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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 138.

new england region



PAMELA HUNT

According to a recent report, 1998 was the warmest year of the current millennium. This certainly makes sense if you look at New England's climate during December, which was the sixth warmest on record. This was largely due to temperatures averaging 11 degrees above normal for the first three weeks, breaking 70° in five states December 7 (and reaching 67° in Vermont). If it hadn't been for below-normal temperatures in the last 10 days, December 1998 might well have been the warmest December since record keeping began in 1894. The obvious results of this unseasonable weather were lots of open water and a profusion of lingering migrants, both the traditional half-hardies and more unusual fare. Topping the list were 20 species of warblers and three species of tanagers for the month. The warm trend continued into January, although not spectacularly so, while February ranked among the top 15 warmest, again bringing an early wave of migrants north at the end of the season. Bird highlights are almost too numerous to mention, but in addition to the aforementioned warblers and tanagers, there were the largest alcid flight in at least 10 years, unusually high numbers of lingering waterfowl, and a

spectacular gull show in Connecticut. Rarities included an unprecedented five Ash-throated Flycatchers, possible Arctic Loon in Maine, Pink-footed Goose in Massachusetts, possible Yellow-legged Gull in Connecticut, three Western Tanager, and two wandering alcids: Long-billed Murrelet and Ancient Murrelet. On the downside, there was essentially no southward flight of raptors, finches, or waxwings, but such is the way of these northern wanderers.

Abbreviations: MARC (*Massachusetts Avian Records Committee*); Nantucket (*Nantucket I., MA*); P.I. (*Plum I., Essex Co., MA*); Provincetown (*Provincetown, Barnstable Co., MA*); Rockport (*Rockport, Essex Co., MA*).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

A well-described bird matching most descriptions of **Arctic Loon** was seen off York, York, ME, Jan. 30–31 (†P. Moynahan, S. Spangenberg). This represents the first detailed report of this species for Maine, and although there are 3 previous reports for Massachusetts, none has been accepted as unquestionably Arctic (vs. Pacific) by MARC. **Pacific Loons** are more likely than Arctics on the east coast, and this winter there were two individuals at York, ME, Dec. 19–Feb. 7, and another at Provincetown Jan. 30 through February.

Considering the mild early winter, a lack of inland Pied-billed Grebes is somewhat unusual, but Red-necked Grebes perhaps made up for their smaller relative's absence. Two were inland at Bantam L., Litchfield, CT, Dec. 3, and one was at Quabbin Res., Hampshire, MA, Dec. 26. The **Bared Grebe** returned to Gloucester, Essex, MA, for a 3rd winter. Three W. Grebe reports was above average, but none remained for an extended period. This season's birds were at Sachuest Pt., Newport, RI, Dec. 5–7; Attleboro, Bristol, MA, Dec. 23–26; and Jamestown, Newport, RI, Feb. 19 through March.

Great Egrets lingered later than usual, including a very late individual in Salisbury, Essex, MA, Jan. 8 (RH). Nantucket hosted up to 22 Black-crowned Night-Herons in January, while singles showed up elsewhere



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in e. Massachusetts. Normally gone by September, a Glossy Ibis in Darmouth, *Bristol*, MA, Dec. 2 was yet another indication of the mild late fall and early winter. Connecticut's wintering Black Vulture numbers were unremarkable this year, with only 20 at the traditional roost in New Milford, *Litchfield* (*fide* GH). More noteworthy were one in Sheffield, *Berkshire*, MA, Dec. 26 (D. Reid), and another much farther afield over Ogunquit, *York*, ME, Jan. 7 (no details, D. Green, *fide* JD).

