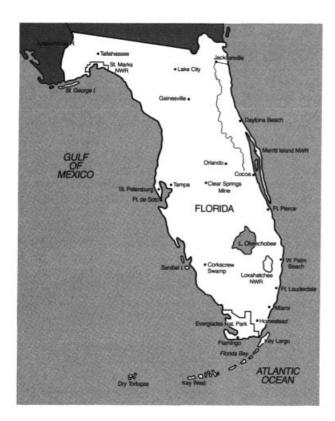
florida region



RICHARD L. WEST

C orrespondents mentioned the heavy rains in much of Florida, exceeding averages by more than 100%. The rains, with a late freeze, gave the impression of a damp and chilly winter. However, the record warm winter in parts of the East probably had much more effect on the birds we did not find. Many species, from ducks to sparrows, were late and scarce, probably reflecting the presence of food and lack of snow cover farther north.

Bob Sargent continued his good work on identifying and banding hummingbirds throughout the southeast. Florida triumphs this year included the return of a banded Rufous Hummingbird and a Tallahassee banding of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

But all this is business as usual. The Northern Lapwing was the bird of the season, both for its rarity and its spectacular looks.

Abbreviations: C.P. (County Park); E.N.P. (Everglades Nat'l Park); F.O.S.R.C. (Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee); P.P.M. (Polk County phosphate mines); P.P.S.P. (Paynes Prairie State Preserve, Alachua); S.M.N.W.R (St. Marks Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Wakulla); S.R.A. (State Recreation Area); S.T.F. (Sewage Treatment Facility).

LOONS TO FLAMINGO

The rare Red-throated Loon was reported from several areas: singles off Virginia Key, Dade, Dec. 20 (RCu, MC) and off S.M.N.W.R. lighthouse Feb. 22 (HH, TK), and three at Huguenot Park, Jacksonville, Duval, Jan. 31 (RR). An even rarer Pacific Loon with a throat strap was reported at J. N. "Ding" Darling N.W.R., Lee, Jan. 8 (D. Mages, S. Fried, sketch to F.O.S.R.C.). Only one Com. Loon was reported on the Melrose CBC, Alachua, but poor viewing conditions or late arrival could be the cause. since a raft of 56 was found on L. Santa Fe. Alachua, Feb. 26 (J&WB). The only Horned Grebes reported were five at Bivens Arm, Alachua, Feb. 19 (M. Landsman, RR), and a Red-necked Grebe was seen at Merritt Island N.W.R., Brevard, Jan. 10 (RW).

A Manx Shearwater with a British Museum band was found dead on the Palm

Beach shore Nov. 17 by Mark Robson. A Masked Booby drifted N to Playalinda Beach, Canaveral National Seashore, Brevard, Jan. 23 (A&BH), and two N. Gannets were seen in the relatively protected waters off the S.M.N.W.R. Feb. 15 (TK). Inland Brown Pelican are always a puzzle, especially the eight at that stayed at Newnans L., Alachua, Dec. 21-Feb. 20 (JB et al.). A Magnificent Frigatebird was still lingering at Cedar Key, Levy, Jan. 8-9 (DHe). Were the 400 White Ibises seen in c. Pasco Jan. 11 wintering there (LA, MW, JAl)? The 16 Greater Flamingos seen Jan. 1 at the Snake Bight Trail, E.N.P. (RS), were forerunners of 50+ reported at E.N.P. Jan. 4 (fide RCu).

WATERFOWL

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck at Florida City, Dade, Jan. 7 furnished a good record (RCu), but even more unusual were the 26 located at a reclaimed phosphate area just n. of Bartow, remaining for a couple of weeks to be firsts for the Dec. 20 Lakeland CBC (PJF). No wonder, a nearby resident said they had been coming and going for about a year. Two Greater White-fronted Geese were reported at Merritt Island N.W.R. this winter, and six at St. Marks N.W.R. Jan. 10 (RR et al.). A Snow Goose was seen at Paynes Prairie, Alachua, Jan. 25 (T. Wronski); six blue morphs were e. of Sarasota, Sarasota, Dec. 6 (D. Merrick); one white morph at Weedon I. County Preserve, Pinellas, Dec. 20 (BH et al.); and eight (five white, three blue) at N. Jacksonville Jan. 3 (R. Clark). Amazingly, a Ross's Goose was identified at Tram Road S.T.F., Leon, Dec. 1-5 (JEC sketches, † and ph. to F.O.S.R.C.; LMa), the 4th for the county. It appears that this goose is more common in Florida, relative to the numbers of Snow Geese here, than elsewhere in the East. A Brant arrived at Honeymoon Island S.R.A., Pinellas, by Dec. 20 and stayed through the period (WY et al.). A Wood Duck pair began prospecting at a box in Melrose, Putnam, Feb. 2 (J&WB). More than 150 Green-winged Teal were found near Royal Palm, E.N..P., Dade, Jan. 31 (RCu) and a Mallard drake penetrated as far south as Buck I. Ranch, Highlands, Jan. 26 (BPr).

