

from the high mountains in Arizona that were considered valid.

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## New Mexico

### SARTOR O. WILLIAMS III

The season was characterized by generally ample precipitation statewide, while December's mild weather was broken abruptly by an early January snowstorm that reached the Mexican border. Several genuine rarities were found, and the season was made memorable by spectacular movements and numbers of cardueline finches.

**Abbreviations:** B.L.N.W.R. (*Bitter Lake N.W.R.*); Bosque N.W.R. (*Bosque del Apache N.W.R.*); C.C.N.P. (*Carlsbad Caverns N.P.*); E.B.L. (*Elephant Butte Lake*); R.G.V. (*Rio Grande Valley*); Zuni (*Zuni Indian Reservation*).

### Loons to Ducks

Among the several waterbird surprises were a Pacific Loon at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (CR) and a **Yellow-billed Loon** at Willow L., *Eddy*, Dec. 23 (CC), the latter the state's 6th in 6 years. Horned Grebes were prevalent, including in the Pecos Valley s. to Bottomless Lakes S.P.; highs elsewhere were five at Ute L., Jan. 31 (CR), seven at E.B.L., Jan. 30 (JH), and 10 at Caballo L., Jan. 31 (JH). The Cochiti L. **Red-necked Grebe**, first reported in late November, was seen Jan. 5 (JO) & 11 (JEP), after which the lake froze over; one and possibly two Red-neckeds were at Caballo L., Jan. 30–31 (JH), where at least one had persisted through much of 1996. Over 3000 Eared Grebes were at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (BZ), but *Aechmophorus* grebes were notably scarce both there and at E.B.L. until late January. Single imm. **Brown Pelicans** were at upper E.B.L., Jan. 30 (JH) and at High Rolls Jan. 15 (*fide* E. Fields); the latter, with measurements indicating the w. race, was rehabilitated and released in California. Unprecedented numbers of Double-crested Cormorants "discovered" the lower Pecos Valley, including 294 in the Brantley L. area Dec. 28 (TH) and 805 at Loving Dec. 23 (SW); also at Loving were two Neotropics (SW). Neotropics also were in the middle R.G.V. (where resident), but outnumbered Double-crested only at Bosque N.W.R. (v.o.). Lingering Cattle Egrets were one at E.B.L., Dec. 21 (JEP, JO), eight at Mesilla Dec. 27 (JO), and one near Loving Dec. 23 and Jan. 24 (SW). A good season for Tundra Swans

found 10 at Maxwell N.W.R., Dec. 14 (JEP, JO), and 13 at Bosque N.W.R., Dec. 21 (JEP, JO), where one–two remained into February (v.o.); the Pecos Valley yielded one at Bosque Redondo L., Dec. 31 (JEP) and another (or the same) at nearby Summer L., Jan. 19 (JO). An ad. **Trumpeter Swan** eluded many in the Bernardo-La Joya area, where it was found Feb. 2 (ph. JO) and last seen Feb. 16 (JEP, JO) Peripheral Ross' Geese included 20 at Farmington Jan. 31 (TR), one at Clayton L., Dec. 27 (CR, LH), and five at Virden Dec. 28 (JO). Wood Ducks away from the San Juan and Rio Grande valleys included one–four at Clayton Dec. 27 (CR, LH), Tucumcari Jan. 31 (CR), Ruidoso Jan. 4 (L. Cordova), Silver City Jan. 5 (EL), Lordsburg Jan. 22 (EL), and Deming Jan. 1 (JO). Notably early Cinnamon Teal included singles at Lordsburg Jan. 19 (CR), Bosque N.W.R., Jan. 23 (T. Bulow, *fide* PRS), and Zuni Jan. 25 (DC) **Eurasian Wigeons** made yet another good showing, with single males at Albuquerque Dec. 21–Feb. 20 (M.L. Arthur, HS, NMC), Caballo L., Jan. 20 (M. Fraker) and Feb. 18 (GE), and B.L.N.W.R., Jan. 11–Feb. 7 (WR). Greater Scaup were rarely reported included one at Bottomless Lakes S.P., Jan. 31–Feb. 1 (JO, GE) and two near Garfield Jan. 26 (JO). Oldsquaws have been a regular feature of recent winters; this season found one at Clayton L., Jan. 11 (ph. JO), two at Sumner L., Dec. 22 (JO), and one at Bottomless Lakes S.P., Dec. 21–Feb. 2 (v.o.). The only Barrow's Goldeneye away from the San Juan R. was a male at Cochiti L., Dec. 24 (WW).

