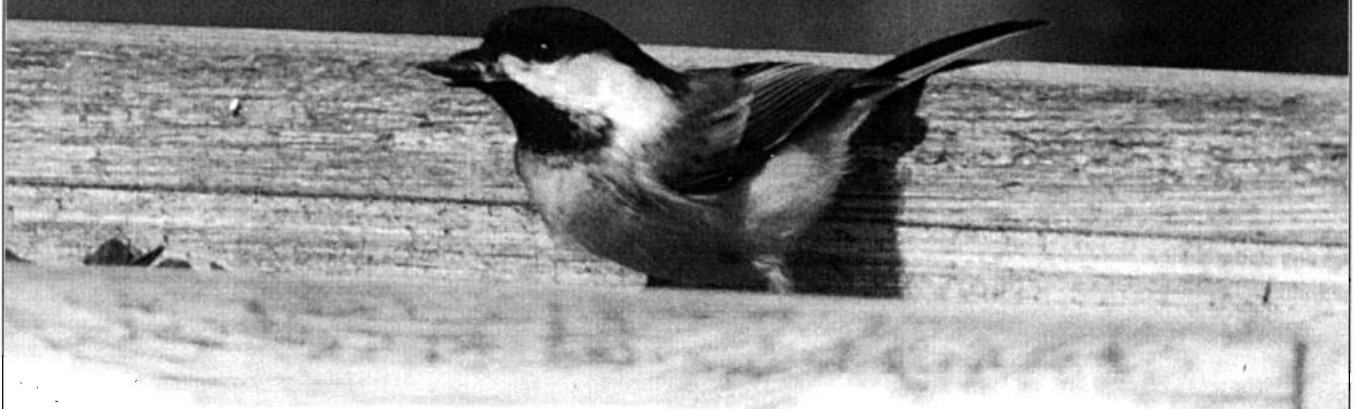


Black-capped Chickadees sometimes disperse southward in winter. Despite the warm weather typifying winter 1999–2000, two ended up some 240 km south of their normal range in Madison, Kentucky, furnishing a first record for that state. This individual was photographed on 3 Mar 2000. Note the extensive pale edgings to the wing coverts and the ragged lower edge to the black bib. Photograph by Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.



midwestern prairie



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There was Regional consensus that the winter of 1999–2000 duplicated the mild conditions that occurred across the Midwest during the past two winters. This year “normal” winter prevailed for only about three weeks, beginning in late January. This brief, bitter cold was followed by unprecedented warmth; indeed, in Chicago, February was reportedly the warmest on record. Precipitation, though moderate in some areas, was deemed insufficient to erase the acute moisture deficit generated last summer and fall. Most pre-

cipitation fell as rain or snow that quickly melted.

Following the pattern established in recent winters, the warm December climate enticed numerous birds to linger in the Region. The roster of loiterers was dominated by waterfowl, shorebirds, sparrows, and blackbirds, many of which ultimately wintered. Also as expected, April-like mid-February temperatures brought an influx of early migrants, including the likes of Blue-winged Teal, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Forster’s Terns. With the exception of a few Snowy Owls, a White-winged Crossbill movement, and a significant Northern Shrike incursion, few birds moved into the Region from farther north.

The Middlewestern Prairie Region’s recent pattern of clement winters has significantly improved the birding. Birders are rapidly becoming acclimated to hummingbirds in December, waterbirds in January, and spring migration in February. Will the bubble burst?

Abbreviations: Carlyle L. (*Carlyle Lake in Clinton, Fayette, and Bond, IL*), H.B.S.P. (*Headlands Beach S.P., OH*); Jax.P. (*Jackson Park on the Chicago lake-front*); L. Calumet (*Lake Calumet, Chicago*); R.E.D.A. (*Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO*).

LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Red-throated Loons were less widespread than last winter, with eight birds restricted to Illinois and Indiana. Common Loons lived up to their name; there were reports from all six states, with peak counts of 79 at H.B.S.P. 11 Dec (RHn) and 66 at L. Monroe, IN, 12 Dec (DWh, LSt). Iowa’s second **Yellow-billed Loon**, an imm. at Little Wall L., was first seen 1 Dec and remained until 12 Dec (JD, †TKt, †CE, AR, †MP, m.ob., ph.). Presumably the same bird reappeared at Hallett’s Quarry, a few miles s., where it stayed until at least 21 Dec (†SD, †JD). Grebes took advantage of the open water and lingered in good numbers; peak counts of both Pied-billeds and Horneds exceeded 100 birds. Red-necked Grebe counts were near normal, with three in Illinois and one in Indiana. The only W. Grebes were identified on Clearfork Res., OH, 15–18 Dec (JHe, m.ob.) and on Kentucky L., KY, 21 Feb (DR).

American White Pelicans were unusually plentiful in the w. states, with counts exceeding 200 in Illinois and Missouri; one wandered e. to Mahoning, OH, where it was observed 19–20 Dec (Bjo, LRo). Other than a concentration of 1750 at Rend L., IL (KMc, RZ), Double-crested Cormorants were surprisingly scarce. Lingering Great Egrets at

Port Clinton, OH, 25 Dec (Jpg), Cook, IL, 19 Dec (AS), and McKee Marsh, IL, 18 Dec (EW) were exceptionally late for these northerly sites. Excellent winter Black Vulture counts included 400 near Aberdeen, OH, 2 Dec (BL) and a record-high Kentucky tally of 192 at the Ghent Power Plant 18 Dec (*vide* BPB).

WATERFOWL

Following the recent expansion pattern, numbers of all geese species were again high this winter. Perhaps the best barometer of goose abundance is provided by Ross's Goose, which was reported in all six states, with double-digit maximum counts in the three w. states. In concert with upper Midwestern reintroduction programs, Trumpeter Swans are now appearing regularly in the Region. This winter's peak count was 22 in Webster, IA, 4 Dec, and there were also reports from Missouri and Ohio.

Duck numbers were similar to those over the past two warm winters. Unusual puddle duck reports included a Eur. Wigeon at Ottawa N.W.R., OH, 27 Feb (*vide* G. Links), numerous early Blue-winged Teal that arrived in late Feb, and a record-early Cinnamon Teal in Marshall, IA, 22–24 Feb (MP, PA, RA). Harlequins were reported only on L. Michigan, where an imm. male and female were identified at Waukegan, IL, 5 Feb (AS) and a female was seen off Beverly Shores, IN, 27 & 29 Feb (B&S), BGr). The only other unusual sea duck report consisted of 14 Black Scoters at

Spirit L., IA, 6–12 Dec (LSc, ETH), which is a most remarkable winter count for an inland site. The Region's largest Hooded Merganser concentration consisted of 600 at Saylorville Res., IA, 4 Dec (DT, JD). West of the Mississippi R., peak Red-breasted Mergansers counts included 16 at Lost Island L., IA, 26 Feb (LSc) and two males at Smithville L., MO, 9 Jan (MRo).

EAGLES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Several correspondents noted lower Bald Eagle numbers this winter, suggesting that the absence of ice failed to concentrate them. Despite this dispersal every state except Kentucky reported peak counts exceeding 100 birds. An impressive N. Harrier tally of 44 birds, at Taberville Prairie, MO, was logged at sunset 16 Jan (MRo). The eleven N. Goshawks reported in the four n. states is about typical for a non-invasion year. Most remarkable among the 21 Golden Eagles reported this winter was the presence of at least six birds in Ohio; this number is unprecedented for that state. The winter Merlin presence in the Region remained strong, with multiple reports from all six states. Interestingly, several of the pale *richardsonii* form were found in Iowa and Missouri. Surprisingly, 20–25 of the 53 Greater Prairie-Chickens observed at Prairie S.P., MO, 16 Dec, were displaying (MRo). Without doubt Virginia Rails are regular, though rarely reported, winter residents in the Region; consequently, the bird seen 2 Jan in Muhlenberg, KY (DOb), is noteworthy. For the third consec-

utive winter Sandhill Cranes were widespread in the Region. Perhaps the most impressive single report consisted of 220+ over Spring Grove Cemetery, Hamilton, OH, 24 Dec (JRa).