WATERFOWL

The star of the season among our web-footed friends was the **Pink-footed Goose** that frequented the Dennis Pines Golf Course, Dennis, *Barnstable*, MA, Jan. 16–Feb. 20. It was usually found with Canada Geese and was monitored for visiting birders by helpful golf course employees. In light of last spring's carefully researched bird in Connecticut, perhaps the odds are in favor of this bird's being a bona fide vagrant; countless birders await final word from MARC. Less notable, but still noteworthy, were numerous Greater White-fronted Geese; totals were four in Connecticut, a record-high five in Rhode Island, and two in Massachusetts. One of the latter was inland at Hadley, *Hampshire*, Feb. 24. Another noteworthy inland goose sighting was a flock of six Brant on Wachusett Res., *Worcester*, MA, Feb. 13.

In the wake of November's Regionwide fallout, it was not surprising to have several Tundra Swans lingering into winter. These included two in Connecticut, four in Rhode Island, 11 in e. Massachusetts, three in New Hampshire, and one in Maine (low, *fide* JD). The high count came from Vermont, where a flock of 14 appeared on L. Memphremagog, *Orleans*, Dec. 13 (B. Prue). Although Whooper Swans in n.e. Massachusetts are becoming less and less noteworthy, they are still making news elsewhere in coastal New England. Recently unearthed information suggests that the individual on Great Bay, *Rockingham*, NH, may have originated from a breeder within the Granite State, rather than from feral birds in Massachusetts (*fide* SM). Farther afield was a bird in Eastham, *Barnstable*, MA, Jan. 17, and, most notably, one in Lubec, *Washington*, ME, from November to Dec. 6 (*fide* WT). Last seen flying out to sea, was this latter swan also derived from captive stock, or could it represent a genuine European stray? It is worth noting that the only other pre-1990 record for the Region came from this same county in September 1903

Eurasian Wigeon numbers were standard for recent years and included five in Connecticut, three in Rhode Island, at least seven in Massachusetts, and two in New Hampshire. There is not enough space to discuss in detail the numbers of lingering waterfowl in New England this winter. One of the standouts was N. Shoveler, which hit a record-high count of 25 for Rhode Island in Middletown, *Newport*, Dec. 19 (R. Enser et al.). Maine and Massachusetts also hosted unusually high numbers of shovelers, some of which stayed through February in the latter state. Redhead was the most unexpected lingerer among the diving ducks, with numbers of inland birds being particularly unusual. These included 10 at Bantam L., CT, Jan. 31, and nine in Pantou, *Addison*, VT, Jan 16–21. A total of 374 Ring-necked Ducks was a record for the annual Cape Cod Bird Count Dec. 5–6 (BN et al.). The only Tufted Duck reports were of returning individuals, including the male in Sterling, *Worcester*, MA, back for its 4th winter. More notable was Maine's 2nd record: two males at Chickawukie L., *Knox*, Dec. 3–19, the site of the state's first record 2 years earlier.

Vermont's imm. male Com. Eider lingered through Feb. 25 at Charlotte, *Addison*, after which it started moving N and was last seen in Burlington Feb. 28. Numbers of King Eider and Harlequin Duck were roughly normal, although the latter species hit a December record high of 107 at Sachuest Pt., RI, Dec. 12 (*fide* DE). More unusual for Harlequins were one deep into Long I. Sound at Stamford, *Fairfield*, CT, Dec. 15–mid-January (P. Dugan, m.ob.), and another up the Merrimack R. in Nashua, NH, Dec. 27–Jan. 2 (m.ob.). Both Hooded Merganser and Ruddy Duck hit record highs of 933 and 262, respectively, on the Cape Cod Bird Count (BN et al.), and the latter species approached a state record for Maine with 213 in Stockton Springs, *Waldo*, Dec. 13 (*fide* JD).

RAPTORS THROUGH CRANES

In a December marked by mild temperatures and open water, it is perhaps not surprising to have 4 Osprey reports in e. Massachusetts, with the latest in Easton, *Bristol*, Dec. 31. A little farther north was a bird in New Boston, *Hillsborough*, NH, Dec. 13 (R&S Suomala). Even more unusual, and unconfirmed as of this writing, was an Osprey in Vergennes, *Addison*, VT, on the exceptionally late date of Jan. 22 (*fide* JP). After most Northeast hawk watches have shut down in October, stalwart observers

on Mt. Wachusett, *Worcester*, MA, documented continued raptor movements well into December. Totals for selected species over 3 dates (Dec. 5, 12, & 20) include three Bald Eagles, three N. Goshawks, five Red-shouldered Hawks, 73 Red-tailed Hawks, and one Golden Eagle (T. Carrolan). Numbers of wintering Golden Eagles were normal, with one in w. Massachusetts and two or three in Connecticut.

