBC period and, unfortunately, few were able to see the dove. Although the bird was wild, skeptics might have argued that this species could not possibly have made it this far north on its own, but the widespread wanderings of Inca Doves this fall would seem to dispel any doubts. How many true vagrants are discounted by the birding community because it is believed they couldn't have wandered so far without human assistance? Some S. Dakota birders believe that a rejected 1983 record from their state should now be reconsidered, so the N. Dakota bird may represent the 2nd record for the Region.

It was a good winter for Snowy Owls, with reports as far south as Hyde and Deuel, SD. In mid-February 510 were seen daily in Grand Forks and Walsh, ND (EF). Four wintered in the vicinity of Chester, MT (HM). Near Fargo, a Barred Owl repeatedly flew against a window, attempting to attack a parrot; the parrot died, presumably of fright. Three reports of N. Saw-whet Owls were from N. Dakota, including a dead specimen collected by a cat. The presence of five Red-headed Woodpeckers at 4 Fargo area sites (RHo, *et al.*) was surprising, as there were only about 4 previous overwintering records for the state; another was seen near Bismarck. The Red-bellied Woodpecker at a Miles City, MT, feeder in the fall was last seen in mid-February. A tally of Pileated Woodpeckers on the Fargo CBC nearly doubled the previous high and documents the increase in the e. part of the Region; they continue to be seen in Roberts, SD (BH).

#### PASSERINES

The Varied Thrush in Grand Forks died Dec. 22; the retrieved specimen, a first for the state, was given to the University of ND (DL). Another Varied Thrush was in Roberts, SD, Dec. 12 (MSS). Bohemian Waxwings were widely distributed in w. North Dakota but were very scarce east, with none seen in Grand Forks or Fargo. An unprecedented four Brown Thrashers attempted to winter in N. Dakota

at Sawyer (RM), Minot, Long L. N.W.R. (AMV), and Fargo (D&DW); the last was seen alive Jan. 10. Northern Shrikes may have pushed farther S than normal; after good numbers through early December, the N. Dakota CBC total was the lowest in 20 years. Most winter Loggerhead Shrike reports from this Region may be erroneous. One at Long L., Dec. 22, was the first for N. Dakota with adequate documentation (MH), while one in Pennington, SD, Jan. 22 (NW) was also considered unusual, even though it was several hundred miles farther south. Swamp Sparrows seen Dec. 19 at Mayville, ND (DL) and Jan. 2 in Fall River, SD (JSP) provided the 2nd winter records for each state. Two juncos at a Grand Forks feeder Dec. 12 (MK) appeared to have been "Gray-headed"; this subspecies has been recorded twice previously only in the s.w. part of the state. A Brown-headed Cowbird at J. Clark Salyer N.W.R., Dec. 21 (GE) was a rare winter sighting. Eastern N. Dakota birders wondered whether Purple Finches might be decreasing because of the increase in House Finches, but most winter finches have been reduced for several years. There were only 5 reports of Pine Grosbeaks e. of the mountains. About 60 Red Crossbills wintered at a pine plantation near Denbigh, ND (GB), and 20 were seen in Codington, SD, Jan. 29 (BH), but there were only 3 other reports of 1-2 Reds e. of the mountains and only one of a single White-winged Crossbill. Redpolls were present in the north in small numbers but were reported from only one S. Dakota county; no Hoarries were noted. Pine Siskin sightings were sporadic in the w. Dakotas but common east. Evening Grosbeaks went unreported for N. Dakota, the entire season—the first winter since 1973-1974 in which they have not been seen—but there may have been a few more than normal in Billings (WR).

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## SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

Joseph A. Grzybowski

Although large portions of Kansas and Nebraska and northwestern Oklahoma were snow covered for an extended period, most observers considered it an otherwise average winter, perhaps only a little harsher on ground-feeding passerines. The rest of Oklahoma had another placidly mild winter. Several resident passerines may have maintained density-dependent populations, perhaps forcing some individuals, such as wrens, to become extralimital.

Mlodinow characterized Eastern Bluebirds as common in northeastern Oklahoma. Carolina Wrens are certainly maintaining their numbers across most of Oklahoma. Numbers of Pine Warblers were high in southeastern Oklahoma. More than the usual scattering of Eastern Phoebe and Orange-crowned Warbler observations were reported in December and January. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers also appeared to be more common in central Oklahoma. The surge of LeConte's Sparrows noted in the fall report was validated, at least for some areas of Oklahoma, where these secretive sparrows could be flushed at will from most patches with suitable tall, thick grass cover.

The more hardy waterfowl appeared to concentrate in the northern portions of the Region, with good numbers of some species reported from Nebraska. Buteos appeared in reasonably good numbers, with Ferruginous Hawks perhaps in modest numbers into the middle of the Region. Although not outstanding, a representative number of waterbirds and shorebirds that are normally more southerly in their winter distribution, were found. This may have been particularly true of cormorants and pelicans, though Moore commented on the large concentrations of geese that wintered in Kansas.

**Abbreviations:** L. Hefner (*L. Hefner, Oklahoma Co., OK*). Place names in *italics* are counties.

### LOONS TO DUCKS

A Pacific Loon was noted Dec. 22 in *Canadian, OK* (JGN), where this bird, or a 2nd, was observed Feb. 27 (JGN, MO). Lake Tenkiller

in e. Oklahoma appears to be a mecca for Com. Loons, with 73 reported Feb. 13 (MMI). Others likely wintering were reported from L. Hefner and Tulsa during January and February. An Eared Grebe seen Feb. 28 in Tulsa (PS, JL) may also have spent the winter, and 16 W. Grebes were still present on L. McConaughy, *Keith, NE*, Dec. 18 (SD, RS).

American White Pelicans were widespread in n.e. Oklahoma (JM, MMI, m.ob.). Three, including one injured bird, were present in *Lincoln, NE*, to Feb. 1+ (BJR). Great Egrets continue to make late showings in Oklahoma with one Dec. 11 in *Garvin, (JSt)*. An uncommon sight was a Black-crowned Night-Heron Feb. 18 at L. Hefner (JGN).

Two ad. and four imm. Trumpeter Swans were documented in *Osage, OK*, Jan. 6 (DLR, BG) and may represent a coming trend in wintering birds. Seven were noted in *Keith, NE*, Dec. 18 (RCR, DJR) & 19 (SD, RS). Col-lared birds are almost a safe bet to be Trum-peters, as are very dark immature swans. This should make us all look more closely at Tun-dra Swans such as those reported Dec. 31 in *Comanche, KS* (MT, SP) and Jan. 17–24 in *Cowley, KS* (MT, PJ, JNo).

A noteworthy 250,000 Snow Geese were beheld Dec. 2 at Desoto N.W.R., NE (JT). Ross' Geese continue to be reported in in-creasing numbers in the Region. Twelve were noted Feb. 26 & 27 in *Canadian, OK* (JGN) and smaller numbers in 5 locations in Kansas. One, a very rare blue morph, was observed Dec. 12 in *Pottowatomie, KS* (DR).

The only Am. Black Ducks reported were sighted in e. Kansas (*vide* LM). A Blue-winged Teal Dec. 20 in *Jefferson, KS* (GP) was tardy.

Greater Scaup were reported from 2 localities in Oklahoma and from 3 in Kansas, with the maximum number observed 17 in *Keith, NE*, Dec. 19 (RCR, DJR). Oldsquaw reports came in for 4 locations in Kansas and for 3 in Ne-braska. One was discovered as far south as *Bryan, OK* Dec. 1 (JWe). Five White-winged Scoters in *Cowley, KS* (WH) were the only scoters reported. Exceptional was a **Barrow's Goldeneye** in *Osage, KS* (GK). Also excep-tional in number were 6000 Com. Gold-eneys in *Lincoln, NE*, Dec. 17 (RCR, DJR).

Common Merganser numbers in Okla-homa were low, while Red-breasted Mer-gansers appeared to be more common than in previous years. At L. Hudson, *Mayes, OK*, 87 Red-breasteds were counted Jan. 16 (MMI, DC, KG). Common Mergansers apparently wintered farther north, as 10,000 were reported in *Lincoln, NE*, Dec. 19 (RCR, DJR).

### RAPTORS TO OWLS

Turkey Vultures stretched their wings into *Comanche, OK*, Feb. 2 (KB), and *Cleveland, OK*, Feb. 6 (VB). Northern Goshawks made a modest showing in Kansas, furnishing 4 records. A Peregrine or two again graced the downtown district of Tulsa (m.ob.). Fifteen Merlins were reported this season, a healthy sample.

A marsh with a warm water spring in *Garden, NE*, appears to have provided favorable abode for a King Rail observed Dec. 19 (RCR, DJR). Another surprise was a Sora Rail Feb. 13 in *Sequoyah, OK* (TR).

A number of shorebirds lingered or wintered in the Region, including a Black-bellied Plover noted Dec. 17–Feb. 5 in *Sequoyah, OK* (JM, m.ob.). Greater Yellowlegs were noted as far north as *Alfalfa, Jan. 31* (JH, JN, JM). Seventeen were observed Feb. 2 in *Johnston, OK* (JWe). A Spotted Sandpiper lingered until Dec. 1 in Tulsa (SB *et al.*), and two were present Dec. 11 in *Johnston, OK* (JWe).

A Franklin's Gull was noted Jan. 15 in *Tulsa* (SM). An ad. **Common Black-headed Gull** at Perry L., *Jefferson, KS* Dec. 8–18 was video-taped (CH, m.ob.), providing the first fully documented record for Kansas. Although a shadow of last years find, ≥6 California Gulls were reported from e. Kansas. A pale Thayer's/Iceland type Gull was present in *Sedgwick, KS*, Jan 6 (PJ), and ≥5 Thayer's were claimed for Kansas, with a few more for Ne-braska, including one well decribed from *Keith, NE*, Dec. 18 (SD). An ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was noted Feb. 18–Mar. 3 at L. Hefner,





**Sapsucker wintering at Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma. Possibly a Red-naped, although the amount of white on the face and the nearly-complete black border around the throat suggest a Red-naped x Yellow-bellied hybrid or even a variant Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Photograph/Steve Metz.**

likely the same bird appearing since 1984 (JGN). Another, accounting for the 2nd record for Nebraska, was noted Dec. 17 in *Lincoln*, NE (SD, RS). Glaucous Gulls were reported from 7 locations in Kansas, two in Oklahoma and two in Nebraska.

Certainly the find of the season, and probably of the year, was a **Ross' Gull** in 2nd-winter plumage discovered by Steve Dinsmore at Sutherland Res., *Lincoln*, NE, Dec. 17. The first reported for the Region, it remained until Dec. 27.

Inca Doves appear to be staging an upsurge, with one reported from *Seward*, KS, Jan. 1 (SP), three in *Ford*, KS, Dec. 19, three in *Scott*, KS, all winter (L&BR), and one Dec. 29-Jan. 29 in *Jackson*, OK (IM). Hard to come by since the mid-1970s have been Snowy Owls. Only one was reported this season, from *Pratt*, KS, Dec. 19-21 (KB).

A Rufous Hummingbird visited a feeder at *Leavenworth*, KS, Dec. 3-6 (TW). Another was noted in *Tulsa* Dec. 10-Jan. 17 (ML, m.ob.). The rotation of feeder bottles by a dedicated hummingbird watcher was likely instrumental in allowing it to persist through freezing weather.

#### WOODPECKERS TO WARBLERS

An apparent Red-naped Sapsucker was photographed Feb. 12-19 in *Johnston*, OK (PD, DS, m.ob). The record is unusual in that the species is normally a migrant through the very w. border of the Region. The photos may still need to be examined more closely to determine whether it was a hybrid.

A Tree Swallow lingered until Dec. 19 in *Wagoner*, OK (JM). A Clark's Nutcracker sighted Feb. 19 in *Sioux*, NE, was unusual (RCR, DJR). Twelve Com. Bushtits that pushed out onto the plains were discovered in *Morton*, KS, Jan. 2 (SP). A single bird was

noted Jan. 14 in *Scott*, KS (TS).

An extralimital Rock Wren spent the winter on the Ft. Gibson Dam (TR, m.ob); two noted Feb. 13 at Tenkiller L., *Sequoyah*, *Cherokee*, OK (MML, DC, KG) may be spin-offs from the population buildups of the last several years in w. Oklahoma. A Carolina Wren w. in *Morton*, KS, Jan. 2 was also outside its normal range (SP). A Canyon Wren discovered earlier in *Morton*, KS was still present Jan. 6 (SS). Several Sedge Wrens wintered in *Tulsa* and were observed Jan. 30-Feb. 14 (JW, PS *et al.*). Winter Wrens braved the snow in Fontenelle Forest, *Sarpy*, NE, Dec. 6 (MS) and persisted in *Buffalo*, NE, Jan. 24-30 (RH, LR), and *Dakota*, NE, Jan. 20-31 (BH).

Four Townsend's Solitaires wandered E to *Kearney*, NE (RH, LR). A surprise any time, a Varied Thrush graced *Scott*, KS, Jan. 14 (BC), while another visited a feeder in *Omaha* (JWv, m.ob). A maverick Gray Catbird that may have spent the winter in *Omaha* was seen Feb. 7-8 (WN). Among very few recent reports of Bohemian Waxwings was that of one Dec. 19 in *Riley*, KS (TC). Northern Shrikes were scarce in w. Nebraska (RCR, DJR), although a few made it into Kansas. Three Water Pipits were either tardy or wintering in *Keith*, NE, Dec. 19 (RCR, DJR).

A Solitary Vireo was again discovered in



**Part of a family of Trumpeter Swans in Osage County, Oklahoma, January 3, 1993. Photograph/Patricia Seibert.**

*McCurtain*, OK Jan. 2 (*vide* BH) and a second was reported from *Carter*, OK Dec. 24 (BF). Lingering was a Nashville Warbler Dec. 10 in *Sumner*, KS (*vide* DK). This winter also produced a few Com. Yellowthroats in *Tulsa* Feb. 14 & 27 (PS, JL *et al.*).

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A Pyrrhuloxia in *Morton*, KS, Jan. 1-Feb. 28 (JG, NJ) provided only the 2nd Kansas record. A Dickcissel, undoubtedly lost, was noted in *Osage*, OK, Dec. 19 (PH). Unusual in migration, but even more so in winter, were Green-tailed Towhees in *Scott*, KS, Jan. 1-23 (L&BR) and *Jefferson*, KS Dec. 19 (CH). A Rufous-sided Towhee staked a hardy attempt in *Antelope*, NE, Feb. 14 (MB). Likely one of the better finds of the season was a **Black-throated Sparrow** Nov. 30-Jan. 7 in *Johnston*, KS (P&BR, m.ob). Surprisingly, another was noted in *Dixon*, NE, Jan. 2-Feb. 28 (J&RJ, m.ob.). A flock of 110 Chipping Sparrows in *Comanche*, OK, Dec. 19 (JDT *et al.*) was exceptional; >60 were noted Jan. 2 in *McCurtain*, OK (*vide* BH). The one or two win-

tering in *Tulsa* were also unusual (DH, m.ob.). A Vesper Sparrow Dec. 20 in *Jefferson*, KS (GP) was tardy. LeConte's Sparrows appear to be having a population pulse, almost common in *Carter*, *Cleveland*, and *Comanche*, OK (JAG, BF). A Swamp Sparrow Dec. 19 in the *Wichita* Mts. was the first to be noted there (JAG). An undocumented report of a Golden-crowned Sparrow was received for *Jefferson*, KS, Dec. 2 (RR). A few Chestnut-collared Longspurs Feb. 17 in *Tulsa* (JW, ES) may have been early migrants. Among the few winter records of Brewer's Blackbirds for w. Nebraska was that of 30 birds noted Dec. 17 in *Garden* (RCR, DJR).

A Pine Grosbeak was duly reported Jan. 1-4 in *Geary*, KS (CO). Wintering Purple Finches continue to be relatively scarce, causing one to wonder about their interaction with House Finches, which have finally made it into s.e. Oklahoma (*vide* BH). Red Crossbills were fairly numerous in far w. Nebraska (RCR, DJR) but were scarce elsewhere, with only five reported Feb. 11, and one Feb. 15 in *Omaha* (JS, MJ). Common Redpolls made it s. to *Geary*, KS, Dec. 24 (DLS). Pine Siskins finally made an appearance across the Region this winter, after several years of scarcity; they were actually considered common in e. Kansas. A ♂ Lesser Goldfinch that turned up in *Jackson*, OK, Feb. 1 (EB) provided one of few winter records. Four Evening Grosbeaks Dec. 16 in *LeFlore*, OK (LA), one Dec. 16 in *Harrison*, NE (SD, RS), and one Jan. 24 in *Halsey*, NE (TB) were among the very few reported in the past several years.

**Observers [area editors in boldface]: KANSAS:** Ken Brunson, Ted Cable, Barbara Campbell, Joann Garrett, Chris Hobbs, Wayne Hochstetler, Pete Janzen, Nan Johnson, **Dan Kilby**, Geln Koontz, Dan LaShelle, **Lloyd Moore**, John Northrup (JNo), Chuck Otte, Sebastian Patti, Galen Pittman, Paul & Billie Rhudy, Leonard & Betty Rich, David Rintoul, Richard Rucker, Scott Seltman, Tom Shane, Max Thompson, Trish Wilds. **NEBRASKA:** Mark Brogie, Steve Dinsmore, Robin Harding, Bill Huser, Marilyn Jensen, Jan & Richard Johnson, Wanda Neaderhiser, **Babs Padelford**, Dorothy J. Rosche, **Richard C. Rosche**, B.J. Rose, Julie Schroeder, Mark Shubert, Ross Silcock, Jerry Toll, John Weaver (JWv). **OKLAHOMA:** Lief Anderson, Edith Bishop, Scott Buckner, Kenn Butte, Vicki Byre, David Chapman, Peter Dunne, Brush Freeman, Bonnie Gall, Karen Garrett, Joseph A. Grzybowski, Jim Harman, Berlin Heck, Paul Hendricks, Margaret Lindsey, **Jo Loyd**, **Louis McGee** (LMc), **Jeri McMahan**, Ina Mery, Steve Metz, Mike Mlodinow (MML), **John G. Newell**, Jimmie Norman, Mitchell Oliphant, Dan L. Reinking, Tom Roberts, Pat Seibert, Eleanor Seig, David Sibley, John Sterling (JSt), Jack D. Tyler, Jeff Webster (JWe), June Wilson (JWi), Jim Woodard.—**JOSEPH A. GRZYBOWSKI**, 1701 *Lenox*, Norman, OK 73069.

# TEXAS REGION

Greg W. Lasley and Chuck Sexton

It was a mild and wet winter over most of Texas. Coastal and south Texas were generally frost free. The Lower Rio Grande Valley and parts of west Texas were a bit drier than normal, but no real drought conditions were reported. The Panhandle, in fact, had an abundance of snow after several years of very little of the white stuff. Observers might have predicted an influx of northern and montane species, but quite the opposite occurred, with many late-lingering and overwintering species from the Panhandle southward.

A number of reporters speculated that the predominance of Pacific fronts, as opposed to Arctic air masses, may have been responsible for inhibiting the onset of a harsher winter, with its attendant avifaunal shifts. The continued presence of a sprinkling of western species at more easterly longitudes would appear to be symptomatic of the same large-scale phenomenon. The unprecedented influx of selected waterbirds from lower latitudes (e.g., Northern Jacana, Masked Duck) was almost certainly the result of wet and mild conditions in northeastern Mexico, having lasted nearly 2 years.

**Abbreviations:** Ft. Bliss (*Ft. Bliss sewage ponds, El Paso*); G.M.N.P. (*Guadalupe Mts. N.P.*); L.R.G.V. (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); S.S.W.T.P. (*Southside Water Treatment Plant, Dallas*); U.T.C. (*Upper Texas Coast*). Shortened names for respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges include Aransas, Attwater, Bentsen, Big Bend, Buffalo L.,

Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, Sabal Palm, and Santa Ana.

## LOONS TO IBISES

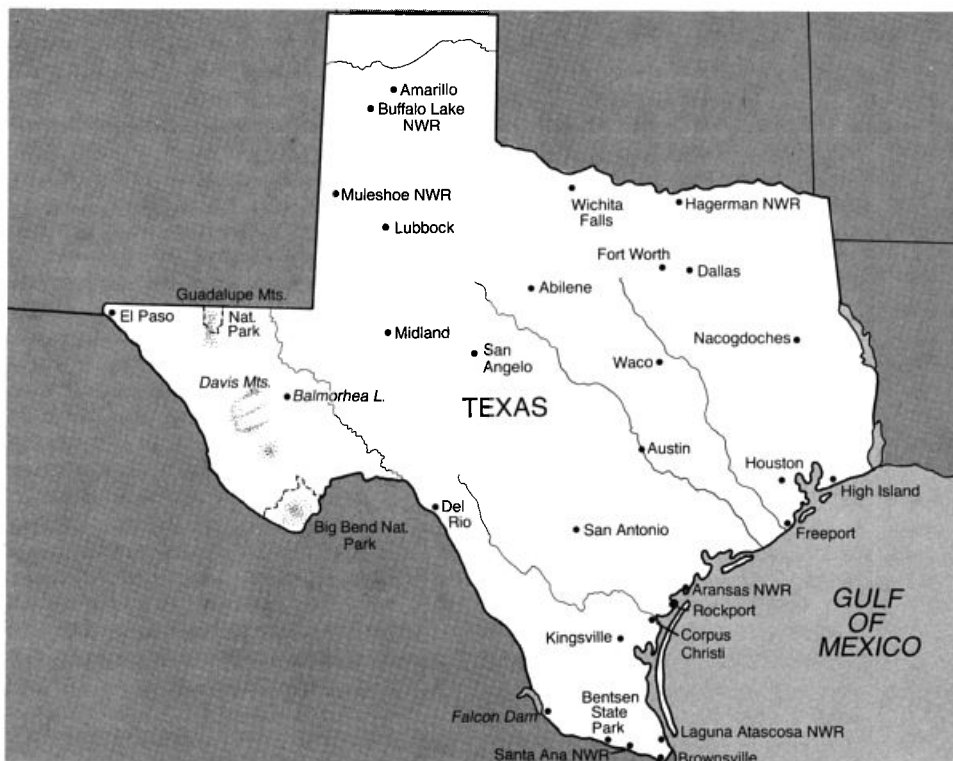
Red-throated Loons seemed to be all over n.e. Texas this season, with three at L. Murvaul, *Panola*, Dec. 27 (KN), two at L. Texoma Jan. 9+ (HG, LLe *et al.*), and another at L. Tawakoni Jan. 31 (†MWh, D&LB, DO, AV) joined by a 2nd bird by Feb. 7 (†RK, GH, JN). Pacific Loons have been reported in increasing numbers during recent winters, but this season only three were seen, two at L. Tawakoni Dec. 12–Feb 7 (†RK, JN, AV *et al.*) and one at Goose I., *Aransas*, Feb. 27 (†DW, JF *et al.*). Least Grebes were reported in “incredible” numbers from all of s. Texas and much of the coast. As many as 50 Least Grebes were on a single large pond in *San Patricio*, Feb. 8 (GL *et al.*), with numerous other reports of “dozens” at ponds in *Kleberg* and elsewhere in s. Texas (*fide PP*). Another Least Grebe wandered all the way up the coast to Houston during the fall, where it remained until Feb. 2± (PDH). Masked Boobies were reported off *Aransas*, with ≤6 sighted Jan. 16–17 (LL); this species is unusual in Texas during winter. Northern Gannets were reported in greater-than-normal numbers along the coast from Galveston s. to S. Padre I. A Brown Pelican wandered inland to *Irion*, where it was found exhausted and later returned to a rehab location (ToM). This bird provided only the 2nd Concho Valley record for the species. An extraordinary 10,350 Double-crested Cormorants were seen along a stretch of Mustang I., Dec. 26 (TA), while a single Double-crested overwintering at Lubbock was unusual (CSt). An Am. Bittern at Big Bend’s Rio Grande Village Dec. 30 (MR, GL) was unexpected. Recent Glossy Ibis re-

ports in Texas are concentrated in spring and early summer; however, two at Ft. Worth Dec. 19 (ph., †CH, MPW, TR) and another at Santa Ana Dec. 30–Jan. 2 (†JI *et al.*) would constitute unusual winter records, if accepted by the T.B.R.C.

## WATERFOWL

Fulvous Whistling-Ducks are rare in the L.R.G.V. during winter, so two at Santa Ana Dec. 31 were unexpected (JI), as was a group of 43 on Mustang I., Feb. 14 (TA). Several large concentrations of Black-Bellied Whistling-Ducks were noted along the coastal bend, with 1200 at one *Kleberg* site Dec. 21 (N&PP) and 2500 at L. Corpus Christi Feb. 16 (*fide SWh*) most noteworthy. Twenty-two Tundra Swans spent the winter in the Panhandle counties of *Terry* and *Yoakum* (AG, BR, SM), and two were at Boerne Dec. 22 (EW) and four in *Fayette* Dec. 26 (DN). An imm. swan at the Louisville Fish Hatchery, *Denton*, Dec. 28–Feb. 27 (†KL, m.ob.) was identified by many as a Trumpeter. If accepted by the T.B.R.C., this would represent the 3rd state record. The presence of 62 Ross’ Geese at Lorenzo, *Crosby*, Feb. 7 (ML) was unprecedented, where rarely are more than a half-dozen seen in a season (*fide CSt*). Canada Geese were scarce in s. Texas (*fide PP, AO et al.*), but 100,000 wintered in Lubbock (L.E.A.S.). Muscovy Ducks continue to be reported along the Rio Grande from Falcon Dam to Bentsen, with a high count of 19 seen at Salineno Dec. 17 (*fide TP*). Initial enthusiasm over the Jan. 13–16 observations of a White-cheeked Pintail near Angleton, *Brazoria*, was quickly doused upon the discovery of a waterfowl collector nearby, who had purchased a pair of “Bahama Ducks” shortly before the observations were made. The

T.B.R.C. currently accepts a 1978–1979 record of this species from Laguna Atascosa, but there have been recent rumblings about that bird as well. Certainly this season’s experience in *Brazoria* underscores the need to be extremely suspicious and cautious regarding all rare waterfowl reports. What appeared to be an Am. Wigeon × Gadwall hybrid was photographed in Lubbock Feb. 5–7 (ML). A Eur. Wigeon at Ft. Hancock Jan. 27 (†ph. BZ) was the 4th for that area. Greater Scaup were reported more often than normal at scattered locations in the s. two-thirds of the state. Lesser Scaup, whose numbers have been greatly reduced in the Baffin Bay system during years of brown tide, were present in near-normal numbers (±8000) on the Cayo del Grullo in late February (PP). No Oldsquaws were seen in Texas this winter, in contrast to reports for previous winters. A White-winged Scoter at L. Tawakoni Jan. 31 (MWh) provided a first winter record. The **Barrow’s**



Goldeneye present in La Porte, *Harris*, in December 1991, was seen sporadically at the same location Dec. 17–Jan. 15± (†BH, LLa).

#### S.A.

Texas experienced a virtual invasion of Masked Ducks, a species that is typically less than annual in occurrence. The first was found in Seadrift, *Calhoun*, Dec. 14–Jan. 3 (†ph., PH, JT, m.ob.), while 1–4 were seen at Brazos Bend S.P., Dec. 20+ (m.ob.). A Masked Duck sighted in Corpus Christi Dec. 20 (*fide* CC, †A&MC) was found dead Jan. 1 (\**fide* T.C.W.C.), while yet another was seen at Santa Ana Dec. 25–31 (†ph., GDL). The most incredible Masked Duck observation of the season, however, was 15–20 reported from a private *San Patricio* location in mid-January (TB). In order to document the record, other observers (CC, GL) were allowed onto the property Feb. 8, with 37 Masked Ducks counted and photographed on 2 large ponds, certainly the most ever observed at one time in the United States. An individual was found at Riviera Feb. 27 (†JG). Watch the spring summary for other records!

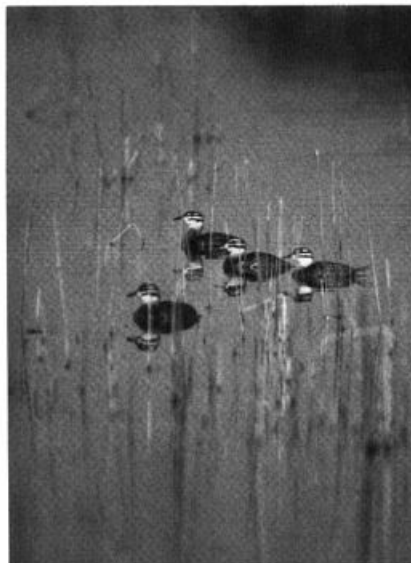
#### RAPTORS

Black-shouldered Kites turned up in several unexpected locations late this season; one at Nacogdoches Feb. 25 was the first for that area since 1979, while another near L. Electra, *Wilbarger*, Feb. 27 (RR) provided a 2nd local record. Black-shouldered Kites were present again in good numbers in the Kingsville and Falfurrias areas, after 2 years of few sightings (*fide* PP, AO). An impressive concentration of 13 Bald Eagles Jan. 15 in *Harris* (PDH) was unexpected. A Com. Black-Hawk was reported at Salineno Feb. 26–27 (JBu), and another was seen at nearby Zapata Feb. 27 (JI). A record 44 *Harris'* Hawks were found on the Kingsville CBC Dec. 20 (*fide* PP). Gray Hawks were seen at Salineno, Bentsen, and Santa Ana. A Swainson's Hawk at San Angelo Feb. 5 (ph., ML) was totally unexpected, while others at Falfurrias Feb. 9 & 13 were also unusual (AO, N&PP). A Zone-tailed Hawk was sighted in Bastrop during February (BF, EK *et al.*). Ferruginous Hawks were more widespread than normal in n.c. Texas (*fide* CH). A Crested Caracara was at an unusual location, along the coast in *Jefferson*, Dec. 23 (BG), while another at Tornillo, *Hudspeth*, Jan. 13 (ph. BZ) may be the first documented wild bird in that area of the Trans-Pecos. Banded Aplomado Falcons continued to be seen at Brownsville and Falfurrias (TP, AO *et al.*).