Along with the milder winters, shorebirds have become a regular complement of this season's report. This year ten species were logged in the Region. Numerous Greater Yellowlegs lingered into December, the latest on the 26 Dec, e. Cincinnati, OH, CBC (*vide* RHa). February Lesser Yellowlegs arrived in four states; the vanguard of this entourage appeared at Schell-Osage W.M.A., MO, 9 Feb (LL). A Spotted Sandpiper spent the dead of winter in cen. Illinois at L. Springfield 25 Jan–15 Feb (†DBo). Least Sandpipers were reported in December in five states, and a surprising number of hardy individuals lingered into January, with 17 at Paradise, KY, 2 Jan (some still present 18 Jan, *vide* BPB) and seven at Montrose W.M.A., MO, 16 Jan (MRo). The only Pectoral Sandpiper report consisted of an early spring migrant that arrived at Ottawa N.W.R., OH, 29 Feb (VF). Purple Sandpiper reports were restricted to L. Erie, where three were found along the Ohio lakefront. Continuing the pattern of recent years, December Dunlins were reported in four states; the only mid-winter report consisted of one at Montrose, Chicago, 9 Jan (AS). Up to 86 Com. Snipe were at L. Monroe, IN, 2–10 Dec (LSt, DWb), which constitutes an exceptional winter tally. Many correspondents com-

SA Whooper Swans made a stately entry into the Region this winter when three free-flying singletons appeared at widely separated locations. It appears quite doubtful, however, that any of the three were of wild origin. The first Whooper was found 7 Jan in se. Lee, IA, on pool #19 of the Mississippi R. (CFu). This individual apparently moved about quite a bit and soon disappeared (†CE, †JF, †TKt, JSh, m.ob.), only to be relocated 5 Mar (*vide* JD). The second bird lingered on the e. side of Cincinnati, OH, 22 Jan–16 Feb (BWh et al.) until it disappeared into a restricted area; it was ultimately rediscovered 8 Mar (Jay Lehman, *vide* RHa). The third Whooper, a highly oiled adult, was on L. Michigan at Miller Beach, IN, 25–26 Feb (†KB, †JCd, m.ob.). Augmenting this Regional incursion was a fourth adult that was captured in N. Dakota; this bird was believed to have been an escapee (*vide* P. Scherr).

Although the precise origin of the Middlewestern Prairie Region Whoopers remains problematical, there exists an ambient feral/captive population in the eastern half of the Continent. The best documented group is in Massachusetts, where three birds escaped from a Long Island, NY, breeder in March 1993 (FN 49:126) and became established in the

Ipswich/Plum I., MA, area (AB 47:395, FN 48:187, FN 49:31, 228), with breeding reported (FN 52:28, NAB 53:31). Wandering Whoopers found in Labrador, New England, Pennsylvania, and Québec have been attributed (though not with unanimous agreement) to this prolific group (FN 49:11,13,17, FN 49:131, NAB 53:144).

Although there is a dearth of published reports from geographical areas further west, Whooper Swans have also made their presence known there. Peder Svingen (pers. comm.) notes that Whoopers have been reported in Minnesota almost annually throughout the 1990s, including an adult with four young in 1998. These birds were all deemed escapees; no valid records exist for Minnesota (*vide* Bob Janssen). Another seen in Missouri in March 1995 suffered a similar fate (*vide* MRo). In 1998 a captive pair bred near Rockford, IL; though five young hatched only one fledged (*vide* Dan Williams). No doubt other birds are present, but because they are deemed uncountable by birders, they are usually ignored. Some biologists have suggested that Whoopers may duplicate the invasion pattern of Mute Swans, consequently, the population warrants monitoring.

mented about early Am. Woodcock arrivals; the earliest among these appeared 10 Feb near Cincinnati, OH (TSI), and in *Pulaski*, IL, 11 Feb (FBe).

