

Falls (CT), and 3 in *Owyhee* (SP). Like last year, 3 rare Common Grackles lingered into Dec in w Montana. Another incredible winter Regional first was a male **Bullock's Oriole** photographed in Hamilton, MT 24-25 Dec (MD, MN, CP). A Purple Finch was a good find in Blackfoot 15 Dec—24 Feb (BCa); they are less than annual in Idaho. Another of the season's highlights featured Montana's 6th **Brambling** in Lake 21 Jan—28 Feb+ (MM). It was a banner year for Common Redpolls; thousands visited northerly locations and a few even made it to s. Idaho locations that had not seen them in over 20 years. Unprecedented

numbers of Hoary Redpolls came with them, with reports of at least 15 in Idaho and 60 in Montana. More Lesser Goldfinches appear to be staying in the Gem State after late fall; at least 12 overwintered near Boise (RLR, DT), and 2 were found near Lewiston 17 Feb (RD).

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# Mountain West



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This season was mild and exceedingly dry, especially in southern Wyoming and most of Colorado. There were numbers of birds that lingered into December and spring migrants arrived early.

**Abbreviations:** F.C.R.P. (Fountain Creek Regional Park, *El Paso*, CO); J.M.R. (John Martin Reservoir, *Bent*, CO).

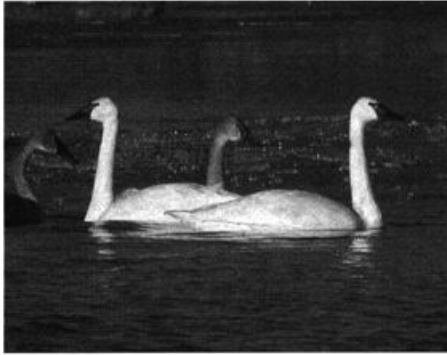
## LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

A late Horned Grebe was at Glendo Res., Platte, WY 15 Dec (SJD, JBF). Single Red-necked Grebes were found at Barr L., *Adams* 1 Dec (JBn, TL, JBF); Standley L., *Jefferson* 9-23 Dec (NE, LS); and Pueblo Res., *Pueblo* 14-20 Dec (BKP, m. ob.), with 2 there 11 Feb (BKP, CLW). Late Western Grebes in Wyoming included 16 at Glendo Res. 15 Dec (SJD, JBF) and 18 at Greyrocks Res., *Platte* 15 Dec (SJD,

JBF) and a Clark's Grebe was at Glendo Res., WY 15 Dec (JBF, SJD). Rarely observed in winter, a **Great Egret** was in Grand Jct., *Mesa* 2 Dec—22 Feb (LA, m. ob.). A **Green Heron** was seen at J.M.R. 1 Jan (BKP, MJ, DN). An imm Ross's Goose frequented Blue L., *Eagle* 15 Dec and 15 Jan (JMe). An ad. **Black Brant** was at Woods L., *Weld* 30 Nov—6 Dec (DF, m. ob.), and perhaps the same bird visited Long Pond in Ft. Collins, *Larimer* 19-22 Dec (RH).

It was a good swan season in Colorado Trumpeter Swans were reported from *Rio Blanco*, *Fremont*, *Northglenn*, *Grand*, and *Prowers*; and in e. Wyoming, one was at Grey Reef Res., *Natrona* 2-28 Feb (CEM, J&GL). Tundra Swans were reported from *Larimer*, *Weld*, *Pueblo* and *Prowers*. Scoter reports included single Surfs at L. Henry, *Crowley* 9 Dec (MJ, BKP) and J.M.R. 27 Dec (MJ, TL, m. ob.) and 10 Jan (DN); single White-winged at Pueblo Res., *Pueblo* 1 Dec (BKP, JBy), Big Johnson Res., *El Paso* 15-16 Dec (DE, m. ob.), and Marston Res. 23-27 Dec (TJ, m. ob.); and single Blacks at Marston Res., *Denver* 29 Nov—28 Dec (TJ, LS, DAL, DCE), at Horseshoe L. in Loveland, *Larimer* 8-10 Dec (NK, LS, RH, m. ob.), and at J.M.R. 27 Dec (MJ, TL). An Oldsquaw was at Grey Reef Res., *Natrona*, WY 31 Dec (CEM, BS). In Wyoming, a Red-breasted Merganser was at Glendo Res. 15 Dec (SJD, JBF) and up to 9 Hooded Mergansers were at Greyrocks Res. 15 Dec—12 Jan (SJD, JBF, DF).