### Eagles to Gulls

Incubation was in progress at the state's 2 known Bald Eagle nests, one each in *Colfax* and *Sierra*, by Feb. 17 (SOW, KCW); a sizable Bald Eagle roost was discovered in s. Albuquerque, where there were  $\geq 18$  Jan. 19 (DS). Sharp-shinned Hawks outnumbered Cooper's in the Caballo (BZ), Las Cruces (GE), Silver City (D&MZ), and Peloncillo Mts. (AC) areas. At Silver City (where Cooper's were formerly the commoner of the two), Sharpies feasted on the abundant cardueline finches (D&MZ). An imm. **Crested Caracara** at B.L.N.W.R., Jan. 31 (ph. WR) and later (GE, JEP, ph. JO) was last seen Feb. 5 (*fide* WR); this furnished a *Chaves* first and the first well-documented New Mexico record in over a decade. Another good winter for Merlins found one–three December–February at 26 locales from the Pecos Valley westward (v.o.). Perhaps following a recolonization "trend," an **Aplomado Falcon** was discovered n. of Hachita Dec. 30 (T



**Crested Caracara at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico, January 31, 1997. First well-documented record for the state in over a decade, and first local record ever. Photograph/William R. Radke.**

& E. Wootten) and was reported intermittently through at least Feb. 22 (v.o.). Interestingly, aside from the initial sighting, described as an immature, all other written reports described an apparent adult and fell within the narrow period Jan. 22–31 (F. Haas, D. Krueper, E. & E. Lewis, D&MZ, GE, DS, KCW, SOW). Despite the nationwide attention this event received, no additional written reports and no truly satisfactory photographs have emerged! Mountain Plovers are not known to winter in New Mexico, but  $\geq$ three near Janos, Chihuahua, Jan. 4 (SOW, D. Larson) demonstrated they are not far away; early was one at Los Lunas Feb. 21 (DE). A Lesser Yellowlegs was early at Sunland Park Jan. 19–21 (JNP). A late Long-billed Curlew was at Maxwell N.W.R., Dec. 1 (JO). The only Dunlins were early singles at Navajo Dam Feb. 23 (TR) and B.L.N.W.R., Feb. 1–2 (DE, BN, CR, JEP). An American Woodcock at Albuquerque Feb. 5–10 (v.o., phs. WH, JO) provided the state's 7th overall, but it followed the 6th by only one year. Among the numerous gulls discovered frequenting



**Surprisingly cooperative for an American Woodcock, this individual—the seventh ever for New Mexico—was seen by many at the Rio Grande Nature Center in Albuquerque in February 1997. Photograph/Jerry R. Oldenettel.**

the Sunland Park racetrack were an ad. **Laughing Gull** Jan. 28 (JNP, BZ), an ad. Franklin's Jan. 11–18 (JNP), an ad. California Jan. 11–27 (JNP), and a first-year Thayer's Jan. 27–Feb. 2 (JNP, BZ). Elsewhere, presumed Thayer's Gulls peaked at two at Storrie L., Dec. 1 (ph. JO), seven at E.B.L., Jan. 30–31 (JH) and 10 at Caballo L., Jan. 31 (JH). A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** at Caballo L., Dec. 21 (JEP, JO) likely was an autumn holdover.