GULLS THROUGH OWLS

Reports of lingering Franklin's Gulls included an ad. on the Mississippi R. in *Hancock*, IL, 8 Jan (DBo, BDy, DKa, MDe), an alternate ad. in *Lee*, IA, 8 Jan (JF, TKt), and one in *Madison*, IL, 17 Jan (JZ, TBe). The only Little Gull consisted of an ad. at L. Shelbyville, IL, 5 Dec (RCh). Adult California Gulls were found at Michigan City Harbor, IN, 11 Dec (†KB, †Jcd, m.ob.) and in Chicago 22–23 Jan (MRe, JRi, JL, ph.). Despite the mild winter large gull numbers were better in most areas (L. Erie and the St. Louis area excepted) than in the last few years. Thayer's Gulls were unusually common both in Illinois and Indiana. The peak count consisted of 15 (10 adults, three first-year, and two second-year birds) at Pekin 30 Jan (MRe), a record count for Illinois and the Region. Above-normal Iceland Gull numbers were also observed in these two states, where the peak consisted of four at Pekin, IL, 30 Jan (MRe). Both black-backed gulls were reported in all six states; the southernmost Lesser Black-backed report consisted of "several" at Kentucky Dam 5–6 Feb (BPB). Great Black-backs have truly invaded the Region. This winter a bumper crop appeared on L. Michigan, including a state high daily count of ten off the Migrant Trap, IN, 19 Feb (RHu). Additionally, inland birds were logged in Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, and Missouri. After two winters of short supply, Glaucous Gull numbers returned to normal this winter with reports from all six states. One persevering adult Glaucous lingered on L. Monroe, IN, 17 Dec–10 Jan, establishing a first local record (J&SH, m.ob.). It was a fine winter for Black-legged Kittiwakes, with three singletons reported in Illinois and a juv. at Meldahl Dam, KY, 4–15 Dec (FR, ph.). The presence of terns in the winter report attests to the season's mildness. A very tardy Caspian Tern was reported at Newton Lake, IL, 2 Dec (JWa, JSm, AH, RHI). At the other extreme four overzealous Forster's Terns arrived at Kentucky L., KY, 27 Feb (HC), providing one of a handful of winter records for that state.

Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported from every state except Indiana and Ohio; the peak count was ten in *Pulaski*, IL, 10 Dec (FBe), but most reporting states listed multiple birds. Snowy Owls staged a feeble flight, with 1–3 birds reported in every state except Kentucky. Short-eared Owl concen-



After decades with few records east of the Great Plains, the California Gull is being recorded with regularity in the East. This adult was one of two present in Chicago, Illinois, 22–23 Jan 2000; it was photographed on the latter date. Photograph by James Landing.

trations included 30–50 birds that wintered at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, IL (JWa), 21 in *Wayne*, IA, 24 Dec (ABr), and 20 at the Wendell Ford Regional Training Center, KY, 9 Feb (BPB). The elusive N. Saw-whet Owl was anything but elusive this winter, with an unprecedented 25 birds reported across the Region's six states. The southernmost report came from *Hart*, KY, where two calling birds were heard 17 Feb (SKs).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Two Red-shafted Flickers were reported in Iowa; one in *Story* 22 Jan (B. Clark *vide* JD) and the other in *Mason City* 23–27 Jan (CFi). Eastern Phoebees were unusually numerous this winter, with six birds in Illinois, five in Kentucky, and three in Ohio. Kentucky's second **Say's Phoebe** was discovered in *Logan* 28 Dec and remained until 14 Jan (MB, DR, BPB, ph.). The Region experienced a major invasion of N. Shrikes, with some 80 birds distributed across every state except Kentucky. As expected the greatest numbers appeared in the n. states; 25 were reported in Iowa, 24 in Ohio, and 21 in Illinois. However, at least two birds pressed s. to the St. Louis, MO, area. The first was at *Marais Temps Clair* W.M.A. 11 Dec (WR) and the second was discovered 12 Dec in *St. Charles* and remained there until at least 11 Feb (P&BJ, m.ob.). The **Western Scrub-Jay** that arrived in *Tippecanoe*, IN, last fall continued to visit the local feeding station until 28 Jan, when it is suspected to have fallen prey to a marauding hawk (*vide* BDU). Early arriving

Fish Crows provided a new species for the winter report. At least one was calling in *Hickman*, KY, 16 Feb (BPB), one was in *Union*, IL, 19 Feb (KMc, FBe), and two were identified at Ft. Massac S.P., IL, 28 Feb (FBe). In w. Iowa two Black-billed Magpies were seen 11 Dec in *Plymouth* where one was reported last fall; one was still present in late Jan (S. Moats, *vide* JD).