A juv. Northern Goshawk was s. of Rocky Ford, *Otero* 6 Feb (SO). An ad. Red-shouldered Hawk was reported in *Bent* 17 Jan (DN). An unexpected juv. **Broad-winged Hawk** was at Boulder 24 Dec (BSc). An ad. gray-morph **Gyr Falcon** was observed in North Park, *Jackson* 20-25 Feb (RH) and a white-morph **Gyr Falcon** was near Casper, *Natrona*, WY 26 Feb (GL).



Two adult and three juvenile Trumpeter Swans were found at McKay Lake in Northglenn, Colorado on 13 January 2002. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

### RAILS THROUGH GULLS

Rarely reported in winter in Wyoming, 2 Virginia Rails were at Table Mt. W.M.A., Goshen, WY 12 Jan (DF, JBF). A wintering Greater Yellowlegs stayed at F.C.R.P. 6 Dec—24 Feb (KPa, m. ob.); 15 found at J.M.R. 6 Dec (DN, SO), one there 23 Dec (DN), and one at L Cheraw, Otero 9 Dec (BKP, MJ) were late migrants. Two Spotted Sandpipers and 3 Least Sandpipers were found on the Colorado R., near Fruita, Mesa 16 Dec (CD, LA). An **American Woodcock** was found at Bonny Res., Yuma 4 Jan (CLW). A first-basic Laughing Gull was at Standley L. 1 Dec (LS). Late for Wyoming, 4 Bonaparte's Gulls were at Glendo Res. 15 Dec (SJD, JBF). Also at Glendo Res., an ad. basic-plumaged **Mew Gull** was observed 15 Dec (SJD, JBF). Mew Gulls in Colorado, included a juv./first-basic at Warren L in Ft. Collins 1-9 Dec (NK), an ad. at Marston Res. 1 Dec (DAL, DCE), an ad. at Bonny Res. 2 Dec (JK, m. ob.), and an ad. 8 Dec (TL) and a juv. 8-10 Dec (RH, JV, PG) at Horseshoe L., Larimer. A first-basic **Glaucous-winged Gull** was found at Cherry Cr. Res. 23-28 Feb+ (GW, RO, DF, m. ob.). A Glaucous Gull was at the Casper Landfill, WY 11 Dec (CEM), and singles in Colorado were in Boulder, J.M.R., and at Standley L. Great Black-backed Gull reports included singles at Pueblo Res., L. Hasty, Bent, Neenoshe Res., Kiowa, and J.M.R. A juv. Black-legged Kittiwake was at Chatfield Res., Jefferson/Douglas 2 Dec (BSc).

### DOVES THROUGH WAXWINGS

As many as 14 Eurasian Collared-Doves were at Ft. Laramie, Goshen, WY 12 Jan (JBF, DF). The first winter records of **White-winged Dove** in Colorado included the one found in the fall at Rye, Pueblo, (NH, DSI, SC, m. ob.) and the one to 2 seen with Eurasian Collared-Doves in Pueblo 1 Dec—23 Feb (RM, m. ob.).

A **Snowy Owl** invasion into Colorado went s. of normal invasions. It appears that there may have been over 10 individuals in the state. They included an imm. female at Adobe Creek Res., Bent 16 Jan—28 Feb+ (DN, m. ob.) and 2 (or 3) n. of Riverside Res., Weld 15-24 Feb (JK, SSt, m. ob.). Other undocumented reports were from Kiowa, Bent, Otero, Pueblo, and several from the ne. part of the state. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was Bonny Res. 5 Jan (JBn et al.), and 2 were on the Pawnee N.G., Weld 21 Jan—16 Feb (DSc, RH, DAL, m. ob.). An ad. male Williamson's Sapsucker was at Coaldale, Jefferson 8 Dec (TM). Six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were observed in e. Colorado. Rare in winter, a **Red-naped Sapsucker** was at Grand Jct. all season (LA), and another was in Beulah, Pueblo 5 Jan (MY).