Just before the Pink-footed Goose began attracting attention on Cape Cod, a species much more worthy of the appellation "origin uncertain" appeared in the Cumberland Farm Fields, Middleboro, *Plymouth*, MA a **Crested Caracara** that entertained numerous observers Jan. 2–9. Given the non-migratory nature of this falcon relative, not to mention its occasional use by falconers, this record is unlikely to pass muster by MARC. The Region's only Gyrfalcons in this winter of few invaders were single individuals at Logan Airport, Boston, MA, Dec 30–Jan. 1 and in Addison, *Addison*, VT, Dec 5

The mild winter also allowed rails to linger northward in higher than usual numbers. These included a King/Clapper Rail in Orleans, *Barnstable*, MA, Dec 20 (JT) and a Clapper in Charlestown, *Washington*, RI, Feb. 16. Virginia Rails were almost abundant, with a maximum of 16 in Barnstable, *Barnstable*, MA, Dec. 29 (JT), and one to two lingering at other Cape Cod locations through February. Even Soras, normally gone by mid-October, were noted in Barnstable Dec. 4 and Nantucket Jan 1. Much more unexpected was the **Purple Gallinule** found in Stamford, CT, in mid-December. The bird was captured but later died at a rehabilitator's facility Dec. 17 (*fide* GH). Like many ducks, Am. Coots lingered late and north, including birds at Charlotte, VT, and Tilton, *Belknap*, NH, that made it into February. The Sandhill Crane appearing in S. Kingston, *Washington*, RI, in November was last seen Dec. 7 (m ob). Another was photographed on Naushon I., *Barnstable*, MA, Jan. 17 (G. Leon, *fide* H Pratt).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

Many shorebirds, like so many other species, stayed into the winter. In Massachusetts these included two Am. Avocets on PI through Dec. 6 and a Spotted Sandpiper in Arlington, *Middlesex*, Dec. 9. Staying through most of the season on Cape Cod were a Lesser Yellowlegs in Harwich and a Whimbrel in Yarmouth, the latter presumably the same bird that wintered there in 1997–1998. There were several reports of

Long-billed Dowitchers, including one-nine on P.I. through Dec. 16 (RH, m.ob.). Two other individuals appeared to overwinter: one at Hyannis, *Barnstable*, MA (BN), and another at S. Kingston, RI (*fide* DE).

A late February storm brought a Great Skua close to shore at Rockport Feb. 25 (†RH), while an unidentified skua was seen in Block I. Sound, RI, Dec. 21 (R. Farrel, J. St. Jean) was also likely a Great. With the exception of sightings from Nantucket and the 2 landfills mentioned in the S.A. below, gull reports were largely unremarkable. Black-headed Gulls were scattered and in lower numbers than usual, and the Mew (Com.) Gull at Winthrop, *Suffolk*, MA, showed up for its 9th winter. Noteworthy among the usual was an ad. **California Gull** in Easton, *Bristol*, Jan 23 (S. Arena). Gull highlights from Nantucket included up to 4500 Bonaparte's Gulls, the season's only

Little Gull, 60 Iceland Gulls, five Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and two Thayer's Gulls (v.o.). In addition to the birds at Nantucket and Connecticut, a 5th Thayer's was reported from Provincetown Feb. 15 (†RH).