Out-of-range ducks included a male

Cinnamon Teal near Royal Palm, E.N.P., Jan. 31 that had been present "for several days" (RCu), and at Hamilton phosphate mines Feb 7 (R. Harrison et al.). A Eur. Wigeon was at Merritt Island N.W.R. Jan. 10 (RW et al) & 17 (W. Stinehelfer), and one visited the P.P.M. Feb. 11 through the period. Outstanding diving duck reports include a Canvasback at Bivens Arm Dec. 21-Jan. 12 (RR, JH); a male Oldsquaw at Hunter L., Spring Hill, Hernando, Dec. 2 (A&BH, CB), and other Oldsquaw singles at Huguenot Park and N. Jacksonville Dec. 27 (RR, JH), at Cedar Key Jan. 3-Feb. 25 (DHe), near Turtle Mound, Canaveral National Seashore, Volusia, Jan. 11 (K. Allen), and a female at St George I., Franklin, Feb. 14 (HA, B. Muschlitz, M. Landsman). Individual Com. Goldeneyes were found at Gainesville, Alachua, Nov. 22-Jan. 20 (JH) and Jan. 10-17 (K. Johnson), and at Ft. Island Beach Park, Citrus, Jan. 10 (A&BH, CB). No scoters were reported.

AND THE WARNESS AN WINDER IN MEMORY AND A MEMORY

RAPTORS TO CRANES

Ospreys had arrived in numbers at L. Santa Fe by Feb. 21, with 38 counted and many sitting on nests (J&WB). Early arriving Swallow-tailed Kites included six at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Collier, Feb. 23 (SM), another the same day in Levy (K. Bowman), and singles near Royal Palm, E.N P., Feb. 24 (RCu), and at Ellzey, Levy, Feb 28 (T. Webber). A White-tailed Kite was found at Mossy Cove Rd., L. Istokpoga, Highlands, Dec. 8 (W. Biggs, GW et al.), and two were s. of Ft. Basinger, Highlands, Dec. 30 (fide FBR). A pair built a nest at Buck I. Ranch, Highlands, but a prescribed fire singed the nest tree, and the kites abandoned the nest (MMc, WJ, BPr). A latemigrating (?) Cooper's Hawk was at Key West, Monroe, Jan. 21 (RCu). A Short-tailed Hawk was found at Ponce Inlet, Volusia, Dec 20 (D. Hartgrove, details to F.O.S.R.C.), and a light morph was seen at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Jan. 20 (BPo) and Feb. 23 (SM). Rare winter Peregrine Falcons were noted in S.M.N.W.R. Dec. 15 (J. Burnett), on the Lakeland CBC Dec. 20 (L. Lane), at Gainesville Jan. 26 (B. Eichhorn), at Springhill Road S.T.P., Leon, Dec. 29 (JEC), and at Orlando Wetlands Park, Orange, Feb. 21 (S. Pierce).

A Black Rail record for *Hernando* was inadvertently secured when one was apparently run over by a vehicle at Weekiwachee Preserve Dec. 20 (D. Robinson, M. Barnwell et al , * to A.B.S.). Another responded in the same county at Pine I. to a tape at 6:55 a.m. Dec. 23 (D. Goodwin, E. Haney). A Purple Gallinule at Orange L., *Alachua*, Jan. 21 (JB) was a little n. of its usual wintering range, which is typified by the record 128 found on the Lakeland CBC (PJF compiler). Two Whooping Cranes were seen in a new location in a marsh near Haines City, *Polk*, Jan. 9 (D. Gore). Five calling cranes (Sandhill) flew over n. Jacksonville 2 days after Christmas (BR).