#### PRAIRIE-CHICKENS TO SHOREBIRDS

Ortego found 13 Attwater's Greater Prairie-Chickens near Refugio Feb. 20, while only five could be found at the Attwater refuge, *Colorado*, Feb. 19 (*fide* JHo). "Fair numbers" of this species were reported at a closed private site on the central coast (CC). Wild

Turkeys seemed more abundant than usual in the s. Texas Brush country around Kingsville, Riviera, and Falfurrias (*fide* PP). A colony of Black Rails was found on private property in *San Patricio*, Dec. 19 (A&MC *et al.*), an extraordinary find for that area, while a single Black Rail was flushed from a controlled burn in *Matagorda* Dec. 6 (JBe). Elsewhere along the coast, birders had little luck sighting the species, but the raptors seemed to find them: Ortego watched a Merlin with a Black Rail Jan. 10 in *Calhoun*, while an Am. Kestrel was eyed feasting on another at Bolivar Pen., during late February (WB). Common Moorhens, typically a local summer resident in n.c. Texas, could be found in good numbers wintering near S.S.W.T.P., *Dallas* (PS). Stehn reported 121 ad. and 15 imm. Whooping Cranes at Aransas this winter. This total of 136 birds represents a loss of 10 birds since last year, but there were apparently no losses this winter in Texas. A count of 151 Piping Plovers along Mustang I., Dec. 14 (TA) was noteworthy, as was a count of >50 Mt. Plovers near Edroy, *San Patricio*, Feb. 20 (E&NA). At least two Black-necked Stilts wintered at Doniphan Marsh, *El Paso*, for the 2nd year (BJ *et al.*); before last winter, there had been no winter records for the Trans-Pecos. A va-



Four Masked Ducks (of thirty-seven present) at one location in San Patricio County, Texas, February 8, 1993. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley.

grant so far north in winter was an Am. Avocet on a small playa near Crosbyton, *Crosby*, Feb. 7 (ML). The two N. Jacanas reported last fall from Falcon remained through Feb. 23±, but they were not the only ones to show up in Texas this season. Another was discovered near Seadrift, *Calhoun*, Dec. 10+, while yet another was at Santa Ana Feb. 12+ (JI, TP *et al.*). A few unusual shorebird records were furnished at the Trans-Pecos, including a Lesser Yellowlegs at Ft. Hancock Jan. 24–Feb. 13 (DE, BN, m.ob.), 77 Long-billed Curlews at Fabens Jan. 26–27 (BZ), and two W. Sandpipers and five Dunlins at Ft. Hancock Jan. 24–27 (DE, BN, BZ).



Juvenile Swainson's Hawk south of San Angelo, Texas, on February 5, 1993. Either a very rare wintering bird or a very early migrant. Photograph/Mark Lockwood.

#### GULLS

Franklin's Gulls, rare anywhere in the United States in mid-winter, were reported several times, with three Dec. 22 at Uvalde (AJO, EW), two in Lewisville in mid-January (LH, MR), and another at Ft. Hancock Jan. 24–Feb. 28 (DE, BN, BZ). Little Gulls seemed to turn up everywhere, with one adult at Waco Dec. 1–Jan. 31+ (†JMu, m.ob.), one to two (ad. and 2nd year) at White Rock L., *Dallas*, Feb. 5–27 (†R&NA, m.ob.), an adult at Cooper L., *Delta*, Feb. 13 (†MWh), and another adult the same day in s.e. *Dallas* (†EW). Details were received for two separate ad. Com. Black-headed Gulls, one seen in far n.e. Texas in *Bowie*, Jan. 2 & 20 (†CMI, D&DH) and another at close range at Drum Pt. on Baffin Bay, *Kleberg*, Feb. 28 (†AO). If accepted, these would represent the 5th and 6th Texas records. A first-winter Mew Gull was photographed at Ft. Hancock Jan. 26 (†BZ), representing the 2nd Trans-Pecos and 4th Texas records. The first- (or 2nd?) winter California Gull at L. Waco recorded in the fall report was seen through Jan. 17+ (*fide* FBu). Another first-winter California Gull was in San Antonio Jan. 5–9 (†ph., WS) while an adult was seen in *Victoria*, Feb. 2 (BO). A report of two Herring Gulls at Midland Dec. 12–17 (FW) was unusual. A first-winter Thayer's Gull studied at White Rock L., Jan. 24 (†CH, MR) would constitute the first documented record for n.c. Texas, if accepted. Now routine were ≥7 coastal Lesser Black-backed Gulls between Brownsville and Port Aransas. An unexpected record of this species was furnished by an adult seen in the e. Texas piney woods at L. Livingston, *Polk*, Dec. 29 (†DFi, DJ, NB). Single imm. Glaucous Gulls were at the Brownsville Dump Dec. 28–Jan. 2 (†ph., CH, JH, m.ob.), San Antonio Jan. 3–30 (†ph, WS), and Mustang I., Feb. 20–28 (†ph., TA, DW, JF). An ad. Great Black-backed Gull at Corpus Christi Dec. 31–Jan. 2

(+ph., A&MC, PI) was a rare find. A 3rd-winter Great Black-backed Gull was discovered in n.e. Texas in *Harrison*, Dec. 30 (+GLu, DBro). The bird relocated about 10 mi away, to Lake O'The Pines, where it remained Jan. 3-Feb. 2 (ph., JLu, PHa, HB, JD *et al.*, m.ob.). This record represents the first for Texas away from the coast.

#### DOVES TO NIGHTJARS

The White-winged Doves that nested in Lubbock last summer remained into winter; eight were found Dec. 19 (RE), while another visited a College Station feeder in January and February (CCa). A roost of >2000 White-wingeds was present in a residential block of n. Austin in December and January (*fide* CS). Inca Doves again wintered in Amarillo, and others were found in Vega, *Oldham*, Dec. 4 (RS) and Palo Duro Canyon Feb. 28 (KS). A Green Parakeet was at San Antonio's Calaveras L., Dec. 24-27 (WS), and the Groove-billed Ani seen in Dallas Dec. 24-26 was certainly a surprise find (CR, TGo, WP). A pair of Elf Owls again wintered at Bentsen and were calling there by early March (R&LG). A "tree full" of Long-eared Owls may occur in some areas of the country, but 10 found in a single tree in n.e. Texas in *Archer* was an unusual event (*fide* DMc)! The latest Com. Nighthawk lingered in San Antonio until Jan. 5± (WS).

#### HUMMINGBIRDS TO WOODPECKERS

Perhaps a larger smattering of hummingbirds overwintered this winter than in harsher years. The Sinton Broad-billed Hummingbird reported in the fall remained through Feb. 19 for a total of 99 days, the longest-staying Broad-billed ever found in Texas (L&MS). Records of Anna's Hummingbirds seemed a bit more numerous (5 birds) away from w. Texas. Small numbers of Buff-bellies reached the U.T.C. About seven Rufous, four Broad-tailed, and two *Archilochus* hummingbirds were reported in central, south, and coastal Texas. Observers differed over the identity of a *Selasphorus* seen at Salineno in January; it seemed to "fit the bill" for an Allen's (m.ob.). Another probable Allen's was in Houston, but detailed documentation or photos are still lacking. A Ringed Kingfisher at Welder Ref., Dec. 17 (CC) was noteworthy. Farther afield were three Ringed Kingfishers all season at Ft. Clark, *Kinney*, two at Mill Dam, Comfort Feb. 8 (*fide* SW), and another Jan. 27 on Independence Cr., *Terrell* (JK, KT). The latter record may represent the first for the Trans-Pecos. Red-bellied Woodpeckers again cropped up farther w. than normal; one was at Buffalo L. N.W.R. early in the season (DBI), while two others were found Jan. 3 in Briscoe (JR, RS, KS). Two Red-naped Sapsuckers were reported at Palmetto S.P., Jan. 28 (EK). A Williamson's Sapsucker remained at Utley until Dec. 6 (BF). Downy Woodpeckers seem to be moving W along c. Texas river-courses (TG); five were found in *Mason*, Jan. 2 (DF, DR, BFa). Other out-of-range Downy Woodpeckers included one along the San An-



**Downy Woodpeckers rarely approach the Mexican border, and this one provided a first county record at El Paso, Texas, on January 22, 1993. Photograph/Barry Zimmer.**

tonio R. near the coast Jan. 27 (CC) and one at El Paso Jan. 22-29, providing the first county record (BJ, ph. BZ).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

A carefully described Hammond's Flycatcher in McKittrick Canyon Feb. 8-27 (+JGe *et al.*) furnished a first G.M.N.P. winter record, while at least four Gray Flycatchers wintered at Big Bend's Rio Grande Village (PI, ph., GL, BW). A "Western" Flycatcher was photographed at Utley, *Bastrop*, just outside Austin, Dec. 22-24 (+TGP, DBo). This record represents the first for the super-species in c. Texas. Say's Phoebe made a widespread but sparse incursion into n. and e. parts of the state, with records as far-flung as *Randall*, *Potter*, *Palo Pinto*, *Harrison*, and *Goliad*. An E. Phoebe at Midland Feb. 4-20 (JMe *et al.*) provided one of only a few winter reports ever from that area. Tropical Kingbirds continued to be reported from their 2 *Cameron* outposts of recent seasons. Two late Scissor-tailed Flycatchers remained in Dallas on Christmas Day (B&CH). A Rose-throated Becard was seen sporadically at Santa Ana Jan. 2+ (*fide* JI, R&LG). Cave Swallows continue to be conspicuous in s. and parts of c. Texas during the winter. Two Cave Swallows in *Bastrop*, Jan. 9 (JA) were more unexpected. A Jan. 1 Barn Swallow at Aransas (PH) was early, as was a pair investigating a nest site in Kerrville Jan. 28 (J. Bry).

#### JAYS TO SHRIKES

At least one out-of-range Blue Jay spent much of the season in Kingsville (DO). The Carolina Chickadee first found in the fall was still present through January in Midland (*fide* FW), echoed by repeated reports of one or more others at Santa Ana during the period. Rock Wrens made news at several locations, with one wandering N to L. Arrowhead, *Clay*, Feb. 26 (RR), and another well out of range at Alazan W.M.A., *Nacogdoches*, Jan. 6-16 (DFi,

MM). Wolf reported that this is the first Rock Wren record for that area of the state. The first winter record of Carolina Wren in *Midland* was of one (or two?) Dec. 12 and Feb. 13 (FW, m.ob.). Elsewhere, several Carolina Wrens in the Panhandle spent the winter as well; one was found in Palo Duro Canyon Dec. 12 (KS) and Jan. 20 (RS), and two were in Caprocks Canyon, *Briscoe*, Jan. 3 (KS). Eastern Bluebirds enjoyed increased abundance along the U.T.C. in *Jefferson*, *Chambers*, and *Harris* (BG, GDL), with some observers reporting "more than they have ever seen before." Mountain Bluebirds and Townsend's Solitaires were extremely scarce in the Panhandle (KS) and in other areas of w. Texas as well. A lone Mt. Bluebird was unusually far e. at Canyon L., *Comal*, late December-Feb. 8 (CiR, ph., DH, DBe *et al.*). Reports of five Clay-colored Robins came from the L.R.G.V. (Santa Ana, Bentsen, McAllen) Dec. 17-Feb. 24 (m.ob.). Gray Catbirds occasionally turn up in winter in c. and s. Texas, but one in the Panhandle discovered at Palo Duro Canyon Dec. 19+ (TMa, JR, m.ob.) constituted an amazing record. Three Sage Thrashers were observed both Jan. 24 and Feb. 4 (AO) in the Falfurrias area, where even a single winter sighting of this species is noteworthy. Furnishing a new record for the L. Tawakoni area was a Curve-billed Thrasher in *Rains*, Dec. 18-Jan. 3 (ph., JH). One of the outstanding rarities of the season was a **Bohemian Waxwing** discovered in a flock of Cedar Waxwings at Palo Duro Canyon Jan. 28 (+MEM, JJo); there are currently only 3 accepted Texas records. Loggerhead Shrike continues to be quite abundant in s. Texas, with plenty of wintering birds and a growing number of year-round residents (PP *et al.*). This trend is of interest, particularly considering the species' decline in other areas of the country.

#### VIREOS, WARBLERS

A Hutton's Vireo at Ft. Bliss Jan. 14 (ph., BZ) provided *El Paso's* first winter record. Archer reported a Yellow Warbler Jan. 9 and a Blue-winged Warbler Jan. 9-10 in *Medina*. A very unusual warbler record was that of a Lucy's at Big Bend Ranch, *Presidio*, Dec. 9 (+JGe). A Black-throated Blue Warbler spent much of the winter at Sabal Palms. A Black-throated Green was in Corpus Christi Dec. 3 (CC), while a Townsend's hung around with a couple of White-collared Seedeaters at San Ygnacio during February. Pine Warblers drew attention at a few locales where they are uncommon to rare, including one at L. Pat Cleburne, *Johnson*, Jan. 9 (CE), one at Midland late December-Feb. 13 (FW), one at Aransas Pass all winter (E&NA), and another at Kingsville Feb. 8 (PP). An Am. Redstart was at Brazos Bend S.P., *Ft. Bend*, Dec. 26 (PDH). Prothonotary Warblers very rarely make appearances in Texas during the winter season, but one was seen this season in Corpus Christi Dec. 15-18 (+WJ). Details of a Gray-crowned Yellowthroat reported at Santa Ana Dec. 30 and Jan. 2 (JI) have been submitted to

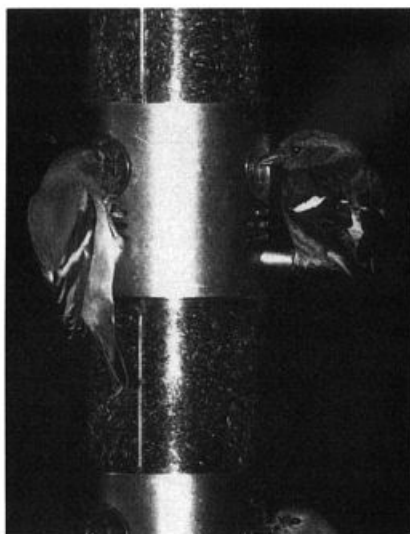


the T.B.R.C. It has been 6 years since the last report of a **Rufous-capped Warbler** in Texas and >10 years separate the last sighting by multiple observers. We received 2 reports this season from different areas of the state by knowledgeable observers. The first was reported Dec. 19 near Corpus Christi (†HS, GA) and the 2nd was seen on Dolan Cr. in *Val Verde*, Jan. 10 (†JK, KT). If accepted by the T.B.R.C., these would represent the 7th and 8th Texas records.

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A W. Tanager near Lufkin Nov. 21 (JPu) provided the first record for *Angelina*. Pyrrhuloxias were in increased abundance in Kingsville and other areas of s. Texas; 484 were tallied at Kingsville Dec. 20 (*vide* PP). Single Pyrrhuloxias, that "notorious northern wanderer in winter" (KS), showed up n. of Amarillo, *Potter*, Jan. 17 (TMa) and Palo Duro Canyon Feb. 7 (PA) & 13 (TMa). Another Pyrrhuloxia wintered in Ft. Worth Dec. 26+, providing the first documented record for *Tarrant* (IGK, m.ob., ph.). The species was encountered up the coast to Houston during the season. Black-headed Grosbeak is a very rare vagrant to the piney woods, so individuals in *Nacogdoches*, Dec. 26–Mar. 6 (DW) and s. *Angelina* were of interest. An out-of-range Olive Sparrow was in *San Jacinto*, Dec. 29 (DP, RM). Canyon Towhees continued their fall lowland invasion with unusual numbers present in odd riparian habitats in Big Bend (GL) and in *El Paso* and *Hudspeth* (BZ). The obligatory White-collared Seedeaters were seen at San Ygnacio, but one was also reported at Falcon Dam Feb. 15 (SWh). After a good season last year, many observers across the s. half of the state believed that sparrow numbers were spotty or down this winter. By contrast, Haynie reported from n.c. Texas that "winter sparrows were average in numbers to well above average." A stray Rufous-crowned Sparrow, the first for *Dallas*, was seen Dec. 24–Feb. 21 (ph., HK). Wolf reported higher numbers of Chipping Sparrows than usual in far e. Texas. A Black-throated Sparrow photographed in Ft. Worth Dec. 18–Jan. 6 (GC, LB *et al.*) established a first *Tarrant* record, while another in *Victoria*, Jan. 24–Feb. 7 (ph., BB) was new for that county. Unprecedented were 26 Sage Sparrows at Ft. Bliss Dec. 1 (BZ). This uncommon and local winter resident normally requires some searching to find one or two in a day in that area. Gee reported good numbers of this species banded at Big Bend Ranch, and a lone bird was recorded Jan. 26 at L. Balmorhea (CM, CeC), where it is rare. Savannah Sparrows seemed markedly down on the U.T.C. (DBr, GDL) but were seen in abundance in s. Texas (*vide* PP). Two Henslow's Sparrows were seen in *Shelby*, Dec. 27 (†DW), and 6 reports of eight Henslow's Sparrows came in from *Harris* during the period. Numbers of LeConte's Sparrows were higher than normal on the U.T.C. (*vide* GDL), whereas O'Neil could only find one all season at Falfurrias. McCown's Longspurs were abundant in some areas of the Panhan-

dle; several thousand could be found in a day at Buffalo L. (KS *et al.*), and ≥1500 Lapland Longspurs were seen in Hansford Jan. 23 (KS). It was also a good longspur winter in n.c. Texas; unlike last year, roughly 300 Smith's Longspurs returned to fields near L. Tawakoni. A Yellow-headed Blackbird at L. Tawakoni Feb. 6 (MWh) provided a first winter record for that area. Palmer continues to become cautiously optimistic regarding the numbers of Bronzed Cowbirds in and around Kingsville, where numbers are far lower than 10 years ago. A Scott's Oriole at Kickapoo Feb. 13 (ML) provided the area's earliest record by >2 months. Winter finches had an excellent year in most areas of the state. The one exception was Purple Finch, reported in low numbers almost everywhere. House Finches continue to spread in e. Texas, with multiple observations this season in *Victoria*, *Gregg*, and *Harris*. House Finches were also



**Female White-winged Crossbill (with American Goldfinches) at Aledo, Texas, December 16, 1992. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley.**

reported at Welder and College Station, locations where they are still rare. Unusual records of Red Crossbills included one in Flower Mound, *Denton*, Jan. 23–27 (ME, WP) and another in *Bastrop*, Jan. 27+ (BF). Totally unexpected was a **White-winged Crossbill** that visited a yard in Aledo, *Parker*, Dec. 12–Feb. 27; the pioneer supplied just the 3rd record for the state (†J&TN, ph., CH, GDL, GL, m.ob.). Pine Siskins and American Goldfinches were in very large numbers everywhere except deep s. Texas. A small flock of Evening Grosbeaks was found in Ft. Worth Dec. 19, rounding out an amazing finch year in that area (MS *et al.*)

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## IDAHO-WESTERN MONTANA REGION

Thomas H. Rogers

Winter was very cold and snowy in most areas of the Region, with snow cover lasting throughout the period. Persistent snows gave the impression of abundant moisture, but low temperatures kept the snow from settling and melting. There were exceptions, with Red Rock Lakes NWR, Lima, MT, reporting average weather conditions and Helena, MT, somewhat above-normal precipitation, though very low temperatures. Salmon, ID, had no more than 7 inches of snow cover at any time. Generally deficient snowfall presaged a hot, dry summer in this Region, which depends so much on moisture stored in winter.

### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

A Com. Loon froze into the ice on the Clark Fork R. just e. of Missoula, MT, a few days after the CBC there (*vide* PLW). A Pied-billed Grebe on the Bitterroot R. s. of Missoula, MT, apparently made the latilong's first winter record (TT, CT). *Forty* Horned Grebes were on Coeur d'Alene L. at Harrison, ID, Dec. 26 (DS), and nine appeared at C.J. Strike Dam, Bruneau, ID, Jan. 27 along with seven Eared Grebes and three W. Grebes (MC, FK). A W. Grebe was sighted on Coeur d'Alene L. Dec. 26 (SW). Two Red-necked Grebes were at Harrison Dec. 5, and six were found on Hayden L., Hayden, ID, next day (C.A.S.). Two Am. White Pelicans showed up on the Bitterroot R., just s. of Missoula, Dec. 3 (JH). One was on the Snake R. below Am. Falls Dam, Power, ID, Jan. 9, and four were there in late February (CHT). A Double-crested Cormorant was seen on the Missouri R. below Canyon Ferry Dam e. of Helena, MT, Jan. 1 for a rare winter sighting (BN). On the ice at Harrison were 41 Great Blue Herons Feb. 7 (JW). The Boise R. s.e. of Boise, ID had a Green-backed Heron Dec. 27 (MC, FK) and Feb. 22 (JG).

Coeur d'Alene L. had  $\leq 40$  Tundra Swans, and nearby Thompson L. hosted several more (DS, SW, JN). A Trumpeter Swan with a green neck band was sighted on L. Helena Jan. 7 (D.F.W.P.), subsequently seen through Feb. 6; two others were identified there Feb. 13 (*vide* GH). More than 30 were counted on Am. Falls Res. Jan. 15 and Feb. 15 (CHT). Red Rock L. N.W.R. terminated winter feeding of waterfowl; the program worked well, with all Trumpeter Swans reported leaving by early January and a few returning for short visits. (In previous winters, 400–800 swans had remained to feed.) Wintering duck numbers also dropped markedly there as a result, with  $< 50$  remaining (KN). Twelve Greater White-fronted Geese and two Snow Geese showed up at Hamilton, MT Dec. 5 (CB). Up to 150 Wood Ducks frequented a pond in Lewiston, ID, throughout the period (C.B.), and a male competed with other ducks and gulls for handouts of bread at Coeur d'Alene's City Beach in January and February. Mallards numbered 5000± at Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, ID, before the early December freeze-up (JR). A ♂ Cinnamon Teal wintered on a pond near Pocatello, ID (CHT) and one was reported Dec. 2 at Hamilton, MT (CB). A Gadwall was at Metcalf N.W.R.,

Stevensville, MT, Jan. 30 (CB). Ponds and parks along the river at Boise hosted three Eur. Wigeons December–February (MC, FK, DT). A lone Canvasback appeared on Flathead L. *Flathead*, Jan. 17 (CB). An ad. ♂ Greater Scaup was viewed at Harrison Jan. 9, and two imm. males and eight females were at the same locale Feb. 6+ (KD, DS). Oldsquaw sightings in Idaho included one on the Snake R. at Grandview Jan. 27 (MC, FK), one overwintering in Idaho Falls Dec. 8–Jan. 30 (CHT, m.ob.), and two in Magic Valley near Hagerman Dec. 20 and Feb. 28 (*vide* CHT). In Montana one was seen just below Hauser Dam n. of Helena (CJ). One to two Barrow's Goldeneyes were seen in the Coeur d'Alene L.-St. Maries, ID, area in January–February (DS, IS). A late ♀ Ruddy Duck was sighted at Harrison Dec. 5 (DS).

### HAWKS TO GULLS

Sixteen Bald Eagles were on the ice at Harrison Feb. 7 (JW). Single "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawks appeared in four places in Idaho's latilong 2 in December and February (DS, IS, PG, SW, JT, SHS) and near Potlatch, ID, Dec. 25 (ZP). One was seen at Boise Jan. 25 (MC, FK). A partial albino "head of Krider's but body, tail, etc., of adult Red-tail" was photographed at Nampa, ID, Feb. 14 (*vide* DJ). Single Golden Eagles were sighted at 3 localities, also in Idaho's latilong 2 (DS, IS, CV, WH, SR). Merlins were reported as "regular"; Peregrines, three; Gyrfalcons, 13; and Prairie, one.

Wild Turkeys appeared to be on the increase in Idaho's latilong 2, and a flock of 11 N. Bobwhites survived by seeking shelter in a heated stock barn (DS)! A Virginia Rail at Hamilton was apparently wintering (FN). A Com. Snipe was found Dec. 30 near Potlatch (ZP). Coeur d'Alene L., close to the city, had a Mew Gull Jan. 29+ (KD, DS, WH, CV, GHa, SHS, JW). Three more were at the Polson, MT, dump in December, and another was reported to the University of Montana (\*U.M., DH, JM, PLW). Herring Gulls reached a peak of 600 at Coeur d'Alene L. in late December, and 1–3 Thayer's Gulls remained throughout the period (DS, PG, KD, DHo, DS, JW). Single Thayer's were observed at Boise Jan. 10 and in February, as



well as at C.J. Strike Res., Jan. 17 (MC, FK). "More than one" was seen at the Polson dump (DH, JM) and one Dec. 10 (\*PLW). A lone Iceland Gull appeared at the Coeur d'Alene landfill Dec. 19 (DS). Single Glaucous-winged gulls were sighted at the Coeur d'Alene landfill (DS, KD, CV, WH). Glaucous Gulls appeared at that landfill, 2 ad. and 5 imm. the highest number (KD, DS, DHO, CV, WH, JW, C.A.S.).

#### OWLS TO WRENS

Barn Owl observations are becoming routine in the Lewiston-Moscow, ID, vicinity. Three appeared s. of Moscow Dec. 16 (KD). A pair was sighted at Nampa Feb. 14 (MC, FK). Snowy Owls appeared all winter in the Lower Flathead Valley s. of Flathead L., (PLW), and 2 sightings were made in the vicinity of Kalispell-Somers, MT (DC). Singles were seen w. of Idaho Falls and near Stanley, ID (*vide* CHT), as was an individual s. of Genesee, ID (KD, m.ob.). A N. Hawk Owl was reported at Niarada, MT, before Christmas—Feb. 3+ (DH). A Great Gray Owl appeared at Bigfork, MT, Jan. 10 (DC); another was calling at Hamilton Feb. 6 (CB). A N. Saw-whet Owl called incessantly at Victor, MI, Feb. 6 (CB), and two were heard s. of Princeton, ID, the week of Feb. 8 (KD). The prize of the season was a **Red-bellied Woodpecker** 5 mi s.w. of Coeur d'Alene Oct. 2—Jan. 23 (TM, MM, GHa, SHS, DS), Idaho's first; St. Maries had a "Yellow-shafted" N. Flicker Feb. 13 (DS). An unusual sighting was a flock of  $\pm 60$  Horned Larks on Rathdrum Prairie, Kootenai, ID, Feb. 23 (PG), as was a flock of 89 at Missoula Feb. 16 (DH). A Blue Jay was identified in Moscow Dec. 8 (CG) and Dec. 17 (KD). Chestnut-backed Chickadees were reported at several localities in Kootenai, ID (DS, SHS, SW, JW) and in the Potlatch, ID, vicinity (ZP). Single White-breasted Nuthatches were found at St. Maries (a female throughout the period); at Rose L., ID, Jan. 24 (DS), at Cataldo, ID, Dec. 19 (SW), and in the Potlatch area (one or two) (ZP). Bewick's Wrens keep moving N in Idaho, where two males were seen at St. Maries Jan. 24+ (DS).

#### BLUEBIRDS TO FINCHES

A Mt. Bluebird frequented the University of Montana campus, Missoula, late December—February (*vide* PLW). The Trout Farm near Pocatello spawned a Hermit Thrush Dec. 19 (CHT). A ♀ Varied Thrush at Boise Feb. 26 (MC, FK) was unusual. Four Am. Robins appeared at Kerr Dam near Polson Jan. 17 (CB). A N. Shrike near Boise Feb. 28 was noteworthy (DJ). A late Loggerhead Shrike appeared Dec. 10 along Simco Road, 25 mi e. of Boise (MC, FK). Bohemian Waxwing distribution was spotty—abundant in some places, scarce in others. A Rufous-sided Towhee seen Jan. 6 provided Helena's first winter record (VF). A Fox Sparrow was carefully observed at a Hamilton feeder Dec. 21 (CB *et al.*). A Lincoln's Sparrow appeared at Boise Dec. 29 (MC, FK), and a Swamp Spar-



**Male Barrow's Goldeneye at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in February 1993. Photograph/Dan Svingen.**

row responded to a tape of its song at Bruneau Dunes S.P., Dec. 28 (BH), and two or three were noted at Trueblood W.M.A., Grandview, ID, December—January (MC, FK, DT). Two White-throated Sparrows wintered at Boise, as did a Harris' Sparrow (BB, MC, FK, DT). The Missoula area had a Harris' Feb. 27 (VV).

Single Lapland Longspurs were sighted n. of Somers Jan. 9 (DC), with Horned Larks near Idaho Falls Dec. 10 (BH), with larks at Pocatello Dec. 20 (CHT, DT), and 15 mi e. of Boise Jan. 12 (MC, FK). A flock of 40 Snow Buntings was observed near Idaho Falls Dec. 10 (BH); another flock alighted near Pocatello Jan. 10 (CHT, DT). Singles were seen in the Boise area Jan. 12 and Feb. 15 (MC, FK). A lone bird was found on the Lewiston grade n. of Lewiston Jan. 10 (CV).

Three Rusty Blackbirds accompanied Red-winged and Brewer's blackbirds 3 mi n.w. of St. Maries. Apparently present Dec. 5+, they were, finally, positively identified Feb. 6 (DS, KD, m.ob.). Only two reports of Cassin's Finches came in: 10 in the Cataldo area Dec. 19 (SHS) and a sighting in the Missoula area, where House Finches were reported as the most common bird in the city (PLW). Red Crossbills were reported only once, near Potlatch in early February (ZP). Common Redpolls (75–100) were reported near Cavendish, ID, Feb. 8 (WHO, EHO) but were uncommon elsewhere. A Hoary Redpoll was observed near Missoula Jan. 22 (TT, CT, HVW, *vide* PLW), and three were reported at Elkhorn Village, ID, Feb. 3 (MC, FK). Evening Grosbeaks were sparsely reported and noticeably absent at many feeders in the Kalispell area (DC).

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## IDAHO-WESTERN MONTANA REGION Summer 1992

*Thomas H. Rogers*

June in the Region was abnormally hot and dry in parts of Idaho, but w. Montana fared better, with total precipitation generally above normal, though mostly concentrated at mid-month and at the month's end. July was actually cooler than in June in many places! Although precipitation totals were above normal in many areas, the distribution was limited to the first 12 days and the third week. Total precipitation in the Region for the year was still deficient due to the previous winter's low snow pack in the mountains. The effects of water lack in the Region probably will become better known by early Autumn.

**Abbreviations:** B.B.S. (*Breeding Bird Survey*); C.G. (*Campground*).

#### GREBES TO IBISES

Three pairs of Red-necked Grebes incubated at Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, ID, until mid-July, when they left for unknown reasons (JR). One of the species was on the Clearwater R. at Lewiston, ID, July 23 (LL). Another, a nesting bird, was found on Silver L., Harri-man S.P., Island Park, ID, June 18 (CT); juv. birds were later noted there and on another pond in the park (JT). Nearby Island Park Res. yielded >50 Eared Grebe nests, 275 adults and  $\geq 100$  nests of W. Grebes, and two Clark's Grebes June 19 (CT). Lake Helena, Helena, MT, had nests of 40 Eared Grebes, 90 of W. Grebes, and two of Clark's Grebes, but strong winds disrupted the attempts perhaps 100 percent, though four imm. Westerns were seen later. Thus, the lake appears not to be sheltered enough for consistent grebe reproduction (GH). A Clark's Grebe near Salmon,

ID June 14 was Hadley Roberts's first observation of the species.

A Great Egret appeared at Warm Springs, MT, in late July (GG). Single Great Egrets were seen at Am. Falls Res., Pocatello, ID, and on the nest at Mud L. W.M.A., Hamer, ID; two were found at Market L. W.M.A., Roberts, ID (CT). Green-backed Herons on the Snake R. near Blackfoot, ID, were suspected of nesting again this year (LB). A Black-crowned Night-Heron July 14 at Kootenai N.W.R. for the refuge's first sighting (JR). Six White-faced Ibis were viewed at Camas N.W.R. Hamer, ID, June 11 (BM, SS).

