

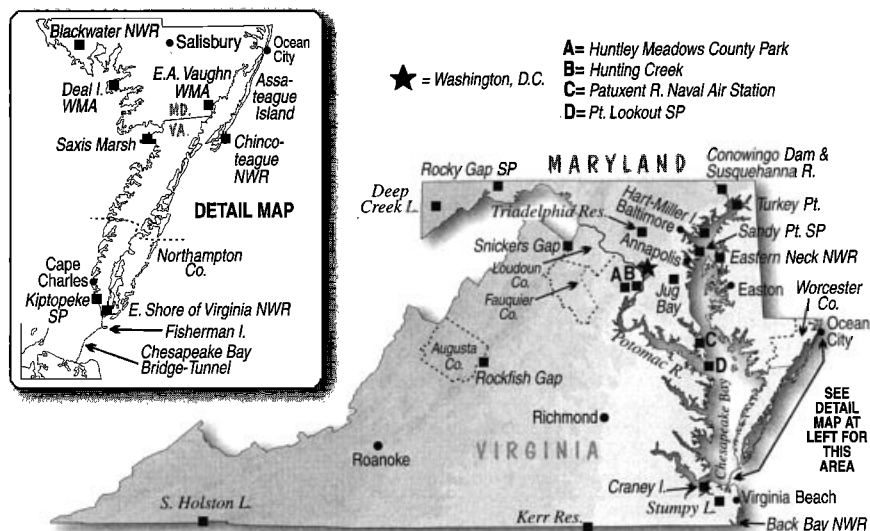
Middle Atlantic

The winter of 2003–2004 was again a brutally cold one, with heavy snow in western portions of the Region. A fallout of redpolls along the coast in late December was one of the most significant events of the season. The District of Columbia came through with a collection of interesting birds (two hummingbirds, Ovenbird) that braved the winter in a small garden off The Mall. City parks and gardens have long provided havens for tough vagrants in Boston, New York City, and other eastern metropolises. The warmer microclimates of large cities, enhanced by the wind-shelter of tall buildings, can entice insectivores to overwinter, provided they have at least a little bit of vegetative shelter, food, and fresh water. We predict that careful scrutiny of potential habitat in D.C. and other larger cities in the Region (such as Richmond and Baltimore; see Ash-throated Flycatcher below) would produce regular sightings of such vagrants. Birders in the Region might do well to visit such habitats regularly.

Abbreviations: Assat. (Assateague I., Worcester, MD); Bay (Chesapeake Bay); Black. (Blackwater N.W.R., Dorchester, MD); Blandy (Blandy Experimental Farm, Clarke, VA); C.B.B.T. (Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, s. of Northampton, VA); Chinc. (Chincoteague N.W.R., Accomack VA); Chino (Chino Farms, Queen Anne's, MD); Craney (Craney I., Portsmouth, VA); D.C. (District of Columbia); O. C. Inlet (Ocean City Inlet, Worcester, MD). The state for a location is noted the first time it is mentioned in the text.

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

It was an interesting winter for loons and grebes in the Region. Several reports of Pacific Loon began with one seen well inland 6 Dec at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg, VA, a bird seen sporadically throughout winter after being relocated 27 Dec, though never offering opportunity for photographic documentation (p. a., †AD, †MBo, JBl, G&RH). Also inland was one found at L. Anna from the North Anna Power Station, Louisa, VA 24 Feb (acc., ph. †MBo, John Irvine). More expected coastally, another was described at Cherrystone Landing, Northampton, VA 30 Dec (p. a., DS, TG). Another Pacific-type loon seen from First Landing S.P., Virginia Beach, VA 2 Jan (ESB) was of interest: prominent, consistent white flank patches observed over a half-hour while the bird was at rest, a fairly heavy bill and blocky head, and a lack of a chin strap and vent strap suggested the possibility of Arctic Loon. Unfortunately, photographs were too distant to be definitive, though the white flanks are discernible. There are at least nine reports of such birds on the East Coast between coastal Massachusetts (11–18 Jan 1983, 21 Jan 1983, 16 Mar 1994, 11 Jan 1998, 16



May 1998), Long I., NY (7 Feb 1993, 20 Dec 1998, 6 Jan 1999), Wrightsville Beach, NC (5 Feb 1994) and Tybee I., GA (19 Nov 1989), and one previous report from this location in Virginia (1 Jan 2000), but none with photographs. Two Pacific Loons were reported on the Little Creek C.B.C. 31 Dec (p. a., DLH, MI; RLAn). A Clark's Grebe at First Landing S.P. 31 Dec–3 Jan was surely the same bird returning for its 4th winter (acc., DS, TG, ph., †BTe, m. ob.), while a Western Grebe was seen 29 Dec at False Cape S.P., s. of Virginia Beach (acc. ESB). A lone Eared Grebe was among Horned Grebes at Craney 10 Feb+ (EE).