### **Pigeons to Flycatchers**

Unusual but not unprecedented was an early Band-tailed Pigeon at Sandia Heights Feb. 21–23 (RH, *fide* HS). White-winged Doves, now resident in numbers in Albuquerque and Roswell, pushed n. to Santa Fe, where there were one–two in December (F. Quesenberry) and Jan. 26 (WW, *fide* PRS); White-wingeds also overwintered at Silver City, and began singing there Jan. 29 (D&MZ). A singing Inca Dove at Silver City Jan. 27 had attracted a second by Feb. 20 (D&MZ). The only Com. Ground-Dove was near Rodeo Dec. 28 (R. Scholes). **Eurasian Collared-Doves**, first noted at Roswell in September 1995, seem to have persisted there, and several were photographed in February (ph. SB); this rapidly expanding species is now present in  $\geq$ 4 Texas Panhandle localities, including one individual on the New Mexico line at Farwell Feb. 20 (GL). Far north was a Greater Roadrunner at Taos Jan. 27–30 (P. Luther); it was catching finches at a feeder. A Short-eared Owl, a species now excessively rare in New Mexico, was at Zuni Dec. 22 (JT). Two Com. Poorwills were in P.O. Canyon Dec. 29 (R. Armstrong, *fide* AC). White-throated Swifts went unreported from Jan. 3, when there was one at Caballo L. (BZ), to Feb. 8, when there were five near Columbus (JO). Among the few hummers reported were a ♂ Anna's at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (KS), two ♀ Anna's in Clanton Canyon Feb. 15 (JO), and an ad. ♂ Rufous at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (C. Anderson, *fide* GE). Lewis' Woodpeckers again wintered in the lower R.G.V., with singles at Las Animas Cr., Jan. 3 (DE), Percha December–February (v.o.), Garfield Jan. 11 (BZ), and Sunland Park December–February (JNP, BZ); noteworthy was another at San Juan, *Grant*, Feb. 9 & 23 (EL). Gila Woodpeckers continued scarce in the Gila Valley, but seven were in the Animas Valley Dec. 29 (AC). Northerly was a ♂ Red-naped Sapsucker at Zuni Dec. 19 (JT), as were three Williamson's there the same date (JT); notable for winter was another Williamson's near Sandia Park Jan. 8 (PES). Southerly was a Downy Wood-

pecker at Las Animas Cr., Jan. 3 (DE, JEP). Single Hammond's Flycatchers were along Las Animas Cr., Jan. 3–4 (JEP, JO) and near White Signal Jan. 28 (D&MZ). A Gray Flycatcher near Bill Evans L., Feb. 23 (EL) may have been the unidentified *Empidonax* seen there Jan. 4 (RF).

### **Swallows to Dipper**

Swallows in January are unusual; this season found a Tree at E.B.L., Jan. 30 (JH) and two Rough-wingeds at Caballo L., Jan. 3 (BZ), plus a Barn there Jan. 4 (JEP, ph. JO). Remarkable—if accurate—was a possible Gray Jay that wandered to Roswell Dec. 21 (E. Schooley). Pinyon Jays at the s. edge of their range included 180 at Silver City Dec. 21 (RF) and 150 in 2 flocks in the Mimbres Valley Feb. 17 (NMC). Notable were 50 Am. Crows in pecan trees near Deming Dec. 27 (JNP). Single Chihuahuan Ravens were at Albuquerque Dec. 21 (G. Froehlich) and Feb. 23 (BV), the latter frequenting a dairy;  $\leq$ 14 wintered at Silver City, where they favored fast-food restaurants (D&MZ). At least one Mexican Chickadee persisted at Clanton Canyon, seen Jan. 18–19 (BN, DE, CR), Jan. 31 (JEP), and Feb. 15 (JO). Mountain Chickadees were conspicuous in submontane areas, including three e. to Clayton Dec. 27 (CR, LH), eight at Santa Rosa Feb. 23 (JO), six at Ft. Sumner December–February (v.o.), two at Roswell Dec. 21 (SB) and Feb. 1 (CR), and two n. of Carlsbad Dec. 28 (TH). For only the 3rd winter in 4 decades, several wintered at Silver City (D&MZ). Surprising was a Plain Titmouse at Roswell Feb. 1 (CR); northerly was a Verdin at Turn, *Valencia*, Jan. 25 (CR). Red-breasted Nuthatches attracted attention in submontane areas all season, including e. to Clayton (WC), Tucumcari (JO, CR), and Clovis (JO), and s. to Deming (JNP), Mesquite (GE), and Loving (SW). Notable highs were 10 at Santa Fe Dec. 28 (PI), 14 at Roswell Dec. 21 (SB), nine at Caballo-Percha Jan. 3 (BZ), 44 at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (GE), and five near Carlsbad Dec. 28 (TH). The saga of northeasterly Cactus Wrens continued, with two at San Jon Dec. 8 (JO) and one at Ute L., Jan. 31 (CR). A Canyon Wren wandered to Bosque N.W.R., Dec. 22 (NC). Providing a local first was an Am. Dipper at Rattlesnake Springs Jan. 15 (V. Sartori).