It was one of the best acid years in recent memory, with Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts each reporting all six Atlantic species. Although birds started showing up at Cape Cod in December, the main push farther north occurred from mid-January onward. Numbers of Dovekies were the highest in at least the last decade, although still paling in comparison to groundings in the distant past. The season high was 20 at Rockport Feb. 5 (RH), and New Hampshire came in 2nd with an off-shore count of 10 Feb. 9 (SM) and another seven from Hampton Beach, *Rockingham*, Feb. 12 (M. Resch). Single Com. Murres were reported from Maine and New Hamp-

shire (the latter found dead, *fide* AD), while one to two spent the winter at Rockport and Provincetown. Thick-billed Murres were literally everywhere, with at least 16 in Maine and a one-day total of 19 in Seabrook and Hampton, *Rockingham*, NH Feb. 6 (AD). Numbers off Rockport regularly surpassed 20, with a seasonal high of 76 Feb. 19 (RH). Elsewhere in Massachusetts numbers were lower, with totals under 10 on Cape Cod and one to two at other coastal locations. Five Thick-bills even made it to Sakonnet Pt., *Newport*, RI, Dec. 19, a relatively high number for the state (GL). What caused this murre invasion is unclear, but circumstantial evidence suggests it may have been food related. By mid-February, murres were showing up dead or nearly so on New Hampshire and Massachusetts beaches, many emaciated. Perhaps already weakened by a shortage of baitfish,

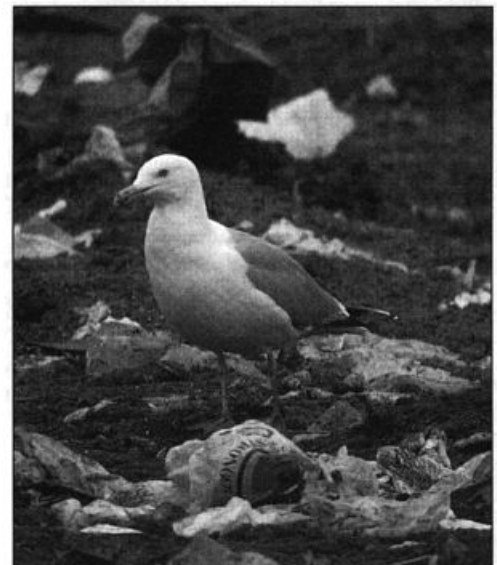
SA If it was gulls you wanted in the winter of 1998–1999, the place to be was the landfill at Manchester, *Hartford*, CT. Gull numbers peaked near 15,000 there in January, with most days hosting around 5000 (P. Comins). Among the expected Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed gulls were roughly 25–30 Iceland, nine Glaucous, seven Lesser Black-backed, and two Thayer's gulls. As if two Thayer's weren't enough, a bird showing all the field marks of an ad. **Yellow-legged Gull** was present Jan. 18–30. This particular gull was seen and photographed by many, including Europeans more familiar with this recent split from Herring Gull than Americans now are. In light of recent evidence that North American Herring Gulls may sometimes show characteristics of Yellow-legged Gull, the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut seems unlikely to accept the record. Then there were the even more problematic individuals: two very pale first-winter Herring Gulls that appeared to belong to one of the European subspecies, and that also generated extensive, albeit largely inconclusive, international comment. And, finally, there were the hybrids,

including seven "Nelson's" Gulls (Herring × Glaucous), a possible Herring × Iceland, and a probable Herring × Great Black-backed.

Meanwhile, some 150 mi to the northeast, the landfill and nearby sewage ponds at Rochester, *Strafford*, NH, also hosted upward of 5000 gulls. Access was more restricted

and fewer observers kept an eye on the gull traffic, but nonetheless some very respectable numbers were obtained for the Granite State. These included one-day maxima of five Glaucous and Iceland gulls, and three Lesser Black-backed Gulls (SM).

The bad news is that the Manchester landfill is scheduled to close in July 1999, and the New Hampshire sites are unlikely to become generally accessible. Where will New England's gulls (and gull-watchers) concentrate now? While sites like Nantucket will continue to attract these opportunistic birds, the continued decline of the New England landfills is likely to dramatically reduce gull-watching opportunities in years to come.