The fall influx of American White Pelicans contributed to a record number of winter reports. An injured bird was found at Craney 7 Dec (DCI). The flock of 24 that had been present since late Nov on Newport Bay, s. of South Pt., Worcester, dwindled to 12 seen 28 & 30 Dec (m. ob., ph. MLH) and were apparently gone by 31 Dec (JLS et al.). Amazingly, on 3 Jan Brinkley watched a flock of 11 come in off the ocean at Virginia Beach and continue westward over First Landing S.P. (m. ob.); we presume the 11 birds to have been part of the Maryland flock. We can only assume that some of the ensuing reports pertained to fragmentation of the same group, although this is impossible to establish with certainty: one at Craney 29 Dec (Karen Heatwole) and 3 there 22 Feb (Ben & Mary Copeland); 6 at Rudee Inlet, Virginia Beach 13 Feb (Bill & Clare Leaning); and 3 at Black. 14 Jan (p. a., AS). Though only re-

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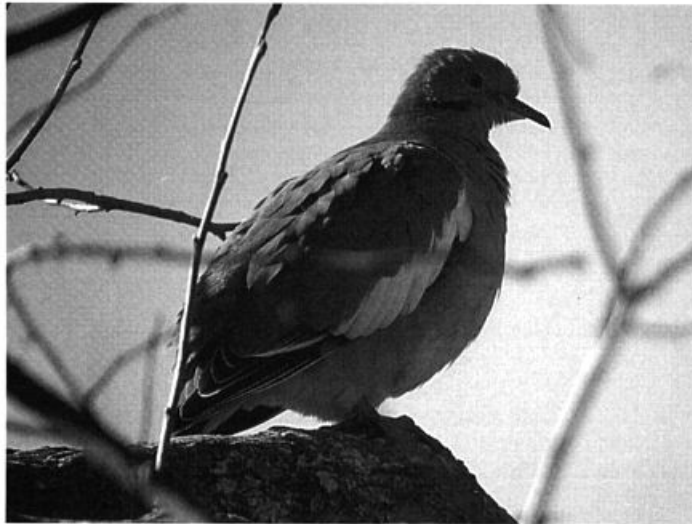
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cently joining Maryland's winter avifauna, 6 Brown Pelicans at Point Lookout S.P., Saint Mary's were almost expected 28 Dec (MC); other Dec sightings came from Wicomico and Worcester; 10 at Thomas Pt., Annapolis, Anne Arundel, were more surprising 3–4 Jan (Peter Hanan, MJI, HLW, SR et al.) and constituted a first for that C.B.C. A Great Cormorant was rare inland at L. Accotink, Fairfax, VA 1 Dec (Joan Woodward). An Anhinga in Pembroke Meadows, Virginia Beach 31 Dec (BC, John Porter) was not far from the sites of the three previous Regional winter records from 1981, 1997, and 1998. Green Herons were late at E.A. Vaughn W.M.A., Worcester, MD 29 Dec (ZB, RFR, BE) and Schoolhouse Pond, Prince George's, MD 2 Jan (FS), as were 2 Glossy Ibis at Back Bay N.W.R., Virginia Beach 6 Dec (Clark White et al.).

A **Black Brant** was found among the Atlantic Brant flock at 4th Street in Ocean City, Worcester 6 Feb (p. a., †WGE, Peter Mann). The good description constitutes the first record of this form for Maryland (there is one previous, undocumented report) and eliminates similar dark-bellied taxa. Virginia has no confirmed record of this taxon. A Brant along Sparks Rd. was rare for inland Caroline, MD 7 & 14 Feb (ph. DP). Richardson's Canada Geese were widely reported: there were 10 reports in nine counties in Maryland, and three reports in different counties in Virginia, the best being 8 birds at Riverview, Radford 17 Jan (CK, BK). Ross's Geese were reported Regionally from eight locations e. of the Bay, all but one in Maryland, with counts of up to 3 birds. Western Shore reports were all in Virginia: 3 on 26 Nov–3 Dec s. of Harrisonburg, Montgomery (p. a., Ken Ranck); one 12 Dec at Abingdon, Washington, VA (p. a., Bob Riggs); 1–7 Jan on the New R., Carroll (p. a., Glen Eller, Allan Boynton); 15 Jan in Amherst (p. a., Mark Johnson); and 29 Feb–1 Mar s. of Marshall in Fauquier (p. a., †KG, †TMD). Ross's Goose reports away from significant Snow Goose wintering areas have been on the rise. Maryland's 11 reports of Greater White-fronted Geese came in well above average. The most noteworthy were 8 in Queenstown, Queen Anne's 15 Feb (ph. DP), the 2nd highest count for the state; other counts of multiple birds were 3 at Jug Bay, Anne Arundel, 26 Dec–4 Jan (DBy), 2 at Lilipons, Frederick, 21 Feb–1 Mar (DCz et al.), and 2 in Kent 29 Feb (JBr). There were three reports from Virginia from Amherst, Fairfax, and King George.