#### WATERFOWL TO BOBWHITE

Trumpeter Swan production at Red Rock L. N.W.R., Lima, MT, was slightly above average, with 73 cygnets counted in the Centennial Valley July 22 (KN). Lake Helena had two beginning July 16 (Jeff Herbert). Canada Goose production at Kootenai N.W.R. was low, with only 80 goslings fledged. High winds had damaged nests on artificial platforms (JR). Young Wood Ducks were noted at Lewiston, apparently fledged from nest boxes placed by the Army Corps of Engineers (LL). Lily L. along Hwy. 12, 10 mi. e. of Lolo Pass on the Idaho-Montana border June 21 provided a ♂ Green-winged Teal, for a latilong first (PW). That lake also had a latilong first for Ring-necked Ducks July 31 with a brood of eight plus eight or 10 other adults of the species (BB, PW). McDonald Cr., Glacier N.P. had a brood of 23 Harlequin Ducks June 17 (BM, SS). The upper St. Joe R.-Marble Cr. areas e. of St. Maries, ID, had 24 broods (DS), and production along the tributaries of Priest and Pend Oreille Lakes, n. ID, was twice that of last year (FC). Lower St. Mary L. just e. of Glacier N.P. had a brood of eight Com. Goldeneyes and five subad. ♂ Barrow's Goldeneyes, June 18 (BM, SS). Breeding pairs of ducks at Kootenai N.W.R. totaled 472, well below the normal 700± production, estimated at 900, was correspondingly off. Mallards were the principal nester, with Gadwalls, Wood Ducks, and Com. Goldeneyes following, in that order (JR).

The pair of Bald Eagles whose nest was blown down at Kootenai N.W.R. in spring had built another nest nearby, toward the end of July (JR). A pair at Red Rock L. N.W.R. fledged two young, July 10± (KN). These birds seem to be well established along the Missouri R. through Wold Cr. Canyon n. of Helena, MT; a pair seen there June 18 was suspected of nesting (EH). A survey in Targhee N.F., Fremont, ID found at least 16 active N. Goshawk nests (SP). Seven broods of Wild Turkeys were observed near Fernan L. e. of Coeur d'Alene and at St. Maries, ID (DS). Three or four N. Bobwhites were calling at Firth, ID (BH). A brood of California Quails was sighted 5 mi. S. of Coeur d'Alene, ID (DB).

#### RAILS TO TERNS

A Virginia Rail was calling at Camas N.W.R., June 11 (BM, SS). Sandhill Cranes apparently



Female Red-bellied Woodpecker at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, December 31, 1992. First state record. Photograph/Dan Svingen.

were still nesting in the area from Three Forks to Belgrade, MT, where eight were seen June 18 (EH). A lone Whooping Crane, first seen at Red Rock L. N.W.R. May 14, stayed throughout the period. It was one from the Grays L., ID, foster-rearing project that has summered at Red Rock for the past 3 years (KN). A breeding-plumaged Black-bellied Plover and two Semipalmated Plovers appeared at Indian Cr. s.e. of Boise, ID, July 21 (MC, FK). Three Whimbrels appeared with migrating Marbled Godwits near Am. Falls Dam in s. ID (CT). Two Solitary Sandpipers were found near Market L. W.M.A., Roberts, ID, July 21 (BH). Indian Cr. Res. s.e. of Boise had two Semipalmated Sandpipers July 21 (MC, FK). Mann L. e. of Lewiston Orchards, ID, hosted two Short-billed Dowitchers June 2 (LL). Two Wilson's and three Red-necked phalaropes were at Indian Cr. Res., July 21 (MC, FK). A northbound flock of Red-necked was noted at Market L., June 5 (BH), and flocks were showing up on Am. Falls Res., July 25 (CT). A Franklin's Gull was sighted at Lewiston June 21 (CV). A Caspian Tern showed up at Missouri Headwaters S.P. near Three Forks, MT, June 10 (BM, SS). Black Terns were seen at Kootenai N.W.R. in May and June but departed quickly, leaving only a few in July. Apparently none nested for the 2nd consecutive year there (JR).

#### OWLS TO WARBLERS

Noteworthy was the sighting of a Barn Owl near McCannon, ID, July 16 (CT). A W. Screech-Owl was calling along the St. Maries R., St. Maries, June 24 (DS). A pair of Barred Owls behaved very territorially in the Centennial Mts. n. of Spencer, ID, July 9 (SP, CT). Sagehen Res. near Ola, ID, had two July 14 (MC). One was calling at Salmon L. near Seeley Lake, MT May 27 (KA). An ad. Great Gray Owl with two young was sighted in the upper meadows of Marsh Cr., ca. 12 mi n.w. of Stanley, ID, July 11 (LH). Two Black Swifts

were seen at Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, MT, June 15, and 250 were at the National Bison Range, Moiese, MT, June 15-16 (BM, SS). Hummingbird numbers at Troy, MT, were high, with >400 banded (KB). A Cordilleran Flycatcher sang at Palisades C.G. s.w. of Red Lodge, MT, June 14 (BM, SS). A nest of this species was found at Benewah L. near St. Maries (DS). A well-documented Great Crested Flycatcher was sighted in Paradise Valley s. of Livingston, MT, July 12, apparently the state's 3rd (DT). A Cassin's Kingbird was found near Mud Lake W.M.A., June 20, for a rare sighting (CT *et al.*).

A White-breasted Nuthatch was observed nest-building at 6000-ft. elevation on Sawtell Pk. n. of Island Park, ID, June 18 (BK, JT). A ♂ Bewick's Wren was still singing and displaying on territory at Benewah L., June 13 (DS). A N. Mockingbird was identified about 1 mi s.e. of E. Helena, MT, June 10 (BM, SS).



Immature Harris' Sparrow at Boise, Idaho, in January 1993. Photograph/Mark R. Collie.

In Glacier N.P., a ♂ Tennessee Warbler was singing along McDonald Cr. near Appar June 17 (BM, SS), and another was singing along the same creek near Avalanche Cr., June 18 (EH). A Bay-breasted Warbler was identified at Appar June 10-11 (AB, *fide* PW), where a pair was found June 17-18 (EH, SSc) for the latilong's first records. An Ovenbird sang near Palisades C.G. near Red Lodge C.G., June 14 (BM, SS). A N. Waterthrush was singing near the dam at Island Park Res., ID, June 18 (CT). Yellow-breasted Chats were seen in 2 locations along the Wolf Cr. Canyon stretch of the Missouri R., June 16 (EH). A drop in hatching-year warblers was noted in the Troy, MT, vicinity (KB).

#### SPARROWS TO FINCHES

A Blue Grosbeak showed up on a B.B.S. near Preston, ID, in early June (JTr). A Clay-colored Sparrow sang near Three Forks, MT, June 10, and one was seen near Cut Bank C.G., Glacier N.P., June 19 (BM, SS). Several sightings of Lark Buntings occurred in s.e.

Idaho: one in the Island Park areas in mid-June (BH); one near Tetonia, ID (*vide* CT), and males and females s. of Idaho Falls, ID, July 26 (BK, JT). At the latter spot, the next day, females and/or immatures were noted, possibly indicating a nesting group (CT). The species, typically seen spasmodically in c. Montana, appeared in a few localities: Canyon Ferry Res. e. of Helena May 23 (CJ *et al.*); near Belgrade June 3; and on the Belgrade B.B.S., June 7 (DSu); another was found near Three Forks June 8 (GH). A Grasshopper Sparrow was sighted near Mud L. W.M.A., June 20 (CT *et al.*), as was a single individual near Hells Gate Park C.G. near Lewiston June 6 (CB). A Lincoln's Sparrow was on territory at Marble Cr., June 27 (DS).

Bobolinks apparently bred successfully again in the Pocatello, ID, area; several were found on nearby Ft. Hall Indian Res., June 15 (*vide* CT). Common Grackles were reported breeding at Polson, MT (JRo). Small flocks of Rosy Finches were found on the snowfields s. of Borah Pk. near Chilly, ID, July 31 (CT). Flocks of ca. 10 and 30 White-winged Crossbills were encountered in the Sapphire Mts. e. of Anaconda, MT, June 15 (BM, SS). June 20 a pair of Lesser Goldfinches was found along Mink Cr. Rd. s. of Pocatello, where they bred last year. They were also heard at Market L. W.M.A. and near Pocatello (CT).

**Addenda:** A Clark's Grebe was identified at Metcalf N.W.R. May 9 (SB) DB, CH). A Harris' Sparrow frequented a feeder at Libby, MT, during the spring period (*vide* DSk).

**Observers cited [subregional editors in bold-face]:** Kathleen Anderson, Bill Ballard, Dale Beeks (DB), Linda Beidleman, Ann Belamy, Sharon & Dan Browder (Dbr), Kay Burk, Canyon Birders (C.B.), Frances Cassirer, Pat Cole, Mark Collie, Gary Gallagher, Lucinda Haggas, Brad Hammond, Ed Harper, Cal Henry, Jeff Herbert, **George Holton**, Cedron Jones, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Koliner**, Barbara Kracher, Louise La Voie, Bob Machover, Kenneth Niethammer, Susan Parla, Jimmie Reynolds (JR), **Hadley Roberts**, Jim Rogers (JRo), Starr Saphir (SS), Susan Scott (SSc), Don Skaar (DSk), Dan Sullivan (DSu), Dan Svingen (DS), Drew Thate, Joel Tinsley (JT), **Charles Trost** (CT), Jack Trotter (JTt), Carole Vande Vorde, **Philip Wright**—Thomas Rogers, 10820 E. Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206-4894.

## MOUNTAIN WEST REGION

Hugh E. Kingery

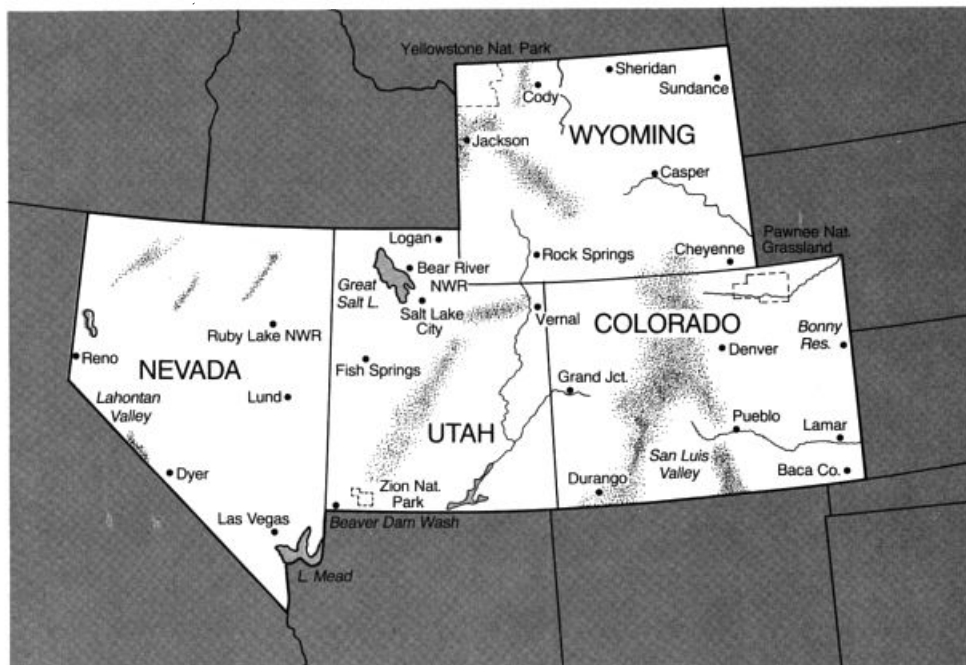
Baikal Teals, Dunlins, Long-billed Thrashers, Pine and Palm warblers, and Ovenbirds—a remarkable set of out-of-place species—wintered, or tried to, in the Denver area this year. Benign weather could not have engendered this gallimaufry. The fall was cold, the winter snowy. Faulty internal compasses and satisfactory food supply may explain some of them. What else? The winter was a “droughtbuster” (LN). Nevada's state climatologist said that 2 winters worth of snow came in one, but the state still needs to find another 4 winters. “Nevada's sponge isn't full yet” (JJ). “Everyone waits with great anticipation to see the generous snowpack translate into wildlife habitat this summer. But reservoir storage is so low that systems will absorb much of this year's runoff, making it hard to predict how much improvement in wetland conditions will be realized this year” (LN). In Utah, Duck Cr., e. of Cedar City, had 340 inches of snow. Thirty inches of snow made the roads to the s.e. side of Great Salt L. impassable. Regional observers found fewer birds; the shortness of this column reflects that scarcity.

**Abbreviations:** L.L.B.L. (*Longmont/Lyons/Berthoud/Loveland area, CO, using Foothills Audubon Club records*); G.S.L. (*Great Salt L.*); I.P.W.C. (*Indian Peaks, CO, Winter Bird Count*); S.S.G.L. (*South Shore, Great Salt L.*); 1st Lat. (*first latilong record [a latilong is outlined by one degree each of latitude and longitude and measures about 50 by 70 mi ]*); \*ph. (*photograph on file with Reg. Ed.*); †(*written description on file with R.E.*); ‡(*written description on file with, and subject to approval of, state and local records committee*).

### PELICANS TO DUCKS

Two Brown Pelicans wintered at L. Mead, NV—birds that had arrived last summer (J&MC). A hot spring s. of Reno again had three Am. Bitterns Jan. 23 (†JW). An unusual winter Great Blue Heron stayed near mountain town Breckenridge, CO, Dec. 15+, and one stopped at Fontanelle Dam, WY, Jan. 17. A White-faced Ibis wintered at Fish Spgs. N.W.R., UT (JB), and two spent Jan. 12–31 at Las Vegas (J&MC). Despite the cold fall weather, the C.D.O.W. count in n.e. Colorado produced 63,590 ducks cf. 12,213 last year. Attempts to displace Trumpeter Swans from their n. U.S. refuges worked; migrant family groups appeared in Nevada and Colorado. Three Trumpeters, from a transplanted Oregon population, were at Ft. Churchill St. Pk., NV, Jan. 12 (NS, LN). Colorado attracted 3 groups, 2 on the Colorado R. Five appeared at Mack Dec. 4, staying there and at Debeque until Jan. 16 (CD, RL). Two came to Radium on the Colorado R., Nov. 30; by Feb. 1 only one remained, the other shot by a poacher (BT *et al.*). The Radium swans came from Seedskadee N.W.R., WY, where poachers gutted a transplanted population. Two men, found and convicted through anonymous tips after a community outcry, paid †6500 and will contribute 200 hours of service to the refuge. They thought that the swans were Snow Geese, a rare bird in s.w. Wyoming (TSS). Another group of four Trumpeters—two adults, 2 immatures—arrived Feb. 28 at Ordway, CO, in the Arkansas R. valley (LL ‡BP). At their regular breeding ground at Ruby L. N.W.R., 30 Trumpeter Swans wintered, the same as last year, but up from an average 15.

Greater White-fronted Geese wintered at





Canon City, CO (2nd year); Mason Val. Wildlife Area, NV, reported 24 Jan. 5, while Walker L., NV, had 150 Snow Geese Jan. 24. For the 2nd year, counts of Canada Geese declined in Denver, with 5512 for the season, as compared with 6092–12,366 over the past 6 years, and with 9330 at L.L.B.L., against 20,699 last year.

#### S.A.

A ♀ Baikal Teal created a great stir at Evergreen, CO, Nov. 28–Jan. 23 (‡W/WB *et al.*). She associated constantly, though on the fringes, with a flock of wild Mallards. Habituated to humans because residents and restaurants along Bear Cr. leave cracked corn for them, the flock roamed along 3 mi of Bear Cr. The distinctive teal attracted listers from all over the country, but she leaves a legacy of uncertainty—was she wild? For approval by the birding bureaucracy, vagrants in Colorado must surmount a greater burden of proof than coastal vagrants (*e.g.*, the Red-backed Buzzard at Gunnison). Apparently bird fanciers like Baikal Teals because of the birds' striking plumage. A duck breeder in Greeley, 100 mi away, reportedly lost 1–2 pairs 18 months before the teal's arrival at Evergreen. The breeder claimed to have complied with federal laws for captive birds: He said all his birds had bands and clipped halluxes. Janos argued for wildness: (1) collectors rarely have Baikal Teals and would prefer the more striking males (but note the report from Greeley; also, nobody saw any, males or females, during those 18 months); (2) this bird had halluxes on both legs, showed perfect plumage, and lacked bands; (3) she was free-flying, wild, and comparatively wary, even though her flock of Mallards fed regularly on cracked corn handouts, and her "low threshold" made it hard for photographers to get close for photographs; (4) the dates match the November–January window established 1960–1980 for "wild" vagrants on the Pacific Coast; (5) in Japan, Baikal Teals winter at the same latitude; and (6) Colorado has attracted many rare high Arctic and n. Pacific species: Red-throated and Yellow-billed Loons, Garganeys, Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Ancient and Marbled murrelets, and Ross' Gulls (one was in Nebraska at the same time) and, more commonly, Pacific Loons, Oldsquaws, three scoter and three jaeger species, and Red Phalaropes.

Big mid-winter counts of ducks included 885 N. Shovelers at Denver and 2000 Canvasbacks at Pyramid L., NV. Observers found a surprising 35 Greater Scaup, from 4 Colorado and 6 Nevada sites, topped by 14 at Pyramid L. (‡JW). Nevada reported two Oldsquaws, and about 10 spent the winter in e. Colorado. Two White-winged Scoters wintered at Rawhide Res. n. of Ft. Collins. Hooded Mergansers have increased significantly over the

past few decades. Of the Region's 115, Pueblo observers saw 50 mergs Dec. 7.

#### RAPTORS

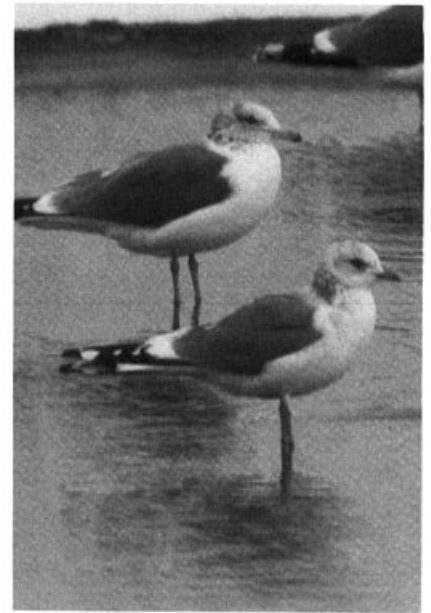
A bumper crop of pocket gophers, produced in fields left fallow because of the drought, attracted impressive concentrations of buteos to Lovelock Val., NV. Estimates ranged from 300 in December to 125 counted on a foggy January day (LN, GH). The Region's 42 N. Goshawks occurred mainly on the Colorado plains and in Utah. The Lovelock buteos included 20–27 Ferruginous Hawks, also the most common hawk at Rocky Mt. Arsenal, CO, with 16/day on the regular raptor counts. Merlins failed to achieve the numbers of several years ago; the Region had only scattered reports, though 10 were found wintering at Grand Jct., CO. One Gyrfalcon reached s.w. WY, Dec. 6 at Hudson (RS).

#### RAILS TO GULLS

Both Logan, UT, and Eagle, CO, documented their first winter Virginia Rails (RJ, †JM). Sandhill Cranes did not reach Ruby Val. in February, but four stopped in January at Mason Val. W/L Area, and 111 passed through Fowler, CO, in the Arkansas Valley Feb. 27. Greater Yellowlegs now winter regularly at Fish Spgs., with 26 at the peak, 13 low (JB), Salt Lake City, and Grand Jct., with 3 (CD). Fish Spgs. also had an Am. Avocet Jan. 2 and 9 Long-billed Dowitchers Dec. 8 (JB). A few Dunlins typically migrate through e. Colorado in November; this winter, 2–3 remained at Denver and were last seen Feb. 6 (D.F.O., ph. DL). Another spent 2 weeks at Las Vegas Dec. 19–Jan. 12 (†MC). Several gull species mentioned in the fall report spent the winter at Las Vegas: Laughing, into March; Mew, to Feb. 7; Yellow-footed, to Jan. 9; and Western, to Jan. 16; with Black-legged Kittiwakes into March. Pueblo's first winter Franklin's Gulls appeared Feb. 14 (†MJ). Bonaparte's lingered into December, with 30 at Pueblo Dec. 5 and 16 at Las Vegas Dec. 6–10. Other Mew Gulls visited Pyramid L., Jan. 17 and Feb. 28 or wintered (JT ph.). Californias have begun to replace Ring-billeds as the wintering gull around GSL; they occurred all winter along S.S.G.L. (ES). Colorado gull numbers plummeted, perhaps because of frozen reservoirs, or due to closed landfills: D.F.O. trips had 678 Ring-billeds, as compared with 1178–14,919 in other years. Longmont had only 19, a huge drop from last year's 3912. Pueblo had 4000 Ring-billeds Dec. 4. An extraordinary four Lesser Black-backed Gulls visited Colorado in February: an adult Feb. 7 at Pueblo, for the 2nd consecutive winter record (†MJ); an adult Feb. 27–28 at Ordway, 55 mi e. of Pueblo (†BP); and two, an adult and another, variously described as a 2nd- or 4th-winter bird, Feb. 20+ at Boulder (DE, ph., †SF). Colorado now has 10 records.

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

Fort Collins hosted 20–30 wintering Mourning Doves, and 20 hovered around a W. Jor-



**Adult Mew Gull (front—with California Gull at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, January 17, 1993. Photograph/Jane Thompson.**

dan, UT, feeder Dec. 15–Jan. 7 (TS). From the fall Inca Dove incursion, only the two at Pueblo stayed, reduced by Jan. 4 to a single bird (BP). At Morgan, UT, small owls paid a toll to the rough winter. Two N. Pygmy-Owls were found in weakened condition, and two Saw-whets were found dead. An elderly rancher rescued one of the pygmy-owls and nursed it to health; a cat caught the other. Several N. Pygmy-Owls and N. Saw-whets, working backyard feeders, hung out in Salt Lake City residential areas. At Rocky Mt. Arsenal, CO, 10 Long-eared Owls roosted beside a regular tour road all winter (UK). Grand Jct. reported 10 seen Dec. 7, and 2–5 birds thereafter (CD). The Long-eared at Monte Vista Feb. 2 provided the San Luis Valley's first winter report (JJR); Reno had three Feb. 13 (EK). At Jackson, WY, ravens chieved a Short-eared Owl and drove it to the ground. Then they had to sit back in trees and watch a N. Goshawk consume the dead owl; whether the ravens or goshawk killed the owl was not apparent (GB). For the 5th year, an Anna's Hummingbird wintered at Davis Dam, s. of Las Vegas. Two Costa's wintered at L. Mead, near Las Vegas. A Red-headed Woodpecker ran the gamut in a park in Fountain, CO, where it hatched and then changed from imm. to ad. plumage as it stayed home over the winter (TB). For the 2nd year, Red-bellied Woodpeckers wintered along the Colorado Front Range, at Ft. Collins and Penrose (GF, HB). After last year's glut of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, the Front Range recorded only seven this year, from Ft. Collins to Pueblo. Each of the other three sapsucker species stopped at Reno (EK); Pueblo had a Williamson's Jan. 2 (MK).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO WAXWINGS

An Ash-throated Flycatcher and 1–3 Black Phoebe overwintered in Las Vegas. Blue Jays

spent the season at Monte Vista, CO, and Logan, UT. Black-capped Chickadee numbers shot up this winter, from Logan to L.L.B.L., the latter reporting 324, as compared with 219 last year. Cactus Wrens, once common around Las Vegas but now hard to find, increased somewhat this winter, with 8 observations. Pueblo had 3-5 wintering Rock Wrens. Bewick's Wrens picked 2 unusual sites for spending at least part of the winter: Logan Nov. 25-Jan. 6 (LR, 1st Lat) and Ft. Collins Jan. 15-Feb. 15. An Am. Dipper strayed to Ruby L. in early December. Ruby-crowned Kinglets wintered at Grand Jct. and Boulder; Story, WY, had one Jan. 25 (J&GL). The Colorado Front Range attracted 11 E. Bluebirds, including one male at Boulder Feb. 28 visiting a nest box and behaving territorially, without a mate to show for his efforts (BK). Five Hermit Thrushes wintered at Las Vegas, and single birds appeared in January and February at



**One of the two Pine Warblers wintering in Boulder, Colorado, December 10, 1992.**  
Photograph/Duane Nelson.

Reno, Salt Lake City, Springdale, and Grand Jct. A paucity of Am. Robins braved the winter; D.F.O. counted only 23, the lowest ever, against 27-408 counted other years, and 295 reported by L.L.B.L., versus 841 last year. A Varied Thrush found at Sutcliffe, NV, Dec. 25-Jan. 3, may have been there since Sept. 30 (JT ph.), and others were found at Bountiful and Ogden, UT, Dec. 20 & 21 (TN, BB). A surprising 50-100 Sage Thrashers wintered at Pueblo. Single Brown Thrashers stopped for a day at Beulah, Pueblo, and Lyons, CO, Dec. 24-Jan. 29.

Only a few Bohemian Waxwings filtered S beyond their usual n. Wyoming haunts. Grand Jct. had one Dec. 12, Las Vegas had 10 Dec. 18, Fallon, NV, reported 2 on its CBC Dec. 26, and in Colorado, the I.P.W.C. found 65 Jan. 9, Loveland had 100 Jan. 22, and 30 flew through pinyon/juniper woodland at Eagle Feb. 7.

#### S.A.

Colorado's 2nd Long-billed Thrasher, found Jan. 4 at Chatfield S.P. near Denver, captured the imagination of Colorado birders. It traversed the snow cover to seek exposed patches of leaf litter, where it flung leaves 6 inches into the air in vigorous pursuit of food. Observers were able to find it by listening for noisy scratching among the leaves. The Colorado winter closed in after the last observation Feb. 13; 4-6 inches of snow fell Feb. 15-16, and the temperature dropped -8°F. Subsequent searches for the thrasher proved unsuccessful (†UK, HEK).

#### WARBLERS

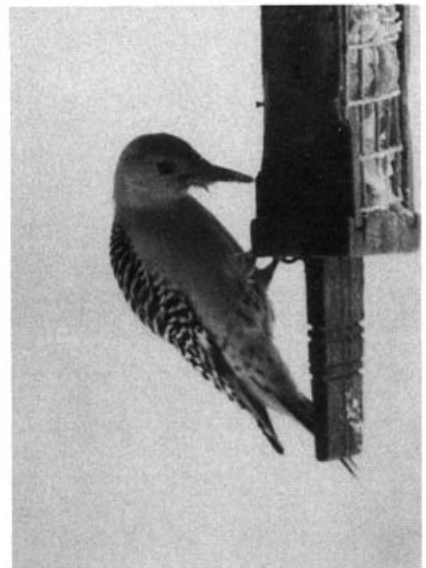
Like last year, an Orange-crowned Warbler seen feeding at a hummingbird feeder wintered in Las Vegas (VM). The Las Vegas CBC also had a Yellow Warbler Dec. 19-Jan. 3 (†MC).

#### S.A.

Colorado hosted three remarkable warblers for the winter. Two Pines, one adult, one immature, inhabited Boulder Dec. 15+, feeding on tortoise scales in Scots pine, boxelder sap, and bean sprouts out of area dumpsters. As a result of their eating habits and foraging in scale-infested trees with black mold, both birds changed color during the winter. In December they were clean and light in color. By February their heads and throats had turned almost black (†SF, DL). The same area in Boulder harbored a Palm Warbler Dec. 15+ (†SF). In Denver, an Ovenbird came daily to a yard where it ate suet, seed, and fruit. It arrived Nov. 22, and probably would have weathered the winter, except for the fatal intervention by a neighbor's cat Feb. 11 (PE, \*D.M.N.H.).

#### SPARROWS TO GROSBEAKS

Two Rufous-crowned Sparrows popped up from some brush near Las Vegas Feb. 7, for Nevada's 7th record (†J&MC). Most reporters deemed Am. Tree Sparrows scarce, though a handful wintered in mountain towns such as Breckenridge, Eagle, and Aspen, CO. Only four wintered at Rock Spgs., WY, and L.L.B.L. reported 247, versus last year's 824. The D.F.O. field trips, however, tallied 196, an average number. A Field Sparrow surfaced at Grand Jct., as did an errant Lark Bunting, both on Jan. 9 (CD). A large-for-winter flock of 250 Lark Buntings swirled over a Baca, CO, field, s. of the Cimarron R., Feb. 6 (SS). A Golden-crowned Sparrow returned to Red Rocks Park near Denver, the 3rd straight year one has hung out at the feeder. Grand Jct. also reported a Golden-crowned in January. Jackson, WY, had an un-



**Male Red-bellied Woodpecker at Fort Collins, Colorado, in January 1993.** Photograph/Ron Ryder.

precedented 10 Harris's Sparrows Dec. 6 (LK). Average numbers of Lapland Longspurs drifted in, with typical counts of 80-100 in e. Colorado. Observers found five at Bear R. N.W.R., UT, and two at Farson, WY, Dec. 5. The same day, Bear R. had two Snow Buntings and Farson had a flock of 350, rising to ≤450 by Jan. 3. Early snows forced farmers to leave sorghum unharvested in Baca; 20,000 Red-winged Blackbirds took advantage of the easy food supply Feb. 16 (JnlT). At least 6 Com. Grackles wintered in n. Colorado at Evergreen, often seen by the Baikal Teal searchers, and at Ft. Collins. Rosy Finches descended into town feeders in Sheridan, Casper, and Loveland. Others straggled to Reno, Ruby L., and Pawnee Nat'l G/L. "Ornithological skiers" reported fewer Red Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks around Logan than last year (KD), although crossbills spread out to Cheyenne, Sheridan, and Story, WY. Most surprising was the number of White-winged Crossbills: 1-8 at Cheyenne all winter, 3-10 in the Evergreen area, one all winter at Salt Lake City, and another at Provo Jan. 23. Except for one or two at Salt Lake City and Logan, Wyoming reported the only Com. Redpolls, with many at Jackson and small numbers across the rest of the state, south to Fontanelle, Farson, and Green R. This winter, Pine Siskins stayed closer to people, with 150 at Springdale, UT, a record 111 on D.F.O. trips, and good numbers in Cortez, Salida, and Ft. Collins. At Sheridan, Casper, and Cortez, 45-200 Evening Grosbeaks were reported.

**Corrigenda:** A Nashville, not a Townsend's, Warbler was observed at Reno June 21-28 last summer (EK) (AB 92(5):46).

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## SOUTHWEST REGION

### Arizona

David Stejskal and  
Gary H. Rosenberg

This winter was one of the mildest and wettest on record, with all areas of the state receiving record or near-record precipitation. Much of southern Arizona experienced moderate to severe flooding because of prolonged periods of rain during January and February. The mild temperatures were probably responsible for a number of less hardy species (mostly hummingbirds, insectivores, and frugivores) lingering late or wintering in the state. Highlights for the season are many, with Arizona's second Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, the wintering Crescent-chested Warbler, and Arizona's first Tufted Duck deserving special mention.

