



**SA** Unlike in recent years, there were no Brown Pelicans in New England this winter, but if any had appeared, they would have been upstaged by their counterparts from the continent's interior. The **American White Pelican** saga apparently began with a flock of 5 at P'town 5 Dec (ph. S. Landry et al.). A few days later, on 9 Dec, single birds were reported in Woburn and Belmont (both *Middlesex*; MR, B. Ramsey et al.). Even though the locations are only 10 km apart, observers differed in their descriptions of bill color, and these differences were consistent with variation described in the birds photographed at P'town. Another pelican was observed flying s. along the Merrimack R. in Manchester, *Hillsborough*, NH 18 Dec (R. Tulloh). Presumably the same individual was reported later that same day with a flock of Canada Geese on the Nashua R. in Hollis, *Hillsborough*, NH (C. Beaudry), where it remained through 20 Dec. The New Hampshire sightings are roughly 60 km as the pelican flies from the 9 Dec locales, so it is tempting to speculate that at least one of the birds from Greater Boston wandered n. of the border.

Meanwhile, on the coast, unsubstantiated reports of another (or the same) white pelican came from Rye, *Rockingham*, NH around 22 Dec and Biddeford Pool, *York*, ME 23 Dec. In the absence of details on plumage, bill color, or other distinguishing markings, we are unlikely to know how many birds wandered n. into New Hampshire and Maine. At least one bird went s. from P'town and was seen in Eastham, *Barnstable*, MA 12 Dec (C. Goodrich). The same or another appeared on Prudence I., *Newport*, RI 13–19 Dec (M. Rehor). It then moved to Westerly, *Washington*, RI, where it remained 29 Dec–20 Jan (m.ob.). This bird was found dead 13 Feb, having not quite added Connecticut to the list of New England states hosting the species this winter. Outside of the Region, 4 American White Pelicans appeared in n. New Jersey 11–12 Dec, with one in *Cape May*, NJ 8–9 Jan. Given that we know at least 2 were still in New England in mid-Dec, one is left wondering just how many pelicans really were involved in this winter's sightings.

became just the 2nd mid-winter record for the state. Similarly rare in winter was a Green Heron that stayed from the fall through 19 Dec in Amherst, *Hampshire*, MA (m.ob.). Another of this species was reported without details from Hollis, NH 2 Jan. A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was unusual in E. Providence, *Providence*, RI 20 Dec. Black Vultures continue to increase in the sw. portion of the Region, both in Rhode Island and w. Massachusetts. Seventeen on the Napatree C.B.C. 19 Dec ties the Ocean State's record high count, and 14 were still present at a roost in Ashaway, *Washington* 12 Feb. The high count for the season in Massachusetts was 10 in Sheffield, *Berkshire* 19 Feb (M. Lynch). Another was reported without details from the Nashua landfill, *Hillsborough*, NH 10 Feb (M. Medeiros).

## WATERFOWL

As usual, Greater White-fronted Geese appeared in the s. part of the Region, although this winter they were all in the Connecticut River valley. Northernmost was one in Amherst and nearby Hadley, MA 19 Dec, while Connecticut hosted 7 (*vide* GH). In the wake of the recent split, a Cackling Goose at Vinalhaven I., Knox, ME 30 Dec–20 Jan (ph. Kirk Gentalen) may represent the first winter record for the Region. Tundra Swans were also in the s. states. Least expected was a bird at Egremont, *Berkshire*, MA that lingered from the fall through 4 Feb (m.ob.). Coventry, *Washington*, RI again hosted 4 of this species in Jan and Feb, while another wintered

along the lower Connecticut R. in Connecticut. A Whooper Swan of presumed captive provenance spent a few days on the ocean off Rye, NH in mid-Jan.

Dabbling duck counts were unremarkable, with a few exceptions. A count of 13 Gadwalls on Great Bay, NH 18 Dec was one of the highest totals for the state in winter, while 14 Northern Shovelers off Cape Elizabeth, *Cumberland*, ME 3 Dec (*vide* DL) were even more remarkable for the Pine Tree State. A report of 11 shovelers at Newburyport, MA 4 Dec (S. Mirick) was nearly as unusual and perhaps indicative of an excep-

