

# Oregon & Washington



## Steven Mlodinow

4819 Gardner Avenue  
Everett, Washington 98203  
(SGMlod@aol.com)

## David Irons

2690 Adams Street  
Eugene, Oregon 97405  
(llsdirons@msn.com)

## Bill Tweit

P.O. Box 1271  
Olympia, Washington 98507  
(Sebnabgill@aol.com)

Typically, December provides the best winter has to offer, both in tardy migrants and genuine vagrants. This December, however, was depauperate of both and seemed to bode poorly for the months to come. But January brought a roster of rarities and—most oddly—delivered two first Regional winter records after a week of ex-

tremely cold weather. Among aseasonal birds, largely shorebirds and sparrows, Washington had four sightings of birds with fewer than four previous winter records, while Oregon had three such sightings. And once again, a mid-winter pulse of Barn Swallows was detected: the sudden, unexplained shift in this species' migratory behavior could be one of the biggest bird stories of the decade—if only it were understood.

The weather depended largely on the month and Regional location. Overall, however, the winter started warmish (3–8° F above normal during December in much of Oregon) and ended cool (much of the Region 0–8° F below normal in February). Oregon was rather wetter than normal, while Washington was near average in precipitation. Compared to norms, the eastside was moister than the west.

Abbreviations: F.R.R. (Fern Ridge Res., Lane, OR); N.S.C.B. (N. Spit Coos Bay, Coos, OR); O.S. (Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor, WA); Ridgefield (Ridgefield N.W.R., Clark, WA); W.W.R.D. (Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla, WA), Y.R.D. (Yakima R. delta, Benton, WA). "Eastside" and "Westside" designate locations east and west of the Cascade crest, respectively.

## LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Yellow-billed Loons continued to rebound from their nadir in the 1990s, with 11 in

Washington and 2 in Oregon this winter, the highest total in at least 14 years. Maxima included 4 between Protection I. and Dungeness Spit, Clallam 15 Dec (CW, BT, BLB, V. Gross) and 2 from the Hood Canal Bridge, Jefferson 1 Jan (SM, CCx, DD, RTS, CW); another at Chelan 14–15 Feb provided a very rare eastside record (H. Jennings, ph. RS). After a very poor fall showing, westside Clark's Grebe numbers were up this winter, with 8 in Washington and 5 in Oregon. Top counts were 4 at F.R.R. throughout the winter (DI), 3 off Ketron I., Pierce 20 Dec (CW, BLB), and 2 at O.S. 18 Feb (BW). Unfortunately, no pelagic trips made it out this winter. A dead Northern Fulmar at Keystone, Island 21 Feb provided the only Puget Trough record following this fall's unprecedented incursions (DD, SM). A dead Mottled Petrel on Ona Beach, Lincoln 17 Dec was the first in the Region since fall 2001 (*vide* R. Bayer); about half of the previous records have been of dead birds, and the occurrence of this species in our Region seems linked to influxes of fulmar. Eight Short-tailed Shearwaters off Seal Rock S. P., Lincoln 4 Jan furnished a good from-shore count (J. Fontaine, S. Dinsmore).

An American White Pelican lingered at Bridgeport, Douglas 31 Dec–15 Jan (MB, KK); this species is rare during winter in Washington away from the lower Columbia Basin. Winter numbers of Great Egrets continue to increase. A stunning 144 were near Scappoose, Columbia 7 Dec (HN), and for the 5th consecutive winter, Great Egrets graced the Columbia Basin, with one at Moses L., Grant 20 Dec–3 Jan (DSc) and 12 at Ringold, Franklin 8 Jan–7 Feb (A. & J. Dittmer). Two Black-crowned Night-Heron roosts along the Link R., Klamath yielded an impressive 385 birds on 7 Feb (K. Larsen). Numbers of wintering Turkey Vultures in the Willamette Valley continued to increase, with up to 11 overwintering near F.R.R. (Anne & Dan Heyerly) and another near Corvallis (Joe Fontaine). A Turkey Vulture near Cle Elum, Kittitas 22 Feb was early for e. Washington but not totally unexpected (D. MacRae).