### **Gnatcatchers to Vireos**

Gnatcatchers in winter deserve special care; this season produced single Black-taileds n. of Hachita Dec. 28 (JO) and at the Las Cruces airport Feb. 18 (JEP), plus two at Mesilla Dec. 27 (JO), as well as two Blue-grays at Bosque Redondo L., Dec. 1



**Yellow-throated Warbler near Reserve, southwestern New Mexico, December 15, 1996. One of two in the state during this season. Photograph/Jerry R. Oldenettel.**

(CR) and singles at Bosque N.W.R., Dec. 22 (NC), E.B.L., Jan. 4 (JEP, JO), and the Avalon-Brantley area Dec. 28 (TH). Notable E. Bluebirds included two near Bill Evans L., Dec. 4 (RF) and two at Dripping Springs Dec. 21 (GE). Easterns outnumbered Westerns and Mountains combined at C.C.N.P., Dec. 21 (SW). Mountain Bluebirds were scarce in the north, but occurred in sizable flocks in the south, with notable highs including 300 at Redrock (JO) and 292 in the Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 29 (AC), 60 at Mangas Jan. 13 (RF), 50 at Lordsburg Jan. 25 (JO), 30 near Las Cruces Jan. 9 (BZ), 350 at Roswell Dec. 21 (SB), and 129 at Loving Dec. 23 (SW). Likely following available food crops, Am. Robins were scarce or absent in some locales but present in record numbers elsewhere. Single Brown Thrashers were at Farmington (L. Lesperance, *vide* A. Nelson), Watrous (ph. JO), Tucumcari (CR), Bosque Redondo L. (JO), Roswell (SB), Las Cruces (GE), and Jornada (CS), and five were at C.C.N.P. (SW). Notable was one at Janos, Chihuahua, Jan. 5 (CM). A probable **Long-billed Thrasher** was discovered at Bosque Redondo L., Feb. 22 (JEP) and was compared to a nearby Brown Feb. 23 (ph. JO); there is but one previous state record for this species. Getting an early start was a singing Bendire's Thrasher n. of Hachita Jan. 22 (D&MZ). Far north was a Crissal Thrasher at Los Alamos from Dec. 30 into March (ph. R. Boicourt), providing only the 2nd local and first winter record there. Backdating a Crissal Thrasher nest at Petroglyph N.M. indicated incubation had begun Feb. 17 (HS). Single Sprague's Pipits were in grasslands near Bingham Dec. 14 (D. Burkett) and s. *Otero* Jan. 5 (ph. GL). Of considerable interest was the discovery of 54 Sprague's just s. of New Mexico at Janos Jan. 5 (CM). Northerly was a Phainopepla in the s. San Mateo Mts., Feb. 2 (HS); easterly were four near La Luz Dec. 28 (GE). Northern Shrikes away

from the n. tier of counties included singles at Zuni Dec. 21 (JT), Belen Dec. 25 (JO), San Marcial Jan. 5 (JO), Quarai Jan. 2 (HS), and Texico Dec. 22 (JO). Hutton's Vireos are rare but regular in winter in the lower R.G.V.; this season found singles at Percha Dec. 21 (JO) and Jan. 3 (JNP, BZ), Las Animas Cr., Jan. 3 (JNP, BZ), Mesilla Jan. 9 (BZ), and Dripping Springs Dec. 21 (GE). Undetailed was a possible *plumbeus* Solitary Vireo at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (*vide* GE).

### Warblers to Sparrows

Lingering were single probable N. Parulas at Bosque Redondo L., Dec. 1 (CR) and Las Cruces Dec. 21 (KS). A Townsend's Warbler was at Mesilla Dec. 21 (R. Gunter) and Jan. 9 (BZ). Well-detailed were single **Yellow-throated Warblers** near Reserve Dec. 15 (ph. JO) and at Las Cruces Dec. 22 (W. Glenn) and Jan. 11 (GE). Presumably the same ♀ Black-and-white was at Caballo Riverside and nearby Percha Dec. 27-Jan. 4 (GE, J. Sproul, JEP, ph. JO). Unusual in winter, a ♂ Com. Yellowthroat was n. to Percha Dec. 21-Jan. 4 (JEP, JO); briefly noted were seven at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (GE) and six at Loving Dec. 23 (CC).