An apparent **Gadwall x American Wigeon** hybrid (ph., †Les Willis) was seen on the Nansemond R. at Suffolk 1 Feb. It was swimming with a hen Gadwall and resembled a drake Gadwall in all respects, except for a bright green eye patch typical of American Wigeon. A drake Eurasian Wigeon returned to the same group of small ponds in Fauquier, VA, for the 10th consecutive year 12 Dec–29 Feb+ (SH, W. J. L. Sladen). Others included one at Sunken Meadow Garden, Surry, VA 29 Feb (MI); 3 at Eagles Nest Golf Course, Worcester, MD 14–28 Feb, including one hen, rarely identified in the Region (†MLH, MC, m. ob.); one at Deal Island W.M.A., Somerset, MD 29 Nov–5 Jan (John Hubbell, m. ob.); and one at Loch Raven Res., Baltimore, MD 21–23 Feb (Kye Jenkins, Elliot Kirschbaum). Two inland Virginia C.B.C.s noted Blue-winged Teal, a single 20

Dec at Dyke Marsh, Fairfax (PS) and one on a farm pond in Fauquier 21 Dec (RPA, Joan Boudreau). An incredible 8000 Redheads were seen at Rumbly Pt., Somerset 14 Feb (HH, JBr) but were in Pocomoke Sound, where such concentrations have been noted in the past. On the Virginia side of the same sound, 406 Redheads along with 590 Canvasbacks and 1491 Ruddy Ducks were seen from Saxis, Accomack, VA 27 Dec (ESB, TMD). An amazing spectacle of scoters was enjoyed at the C.B.B.T. this winter. The first reports with estimates of thousands of birds came 24 Jan, while more diligent efforts at tracking numbers by Byrd and Williams provided a peak count of 60,000 Surfs, 15,000 Blacks, and 100 White-wingeds on 4 Feb



This White-winged Dove at Les Willis's feeders at Eclipse, Suffolk, on the Nansemond River—present 17–25 (here 21) November—was one of two noted in mid-November 2003. There are only 10 or 11 previous state records, though rumors persist that the species was seen at hunters' check stations in the early 1990s. *Digitized photograph by Les Willis.*

(BW, MBy) and similar numbers over the next several days (ESB, BTe, m. ob.). One wonders what percentage of the Atlantic's Surf Scoters wintered at the mouth of the Bay. High counts continued throughout winter, and even larger numbers were seen at Cape May, New Jersey in late winter, after numbers declined in early and mid-Mar. Riverview Park at Radford hosted 2 imm. White-winged Scoters 1 Dec, with at least one present until 31 Jan, and an ad. male Surf Scoter 13 Dec (CK, BK). Five White-winged Scoters were at Kerr Res., Mecklenburg 17 Jan (AD). It was a good year for the three jetty ducks. Ocean City Inlet eider counts peaked at 28 Common Eiders 29 Feb (MBu) and 6 King Eiders 24 Feb (SHD); a nearly ad. male King Eider was enjoyed from late Nov until 26 Dec at the C.B.B.T (BTe, JSp, m. ob.).

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Following a major winter storm that crossed from the Ohio Valley through the Northeast