Late February Tree Swallows appeared in Kentucky and Missouri and one overzealous migrant was seen at *Magee Marsh*, OH, 28 Feb (RHu, SW). An extremely late N. Rough-winged Swallows lingered on the *Maumee R.*, *Lucas*, OH, until 11–12 Dec (ETr, TKp) and at *Maumee Bay S.P.*, OH, until 5 Dec (KG, JMc, et al.). Kentucky's first confirmed **Black-capped Chickadees** were present in rural sw. *Boyd* (L. Tower, BPB, ph.), some 150 mi s. of the species' normal range. One of the two birds present was captured, measured (well within Black-capped range), and photographed (BPB). Perhaps their appearance was in concert with a "good-sized" movement reported in cen. Ohio (*vide* RHu). Wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported in moderate numbers across the Region. Following last winter's incredibly productive Sedge Wren census at *Prairie S.P.*, MO, which yielded 33 birds, Mark Robbins repeated the exact survey on 16 Dec this year, but found only four birds. According to Robbins, the primary habitat appeared identical both years. One other Sedge Wren was reported at *Carlyle L.*, 19 Dec (DKa). Marsh Wrens were reported only in s.

reaches of the Region, with two in Kentucky and one in Missouri. Both kinglets were widely reported and in the St. Louis area Ruby-crowneds were deemed unusually common (WR). Although Am. Robins were generally less common than last winter, a hefty tally of 4338 was logged 26 Dec in Lake, IL (AA, et al.). It was a better-than-average winter for Varied Thrushes, with four singletons. Reports included a male at Waterloo, IA, 8–23 Jan (MDo et al.), a male in the Indiana Dunes 16 Jan–22 Feb (SBg, m.ob.), a male at Rock Falls, IA, 20–29 Jan (JWI), and a female that fed on millet in Winnesheik, IA, 24 Jan–21 Feb (DC). American Pipits lingered in good numbers, providing reports from every state except Missouri. The peak count consisted of a flock of 100+ near L. Waveland, IN, 27 Dec (AB, CM). The only documented Bohemian Waxwing occurred in cen. Illinois at Rochester 22, 23, & 25 Jan (†DBo, †RCh, BDy, m.ob.).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Nine warbler species were recorded in the Region, which is a typical number for the recent mild winters. The more unusual of these included a Nashville in Chicago's Grant Park, 9 Dec (DSt), Iowa's 2nd wintering Cape May, an ad. male, in Cedar Rapids 22 Dec–23 Jan (J. Miller, †MDo, †TKt, ph.), a Prairie at Warsaw, KY, 18 Dec (TSp, KF, BPB), and an Am. Redstart in Chicago 6 Dec (AW).

Spotted Towhee reports included two in Illinois and one each in Indiana and Iowa. The mild season had Chipping Sparrows reported in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. The only Vesper Sparrow report consisted of a one at Iowa City, 19 Dec (CE). Either winter Le Conte's Sparrow numbers are increasing or birders are becoming more skillful at locating these furtive birds. This winter multiple Le Conte's were reported in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Missouri. The peak count consisted of 12+ at Prairie S.P., MO, 16 Dec (MRo). Lincoln's Sparrows, which in former winters were quite rare, appeared in impressive numbers this season, with seven in Illinois, plus singletons in Iowa and Missouri. Triple-digit Lapland Longspur tallies were reported from every state except Kentucky. The largest count consisted of 2300 near Ellettsville, IN, 6 Feb (LSt, JV), but 2100 migrants were also seen flying past Maumee Bay S.P., OH, 26 Feb (VF). Snow Buntings followed a similar pattern with counts exceeding 300 in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Ohio. One bird wandered s. to Boone, KY, where it was seen within a Horned Lark-

longspur flock 22 Jan (BPB). A Dickcissel wintered near the *Holmes/Coshocton*, OH, line (*fide* BGI), where this species is casual in winter.

