

nately increasing outside the boreal forest across s. Manitoba (m. ob.).

PASSERINES

Red-breasted Nuthatches thrived in the prairie city of Swift Current, SK, with 25+ in one city park 21 Feb (M&LD). Brown Creepers are making increasing use of feeders, where they glean peanut butter, suet crumbs, and sunflower seed fragments. A Winter Wren turned up at a Millarville, AB farm 31 Dec (TK). There were fewer reports than usual of both Townsend's Solitaire and Varied Thrush in Saskatchewan (fide BL). A Hermit Thrush survived in Brandon until at least 11 Jan (BR). Over 30 Cedar Waxwings were still in Regina 9-13 Feb (JN). Inevitably, 2 Yellow-rumped Warblers in Calgary succumbed to the late-Jan cold.

Wintering sparrows, other than Dark-eyed Juncos, were relatively scarce, with only one American Tree Sparrow reported in s. Saskatchewan. Unusually far n. were 5 Dark-eyed Juncos at Nelson House, MB 3 Feb (RB). Likewise, heavy snow cover apparently drove Lapland Longspurs s. of the border. Three Northern Cardinals were reported in Saskatchewan, with a male surviving to at



This Prairie Falcon spent most of the winter just north of Winnipeg, Manitoba (here 1 March 2004), where it fed on an abundant supply of Rock Pigeons. Rare in the province at any time of the year, it attracted numerous observers.

Photograph by Christian Artuso.

least 17 Feb at Theodore (D&CA) and a female to 22 Feb in Saskatoon (fide DW), and there were sightings at five s. Manitoba locations. A flock of 12 Rusty Blackbirds overwintered near Regina (JN, BL).

Over 1000 Gray-crowned Rosy Finches were reported at Exshaw, AB in early Feb (J&MM). Pine Grosbeaks irrupted farther s. than usual in Saskatchewan, while White-winged Crossbills made a good showing across most of the s. tier. Common Redpolls

were widespread in good numbers, while Pine Siskins were numerous only in Alberta. At least 16 American Goldfinches survived the Jan cold at Regina, SK (fide BL); flocks of 30 were noted at feeders at Gretna, Horn-dean, and Winkler throughout the winter in extreme s. Manitoba (fide AS). Evening Grosbeaks seem to be declining even in their main strongholds along the s. edge of the boreal forest.

Observers (provincial compilers in bold-face): Bill Anaka, Delores & Clark Anderson, Martin Bailey, Dennis Baresco, Rob Berger, Carol Bjorklund, David & James Bradley, Andy Courcelles, Jim Cummings, Calvin Cuthbert, Rick Demey, Mary Ann & Larry Dudragne, Doug & Teresa Dolman, Ken Gardner, Wietek Gierulski, Fran Giesbrecht, Bernard & Therese Goulet, Michael Harrison, Al Hartley, Trevor Herriot, George Holland, Ray Iverson, Jim & Shirley Jowsey, Ted & Darlene Klassen, Rudolf Koes, Terry Korolyk, Bob Luterbach, Joan & Malcolm McDonald, Bernie Neufeld, Jim Nordquist, Barbara Robinson, Al Schritt, Penny Smith, Ben Verner, Ken Wallace (KWa), Guy Wapple, Don Weidl, Marge Wilson, Kerry Wishko. ☺

A mild December was followed by six weeks of severe cold, when some areas of northern North Dakota and northeastern Montana saw temperatures drop to -40° F. In late January and early February, the temperature did not rise above zero for a twelve-day stretch at Minot, North Dakota. Milder temperatures returned by mid-February.