The 2 Pink-footed Geese remained at Hoquiam, Grays Harbor until 10 Jan, when one mysteriously disappeared. The lone bird was last seen 11 Jan. Then on 21 Feb, a single Pink-footed Goose, presumably one of the original two, appeared about 30 km to the e. in Elma and remained into Mar (RS, PtS). Further investigations have shown that, though rare in captivity, Pink-footed Geese are kept by several aviculturalists across North America; the possibility of captive origin thus cannot be ruled out and may not be insignificant (G. Toffic). The Port Angeles

Emperor Goose survived another winter (CCx, JB), but no other Emperors were detected. A Snow Goose was at Spokane 16–17 Jan (G. Lynch); this species is very rare in e. Washington during winter away from the lower Columbia Basin. Ross's Geese again showed well, with 7 in w. Oregon, 3 in w. Washington, and one in e. Washington; notably, most were found with *minima* Canada Geese. An apparent Greater White-fronted Goose x Canada Goose hybrid, very rare in the Region, was at Ridgefield 18 Dec (TA). A Trumpeter Swan, very rare on Oregon's outer coast, visited Eckman L., Lincoln 6 Jan (R. Lowe). Washington's 2nd Bewick's Swan was on Fir I., Skagit 10 Jan into Mar (vt. SM, CCx, ph. JB).

Oregon's first Falcated Duck was discovered in a large wigeon flock at F.R.R. 14 Feb (J. Houle, D. Turner). The bird then disappeared for several days before reappearing nearly two weeks later (ph. M. Nikas). It was another banner winter for eastside Eurasian Wigeon, with 10 in e. Washington and 18 in e. Oregon, including an eastside record 12 at Lower Klamath N.W.R. 29 Feb (KS). On the westside, Eurasian Wigeon numbers seemed up in Oregon but unremarkable in Washington. A Mallard x Northern Pintail was at Olympia 14 Dec (JP); this hybrid is almost annual in the Region. A Blue-winged Teal visited Sauvie I. 21 Dec (Karen Bachman), and 2 were at Camp Rilea, Clatsop the same day (MP); this species is not annual during winter. Likely setting a Regional record, 18 Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal were detected this winter, including very rare eastside singles at L. Pend Oreille 8–9 Feb (S. Lindsay) and Bend, Deschutes 28–31 Dec (M. Miller); additionally, 4–5 Common Teal x Green-winged Teal hybrids were reported from the westside.

A tally of 1000 Ring-necked Ducks at Daroga S. P., Douglas 10 Jan was exceptional (CW, RTS, BLB), as was a gathering of 2640 Greater Scaup near Cathlamet, Wahkiakum 1 Feb (SM, DD). Apparent Ring-necked Duck x scaup hybrids were at Renton, King 24–26 Dec (CCx, †CW), Lane Community College 20 Jan (†DI), and Fernhill Wetlands, Washington 19 Jan (ph. GG); there have been few, if any, previous records of this hybrid in the Region. A Tufted Duck at Siltcoos L. 30 Jan (ph. DP) was Lane's first, while another at Finley N.W.R. 9–27 Feb (ph. HH) was Benton's 2nd; the Region averages about 2 per winter. The Tufted Duck x scaup remained near Maryhill, Klickitat through 28 Dec (*fide* SJ). A Harlequin Duck, very rare on the eastside during winter, overwintered at the mouth of the Deschutes R. for the 2nd consecutive year (T. Herzig). Surf and White-winged Scoters are very rare during winter on the eastside: a Surf stopped at Bridgeport, Douglas 29 Feb (S. Pink), while single White-wingeds visited Wanapum Pool, Kitti-

tas 7 Dec (CW) and Black Butte Ranch, Deschutes 14 Dec (SS). A remarkable 990 Long-tailed Ducks were tallied between Protection I. and Dungeness Spit, Clallam 15 Dec (CW, BT, BLB, V. Gross); eastside sightings included singles at Bridgeport, Douglas 15 Jan–14 Feb (G. Sheridan), John Day Dam 13 Dec (MD, MLD), and Pelton Dam, Jefferson 13 Jan (C. & M. Miller). A single Barrow's Goldeneye spent its 3rd consecutive winter at Willamina, Yamhill, where quite rare (Q. Nice), while another at Jackson Bottoms, Washington 30 Dec (J. Blowers) was equally unexpected; this species is very rare in the



This Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, only Washington's fourth, was found at Hood Park, Walla Walla County on 19 (here 29) February 2004 by Mike Denny and remained into March. Photograph by Denny Granstrand.

Willamette Valley away from the Columbia R. The Common Goldeneye x Bufflehead lingered at Wenatchee, Chelan through 18 Dec (DB). For the 2nd year, large numbers of Common Mergansers were found near Tacoma, with 1276 counted on 20 Dec (CW, BLB), while a tally of 800 at F.R.R. 27 Jan likely set an Oregon record (R. Robb).