SHOREBIRDS TO SKIMMER

An ad. **Northern Lapwing** in a pasture along L. Istokpoga, *Highlands*, Dec. 7–Jan. 4 (E&F Pratt et al., † by GW and BPr in preparation), the first documented in Florida, drew many hundreds of birders to the littletraveled Mossy Cove Rd. Some visitors came from as far away as Alaska to spend hours waiting for the lapwing to appear.

Rare wintering shorebirds include two inland Semipalmated Plovers near Royal Palm, E.N.P., Jan. 31 (RCu); a Solitary Sandpiper at Buck I. Ranch Jan. 31 (RW); Long-billed Curlews through the period both at Ft. DeSoto C.P., Pinellas (LA et al.), and Honeymoon Island S.R.A., Pinellas (WY et al.); and Stilt Sandpipers in c. Pasco Jan. 11 (LA, MW, JAl) and at Royal Palm, E.N.P., Feb. 4 (RCu). Shorebird concentrations included 500 Black-bellied Plovers at Shell Key, Pinellas, Feb. 26 (PB); 38 Piping Plover at Shell Key Jan. 6 (PB, WY); and 20 Long-billed Dowitchers in c. Pasco Jan. 19 (RW et al.), eight at Carillon, Pinellas, Feb. 28 (A&RS), and two near Royal Palm, E.N.P., Jan. 31 (RCu). Five Am. Woodcock exhibited courtship display e. of Brooksville, Hernando, Jan. 7-Feb. 5 (A&BH et al.); these dates are consistent with some breeding records in the deep south.

Reports of rare gulls included a Franklin's at Venice, *Sarasota*, Jan. 12 (A. Van Netta) and two along SR-406, *Brevard*, Jan. 18 (B. Bergstrom); a first-year Glaucous Gull at Egmont Key N.W.R., *Hillsborough*, Feb. 19 (J. Chicoine); an ad. Great Blackbacked Gull at Virginia Key Dec. 20 (RCu); and an imm. Black-legged Kittiwake at Jetty Park, *Brevard*, Dec. 21 (R. Halpin et al.). The usual spate of Lesser Black-backed Gulls was reported from Ft. DeSoto C.P., Merritt Island N.W.R., Ft. Myers Beach, and Carillon. About 200 Herring Gulls were at Shell Key Feb. 23 (PB).

Rare winter Gull-billed Terns were reported at Pine Island C.P., *Hernando*, Dec. 26 (BPr, C. Letcher) and inland near Royal Palm, E.N.P., Jan. 31 (Rcu). A Black Skimmer wandered inland to Gainesville Jan. 19 (J. Krummrich).

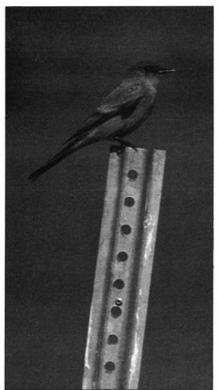
CUCKOOS TO HUMMINGBIRDS

A Mangrove Cuckoo was noticed at J. N "Ding" Darling N.W.R., Lee, Jan. 28 on (BPo). A Groove-billed Ani was along Mossy Cove Rd. Dec. 13 and later (D Wright et al.). Three Lesser (?) Nighthawks found at Loxahatchee N.W.R. Nov. 24 (BHH, CW) were seen again (CW, HPL, GSH) and video-taped (BHH) the next night. Eight nighthawks reported at Loxahatchee N.W.R. Dec. 22 and beyond, were also thought to be Lessers (BHH et al., vt BHH). Another nighthawk, reported as a Common on the Jan. 3 South Brevard CBC, was described merely as having an erratic flight, and could just as easily have been a Lesser. Another nighthawk was seen in Saddle Cr. Park, Polk, Feb. 18 & 25 (R.Miller), but could not be relocated.