Single **Eastern Phoebes** were at Bonny Res. 5 Jan (SSe) and Wray, Yuma 6 Jan (JBF, TL). A first-fall male **Vermilion Flycatcher** was found near Vineland, Pueblo 23-31 Dec (MY, JY, m. ob.); this season's mild weather obviously allowed insects to remain active late. At least 8 Steller's Jays that were found in Oct stayed around Ft. Lyon, Bent through the season (DN, m. ob.). A Juniper Titmouse was found n. of normal in Ft. Collins 18-19 Jan (DAL, RH, m. ob.). Out-of-range Bushtits included 10 in Lyons, Boulder 10 Dec (BK), one in Boulder 17 Feb (RLi), and 5-12 at Coal Mountain, Natrona, WY 15-24 Dec (J&GL). Two eastern-race White-breasted Nuthatches stayed all season at Lamar, Prowers (DAL, m. ob.), and 4 were at Bonny Res. 5 Jan (JBF et al.). A Rock Wren was n. of normal at White Rocks, Boulder 19-22 Dec (BK, JP, JV). The Carolina Wren that appeared in Oct stayed through the season at Colorado City, Pueblo (DSi, m. ob.). A Winter Wren was at Storey, Sheridan, WY 1-10 Jan (BS); others were at Two Buttes Res., Baca 2 Jan (DAL) and a western-race bird in Bent, 9 Jan—28 Feb+ (DN, m. ob.).

Three Eastern Bluebirds were at Bessemer Bend, Natrona, WY 21 Jan—28 Feb (CEM, HS, J&GL). A Mountain Bluebird was near Gypsum, Eagle 5 Dec (JMe), 7 at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec (DAL), and 2 at Bonny Res. 5 Jan (SSe). Single Hermit Thrushes were in Canon City 1 Dec (SMo) and Ft. Collins 9 Dec (DAL). Varied Thrush reports included one in Durango, La Plata 22 Dec—2 Jan (KSt, m. ob.), one in Boulder, 23 Dec—1 Jan (BK, TL, LS), and one at Crosier Mt. Trail in Drake, Larimer 21 Dec (RDi). A Gray Catbird was in Pueblo 10-15 Dec (BKP), and one to 2 were at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec and 2 Jan (DAL). A Northern Mockingbird was at Casper, WY 15 Dec (DW), with 7 in Colorado this season. Single Brown Thrashers were at Ft. Lyon 23



This juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake (right; with a Bonaparte's Gull) was at Chatfield Reservoir, Colorado on 2 December 2001. Records of this species from the continent's interior are increasing, as more and more birders make regular trips to scope large reservoirs in all seasons. Photograph by Bill Schmoker.

Dec—28 Feb+ (DN, m. ob.), at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec and 2 Jan (DAL), at Vineland, Pueblo 23 Dec (DJ), and at Lamar 2 Feb (DAL) North of normal, a Curve-billed Thrasher was observed nw. of Windsor, Weld, 11 Nov—2 Feb+ (MMA, m. ob.). Bohemian Waxwings were seen in flocks of several hundred in Rio Blanco 2 Dec—16 Jan (DH), and about 300 were seen in Boulder, 2 Feb (BSc).



This Common Redpoll was at Crow Valley Campground, Weld County, Colorado, on 27 January 2002, part of a major exodus of the species from parts north. Photograph Andrew Spencer.

## WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

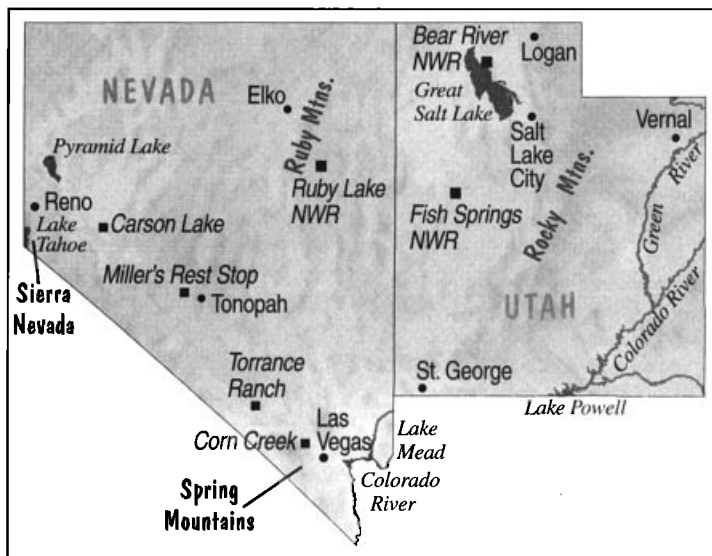
A male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** visited F.C.R.P. 15-16 Dec (KPa, m. ob.). Single Common Yellowthroats were at Pueblo 10 Dec and 2 Jan (BKP) and at F.C.R.P. 15 Dec (BGo, m. ob.). A male Wilson's Warbler was also at F.C.R.P. 1-16 Dec (KPa, m. ob.). Rare in winter, a Green-tailed Towhee was at Two Buttes Res. 19 Dec and 2 Jan (DAL) and another at Parker R.P., *Douglas* 20 Feb (GW). A **Clay-colored Sparrow**, representing Colorado's 2nd winter record, wintered at Lamar (DAL, m. ob.). A Field Sparrow was at Runyon L. in Pueblo 21-28 Feb+ (RMi). Wintering Savannah Sparrows included singles at Rocky Ford 9 Dec (BKP, MJ), at Fort Lyon 27 Dec (BKP, PGa), and at Lamar 13 Jan (MJ). An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Wray 6 Jan (TL, JBF, JBn). McCown's Longspurs wintered in larger numbers than normal in se. Colorado, especially in *Bent* and *Kiowa*. An ad. male Chestnut-collared Longspur was in *Kiowa* 13 Jan (BKP, MJ). A Black-headed Grosbeak stayed at Naturita, *Montrose* 1-19 Dec (CD, BW). Yellow-headed Blackbird reports included 2 in *Bent* 26-27 Dec (DN, JTh), one near Barr L. 19 Jan and 18 Feb