Adding to about 10 winter records from e. Washington, an Osprey traveled between Selah and Zillah, Yakima from early Dec into early Jan (DG); in w. Washington, where not quite as rare, one was at Fall City, King 22 Jan (J. Meyer). White-tailed Kite roosts hosted 24 birds at F.R.R. 20 Dec (J. Sullivan) and 20 at Tillamook 20 Dec (*fide* O. Schmidt), providing further evidence of this species' increase in the Region. A large die-off of goldfish in F.R.R. during late Feb attracted up to 62 Bald Eagles, easily a record number for the s. Willamette Valley (DF). For the first winter since 1998–1999, there was merely one Red-shouldered Hawk found in Washington, an ad. at Ridgefield 21 Dec (WC). In

e. Oregon, one visited Lower Klamath N.W.R. 10 Feb (S. Seibel); though several per fall is now the norm in e. Oregon, they are still very rare there during winter. Two well-described light-morph Swainson's Hawks over Canyon Terrace, Benton 11 Feb (K. Criddle, *fide* BL) furnished Washington's first winter record since 1920 (*Auk* 46: 511). A Ferruginous Hawk, rare during winter in Washington, was near Lyons Ferry, Franklin 29 Feb (A. Winter). A single Ferruginous was also reported near Agate L., Jackson 13 Feb (N. Barrett); away from the Rogue Valley, they are quite rare w. of the Cascades. Nine Gyrfalcons in Washington and 3 in Oregon represented a fairly typical winter, though one was quite far s. at N.S.C.B., only the 4th for Coos (TR). A Prairie Falcon on the Bellingham C.B.C. 14 Dec furnished w. Washington's lone record this winter (*fide* TRW), while approximately 12 in w. Oregon was about average.

A group of 130 Wild Turkey near Teanaway, Kittitas 7 Dec afforded evidence of this species' increasing numbers (R. McNair-Huff). Not annual in n. Washington during winter, a Sandhill Crane was at the Lummi Flats, Whatcom 14 Dec–Jan (*fide* TRW). Soras, very rare during winter in Washington, were near Raymond, Grays Harbor 8 Dec (RD) and at Ocosta, Grays Harbor 3 Jan (L. Heinz). In Oregon, where annual in winter, Soras were detected at Siltcoos L., Lane 15 Jan (DI, DP) and Killin Wetlands, Washington 8 Jan (Dennis Manzer).

## PLOVERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Nearly annual during recent winters, a Pacific Golden-Plover was at Clatsop Spit 8 Dec (HN); another returned for its 3rd winter near Tangent, Linn (M. Nikas). A gathering of 50 Snowy Plovers at Midway Beach, Grays Harbor 11 Jan set a Washington record, most unexpected given this species' Regional decline (M. Bartels). Washington's first winter American Avocet remained at Alice Bay, Skagit until 24 Dec (TA), and what was likely the same bird appeared briefly near Stanwood, Snohomish 2 Jan (*fide* D. Swayne). For the 4th consecutive winter, a Lesser Yellowlegs was found in Washington, near Sequim, Clallam 13 Dec (B. Boekelheide); in Oregon, one overwintered near F.R.R. (LM). Most unexpected, a Solitary Sandpiper appeared then disappeared near Stayton, Marion 18 Jan (ph. R. Hoyer, P. Pisano); there are no prior Regional records between 22 Oct and 24 Mar. A Willet, very rare away from the outer coast in Washington, fed at Kennedy Creek, Mason 17 Jan (B. Shelmerdine). Five Marbled Godwits, rare away from the outer coast during winter, were near Sequim 6 Dec (RD, SM, DD), while 1500 roosting at Tokeland, Pacific 20 Jan provided a record Washington maximum (SM, DD). A total of 740 Black Turnstones at Oak Har-

bor/Penn Cove, *Island 4* Dec was the Region's highest ever for winter (SM, D. Paulson, TA, RD). A Red Knot, very rare during winter, was at Dungeness Spit, *Clallam* 15 Dec (J. Acker, D. Waggoner, B. Waggoner), while 2 lingered at Coos Bay until 6 Dec (TR). Least Sandpipers may be more regular than realized during winter on the eastside, as they have now been found during four of the last five winters. This year, 37 were at Cold Springs N.W.R., *Umatilla* 10 Dec (CC, JC), and one was at Finley, *Benton* 28 Dec (DR). During a winter full of wonderment, the Best Bird award must go to the Baird's Sandpiper at Moses L., *Grant* 31 Jan–1 Feb (ph. DSc, BF, RH). Not only did this supply the Region's first winter record, it likely represented the first verifiable mid-winter record for all of North America! Mundane by comparison, numbers of Dunlin again wintered in the Columbia Basin, with maxima of 160 at Cold Springs N.W.R. 10 Dec (CC, JC), 71 at W.W.R.D. 25 Feb (MD, MLD), 65 at Y.R.D. 3 Dec (BW), and 46 at Moses L. 11 Jan (DSc). A gathering of 25,000 Dunlin at Ankeny N.W.R., *Marion* 29 Dec nearly doubled any previous Willamette Valley tally (RPM). Excluding years during which "wrecks" occur, Red Phalaropes are rare during winter on marine waters and very rare inland. This year, 13 were at Dungeness Spit 15 Dec (J. Acker, D. & B. Waggoner), one was near Florence, *Lane* 27 Dec (J. Carlson), and one was inland at Ankeny N.W.R. 28 Dec (RPM).