Unusually large icterid flocks lingered in the s. states as evidenced by a flock estimated to contain one million birds, dominantly Com. Grackles, at Pere Marquette, MO, 18 Dec (WR) and 300,000 Red-winged Blackbirds at Rend L., IL, on the same day (KMc). Other unusual icterids included a singing W. Meadowlark in *Fulton*, KY, 17 Feb (BPB) and a female Yellow-headed Blackbird in *Meade*, KY, 31 Dec (BPB). The most impressive report within this avian group, however, consisted of a female **Great-tailed Grackle** at Sangamon L., IL, 2 Feb (†DBo), which provided one of few records for the state. In w. Missouri 476 Great-taileds were counted at L. Contray, 8 Feb (JHi), attesting to the expansion of this species in the Region.

Despite encouraging activity during the autumn migration, the winter finch invasion was less than spectacular. The singular highlight was a moderately strong White-winged Crossbill incursion that sent birders scurrying to local cemeteries, where the birds showed a penchant for hemlock. This flight yielded daily counts of one to 40 birds in each of the Region's six states; the peak count was 40 at Lindenwood Cemetery in Fort Wayne, IN, 11 Feb (*fide* Haw). Otherwise winter finches consisted of mod-

est Purple Finch and Red Crossbill numbers, plus a scattering of Com. Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Perhaps the season's best winter finch was a Hoary Redpoll that frequented a Skokie, IL, feeder 7–29 Feb, (†RCh, SBy, JL, GW, EW, m.ob.), much to the delight of Illinois birders. Evening Grosbeaks were decidedly scarce, with only single reports from two states. Strength of the Eur. Tree Sparrow expansion into cen. Illinois was vividly demonstrated by a count of 400 birds in Snicarte, *Mason*, 13 Jan (VK).

RARITIES COMMITTEE UPDATE

Indiana: Photos of the roadkill Bridled/Sooty Tern found in Indianapolis 24 Feb 1998 (*Field Notes* 52:205) were examined by experts, who agreed that the bird was a **Sooty Tern**; this species has now been added to the Indiana state list. **Ohio:** A Pine Grosbeak report from *Paulding*, OH, 20 Oct reported in the fall 1999 FN summary was rejected.

Contributors (Subregional editors in bold-face): Many other individuals who could not be personally acknowledged also submitted notes to the various state reports.

Alan Anderson, Hank Armstrong, Pam Allen, Reid Allen, Emil Bacik, Susan Bagby (SBg), Steve Bailey (SBy), Frank Bennett (FBc), Mark Bennett, Torrey Berger (TBe), David Bohlen (DBo), Aaron Brees (ABr), **Alan Bruner** (AB) (Indiana), Dennis Carter, John Cassidy (JcD), John Castrale (JCs), **Robert Cecil** (RCe)(Iowa), Robert Chapel (RCh), Hap Chambers, Myrna Deaton (MDe), James Dinsmore, Steven Dinsmore (SD), David Dister, Michael Dooley (MDo), Jon Duerr (JDr), Barny Dunning (BDu), Becky Dyer (BDy), Dave Easterla, Chris Edwards, Vic Fazio, Carolyn Fischer (CFi), Kevin Flowers, Chuck Fuller (CFu), Jim Fuller, Larry Gara, Kent Glauser, Bruce Glick (BGI), Brendan Grube (BGr), Ray Hannikman (RHn), Regina Hantle (RHl), **Rob Harlan** (RHa) (Ohio), Jim Haw (Haw), Jim & Susan Hengeveld (J & SH), John Herman (JHe), Jack Hilsabeck (JHi), Robert Hughes (RHu), Bill Huser, **Brad Jacobs** (BJa) (Missouri), Brad & Scott Jackson (B & SJ), **Ann Johnson** (Iowa), Paul & Barbara Johnson (P & BJ), Bill Jones (BJo), Dan Kassebaum (DKa), Tom Kemp (TKp), Thomas Kent (TKt), Matt Kenne, Steve Kinder (SKd), Steve Kistler (SKs), Vernon Kleen, Laurence Lambert, James Landing, Barbara Lund, Walter Marcisz, Jeff McCoy (JMc), **Kelly McKay** (KMk) (Illinois), Keith McMullen (KMc), Lee McNeely (LMc), Joe Milosevich (JMi), Clint Murray, Darrin O'Brien (DOb), Doug Overacker (DOv), Babs Paddleford, Loren Paddleford, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. (BPB), Ed Pierce, John Pogacnik (JPg), Mark Proescholdt, John Rakestraw (JRa), Frank Renfrow, Mike Retter (MRc), Justin Rink (JRI),