(TL), and one near Rocky Ford 21 Feb (SO). A female or imm. Purple Finch was at Naturita 2 Dec (CD, BW) and another at Lamar 17 Jan (DN). **White-winged Crossbills** invaded Colorado this season. They were in Las Animas, *Bent* 31 Dec—6 Jan (DN, m. ob.), up to 22 in Ft. Collins Jan—10 Feb (JMm, DAL, m. ob.), and 6 in Golden, *Jefferson* 29 Jan (DSc). In Wyoming, 6 White-wingeds were in Cheyenne 12 Jan (DF, JBF). Common Redpolls in Wyoming included 27 at Coal Mountain, *Natrona* 15 Dec (J&GL), one near Casper, *Natrona* 31 Dec (GL, BS, CEM), and an ad. male at Ft. Laramie, *Goshen* 12 Jan (JBF, DF). Common Redpolls also invaded s. into Colorado, with reports from *Boulder*, *Rio Blanco*, *Eagle*, *Yuma*, and *Weld*.

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# Great Basin



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The Great Basin is sometimes disparaged as a featureless and homogeneous "sagebrush sea." But no one would ever argue that the

weather is the same all across the Region. In southern Nevada, above-average temperatures may have benefited wintering hummingbirds. In southern Utah, though, it was colder than average, with very little precipitation. Precipitation was below average in northern Utah, too, but the northern Nevada snow pack was right about normal. This winter, several observers felt that local variation in ice cover and snow pack helped

to explain patterns of occurrence in species such as Tundra Swan, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Black Phoebe, and Northern Shrike. But this year's Common Redpoll invasion was attributable to meteorological and other phenomena outside our Region. And then there are always the flukes—totally unexpected sightings without precedent or explanation. The season's winner in this category was surely the Ruff that spent the last week of December at the Great Salt Lake.

**Abbreviations:** A.I.C. (Antelope Island Causeway, *Davis*, UT); C.L. (Carson L., *Churchill*, NV); C.C. (Corn Cr., *Clark*, NV); FB (Farmington Bay, *Davis*, UT); P.L. (Pyramid L., *Washoe*, NV); Q.C.R. (Quail Creek Res., *Washington*, UT); S.L.C.C. (Salt L. City Cemetery, *Salt Lake*, UT); S.L.R. (S-Line Res., *Churchill*, NV); S.R.P. (Sun R. Pond, *Washington*, UT). Christmas Bird Counts referred to in this report include the following: B.R. (Bear R., *Box Elder*, UT, 19 Dec); Elko (Elko, *Elko*, NV, 22 Dec); F.S. (Fish Springs, *Juab*, UT, 30 Dec); P.L. (Pyramid L., *Washoe*, NV, 1 Jan); S.G. (St George, *Washington*, UT, 29 Dec); S.R. (Silver Reef, *Washington*, UT, 15 Dec); T.M. (Truckee Meadows, *Washoe*, NV, 15 Dec).

## LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A rare Red-throated Loon remained at Minersville Res., *Beaver*, UT until 2 Dec (RF et al.). The only Pacific Loon reports were of 2 each