New Gulls are increasingly reported from the eastside, perhaps in part due to increased observer effort. This winter, at least 10 were found, with maxima of 3 each at Lyons Ferry, *Franklin* 21 Feb (C. Swift) and E. Kennewick, *Benton* 3 Jan (DR). The *Walla Walla* Lesser Black-backed Gull returned for its 5th consecutive winter; it was first detected near College Place 14 Feb and was then near W.W.R.D. 16–22 Feb (MD, MLD). Washington's 6th Slaty-backed Gull intermittently visited Renton, *King* 20 Jan–4 Feb (ph. MD, MLD, vt. SM), while singles at Tillamook 3 Feb (†IT, †DMa) and Astoria, *Clatsop* 8 Feb (ph. MP) brought Oregon's total to about 10; most have been 30 Dec–10 Mar. A Western Gull, extremely rare in e. Oregon away from the Columbia R., was at Redmond, *Deschutes* 29 Jan (K. Owen). At least 25 Glaucous Gulls were reported, the best total in four years but well below counts from the 1980s and early 1990s. The Region's first Great Black-backed Gull, apparently a second-year bird, graced Renton 12 Jan–16 Feb (†E. Hunn, ph. CW, ph. DG); the only previous Pacific Coast record comes from Kodiak I., Alaska Feb–Apr 1995 (*Western Birds* 28: 62). Rare in the Puget Trough, 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes were off Pt. Defiance, *Pierce* 8 Dec (CCx). An extremely confused ad. Red-legged Kittiwake was discov-

ered 50 km inland at the Jewell Elk Refuge, *Clatsop* in late Dec and brought to rehabilitators (D. Horning); there are about 10 previous state records, nine between 31 Dec and 25 Mar. Tallies of 750 Pigeon Guillemots and 1802 Ancient Murrelets between Protection I. and Dungeness Spit, *Clallam* 15 Dec were among the highest in years (CW, BT, BLB, V Gross).

A Band-tailed Pigeon, exceptionally rare in e. Washington during winter, was near Teanaway, *Kittitas* 20 Jan (†M. Hobbs). For the 2nd consecutive winter, Snowy Owls showed poorly, with 2 near Reardan, *Lincoln* 10 Jan through Feb (JA) and one near Pot-holes Res., *Grant* 23 Dec (RH) being the only ones detected; typically, during a non-invasion winter, about a dozen are found. A



Oregon's second Lucy's Warbler appeared at this Harbor, Curry County, Oregon feeder on 15 (here 19) January 2004 and remained into February. The state's first record, some 17 years ago, was also of a bird on the coast during winter. Photograph by Sheila Chambers.

Burrowing Owl survey in the Columbia Basin once again showed how poor birders are at finding this species: the researcher found 27 in the Tri-Cities area in mid-Jan and 17 near Othello/Quincy during late Jan/early Feb (C. Sanders); birders found only 3–4 in e. Washington. In w. Oregon, 5 Burrowing Owls was a better-than-average total. Great Gray Owls seemed to be on the move this winter, with 3 at lowland Puget Trough locations, plus singles in *Chelan* and lowland *Walla Walla*. Rare in e. Washington away from *Klickitat*, 2 Anna's Hummingbirds were near Wapato, *Yakima* 1–15 Dec (AS, ES). Washington's 5th Costa's Hummingbird, and the first for winter, overwintered in Vancouver, *Clark* (E. & T. Bjorkman, ph. S. Hagen, WC). In Oregon, 4 Costa's spent the winter, adding to approximately 11 previous winter records: singles were at North Bend, *Coos* (B. Griffin) and Portland (D. Anderson), while 2 were in Salem (*vide* J. Lundsten). Unidentified *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, extremely rare in Washington during winter before mid-Feb, were at Diamond Point, *Clallam* Oct–18 Jan (S. & J. Shenar) and at Edmonds, *Snohomish* 27–30 Dec (D. Harville); almost as unusual were 2 in Brookings, *Curry* 24 Dec (DM). Two to three weeks early were Rufous Hummingbirds at

Astoria, *Clatsop* 24 Jan (B. Barnett) and Glenwood, *Lane* 26 Jan (M. Maffei).