Hummingbird reports seem to continue to increase. A female Ruby-throated was banded in Tallahassee Jan. 10 by Bob Sargent, and a imm. male was also present on that date. Scattered Ruby-throated sightings occurred throughout the season in Polk (fide LC), including a male and female Ruby-throated reported returning to a feeder for the 3rd year in the L. Wales CBC circle (D. Pierce). A Black-chinned was identified in Tallahassee (JEC), and an Archilochus species (probably Black-chinned Hummingbird) was at Orange Park, Clay, Dec. 16-23 (L. McCullagh). Ruby-throated reports seemed to exceed Black-chinned this year, a situation also noted by Sargent in his banding travels in the Southeast; he speculated a poor breeding season led to some late broods of Ruby-throateds, which attempted overwintering in North America. A female Rufous Hummingbird wintered at Dade City, Pasco, mid-November-March (D. Ward, LA et al.), and a male wintered at Edgewater, Volusia, (G. Dombroski). A female banded at Melrose, Alachua, last winter returned Jan. 8 through the period (D Abbott). An imm. female Rufous in Tallahassee from Jan. 5-February was identified and banded by Sargent, and an ad. female was present there Feb. 10-26 (both JEC et al.). A Selasphorus hummingbird wintered at Gainesville Jan. 1 through the period (MMa, E. Perry). An ad. male Allen's Hummingbird was identified in Tallahassee Jan. 5 (JEC, D. Yon, D&L Gruender, † to F.O.S.R.C.).

FLYCATCHERS

A Least Flycatcher was calling just s. of Mossy Cove Rd. Dec. 9 (JF), and another was calling at Brooker Cr. County Preserve, *Pinellas*, Jan. 11, where one had been found



Photographed on January 30, 1998, this Say's Phoebe was present for several weeks in a phosphate mine region near White Springs, Florida. Photograph/ William J. Bolte

in mid-February 1996 (A&RS, BH). A Say's Phoebe wintered at Hamilton phosphate mines Jan. 17-Feb. 24 (M. Dolan et al., † to F.O.S.R.C., ph. Jan. 30, J&WB). An imm. Vermilion Flycatcher was at St. Marks N.W.R. Jan. 10 (RR et al.); the male at Buck I. Ranch, Highlands, was seen last Feb. 27 (MMc). A variety of Myiarchus flycatchers were reported: Great Cresteds in Polk Jan. 11 (CG, PT) and at Gainesville Feb. 21 (S. Duncan); a Brown-crested seen and heard w. of Delray Beach Oct. 28, in the same place as one last year (BHH), for the 3rd county report; and a La Sagra's Flycatcher at Elliot Key, Dade, in January (fide LMa). Western Kingbirds were reported around the state, with the highest concentration of 18 at Homestead, Dade, Jan. 1 (LMa). Likewise, the highest number of Scissortailed Flycatchers reported was eight at Homestead Jan. 18 (LMa).

NUTHATCHES TO WARBLERS

Although this did not seem like an invasion year, one Red-breasted Nuthatch was reported at Cedar Key Jan. 2 (G. Basili, R. Christen), another at Jacksonville Jan. 10 through the season (N. Wamer), and a 3rd at Monticello Dec. 4–Feb. 23 (GEM, m.ob.). A Winter Wren was found at Swift Cr., *Hamilton*, Dec. 20 (RR), and others were in Black Swamp, *Leon*, Jan. 12 (GEM) & 25 (LA, GEM). Golden-crowned Kinglets were few and far between; one was n. of Gainesville Feb. 8–18 (JH). Also scarce was the Brown Creeper, reported only at Tall Timbers, *Leon*, Dec. 1 (LMa).

Rare winter warblers reported include a Blue-winged Warbler at P.P.S.P. Dec. 21 (GMc), a lutescens Orange-crowned Warbler at Honeymoon I. Dec. 21 (LA), Nashville Warblers at Spanish R. Park Oct. 28 (BHH) and Ft. DeSoto C.P. Dec. 17-Feb. 8 (LA et al.), and Yellow Warblers at Loxahatchee N.W.R. Dec. 13 (HPL, GSH) and near Mossy Cove Rd. Jan. 11 (LA). There was one Magnolia Warbler at Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area, Lake, Jan. 2 (JB); two Black-throated Blue Warblers in West Palm Beach Feb. 10 (A. Hunter, A. Knafel) and another in Polk Jan. 11 (PT, CG, B. Bratlie); and Black-throated Green Warblers at Royal Palm, E.N.P., Jan. 25 (RCu) and in Seminole Jan. 29 (D. Freeman). American Redstarts were seen at Gainesville Nov. 20 through the winter (MMa et al.), at Bivens Arm Dec. 21 (RR), and one "presumed migrant" e. of Florida City Feb. 24 (RCu). A N. Waterthrush was near Newmans L. Dec. 6 (MMa), three were near Mossy Cove Rd. Dec. 13 (LA), and one near P.P.S.P. Dec. 21 (MMa). A Yellow-breasted Chat was at Emeralda Marsh C.A., Lake, Jan. 2 (JB).