5–6 Dec, leaving several inches of snow in places, our Region witnessed a notable flight of Rough-legged Hawks. Certain areas in the Region (e.g., Maryland's Eastern Shore marshes, highlands of w. Maryland and Virginia) have small wintering populations; however, this year's push was detected most notably on Virginia's n. Piedmont. The first bird was seen 6 Dec in Cecil, MD (SM), followed by a barrage of reports from Prince William, Fauquier, Orange, Culpeper, and Loudoun, VA 10–26 Dec, mostly singles but some counts of 2–3 (LC, SH, TMD, G&RH, m. ob.). Through Jan and Feb, observers were reporting Rough-leggeds from many locations in both states, with some impressive counts: Montessor Rd., Loudoun, VA boasted up to 11 birds 7 Feb (JL, BJW, m. ob.), and at Rapidan, Culpeper, 6 were seen 15 Feb (BTe, Gordy Adamski). Counts from the Virginia mts. seemed to be higher than usual, noticed primarily in Highland's Bluegrass Valley, with 8 present 18 Dec, 11 on 31 Jan, and 12 on 15 Feb (JL, BJW, SH, JSp, DLH, Greg Justice). The abundance of reports dwindled by mid-Feb, with only a trickle through the end of the month and beyond. It is possible that the perceived distribution of the hawks was a result of density of observers, with areas farther s. getting far less coverage, but one was seen at Eastern Shore of Virginia N.W.R. 15 Feb (VK, m. ob.), where unusual, and around Saxis W.M.A. on several dates (v.

o.), where less so.

A late Osprey was at Salisbury 2–4 Jan (SHD). Golden Eagles away from expected areas included one at Wye I., Queen Anne's, MD 1 Feb (Bill & Karen Harris); one near Sparks Rd., Caroline, MD 13 Feb (HH); one ad. 31 Dec at Sky Meadows S.P., Fauquier (MJI, G.L. Armistead); and one imm. 31 Jan at Elsing Green, King William, VA (FA).

A Black Rail and a Sora were flushed 24 Jan near Locustville, Accomack, VA (George Reiger, *vide* HTA). An American Avocet was reported 23 Dec from Black. (Paul Spitzer, *vide* LR). A Piping Plover 15 Feb on the sound side of Assat. was a good find (HH, JBr). Two Pippings on Fisherman I. were the Cape Charles C.B.C.'s 5th record since 1979 (they were far more regular before 1979). Interestingly, one had been color-banded in the Great Lakes; another Great Lakes bird was in Cape May, NJ, this winter, and Maryland has a Mar specimen thought to belong to a Great Lakes population. It may be that wintering birds are more likely to pertain to

Great Lakes than to East Coast nesters, which could explain why winter records in the Region have dropped off more precipitously than even the Regional breeding population. A Marbled Godwit lingered at Skimmer I., Worcester, MD 20 Dec–2 Jan (SA, Bill Hubic, DCz, N&FS). A Red Knot accompanied 200 Marbled Godwits, 200 Willets, and 35 Short-billed Dowitchers at Willis Wharf, Northampton 27 Dec (ESB, TMD), the last of the winter. A Willet 31 Jan at Elsing Green, King William, VA was out of place on the Bay (FA). Sixty Red Phalaropes were seen off Maryland 28 Feb (PG et al.).

Two unidentified jaegers were noted from Chinc. 16 Feb (RPA). Three ad. Little Gulls were at Ocean City Inlet 6 Dec (MH, JLS, Ed Boyd), while an ad. was seen on the Little Creek C.B.C. from Ft. Story at Virginia Beach 31 Dec. Clayton L., Pulaski, VA held 10 Bonaparte's Gulls 1 Jan, an unusual date at this w. location (BK). All five reports of Black-headed Gulls were from Maryland: at the Denton W.T.P., Caroline 20–31 Dec (Steve Westre, Glen Lovelace); at Ocean City Inlet 11 Jan (SHD); at Assat. 15 Feb (HH, JBr); and at the Easton W.T.P., Talbot (JBC, RK) and Tanyard, Caroline (MBu et al.), both 29 Feb, possibly the same individual. An ad. California Gull was reported from the Prince William Landfill and Neabsco Cr., Prince William 27 Dec–28 Feb (acc. ph. SCR, PP, OJ, †MBo, KG.); we believe that gulls foraging at the landfill roost on the exposed mud at the tidal creek and that reports from the two locations most likely refer to the same individual California Gull. The Fauquier Landfill yielded three county firsts this year. A first- or second-winter Glaucous Gull was present 18–21 Dec (SH, ph. †TMD, ph. †SCR), and on 21 Dec Rottenborn photographed an Iceland Gull and a Thayer's Gull, both first-winter birds. Iceland Gulls were widely reported: 12 reports in seven counties in Maryland, including 2 different ads., and 5 or more from two counties in Virginia. Other Thayer's Gull reports were one first-winter bird 24 Jan at the Salisbury landfill, Wicomico, MD (JLS); an ad. 7–12 Feb at the Cecil landfill (EJS, SM, Joel Martin); a first-winter 15–21 Feb around Washington Channel, D.C. (PP, DCz); and a second-winter at the Charles, MD landfill 27 Feb (FS). Glaucous Gulls were reported from five locations in four counties and D.C., totaling some 6 individuals in Maryland, with four other reports from four counties in Virginia. All but two of these reports were of first-winter birds (the remainder were second- or third-winter). A Black Skimmer was seen at Craney 6 Feb (Andy Rabin, Larry Meade), where unprecedented at this time of year. A small flock winters at Lynnhaven Inlet, Virginia

Beach, but is not known to stray westward.