Very rare on the Outer Coast, a Lewis's Woodpecker at North Bend 13 Feb was only *Coos's* 7th (M. Wihler). A Williamson's Sapsucker was at Conboy N.W.R., *Klickitat* 28 Dec (J. Larson); thought to be very rare during winter in Washington, this species may winter regularly in *Klickitat*. Washington's 4th Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Hood Park, *Walla Walla* 19 Feb–Mar (ph. MD, MLD, ph. DG); prior Washington records were also from winter. In Oregon, adding to approximately 15 previous records, single Yellow-bellieds visited Burns, *Harney* during Dec (ph. R. Vetter) and Florence, *Lane* 18 Dec through Feb (ph. G. Hamman). A Red-naped Sapsucker resided on Vashon I., *King* 11 Dec–1 Jan (ph. Richard Rogers); this species is very rare in Washington w. of the Cascades and anywhere in the state during winter. Rare e. of the Cascades, a Red-breasted Sapsucker graced N. Richland 7 Jan, providing a *Benton* first (A. Haun), while another was near the Summer L., *Lake* 7 Feb (S. Lay).

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

The Black Phoebe near Cathlamet, *Wahkiakum* remained through at least 14 Feb (m. ob., vt. SM), while another was in the town of Ridgefield, *Clark* in mid-Dec (†S. Van Leuven); the latter bird was likely the same individual found during fall at the nearby N.W.R., and if so, Washington's total for this species remains at five. In Oregon, this species' range expansion continued, with seven extralimital westside records barely worthy of mention; in e. Oregon, where formerly very rare, Black Phoebes are now somewhat regular in the Klamath Basin, with 3 tallied on the Klamath Falls C.B.C. (KS). The Say's Phoebe at Silverdale, *Kitsap* lingered to 27 Dec (B. Waggoner), and another was near Nisqually, *Thurston* 14 Dec (G. Wiles); w. Washington had only one previous early to mid-winter record. Say's typically arrive in e. Washington in mid- to late Feb and are occasionally found on the westside that early. This Feb, one was at Steigerwald L., *Clark* 15 Feb (J. & A. Allinger), increasing to 3 there 17–28 Feb, setting a w. Washington record high count (WC). Five Say's Phoebes this winter in w. Oregon was about average, but 2 early winter birds in e. Oregon were unusual: Ladd Marsh, *Union* 12 Dec (Trent Bray) and near Helix, *Umatilla* 25 Dec (CC, JC). For only the 4th winter ever, one of the fall's Tropical Kingbirds lingered into Dec, with one at Gearhart, *Clatsop* remaining to 6 Dec (S. Warner).

Rare during winter in Washington, Loggerhead Shrikes were at McNary N.W.R., *Walla Walla* 22 Dec (A. McClelland) and near Corfu, *Grant* 5 Feb (BF). Three Blue Jays were found, well below average: one over-

wintered at Othello, *Adams* (RH) and 2 did so at Thornhollow, *Umatilla* (CC). Horned Lark numbers were up in w. Washington, with 130 near Woodland, *Cowlitz* 11 Jan likely setting a modern-day record (R. Koppenderayer); not quite as impressive, a flock of 35 near Snohomish 25 Dec–3 Jan was the largest in the Puget Trough in a number of years (SM, CCx). Unfortunately, these were not of the Endangered breeding race, *strigata*. Swallows are increasingly becoming part of the Region's winter avifauna. Tree Swallows were more apparent than normal this winter, with small numbers throughout the winter at F.R.R. (LM) and N.S.C.B. (TR), plus scattered sightings elsewhere in Oregon during Dec and the first half of Jan; returning birds, a few weeks early, were noted by mid-Jan, and by late Jan, migrants were evident throughout the westside. Two closely studied Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Merlin, *Josephine* 14 Jan provided Oregon's first Jan record (DV).