TARAGERS TO FINCHES

Summer Tanagers were at the Street / Audubon Nature Center Dec. 31–Jan. 2 (LC) and at Deering Estate, *Dade*, Feb. 6 (RCu), and an ad. male W. Tanager visited Sanibel I., *Lee*, Feb. 18 through the season (RK et al., v.t. BA). An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak remained at Sanibel I. Feb. 18 through the season (RK et al., v.t. BA).

Field Sparrows were reported 3 times in Pinellas: one at Boyd Hill Nature Park Dec. 6 (A&RS, BH), two at Weedon I. Dec. 20 (BH), and two at Brooker Cr. Preserve Jan. 11 (A&RS, BH). A Lark Sparrow found its way to Homestead Jan. 18 (LMa). Three Henslow's Sparrows were reported in a usual spot s. of Newport, Wakulla, Dec. 2 (LMa), and another at P.P.S.P. Dec. 21 (BR, TT). Two Le Conte's Sparrows were at Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area Jan. 2 through the period (J. Bryan), and one graced Buck I. Ranch Jan. 29 (BPr). A Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow was reported from S.M.N.W.R. Dec. 2 (LMa), where Nelson's predominate, and two were

at Ft. Island Gulf Beach Jan. 10 (A&BH). Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were more frequently reported: "several" at St. Marks N.W.R. Dec. 2 (LMa), two at Ft. Island Gulf Beach Jan. 10 (A&BH), and seven at Ft. DeSoto C.P. (RS et al.). Fox Sparrows were reported from Hamilton Dec. 20 (MMa, J. Ault); P.P.S.P. Dec. 21 (MMa, S. Cole); twothree at San Felasco Hammock, Alachua, Jan. 11-Feb. 8 (MMa, GMc); and one at L. Alto, Alachua, Feb. 14 (J. Winn). Lincoln's Sparrows were reported from Weekiwachee Preserve Dec. 23 (BPr), S.M.N.W.R. Jan. 17 (TT, V. Steadman), Buck I. Ranch Jan. 28 (BPr), and two at P.P.S.P. through the period (JH, MMa). Two White-crowned Sparrows were reported in Delray Beach Dec. 27 (BHH) and two w. of West Palm Beach Jan. 6 (HPL, GSH).

Dark-eyed Juncos were sparely reported, mainly from Tallahassee. A laggard Bobolink was photographed at Gulfport, Pinellas, Dec. 20 (RW ph. to F.O.S.R.C., A&RS). Yellow-headed Blackbirds included one ad. male at Bradenton, Manatee, Feb. 28-Mar. 1 (J. Palmer). Eight Rusty Blackbirds were at P.P.S.P. Dec. 18 (JH, HA), and more than 10 near Cedar Key Jan. 2 (RR, MMa), and 12 Brewer's Blackbird were at Sanford, Seminole (D. Branchett). Shiny Cowbirds were reported from at Briggs Nature Center, Lee, Dec. 30 (V. Fazio). Eight Bronzed Cowbirds wintered at Lakeland through the period (LC et al.). Purple Finches came only to Jacksonville, underscoring the poor finch year (fide P. Powell), but 13 House Finches spread down to Brooksville, Hernando, Jan. 6 on (LA et al.), and a pair wintered for the first time in Polk, at a Haines City feeder (A. Wheaton).

EXOTICS

A pair of Blue-and-yellow Macaws that had been visiting a feeder in the town of Loxahatchee brought in and fed a juvenile bird there this fall (*fide* HPL). A Diamond Dove came to a feeder in Boynton Beach during October and November (J. Calder). Its photo was sent to P. William Smith, who identified the bird. A male and female Black-capped Mannikin (*Lonchura atricapillus*) were found at Flamingo, E.N.P., Dec. 28 (MMa).

Observers and contributors: Reports were compiled in part by the Florida Ornithological Field Observations Committee, **Bill Pranty**, state compiler (8515 Village Mill Row, Bayonet Point, FL 34667-2662; email billpranty@hotmail.com), and members **Linda Cooper** (115 Lameraux Road,