A significant movement of alcids was documented at our latitudes this winter, but the lack of boat trips off Virginia Beach (for the first time in 15 years) left a gap in data off most of the Region. In Maryland, Razorbills were noted from shore at Ocean City Inlet 12 Feb (one bird; Lorraine Logan, fide D&CB) through 24 Feb (8 birds; SHD). Much rarer, a single Dovekie was inside the inlet 21 Feb (ZB et al., ph. Don Broderick). The only pelagic trip in the Region this season on 28 Feb (PG et al.) confirmed that a significant push of Dovekies had reached the Region, with 144 counted around Baltimore Canyon; 2 Atlantic Puffins there were standard fare, but amazingly, no Razorbills were seen. In Virginia, Razorbill sightings came from Chinc., with 1–4 birds 13–16 Feb (VK, RPA et al.); at Fort Story, Virginia Beach 16–19 Feb (RLAn, RLAK, Joyce & Hayes Williams), with as many as 18 on 16 Feb; and an imm. seen 21 Feb at Little I. Park, Virginia Beach (MI, Tom Pendleton). A boat trip off Virginia Beach 22 Feb that reached only the 50-fathom line found only 8–10 Razorbills before turning back (BP et al.).

OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

The Region's only Snowy Owl report was of an imm. at Assat. 25 Dec (N&FS). Ten Short-eared Owls were hunting over a field at Rapidan, Culpeper 27 Feb (G&RH), in an area where the species has recently bred. Generally, Short-eared Owls were more numerous this winter than in an average winter, as for Rough-legged Hawks. A Common Ground-Dove, a female or imm., flushed from a garden thicket at Cape Charles 1 Dec but could not be relocated (ESB); the species has declined tremendously in the Southeast and is now rarely seen in the Region. Eurasian Collared-Doves showed further signs of spread in Virginia. Two reported from Colonial Beach, West-

moreland 12 Feb were heard singing (Dan Kluz), and another pair was at Price's Fork, Pulaski 27 Feb–2 Mar (Sally Pfeiffer, fide Bruce Grimes). Increasingly difficult to track accurately, hummingbirds again delighted birders throughout the winter. At least a dozen Rufous or *Selasphorus* hummingbirds were scattered throughout the Region. A Rufous Hummingbird was discovered 29 Nov and banded 4 Dec at the Mary Ripley Gardens; this or a similar bird lingered well into Jan. The Black-chinned Hummingbird at the Mary Ripley Gardens, D.C. was last reported 12 Dec, and at least 4 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported well into Dec, the latest being a bird seen at Cape Charles feeder through 30 Dec (ESB, Roberta Vallone). An ad. male Magnificent Hummingbird at Radford, VA 22–25 Oct (J. Pierce, fide Jerry Via) was nicely videotaped and will be reviewed by the state records committee.

An Ash-throated Flycatcher at Ft. McHenry 3–5 Dec (JP, ph. Bob Mumford, m.ob.) was Baltimore's 2nd and Maryland's 9th. Like several other Ash-throateds in the past, it was initially reported as a Great Crested. Common Ravens were reported from several locations away from expected areas. Four were reported from the Sugarloaf Mt. C.B.C. 4 Jan (Helen Horrocks et al.); one was s. of Poolesville, Montgomery, MD 1 Feb (Clive Harris); 2 were at the Occoquan N.W.R. on the Coastal Plain in Prince William 31 Jan (Larry Cartwright, LC et al.); and one was seen along I-95 in Caroline, VA 16 Feb (FA). Overwintering Brown Thrashers are not uncommon, but one at 720 m on Compton Mt., Buchanan, VA 29 Dec is worth noting (Roger Mayhorn).