Foraging amidst the typical detritus of an American landfill, a putative Yellow-legged Gull, recently split from Herring Gull, was present in Manchester, Connecticut, January 18–30, 1999; the gull provoked much debate about its identity because North American Herring Gulls sometimes display characteristics of Yellow-legged Gull. Photograph/Patrick M. Comins



One of two Thayer's Gulls present at the Manchester, Connecticut, landfill during the winter, this immature was photographed January 23, 1999. Photograph/Patrick M. Comins

these birds risked it all to seek sustenance near shore, only to find such pastures no greener than those they left.

Razorbill numbers were not noteworthy in the north, with normal counts and no large concentrations in Maine and New Hampshire. Offshore and to the south, however, numbers reached into the hundreds on Cape Cod, where the season high of 1025 was made at Provincetown Feb. 16 (J. Sones). Thirty Razorbills at Sakonnet Pt. Dec. 19 were unusually high for Rhode Island (GL). Usually scattered in low numbers south to e. Massachusetts, Black Guillemots regularly totaled 25–50 off Rockport, with a county record high of 131 Feb. 11 (RH). The high count to the north was 141 off Jonesport, *Washington*, ME, Feb. 9. To the south, Rhode Island hosted an unusually high total of four at various times during the winter. In what probably seems like a broken record by now, Atlantic Puffins were reported in higher than usual numbers: Maine had two, New Hampshire one, and Massachusetts one to two each at Rockport and Provincetown. As if the normal alcids were not enough, two Pacific strays reached New England waters. The first was the Narragansett, RI, **Long-billed Murrelet**, which stayed from late November through Dec. 9 (m.ob.). And Massachusetts hosted its 3rd **Ancient Murrelet** (pending MARC review) at Rockport Feb. 5 (†R. Frchette).

PARROTS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A group of seven Monk Parakeets in S. Dartmouth, MA, Jan. 11 almost certainly represented the continued expansion of populations already established in nearby Rhode Island and Connecticut. Snowy Owls were almost absent, with only two in Maine and one in Massachusetts. Long-eared Owls were reported only in Massachusetts, including up to 10 at the Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary, Marshfield, *Plymouth*, throughout the winter (m.ob.). For the first half of the winter, Short-eared Owl reports were limited to one to two birds at scattered locations in e. Massachusetts, but in mid-January there was something of an invasion into e. New England. The bulk of the movement occurred Jan. 10–20, with three birds appearing in Rhode Island, at least 14 in e. Massachusetts (seven at Logan Airport), and two in New Hampshire. By February, most of these birds had moved elsewhere, save for seven and four at the Cumberland Farms Fields and Salisbury, respectively

A *Selasphorus* hummingbird visited a feeder in Westport, *Bristol*, MA, Dec. 1–12 (*vide* D. Thurber). On the down side, the male Rufous Hummingbird transplanted from New Hampshire to Massachusetts, as reported in the previous season, was killed over the winter by the greenhouse's "resident" female. If we are to take lessons from this event, may it be that hummingbirds are a) highly territorial, and b) not supposed to be in New England in the late fall. Perhaps it is best that we take down our feeders in October and let nature take its course.

Following a good fall showing, Red-headed Woodpeckers remained into the winter in better than average numbers, with three in Connecticut, four in Rhode Island, six in Massachusetts, and one each in New Hampshire and Vermont. Red-bellied Woodpeckers in n. New England totaled one in Vermont, 11 in New Hampshire, and six in Maine (low, *vide* JD). Given the mild December, it was perhaps not surprising to have more than the usual number of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers as well, including 12 overwintering birds in Massachusetts and four in Rhode Island. A N. Flicker at Estcourt Station, *Aroostook*, ME, was as far north as you can get in New England, especially on the late date of Dec. 13.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

A few more E. Phoebes than usual stayed north in e. Massachusetts, but nothing could have prepared anyone for a singing bird in Burlington, VT, Feb. 13–15 (†S. Morrill). Likely its short stay was related to the fact that February in n.w. Vermont is no place for a phoebe, no matter what the thermometer may read (see also the comments on hummingbirds above!). The western vagrant of the season was without doubt **Ash-throated Flycatcher**. In chronological order, the region's *five* records follow: Lyme, *Grafton*, NH, from late November to Dec. 10; Cambridge, *Middlesex*, MA, from November to Dec. 20; Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, MA, Dec. 10–20; Westbrook, *Cumberland*, ME, Dec. 12; and Barnstable, MA, Dec. 20–26. Could it be possible that there were more Ash-throated Flycatchers than phoebes in New England last December?