**Abbreviations:** A.B.C. (*Arizona Bird Committee*); B.T.A. (*Boyce Thompson Arboretum*); G.F.P. (*Gila Farms Pond*); L.C.R.V. (*Lower Colorado R. Valley*); M.F.L. (*Many Farms L.*); P.R.D. (*Painted Rock Dam*); S.P.R. (*San Pedro R.*); S.T.P. (*Sewage Treatment Plant*); sr. (sound recording). Place names in *italics* are counties.

#### LOONS TO IBISES

A Red-throated Loon, accompanied by two Com. Loons, put in a one-day appearance at

P.R.D., Jan. 13 (†TC), representing about the 11th record for the state. Slightly more expected in the state was a Pacific Loon near Granite Reef Dam e. of Phoenix Jan. 9–15 (†PSc, DH), only the 5th for *Maricopa*. The only Horned Grebes reported this season were three sighted at Picacho Res., Dec. 18 (PM). A pair of Pied-billeds nested extraordinarily early in Mesa, with two downy young seen with two ad. birds Jan. 12 (PSc, DH). Equally amazing for Arizona was a concentration of ±600 Pied-billeds on Picacho Res., Jan. 30 (TC *et al.*). Most of these grebes were believed to have been displaced from s. Arizona's flooded rivers. A flock of 41 Am. White Pelicans wintered successfully at P.R.D. this season, the group first found Jan. 13 (TC *et al.*); two at Gilbert S.T.P., Dec. 17 (SGa), one at Picacho Res., Dec. 26 (DW), and three more at L. Pleasant Feb. 22 (S. Walchuck) probably all represent migrants. Five imm. Brown Pelicans in s. Arizona during the season were a bit of a surprise, as there are few winter records for the state. One was at Picacho Res., Dec. 26 (DW), three at P.R.D., Jan. 13 (TC *et al.*), and one in Tucson Jan. 19 (T. Wentch). A single Neotropic Cormorant was seen at Kino Springs Jan. 23–29 (DJo *et al.*), and 12 birds were at L. Patagonia Jan. 30+ (PL *et al.*).

A confused Am. Bittern spent the day in a c. Tucson yard Jan. 22 (B. Brown). One to two Least Bitterns were recorded from Picacho Res., Dec. 26–Feb. 6 (DW, JBo); this was not terribly unexpected, considering the large numbers of Least Bitterns there during summer 1992. Two imm. Little Blue Herons were reported for the period, with one at Picacho Res., Dec. 18–25 (PM, DJo), and another

along the Salt R. e. of Phoenix Jan. 15–24 (LH *et al.*). There is only one previous winter record for the state. About 80 White-faced Ibises on the Gila R. near Buckeye Dec. 22 was a surprising number for winter (*vide* T. Hildebrandt), but 1–5 birds at Picacho Res., Dec. 15–Feb. 20 were more expected (DP).

#### WATERFOWL

An astounding tally of 245 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks in Chandler Jan. 10 probably represents the largest concentration of this species ever recorded in Arizona (RN). Two Trumpeter Swans, one banded and color-marked, were seen near Kirkland, s.e. of Prescott, Dec. 24+ (?) (J. Lawrence, *vide* T. Tibbitts). The banded bird, according to Tibbitts, was an ad. female captured by the U.S.F.W.S. in n.e. Idaho, released Dec. 16 at Seedskaadee N.W.R., Wyoming, as part of a winter relocation project. The origin of the unbanded bird is unknown. There are no previous reports for this species in the state, and the record is now being considered by the A.B.C. Tundra Swans, rare winter visitors to c. and s.e. Arizona, were recorded from 4 areas: one at G.F.P., Dec. 2 (BD *et al.*), two at Gilbert S.T.P., Dec. 4 (SGa), one flying over the University of Arizona campus, Tucson, Dec. 9 (B. Lyons), and a group of seven near Gillespie Dam, Gila R., Dec. 31 (R. Smith). Four Greater White-fronted and four Ross' geese, all in s. Arizona, were reported for the period, with three Greater White-fronteds and two Ross' remaining (m.ob.). An impressive nine Eur. Wigeons were reported for the winter season, with three different birds in Scottsdale, one remaining from fall (m.ob.), one at the Phoenix Zoo through the period (m.ob.), one at Ahwatukee, s. of Phoenix, Jan. 1+ (PB), one in Casa Grande Dec. 2 (BD *et al.*), one at Kino Springs mid-December (WR), one at Nogales S.T.P., Jan. 23+ (B. Jones, M. Hansen), and another at Arivaca Feb. 14–15 (T. Ewen); all of these birds, except for the Kino Springs individual, were ad. males. In addition, a ♂ Eur. Wigeon × Am. Wigeon hybrid was described from Kino Springs Jan. 30 (†PL *et al.*). The duck of the season was undeniably the ♂ Tufted Duck, first found in Mesa Jan. 8–10 (R. Shults *et al.*). The bird disappeared after its short initial showing but was rediscovered Feb. 4 at the same locality, where it remained (m.ob., ph. R. Jones). This repre-





**Photographed in January 1993, this Crescent-chested Warbler—representing the third record for the United States—remained for many months at Patagonia, Arizona. Photograph/Chris D. Benesh.**

sents the first report of this species in Arizona. A pair of Greater Scaup, an extremely rare winter visitor to s. Arizona, was found at Silverbell L., n.w. Tucson Dec. 26–late January (CDB *et al.*), while another was reported from Scottsdale Jan. 16 (RB). Four to five Greater Scaup were present on Watson L. near Prescott Jan. 14–19, with two ♂ birds remaining there until Mar. 2 (CT). Four Oldsquaws, another rare vagrant to the state, were found, with a male at Parker Dam Nov. 27–Jan. 15+, when it was joined by a female (SF, †CM, PS), another at Alamo L., Jan. 16 (PN), and the 4th at Lee's Ferry Feb. 27 (T. Britt). An ad. pair of Surf Scoters was found at Lee's Ferry Dec. 28 (TC, DTr), while another ♀/imm. bird was found the same day at G.F.P. (DS). As usual, several reports were submitted for individual and small groups of Hooded Mergansers, the most significant of these single females in n. Arizona (where rarely recorded) at Lee's Ferry Dec. 28 (TC, DTr) and Kayenta Feb. 15 (CL), and an incredible concentration of 86 in n.w. Phoenix Jan. 10 (RN). The latter record is, by far, the largest number ever recorded for a single location in Arizona. A single Red-breasted Merganser found at Gilbert S.T.P. in early December remained (SGa).

#### **VULTURES TO TERNS**

A single Turkey Vulture near Portal Feb. 15 was about 3 weeks early (*vide* DJa). Thirteen Black-shouldered Kites were reported throughout the period, with most records (nine) coming from the Gila R. valley s.w. of Phoenix (m.ob.). The Bald Eagle nest discovered near L. Pleasant in 1984 hatched its first nestling ever Feb. 26± (*vide* TG). On a gloomier note, the same observer reports that 3 nests on the Bill Williams R. near Alamo L. and

one to two nests on the Verde R. n.e. of Phoenix were destroyed by flood waters this season. Thirty wintering Bald Eagles counted Jan. 30 in the L. Mary/Mormon L. area s. of Flagstaff was the highest single-day count ever for that location (CVC). A real rarity in winter in the state was an imm. Gray Hawk seen soaring over the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary Dec. 16 (LD). The Red-shouldered Hawk found earlier in the year along the Salt R. s.w. of Phoenix remained in the area until Dec. 20+ (RN). An imm. Broad-winged Hawk, a rare visitor to the state in any season, was reported sporadically from n.e. Tucson in early February (WR). Another rarity for this season was a Zone-tailed Hawk reported from near Maricopa Dec. 20 (PSc, DH); there are few valid winter records for the state. The only report received for "Harlan's" Hawk this winter was of a single bird near Elfrida Jan. 7–27 (LD *et al.*). A Crested Caracara, unusual anywhere in the state away from w. Pima, was reported sporadically from Picacho Res., Jan. 3–Feb. 6 (A.&S. Hilts *et al.*).

Three Black-necked Stilts on the Santa Cruz R. n.w. of Tucson Dec. 21–26 (m.ob.), and another bird near McNeal Jan. 25 (AM) were noteworthy, as this species is virtually unknown in winter in the state away from the Phoenix area. A single Red Phalarope at the Sierra Vista S.T.P., Dec. 30 was a very late migrant (J. Shipley). A single Bonaparte's Gull, a rare winter visitor, was observed at G.F.P., Jan. 17 (RN). Two Caspian Terns, another bird that is quite rare in winter in Arizona, were seen Jan. 20 near Cibola N.W.R. (PS).

#### **PIGEONS TO KINGFISHERS**

Two Band-tailed Pigeons at a feeder in Camp Verde Dec. 18 (H. Haas) and two more seen on Mingus Mt. near Cottonwood Jan. 21 (T. Hurley) were indicative of the relatively mild winter temperatures throughout the state. An Inca Dove at Portal feeders Dec. 1–Jan. 1 was a local rarity (DJa *et al.*). Two Com. Ground-Doves at Camp Verde Jan. 5, well n. of their normal winter range in Arizona, were eclipsed by the report of two Ruddy Ground-Doves there the same day (V. Vaughn *et al.*). Another Ruddy Ground-Dove was reported from the Granite Reef Dam area e. of Phoenix Dec. 17 (H. Fibel *et al.*), and the 3–4 birds present in Patagonia during the fall lingered there through the period (m.ob.). A N. Saw-whet Owl was heard calling in pinyon/juniper habitat at Navajo N.M. through February (B. Mellbery, *vide* CL). Individual Com. Poorwills were seen in Portal, with one Jan. 17 and another, or the same, Feb. 6 (DJa). These sightings are an excellent indication of the mildness of the season.

A lingering ♀ White-eared Hummingbird was seen regularly at the Ramsey Canyon feeders through mid-January but was not seen after the torrential rains of the month. A ♂ White-eared returned to the canyon on the early date of Feb. 20 (*vide* S. Williamson). Two to three Violet-crowneds were reported through the period in the Patagonia/Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary region, with most reports com-

ing from feeders (m.ob.). An imm. ♂ Magnificent Hummingbird remained at a n.e. Tucson feeder through Dec. 7, and a female was at the same feeder on the odd date of Jan. 25 (LK). Another Magnificent was reported early at a Sedona feeder Feb. 23, and an extraordinarily early Black-chinned Hummingbird was reported there Feb. 5 (E.&E. Gardner). A ♀ *Archilochus* sp. was present at a Prescott feeder Dec. 1–15 but was not identified definitively as to species (S. Harris *et al.*, *vide* CT). A single ♂ Broad-tailed Hummingbird at Tonto Natural Bridge near Payson Feb. 23 was very early that far north (R. Hefernon). An ad. ♂ Rufous Hummingbird was discovered at a Scottsdale feeder in mid-December, where it remained until Feb. 25± (*vide* JiB). The Ramsey Canyon Eared Trogons were recorded sporadically throughout the period (*vide* S. Williamson). Single Elegant Trogons were found near Pena Blanca L., Feb. 17 (D. Touret) and in Garden Canyon Feb. 24 (R. Smith), and both may have wintered locally. Single Green Kingfishers were reported from lower Sonoita Cr. n. of Nogales Dec. 1 (MJ), at the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary Jan. 23+ (J. O'Brien *et al.*), and along the upper S.P.R., Jan. 29–31 (PL, R. Smith).

#### **FLYCATCHERS TO DIPPERS**

A N. Beardless-Tyrannulet at Empire Ranch n. of Sonoita Jan. 23 (GM), and another at Roper L. S.P. near Safford Feb. 5 (LD), were both at new winter localities for that species. A late Greater Pewee was seen in Madera Canyon Dec. 5 and another, or the same, was in lower Madera Canyon on Proctor Rd., Jan. 19–27 (LD). Extraordinary and completely unexpected was the discovery of a calling Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Patagonia Dec. 20. This bird, covering the 2nd documented record for the state, and probably the first winter record n. of Mexico, was seen by many through the period (WR, ph. GR, sr. DS, m.ob.). Two "Western-type" flycatchers were present since late fall until Jan. 2± at Rio Verde, n. of Ft. McDowell (m.ob.); at least one observer (TC) characterized the calls as typical of the Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Three E. Phoebes, about normal numbers for the season, were reported from Patagonia Dec. 6+ (DW *et al.*), Silverbell L., Dec. 13–16 (PM), and Cook's L., lower S.P.R., Jan. 28 (MJ, D. Laush). Single Ash-throated Flycatchers were found at Portal Dec. 19–20 (DJa) and near St. David, Feb. 2 (JWh); these areas are e. of that species' winter range in Arizona. A Cassin's Kingbird at Gardner Canyon n. of Sonoita Jan. 20 supplied one of just a handful of January records for the state (all from the past few years) (GW). An unidentified *Tyrannus* sp. was reported from near Gillespie Dam Dec. 22 (TG, R. Smith).

One to two Violet-green Swallows lingered in Patagonia Dec. 29–30 (LD, J. Shipley); there are few valid winter records for the state. A late Barn Swallow was seen at Ruthrauff Pond, Tucson, Dec. 7 (DW). An Am. Dipper along Beaver Cr., Verde R. Valley, Jan. 15 represented the lowest local record ever (AG).

## GNATCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

A ♂ **Black-capped Gnatcatcher** was well described from near Sabino Canyon Feb. 21 (†T. Fiore); this area is well n. of previous records in the state. Two Rufous-backed Robins were recorded for the period, with one s. of Patagonia Dec. 20–Jan. 1 (B. Johnson *et al.*), and another on the Santa Cruz R. n. of Nogales Jan. 1+ (R. Kelman *et al.*). A N. Mockingbird near Tuba City Feb. 13 represents one of the few winter records for n. Arizona (CL). Three Brown Thrashers were uncovered—one at Kino Springs Dec. 7 (H. Winkler), one at the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary Dec. 12–27 (DJo *et al.*), and the last at the Hassayampa Preserve s. of Wickenburg Dec. 13+ (J. Bartley *et al.*).

A Tennessee Warbler put in a brief appearance at Patagonia Jan. 5 (GM), probably representing the first January record for the state. A N. Parula's stay at Rio Verde spanned autumn–Dec. 12 (*vide* SGA). The very obliging **Crescent-chested Warbler** at Patagonia, first found in September, was seen by hundreds of observers throughout the period (m.ob., ph. CDB, SF). A late or wintering Yellow Warbler was found along the Santa Cruz R. in n.w. Tucson Dec. 26 (CDB). The only Chestnut-sided Warbler reported for the season was the bird first found during the fall on the Salt R. s.w. of Phoenix, and last reported there Dec. 11 (SGa). A Palm Warbler was reported from Picacho Res., Dec. 15 (DP); there are few winter records of this species in the state. Three Black-and-white Warblers, about average for winter, were reported from Rio Verde (two since fall) (m.ob.), and another at Cook's L., Jan. 25 (TG, D. Laush). The Louisiana Waterthrush found during the fall in Madera Canyon was last seen there Dec. 2 (LD), and another was found in the Sonoita Cr. Sanctuary Jan. 20–Feb. 21 (GW *et al.*).

## TANAGERS TO FINCHES

The ♂ Summer Tanager found during the fall at the Phoenix Zoo was last seen there Dec. 8 (R. Jones), and another male was found in Scottsdale Jan. 25–Feb. 2 (JiB). A few Cassin's Sparrows wintered successfully at B.T.A., well n. of normal wintering areas in the state, present Dec. 11+ (CT). A Rufous-crowned Sparrow at Parker Dec. 5–6 (TC, DTr) was evidently the first for the L.C.R.V. Two Clay-colored Sparrows, very sparse in the state in winter months, were reported for the period, with one n. of Nogales along the Santa Cruz R. Dec. 19 (DJo), and another at a feeder in Portal (DJa, RM). A single Vesper Sparrow in Kayenta Dec. 12 furnished what is probably only the 2nd winter record for n. Arizona (CL). At least seven Golden-crowned and five Harris' sparrows were found across the state (v.o.). As many as 100 McCown's Longspurs were present in the San Rafael Grasslands s.e. of Patagonia Dec. 6+ (m.ob.); this species has been very sparse in this area in recent years. A ♂ Great-tailed Grackle, rarely recorded from n.e. Arizona in winter, was at Kayenta Dec. 15–Jan. 10 (CL). For the 4th consecutive year, a ♂ **Streak-backed Oriole** was reported from Cook's L., Feb. 23 (D. Laush).

Three Pine Grosbeaks, thought to represent a continuation of the mini-invasion of this species during the fall to n. Arizona, were found on Black Mesa Dec. 26 (CL). Only two Purple Finches were reported from the state, with a female at Catalina S.P., Jan. 23 (SGO), and a male n. of Nogales on the Santa Cruz R. Feb. 28 (C. Cathers). Thirty-six Lawrence's Goldfinches at Quail Springs near Cottonwood Dec. 20–Jan. 23 were n. of their winter range in Arizona (CVC, VG).

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## New Mexico

*Sartor O. Williams III*

Moist and mild conditions were again the rule in New Mexico this winter. Most areas received above-average or record precipitation, with rains responsible for flooding in some areas. Birding was relatively quiet, with essentially no lowland invasion of montane species, but enough surprises were sprinkled about to keep things interesting.

**Abbreviations:** Bitter L. (*Bitter L. N.W.R.*); Bosque Ref. (*Bosque del Apache N.W.R.*); E.B.L. (*Elephant Butte L.*); L.V.N.W.R. (*Las Vegas N.W.R.*); R.G.V. (*Rio Grande Valley*); Zuni (*Zuni Indian Reservation*). Guadalupe Canyon refers only to that portion in New Mexico. Place names in *italics* are counties.

## LOONS TO WATERFOWL

New Mexico's 2nd **Yellow-billed Loon** in 2 years was at Navajo L., Feb. 4 (B. Grossi) through Feb. 23+ (v.o.); a mysterious small

loon also there during the same period was most probably a **Red-throated Loon** (JP, CR *et al.*). Horned Grebes, regular but rare in winter, were reported at Storrie L. (EE, PS), L.V.N.W.R. (JP, BP, CR), Conchas L. (CR), and E.B.L. (v.o.), including a high of 11 at the latter site Feb. 26 (CR, PS). Late were single Clark's Grebes at L.V.N.W.R., Dec. 3 (CR) and at Bill Evans L., Dec. 2–7 (RF), while 3–8 Westerns were early at Navajo L., Feb. 14 (CR *et al.*) and Conchas L., Feb. 27 (CR). *Aechmophorus* grebes again wintered in the lower R.G.V., with >600 at E.B.L., Jan. 15 (SOW) as well as smaller numbers at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (GE, BZ); an estimated 6000, including both species, were at E.B.L., Feb. 26 (CR, PS), where courtship was in progress. Unusual for winter were ≤35 Am. White Pelicans at Caballo L., December–January (CS, BZ, JP); seven were early at La Joya, Feb. 13 (LH). At least one **Brown Pelican** remained in the state into the period—an immature at Bosque Ref., Dec. 22 (ph. H. Messing). A Double-crested Cormorant at L.V.N.W.R. was late, Dec. 3 (CR); both Double-crested and Neotropics remained in the lower R.G.V., from Bosque Ref. south (v.o.). Great Egrets lingered at Bitter L., with 2–3 observed Dec. 12–Jan. 18 (SW, SBI); singles were noted at Tucumcari, Feb. 3 (CR), Isleta, Dec. 18 (AS *et al.*), and Caballo L., Dec. 31–Jan. 3 (CS); Las Cruces had a high of five, counted Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*), along with several Cattle Egrets, Dec. 15–Jan. 10 (CS). Unusual for winter were 1–4 *Plegadis* ibises at Bosque Ref. throughout the period (v.o.). Two of three ad. swans at Bell Ranch, *Harding*, Jan.–Feb. 25 were marked **Trumpeter Swans** released as cygnets in Wisconsin back in 1991 (*vide* R. Drewien). Two apparent White-fronted × Canada goose hybrids were at L.V.N.W.R., Feb. 17 (CR). Wintering Ross' Geese, steadily increasing in the state in recent years, included several thousand, both at Bosque Ref., Jan. 4 (J. Taylor) and at Bitter L., Dec. 19 (SBI); a noteworthy find was 330 at L.V.N.W.R., Feb. 21 (CR) and eight at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (BZ *et al.*). Westerly Wood Ducks included one at Glenwood Dec. 27 (RD, JH) and four at Silver City Dec. 17 (RF *et al.*). Mexican Ducks included three at Bosque Ref., Dec. 19 (DM), five near Rodeo Dec. 26 (RS *et al.*), and 12 at Las Cruces Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*). Among several early Cinnamon Teals were two at L.V.N.W.R., Jan. 20 (CR, PG), followed by 13 observed Feb. 2 (CR, PG). Highs for Greater Scaup were six at L.V.N.W.R., Jan. 5 (CR, PG); 11 at Conchas L., Dec. 8 (CR); six at E.B.L., Jan. 16 (JP); and a remarkable (but undetailed) five in the Gila Valley, Jan. 2 (RF *et al.*). The only Oldsquaw was at Maxwell N.W.R., Dec. 11 (CR). Up to 10 Barrow's Goldeneyes were on the San Juan R. below Navajo Dam from mid-December (DC) into mid-February (JP *et al.*); seven on the Rio Grande below Taos, Jan. 17 (SW) provided a new wintering locale. Moderate numbers of Hooded Mergansers were found from the R.G.V. eastward, including highs of 23 at Bitter L., Dec. 19 (SBI *et al.*) and 42 at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (BZ *et al.*); westerly sightings included



two at Bear Canyon L., *Grant*, Dec. 7 (J&M Carter, *fide* RF).

#### RAPTORS TO CRANES

Remarkably early was a Turkey Vulture at Silver City Feb. 18 (D&MZ, *fide* RF). Unusual for winter was an Osprey near Cliff Jan. 2 (RF). The **Black-shouldered Kite** invasion of autumn remained much in evidence, with continued reports of 1–2 at Bosque Ref. through February (m.ob.) and in the Animas Valley through Dec. 24 (AC, NMC). New locales for kites included the Nutt-Uvas Valley area Dec. 26–Jan. 7, where two were seen (P. Pashe, W. Baltosser, R. Irvin); *Doña Ana*, with one Dec. 2 (CB); as well as the vicinity of Rattlesnake Springs, with 1–2 sighted Dec. 20 (E. Hernandez, *fide* SW). The 487 Bald Eagles counted on standardized aerial transects Jan. 12–15 (SOW, GS) was the 2nd highest total recorded on these surveys. These wintering eagles have been increasing on average by ±100 birds every 4 years since the early 1980s (SOW). An ad. N. Goshawk apparently wintered in a pecan grove at Mesilla (GE, ph. BZ). Harris' Hawks may be expanding into the Tularosa Valley, where three were seen s. of Alamogordo Jan. 12 (DS); numbers continued to improve in *Eddy* (SW), and small numbers persisted in *Hidalgo* (v.o.). Southerly Rough-legged Hawks included 1–2 in the Animas Valley Dec. 2–Jan. 1 (AC, NMC), while the species was judged to be much more common than usual in *Eddy* (SW). Merlins were widespread and unusually conspicuous in the east and south, with multiple reports from ≥20 locales (m.ob.). Counted among wintering peregrines were singles in the Sandia Mts., Jan. 26 (BM, *fide* HS) and at Bosque Ref., Jan. 9 (ED, CS), plus two in the Gila Valley Jan. 2 (RF). Montezuma Quails at the n. edge of their range were ≤10 in the Bear Mts. n. of Magdalena Dec. 3 (GS). Scaled and Gambel's quails and N. Bobwhites were in good numbers throughout their small ranges, undoubtedly reflecting recent favorable conditions. The 15 Com. Moorhens at Las Cruces Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*) outnumbered neighboring Am. Coots. Sandhill Cranes away from usual reporting areas included 1000 s. of Deming Dec. 17 (EL) and four at Cloverdale Dec. 21 (AC, NMC). The experimental Whooping Crane flock stood at nine adults in December (U.S.F.W.S.), down from a high of 32 in 1983–1984; no additional egg transfers have been made since 1989, nor has any natural reproduction occurred.

#### PLOVERS TO CUCKOOS

Nine Snowy Plovers at Laguna Grande Feb. 27 (SW *et al.*) were likely early migrants. Also early were two Am. Avocets at both the Lordsburg Playa Feb. 25 (CR, PS) and Holloman L. Feb. 26 (L. Hinesley, *fide* CS). Four Long-billed Curlews were late, found Dec. 21 at Loving (CW, SW), where they are rarely recorded in winter. What was termed a "Dunlin invasion year" added up to 25 wintering at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (ph. BZ) and a single at Las Cruces Dec. 20; another at Bernardo Feb. 20 (JP) may have

wintered locally, but seven at Bosque Ref., Feb. 27 (JP) were likely spring migrants. Long-billed Dowitchers, similarly rare in mid-winter, likewise made a good showing in the lower R.G.V., including 11–22 at Bosque Ref., Jan. 9 (CS) & 21 (CR) and a high of 160 at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (ph. BZ). The season was quiet on the gull front, with the exception of a probable **Mew Gull** at Conchas L., Feb. 27 (CR), for the 2nd consecutive year. For better or worse, Herring Gulls were reported in bevies at reservoirs in the northeast and in the R.G.V., with highs of 14 near Las Vegas Jan. 20 (CR), 10 at E.B.L., Jan. 16 (JP), and 21, plus 15 Californias, at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (BZ *et al.*). Small groups of White-winged Doves again wintered n. to Albuquerque (AS) and Socorro (JP), with hundreds in the Las Cruces area (CS, BZ) and "increasing" numbers at Carlsbad (*fide* SW); two at Columbus Feb. 25 (CR, PS) were noteworthy. Mourning Doves in the north included singles at L.V.N.W.R., Jan. 5 (CR, PG) and at Apache Cr., Dec. 26 & 31 (JH); Mournings were judged "unusually common" at Zuni in mid-winter (DC). The previously reported Inca Dove at Clayton remained until Feb. 10 (WC *et al.*, ph.); among the other Incas counted were 1–2 at Socorro throughout the period (JP, BP, SW), ≤4 in Roswell (SBi), a remarkable 40–50 at Owens Farm, *Doña Ana*, Dec. 2 and Jan. 22 (CB), and ≤15 at Carlsbad (T. Hines, *fide* SW). A lone Com. Ground-Dove was seen near Cliff Jan. 2 and Feb. 13 (RF). A peripheral find was a Greater Roadrunner at Datil Dec. 31 (JH); the southwest's numbers were up (RF), and Las Cruces yielded a nest with eggs noted Feb. 22 (GE).

#### OWLS TO WOODPECKERS

Eleven W. Screech-Owls were encountered at Bosque Ref., Dec. 19 (SC *et al.*). A Short-eared Owl put in an appearance at Morgan L., *San Juan*, Feb. 23 (SBa).

A Com. Poorwill near Dripping Springs, Organ Mts., Jan. 23 (R. Meyer) may represent a local winter first. A subad. ♂ **Magnificent Hummingbird** at Silver City Oct. 29+ acquired adult plumage; by late February, the bird was found singing (D&MZZ, ph. RF). An Anna's was in Guadalupe Canyon Feb. 9 & 16 (AC, NMC), and another was seen Dec. 20 at Las Cruces (H.&B. Hanson), where the species has been recorded during most recent winters. Late Rufous Hummingbirds included an ad. male at Silver City Dec. 5 (D&MZ, *fide* RF); an imm. male in the Peloncillo Mts. Dec. 20 (T.&B. Dolezal), under observation late October+ (RS); and single females at Las Cruces Dec. 5 (GE) & 20 (T.&B. Dolezal); added to the Dec. 20 booty at Las Cruces was an imm. ♂ *Selasphorus* sp. (*fide* BZ, ph.). Two Gila Woodpeckers in the n. Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 6 (RS *et al.*) provided a local first; other Gilas included three each near Cliff Jan. 2 (RF) and at Nimas Cr., *Hidalgo*, Feb. 25 (CR, PS). A **Red-bellied Woodpecker** was found Dec. 9, along Perico Cr. near Clayton (WC), where previous sightings harken back to winter 1955–1956 and summer 1990. Judging from sight reports, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers may

prove to winter more commonly than now believed, in the lowlands from the R.G.V. eastward; this season produced detailed reports in the R.G.V. at Tesuque (CR), Albuquerque (BV, AS), Socorro (JP, BP), Bosque Ref. (v.o.), Caballo L. (BZ), and Las Cruces (L. Schulte *et al.*), and eastward at Conchas L. (CR) and Rattlesnake Springs (CB, CM). A Downy Woodpecker completed the picture at Rattlesnake Springs Dec. 19 (L. Bush).

#### S.A.

Intriguing was the saga of a Barred Owl, presumably of New Mexican origin. The freshly killed carcass was retrieved from a truck driver at the Trinidad, CO, Port of Entry, on I-25, just n. of the New Mexico state line, the evening of Feb. 1. The driver explained that he was "just outside of Albuquerque" when he saw two owls in front of his truck. Not knowing that he had hit one of them, he continued along to a New Mexico truck stop, where passersby pointed out an owl on the rig's front grill. In an effort to preserve it, the driver placed the freshly killed bird in a cooler and "declared" it when he crossed into Colorado. Told that possession of an owl is illegal, the carcass was confiscated by Bob Holder, who transported it to Denver, where it was identified by Hugh Kingery Feb. 2. The specimen is now in the Museum of Southwestern Biology. There are no previous reports.

#### FLYCATCHERS TO KINGLETS

An early N. Beardless-Tyrannulet turned up at Guadalupe Canyon Feb. 27 (AC, NMC). January 3 scored a Hammond's Flycatcher residing at Percha Dam (ph. BZ), where the species has wintered almost annually in recent times, and two others near Caballo (GE *et al.*). Single E. Phoebe were at Percha Dam Dec. 3 (LH) and Jan. 3 (ph. BZ), near Caballo Jan. 3 (GE *et al.*), and at Las Cruces Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*); milder winters may be responsible for more reports of overwintering birds. Unusual for the season was a Vermilion Flycatcher at Rodeo Dec. 27 (RS *et al.*), and another was early, in the Animas Valley Feb. 25 (AC, NMC). Tree Swallows included 2–3 late at E.B.L., Dec. 28 (DC) and three early-comers to Bosque Ref., Feb. 18 (RT, PB). An unusual find was 1–2 N. Rough-winged Swallows in the Caballo-Percha area Dec. 18 (SBa, SG) and Jan. 3 (BV, BZ); one at Mesilla Feb. 18 (GE) and three at Redrock Feb. 24 (CR, PS) were early. A noteworthy addition to the state roster was a Gray Jay at 9500 ft near Black L., *Colfax*, Dec. 12 (CR *et al.*). Peripheral single Blue Jays were at Ocate Jan. 16 (CR) and Santa Fe Dec. 12 & 27 (SBa); "more than ever" wintered at Clayton (WC), while resident populations at Ft. Sumner (CR), Roswell (SBi), Carlsbad (SW), and Loving (SW) continued to thrive. Pinyon Jays remained much in evidence in the north and west, with noteworthy highs of 561 at Santa Fe Dec. 27 (PI *et*

al.) and 335 in the Sandia Mts., Jan. 3 (T. Bulow *et al.*), and 100 in the Datil Mts., Dec. 2 (GS); the s. sector had 30 at L. Roberts, *Grant*, Dec. 25 (EL). Peripheral Am. Crows included singles at Clayton Feb. 10 (WC) and Conchas L., Feb. 27 (CR) plus 1–2 at Aragon, Apache Cr., Alma, and Glenwood Dec. 26–31 (JH, RD). Found roosting with crows at Albuquerque Dec. 20 were  $\leq 55$  Chihuahua Ravens (BM). Easterly Bridled Titmice were at Percha Dam Jan. 3 (BZ *et al.*), Jan. 16 (JP), and Feb. 26 (CR, PS). A Red-breasted Nuthatch near Mule Cr., Dec. 29, was an excellent find (JH). More evidence of Cactus Wrens colonizing the northeast was provided by three at Gallegos, *Harding*, Feb. 3 (CR). Golden-crowned Kinglets were scarce in submontane areas, but an easterly two were found among the salt cedars at Loving Dec. 21 (SW, CR); Ruby-crowns were in unusually short supply at many reporting locales (m.ob.).