The isolated *plumbeus* Bushtit population near Potholes Res., *Grant* persists, with a maximum of 5 located on 26 Feb (T. Pieper). In ne. Oregon, 3 Bushtits were at Enterprise, *Wallowa* 14 Dec., where they are virtually unknown; at least one remained 8 Jan (Paul Sullivan). A White-breasted Nuthatch at Rook's Park 8 Dec provided a first Walla Walla valley record (MD, MLD); they are resident nearby in the Blue Mts. A Rock Wren at Oak Grove, *Clackamas* 17 Dec provided the first westside winter record in three years (R. Farr). A Bewick's Wren at Umtanum Canyon, *Yakima* 1 Dec was at the edge of that species' expanding range (J. Duemmel). Though northbound Western Bluebirds arrive in Washington by Feb, early and mid-winter sightings are rare, particularly on the westside; more than usual were found this winter, with 3 near Sequim, *Clallam* 6 Dec (SM, RD), 3 at North Cove, *Pacific* 2 Jan (B. Shelmerdine), 6 at Midway Beach, *Grays Harbor* 4 Jan (PtS, RS), and 6 through Dec at Desert Aire, *Grant* (fide DG). A Mountain Bluebird, very rare during winter on the westside, was in N. Portland 31 Dec (D. Bailey). A total of 9 Townsend's Solitaires in w. Washington, mostly during Dec, was well above average. A flock of 150 American Pipits in Everett 3 Jan may well have set a winter record for Washington (SM, DD,

CCx). This winter followed last year's in being poor for Northern Mockingbirds, with only 2 reported: Newport, *Lincoln* 18 Jan (D. Faxon) and Cape Blanco, *Curry* 24 Jan (C. Gates). A Sage Thrasher at F.R.R. 20 Dec provided only the 2nd westside winter record (J. Sullivan), while one at Hines, *Harney* 2 Dec was merely two months late for the eastside (P. Bowers).

A Lucy's Warbler frequented a Harbor, *Curry* hummingbird feeder from 14 Jan into Mar (ph. S. Chambers); Oregon's only previous documented record was also on the Outer Coast during winter. The Region averages about one Hermit and one Black-throated Gray Warbler every other winter. This year, a Black-throated Gray was at Pistol R., *Curry* 8 Feb (R. Robb), and a Hermit was at Finley N.W.R., *Benton* 9 Feb (HH). Eastern Washington's 3rd winter Townsend's Warbler was near Wapato, *Yakima* 16 Dec (AS, ES). Rare inland, a Palm Warbler was at F.R.R. in early Dec (DDW). A Black-and-white Warbler at Daroga S. P., *Douglas* 6–30 Dec was Washington's first for winter in five years (DB). Oregon's 4th winter MacGillivray's Warbler was Jackson Bottom, *Washington* 20 Dec (†Dennis Manzer). Five w. Washington Common Yellowthroats 21 Dec–2 Jan was exceptional, but none apparently survived Jan's cold snap; oddly, only 2 were found in w. Oregon, both during early Dec. Very rare during winter, a Wilson's Warbler visited Grants Pass, *Josephine* 23 Dec (DV). Amazingly, Western Tanagers were recorded in the Region for the 6th consecutive winter, with singles at Roseburg, *Douglas* 9 Dec (L. Balaban) and Fidalgo I., *Skagit* 18 Dec (J. Shiflett). Prior to 1998, Washington had only one winter record; now it has 10.

Oregon's 3rd winter Green-tailed Towhee was at Sisters, *Deschutes* 13 Dec (Norma Funai). An American Tree Sparrow was near Bandon, *Coos* 21 Dec (D. Lauten, K. Castelein), and up to 3 were at F.R.R. 4–11 Jan (LM); tree sparrows are rare in w. Oregon. For the first winter since 1999–2000, there was only one Chipping Sparrow found in Oregon: Eugene 4–21 Jan (DI, D. Arendt). There were "only" 3 Clay-colored Sparrows this winter, with singles near Eugene 26–28 Dec (A. Prigge), at Woodland, *Cowlitz* 19 Jan (MD, MLD, KK), and at Gold Beach,