Shrikes were generally few and far between in most of the Region, although Connecticut's eight were more than usual (*vide* GH). The season's only Blue-headed Vireo was in w. Massachusetts at Agawam, *Hampden*, Dec. 19. As populations continue to expand in the Northeast, Com Ravens

are actually becoming almost common in extreme s. New England. This winter there were roosts of 13 and 20, respectively, at L Waramaug and Barkhamsted Res., both *Litchfield*, CT, while a raven in Gloucester, *Providence*, RI, Feb. 17 is one of only a few reported from Rhode Island in recent years (*vide* DE). Rhode Island continues to host most of the Region's wintering Tree Swallows, with up to 50 in Charlestown throughout the season. Details were submitted on a Bewick's Wren in Westport, MA, Jan. 6 (DE, R. Bower), but final word will await MARC review.

A lingering Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was in Chatham, *Barnstable*, MA, Dec. 20, while just up the cape in Orleans a Townsend's Solitaire was present Dec. 27–Jan. 3 (*vide* MR). Like so many other half-hardies, Hermit Thrushes lingered north in better than usual numbers. Many observers noted large flocks of Am. Robins throughout the Region, including at high elevations in New Hampshire's White Mts., where they fed on abundant mountain-ash berries. Farther south, counts of over 1000 were regular in e. Massachusetts, with a season high of 12,500 in Barnstable Dec. 29. After ice storms affected n. regions in mid-January, robins from higher elevations may have been forced down slope, including at least 1000 in Benton, *Grafton*, NH, Jan. 23 (A Ports). Varied Thrushes included two in Annisquam, *Essex*, MA, through Dec. 4, one in Pembroke, *Merrimack*, NH, Jan. 16–Feb 2; and a 4th in Harrison, *Cumberland*, ME, Jan. 7–17. American Pipits lingered in very high numbers, with up to 27 in N. Dartmouth, MA, throughout the winter. Other wayward pipits included 14 in Weekapaug, *Washington*, RI, Feb. 13, and one in Ogunquit, *York*, ME, Jan 1. Bohemian Waxwings were almost entirely absent, with the largest reported flock being only 25 birds in New Harbor, *Lincoln*, ME, Jan 31 (*vide* WT). Elsewhere in the northern 3 states there were never more than two at once.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

For observers in some parts of New England, early December may have seemed more like the peak of fall warbler migration, at least in terms of species diversity. Seventeen species were recorded in e. Massachusetts alone, with three additional species elsewhere in the Region. Among the outstanding warbler finds were the Region's first winter Blue-winged Warbler in Burlington, *Middlesex*, MA, Dec. 5 and a Yellow Warbler at the Boston Public Gardens Dec

1-7. Along with the latter were single Orange-crowned and Yellow-throated warblers, all of which frequented a single low bush near a water source. Other warblers that should have been far south of the Bay State in December included two Nashvilles, a N. Parula, two Black-throated Blues, a Black-and-white, two Am. Redstarts, three N. Waterthrushes, and three Wilson's. Most unexpected (or maybe not, considering all the Ash-throated Flycatchers) was a **MacGillivray's Warbler** in Mattapan, Norfolk, MA, Dec. 13-16 (R. Sty-meist, MR, m.ob.)