#### BLUEBIRDS TO WARBLERS

Eastern Bluebirds were conspicuous in the southeast at Ft. Sumner, Conchas L., Roswell, and Rattlesnake Springs (v.o.); in the southwest,  $\leq 5$  Easterns delighted observers near Cliff Jan. 2 and Feb. 13 (RF), two at Silver City Dec. 17 (RF *et al.*), four in the Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 26 (RS *et al.*), and 10 at Las Cruces Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*). Mountain Bluebirds were unusually plentiful in the Eastern Plains and Canadian Basin, including 600 at L.V.N.W.R., Jan. 20 (CR, PG), “increased numbers” at Conchas L., Jan. 7 (CR), and  $>100$  near Pastura Dec. 11 (CS *et al.*). Compared with recent years, Am. Robins were relatively scarce in most areas (v.o.). Well-detailed Gray Catbirds, casual at best in winter, were singles at Socorro Jan. 30 (JP, BP) and Roswell Dec. 19 (P. White). Northerly N. Mockingbirds, perhaps often overlooked in winter, included singles at Clayton (WC), *Harding*, Feb. 3 (CR), and Ft. Sumner Jan. 14 (CR). Nine Brown Thrashers were reported at 6 locales from the R.G.V. eastward (v.o.). Moderate numbers of Cedar Waxwings wintered in the southwest from Pleasanton and the Peloncillo Mts. eastward to Caballo L. and Las Cruces (v.o.); in the Pecos Valley, however,  $>100$  stayed at Roswell all winter (*vide* SBi). Seven N. Shrikes were reported from as many areas in the north, in *San Juan*, *McKinley*, *Rio Arriba*, *Taos*, *Mora*, and *San Miguel* (v.o.). Winter records of Solitary Vireos may be on the rise in the lower

R.G.V., with an “eastern” at Percha Dam Dec. 31 (CS) and one each *solitarius* (ph. BZ) and *cassini* at Las Cruces Dec. 20. Single Hutton’s were also at Percha Dec. 31 (CS) and Jan. 3 (ph. BZ) & 16 (JP) and at Las Cruces Jan. 8 and Feb. 8 (CS). A total of 21 Orange-crowned Warblers at Las Cruces Dec. 20 (BZ *et al.*) was unusually high. A probable **Townsend’s Warbler** at Las Cruces Dec. 23 (CS) furnished the state’s 4th winter report in the past 5 years.

#### CARDINALS TO CARDUELINES

Far n. of the usual range was a ♂ N. Cardinal at Tucumcari in February (ph. B. McClelland, *vide* HS). Pyrrhuloxias were numerous in the s. lowlands especially in *Doña Ana* (BZ) and *Eddy* (SW) and northward to *Grant*, *Socorro*, and *Chaves* (v.o.); one found in the Sandia Mts., Dec. 13–Jan. 13 was far north and a local first (HS, ph. C. Treat). Canyon Towhees remained conspicuous in previously unoccupied lowland areas in *Doña Ana* (GE, CS) and *Eddy* (SW); a remarkable 372 were counted in the Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 26 (RS *et al.*). Abert’s Towhees included three near Cliff Jan. 2 (RF),  $\leq 10$  at Redrock Feb. 24 (CR, PS), and two at San Simon Cienega Feb. 25 (CR, PS). Three Rufous-crowned Sparrows were at the Canadian R., near Roy Feb. 5 (CR), where they are unusually hard to find in winter. Numbers of Am. Tree Sparrows in the northeast were down from previous years (CR), perhaps reflecting milder conditions farther north. Black-throated Sparrows were found northerly, with  $\leq 5$  wintering at Petroglyph N.M. (HS). A Lark Bunting was early at San Jon, *Quay*, Feb. 3 (CR). The only Grasshopper Sparrow was one in the Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 26 (RS), where seven were reported in the past 10 years. Only five Fox Sparrows were seen, all in the s. one-third of the state (v.o.). Always noteworthy, Golden-crowned Sparrows were more numerous than usual, including two found in Albuquerque Dec. 20 (HS *et al.*)–Jan. 31 (v.o.), one near Cliff Jan. 2 (RF), and one in Guadalupe Canyon Feb. 13 (NMC). The only Harris’ Sparrows were singles at Española Dec. 20 (BF) and Percha Dam, Jan. 3 (ph. BZ). A White-winged Junco was at Clayton (WC), where the species is rarely reported, while Gray-headed were singing in the Zuni Mts., Feb. 27 (JH, EE). Efforts to find Lapland Longspurs in the northeast were generally successful, with small numbers at Maxwell N.W.R., Jan. 31

(CR) Feb. 5 (JP, BP) & 18 (SBa), as well as others at Springer (CR) and near Las Vegas (v.o.). Northerly for January were small numbers of Chestnut-collareds at Maxwell N.W.R. and Las Vegas (CR); 140 near Roy Feb. 5 was a notable find (CR), as were four in the Datil Mts., Dec. 2 (GS). Noteworthy were seven E. Meadowlarks singing near Mule Cr., Dec. 29 (RD, JH). Common Grackles, unusual in winter, were reported among Great-taileds at Roswell Dec. 19 (SBI *et al.*) and Las Cruces Dec. 20 (CS, CR); far westerly were nine at Redrock Feb. 24 (CR, PS). A Scott’s Oriole at Pancho Villa S.P., Jan. 21 (CB) provided the 3rd recent winter record for that site. Varying flocks of 20–450 Rosy Finches were observed in the northeast December–February, at such locales as Eagle Nest (JH *et al.*), Angle Fire (CR, SW), Black L. (CR, LH, SBa), and Las Vegas (CR); the vast majority were identified as Brown-capped with only a few Gray-crowns and a handful of Blacks; 36 more Rosy Finches were at Navajo Dam Feb. 14 (CR *et al.*). A high of 10 Pine Grosbeaks were at Sandia Crest Jan. 31 (JP, BP). Cassin’s Finches were generally scarce in their usual haunts and showed little evidence of submontane movement. Red Crossbills located where they are rarely reported included five near Cuba Feb. 13 (JP), 15 n. of Apache Cr., Dec. 29 (RD, JH), and five in the Guadalupe Mts., Feb. 6 (K. Bruns, *vide* SW). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce, restricted to n. foothill areas from Navajo Dam (JP) and Zuni (DC) eastward to Cuba (JP), Santa Fe (JH), and Las Vegas (CR).

**Cited observers:** Sy Baldwin, Pat Basham, Sherry Bixler, Charles Black, David Cleary, Wes Cook, Steve Cox, Alan Craig, Narca Moor Craig, Robert Dickerman, Ellen Espinosa, Gordon Ewing, Ralph Fisher, Bernard Foy, Phil Garcia, Sheila Gershen, Lois Herrman, John Hubbard, Pat Inley, Eugene Lewis, Curtis Maramant, Bill Maynard, David Mehlman, Benjamin Parmeter, John Parmeter, Christopher Rustay, Catherine Sandell, Gregory Schmitt, Robert Scholes, Hart Schwarz, Patricia Snider, Dale Stahlecker, Alan Swain, Ross Teuber, United States Fish & Wildlife Service (U.S.F.W.S.), Brad Vaughn, Steve West, S.O. Williams, Barry Zimmer, Dale & Marian Zimmerman.—**SARTOR O. WILLIAMS III**, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

## ALASKA REGION

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

Except for a Regionwide high pressure and subzero freeze in late January, winter 1992–1993 was mostly mild, uneventful, and tedious. This winter’s weather patterns seemed to mirror those set in motion through

the late fall; that is, slow-moving low-pressure systems generated near-record snow accumulations across the Interior; weak high and low pressure across the North Gulf of Alaska Coast produced many weather combinations with no real pattern all season; and extended high-pressure cells over Southeast permitted below-average cold and snow conditions and below-average snow for the northwest coastal regions. Snowpack accumulation was at maximum of record in 35 years in the s. Interior, concentrated especially in the lower Tanana

Basin. Elsewhere, snow cover was a mixed bag, given local mild conditions.

Although fall migration began early, lingerers remained noteworthy well into December. Wide temperature swings punctuated February statewide, but the average for February ranged above normal in Southeast and increased steadily toward the west and northwest coasts. Such late winter weather usually allows for an early intra-Region movement of early migrants. None was noted as of period’s end. An Asiatic component was dis-



Middleton I. thickets, Dec. 30–Jan. 1 (RLS), providing the first island winter report. Two N. Flickers were located in midtown Anchorage Jan. 2–Feb. 19 (LW, DFD). A single flicker that spent parts of the 2 previous winters in Anchorage represented Upper Cook Inlet's only other winter record. Another N. Flicker lingered at Homer until Dec. 20 (GCW), while elsewhere three N. (Red-shafted) Flickers overwintered at a Ketchikan feeder (SCH), and several were noted around Petersburg Dec. 17–Feb. 15 (PJW).

The five Black-billed Magpies found around the s. side of Unimak I. at Cape Lazaref Feb. 2 (CPD, CFZ), likely represent the Region's westernmost. Magpies were historically recorded in winter casually W to False Pass, an area that now supports small numbers annually in mid-winter. In a year in which the North Gulf Coast Black-capped Chickadee population swelled to record numbers, including 1983 seen Dec. 19 at Anchorage (m.ob.), three wandered offshore to Middleton I., Dec. 30–Jan. 1 (RLS). There are no previous chickadee records from the more distant offshore islands in the Gulf (e.g., Kodiak, Middleton, the Barren Is.). Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers showed no signs of falling from last year's record counts in the Anchorage area, where this season's peak reached 130 Dec. 19 (m.ob.). Twenty nuthatches in Seward Dec. 27 (m.ob.) constituted one of Resurrection Bay's best winter totals.

At least two Townsend's Solitaires wandered around the Anchorage area seen sporadically Dec. 1 (*fide* DWS)–Feb. 26 (AS). Another solitaire spent the month of December at Juneau (*fide* MEI). Previously considered casual in winter, a few Solitaires have now been found somewhere in the s. portions of the Region for the past 6–8 winters. Varied Thrushes lingered late and north, where they are casual away from the immediate North Gulf Coastal fringe, with singles noted at Fairbanks until Dec. 23+ (DDG) and in Anchorage Dec. 1–Jan. 10+ (TGT). Milder weather at offshore sites enables good numbers of Varieds to winter (e.g., 84) were counted around Kodiak Jan. 2 (RAM, m.ob.). We received a second-hand "by-the way" report of a Northern Mockingbird tracked down and confirmed in an Anchorage neighborhood (DFD, ph. RLS, EW, TGT). This bird, present since Nov. 10, was believed by most to be the same individual that appeared briefly at a site <1 mi away in June (q.v. Summer



**White-throated Sparrow at Seward, Alaska, December 27, 1992. Photograph/R. L. Scher.**

1992). It remained all season and roosted against a south-facing condominium window, feeding on fresh mealworms at a local feeder during prolonged subzero temperatures and north winds.

#### STARLING TO FRINGILLIDS

Extralimital Eur. Starling reports included two in an Anchorage neighborhood until Dec. 19+ (TGT, RLS, RA) and three around Kodiak Jan. 3–Feb. 13 (DWS, RAM, JBA). Unusually tardy were two Orange-crowned Warblers around Petersburg Dec. 8 & 11 (PJW). The Orange-crowned Warbler that appeared at a Kodiak feeder Jan. 24–30 (RAM) may well have been the same bird that had successfully overwintered at the same feeder last winter, for the Region's first winter record. Wintering sparrows were found in above-average numbers across Southcoastal, where most are annual in variable numbers. American Tree Sparrows were widespread in Southeast and Southcoastal, with high counts of five at Seward Dec. 27 (m.ob.); six on Kodiak's Narrow Cape CBC Jan. 3 (*fide* DWS) and at Homer Dec. 20 (*fide* GCW); and nine in Anchorage to Dec. 19 (*fide* DFD). Fox Sparrows were also widespread, notably four at Cordova through December (REF), 2–3 at Seward Dec. 27 (RLS, TGT), 11 at Kodiak Jan. 2 (*fide* RAM), and four in Homer Dec. 20 (*fide* GCW). Rusty Interior forms were described at Kodiak, Seward, and Juneau. The

Region's rarest winter sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, was also widespread, with four at Kodiak all period (RAM), one at Homer Dec. 20 (*fide* GCW), and another at Ketchikan Jan. 11 (SCH). Fitting the recent pattern of late fall appearances in Southeast, an imm. Swamp Sparrow was described from Petersburg's Blind Slough Dec. 10 (PJW). The winter's only White-throated Sparrow appeared at Seward Dec. 27 (RLS, TGT), a 3rd local record, remaining until Feb. 17+ (GCW). There are now about 6 Southcoastal records, all from winter. Several ♂ McKay's Buntings were with wintering Snow Buntings in January and February, at what must be the extreme n. edge of both species' winter ranges, at Kotzebue and inland at Sisualik (WRU). A few McKay's overwintered at Cold Bay, where they are annual, Jan. 4–Feb. 28+, and a maximum three Jan. 28 (MZ, CFZ).

Last winter's ♀ Brewer's Blackbird returned to the same Ketchikan feeder in October and remained until mid-February (SCH). The season's only Brambling was a single remaining at Kodiak October+ (PS). After December, both crossbill species were absent or rare s. of the Alaska Range. North of the mountains, White-winged were locally common at Tok (TJD) in the east to the lower Noatak R. drainage in the northwest (WRU). White-winged Crossbill numbers have been very low throughout the Region for nearly 3 years now. Wintering Redpolls were widespread and in about average numbers, except in Southeast, where numbers built to above-average local peaks in early February (m.ob.).

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA/ YUKON REGION

Chris Siddle

With the departure of El Niño and its warming influence earlier in the year, winter was more "normal" along coastal British Columbia. Arctic outbreaks meeting low-pressure

cells from the Pacific produced much more snow than the coast has seen in many years. While impressive, the 35 cm of snow that fell in Vancouver was by no means record breaking. Mid- and late January were frigid in the interior. Dawson Creek experienced -50°C for a week. Prince George had a cold snap Dec. 27–Jan. 17, one of the longest since the 1940s. January began with more snow, followed by a cool drying trend on the coast, January to early February. Early spring began, as usual, in late February around Vancouver

and Victoria, but the rest of the province continued to shiver under a series of cold spells. Some brought record-setting low temperatures.

Canada's first Dusky Thrush, a Siberian vagrant, appeared in a yard in Langley and stayed in the neighborhood for more than 2 months. Almost everyone who searched for the bird found it. In the interior, to quote Subregional Editor Dirk Septer, "The cold weather and lack of open water made this winter very dull. ..."

Many thanks to Victoria birders, who provided an exceptionally concise, ready-to-use report.

Anyone interested in northern avifauna will be interested in the Yukon Bird Club's new and attractive quarterly newsletter. For membership information, write to: The Yukon Bird Club, RR 1, Site 16, Comp. 44, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 4Z6.

**Abbreviations:** Q.C.I. (*Queen Charlotte Is.*); Van. I. (*Vancouver I.*); Vic. (*Victoria*).

### HERONS TO WATERFOWL

A late report received after the fall was of a Great Egret photographed at Moose L., Mt. Robson P.P., in late October (ph. PB, ES). The bird wandered around the area and was last seen at the Columbia Icefields, Jasper, Alta., ca. Nov. 13. After the December freeze-up of all lakes except Okanagan L., Great Blue Herons around Kelowna began to appear standing near the holes created by ice fishermen. Now and then a fisherman would take pity on a poor bird and toss it a scaly snack (CRS). After the huge fall invasion, only two Cattle Egrets were reported, at Courtenay (DHa) (no other details). A Green-backed Heron at Brackendale Jan. 17 (BS) provided an unusual winter record. As has been usual for the past several years, Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at Reifel I., Ladner. This season's count included two adults, two subadults, and two immatures (JI).

The extremely cold weather probably accounted for the low Trumpeter Swan count at the traditional wintering spot at Crooked R., n. of Prince George. Only 29 adults and one immature were found Jan. 17 (P.G.N.C.). Contrast this sighting with 36 adults and 12 immatures in January 1992. One of 10 Trumpeters seen at Summerland Jan. 24 wore a black collar that read 46 HC. Swan researchers take note. The high count of Trumpeters at Reifel I. was 341 Jan. 29, with 200–300 present most of the season (JI). Vernon's Ross' Goose, which first appeared Sept. 13, stayed in the area into winter. It was last seen Dec. 24, accepting handouts with a flock of Canadas (MC, PR, CRS ph.). Reifel I.'s imm. Ross' was seen Dec. 1–15 (JI, m.ob.). Six Emperor Geese appeared at Sandspit, Q.C.I., Jan. 31 (MH)—the first flock of these very rare stragglers to be recorded on the BC coast in living memory.

A *nimia*- or *crecca*-type Green-winged Teal, shot by a duck hunter at Port Alberni Dec. 9 (DGC), was photographed Dec. 13 (SM). Van. area reported two non-North American Green-wingeds: one at Blackie Spit, Feb. 26 (WCW), and another at Maplewood Flats (GS, BD). These teals are very rare stragglers to coastal locations in BC. Slides



were received confirming the identification of the Garganey reported at Iona I., Sept. 13–14 (ph. RV). The single-site high count for Eur. Wigeons on Van. I. was eight at Parksville Flats Feb. 14 (DGC). For the mainland, it was 13 at Tsawwassen Jetty, Delta Jan. 10 (WCW). A ♀ Canvasback was seen on the Yukon R. below Lewes Dam Dec. 19 (HG) and 20 (CE, PS) for a first Yukon winter record. Tufted Ducks reached their highest total ever, with 55 different birds reported from Iona-Lost Lagoon Dec. 5–23. A count of *three* males at Iona, Dec. 14, was unprecedented (PSP, BSp, RT). Three Surf Scoters near Balfour, Nelson, Feb. 20, was very unusual, possibly representing the first winter record for the E. Kootenay region (LVD). A very rare winter sighting of a Bufflehead, perhaps the first, was made in the Yukon R. at Whitehorse Dec. 5 (HG). Red-breasted Mergansers continue to increase as winterers on Okanagan L. An unprecedented sighting of five males was made at Gellatly Bay Feb. 4 (DW, JBu, DMu).

### VULTURES TO OWLS

Turkey Vultures, rare on Van. I. in winter, had 3 reports: four were seen over Rocky Pt., Sooke Dec. 20 (RS), two in Metchosin Jan. 16 (AC), and one at the Malahat summit Jan. 10 (DA). Another was observed at Boundary Bay airport Jan. 22 (MBI). Two Bald Eagles, an adult and an immature, at Kluanine L., Dec. 12 and Jan. 20, provided unusual winter records for the Yukon (PU, EH). The Victoria CBC reported a record-high 30 Sharpshinned Hawks Dec. 19. Cooper's Hawks appeared in average numbers on s. Van. I.; many were observed hunting the numerous but slow-flying Steller's Jays at Victoria feeders. Both an ad. and an imm. Golden Eagle at-

tempted to flush a party of six Gray Partridges from snow near White L., Jan. 1 (RJC, SGC, SRC). Six Peregrine Falcons each were seen on both the Vic. and Duncan CBCs. A remarkable five Peregrines were reported by the R.B.A.V., Jan. 26 from the Martindale Rd. area of c. Saanich. As is often the case on Van. I., a single Gyrfalcon was observed at c. Saanich Jan. 9 (KT), Jan. 28 (DAL), & Jan. 29 (HV). Another Gyr was in Duncan, Jan. 9 & 11 (DM). Thirty-four reports of Gyrfalcon were received from Van., but most probably represent the same Roberts Bank bird (RJC) seen Dec. 1–Feb. 26 (m.ob., ph. TH). Eight reports were received of a Prairie Falcon around Brunswick Point-Roberts Bank Dec. 1–Feb. 8 (m.ob.). No doubt this is the same bird that has frequented these locations for the past 4 winters.

Ring-necked Pheasants continue their decline in the Vic. area, likely due to extensive habitat loss. The Vic. CBC, Dec. 19, found only five, a record low. Compare this with a median of 46 for Vic. CBCs of 1958–1984 (*The Birds of British Columbia*, Vol. 2, p. 519). The winter brought deep snow to many locales, with unknown effects on many ground-feeding species, including Wild Turkeys. Three groups were reported: 50 at Sirdar, Feb. 24 (LVD); >30 at Ha Ha L. (e. of Kimberley), early February (JR); and 18 s.e. of Cranbrook (no date, MW).

Two Sandhill Cranes frequented 68th Street, Delta, in early December (PSP, BSp, GPA, GA), while a wild bird associated with Reifel I.'s captive(s) throughout the period (JI). Two Semipalmated Plovers seen at Boundary Bay Dec. 4, provided a rare winter record (MG). A Lesser Yellowlegs at Reifel I., Feb. 2, was also a very rare find (JI). A Spotted Sandpiper overwintered at Goldstream P.P. (m.ob.), and two immatures were found at the same site Dec. 25 (DA). A Whimbrel at Ten Mile Pt., Feb. 7 (RBAV) & 15 (J&RS), was in the most reliable wintering Whimbrel spot around Vic. The "Three Amigos"—a Whimbrel, a Long-billed Curlew, and a Marbled Godwit—continued their lengthy sojourn at Blackie Spit (m.ob.). In spite of the numbing weather, a Dunlin appeared along the Kelowna lakeshore Jan. 30–Feb. 15± (DB, m.ob.). A Com. Snipe located at a tiny spot of open water in Smithers Dec. 27 probably failed to survive the late-December cold snap (DH).

More Glaucous Gulls than usual were found around s. Van. I.: five overwintering at Duncan-Cowichan (DM); one 2nd-winter bird at Goldstream Dec. 13 (AC, DFF), Dec. 25 (DA), and Jan. 24 (J&RS); a first-winter bird at Cumberland Dec. 20 (OKM, NJM); and a first-winter bird at Clover Pt., Jan. 4–5 (J&RS). An adult, representing an age group



seldom seen on Van. I., turned up at Co-wichan Bay Dec. 12–13 (DM).

Several Vic. observers kept careful records of Band-tailed Pigeon numbers. The largest group included 60 in N. Saanich Jan. 9 (J&GA). The high count for the Courtenay area was 23 at Union Bay Jan. 17 (BMS). A Barn Owl was found dead at Little R., Comox Jan. 22 (DWI). Three Barn Owls were reported from the Vic. area. As Barred Owl numbers increase ( $\geq 6$  reported this winter around Vic.), W. Screech-Owls appear to be decreasing, with only nine found on the Vic. CBC, down from 23 last year.

Following the fall invasion of Snowy Owls into the Van.-Vic. region, a few were reported from the s. interior, as is usual during invasion years. Singles were at Vernon Dec. 13–14 (FP, CRS) and at Nakusp Feb. 2 (MGe, DSt). A Snowy was sighted at View Royal, Van. I., Nov. 30 (JH, DSo), and one spent Dec. 7 perched on a roof in downtown Vic. (JL). One at Goose Spit, Comox Dec. 6 (JN *et al.*), provided the only up-island report. The single highest count for Snowy Owls was 9 at 72 St., Delta Dec. 23 (MBr) & 27 (MBr). Snowies remained widespread in the Van. area, with 92 reports received from Delta and Ladner. Great Horned Owls were scarce in the Yukon, probably because of low Snowshoe Hare numbers (HG). The only N. Hawk Owl reported in BC was at the junction of Hwy 99 and 91 Dec. 12 (LA). In the Yukon, hawk owls were also considered very scarce, with only two reported. Continuing their trend from the fall, N. Pygmy-Owls were more commonly encountered than usual in the lowlands of the North Okanagan and the W. and E. Kootenays. One observer (WCW) saw four in one day while driving from Hope to Cranbrook.

Small numbers of Great Gray Owls "invaded" s. BC. A Great Gray, accidental on Van. I., turned up at Port Alberni Jan. 9–Feb. 22 (†DGC., JVA, m.ob.). Two appeared in the Van. area at UBC Feb. 7 (MK), and at Burnaby L., Jan. 8 (MP, ESa, SR). The Okanagan (where the species is very rare) had 2–3 at Vernon Dec. 31+ (PR, m.ob.), one at Mahoney L., Jan. 2 (RJC), and another at Tugulnuit L., Jan. 2 (GL). Prince George reported only one Great Gray, in contrast to last winter's invasion (JB). One was reported from Quick and two from Tyhee L. near Telkwa (no dates, EC). A dead Great Gray was brought to the Nakusp Conservation Officer Jan. 21 (JBe, GSD). A single was seen at Whipsaw Cr., 20 km E of Princeton Dec. 26 (DBr). A Long-eared Owl, a vagrant on Van. I., was at Swan L., Saanich Jan. 19 (HV). Eighteen reports of Long-eareds were received from the Van. area. These included single birds at 72 St., Delta; Brunswick Pt.; the Quilchena Golf Course in Richmond; Campbell Valley Park; the Serpentine R. mouth; and Sea I.

Boreal Owls are almost unknown from s.w. BC, yet two road-killed birds were found this season. An adult killed by a vehicle near Tofino in February ended up in the Government



**Gyrfalcon at Boundary Bay, British Columbia, February 17, 1993. Photograph/Tom Heindel.**

Office Building at Port Alberni Feb. 27 (described by DGC). The 2nd was found at 160 St. and Fraser Hwy in Surrey Feb. 17 (specimen at UBC). A N. Saw-whet Owl was found dead in netting from a chicken pen near Quick Feb. 11 (EC).

#### HUMMINGBIRDS TO FINCHES

The only interior Anna's Hummingbird was one at Osoyoos Dec. 8–28 (JK, HK). A probable Red-naped  $\times$  Red-breasted Sapsucker was at Goldstream P.P., Jan. 9 (AB, MB). The bird was described as a  $\delta$  Red-naped with an orange-red wash on its breast below the black bib. As occurred last year, cold weather around Christmas brought Red-breasted Sapsuckers into the lowlands. They were reported by many observers from 11 locations in the Vic. checklist area. In the Van. area, individuals showed up in such lowland locations as Reifel I., Jan. 10 (HNM, JAM) and Langley Dec. 31 (HNM, JAM). Noteworthy was a concentration of eight Three-toed Woodpeckers in a stand of beetle-infested spruce along the Willow R., near Prince George Jan. 14 (MPh). The first Say's Phoebe of the approaching spring arrived at the appointed hour Feb. 22 at Rd. 22, Osoyoos (BC, RW), in spite of much colder-than-usual temperatures.

The Eur. Skylark population around Vic. showed a healthy increase over recent levels, attributed to a drier-than-normal breeding season and to a larger supply of fallow fields this year in the Martindale Rd. area. For the past decade, the Saanich population has been estimated at  $<100$  (ALM, BW, BB). This winter, a conservative count of 173 skylarks was made Jan. 1, consisting of 83 at the bulb fields along C. Saanich Rd./Wallace Dr., and 90 at Martindale Rd. flats, C. Saanich (BB). Two other high counts were 120 birds Dec. 30 (KT) and  $>125$  birds Feb. 27 (J&GA), both at the bulb fields. Four skylarks were found at Maber's Flats, C. Saanich Jan. 31 (J&GA). The Yukon's first winter Horned Lark was in downtown Whitehorse Dec. 19 (HG). During early fall 1992, large flocks of Steller's Jays

were reported from s.w. BC., a first for all observers contributing to this column. Steller's Jays continued to be more common than usual around Vic. all winter. A record-high count of 659 was made on the Vic. CBC Dec. 19. Bushtits still seem to be slowly increasing around Vic. The CBC had an all-time high of 1158 bushtits, compared with 1095 in 1989. Golden-crowned Kinglets also reached a high count of 3337, up from 2907 in 1990.

The bird of the season was a Dusky Thrush of the *eunomus* ssp., discovered Jan. 2 at 20015 Fernridge Crescent in Langley, E of Van. (JI, HNM, JAM, †MAP, m.ob.). This bird was the first of its species ever to be found in North America outside of Alaska, where it had been recorded about a dozen times in the past few decades. The bird centered its activities around a large, well-treed yard, especially around some bushes covered with red berries (*Ilex* or *Pyracantha*?). It often displayed aggressive behavior toward Am. Robins and Varied Thrushes that attempted to feed on the berries. Most birders who came to see this rarity were successful, mainly because the property owners were wonderfully cooperative. Many thanks to Noel and Deborah O'Brien, who allowed a total of  $>1500$  strangers to walk around their yard for 2½ months. I wish this story had a happy ending, but it doesn't.

The thrush stayed throughout the period. The Van. Bird Alert stopped reporting it after mid-March upon request from Mr. O'Brien, who felt it was time to get his life back to normal. How did some birders repay the O'Briens for their incredible patience? They trespassed on the O'Briens' property, even after the Van. Bird Tape had requested that people stop looking for the bird. When confronted by Mr. O'Brien, several admitted they knew they weren't supposed to be there but didn't think the rules applied to them. It's time for every one of us to stop rationalizing that our actions as individuals cannot have far-reaching or harmful effects. Each of us must take responsibility for our actions, *even if it means missing a bird*. The problem is not the other guy: it's *you and me*.

A  $\delta$  Am. Robin present at a Teslin feeder December–February survived Yukon temperatures as low as  $-55^{\circ}\text{C}$  (D&PD). Two N. Mockingbirds were found in Golden Feb. 10; one was later found dead (EZ). Vancouver also had a mockingbird Dec. 29–Feb. 21 (GPA, SPA, m.ob.). Prince George, Nakusp, and Grand Forks observers all reported that their flocks of Bohemian Waxwings had generally left town by the end of December. Four Bohemians, a rare winter visitor to Van. I., were in Duncan Jan. 10–17 (DM), and a single was seen with Cedar Waxwings at Hunt Rd., Saanich, Jan. 15 (HV). The largest flock around Van. was 15 in N. Van., Jan. 21 (WEM). As would seem reasonable, given the colder-than-usual winter, only 4 reports of Yellow-rumped Warblers were received by the Vic. subregional editor. A Townsend's Warbler on Thetis I., Dec. 26 (AC) was a nice find. This species is a rare winterer on Van. I.