*Curry* 27 Jan (TR). Oregon's first well-described winter Brewer's Sparrow was at Siltcoos L., *Lane* 17 Dec. (B. & Z. Stotz). Very rare during winter, a Vesper Sparrow was at F.R.R. 11 Jan+ (S. Maulding). A Grasshopper Sparrow at F.R.R. 10 Jan provided the Region's 6th winter record (S. Maulding). It was a banner fall for unusual Fox Sparrows in Washington. Slate-colored Fox continues to manifest itself as a rare but annual part of Washington's winter avifauna, with singles at Nisqually, *Thurston* 6 Dec (B. Shelmerdine), near Florence, *Snohomish* 20 Dec–1 Jan (RTS, CCx), near Clear L., *Skagit* 7 Feb (SM, RTS, CCx, JB), and near Trout L., *Klickitat* 25 Feb (K. Glueckert). Adding to approximately 13 Washington records, single Red Fox Sparrows were at Battle Ground, *Clark* 7–8 Jan (ph. J.W. Williams), near Monroe, *Snohomish* 2–16 Feb (†CW, K. Brady), and another near Monroe 14 Feb–4 Mar (KA, vt. SM, DD, TA). A total of 7 Swamp Sparrows in w. Washington was fairly typical, but rarer were eastside sightings including 2 along Frenchman Hills Wasteway, *Grant* 29 Feb (DSc, BF, RH) and 3 at McNary Pk., *Umatilla* 4 Jan (CC, JC). In w. Oregon, the peak tally was 7 at Millacoma Marsh, *Coos* 3 Dec (TR). A Washington record 11 White-throated Sparrows were near Woodland, *Cowlitz* 19 Jan (MD, MLD, KK). Harris's Sparrows numbers were low this year, with 7 on the eastside and 6 on the west. A White-crowned Sparrow of one of the black-lored subspecies was on Ebey I., *Snohomish* 25 Dec (†SM, CCx); *leucophrys* has never been recorded in Washington, and *oriantha* has never been found during winter or on the westside. White-crowned Sparrow x Golden-crowned Sparrow hybrids were found near Mt. Vernon, *Skagit* 7 Feb (SM, CCx, RTS, JB) and at Sauvie I. 28 Feb (J. Gilligan, M.A. Sohlstrom).

Adding to six prior Oregon records, 2 McCown's Longspurs were located at Lower Klamath N.W.R. 27 Jan, with 6 found there 31 Jan (F. Meyer); this species has been detected during three of the last four winters in Oregon. Vying for the Region's record maximum, 15,000 Snow Buntings swarmed across fields near Harrington, *Lincoln* 22 Jan (JA, C. Pillsbury); not quite as impressive, a count of 55 Snow Buntings near Stanwood, *Snohomish* 28–29 Jan was, nonetheless, the best for the westside in over a decade (CW). Oregon's 2nd McKay's Bunting was found and photographed by a lucky visiting California birder at Depoe Bay, *Lincoln* 3 Jan, never to be seen again (K. Mahouski). Black-headed Grosbeaks visited Mt. Vernon, *Skagit* 1 Dec–7 Jan (ph. K. Ranta) and Bellingham, *Whatcom* 30 Dec (fide TRW); there was only one previous Washington winter record.

Tricolored Blackbirds are relatively new additions to Washington's avifauna, having been first found in 1998. Othello, *Adams* is

**SA** For the 3rd consecutive winter, Barn Swallows performed a mid-winter appearing act. Though not quite matching last winter's totals, this incursion still exceeded that of 2001–2002. In Washington, where numbers were carefully tracked, 15 were found in mid- and late Dec, well above the norm, but none were located in early Jan. In mid-Jan, 16 were detected, rising to 54 in late Jan and 47 in early Feb. Numbers were still present later, with 14 in mid-Feb and 22 during late Feb. The largest concentration was 36 at Skagit W.M.A. 7 Feb (CW). In Oregon, approximately 180 were reported from 16 widely scattered westside locations, with a maximum of 40 in the Coquille Valley, *Coos* 31 Jan (TR). This winter's incursion also included a number of eastside sightings of singles, virtually unprecedented prior to last winter: Frenchglen, *Harney* 16 Dec (fide HN), W. Richland, *Benton* 30 Dec (H. Newsome), Bridgeport, *Douglas* 31 Jan (M. Spencer), Wenatchee, *Chelan* 6 Feb (DB), Hanford Site, *Benton* 14 Feb (SM), Deschutes R. mouth 16 Feb (J. Gatchet), and Vantage, *Kittitas* 20 Feb (S. Ray). The questions remain: what drives this new phenomenon, and will it continue to repeat?

establishing itself as a regular wintering location. This year, one was there 30 Dec (RH), and by mid-Feb, at least 13 were present (RH, BF, vt. SM). Two were also at the only known Washington breeding location, Wilson Creek, *Grant* 31 Jan (†N. Wendt). A tally of 100 Western Meadowlarks on Fir I., *Skagit* 1 Jan was exceptional for w. Washington (R. Merrill). Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds, rare during winter on the westside, were on the Lummi Flats, *Whatcom* 7 Feb (CCx, JB, RTS, SM). Only one Rusty Blackbird was detected this winter, a single near Walla Walla 14–15 Dec (MD, MLD). A grackle at Liberty L., *Spokane* 12–13 Jan was initially reported as a Common; photographs appear to suggest a Great-tailed. Now nearly annual during winter, single Bullock's Orioles were at Eugene 20 Dec (T. Harrell) and Astoria, *Clatsop* 18 Jan+ (M. Yowell, L. Campbell, MP).