A pair of N. Cardinals was n. to Santa Rosa Feb. 23 (JO), while northerly Pyrrhuloxias included singles at Edgewood, *Santa Fe*, Jan. 15 & 17 (P. Tallman) and n. *Roosevelt* Dec. 1 (CR). A possible Indigo Bunting was at Redrock Dec. 29 (JO); while any bunting is unexpected in winter, Lazuli is believed the more likely. Northerly was a Green-tailed Towhee at Sevilleta N.W.R., Dec. 21 (WH). Imitating their calls produced a record 205 Green-taileds in the Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 29 (AC). Well-detailed was a Rufous-crowned Sparrow in the Los Pinos Mts., *Socorro*, Dec. 21 (WH). Southerly was an Am. Tree Sparrow at Albuquerque Feb. 8 (JEP). Ten Chipping Sparrows at Sevilleta N.W.R., Dec. 21 (WH) were at the n. edge of the usual winter range; very far north were two near Clayton Dec. 27 (CR). Abundant grass seed crops produced record-high counts of Chipping, Brewer's, and Vesper sparrows in *Hidalgo*, where >2000 of each were tallied Dec. 29 (AC). Up to five Field Sparrows were at the n. *Roosevelt* "trap" December-February (v.o.). Lark Sparrows are unusual in New Mexico in winter, so noteworthy were six at Redrock Dec. 29 (JO), two in the Animas Valley Dec. 31 (AC, NMC), one at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (*vide* GE), and one at C.C.N.P., Dec. 21 (SW). Well-described were one-two **Baird's Sparrows** at 2 *Otero* Mesa sites Jan. 4 and Feb. 21 (R. Meyer). Five-six Grasshopper Sparrows were in the

n. Animas Valley Dec. 29 (S. & R. Russell, AC, NMC) and Jan 18 (CR, DE, BN); one banded there Dec. 31 proved to be the widespread w. *perpallidus* (AC). One-three Fox Sparrows, about equal numbers "red" and "gray," were at 9 sites from Redrock, Cliff, Albuquerque, and n. *Roosevelt* south (v.o.). One-two Lincoln's were n. to Zuni Dec. 21 (JT), Bandelier N.M., Jan. 10 (CR), n. *Roosevelt* Dec. 22 and Jan 19 (JO), and Clayton Dec. 27 (CR, LH). Northerly Swamp Sparrows included one at Zuni Dec. 21 (JT), two at Bosque Redondo L., Feb. 23 (JO), and eight at Tucumcari Jan. 31 (CR). Golden-crowned Sparrows emphasized their growing presence in New Mexico, with one-two at Chama Dec. 7 (JEP, ph. JO), Santa Fe Dec. 28 (*vide* PI), Zuni Dec. 20 (JT), Albuquerque Dec. 21 (RH, *vide* HS), Bosque Redondo L., Feb. 23 (JO), Bosque N.W.R., December-Feb. 23 (v.o.), and Bill Evans L., Dec. 4 (RF). Harris' Sparrows likewise were plentiful, with singles at Costilla Dec. 14 (JEP, ph. JO), near Santa Fe Dec. 1 (B. Foy), Albuquerque Dec. 21 (HS) and Feb. 15 (DE, BN), Silver City Jan. 12-30 (ph. D&MZ), and Las Cruces Dec. 21 (W. Whitford), plus two near Bill Evans L., Dec. 4 (RF).

### Meadowlarks to Finches

Eastern Meadowlarks are a challenge in winter; this season found one at Petroglyph N.M., Jan. 18 (HS), two at Sevilleta N.W.R., Dec. 21 (WH), and one w. of Caballo Jan. 3 (JEP, *vide* BZ). Noteworthy for mid-winter were single Com. Grackles at Wagon Mound Jan. 12 and Deming Jan. 26 (JO). Undifferentiated rosy-finches numbered 500 near Angel Peak Jan. 6 (TR) and 100 near Red R., Jan. 18 (JEP, JO). Two Gray-crowns and a Black were at Sandia Crest Dec. 28 (T. Kilroy, *vide* HS). Surprising was a possible Pine Grosbeak near Farmington Dec. 7 (TR). Staging one of the largest invasions in decades, Cassin's Finches inundated the w. two-thirds of the state, numbering into the hundreds at some



**Cassin's Finches staged one of their biggest recent invasions of the southwestern lowlands during the winter. This one was in Rock Hound State Park near Deming, New Mexico, January 1, 1997. Photograph/Jerry R. Oldenettel.**