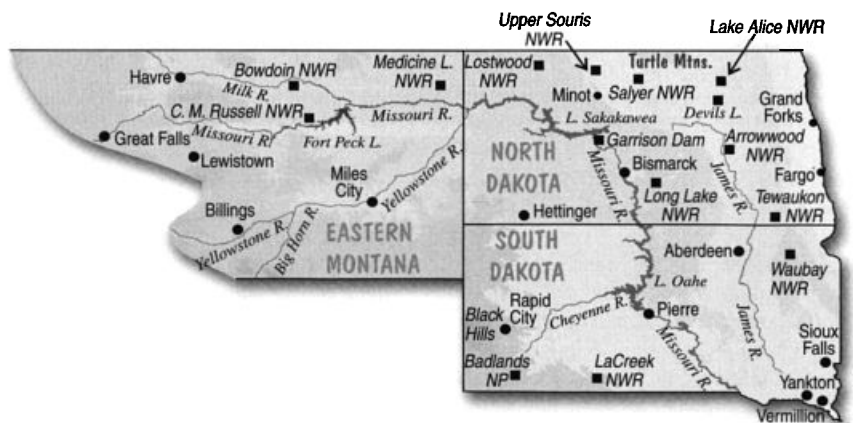
Along with the cold, some northern areas also saw record snowfall during the period, often accompanied by high winds. Two to three feet of snow cover was common in these areas. Glasgow, Montana saw a record snow season with over 150 cm. Much of the Region, however, saw snowfall closer to the long-term average.

GREBES THROUGH HAWKS

A Horned Grebe 20 Dec in Hughes, SD provided the 4th winter record for the state (KM). Also in Hughes, a Red-necked Grebe on Christmas Day furnished the 2nd winter season record for South Dakota (ph. DB). In Montana, a late Eared Grebe was noted on the Chester C.B.C. 14 Dec. The Great Blue Heron in Grand Forks, ND 12 Jan provided the latest record for the state (EEF).

Two Greater Scaup at Garrison Dam 10 Jan furnished the first Jan record for North Dakota (REM). Two Greater Scaup reports were also received for South Dakota: 2 at Yankton 6 Dec (JC) and occasionally through the period at Pierre (RDO). The 2nd

Northern Great Plains



state record Harlequin Duck first noted at Pierre, SD in the fall season remained through the winter and was enjoyed by many—"many" being a relative term in the Northern Great Plains. A Barrow's Goldeneye was in Perkins, SD 14 Dec, the 5th consecutive winter season this species has been reported in South Dakota away from the usual

Ron Martin

16900 125th Street SE
Sawyer, North Dakota 58781-9284
(jrmartin@ndak.net)



The first for North Dakota since 1997, this Northern Hawk Owl was digiscoped 22 February 2004 in McHenry County, where it remained into the spring season. Photograph by Ron Martin.

wintering area at Rapid City (p.a., DCG).

Bald Eagles were widespread, with a peak of 56 on the Yankton, SD C.B.C. 14 Dec. Sixty individuals on 13 North Dakota C.B.C.s made the 2nd highest count on record. Northern Goshawks made a strong showing in North Dakota, with 11 C.B.C.s reporting 26 individuals. The Garrison Dam C.B.C. recorded a new high when 11 were tallied 14 Dec. The peak for Rough-legged Hawks was 69 on the Spearfish, SD C.B.C. 4 Jan.

PARTRIDGE THROUGH GULLS

Gray Partridges have recovered from the lows of the 1990s in many areas, particularly in nw. North Dakota and ne. Montana. The Upper Souris N.W.R., ND C.B.C. tallied a record 319 on 19 Dec, and the state total of 654 was the highest in years. The Ft. Peck, MT C.B.C. recorded 152 on 30 Dec. Sharp-tailed Grouse numbers were spectacular in North Dakota and e. Montana. The peak in North Dakota was 571 on the Upper Souris N.W.R. C.B.C. 19 Dec. Numerous other C.B.C.s and day-counts exceeded 200 individuals. In Montana, 398 were tallied on the Ft. Peck C.B.C. 30 Dec, and other day-counts in the hundreds were reported. Ring-necked Pheasant and Wild Turkey numbers were similarly notable.

Virginia Rails were located in two areas of Lawrence, SD 4 Jan and 14 Feb (AB, PB, SCBC). There are only three previous winter records for the state. An early American Coot was in Grand Forks, ND 28 Feb (EEF).