Hoffman discovered another Blue-headed Vireo at Hickory Pt., Worcester 27 Dec. A Northern Shrike at Assat. was Worcester's 6th on 3–13 Jan (DCz, SHD). Loggerhead Shrikes were reported from several locations in Virginia where expected, in Clarke, Au-

SA Much was written in the fall report about the immediate effects of Hurricane *Isabel* on the displacement of seabirds in the Region, but the storm's effects continued to be felt through the winter. This winter was among the poorest in memory for wintering passerines, especially along the coast. Many observers made the connection between the low passerine counts on C.B.C.s and a poor food crop, blaming the failure of the wild food crop on *Isabel*. Harry Armistead, with almost 40 years of experience compiling the Cape Charles C.B.C., said the wild food crop was the worst he had ever seen. Bayberry bushes in particular were essentially devoid of fruit, and Tree Swallows were nowhere to be seen. Active hurricane seasons of past years have not been implicated in similar cases, so it would be interesting to know more. Was the timing of *Isabel* perfect for destruction of the food crop, or were other factors involved? Observers in coastal New Jersey noted the scarcity of wintering passerines as well, but the hurricane had had no such impact on habitats there.

Although counts of many species (e.g., White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Chickadee, etc.) were significantly depressed, it was the lack of Yellow-rumped Warblers that was most conspicuous, even eerie. This species usually numbers in the thousands in coastal areas of the Region and is the single most common landbird, bar none. While the average Cape Charles C.B.C. (years 1965–1996) counts 4824, this year's count, which had above-average coverage, found a paltry 382. Interestingly, Winter Wrens bucked the trend and set a new high on the Cape Charles C.B.C. (72)—this species, of course, favors tree-falls, brush-piles, and tangles.

SA Common Redpoll is an irruptive species, not quite annual in this Region. Major irruptions have occurred periodically (once every 10–20 years; most recently 1977–1978 and 1993–1994) and may bring many thousands to the Region, with counts of several hundred from single locales. Such invasions typically materialize with a trickle of birds in Dec, becoming a flood of birds by mid-Jan and Feb, with stragglers into Mar and even (in 1994) early Apr. Past redpoll invasions have primarily reached the Mountains and Piedmont sections, with lower numbers on the Coastal Plain of the Western Shore, and just a smattering of reports on the Eastern Shore. But this year witnessed an atypical redpoll movement. Most unusual was the fact that hundreds reached the immediate coast (with just singles elsewhere)—and that it showed signs of being a coastal *fallout* of redpolls rather than a protracted, season-long movement.

The first were 2 near Sycamore Landing, *Montgomery*, MD 4 Dec (Paul Woodward), followed quickly by one at Ocean City Inlet 6 Dec (JLS, MH, EB). A flyover on the C.B.B.T. 26 Dec (ESB) may have been the vanguard of an unprecedented fallout two days later. The 28 Dec Ocean City C.B.C. recorded some **186** Common Redpolls, most of which were seen on the immediate coast at Assat. and many of which were obviously arriving off the ocean. Hundreds more were seen elsewhere on the coast from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Note that during this time no Common Redpolls were seen more than 3 km from the coast. Other Commons found that day were 20+ at Loch Haven Park, Virginia Beach (David West), 4 at Sunset Beach, *Northampton* (ph. ESB, PEL), 5 at the C.B.B.T. (Eric Dean), and 5 at Chinc., the Virginia portion of Assat. (John Hubbell). The next day, one was still at Chinc. (Teta Kain), one flew over E.A. Vaughn W.M.A., *Worcester*, MD during the Chinc. C.B.C. (Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaits), **72** were counted on the Back Bay C.B.C. including a single flock of **62** at False Cape S.P. (ESB), and 2 were in Cape Charles (TG, DS). By 30 Dec, the fallout was dwindling, with 17 recorded (by three parties) on the Cape Charles C.B.C., and 2 over Cape Charles Beach the next day (PEL).

Reports thereafter were limited to singles at four Maryland locations and the following Virginia sightings: 2 at Riverview Golf Course, Portsmouth 2 Jan (ESB), 2 at Mathews 4 Jan (BC), and singles in *Augusta* (Crista Cabe), at Ft. Story 4 Jan (MBy, BW), Chesterfield 19 Jan (John & Caroline Coe), Ashburn, *Loudoun* 4 Feb (John Drummond), Lynchburg 20 Feb–1 Mar (Cinda Hurt), and Hampton 27–28 Feb (BC). These large movements may bring Hoary Redpolls to the Region. Two apparent *exilipes* **Hoary Redpolls** found among the Common Redpoll flock on Assat. 28 Dec (p. a., ph. JLS, EB, Zach Baer) constituted only the 2nd *Worcester* record following the Region's first, a specimen from South Pt. 20 Feb 1949 (J. Buckalew). Confirmation of this species in the Region is elusive: of Maryland's 16 published reports (involving 45+ birds), just six reports include photographs (including one report of 18+; see Czaplak, D. 1995. Identifying Common and Hoary Redpolls in winter. *Birding* 37:446–457). Virginia has just one confirmed record and one other report, though an observer in *Accomack*, VA provided a reasonable description of a Hoary at his feeders 9 Dec 2003 (p. a., Randall Shore).