**Red Crossbill at Farmington, New Mexico, January 28, 1997. The species appeared widely in the southwestern lowlands this season. Photograph/Tim Reeves.**

locales, setting local records, and appearing in unusual situations, including shopping centers at Corrales, bottomlands in the lower Gila Valley, and cacti at Columbus (m.ob.); scattered reports of "Purple Finches" (and even "Redpolls") invariably proved to be Cassin's. Except in the southeast, the season was characterized for many observers by roving flocks of Red Crossbills. Notable included one at Farmington Dec. 15 (ph. TR), plus others there later; 36 near Clayton Dec. 27 (CR, LH), plus others at additional *Union* sites (WC); 50 at Zuni Dec. 14, plus 150 there Feb. 1 (DC); and 15 at Virden Dec. 28 (JO), plus two there Jan. 31 (JEP). Crossbills were particularly conspicuous in the R.G.V. from Albuquerque south, with a high of 106 at Las Cruces Dec. 21 (GE). At Percha (DE) and Las Cruces (C. Benkman) they were found eating pecans.

North for the season were 11 Lesser Goldfinches at Albuquerque Dec. 21 (HS); abundant Am. Goldfinches furnished records of 119 at Santa Fe Dec. 28 (PI) and 597 at Zuni Dec. 21 (JT). The unprecedented **Lawrence's Goldfinch** event continued in the 5 southwesternmost counties, with local highs including 15–17 at Virden Dec. 28 (ph. JO) and Jan. 31 (JEP), 14–15 at Cliff Jan. 4 (RF) & 21 (EL), 13 at Silver City Dec. 27 (RF), 83 in the Peloncillo Mts. area Dec. 29 (AC), and 36 at Dripping Springs Dec. 21 (GE). Among the last to be reported were six n. to E.B.L. Dam Feb. 16 (DC), two at Mangas Feb. 18 (NMC), and 10 at Caballo Riverside Feb. 15 (PB). In n. Mexico, 14 Lawrence's near Janos Jan. 5 (CM) and three near Ascension Jan. 6 (WH, SOW) may represent the first Chihuahu reports. Evening Grosbeaks added substantially to the cardueline winter, with record numbers (often many hundreds) from Farmington,

Zuni, and Santa Fe e. to Clayton, Logan, and Clovis, and s. to the Peloncillo Mts., Tyrone, Las Cruces, and Carlsbad (m.ob.).

**Initialed observers:** Pat Basham, Sherry Bixler, David Cleary, Wes Cook, Nancy Cox, Alan Craig, Narca Moore Craig, Craig Cranston, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Ralph Fisher, Lois Herrmann, Tom Hines, Roger Hoppe, William Howe, John Hubbard, Pat Insley, Greg Lasley, Eugene Lewis, Cynthia Melcher, Bruce Neville, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, William Radke, Tim Reeves, Christopher Rustay, Jerry Oldenettel, Catherine Sandell, Hart Schwarz, Patricia R. Snider, Dale Stahlecker, Paul E. Steel, Ken Stinnett, John Trochet, Brad Vaughn, Steve West, William West, Karen Copeland Williams, S. O. Williams, Barry Zimmer, Dale and Marian Zimmerman.

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# Alaska Region

## T. G. TOBISH, JR.

By late November, weather conditions—including the Aleutian low—were setting up for a return to a "classic" old-style Alaska winter. Regular cold-based low pressure systems were escorting heavy dry snows across the Region, and between each storm below-average cold temperatures prevailed. Freeze-up was early and hard, and few late or lingering migrants turned up. Indeed, Christmas Bird Count plans and most of the counts themselves were disappointments, and accentuated what became a very long and slow winter. Conditions drastically changed and moderated by late January, when the Aleutian low faded and drifted into a less dominant position, and milder, storm-free conditions finished out the season. Late February snowpack conditions were at or, more often, below average, and several areas were closer to about 75% of long-term averages. The season ended with a long string of above-average temperatures and insignificant precipitation events. Most of the Interior, for instance was more than 16° F. above average after mid-January. As is always the case, however, it is almost exclusively the early season weather conditions that exert any substantive impact on winter bird distribution. In general, it was a decent winter for waterbirds, especially extralimital waterfowl pioneering areas