SA Orioles added a splash of color and an element of excitement to the winter season. An imm. or female Baltimore Oriole was at Everly, IA, 26 Nov–21 Dec (LSc). More remarkably, a male **Bullock's Oriole**, which apparently arrived 4 Nov but was not seen by birders until 17 Dec, remained through the season (†TKt, JF, MP, AJ, ph.) to provide Iowa's 3rd record. Amazingly, the Region's first **Scott's Oriole** attended a feeder in Toulon, *Stark*, IL, from about 15 Jan–3 Feb (Pam Sprout). Disappointingly, no experienced birders saw the bird, but excellent photos were evaluated by Richard Palmer and Will Russell; both agreed unequivocally that the bird was an imm. male Scott's Oriole. These records, in concert with the January 1998 imm. Streaked-backed Oriole in Wisconsin (*NAB* 53:390), suggest that all winter orioles in the Region should be carefully scrutinized.

Mark Robbins (MRo), David Roemer, Larry Rosche (LRo), William Rowe, Jim Scheib (JSh), Ed Schlabach, Lee Schoenewe (LSc), Darrell Shambaugh (DSH), Jim Sinclair (JSI), James Smith (JSm), Tammie Stanley (TSI), Tommy Stephens (TSp), Lee Sterrenburg (LSt), Alan

Stokie, Doug Stotz (DSt), Ed Thelen (ETH), Dennis Thompson, Elliot Tramer (ETr), Joe Van Reit (JV), Sandy Wagner, Jeff Walk (JWa), Jan Walter (JWI), Eric Walters, Allan Welby, Bill Whan (BWh), Don Whitehead (DWh), Geoff Williamson, Jim Ziebol, and Ray Zoanetti.



central southern



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This report is my tenth and last covering the winter season in the Region. During the decade that has elapsed since I began reporting, many changes in the Regional avifauna have transpired and it has been enjoyable to document many of them in the pages of this journal and its forerunners. I thank the subregional editors who simplified my task by timely submission of properly formatted and annotated bird records, and I thank all the regional observers who voluntarily provided records to the subregional editors. Louisiana observers especially deserve thanks for their collective and seemingly inexhaustible willingness to provide exemplary documentation for the many unusual avian events annually occurring in the Bayou State.

The weather throughout the Region for the last full winter of the second millennium was generally warm and dry, with only a short spate of cold and snow in mid-January disturbing this pattern.

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Red-throated and Pacific Loons were reported from several widely scattered sites,

solidifying their status as rare but regular winter residents; at least one of the former probably wintered as far north as *Henry*, TN, where the species was reported in Dec and Feb (JRW). Also rare Regionally but not so regular, a Red-necked Grebe remained in *Henry*, TN, 12 Feb (JRW, m.ob.). An Alabama maximum for Eared Grebe was established 3 Jan when 22 were counted in *Baldwin* (AM†, AIM). A W. Grebe visited *Washington*, AR, 6 Feb (KN, LN), the only Regional report.

Fifty Sooty Shearwaters just offshore from *Escambia* 14 Jan (JF†) provided a Florida maximum. On the Green Canyon 18 oil platform, 110 mi s. of Morgan City, LA, an Audubon's Shearwater was seen briefly but well 20 Jan (RLK†); an Audubon's-type shearwater was also there 19 Feb (SJP†) as was a sub-adult Masked Booby 14 Jan (RLK†). Single imm. Brown Boobies were noted in *Mobile* and *Baldwin*, AL, 22 Dec (MVH†, RWH) and 28 Jan (SER†), respectively. Only the 14th for Alabama, a Great Cormorant was on Dauphin Island, *Mobile*, 14–22 Dec (MVH†, RWH). A fifth local winter record, an Anhinga stayed briefly in *Noxubee*, MS, 7 Dec (TLS). American White Pelican counts numbering 122 and 129 were made in *Lake*, TN, 5 Dec (JRW) and *Lowndes/Clay*, MS, 19 Jan (TLS), respectively. An imm. Roseate Spoonbill was seen fairly far inland 29 Dec in *Evangeline*, LA (DLD, PC, JC, SWC).