Even rarer was a Wilson's Warbler at Ravine Way, Saanich, Dec. 5-27 (DM). Five Swamp Sparrows were reported from Saanich and Cowichan and four from the Lower Mainland, but no details were forwarded. Come on, kids. Swamp Sparrows aren't that common yet! About the usual number of White-throated Sparrows were reported from the Vic. area, but one on Saltspring, Dec. 29-Jan. 1 (GSm) was a first for that island. A ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen at Creston Jan. 25 (WCW), providing one of very few Kootenay winter records. A small mixed flock of Brewer's and Rusty Blackbirds survived the snowy Revelstoke winter at a feeder (ACH, GSD, ph.). Single Rusties were at Duncan Jan. 1-3 (DM), Chichester Marsh, Kelowna, Dec. 6 (CC), and Creston Jan. 25 (WCW). Fifteen Rusties were at Barrett near Houston



**Great Gray Owl at Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, during January-February 1993. Photograph/Donald G. Cecile.**

Jan. 6 (E. Jaarsma). The hardest Rusty Blackbirds were clearly the two males seen in Whitehorse Jan. 18+ (CE, PS). Two Brown-headed Cowbirds at Creston Feb. 24 provided a rare winter record for the W. Kootenays (LVD). A N. Oriole (race not given) overwintered in N. Saanich (E. Campbell, *vide* BD). The only sizable numbers of Rosy Finches reported were the 200 at Grand Forks, Dec. 6-14 (RWa). A ♀ and ♂ House Finch, present in the Yukon since the summer, lingered at a Whitehorse feeder until Dec. 26 (B&RS). The female disappeared, but the male remained into late December, when it almost froze at an inhospitable -43°C. Rescued and warmly housed in Whitehorse, it awaits spring (HG, PS, CE). Red Crossbills were scarce in the N. Okanagan, uncommon in the S. Okanagan, but in good numbers in the Vic. area. The size of the wintering population of Com. Redpolls was confused by the spotty nature of the species distribution this season. The E. Kootenays and Yukon reported higher numbers than usual. Grand Forks had none. The N. Okanagan had about normal numbers. Prince George and Vanderhoof indicated that Com. Redpolls were widely reported in small flocks (JB). Two individuals

were found on Van. I., where the Com. Redpoll is accidental: the first at Nanaimo, Dec. 28 (M. Slingerland), and the 2nd in Vic., Jan. 17-25 (BBa). An outbreak of *Salmonella* decimated Pine Siskin flocks around Van. Thousands died (RJC). A flock of 10 Evening Grosbeaks, accidental in the Yukon, stayed the winter at a Teslin feeder (PD), and a Watson L. feeder filled the bill for a flock of 20 (RF).

**Corrigenda:** In AB 46:1170, I guessed that TG's observation of Mourning Warblers near Ft. Liard might provide first records for this species for the NWT. Well, I guessed wrong. Mourning Warblers are regularly found in summer at Nahanni Hot Springs in Nahanni N.P. (AG). All Say's Phoebes referred to in this column (AB 46:1169) were Sage Thrashers.

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## OREGON/WASHINGTON REGION

*Bill Tweit and Jim Johnson*

After six or more consecutive mostly mild, dry winters, this one came as a shock. The drought came to a temporary halt for much of the Region, except for western Washington. The interior received a deep cover of snow that stayed on the ground. In eastern Washington, the Tri-Cities broke the snowfall record by more than one foot, and Yakima recorded the second-highest level ever. Spokane set a record for lasting snow cover. It was called the worst winter ever in central Oregon, with 84 inches of snow in Bend and continuous snow cover for 107 days, 40 days longer than the previous record. Precipitation in the Harney Basin was well above average, and snow covered the ground for 90 consecutive days. The interior was cold as well, with temperatures in the Tri-Cities, Colville, and Lewiston below average all winter.

The west side snowfall had neither the depth nor the duration of that on the east side, and west side temperatures were only slightly below average. An intense windstorm blew through western Washington Jan. 20, with winds reaching 94 mph at Hood Canal, but no effects on birds were reported. Rainfall was average or better in western Oregon, but it remained below average in western Washington. February rainfall in Seattle was less than 10% of average.

Sauvie Island, in the Columbia River near Portland, hosted an inexplicable horde of gulls that built in size from late December through the winter. The numbers and variety were magnitudes larger than observed in previous winters, even though the gulls wintering here have been well studied for three decades. The flocks included hundreds of Herring Gulls, normally very unusual away from the ocean, at least 20 Glaucous Gulls, and two definite Slaty-backed. What happened?

On the west side, an unusual assortment of neotropical migrant passerines wintered: Rufous Hummingbird, Least Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and Western Tanager. Even in the cold interior, some unexpected species attempted to winter: Greater Yellowlegs, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

**Abbreviations:** Malheur (*Malheur N.W.R., Harney, OR*); O.S. (*Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor, WA*); Sauvie (*Sauvie I., Columbia, OR*).

### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

For the 3rd consecutive winter, <5 Yellow-billed Loons were reported. One was sighted at Blaine, *Whatcom, WA*, Jan. 15-Feb. 21 (m.ob.), and one was seen on the Columbia R., *Yakima, WA*, Feb. 14 (†AS), a long-overdue e. Washington first; they are annual in the

interior of B.C. All seven Clark's Grebe reports were of single birds in January and February: two on Puget Sound (SM, RR), one on the Washington coast (†G&WH), and four on the Oregon coast (m.ob.), apparently typical of their winter distribution here. The Jan. 16 pelagic trip off Westport, WA, found the Holy Grail, a first-winter **Short-tailed Albatross** (TW, m.ob.). The last Washington record dates back to the late 19th century. Only two N. Fulmars were found off Westport; the numbers found in late fall had apparently moved S.

Small numbers of Am. White Pelicans wintered in the Columbia Basin (RW, SJ), despite the cold winter. A few Brown Pelicans lingered after the large fall flight: several at Tokeland, *Pacific*, WA, in early January (*vide* R. McCausland) and the latest Oregon report at Yaquina Head Jan. 11 (*vide* RB). Some Cattle Egrets also lingered after a record fall flight. They were found into December on the Skagit flats, WA (SM), and at several Oregon coastal sites (m.ob.). The latest were eight at Port Orford, *Curry*, OR, Jan. 2 (Jim Rogers) and one at the Salmon R., *Lincoln*, OR, Jan. 17 (PaS).

Mute Swans appear to be increasing in the Region; observers should document this. In Washington, a flock of six subad. Mute Swans was in *Snohomish* Jan. 23–31 (SM) and later in *Skagit* Feb. 8–16 (*vide* BK). An immature was seen with other swans in *Skagit* Jan. 1 (†MPt). In w. Oregon, single Mute Swans were found with Tundra Swan flocks Jan. 1–4, near Corvallis, *Benton*, and Jan. 24 in *Polk* (HH). The Mute Swan population in Bend, OR, has increased from one in 1983 to 25 in 1993 (TC). An imm. Ross' Goose was near Vancouver, *Clark*, Dec. 26–29 (†PL, SF) for about the 6th w. Washington record. Two Emperor Geese found in Oregon included one on the outer coast in *Lincoln*, Dec. 20–Feb. 27 (m.ob.) and at least one at various locations in the Willamette Valley, Dec. 6+ (*vide* BB, HN). Several observers reported unusually large counts of Eur. Wigeons in *Skagit*, WA; the highest was 78, Feb. 7 (SM), probably a Regional record. Three Tufted Duck reports are average: a male near Wenatchee, WA, to Dec. 2 (†AS), a male at Julia Butler Hanson N.W.R., *Wahkiakum*, WA, Jan. 23–Feb. 6 (J. Miller), and a male at Quilcene, *Jefferson*, WA, Feb. 10–23 (VN).

#### RAPTORS TO SHOREBIRDS

The number of Turkey Vulture and Osprey reports was unusually high, considering the severity of the season. Vulture reports included one in the Coquille Valley, *Curry*, OR Dec. 27–30 (m.ob.), five over W. Dungeness, *Clallam*, WA, Jan. 29 (D&SS), and two Feb. 8 at Malheur (D. Staller, B. Ullenberg). Ospreys



were seen at Wallowa L., *Wallowa*, OR, Dec. 20 (S. Russell), near Carver, *Clackamas*, OR, all winter (*vide* HN), near Bellingham, WA, Jan. 5 (P. DeBruyn), near Shady Cove, *Jackson*, OR, Jan. 29 (O. Swisher), two along the McKenzie R., *Lane*, OR, Feb. 13 (*vide* HH), and one on the Siuslaw R. estuary, *Lane*, OR, Feb. 27 (JJ). Black-shouldered Kite numbers were about average in Oregon, although five at Fern Ridge Res., *Lane*, two at Baskett Slough N.W.R., and one in *Polk* are a better total for the Willamette Valley than in recent winters. In Washington, kites were found at 2 new locations in w. *Lewis*: Curtis and Boisfort, Feb. 15 (BH, M-PC). Bald Eagle numbers in w. Washington were excellent this winter (D&SS, BT), with  $\geq 12$  different indi-



Emperor Goose at Newport, Oregon, on February 20, 1993. Photograph/Skip Russell.

viduals sighted at Green L., an urban Seattle location (M. Muller). Six Red-shouldered Hawks were found in the Willamette Valley, an above-average total. The number of Ferruginous Hawk reports was the most ever in winter, with nine in e. Oregon (SS, TC); two in the Rogue Valley (H. Sands, MM), where they are quite rare; and five in e. Washington (AS, RW, M&MLD). Five individual Peregrine Falcons resided in Seattle during February (Falcons Research Group), and two were in Tacoma (*vide* EH); their recovery continues! The usual number of Gyrfalcons was found: three in *Whatcom/Skagit*, WA (*vide* TW) and one each in the Reardan/Davenport area, *Lincoln*, WA (SM, JA), near Enterprise, *Wallowa*, OR, Jan. 16+ (ph. CC, m.ob.), and in the Willamette Valley in *Linn*, Feb. 9–10 (R. Hoyer, Sr.); another provided a county first in *Yakima*, Feb. 20 (†AS). At least four Prairie Falcons found in the Puget lowlands included local firsts at Nisqually N.W.R., *Thurston*, Dec. 5–Jan. 1

(BL, BT) and at Toledo, *Lewis*, Dec. 26 (BH, M-PC). Twelve Prairie Falcon reports from w. Oregon is an average total for recent years.

#### CRANES TO ALCIDIS

Two golden-plovers (sp.) were found: at Dungeness, *Clallam*, Jan. 12 (D&SS), and at Ft. Flagler, *Jefferson*, Feb. 3 (†B. Dickison). There are few Washington winter records. The Snowy Plover reports included three at Yaquina Bay, *Lincoln*, OR, in early January (*vide* RB) and 30 at Bandon S.P., *Coos*, OR, Jan. 31 (*vide* HH). One or two Greater Yellowlegs apparently wintered in the Tri-Cities area (RW), very unusual in a harsh winter. A L. Yellowlegs at Tillamook, OR, Dec. 8–19 (JG, †JJ, m.ob.) was well described; most winter reports of this species are poorly documented. The wintering flock of Marbled Godwits at Tokeland, *Pacific*, WA, numbered 200 (B&GR, TB). The large shorebirds are rarely found wintering in numbers anywhere else in the Region, so 50 each Long-billed Curlews and Marbled Godwits at O.S. this winter (G&WH) were unexpected. A concentration of  $\geq 15,000$  Dunlins at Halsey, *Linn*, OR, Feb. 13, is huge for the Willamette Valley (M. & E. Eltzroth), and a large number for most outer coast locations. Short-billed Dowitchers, another rare winter shorebird, were found at Stanwood, *Snohomish*, WA, Dec. 25 (†SM) and at North Cove, *Pacific*, WA, Dec. 27 (†C. Chappell).

A Pomarine Jaeger observed at O.S., Feb. 19 (G&WH), provided the only report this winter; the January pelagic trip found none. An imm. **Common Black-headed Gull** at Bay City, *Tillamook*, Dec. 3–19 (S. Moskie, †JJ, m.ob.) provided Oregon's 2nd record and an adult at Nisqually N.W.R., *Thurston*, Jan. 17–31 (†DP, m.ob.) Washington's 6th record.

Both were the first multiple-day and multiple-observer occurrences for each state. Little Gulls have begun to winter regularly at 2 Puget Sound locations. For the 5th consecutive winter, adults were found on American L., *Pierce*, until Feb. 1 (PtS) and at Pt. No Point, *Kitsap*, Dec. 1 and Jan. 15 (VN). It was a great Glaucous Gull winter, similar to the record numbers of 1990–1991. In Washington, at least three adults were found, all on the east side (RW, SM, M&MLD), and 11 immatures were reported. In w. Oregon,  $\geq 20$ , including two adults, were on Sauvie (HN, m.ob.), and seven others were reported elsewhere. Although  $\leq 4$  adult and two subadult Slaty-backed Gulls were reported at Sauvie this winter, we have only seen solid evidence documenting two adults, so we leave it to the Oregon Records Committee to sort through the sightings. The first was found Dec. 27 (†PL, SF, m.ob.) and the 2nd at some later



**Northern Hawk Owl in Okanogan County, Washington, November 28, 1992. Four seen during fall and winter were the first for Washington in a decade. Photograph/Paul DeBruyn.**

date (m.ob.). These are the first Oregon records. Only two Black-legged Kittiwakes were found on the pelagic trip off Westport, Jan. 16 (TW); generally  $>50$  are found on mid-winter trips.

Viewed off the Grays Harbor channel at dawn were  $>30,000$  Com. Murres, Jan. 16 (TW); this flock may have included most of the s. population in the e. Pacific. An oil spill in this area in December 1988 had killed a large number of murres. We believe the area deserves special protection. A count of 381 dead Cassin's on a *Lincoln* beach in January indicates a high mortality off the Oregon coast (*fide* RB), and only 19 found on the pelagic trip off Westport, Jan. 16 (TW), may also indicate high winter mortality.

#### OWLS TO TROGLODYTES

Barn Owls in the Yakima valley (AS) and Barn, Long-eared, and Great Horned owls in the Walla Walla valley (M&MLD) were for-

aging in daylight over snow-covered fields, probably the most conspicuous effect of the record snow cover in the interior. Snowy Owl numbers began recovering last winter, after several winters of near absence. They improved a bit more this winter, with w. Washington reports from *Whatcom*, *Skagit*, and *Grays Harbor*; e. Washington reports of four in *Lincoln* in February (JA) and two in *Douglas* in January (D. Hill); and two in e. Oregon during early December (CD, CC). Northern Hawk Owl records this fall were supplemented with two more: one near Spokane, WA, Dec. 11–29 (Mark Houston, m.ob.), and another near Pearygin L. S.P., *Okanogan*, WA, late January–Feb. 17 (T. Smith, *fide* J. Tangren). It had been a decade since the previous Washington record. A Great Gray Owl found in *Okanogan*, WA, Dec. 12 (AS), along with other sightings in the area in recent years, points to a small resident population. Good numbers of Short-eared Owls were found in the Puget Trough (EH) and in s.e. Washington (MD), but only a few reports came from elsewhere.

A ♀ Anna's Hummingbird at Richland, WA, until Jan. 8 (RW) and a ♂ at College Place, *Walla Walla*, WA, ca. Oct. 15–Dec. 14 (ph. M&MLD) were both local firsts. A ♀ or imm. Rufous Hummingbird that wintered at Burien, *King*, Dec. 3–Jan. 31 (M. Bruce, †EH), furnished a very unusual winter record. A Red-breasted Sapsucker at Windust Park, *Franklin*, WA, Dec. 5 (ph. M&MLD), was a county first. A Least Flycatcher at Tillamook, OR, Dec. 20–28 (CR, †PL), was mist-netted and identified in hand, for Oregon's first winter record. An ad. ♂ Vermilion Flycatcher at Myrtle Point, *Coos*, Dec. 6–7 (Stan Wilson, BG) furnished Oregon's 2nd record. After heavy snows had brought the snowpack to 52 inches, the 2nd highest ever in e. *Yakima*, WA,  $>13,000$  Horned Larks were counted along a single stretch of highway Feb. 20 (AS).

Blue Jays have become annual winter visitors to Washington. Four were present this time: in *Kitsap* (M. Briejre), *King* (R. Handley), *Spokane* (TR), and *Skamania* (WC). This winter's chapter in the Scrub Jay range expansion saga included two noteworthy Washington birds, one on Mercer I. during February (m.ob.) for the 3rd *King* record and one in Cle Elum, Dec. 5 (RS) for the first at *Kittitas*. On the Oregon coast, they have been regular only in *Curry*, so five at Myrtle Point, *Coos*, Dec. 7 (BG) and three in *Clatsop*, Feb. 6 (PaS) are significant sightings. Small numbers have been present since moving into e. Oregon in fall 1991. Wintering birds included one at Silver L., *Lake* (SS), two in Bend (TC), and one near Warm Springs, *Wasco* (PaS). Some Bewick's Wrens in newly colonized areas in the interior survived the harsh winter; reports came from Asotin Cr., *Asotin*, WA, Feb. 6 (MK), from Snipes Cr., *Benton*, WA, Feb. 24 (SJ), and from Dry Cr., *Benton*, WA, Feb. 28 (SJ). One at Tumalo S.P., OR, Dec. 19–27, provided a first *Deschutes* record (LR, TC).



**Brambling at Lummi Flats, Washington, in January 1993. About the eleventh state record. Photograph/Dick McNeely.**

#### THRUSHES TO FINCHES

Ruby-crowned Kinglets essentially disappeared from the Yakima valley in January (AS), as the cold weather settled in. A Loggerhead Shrike was well described at Frenchman Springs, *Grant*, WA, Jan. 3 (†MPt); many winter records are suspect. A Tennessee Warbler at Yaquina Bay, *Lincoln*, Feb. 11 (†DF) represented about Oregon's 4th winter record. Orange-crowned Warblers at Richland, WA, until Jan. 1 (RW), were lingering unusually late for a cold winter. A Palm Warbler was seen at Corvallis, OR, through Dec. 12 (m.ob.) for a 2nd local record, and two were found on the outer coast through Jan. 8 (*fide* RB, A. Barron), as usual. Washington has only 2 previous winter records of Wilson's Warbler. This season three were seen: at Seattle, Dec. 4 (D. Hutchinson), a male near Bayview, *Skagit*, Dec. 21 (*fide* K&JW), and a male near Stanwood, *Snohomish*, Dec. 25–26 (†SM).

#### S.A.

Pine Siskins were remarkably abundant through mid-January in many areas: s. Puget Sound (G&WH, BT), n.w. Washington (TW), the Walla Walla area (M&MLD), the lower Snake R. (MK), and the n. Willamette Valley (HN, BB). A *Salmonella* epidemic was apparently associated with this abundance, as large numbers of sick or dead siskins were found throughout the w. half of the Region. Siskin mortality was also reported from a few east side locations, but we don't know whether *Salmonella* was the culprit. Some mortality of Evening Grosbeaks and Am. Goldfinches was also reported. Siskin numbers had declined somewhat by the end of the period, but they were still quite abundant. A siskin netted at Portland, Dec. 16 (C. Kebbe, *fide* HN), had been banded near Little Falls, Minnesota, May 18, 1990.

An imm. ♂ Western Tanager on Mercer I., *King*, WA, through at least early March (J. & N. Fellows, ph. N. Morningstar) was another highly unusual winter species. A ♂

Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Salem, OR, Jan. 7-8 (†C. Anderson); there are now quite a few winter records for the Region. American Tree Sparrows are very rare in the Willamette valley, one was at Ankeny N.W.R., *Marion*, Dec. 24 (PaS). Wintering Lincoln's Sparrow numbers were well above average on Lummi Flats in n.w. Washington (JD), lingering in the interior at Sacajawea S.P., until Jan. 22 (RW), a very late date.

The Rusty Blackbirds at Walla Walla, WA, remained until Feb. 20 (M&MLD), for the 4th e. Washington winter record. A Brambling on the Lummi Flats, *Whatcom*, Jan 1-20 (JD, ph. DM) provided about the 11th Washington record, five of which have appeared in the past 2 winters. Red Crossbills were almost unre-

ported in w. Washington (G&WH, D&SS) and were scarce in e. Washington (AS). They seemed slightly more abundant in Oregon (JJ). Small numbers of Com. Redpolls, rare on the west side, were found in the Puget lowlands S to Seattle (m.ob., *fide* EH), and one coming to a Portland, OR, feeder, Feb. 8+ (m.ob.) was highly unusual for w. Oregon.

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## MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

David G. Yee, Stephen F. Bailey, and Bruce E. Deuel

The state's 6-year drought came to an abrupt halt as heavy storms all period brought above-average rain totals to all parts of the Region. More importantly, the snow pack in the Sierra/Cascades was the heaviest in 40 years. Heavy snow in Sierran valleys and our Great Basin areas apparently forced many bird species, especially waterfowl and passerines, out of these areas (RE, LJ, RLR).

Effects of the lingering El Niño were shown by Black-vented Shearwater, Leach's Storm-Petrel, Brown Pelican, Heerman's Gull, and perhaps alcids. Winter irruptives such as thrushes and Red-breasted Nuthatch had average totals, while some, such as Golden-crowned Kinglet, showed poorly. Among the finches, only Pine Siskin and Purple Finch had a strong Season.

**Abbreviations:** C.B.R.C. (*California Bird Records Committee*); C.C.R.S. (*Coyote Cr. Riparian banding Sta., Santa Clara*); C.V. (*Central Valley*); Cyn. (*Canyon*); F.I. (*Southeast Farallon I.*); M.B.O.S.P. (*Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, San Mateo*); P.G.M.N.H. (*Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History*); P.R.B.O. (*Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory*); S.F. (*San Francisco*); ph. (*photo on file with Regional Editors*). All records from F.I. and Palomarin should be credited to Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory. Place names in *italics* are counties.

### LOONS TO CORMORANTS

A Pacific Loon misguidedly paddled in a flooded field about 5 mi e. of Pinnacles N.M., *San Benito*,

Feb. 11 (†GjH), and unusual numbers of all 3 common species were inland in *Santa Clara*. Yellow-billed Loons were near Hayward, *Alameda*, Dec. 22-Jan. 14 (D. Reinsche, †RJR, MiF) and at Rodeo Beach, *Marin*, Feb. 24 (†CLF). A Horned Grebe at Mono L. County Park Jan. 3 was late (DS). Red-necked Grebes at Clifton Court Forebay, *Contra Costa*, Dec. 8-9 (AWi, JM) and Clear L., *Lake*, Jan. 30-Feb. 7 (C. Johnson, JRW) were scarce inland.

Decreasing from their fall irruption, Black-vented Shearwaters were still numerous Dec. 26, when 316 were counted in 5.5 hours at Pigeon Pt., *San Mateo* (PJM, BS). Small numbers lingered into Spring. An intense early morning storm undoubtedly drove to land the **Leach's Storm-Petrel** found dead in Pacific Grove, *Monterey*, Dec. 29 (DSg, T. Love, \*P.G.M.N.H.) and the unidentified dark storm-petrel seen from Pt. Pinos the same day

(DSg). The Leach's represented the first winter record for *Monterey* and about the 4th for the Region prior to this species' late February return to colonies. Unprecedented numbers of Leach's far off s. California in January and February suggest an effect of El Niño (PP, *fide* DR).

Brown Pelicans wintered in numbers unusual n. of Monterey Bay. Exemplary maxima were 450 at Princeton Harbor, *San Mateo*, Dec. 29 (RSTh) and 100 at the same site Feb. 9 (PJM), 142 at Petaluma, *Sonoma*, Jan. 3 (BGr), 300 at Bird Rock, *Marin*, Jan. 18 (JCo), and six on Humboldt Bay Feb. 13 (GjH, Dfx). Unseasonal so far into greater S.F. Bay were singles at Suisun Bay, *Contra Costa*, Dec. 19 (EHa) and Palo Alto, *Santa Clara*, Feb. 16 (JiC). A healthy ad. Pelagic Cormorant swam a manmade lagoon at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo*, Jan. 8 (RSTh).

### EGRETS TO DUCKS

A Great Egret at the Hot Cr. Fish Hatchery (7000') Jan. 4 was the first in winter for the greater Mono L. area (DS). Only the 4th along the n. coast, an imm. Little Blue Heron was at Crescent City, *Del Norte*, Dec. 5-24 (ADB, m.ob.). Cattle Egrets were well reported with over >70 sightings, mostly coastal. A minimum of five White-faced Ibises, which rarely reach the coast in winter, were around Monterey Bay Dec. 3-Feb. 7 (m.ob.).

Two "Bewick's" Swans, a form first recorded in the Region in 1975, were at Lower Klamath N.W.R., *Siskiyou*, Feb. 6 (†RE); another was near Nelson, *Butte*, Feb. 25 (MMA). A transplant of color-marked Trumpeter Swans from Idaho to Summer L., Oregon, resulted in the sighting of 18 of these birds from *Siskiyou* to *Yolo*, while a description of three unmarked birds seen at L. Almanor, *Plumas*, Feb. 15 (†JTr) was sent to the CBRC.

Arctic nesting goose species made the coast in average to above





average numbers, but 15 Snow Geese in Pope Valley, *Napa*, Jan. 1 (PBU) were between the C.V. and the coast, where they are much less common. More than usual blue morph "white" geese were reported, including nine Snow, 8 Ross', and 1 hybrid, all from the C.V.

#### S.A.

An attempt by the P.R.B.O. Pacific Flyway Project to obtain a minimum estimate of the White-faced Ibis wintering in the C.V. turned up a total of 2380, far more than ever recorded before, but perhaps not surprising, given the size of some recent nesting colonies. As many as 74–87% of these birds were seen on private land deliberately flooded as waterfowl habitat, illustrating how important these lands are to the state's waterbirds.

Very rare in the Mountain and Great Basin districts in winter were a Wood Duck at L. Almanor Dec. 18 (*fide* HG) and three at Hot Cr. Fish Hatchery Jan. 4 (DS). Six coastal Eur. Green-winged Teals was an average count for recent years; still rarely reported inland, singles were at Sacramento N.W.R., *Glenn* (LLu) and near Los Banos, *Merced* (RJR), both Jan. 1. An imm. ♂ *Garganey* was found at the Las Gallinas sewer ponds, *Marin*, Jan. 16 (†K. Burton, †K. Howard, †P. Allen), for our 4th record in 2 years. Always interesting to Regional birders, Blue-winged Teals and Eur. Wigeons were reported in numbers about equal to those recorded last year, including 87 of the latter at Gray Lodge W.M.A. Dec. 27 (*fide* BED).

A pair of Tufted Ducks at Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, Feb. 13 (*fide* DGY) and an ad. female in Fresno Dec. 13 (L. Parmeter) were inland, where there are very few records. Six Tufted Ducks were located around S.F. Bay, in keeping with recent trends. The ♀ King Eider that returned to Humboldt Bay in fall remained all period (†JM, †DR, m.ob.). Oldsquaw numbers were slightly below normal but included *Shasta*'s first, a male at Redding Dec. 26–Feb. 14 (BY, m.ob.). Up to six Barrow's Goldeneyes at L. Mendocino Jan. 31–Feb. 21 (RS, m.ob.) were reported as *Mendocino*'s first; four in Smith R. estuary, *Del Norte*, Dec. 4–24 (ADB, m.ob.) was an "excellent showing." Two ♀ Red-breasted Mergansers showed up inland at O'Neill Forebay, *Merced*, Dec. 28 (PJM, DS) and a male and three females were on Clifton Court Forebay, *Contra Costa*, Jan. 31 (SAG).

#### RAILS TO SHOREBIRDS

The best winter for Black Rails since 1984–1985 included 13 birds in s. Tomales Bay Jan. 9 (RS *et al.*). A Clapper Rail was at the same locale Dec. 12 (RS) and Jan. 14 (JGE), where it is accidental, and one was described as a "probable" from the Carmel R. mouth Dec. 22 (†HOS); there are no acceptable *Monterey* records since 1980 (DR). Sandhill

Cranes made very rare coastal appearances with one immature in Santa Cruz Dec. 19 (ELb); three on the San Jose CBC Dec. 20 (m.ob.), representing the 4th *Santa Clara* record; and 15 in the w. Suisun Marsh, *Solano*, Jan. 29–30 (GFI, JMR, CLO).

The Region's 2nd *Wilson's Plover*, found in fall, remained for the Moss Landing CBC Jan. 1 (m.ob.). A peak of 800 Mt. Plovers at Pixley N.W.R., *Tulare*, Dec. 2 (*fide* J. Engler) was the largest number reported in the Region in 15 years. There were also ≤630 in Panoche Valley, *San Benito*, Dec. 16–Feb. 27 (m.ob.). An inland Willet, very rare in winter, was near Sacramento Feb. 6 (GEw). Two Sanderlings were in the Tulare L. basin, *Tulare*, Jan. 29 (†DS, N. Warnock), where one wintered last year. Western Sandpipers aren't supposed to winter in the n. C.V., but P.R.B.O. censuses found several large flocks there, including 450 in *Sutter* Feb. 13 (DS,



**Laughing Gull in first basic plumage at Lake Mendocino, California, on February 9, 1993.**  
Photograph/Robert J. Keiffer.

GWP). A single *Stilt Sandpiper* on Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey*, Jan. 29 (†C. Hickey) followed last year's first Regional winter records. Ruffs wintered again, with two observed near Lemoore, *Kings*, through Jan. 29 (DS, N. Warnock); one at Moss Landing Dec. 13–Jan. 7 (C. Scollan, M. Sutherlin, m.ob.); one in Alviso, *Santa Clara*, Dec. 20–21 (MJM, MMR); and one at Merced N.W.R., *Merced*, Jan. 24 (D. Gray). A *Wilson's Phalarope* at the Lodi sewer ponds, *San Joaquin*, Dec. 12–19 (*fide* DGY); three on Salt Pond A8, *Santa Clara*, Dec. 19–20 (MMR, MJM, S. Formenti); and one s. of Lemoore Jan. 28 (DS, N. Warnock) were exceptional winter numbers.

#### RAPTORS

Eight Ospreys on the Angwin CBC, *Napa*, Jan. 1 tied the second highest count for Winter. Two Broad-winged Hawks made one-day appearances: at Willow Cr., *Sonoma*, Jan. 3 (DE) and over Brisbane, *San Mateo*, Feb. 28 (ASH). A few winter Swainson's Hawks are now expected in the C.V. (AB 43:362, 44:323,

45:316, & 46:311), but not so e. of the Sierra. A light morph ad. Swainson's Hawk in Sierra Valley, *Plumas*, Dec. 8 (†LJ, KL) may have been the same bird seen across the line in *Sierra* through Dec. 15, 1991. Of four reported "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawks only one at Lynch Cyn., *Solano*, Dec. 20–21 was described (†S. Bobzien). *Del Norte*'s second Ferruginous Hawk that wintered last year returned to Ft. Dick (ADB, RAE). Merlins were very numerous throughout the coast and C.V. Seven were reported as the dark northwestern race *suckleyi*, including three together in *Marin*, Dec. 12 (RS). Stallcup noted that they were associated with the Pine Siskin irruption, as they were during the Red Crossbill and siskin irruption of 1984–1985. Supporting the notion of Merlins following finches, 13 of 20 Merlins in *Santa Clara* were away from the S.F. Bay. Two in *Santa Clara* (WGB, MMR) and one at Pixley N.W.R., *Tulare*, Dec. 24 (J. Engler) were reported as the pale race *richardsonii*, which is rare in the Region.