Away from Massachusetts, Maine hosted a Yellow-throated Warbler in New Harbor Dec. 5, a Blackpoll in Portland Dec. 19, and an Am. Redstart in Westbrook Dec. 13, while a Black-throated Green was in Little Compton, Lincoln, RI, Dec. 12. A young male Black-throated Blue Warbler survived the winter at a feeder in Stratham, Rockingham, NH, where it fed on hulled sunflower seeds and the occasional treat of mealworms. Not to be outdone by their long-distance migrant relatives, warblers that are more expected in New England in winter were generally more common than usual. Orange-crowned Warblers were seemingly everywhere, with 10 in Massachusetts and four in Rhode Island. Yellow-rumped were very common on Cape Cod, with totals of over 200 well into January, a time when in some years the species has retreated somewhat to the south. Two even managed to hang on far to the north at Dead Creek W.M.A., Addison, VT, Jan. 2 (*vide* JP). Both Pine and Palm warblers remained reliable on Cape Cod through late February.

It wasn't only warbler diversity that was unusually high in December. Three species of tanagers were reported, including a Scarlet in New Haven, CT, Dec. 4 and a Summer in Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, ME, Dec. 22-Jan. 1 (ph., J. Clark, m.ob.). Massachusetts hosted a remarkable three **Western Tanagers**, two of which were within 10 mi of each other on Cape Cod: one in Orleans Dec. 31-Feb. 7 and the other in Wellfleet Jan. 2-17; the 3rd made a brief appearance in Marshfield Jan. 2 (D. Clapp).

Many observers noted higher than usual numbers of Am. Tree Sparrows, and Chipping Sparrows, usually reduced to singles in December, numbered as high as 16 in Orleans, MA, Dec. 20. Other noteworthy sparrows in Massachusetts included four Clay-colored, nine Vesper, and two Lark. In New Hampshire, single Lark and Grasshopper sparrows were discovered in Hampton

Beach and Stratham, respectively, Dec. 19, with the former lingering until Dec. 24. Both species of sharp-tailed sparrow were reported from marshes in Eastham in early December, with Saltmarsh outnumbering Nelson's by roughly three to one (maxima of 15 and 5 respectively; D. Peacock, JT).

Following the trend set by warblers and tanagers, grosbeaks and buntings made an unusually good showing. Unfortunately, Rhode Island's two contributions—a Blue Grosbeak in S. Kingston Jan. 25 and a Black-headed Grosbeak in Narragansett Dec. 13 (both M. Murray)—were without details at this writing, and, given the extreme rarity of these species at this season, they are best treated with some caution. More expected were two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, one on Nantucket Dec. 13 and an overwintering male at a feeder in Canton, Hartford, CT (M. Marsted). There were also two Indigo Buntings in e. Massachusetts: in Nantucket Dec. 16 and Worcester Dec. 20, while a female/immature **Painted Bunting** in Hartland, Windsor, through Dec. 5 furnished a 2nd state record for Vermont (P. Fournier, ph., J. Nicholson).

The season's only Yellow-headed Blackbird spent the winter at a feeder on Nantucket (E. Andrews, m.ob.). Rusty Blackbirds were reported in larger than usual numbers throughout the winter, and a well-described **Brewer's Blackbird** was in Greenfield, Franklin, MA, Dec. 27 (†W&L Lafley). Baltimore Orioles totaled six in Massachusetts, four in Rhode Island, and three in Maine. Bullock's Oriole is always a little more problematic. Four were reported, but the only ad. males were at Sterling, MA, Jan. 1 and in W. Goshen, Litchfield, CT, for the entire winter.

After last winter's spectacular numbers, it is not surprising that winter finches were almost absent in 1998-1999. Pine Grosbeaks, both species of crossbills, and Com. Redpoll were practically restricted to n. Maine, and even there they occurred in low numbers (*vide* JD, WT). These same species were reported once each in New Hampshire and not at all in Vermont. The exception to this rule was **Berkshire, MA**, where five Red and six White-winged crossbills were in Washington Dec. 29 and three White-winged were in Windsor through January and February. Windsor also hosted practically the only Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, and Evening Grosbeaks in Massachusetts (*vide* SK, MR), and these species were not much more common to the north. The only finch around in any numbers was the Am.

Goldfinch, which was abundant enough to set records or near-records on many New England CBCs.

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