Following the flurry of Mew Gulls in the Dakotas in the fall season, one or more of this species wintered in the Pierre, SD area (RDO, KM). In North Dakota, the last was noted 26 Dec at Garrison Dam (DNS). Casual away from the Missouri R. in e. Montana, a Glaucous Gull was at Eureka Res. 15 Jan (JN). The only Black-legged Kittiwake reported was a single 12 Dec in Charles Mix, SD (p.a., RM).

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported in two new areas, with singles in Brookings, SD 28 Feb (BH) and Ft. Peck, MT 2 Feb (p. a., CC). The peak for the season was at Pierre, SD 20 Dec, when 49 were tallied on the C.B.C. Snowy Owl numbers were very low. A Northern Hawk Owl was photographed in McHenry, ND 22 Feb and remained to the end of the period (p.a., BD, ph. REM, DNS); another was reported in Hazelton, ND on the same day but could not be relocated (p.a., PF). These represented the first reports in North Dakota since 1997.

Additions to the list of extralimital sightings of Red-bellied Woodpeckers from the fall season were a single in Perkins, SD 3 Jan (BD) and 3 in the Minot, ND area through the period (REM). Northern Shrikes were widespread, and 59 were noted on 13 North Dakota C.B.C.s. A Boreal Chickadee was reported 28 Feb at Denhigh Experimental Forest, McHenry, ND (p. a., BD). This furnished the 13th report for the state and the first in 12 years. A Rock Wren 4 Dec in Custer, SD would provide the 2nd winter record for the state (p.a., KH).

Winter season reports of Eastern Bluebirds in North Dakota have become more regular in recent years. This year, 2 were noted 1 Dec in McHenry (GAE). A Mountain Bluebird 15 Dec in Dickinson, ND provided the 2nd latest report for the state (p.a., JPL). Casual in winter in e. South Dakota, a Mountain Bluebird was in Hughes 8 Feb (DB). An astounding 120,000 American Robins were tallied in the Yankton, SD C.B.C. 14 Dec.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Furnishing the 5th winter season report for

North Dakota, a Yellow-rumped Warbler was photographed at a feeder near Minot 26 Jan (p.a., REM). Regular for several weeks at the feeder, the bird did not reappear the morning of 28 Jan, when the temperature hovered at -32° F. In South Dakota, a Yellow-rumped Warbler wintered at Pierre (DB, RDO). Two Chipping Sparrows were seen in the Mandan 20 Dec, the 3rd year in the last four that this species has been reported in winter in North Dakota (p.a., TH). Nineteen Harris's Sparrows on eight North Dakota C.B.C.s was well above the long-term average. A notable flock of 20,000 Snow Buntings was seen in Cass, ND 23 Jan (MO).

Red Crossbill reports were scarce, but White-winged Crossbills were present in good numbers in North Dakota. One hundred on six C.B.C.s was the most in a number of years, and birds were reported from 10 other locations in the state. The peak noted was 87 in n.-cen. North Dakota 21 Feb (BD, REM). Common Redpolls were everywhere, and small numbers of Hoary Redpolls were widely reported in North Dakota. Casual in cen. South Dakota, a single Hoary Redpoll was in Sully 21 Feb (KM). Hoary Redpolls were reported from two locations in e. Montana. Pine Siskin numbers were very low, continuing the trend of recent years.

Contributors (state editors in boldface): MONTANA: Charles Carlson, John Nordrum. NORTH DAKOTA: Bob Danley, Corey D. Ellingson, Gary A. Eslinger, Eve E. Freeberg, Todd Hanson, Jack P. Lefor, Ron E.



Affording the fifth winter report for North Dakota, this Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler was present in rural Ward County until 27 January 2004 (here 26 January). The bird did not reappear 28 January, when the morning low temperature was -32° F. Photograph by Ron Martin.

Martin, Mark Otnes, Dan N. Svingen. SOUTH DAKOTA: Doug Backlund, Addison Ball, Patricia Ball, Jay Carlisle, Bryan Dinkins, Dave and Carolyn Griffiths, Kevin Hachmeister, Bruce Harris, Kenny Miller, Ron Mabie, Ricky D. Olson, Jeffrey S. Palmer, Spearfish C.B.C. (S.C.B.C.)