#### LARIDS AND ALCIDS

A first basic Laughing Gull at L. Mendocino, *Mendocino*, Jan. 23–Feb. 21 (JRW, NWh, ph. RJK, ph. DR, m.ob.) broke tradition in 3 ways: of 18 prior records, 17 had been between April and September, 16 coastal, and 16 adults. A first basic Com. Black-headed Gull at Arcata Jan. 23–Feb. 7 (R.J. Adams, †BBA, †TWL, †JM) was *Humboldt's* 4th and the Region's 14th. No doubt the El Niño and Brown Pelicans influenced many Heermann's Gulls to winter in numbers n. of Monterey Bay. Counts of 255 at Stinson Beach, *Marin*, Dec. 27 (RS, SBT, JW) and 300 at Pacifica, *San Mateo*, Feb. 9 (PJM, A. DeMartini) were unprecedented. An ad. W. Gull at Lakeport, *Lake*, Feb. 24–Mar. 8 (JRW, JPM, C. Johnson) was very rare so far inland. Glaucous Gull numbers equaled those of the record 1990–1991 winter. Four or five adults were among the 26–28 individuals reported.

Two Caspian Terns frequenting Arcata all winter (BBA, DFx, SWH, R.J. Adams), one in *Tulare* and five to seven in *Kings*, Jan. 28–29 (DS, N. Warnock) were rare in winter. An Elegant Tern at Bolinas, *Marin*, Dec. 27 (PP) was late. A Black Skimmer rested at the Big Sur R. mouth, *Monterey*, Jan. 11 (J. Davis), and one banded on both legs stopped at Princeton Harbor, *San Mateo*, Feb. 20 (D. Witter). Two were rumored to have visited *Santa Cruz* in February. The one prior winter record for the Region was at Monterey Bay Feb. 12–March 1988. A Thick-billed Murre was at King Salmon, Humboldt Bay, Dec. 16 (†DFx, †BBA, †TWL). The El Niño may have caused the very high counts of alcids from shore and notable mortality of small alcids. In 5.5 hours of seawatching from Pigeon Pt., 10,100 Com. Murres and 843 Rhinoceros Auklets were counted Dec. 26 (PJM, BS). The Western Sonoma County CBC tallied 4762 Com. Murres, 26 Marbled Murrelets, 82 Ancient Murrelets, and 115 unidentified murrelets Jan. 3. Close offshore Arcata 160 An-

cients were recorded Dec. 19 (GF *vide* DFX). Hundreds of dead Cassin's Auklets littered Carmel R. and Pt. Pinos beaches, *Monterey*, Feb. 2 (C. Scollan). Five Marbled Murrelets and two Cassin's Auklets were found dead at Crescent City Dec. 24–Feb. 19 (ADB).

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

The White-winged Dove at Pescadero, *San Mateo*, Dec. 26 (RSTh) was probably a late fall migrant, as true winter records are few. The state can now officially consider Barred Owl a breeder, as the pair at Wheel Gulch, *Mendocino*, was observed copulating Feb. 6 (RJB, B. Keiffer). Away from the Klamath Basin, winter records of Short-eared Owls in the Great Basin portion of the Region are very rare; thus, one at Mono L., Jan. 3 (DS) was of interest.

Last winter's Costa's Hummingbird in Fair Oaks, *Sacramento*, returned Sept. 9–Feb. 28 (GEw). Another wintered in Hayward, *Alameda*, Dec. 20–Jan. 23 (D. Hamilton, m.ob.). Our only lingering Rufous Hummingbird was an imm. male at U.C. Berkeley Botanical Gardens, *Alameda*, Dec. 12 (DFW). The male at Ano Nuevo State Reserve, *San Mateo*, Jan. 24 (RSTh) was one of the Region's earlier spring arrivals; fewer than 10 mid-late January records fall within this category. Interior sightings of Allen's Hummingbirds are very rare, with movement noted March–September; thus, a male videotaped in Folsom, *El Dorado*, Feb. 7 (*vide* GEw) was most interesting.

Among an impressive eight Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers that wintered along the c. coast, the first noted Nov. 15, singles at San Mateo Dec. 19+ (I. Lake, m.ob.) and La Honda Jan. 31 (CB, WGB) represented *San Mateo's* first records, while an ad. female on Butts Cyn. Rd., Feb. 28 (RS) established *Lake's* first. Conversely, two Red-naped Sapsuckers along the c. coast during December–January was an anemic showing. The Williamson's Sapsucker at Tomales S.P. remained until Jan. 3 (JCo), and another was found in Berkeley, *Alameda*, Feb. 20–Mar. 4 (†R. Swenson, †GFi, m.ob.). The species is casual in the S.F. Bay area. A Hairy Woodpecker in Golden Gate Park Dec. 12–25 (ASH, PJM) was equally rare for S.F. Pileated Woodpeckers are always noteworthy in the S.F. Bay area; one at M.B.O.S.P., Feb. 13 (S. Rottenborn) was *Santa Clara's* 4th.

#### FLYCATCHERS TO SWALLOWS

The recent surge of winter empids continued as the 3rd Regional Winter record of Dusky Flycatcher was at Buena Vista Park, S.F., Dec. 24 (ASH). Two "Western" Flycatchers along the c. coast in mid-December were expected. Eastern Phoebe were numerous in the c. state, for the 2nd consecutive winter. In addition to two on the outer coast Dec. 30 and Feb. 4, first county records were at C.C.R.S., Dec. 20–Jan. 3 (J. Mancini, †WGB, †MJM *et al.*) and Davis, *Yolo*, Jan. 26–Mar. 3 (JMHu, m.ob.), while *Alameda's* 2nd was near Livermore Jan. 24+ (J. Robinson, †GFi, m.ob.).



**Gray Catbird at Orick, California, December 24, 1992. The Region's third in winter, and first for the northern coast. Photograph/ Colin Dillingham.**

Very rare on the n. coast during winter, single Say's Phoebes were at Ft. Dick, *Del Norte*, Dec. 9 (ADB, JGa) and Willow Cr., *Humboldt*, Dec. 26 (C. Ogan, R. Adams, †DFx). The presence of Vermilion Flycatchers in the n. portion of the state continued unabated from last winter and fall, as a male and female were at the Lucky Seven Duck Club near Gray Lodge W.A., *Butte*, December–Jan. 30 (D. Cavallo *et al.*).

The fall deluge of Dusky-capped Flycatchers gathered steam as *Marin's* 2nd was at Pine Gulch Cr., Dec. 7–13 (†RS, †DS *et al.*), and two (!) were in Pacific Grove, *Monterey*, Dec. 23–Jan. 11 (†DR, †RC, m.ob.) and Dec. 29–Jan. 2 (T. Love, †DSg, †RC, †ph. DR, m.ob.). Last dates for birds of the fall: Natural Bridges S.P., Dec. 27 (*vide* JM), El Granada Dec. 2 (BS), and Big Sur R. mouth Dec. 15 (†DR, †RC). Almost as rare in winter, single Ash-throated Flycatchers were in Rohnert Park, *Sonoma*, Dec. 12 (R. Merris, ChW); Sacramento Dec. 26–Feb. 25 (RSt, WEH), probably same bird seen 2 winters ago; and Davis Jan. 26–Feb. 13 (JMHu, m.ob.). Three Tropical Kingbirds along the n. coast Dec. 1–10 were late fall representatives. The first winter record of Cassin's Kingbird in 10 years came from Paicines Res., *San Benito*, Dec. 27 (BJW), while the W. Kingbird at Pt. Reyes Feb. 28 (E. Ruhlén) was the Region's earliest spring arrival ever.

Horned Lark is rare and local on the n. coast past mid-December, so a count of 17 at L. Talawa, *Del Norte*, Jan. 31 (ADB, JGa) was noteworthy. Several observers noted swallows arrived earlier than normal; in coastal *Monterey*, a Tree Swallow Jan. 30 (CHo) and two N. Rough-wingeds Feb. 19 (BHG) were record early there by 5 days (DR), and Barn Swallows at Los Banos N.W.R., Jan. 24 (DES) & 31 (P. Allen), with one and two birds, respectively, were Regionally very early.

#### JAYS TO VIREOS

There were no reports of wandering corvids except for *San Mateo's* first Pinyon Jay at El Granada Feb. 10 (BS). The Rock Wren that returned for its 2nd winter at Bract Tract, *San Joaquin*, Dec. 19–Jan. 16 (AEn, DGY) and one at the Salinas sewer ponds Feb. 10 (DEG) were considered vagrants. Mountain Bluebirds appeared in slightly above-average numbers in the I.C.R., coastal lowlands, and C.V., but Townsend's Solitaire managed only eight sightings in the greater S.F. Bay area.

The Gray Catbird at Orick, *Humboldt*, Dec. 12–Jan. 31 (J. Allen, †L. Barnes, †BBA, †DFx, †DR, ph. C. Dillingham) was a first for the n. coast and the Region's 3rd in winter. Our only extralimital Sage Thrasher was at Bay Farm I., *Alameda*, Dec. 20–Feb. 15 (ALE, m.ob.). Northern Shrikes away from the n. portion of the state were singles at Merced N.W.R., Jan. 10 (RJR) and at Panoche Valley, *San Benito*, Jan. 16–Mar. 1 (CKf, m.ob.). Two coastal "Cassin's" Solitary Vireos during December fell into the recent pattern of late fall migrants.

#### WOOD-WARBLERS TO TANAGERS

Outstanding rarities highlighted the winter warbler show; however, it was the 3rd consecutive mediocre season for our more commonly occurring vagrants. Coastally, there were only one Tennessee, two Yellows, 23 Palms, five Black-and-whites, two Am. Redstarts, three N. Waterthrushes, and 10 Wilson's. As expected, few of these birds were seen past December. Undoubtedly, the bird of the season was the ♂ Blue-winged Warbler that wintered near Ferndale on the Salt R., *Humboldt*, Jan. 2–March 7 (†DFx, †BBA, †JM, m.ob.), providing what appeared to be only the 3rd winter record for N. America away from the Tropics. Twenty coastal Nashville Warblers was about the recent average. The Virginia's Warbler in Carmel Jan. 2–5 (B. Hill, †BJW *et al.*) was the Region's 4th in winter; three of the four have been from *Monterey*. A Lucy's Warbler in Bodega Bay Dec. 7–Jan. 9 (S. Cogen, m.ob.) was *Sonoma's* first and the first to winter on our n. coast.

Yellow Warblers at Nelson Hill, *Solano*, Dec. 21 (†E. Meyers) and at Fair Oaks, *Sacramento*, Feb. 3 (R. Smith) were very rare for the interior. The Chestnut-sided Warbler in S.F., Dec. 29 (PJM) was exceptional for December but was probably a late fall vagrant. A pure flock of 500 "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warblers on Woodley I. near Humboldt Bay Dec. 4 (DFx) gave an example of how "separate" they can be from "Audubon's." Amazingly, the Region's 2nd winter record of Black-throated Green Warbler again came from *Del Norte*, Smith R., Dec. 1–24 (SDS, ADB, BED *et al.*). An Am. Redstart in Sacramento Dec. 16 (TDM) was a first in winter for the C.V. People paid admission to see the the Region's 3rd wintering Ovenbird at the S.F. Zoo Dec. 29–Jan. 23 (DPM, m.ob.).

As usual, S.F. cornered the market on Summer Tanagers, with four Dec. 12–Jan. 16; one at Pine L. Park may have returned for its 3rd

winter. Another was near Pajaro, *Monterey*, Jan. 1 (*fide* DR). A very impressive five W. Tanagers were found along the coast Dec. 7–Jan. 4, with another in Sacramento Dec. 25 (GEw). Early winter records are expected, so one in S.E., Feb. 27 (MLR) was quite unusual.

#### GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Stinson Beach, *Marin*, Oct. 9–Dec. 27 (RS *et al.*) was probably attempting to winter. Another was in Petaluma Dec. 6–12 (W. Nelson). Our only Black-headed Grosbeak was in Pengrove, *Sonoma*, Jan. 18 (H. Boysne, DN). The Region's 2nd winter record of **Lazuli Bunting** was a male at the Carmel R. mouth Feb. 4 (†HOs). *Monterey* continued to shine, as it also held the Region's 9th winter record of Indigo Bunting at Elkhorn Slough Jan. 1 (†PJM, A. Demartini). Most of our winter Green-tailed Towhee records are just one-day birds, so one at a feeder in Martinez, *Contra Costa*, Feb. 10–Mar. 2 (D. Kirshen) was noteworthy. The extreme snow cover over the Region's Great Basin areas likely forced many passerines to non-traditional sites; species like Am. Tree Sparrow were rarely noted (only 8–10). One Clay-colored Sparrow at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo*, Dec. 19–Feb. 28 (D. Powell *et al.*) was our lowest total output for the period in years. A Lark Sparrow at Ft. Dick, *Del Norte*, Dec. 15–20 (ADB, JGa) was a vagrant to the n. coast, and the Lark Bunting at Gustine, *Merced*, Jan. 30 (RJR) was a vagrant to the entire Region. The Grasshopper Sparrow at Ano Nuevo Reserve Dec 26 (†P. Keel) was consistent with recent winter records from the c. coast. Two Sharp-tailed Sparrows were reported from traditional S.E. Bay area spots.

Gazelle Flats, *Siskiyou*, gave us quite a show of snowbirds this Season. Within a ¼-mi ra-

dus, reports included one McCown's Longspur Jan. 14–16, ≤223 Lapland Longspurs Dec. 17–Jan. 17, one Chestnut-collared Longspur Jan. 10–16, and a Snow Bunting Jan. 10 (all †RE). This area has produced impressive numbers of longspurs in the past. Another McCown's Longspur at Tule L., Dec. 22–26 (†K. Spencer, †RE) was added to the Region's less than 15 records. Additional Lapland Longspurs were 14 at Lower Klamath N.W.R., Jan. 18–23 (K. Spencer), 21 at Ash Cr. W.A., *Lassen*, Dec. 27 (T. Easterla), and ≤9 along the n. coast. *Plumas'* first Snow Bunting was in Sierra Valley Jan. 15 (†LJ).

Winter orioles included at least two Hoodeds at Los Altos, *Santa Clara*, Jan. 15–Feb. 6 (V. Reynolds, PLN), and six coastal N. Orioles Dec. 12–Jan. 3. An interior N. Oriole was at Gray Lodge W.M.A. Dec. 5 (BED). Rosy Finches away from traditional sites included ≤3 "Hepburn's" at Fall R. Mills, *Shasta*, Dec. 19–22 (R. Modine) and two at Indian Valley Jan. 15 (G. Rotta, Y. Coulgoulat)—*Plumas'* first). A wandering Cassin's Finch was seen along Mines Rd., *Alameda*, Dec. 28 (RJR); more unusual were three on the C.V. floor in Stockton Feb. 12–28 (DGY, WRH). A notable die-off of Pine Siskins at bird feeders was noted in the greater S.F. Bay area and the c. Sierra mid-December to early January. *Salmonella* was detected in recovered specimens. *Salmonella* was also discovered in dead siskins in the Northwest earlier in winter and apparently followed birds as they invaded south.

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## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

Guy McCaskie

This was one of the wettest winters on record, ending the 6-year drought with major flooding in many areas. By the end of the period, most southern California rivers were actually running, and virtually all reservoirs were overflowing.

Birdwise, this was one of the most uneventful winters in memory. A minimal number of mountain species, such as Red-breasted Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees, made their way down to the lowlands; berry-eaters, such as Hermit Thrushes, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings, were present in only about average numbers. Pine Siskins were widely scattered in large numbers, but other finches, such as Purple Finches, were scarcer than normal away from breeding areas.

**Abbreviations:** F.C.R. (*Furnace Cr. Ranch, Death Valley, Inyo Co.*); H.D.L. (*Harper Dry L., n.w. of Barstow, San Bernardino Co.*); N.E.S.S. (*n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.*); S.B.C.M. (*San Bernardino Co. Museum*); S.C.R.E. (*Santa Clara R. Estuary near Ventura, Ventura Co.*); S.E.S.S. (*s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.*); S.F.K.R.P. (*South Fork Kern R. Preserve near Weldon, Kern Co.*).

As virtually all rarities in s. California are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird are included. Documentation is on file with the California Bird Records Committee (c/o Michael A. Patten, P.O. Box 8612, Riverside, CA 92515) for all rarities listed in this report. Records submitted without documentation are not published.

#### LOONS TO STORM-PETRELS

A Red-throated Loon on L. Isabella, Dec. 21–Jan. 5 (MTH) was the first to be documented in *Kern*. Two Pacific Loons, rare but regular on the larger inland lakes, were also on L. Isabella, Dec. 22–Jan. 5 (JCW). Two Yel-

low-billed Loons were found, with one on Morro Bay, *San Luis Obispo*, Dec. 10 (TME, CAM), and the other photographed in Santa Barbara harbor, Dec. 11 (J&PC): there are only 2 previous records for the coast of s. California, and 2 more for inland lakes within the Region. The Red-necked Grebe in Santa Barbara, Nov. 21–Feb. 10 (JMG), one on Morro Bay, Dec. 7 (KAH), and another in Malibu, *Los Angeles*, Jan. 4 (BE) were the only three reported in the Region.

Only five Laysan Albatrosses were seen during the Jan. 12–27 CalCOFI Scientific Cruise off s. California, with the closest one 53 nautical mi SW of San Nicolas I., Jan 17 (PP). Three Laysans were sighted 70–80 nautical mi W of Pt. Arguello, *Santa Barbara*, during an organized pelagic birding trip, Feb. 6 (SJS), and one flew over the same waters during a similar trip, Feb. 15 (KLG). The only Cook's Petrels seen within 200 mi of the coast were one 172 nautical mi WSW of San Nicolas I., Jan. 16 (PP); another 147 nautical mi WSW of San Miguel I., Jan. 21 (PP); and a 3rd, 65 nautical mi W of Pt. Arguello, Feb. 15 (BKS, SEF). Eight Black Storm-Petrels con-



Diego Bay, Dec. 5 (GMcC); this hybrid is found in California every year and is probably commoner than the few reports would indicate. The only Tufted Ducks reported were a male on Lopez L., *San Luis Obispo*, Jan. 3–4 (KAR) and another male, near Santa Maria, *Santa Barbara*, Dec. 27–Feb. 28 (ph. BHi). The ♂ Harlequin Duck seen at Pt. Mugu, *Ventura*, Jan. 29 (BL) has been present since 1990. An Oldsquaw was inland at S.E.S.S., Dec. 22–Feb. 13 (DDi), and the male found on the Colorado R. below Parker Dam, Nov. 27, was still present Jan. 22, accompanied by a female (JLD); eight counted along the coast was about average. Black Scoters have become exceedingly rare in s. California waters in recent years, as indicated by only four reported S of Pt. Conception this winter. The only scoter found inland was a White-winged at S.E.S.S., Dec. 22 (DDi). A ♀ Barrow's Goldeneye near Cantil, Dec. 19 (MTH) was only the 2nd to be found in *Kern*,

centrated in an area 24–28 nautical mi W of the n. tip of San Clemente I., Jan 17 (PP) were unexpected, as few have been found in California waters this time of year.

#### TROPICBIRDS TO HERONS

Single Red-billed Tropicbirds were seen 49 nautical mi SW of San Clemente I., Jan. 13 (PP) and 46 nautical mi SSW of San Nicolas I., Jan. 17 (PP); this species is unusual in s. California waters in winter. A Red-tailed Tropicbird was sighted at 31°18'N, 120°40'W, about 130 nautical mi SW of San Nicholas I., Jan. 14 (PP) and another at 31°28'N, 122°06'W, about 161 nautical mi WSW of San Nicolas I., Jan. 16 (PP); both locations are over deep water w. of the continental shelf, where this species is proving to be rare but regular. A Brown Pelican near Brawley, *Imperial*, Dec. 23–Feb. 6 (WRR) was evidently wintering at this inland locality. An ad. ♀ frigatebird near Bolsa Chica, *Orange*, Feb. 19, was not specifically identified (J. de la Cuesta); considering that a Great Frigatebird was photographed over s.e. Farallon I., at about this time of year (AB 46:475, 1992), this species cannot be eliminated, though Magnificent would appear the more likely.

The only Little Blue Heron reported away from San Diego Bay was an unprecedented immature photographed inland on the high desert at California City, *Kern*, Dec. 19–22 (MTH). The imm. Tricolored Heron found at the mouth of the Tijuana R. near Imperial Beach, *San Diego*, Oct. 24, was still present at the end of the period, joined by an adult, Jan. 22–Feb. 5 (TC). The imm. Reddish Egret at Bolsa Chica, Oct. 18–Mar. 20 (DRW) was the only one found in California this winter. The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron that has frequented the *San Diego* coast N of La Jolla



**Immature Little Blue Heron inland at California City, California, December 20, 1992. The near wingtip is drooping slightly, showing the dusky primary tips that help to distinguish this species from pale-legged young Snowy Egrets. Photograph/John Wilson.**

since fall 1981 was present among Black-crowned Night-Herons in La Jolla, Dec. 26+ (EC).

#### SWANS TO RAPTORS

The three marked first-year Trumpeter Swans observed near Independence, *Inyo*, Dec. 24–27 (LK) and then on nearby Tinnemaha Res., Jan. 22–31 (T&JH) had been transported from Red Rocks Lakes N.W.R., Idaho, and released at Summer L. in extreme s. Oregon earlier this winter. A "Blue Goose" was noted on Owens L., *Inyo*, Jan. 19–Feb. 2 (T&JH); this color morph is unusual away from the regular wintering flocks of Snow Geese at S.E.S.S. A tally of 35 Eur. Wigeons scattered throughout the Region was a little lower than normal. A ♂ Eur. × Am. Wigeon was present in Goleta, *Santa Barbara*, for its 4th winter (PEL), and another was on s. San

and another, shot by a hunter at S.E.S.S., Dec. 20 (DDi) was a very unusual find, this far south.

An imm. Bald Eagle at Pt. Mugu, *Ventura*, Dec. 5 (BL) was the only one found on the immediate coast. An imm. N. Goshawk near Shandon, *San Luis Obispo*, Jan. 9–Feb. 28 (EMcM), joined by an adult, Feb. 15 (GPS), are two of a very few ever to be found away from the higher coastal mountains and the extreme n.e. corner of the Region. Swainson's Hawks (2–4) carefully identified in the Central Valley W of Bakersfield, *Kern*, Jan. 21–Feb. 19 (SF), were clearly wintering; an immature at Pt. Mugu, Feb. 13–27 (JMC), was thought to have been wintering locally, but extremely early spring migrants this year included one over the San Fernando Valley, *Los Angeles*, Feb. 17 (DA), two more there, Feb. 20 (RB), and another in Imperial Beach, *San Diego*, Feb. 26 (GMcC). Three Zone-tailed Hawks were found along the coast this winter, including an adult near L. Murray, *San Diego*, Dec. 14 (JM); another, possibly the same, in nearby Santee, Jan. 29–30 (EA); and a 3rd adult in Capistrano Beach, *Orange*, Jan. 11 (JEP). With few records of Harlan's Red-tailed Hawks in s. California, the presence of one near Big Pine, *Inyo*, Feb. 13+ (T&JH) and of another near Needles, *San Bernardino*, Dec. 5 (MAP), is of interest.

#### SHOREBIRDS TO PUFFINS

Wintering Pacific Golden-Plovers included two near Santa Maria, through Jan. 15+ (KH); ≤3 on n. Vandenberg A.F.B., Dec. 19–Jan. 27 (AA); and eight at Seal Beach, *Orange*, November+ (DRW). Unusual for this time of year was a count of ≤11 Snowy Plovers, for Owens L., Dec. 23–Feb. 2 (T&JH). Seven Mt. Plovers at Pt. Mugu, Dec. 10 (BL) were



**Ruff at Port Hueneme, California, December 5, 1992. Photograph/Don Desjardin.**

on the immediate coast, where they are now considered rare, and an unusual locality was Owens L., Jan. 28–Feb. 2 (T&JH), where 2–3 were found. Numbers of Mt. Plovers persist in the Palmdale/Lancaster, *Los Angeles*, area, where  $\leq 150$  turned up (MSM); in Lakeview, *Riverside*, with  $\leq 70$  in December (CMcG); and around S.E.S.S., hosting  $>250$  throughout the winter (WRR). The Solitary Sandpiper sighted in Torrance, *Los Angeles*, Nov. 25, and still present at the end of the period (DM), is one of a very few to have wintered in California. Two Ruddy Turnstones at N.E.S.S., Feb. 6 (GH) were believed to be wintering on this inland body of water. Owens L. had  $\leq 4$  Sanderlings, Jan. 19+ (T&JH), the first to be found staying inland away from the Salton Sea. A Pectoral Sandpiper in Niland, *Imperial*, Dec. 22 (PAG) is one of less than a half-dozen observed in California in winter. As usual, small numbers of Silt Sandpipers congregated around S.E.S.S., with 130, seen Feb. 20 (REW), the largest single-day count. A Ruff remained at Port Hueneme, *Ventura*, Dec. 5–Mar. 14 (DDe). Two Wilson's Phalaropes in Salton City, *Imperial*, Feb. 6–14 (CMcG) were undoubtedly wintering locally.

An ad. Laughing Gull present in Santee, Jan. 17–Feb. 12 (CGE) was in the coastal lowlands ca. 20 mi from the coast, a most unusual locality for this species. A first-winter Franklin's Gull in Lake Forest, *Orange*, Dec. 5–6 (JTo) was most likely a late fall straggler, but the same could not be said of the immature noted in Long Beach, *Los Angeles*, Dec. 22–Feb. 20 (KL). The first-winter **Common Black-headed Gull** found in Santa Barbara, Nov. 21, was last seen Dec. 21 (SEF). An ad. Yellow-footed Gull in Newport Beach, Jan. 9 (MTH) was the first for *Orange*, one of a very few to be found away from the Salton Sea in California. Four Glaucous Gulls were reported this winter, with single first-winter birds around Arroyo Grande, *San Luis Obispo*, Dec. 6–13 (TME), at Goleta, Feb. 9 (TS), at SCRE, Jan. 29–Feb. 5 (RWH), and in San Pedro, *Los Angeles*, Feb. 6 (JDB). Black Skimmer numbers in Santa Barbara peaked at 117 in January (FS), and three were on Morro Bay, Dec. 16 (G. McClure), with one or two remaining through Feb. 21 (EG, TME, DWQ)—amaz-

ing considering that this species was unrecorded in this area before 1976.

A dead Ancient Murrelet on the beach in Cayucos, *San Luis Obispo*, Jan. 16 (DC) was the only one reported this winter. A Parakeet Auklet at  $31^{\circ}03'N$ ,  $121^{\circ}12'W$ , about 158 nautical mi SW of San Nicolas I., Jan. 14 (PP) plus an unheard-of concentration (in modern times) of possibly  $\leq 40$  (18 positively identified) materialized between  $34^{\circ}28'N$ ,  $122^{\circ}06'W$  and  $34^{\circ}34'N$ ,  $121^{\circ}53'W$ , -75–60 nautical mi W of Pt. Arguello, Jan. 25 (PP). Three Tufted Puffins, a species rarely reported in s. California waters, came into view between Santa Rosa and San Miguel Is., Jan. 22 (CH).

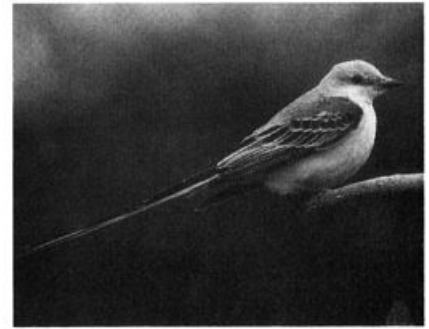
#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

In recent years, White-winged Doves have wintered at oases along the e. base of the *San Diego* mountains, and this year was no exception, with  $\geq 25$ , December–February (H&PB); along the coast, where they are unexpected, as many as five were in Goleta, Jan. 1–Mar. 12 (LB, PEL), as well as another in Irvine, *Orange*, Dec. 20 (RAE). Seven Inca Doves were still at F.C.R., Jan. 4 (T&JH) but could not be found at the end of the period. Common Ground-Doves have expanded their range N along the coast, appearing to favor citrus orchards; they are now resident as far N as Santa Barbara. One found in Santa Maria, Jan. 8–Feb. 28 (DWQ) was N of the species' known range. Five Ruddy Ground-Doves remained at FCR, fall–Jan. 4 (T&JH), and two stayed on (REW). The **Groove-billed Ani** found along the San Gabriel R. in Whittier, *Los Angeles*, Nov. 27, was last seen Dec. 30 (AME), after which access to the area was hindered by flooding. A Lesser Nighthawk over Brawley, *Imperial*, Dec. 30 (AK) was undoubtedly wintering locally. A number of Vaux's Swifts spent the winter in the Greater Los Angeles Basin, as indicated by two winging over San Gabriel, Jan. 10 (KLG), 50 over Sierra Madre, Feb. 4 (CMcG), 25 over the lower portion of Santa Anita Canyon, Feb. 20 (MSM), and  $\leq 37$  over Hansen Dam, Feb. 17–25 (DA). A  $\sigma$  Broad-billed Hummingbird, a rare-to-casual straggler to s. California, was on a private golf course in W. Los Angeles, Jan. 3 (KLG). A Costa's Hummingbird found dead in San Luis Obispo, Jan. 16 (JMu) was unusually far N for this time of year. Four Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported, including an adult in Santa Barbara, Nov. 28–Jan. 2 (AB), a juvenile near Santa Ynez, *Santa Barbara*, Dec. 3–30 (CP), another near Lompoc Dec. 20 (KH), and a 3rd juvenile near Cantil, *Kern*, remaining fall–Jan. 23 (MTH).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO VIREOS

A Greater Pewee found near Imperial Beach Dec. 19 (GR) was present through Jan. 3, when the area became inaccessible due to major flooding. A Hammond's Flycatcher, rare in winter, was on Pt. Loma in San Diego Dec. 1–Jan. 24 (REW). Twelve Gray Flycatchers were found wintering along the coast, and single birds were inland at Yaqui Wells, *San*

*Diego*, Dec. 6–Jan. 20 (AM), at S.E.S.S., Jan. 25–Feb. 13 (PEL), and near Cantil fall–Dec. 19 (MTH); this is the expected *Empidonax* in s. California, this time of year. A "W. Flycatcher," rare in winter, was seen in Irvine, Dec. 8–Jan. 30 (RAE), another in nearby Mission Viejo, Dec. 20 (BED), and a 3rd far inland at SFKRP, Jan. 3 (SL); one at SCRE, Feb. 27 (BHef), was probably an early spring migrant. Three E. Phoebes are known to have been present during the period, with single birds on Santa Cruz I., Jan. 23 (MAH); in Irvine, Dec. 8–Mar. 7 (RAE); and inland near Borrego Springs, *San Diego*, Dec. 29–Feb. 22



**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher wintering in Goleta, California, January 5, 1993. Photograph/Hugh P. Smith.**

(AM). Two Dusky-capped Flycatchers, a casual straggler to California, were found: one in Goleta Dec. 29+ (SEF) and another in San Marino, *Los Angeles*, Dec. 13–19 (KLG). Ash-throated Flycatchers numbered 16 along the coast this winter—far more than usual. Single Tropical Kingbirds at Pt. Mugu, Dec. 1–13 (GS); in Solana Beach, *San Diego*, Dec. 1–5 (RP); and near Imperial Beach, Dec. 15 (TC) are best viewed as late fall stragglers. One in Goleta, Dec. 1–Mar. 15 (BHen) had clearly wintered locally, and another inland near Chino, *San Bernardino*, Mar. 11–13 (HC) is believed to be the same individual present here most winters since 1981–1982. A Thick-billed Kingbird returned to Seal Beach for its 2nd winter, Oct. 9+ (DP). A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was in Solana Beach, Dec. 4 (PAG); another was present in El Monte, *Los Angeles*, Dec. 6–Jan. 1 (JG); and a 3rd was in Goleta, Dec. 11–Mar. 5 (BHen); there are only about a dozen previous records of wintering Scissor-taileds in California.