Most experienced regional birders would have predicted a season-long movement, so the rapid drying up of this year's flight was unexpected. It is clear from the uniquely coastal nature of the event, the behavior of the birds, and the coordinated timing, that thousands of these birds had been displaced offshore, probably well to our north, and struggled to return to the coast. A redpoll invasion was already well underway in the Atlantic Provinces and the Northeast in Nov, but the late Dec weather conditions really set the stage for the fallout.

On 26 Dec, a low-pressure system over s. Ontario moved northeastward, toward the Atlantic Provinces, bringing snow and cloudy conditions. The low interacted with a high-pressure system over the Ohio River Valley to create a very strong corridor of westerly and northwesterly winds throughout n. New England and Atlantic Canada, with sustained winds of 35+ m.p.h. Windy conditions continued through the mid-day on 27 Dec before the building high pressure took hold along the Eastern Seaboard and brought calm winds, warmer temperatures, and clear skies.

The large pulse of redpolls on the morning of 27 Dec was probably displaced offshore from Nova Scotia by the strong westerlies; as redpolls are thought to be mostly diurnal migrants, this could well have happened on that morning. Once offshore, many of the redpolls must have been carried downwind, and the advancing high would have carried them southward and then westward in the anticyclonic winds, helping the hapless finches to regain the coast, albeit up to 24 hours later. Mortality must have been very high offshore, and some of the birds appeared exhausted upon arrival, especially on the outer beaches, where birds were seen flying in from the ocean (also the case on North Carolina's Outer Banks 27 Dec), alighting and feeding on Seaside Goldenrod in many cases.

gusta, and *Montgomery*. A **Bohemian Waxwing** was found and photographed 7 Feb at the Tuckahoe Nursery, *Queen Anne's*, the 2nd for Maryland and 4th for the Region. The bird was located again 8 & 10 Feb (p. a., ph. JLS, EB, ph. DCz, Scott Crabtree). Considering the number of birds that wintered to our n., it is mildly surprising that no others were reported in the Region.

A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** discovered in a grove of planted pines and evergreens at Blandy 27 Dec was the first in Virginia since 1975; it was photographed extensively and seen regularly through 13 Jan (acc. †Doug Poffenbarger, ph. LL, ph. BTe, m. ob.). A Nashville Warbler spent the winter at the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, D.C., along with an Orange-crowned, 22 Dec–29 Feb+ (Paul DeAnna, *fide* PP, m. ob.). A female Northern Parula was at Conowingo, *Harford* 4 Dec (Greg Futral), and another was on the Annapolis C.B.C., *Anne Arundel*, MD 4 Jan. A Prairie Warbler was found 4 Jan at Cove Pt., *Calvert* for the Patuxent River C.B.C. (Arlene Ripley). An ad. male Black-throated Blue Warbler was late at Solomon's, *Saint Mary's* 7 Dec (Mike

Rudy). An Ovenbird was present at the Mary Ripley Gardens in D.C. until 29 Dec. A Wilson's Warbler was a frequent visitor at a Waterford yard, *Loudoun* through 10 Jan (acc., ph., †Nicole Hamilton). A Yellow-breasted Chat was found on the Central Loudoun C.B.C., *Loudoun* 28 Dec (GJ).

Cape Charles feeding stations supplied up to 13 individual Baltimore Orioles with nectar and fruit in Dec, with 3–4 present through the rest of winter and the latest bird noted 15 Apr (ESB); these kept company with a Yellow-breasted Chat (5–30 Dec) and a Dickcissel (5 Dec–Mar). An Ipswich Sparrow away from the immediate coast was seen 16 Feb at Hooper's I., *Dorchester* (HTA), establishing the 10th Bay record for Maryland. An Indigo Bunting visited a feeder 24 Jan in *Charles City*, VA (Margaret O'Bryan), while a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was present early Dec–28 Feb at a feeder near Lynchburg, *Bedford*, VA (*fide* Thelma Dalmas). At least one of 2 Harris's Sparrows discovered in fall spent the winter at Julie Metz Wetlands, *Prince William*, present through 29 Feb+ (p. a., KG, †Erika Wilson, m. ob.). A Clay-colored Sparrow also wintered there 1 Dec–14