Two adult Tundra Swans stayed in *Cleburne*, AR, 3 Dec (KN, LN), while one adult and two immatures were noted in *Newton* and *Lowndes*, MS, Dec–Jan (SA, MS) and 13 Feb (TLS†), respectively. Quite rare and irregular Regionally, a Brant was present in *Cameron*, LA, 17 Dec (DPM†, BMM†, JPS†). One hundred Ross's Geese in *Desha* 22 Feb (RHS, JP) constituted a high Arkansas count; a single in *Baldwin* 29 and 31 Jan (AM, AIM) was the 5th for coastal Alabama, and another in *Shelby* 5 & 7 Feb (AM†, AIM) represented the first for Alabama's Mountain Region; 2530 in

Jefferson Davis 17 Dec (SWC, DLD) were by far a record count for one Louisiana parish. The Cinnamon Teal present in *Orleans*, LA, the last two winters returned for a third year 2 Dec–13 Feb (GO, DPM), while another was ably described and sketched from *Cameron* 17 Dec (MAS†, JPK, MGu). A flock of 2500+ Canvasbacks in *Henry*, TN, 1 Jan (JRW) was present at a site where large flocks have been noted in the past. A flock of 1000+ Greater Scaups 9 Feb in *Colbert/Lauderdale*, AL (DJS), provided a maximum state count. Scarce in Arkansas, single Black Scoters were noted in *Prairie*, *Yell/Pope*, and *Yell* 5 Dec (KN, LN), 11–18 Dec (KN, LN, HP, MP), and 30 Dec (KN, LN), respectively; at least 12 were noted in *Baldwin*, AL, during Jan (BS, AM, AIM); a single was noted 1–3 Dec in *Oktibbeha*, MS (TLS); and another single appeared sporadically in *Cameron*, LA, 11 & 20 Dec (PW, PC, Bve). Single female Long-tailed Ducks were identified in *Chicot* and *Yell/Pope*, AR, 22 Dec (LA) and 16 Jan (KN, LN), respectively; another female visited *St. Tammany*, LA, 17 Jan (BMM, PW, CK).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Lone White-tailed Kites in *Evangeline* and *Vernon*, LA, 29 Dec (RJB) and 24 Feb (CM), respectively, were unusual at those inland sites, the latter record also being a parish first. Continuing a fall record, a White-tailed Hawk, presumably the same bird present during the winters of 1996–1997 and 1997–1998; was in *Jefferson Davis*, LA, until at least 31 Jan (BF†, PC, RLK). Two ad. and two imm. Golden Eagles were counted in Arkansas during December but none thereafter; three of varying ages were in *Henry*, TN, 5 Dec (ph. JRW), with one adult still present 1 Jan (JRW). At least two were in *Noxubee*, MS, during the season, one on 23 Feb tying the late departure date (MCo, DP, JP), while others were noted in *Bolivar* and *Lafayette*, MS; the only Louisiana sighting took place 17 Dec in *Jefferson Davis* (DLD et al.). The *Yalobusha*, MS, *Prairie Falcon* returned for its ninth consecutive winter (GK†, SK).

Seldom observed, *Yellow Rails* were viewed in *Cameron*, LA, 18 Dec (PW) and *Jackson*, MS, 12 Feb (DCi). Eighteen Sandhill Cranes noted considerably w. of their usual migration corridor in *Desha*, AR, 21 Feb (RHD, JP) were probably migrating, and 25 others were present 26 Feb in *Marion*, AR (BJ, PI). Three in *Elmore*, AL, 23 Jan (LG) were locally rare, but somewhat larger groups at Wheeler and Eufaula N.W.R.s were regular at those sites; 211 in *Tunica* 20 Feb (JRW ph.) pro-