Two Cassin's Finches, extremely rare in Washington w. of the Cascade high country, were near Concrete, *Skagit* 5 Jan (ph. P. Vannoy). For the first winter in four years, no White-winged Crossbills were reported. Small numbers of Common Redpolls were widespread in e. Washington and ne. Oregon, with maxima of 60 near Bridgeport, *Douglas* 28 Dec (G. Fredricks) and 40 at Tumalo Mtn., *Deschutes* 30 Dec (D. Tracey); rather surprising, however, were sightings on Oregon's coast of 25 at Astoria, *Clatsop* 21 Dec (L. Cain) and 4 at Alsea Bay, *Lincoln* 4 Jan (J. Fontaine).

**Addenda:** Two sightings were not included in the fall report due to delays in receiving documentation: a Red-shouldered Hawk was near Cathlamet, *Wahkiakum* 21 Sep 2003 (†DR), and e. Washington's 8th Ancient Murrelet was on the Columbia R. below Wanapum Dam 14 Sep 2003 (†M. Monda).

**Initialed observers** (subregional editors in boldface): Kevin Aanerud, Jim Acton, **Tom Aversa** (WA), Jessie Barry, **Range Bayer** (Lincoln), David Beaudette, Wilson Cady, Craig Corder, Judy Corder, Cameron Cox (CCx), Ricky Davis, Merry Lynn Denny, **Mike Denny** (ne. Oregon), Don DeWitt (DDW), Dennis Duffy, Joe Engler (Clark), Dan Farrar, Bob Flores, Chuck Gates, Joel Geier, Greg Gillson, **Denny Granstrand** (Yakima), Hendrik Herlyn, Randy Hill, Stuart Johnston, Bruce LaBar (BLB), **Hill LaFramboise** (lower Columbia Basin), Nancy LaFramboise, Larry McQueen, **Tom Mickel** (Lane), Randall P. Moore, Don Munson, Harry Nehls (OR), Bob Norton (Olympic Pen.), **Michael Patterson** (Clatsop), Jason Paulios, Diane Pettey, Dennis Rockwell, **Tim Rodenkirk** (Coos), Doug Schonewald (DSc), Ryan T. Shaw (RTS), Kevin Spencer, **Dan Stephens** (Chelan), Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, Patrick Sullivan (PtS), Ruth Sullivan, Terry R. Wahl, Bob Woodley, Charlie Wright. ☉

# Middle Pacific Coast



## Luke W. Cole

(Thrashers to Finches)  
561 Hill Street  
San Francisco, California 94114  
(luke@igc.org)

## Scott B. Terrill

(Loons to Frigatebirds, Larids to Alcids)  
H.T. Harvey & Associates  
3150 Almaden Expressway, Suite 145  
San Jose, California 95118  
(sterrill@harveyecology.com)

## Michael M. Rogers

(Herons to Shorebirds)  
499 Novato Avenue  
Sunnyvale, California 94086  
(m.m.rogers@comcast.net)

## Steven A. Glover

(Doves to Wrentit)  
6256 Conestoga Lane  
Dublin, California 94568  
(Sgloverccc@aol.com)

The Region had a relatively mild winter, with a fair amount of rain. There were very few reports of outstanding rarities. Intriguing was a reported Least Tern—a first for the Region in winter—that may have been something even more exciting. Other birds unusual in the Region, or for the season, included our third winter Solitary Sandpiper, a King Eider, and a Le Conte's Sparrow.

**Abbreviations:** C.B.R.C. (California Bird Records Committee); C.R.P. (Cosumnes R. Preserve, Sacramento); C.V. (Central Valley); P.R.B.O. (Point Reyes Bird Observatory); R.P. (Regional Park); R.S. (Regional Shoreline); S.F. (San Francisco); W.P.C.P. (Water Pollution Control Plant). Reports of exceptional vagrants submitted without documentation are not published. Documentation for C.B.R.C. review species will be forwarded to Guy McCaskie, Secretary, P.O. Box 275, Imperial Beach, California 91933.

## LOONS THROUGH IBIS

A well-described Pacific Loon at Camanche Res. 24 Jan (†TEa) represented an overdue first for *Calaveras*. Another inland bird was at L. Shastina, *Siskiyou* 17 Dec and 4 Feb (RE). Also rare inland in the Region, a Red-necked Grebe was at North L. Tahoe, *Placer* 4 Dec (WRi), and another was on Clear L., *Lake* 31 Dec–6 Jan (JLx, GJH).

"Al" the Laysan Albatross returned to Pt. Arena, *Mendocino* 27 Dec (RJK), where hun-