Reports of Rough-winged Swallows were of interest, as this species is considered casual along the coast in winter: a single bird in Goleta, Dec. 29–Feb. 2 (PEL), as many as 25 around El Monte, Jan. 10 (KLG), and several remaining all winter—two in Long Beach (MH),  $\leq 3$  near Irvine (RAH), and  $\geq 6$  in Santee (CGE). A Barn Swallow near Cantil, November–Jan. 23 (MTH) certainly chose an unusual locality to winter in. The Bendire's Thrasher near Lakeview, *Riverside*, since Nov. 8 was last reported Dec. 22 (TM), but major flooding in this area precluded access to the site. The only N. Shrike reported was one near Bishop, *Inyo*, Dec. 23 (JF).

A Bell's Vireo on the Hidden Valley





Adult male Orchard Oriole at Irvine, California, January 3, 1993. Photograph/Matt Heindel.

Wildlife Area, *Riverside*, Dec. 19 (MAP) is one of a very few found in California in winter. Twenty-four Solitary Vireos were reported from along the coast, 16 of the interior race *plumbeous*; one seen in Arroyo Grande, *San Luis Obispo*, Jan. 30–Feb. 28 (KAR) was identified as *solitarius*; another in Independence, Dec. 5 (AK) was unusually late for the area. A Warbling Vireo in Santa Barbara, Dec. 18 (HPR) was thought to be wintering locally.

#### WOOD-WARBLERS

Twelve Nashville Warblers along the coast was a less-than-normal count. A N. Parula, rare in winter, was at NESS, Jan. 2–Mar. 6 (HK). Yellow Warblers appeared to be scarcer than usual, with  $\leq 20$  reported. A Chestnut-sided Warbler in Niland, Dec. 22 (PAG) was the 6th found in this general area, this time of year. The only Hermit Warblers reported were one near Pt. Buchon, *San Luis Obispo*, Dec. 14 (MC) and another in Newport Beach, Feb. 5 (JB). Sightings of 10 Palm and of 10 Black-and-white warblers along the coast this winter were disappointing. Eight Am. Redstarts along the coast was a little less than average, and only three were found around S.E.S.S., where small numbers are expected. An Ovenbird near Hansen Dam, Feb. 17–14 (DA) is one of a very few to be seen in California in winter. A N. Waterthrush in Newport Beach, Dec. 10–Mar. 7 (RAE) was the only one reported. A very late, or possibly wintering, MacGillivray's Warbler was found injured in Santa Barbara, Dec. 5 (ED), and another was present in San Diego, Dec. 19–20 (PU). One of the two Hooded Warblers at Hansen Dam at the end of November was last seen Jan. 6 (DA). Twenty-one Wilson's Warblers on the coast was certainly less than we have become accustomed to. A Painted Redstart, a rare but regular straggler to s. California, was in Costa Mesa, *Orange*, Dec. 5–Feb. 5 (RAH).

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

The ♂ Hepatic Tanager found in Irvine, Nov. 21, was still in evidence Mar. 5 (MTH), another known to have been in Santa Barbara for the past 10 winters was again present, Nov. 13–Mar. 5 (SEF), and a female was seen elsewhere in Santa Barbara, Jan. 3–Feb. 13 (PEL). Eight Summer Tanagers along the coast was less than expected, and W. Tanagers were far less numerous than in recent years. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Niland, Dec. 22 (PAG) was only the 2nd seen in this area of California this time of year; just three more were found on the coast. Single Black-headed Grosbeaks, normally much scarcer than Rose-breasteds in winter, were in Carpinteria, *Santa Barbara*, Dec. 26–Feb. 25 (P&GZ) and in Santa Barbara, Dec. 28–Jan. 14 (JL). An Indigo Bunting, most unusual in winter, was seen in Santa Barbara, Jan. 9 (ph. SEF).

A Clay-colored Sparrow, rare in winter, was in Santa Barbara, Dec. 11–Jan. 13 (PEL), another in Anaheim, *Orange*, Feb. 13–20 (BED), and a 3rd somewhat inland near Lakeview, Dec. 22 (GH). The only Lark Buntings were one in Niland, Dec. 22–Feb. 13 (PAG), another at H.D.L., Feb. 1 (EAC, \*S.B.C.M.), and a 3rd near Soda L., *San Luis Obispo*, Feb. 2 (KH). A LeConte's Sparrow photographed near Malibu, Dec. 20–Jan. 21 (SH, KLG) was the first to be found in *Los Angeles*, and only the 7th along the coast of California, away from the Farallon Is. Twenty Swamp Sparrows scattered throughout the Region was about average, a similar number of White-throated Sparrows was a little less than average, and six Harris' Sparrows was near average. A flock of Horned Larks near Palmdale contained  $\leq 2$  McCown's Longspurs, two Lapland Longspurs, and six Chestnut-collared Longspurs, Dec. 15–Jan. 1 (JKA); the only other longspurs reported were a Lapland at SESS, Feb. 20 (GMCC) and a Chestnut-collared on the Plano Trabuco, Nov. 21–Jan. 30 (DRW).

A Rusty Blackbird, a rare straggler to California, was in Malibu, Dec. 31 (SJS) and another in Long Beach, Feb. 24 (ph. MH). The only Orchard Orioles were a male in Irvine, Dec. 19–Jan. 30 (BO'C) and another male in Goleta, Jan. 14+ (ZL). Six Hooded Orioles, normally very rare in winter, were found along the coast, December–January. Northern Orioles, scarcer than normal, included five *galbula*; a *bullockii* near L. Isabella, Jan. 24 (JS) and another in nearby Weldon, Feb. 2 (JE) were inland, where they are unexpected in winter. As appears normal, small numbers

of Scott's Orioles were found wintering along the extreme w. edge of the desert in *San Diego*; however, the presence of  $\geq 15$  along the coast was far more than expected.

Three Red Crossbills in Cambria, Jan. 13–15 (BB) were the only ones found, but very few finches, other than Pine Siskins, were noted away from breeding localities.

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## HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

Robert L. Pyle

Above-normal rainfall began in July and continued to year's end, canceling the drought caused by last year's El Niño conditions. But

since mid-January, rainfall has again been significantly below normal. Signs of an unusually early return of El Niño conditions in the equatorial Pacific suggest the strong likelihood that dry weather will prevail throughout the state throughout 1993. The fall rains evidently brought on an excellent breeding season for the introduced estrildids. But wounds from hurricane *Iniki* remain on Kaua'i, and the first post-*Iniki* survey in the Alaka'i brought grim

news for survival prospects of five critically *Endangered* endemic forestbird species.

**Abbreviations:** F.F.F. (*French Frigate Shoals*); H. (*Hawai'i I.*); K. (*Kaua'i I.*); M. (*Maui I.*); O. (*O'ahu I.*); K.P.N.W.R. (*Kilauea Pt. N.W.R., K.*).

#### ALBATROSSES TO IBISES

The same two banded Short-tailed Albatrosses returned again to Sand I., Midway

Atoll this winter (BE, EF), the nesting season for all albatross breeding in the n. hemisphere. One (band ♂ 000) seems fully adult; the other, now nine-years-old, is still in subadult plumage. They are not seen together. When not at sea, each remains in its specific "territory" about ¼ mi apart, among the thousands of nesting Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses. Unfortunately, indications are that both may be males (EF).

Laysan Albatrosses returned to K.P.N.W.R., where their nesting grounds had been cleared of much debris left when hurricane *Iniki* struck in September. A record-high 90 eggs were laid in the Refuge itself, but only 24 hatched successfully. In one area, all 23 eggs were abandoned for unknown reasons. Outside, 13 of 29 known eggs hatched, considerably more than last year. One chick off the Refuge was killed by a dog, but all others are expected to fledge successfully in spring (KV).

Brown Booby sightings included ≤6 in January in Ma'alaea Bay on Maui's w. coast (JO, BP), and ≤4 off Ho'okipa Pt. in n.e. Maui January-early February (JO). Boobies are seldom reported s. of O'ahu. Another Lesser Frigatebird, this time a female, was reported at Tern I., F.F.S., Feb.18 & 28 (*fide* EF). A Cattle Egret visited Laysan I. for one day, Dec.17 (RS). A White-faced Ibis, accidental in Hawaii, was seen regularly at Hanalei N.W.R., K. December-February (KV, TS). First reported on Kaua'i in October (DP), it may have been the same bird seen earlier that month at Aimakapa Pond, H.

#### GEESE TO DUCKS

The little group of Nene (Hawaiian Goose, *Endangered*) introduced last year to K.P.N.W.R. not only survived *Iniki* well but produced four goslings from 2 nests this winter. All were doing well at season's end. Three of the four parents involved were only one-year-old at nesting, an unexpectedly early age

for breeding. A Brant, casual in Hawaii, was seen at Liliuokalani Gardens on the ocean front at Hilo, H., Nov.30-Dec.27+ (KI, TG).

Feral Mallards are a scourge on O'ahu now, but they are usually seen in small independent groups of ≤5. Thus, a loose group of 31 mallards on a pond at Waipi'o, O., Feb.7, was an interesting count. They seemed skittish, eventually flying off in one flock (MO). Fully wild migrant Mallards have appeared in Hawaii in earlier years, but whether these were wild can only be conjectured. Eight Koloa and three N. Pintails were on the fringes of the Mallard flock (MO).

A ♂ Cinnamon Teal, very rare in Hawaii, first seen in eclipse plumage at Ki'i Pond, O., Dec. 5 (TS, MO), had changed to full breeding plumage by season's end (v.o.). The ♀ teal seen with it was probably a Blue-winged (PD *et al.*). An assortment of other unusual ducks visiting this winter included three Eur. Wigeons at Kealia Pond, M., Dec. 20-Jan. 3 (JO) and single Gadwalls on O'ahu near Wai'ialua, Dec. 19 (EV) and at Ki'i Pond, Dec. 27 (PD, LT). Single Canvasbacks in ♀/eclipse plumage were reported at Aimakapa Pond, H., Dec.17 (KI) and Feb. 28 (CD) and at Punamano Pond, O., Feb. 2 (PD). A group of 14 *Aythya* ducks, mostly Lesser Scaup, at Punamano Pond during February, included two ♀ Ring-neckeds, another bird identified as a ♀ Greater Scaup (TS), and one darker, drab female believed to be a Tufted Duck (PD, TS *et al.*). Single Greater Scaup, much rarer than Lesser Scaup in Hawaii, were also reported at Aimakapa Pond, Dec. 17 (KI) and Jan. 10 & 31 (TS). Single ♀-plumaged Buffleheads were present on Laysan, Kaua'i, and O'ahu this winter. A ♀ Hooded Merganser, very rare vagrant to Hawaii, was discovered at Wai'alea Pond, H., Dec 14-January (TS, v.o.). Another was seen on a cattle pond near Wai'ialua, O., Dec.13, and on another nearby pond Dec.19 (EV).

#### FALCONS TO TERNS

Winter sightings of a Peregrine Falcon (*Endangered*) on O'ahu were reported at Ulupa'u Head for the Christmas Count (LT), Ki'i Pond (TS, MO, LT), and Kahuku Pt. (PD). Another interesting report was of a Peregrine duo performing aerial acrobatics, observed from the Ko'olau Cr. Trail near Pu'u Pauao Mar. 6 (TC *et al.*).

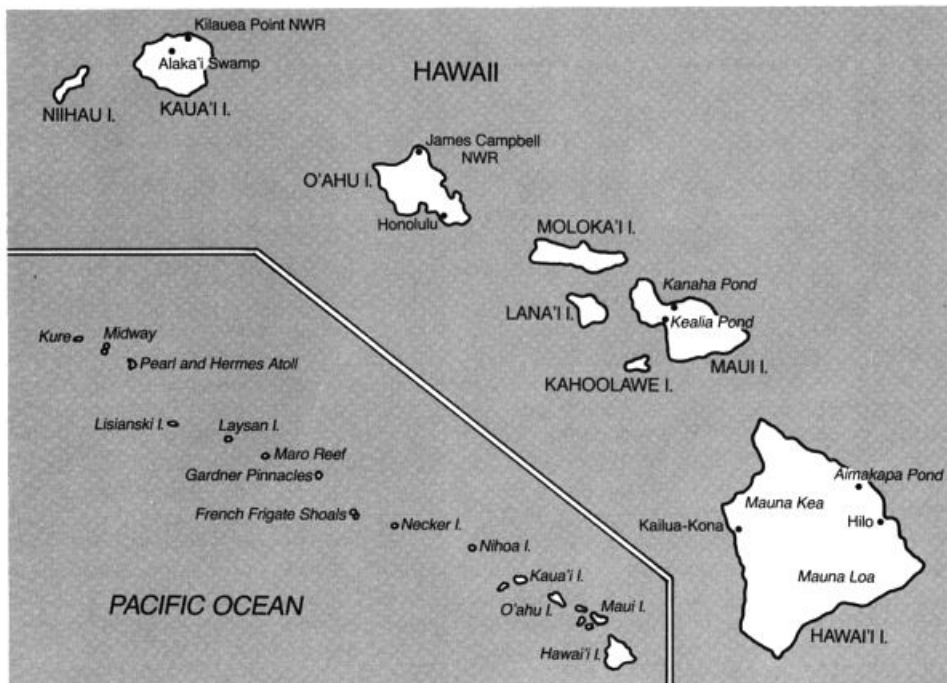
One Semipalmated Plover in breeding plumage, was at Sand I., Midway, Jan.17 and Feb.7 (NS). Two Sharp-tailed Sandpipers at Kanaha Pond, M., seen regularly until Dec. 26, and one in Kihē until Dec. 24 (both JO) were very late for this normally fall-transient species. Three Snipes, probably Commons, were found repeatedly at Ki'i Pond, O., Dec. 5-27 (v.o.), and a Pomarine Jaeger was seen well Jan. 9 within 50-100 meters offshore of the new Kaka'ako Park in Honolulu (PD).

A first-winter Ring-billed Gull that appeared at very popular Ala Moana Beach Park in Honolulu in December became so tolerant of curious beachgoers that it was easily baited to a long-handled net, captured, measured, and banded Jan.4 (JM, RLP, BP). Apparently the first to be captured and banded in Hawaii, this gull can now be recognized if it should establish a migratory pattern of returning in future winters. Any gull in Hawaii is an uncommon visitor, although a few individuals usually turn up each year, with Ring-billeds the most frequently recorded. Other gull stragglers included two Laughing Gulls at a pond at the Westin Hotel near Lihue, K., Jan. 8 (TT) and single Bonapartes at Ki'i Pond, O. (LT, RLP) and Hanalei N.W.R., K. (KV) remaining until at least February. One and sometimes two Glaucous-winged Gulls were seen repeatedly around Ki'i Pond, O., in February (v.o.), one at Aimakapa Pond, H. (KI, TS), and one at Hanapepe Airport and at the nearby Waimea R. mouth on Kaua'i (TS). A Com. Tern, another rare straggler, was observed at Kealia Pond, M., Dec. 27-29 (JO), and a White Tern was seen offshore from Ho'okipa Pt. near Pa'ia, M., Jan.10 (JO). White Terns are rarely reported nearshore s. of O'ahu.

#### SANDGROUSE TO GRACKLES

More than 50 Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse in small groups of 2-8 were observed flying near the highway s. of Waimea, H., between 4:30 and 5 p.m., Dec.17 (KI). The site, just s. of the turnoff to Kamuela Airport, was a favored vantage point for seeing these birds a decade and more ago.

A Japanese Bush-Warbler was observed Jan. 20 at Waita Res. near Koloa, K., well S of the localities in n. and e. Kaua'i, where it has generally been found (TT). This alien species has only recently colonized Kaua'i, apparently expanding its range. The introduced Saffron Finch is locally abundant on the



Kona side of H., and very small numbers have persisted since the 1970s on O'ahu in favored spots around Honolulu. They had not been recorded on other islands until December this year, when a total of 12 were found on Kaua'i in 3 different areas of the Lih'u'e and Kapa'a Christmas Counts, much to the surprise of Kaua'i birders. One can speculate about whether *Iniki* may have been a factor in transporting Saffrons from O'ahu or in causing some to escape from cages on Kaua'i.

Small groups of Red-billed Leiothrix, recovering well on O'ahu, were reported in January on Manoa Cliffs Trail (scolding, LP), Wa'ahila Trail (family of 6, PD), and in central O'ahu on Manana Trail (EV). Yellow-faced Grassquits were observed again along Manana Trail, their traditional locality. Five were seen Jan. 15 and 10 Jan. 30 (EV). Two Yellow-billed Cardinals at Whittington Park e. of South Point, H., Dec. 17 (KI) confirm an earlier sighting there at the e. edge of their expanding range. Oahu's ♂ Great-tailed Grackle was seen again at Sand I. Park in Honolulu, Jan. 21 (PD).

#### NATIVE FORESTBIRDS

On a happier note, the critically *Endangered* Maui Parrotbill was sighted twice during January in the Waikamoi Preserve, M. One was at the edge of Ko'olau Gap, well e. of previous sightings nearer to Hosmer Grove (AC). And 36 Amakihi, a remarkable aggregation, were counted on O'ahu Jan. 21, at the start of Wa'ahila Trail in Wa'ahila Park and down the ridge a bit (PD).

## WEST INDIES REGION Winter 1991–1992

Robert L. Norton

The faithful continue to report sightings in hopes that their contributions will once again see these pages. We are grateful for their persistence.

**Abbreviations:** D.R. (*Dominican Republic*); Bahamas (*New Providence, Bahamas*); StL (*St. Lucia*); StV (*St. Vincent*).

#### BOOBIES TO GULLS

Red-footed Boobies (2 adults, 1 immature) were seen at Pigeon and Fous Cays, StL, Feb. 16 (GC, AK) and off the w. coast of StV (AK), Feb. 20. A Little Egret, an Old World species that is almost certainly breeding in the Region, was seen at Cosgrove Swamp, Barbados, Feb. 21 (MF, AK, EM). A Least Bittern was reported (PS) near Cabarete, D.R., Dec 25. On StL, 26 Blue-winged Teals were seen at Vieux Fort; also found were Green-winged Teals and Am. Wigeons, Feb. 14 (AK *et al.*). At Paradise I., New Providence, Bahamas, 25 Ruddy Ducks were seen, Dec. 12 (PW&SAS); some of the males exhibited bright plumage, a possible indication of a local breeding population. Four Com. Black Hawks were seen at

#### S.A.

An intensive survey in the heart of the Alaka'i Wilderness Preserve, K., the first since Hurricane *Iniki* struck last September, was conducted Feb. 9–12 by a team of 10 trained federal and state biologists. They found blowdown from *Iniki* to be more severe than had been originally indicated from aerial surveys, although damage was patchy, with some good forest remaining in protected areas. The non-endangered native forestbird species were found in about normal numbers overall (TT), with encouraging numbers of Elepaio, Kaua'i Creeper, and Akeke'e, but with I'iwi and Amakihi lower than expected (PC). *Most discouraging was the absence of any confident sighting of any of Kaua'i's critically Endangered endemic species.* Only 2 brief, inadequate observations were recorded of birds that might possibly have been a Kama'o or Puaiohi, but just as likely were not (PC, JD, TT). Best estimates are that four of these critically rare species were down to 10 or fewer individuals remaining or possibly already extinct even before *Iniki*. Only the Puaiohi was thought to have had perhaps as many as 50 individuals remaining. This post-*Iniki* survey did not add any optimism for the prospects that these critically scarce species can long survive.

#### ESTRILIDS

One ♂ Red-cheeked Cordonbleu seen in a park at Kihei, M., Jan. 17 (JO) was probably a recent isolated escape. Four Lavender Waxbills have been coming to a feeder in the Waialae section of e. Honolulu since September and were seen Dec. 20 for the Christmas Count (EV). Several small groups of Warbling Silverbills were noted Jan. 1 on Lana'i at Manele Bay and in Palawai Basin (DM). An unusually large number of juvenile Red Avadavats in several flocks of 20–50 each was observed at Waipi'o Pen., O., Feb. 7 (MO). Large flocks of several hundred mixed estrilids, predominantly Com. Waxbills with lesser numbers of Red Avadavats and Nutmeg and Chestnut Mannikins, were seen around Waialua and other n. and w. O'ahu localities, December–early

March (EV). These large flocks probably reflect a successful nesting season stimulated by the good rains during the fall.

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the Parrot Reserve, StV, Feb. 17 (AK), and five Laughing Gulls were noted off the w. coast of StV, Feb. 18 (AK). A Wood Sandpiper, providing the 2nd record for the Region, was seen throughout the winter at Barbados (*vide* MF, AK, EM; details forthcoming).

#### DOVES TO GRASSQUITS

The Grenada Dove, a rare and endemic form of gray-fronted dove (*Leptotila rufaxilla*), was seen near Mt. Hartman, Grenada, Feb. 19 (AK). Four Eared Doves were seen at their Vieux Fort, StL, outpost (AK *et al.*), Feb. 14, but seven Eared Doves, including one juvenile on Barbados, Feb. 21, tripled the island's previous records and provided evidence of an extended breeding range. A dozen Gray-rumped Swifts were seen near St. George, Grenada, Feb. 20 (AK). Four White-breasted Thrashers, one of the most *Endangered* species of the Region, were seen at Chalope Ravine, StL, Feb. 15 (AK). The elusive Cocoa Thrush was noted at StV's Parrot Reserve, Feb. 17 (AK).

A House Wren was observed at Kingston Botanical Garden, StV, Feb. 17 (AK). The Smiths reported 19 species of warbler in the Bahamas, including a Kirtland's Warbler. The bird was seen Dec. 13 on Coral Harbour Rd., the same location at which the species had been reported by them 5 winters ago. A Hooded Warbler furnished the first record for Barbados, Feb. 12 (MF, AK, EM). A Prothonotary Warbler was also found Feb. 12 (AK).

Cuban Grassquits came in at 100, at a feeder station in downtown Nassau, the Bahamas, Dec. 12 (PW&SAS). Two St. Lucia Black Finches, a threatened endemic, were seen at Chalope Ravine, StL, Feb. 15 (AK).

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## Winter 1992–1993

Robert L. Norton

Rainfall for winter 1991–1992, as measured at Cruz Bay, St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, 18021'N, 64028'W, was -10% (December 40%, January +108%, February 60%). Higher-than-normal rain in the central Bahamas provided suitable habitat for large numbers of waterbirds on Eleuthera. And a rainy dry season was also reported by residents in the Eastern Caribbean by JCH *et al.* during their 22-week blitz through the Lesser Antilles.

The Eastern Caribbean was uniquely covered in 2 weeks (Feb. 16–29) by 3 observers (JCH, BB, DL) on a mission to assess the marketability of a Subregional tour. Ecotourism in the West Indies is educational and very beneficial, both to the visitor and to the visited, with regard to sustainable yield economies and re-



source conservation. Whether it is feasible to sustain a 10-island tour remains unknown, but the opportunity should not be ignored. However, for those of us who are interested in, and concerned about, the endemic birds of these small islands—*ergo Endangered*—we are grateful for a once-in-a-blue-moon snapshot of their results.

In the Bahamas, forest loss or fragmentation is having a negative effect on neotropical migrant warblers and native birds of Eleuthera, where JS reports that housing and road developments during his 16 years of annual spring counts are replacing coppice habitat in the same general area in which a Kirtland's Warbler was reported a few years ago.

**Abbreviations:** Mont. (*Montserrat*); StL (*St. Lucia*); StV (*St. Vincent*).

#### PETRELS TO TERNS

Two Black-capped Petrels were noted flying SE off the w. coast of Mont., Feb. 18. This finding supports the notion that breeding still exists in the Lesser Antilles on Dominica and may yet into the next century. The Guadeloupe colony has been extinct since 1850. Three Red-footed Boobies seen off St. Lucia, Feb. 9 (WB) and 20 spotted from the w. coast of Mont., Feb. 18, are probably breeding nearby at Redonda and feeding off Guadeloupe. Least Grebes were widespread throughout Eleuthera, Feb. 18, as a result of high pond levels. Double-crested Cormorants numbered 58 at a pond n.w. of Palmetto Point, Eleuthera, Feb. 21. A vagrant **Reddish Egret** (no color morph) was noted at McKinnon's Salt Pond, Antigua, Feb. 16, providing one of the few records of the Lesser Antilles.

Lesser Scaup numbered 21 at the pond near Palmetto Point, Eleuthera, Feb. 18, and seven White-cheeked (Bahama) Pintails at a pond n. of Double Bay, Eleuthera, proved to be the largest group JS has seen there. Seventy-five White-cheeked Pintails and 30 Blue-winged Teals were seen at McKinnon's Pond, Antigua, Feb. 16 & 17, respectively. Two Blue-winged Teals were noted at Vieux Fort, StL,

Feb. 9 (WB). An Osprey was seen at Savannes Bay, StL, Jan. 29 (WB) and another at Grenada, Feb. 29, where the trio (JCH, BB, DL) also reported a single Hook-billed Kite. Common Black Hawks were common, numbering 10, at Vermont Nature Trail, StL, Feb. 27. The Merlin booty was one at Dominica, Feb. 20; two at StL, Feb. 27; and one at Grenada, Feb. 29. Peregrine Falcons were seen, Jan. 26, at Pointe du Cap, StL (WB), and Feb. 26–27, at StV. Three Sora rails found at Bois d'Orange wetland, Jan. 22, were a surprise (WB). Two Collared Plovers were reported from Grenada, Feb. 29. Another surprise vagrant from Antigua was an **American Avocet**, engaging Feb. 17. Three Red Knots and three other calidrids (Least, Semipalmated, and W. sandpipers), were sighted at Antigua, Feb. 16, suggesting a strong stopover influence in the n. Lesser Antilles during spring. An imm. Herring Gull was noted at Tarpum Bay, Eleuthera, Feb. 17, representing the first seen there by JS in 16 years. A Ring-billed Gull and seven Sandwich Terns were observed at Antigua, Feb. 16. And a rare mid-winter glimpse of a Brown Noddy, possibly from the Aves colony to the west, was provided at Dominica, Feb. 21.

#### DOVES TO THRUSHES

Two White-winged Doves were noted at Isla Grande Airport, Puerto Rico, Feb. 15. Eared Doves were common, with nine at Vieux Fort, StL, Jan. 29, and 15 and 35 at Grenada, Feb. 28 & 29. But the *Endangered* endemic Grenada Dove was not. Only one was seen, Feb. 28 & 29, although two were heard Feb. 29. On Dominica, the Red-necked Parrot tally came to 25, and Imperial Parrots numbered 3, Feb. 21, encouraging news for these *Threatened* species. Nine St. Lucia Parrots were encountered Feb. 2 at Edmond-Quilese forest reserves, but only two were found Feb. 24. St. Vincent Parrots totaled 23, Feb. 26. The endemic St. Lucia Nightjar came in at five, Feb. 25; one White-tailed Nightjar on Martinique was also reported, Feb. 23. Four Short-tailed Swifts were seen on StL, Feb. 26, but no Gray-rumped Swifts

were seen on Grenada (JCH *et al.*). Guadeloupe Woodpeckers appear to have responded well after the devastation of hurricane *Hugo* in 1989, with four seen Feb. 19 this year. The Grenada Flycatcher staged a 2-island endemic: it was fairly common on StL, with two sighted Feb. 27, and on Grenada, where six and four were found, Feb. 28 & 29, respectively.

The house wrens of the Lesser Antilles pose a peculiar taxonomic problem because they neither look alike, behave alike, nor occupy synonymous habitats. The wrens on Guadeloupe, Dominica, and Martinique (now probably extinct) are dark-breasted forms (RLN) inhabiting moist and humid upland forests. The house wrens of StL occupy arid lowland scrub; these birds have a white throat and upper breast

(RLN), as do the StL wrens. The white-throated form of Grenada is atypically urban. All 3 types were recorded in the Lesser Antilles (JCH *et al.*), with eight from Dominica, Feb. 21; two from StL, Feb. 24, and two from StV, Feb. 27; and six from Grenada, Feb. 29. The Cocoa Thrush was fairly common Feb. 27 on StV, but not on Grenada. The Forest Thrush is an elusive endemic of the Lesser Antilles; one was noted on Mont. and another at Dominica, Feb. 18 & 21, respectively. One of the rarest birds of the West Indies is the 2-island endemic White-breasted Thrasher; five were noted on Martinique, Feb. 22, and Burke found five on St. Lucia, Feb. 5. A flock of five Antillean Euphonias were seen (WB), Feb. 12, at Piton Flore, StL.

#### WARBLERS TO ORIOLES

Neotropical migrant and resident warblers were reported as follows: Yellow Warblers—10 on Antigua, Feb. 16; one on Mont., Feb. 18; one on Guadeloupe, Feb. 19; one on Dominica, Feb. 20; and three on Martinique, Feb. 23; Adelaide's Warblers—50 on StL, Feb. 25; Plumbeous Warblers—five on Guadeloupe, Feb. 19; and eight on Dominica, Feb. 20; and Whistling Warblers—five on StV, Feb. 27.

Northern Waterthrush put in an appearance, with one in Mont., Feb. 18, and one on StV, Feb. 27. Lesser Antillean Tanagers included eight on StV and five on Grenada, Feb. 27 & 28, respectively. Lesser Antillean Saltators were commonly noted on Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, and StL. One of the Grenada specialties, the Blue-black Grassquit, was noted Feb. 28, and a highlight of StL, the St. Lucia Black Finch, was fairly common, with four reported, Feb. 24. As for the endemic orioles of the Lesser Antilles, two were seen on Mont., Feb. 17; three on Mart., Feb. 22; and seven (WB) and 10 on StL, Feb. 13 & 24, making a fairly cooperative showing during the period.

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