Winter Haven, FL 33884), Gail Menk (2725 Peachtree Street, Tallahassee, FL 32304), and Peggy Powell (2965 Forest Circle, Jacksonville, FL 32257), Rex Rowan (2041 NE 15th Terrace, Gainesville, Florida 32609, email afn49272@afn.org), and Ron Smith (1767 Colorado Avenue NE, St. Petersburg, Florida 33703, email smithowl21@aol.com). My thanks to them, to subregional editors, and to the many observers, whether cited or not. Observers or contributors cited with initials only: Howard Adams, Janet Alexander (IAI), Brooks Atherton, Lvn Atherton, Clav Black, Paul Blair, Judy Bryan, Janice and William Bolte, James E. Cavanagh, Linda Cooper, Mort Cooper, Richard Cunningham (RCu), Paul J. Fellers, Judy Fisher, Chuck Geanangel, Al and Bev Hansen (A&BH), Dale Henderson (DHe), John Hintermister, Brett Hoffman, Brian H. Hope, Howard Horne, Gloria S. Hunter, Wendy Jess, Tom Kennedy, Richard Konz, Howard P. Langridge, Michael Manetz (MMa), Larry Manfredi (LMa), Greg J. McDermott (GMc), Mike McMillian (MMc), Gail E. Menk, Scott Merrill, Bev Postmus (BPo), Bill Pranty (BPr), Bryant Roberts, Rex Rowan, Austin Smith, Ron Smith, Terry Taylor, Pete Timmer, Ray Webb, Chuck Weber, Margie Wilkinson, Glen Woolfenden, Wilfred Yusek.

Richard L. West, 2808 Rabbit Hill Road, Tallahassee, FL 32312

KNOW WHERE

Tap into North America's biggest birder network • Share your sightings with other field birders • Plan your next birding vacation • Learn from birding experts • See the most exciting birds in color • Understand trends in migration, nesting, range changes and more

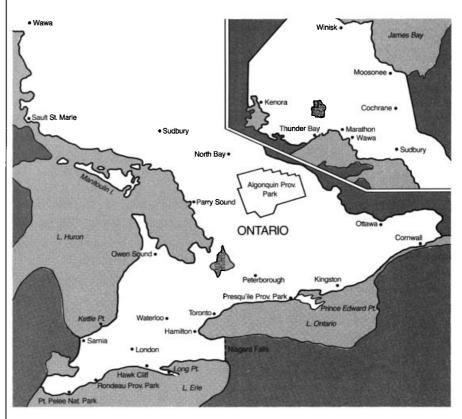
Only in **field notes** magazine Edited by Kenn Kaufman

Yours for just \$20 in the U.S., \$25 (USD) Canada/International. Special rates for ABA members.

field notes

www.americanbirding.org/fldngen.htm

ontario region



RON RIDOUT

Za

F or every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. While the negative influence of El Niño was felt over much of the west, many regions in the east enjoyed a beautiful winter. Ontario was no exception to the latter, with record-breaking temperatures, particularly in February. Several areas in the south received little or no snowfall. It was a season similar to those normally experienced much farther south.

The result of this was that individuals of several species normally found farther south successfully overwintered in the province, and early migrants were widespread from mid-February on. At the same time, several "winter" finch species moved south in good numbers, particularly Pine Siskins, redpolls, and for the first season in many, Evening Grosbeaks.

Notable rarities, though few in number, included Northern Fulmar and Spotted Towhee. All rarities mentioned in this report are subject to approval by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (O.B.R.C.). **Abbreviations:** Pelee (*Pt. Pelee Nat'l Park and vicinity*). Algonquin, Presqu'ile, and Rondeau are Provincial Parks. Place names in italics refer to counties, districts, or regional municipalities.

LOONS TO WATERFOWL

With most Red-throated Loons gone from the Great Lakes by mid-December, two different birds at Kingston Dec. 21–Jan. 11 (K.F.N.) and Oshawa Feb. 22 (TH, RP) were noteworthy. A Pacific Loon at Pinery P.P., *Lambton*, Dec. 3 (AR) was exceptional. A Common lingered until absolute freeze-up on L. Katchewanooka, *Peterborough*, Jan. 31 (PB). A Pied-billed Grebe at Lindsay Jan. 17 (DG) was exceptionally late, as was a Rednecked at Minden Dec. 21 (DT, RT).

The best bird of the season was a **Northern Fulmar** found dead in Hamilton Dec. 11 (JO), furnishing that area's 2nd record. Wintering Double-crested Cormorants continue to increase in s. Ontario, with at least nine on L. Ontario in mid-January (WE), while one at Ft. Frances Dec. 6 (DE) was exceptionally late that far north. A Great Cormorant at Kingston Jan. 11 (KE) was that area's 3rd this decade. A very late