Feb (PS, Sharon Lynn, m. ob.). Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported in Maryland: an ad. male 24 Jan s. of Berlin, *Worcester* with 2 Brewer's Blackbirds among a flock of 100,000 blackbirds (N&FS); one at Willards, *Wicomico* 28 Jan (SHD); and an imm. 28 Jan at Upper Marlboro, *Prince George's* (Susan Henyon). The lone Virginia report was an imm. at Magotha Rd., *Northampton* 21 Feb (LC et al.). Nokesville, *Prince William* remains a reliable location for Brewer's Blackbirds, where they were seen regularly 10 Dec–24 Jan, with a peak count of 20 on 6 Jan (LC, KG, SH, m. ob.). Other Brewer's Blackbirds reports were: one at Salisbury, *Wicomico* 19 Jan (SHD); 3 on 28 Jan in *Caroline*, MD (Les Roslund); 6 at Horsehoe Farm, *Culpeper* 30 Jan (G&RH); one at Rural Retreat L., *Wythe*, VA 29 Jan (GE); and 4 at Elsing Green, *King William* 31 Jan (FA). Evening Grosbeaks were barely reported this winter, with three of four reports coming from the mts., the best of these being about 20 birds in Hancock, *Washington*, MD 15 Jan (AS). The lone report away from the ridges was a bird visiting a *Spotsylvania*, VA feeder 14 Feb–12 Mar (Jackie Nelson).

Undocumented reports: A Sandhill Crane was reported from the Levisa R., Buchanan, VA 11 Dec, but no details provided. A Hudsonian Godwit reported from Black. in early Dec was late enough to necessitate documentation, especially with regard to Black-tailed Godwit.

Addenda: A carefully described *Empidonax* in Rock Creek Park, D.C. 3 Oct (p. a. †Gail Mackiernan, †Barry Cooper) was identified as a Dusky Flycatcher, a first for the Region. There are just two or three previous records for the East Coast, and while it was not photographed, this individual was meticulously described, heard giving a 'whit' call (eliminating Hammonds'), and corresponded with the arrival of several other w. species during the period. Two Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Fairfax W.T.P. on the Ft. Belvoir C.B.C. 29 Dec 2002 (ph. Bart Hutchinson, Ben Jessup) were not included in last year's report but are among only a few Regional winter records.

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Southern Atlantic



This winter's weather was generally average in temperatures and precipitation, with only a few colder, wetter periods in December, while January produced a few snow/ice storms in central North Carolina and the Coastal Plain of South Carolina. Although these events were hard on people, obvious impacts to birds were short-lived, or at least not mentioned. There were several outstanding bird highlights this season however, including Regional firsts such as Georgia's Yellow-billed Loon and North Carolina's Gray Flycatcher.

Abbreviations: B.R.C. (Bird Records Committee); C. Hatt. (Cape Hatteras, NC); E.L.H. (E.L. Huie Land Application Facility, Clayton, GA); H.B.S.P. (Huntington Beach S.P., SC); Hoop. (Hooper Lane, Henderson, NC); L. Matt. (L. Mattamuskeet N.W.R., NC); P.I. (Pea I. N.W.R., NC); S.S.S. (Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper, SC).

LOONS THROUGH WOOD STORK

Inland Red-throated Loons were at W. Point Lake Dam, GA 4-19 Feb (TL, NG, WC) and at L. Julian, NC 19 Feb+ (TJ, v.o.), the latter providing a first for the mts. of that state. Pacific Loon reports included singles at C. Hatt. 3 Jan (BA) and Wrightsville Beach, NC 23 Jan (R&SB). Easily one of the most exciting and unexpected birds this season was the imm. Yellow-billed Loon that wintered at L.

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Horton, GA 29 Dec+ (EB, v.o.). This bird, obviously a Regional first, was not alone e. of the Mississippi R., as several others were located in Tennessee and Kentucky. Red-necked Grebes were present in normal numbers, with the best counts being 4 at Kill Devil Hills, NC 15 Feb (SBa) and 5 at L. Gaston, NC 22 Feb (RD). The best Eared Grebe totals reported were the 23 at L. Juliette, GA 19 Dec (EB) and the 10 at the S.S.S. 31 Jan (SC). An unidentified booby was a surprise on the Litchfield-Pawleys I., SC C.B.C. 30 Dec (WA, fide JP). Although the compiler felt the details supported Masked, identification of any winter booby requires extreme caution. American White Pelicans continued to be found in all three states, with the best counts once again coming from the s. coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina. One was unexpected far inland along the French Broad R., Henderson, NC 21 Feb (LSm, WF, RS). Also unusual far inland was a Brown Pelican catching fish in a small pond near