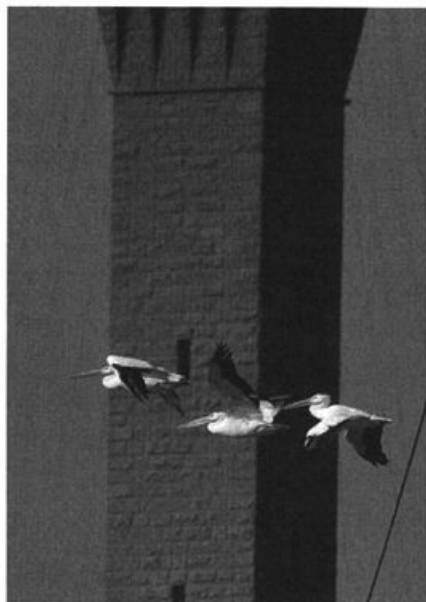
tional winter for the species: at least 10 additional birds were in Massachusetts, and a flock of 6 was reported in Rhode Island. An escaped male Mandarin Duck entertained birders at Ogunquit, ME throughout the winter. While Canvasbacks occur with some regularity in fall and spring in New Hampshire, mid-winter records are scarce, especially away from Great Bay. A male at the Exeter W.T.P., *Rockingham* 17–20 Jan was thus unusual in both respects. Some 10,700 Greater Scaup in upper Narragansett Bay 22 Jan was the highest total for Rhode Island since 1992 (R. Farrell). Barrow's Goldeneyes seemed more common than usual this winter in some parts of the Region. At least 7 were reported from New Hampshire, where the usual winter total is under 4, and there were at least 13 in Massachusetts in Dec. In Maine, there was an influx of the species in early Jan, with a high count of 23 in South Freeport (*vide* DL). Totals of 4 for Rhode Island and 2 for Connecticut were more typical. A *borealis* Common Eider in South Freeport, *Cumberland*, ME 14 Feb (*vide* DL) was rare: this subspecies normally winters only as far s. as the Gulf of St. Lawrence. A female King Eider was at Hammonasset Beach S.P., *New Haven*, CT for its 4th winter. A total of 12 King Eiders in Maine was above that state's winter maximum of 8 (*vide* JD).

## RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Lingering Ospreys in s. New England were not reported after 18 Dec. Numbers from the mid-winter Bald Eagle count set records in many parts of the Region, including 20 in Vermont, 55 in New Hampshire, and at least



This dead Right Whale was discovered off Nantucket in December 2004 (here 10 January 2005). During the time it was under observation by various parties, it was well attended by scavenging Northern Fulmars, including a good number of dark morphs, a plumage that is relatively uncommon in U.S. North Atlantic waters, unlike in the North Pacific. Photograph by Peter Duley/NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service.



While the Pilgrim's Monument in Provincetown is a familiar sight to birders at the tip of Cape Cod, a flock of American White Pelicans in front of it is not. These three were part of a flock of five photographed on 5 December 2004.

The group subsequently dispersed, with birds visiting other locations in Massachusetts, as well as New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island. Photograph by Scott Landry.

69 in Massachusetts. During surveys in the latter state, a new nesting location was discovered. Eagles at Rhode Island's only known nest site were apparently getting ready for the breeding season by the end of Feb. Golden Eagle reports, on the other hand, were fewer than usual: the only report was of a single at Pelham, Hampshire, MA 5 Dec (M. Lynch). The Region's only Gyrfalcon was an imm. gray morph in Burlington, Chittendon, VT 23 Feb (ph. R. Renaud, A. Boccio).

Participants on the Napatree C.B.C. (Washington, RI) had the unusual luck to tally three species of rails (Clapper, Virginia, and Sora) on 19 Dec. Farther n., 2 Virginia Rails at Kittery, York, ME 26 Dec (DL) were the first winter record since at least 1987. A Common Moorhen was on Nantucket 14 Dec (N. Slavitz); the species has been recorded on the island fairly regularly in recent winters. Sandhill Cranes showed up in three states. A bird in Auburn, Androscoggin, ME through 14 Jan had been present since at least Nov (m.ob.), while another made a one-day appearance in Norridgewock, Somerset, ME sometime in



This extremely dark Kumlien's Iceland Gull photographed at Rochester Wastewater Treatment Plant in Rochester, New Hampshire 9 December 2004 is presumably distinguished from Thayer's gull by its very small bill, round head, petite jizz, and uniformity of plumage color; one assumes that hybridization cannot be ruled out in this case, but the Thayer's/Iceland complex is still very much a puzzle, taxonomically and otherwise.

Photograph by James P. Smith.

the first week of Dec (*fide* JD). These are the first winter records for Maine since at least 1987. Farther s., a long-staying crane was in Exeter, Washington, RI 2–27 Feb (m.ob.), while one was briefly at S. Windsor, Hartford, CT 18 Dec (C. Ekroth).

From mid-coast Maine came an intriguing report of a Northern Lapwing at Deer Isle, Hancock 8 Dec (T. Nichols); this bird would represent only the 2nd record for the state. Lingering shorebirds included an unusual combination—a Semipalmated Sandpiper and a Marbled Godwit at Chatham, Barnstable, MA 19 Dec (BN). Other highlights were a Western Sandpiper in Seabrook, Rockingham, NH 18 Dec (R. Aaronian et al.) and a Western Willet at Scarborough, Cumberland, ME through 9 Jan (M. Brush, m.ob.). Two Long-billed Dowitchers lingered until at least 5 Jan at Milford, New Haven, CT (m.ob.). Jaeger numbers were down from recent years in Massachusetts' waters. High counts of 7 Pomarine and 5 unidentified jaegers came from Rockport (RH) and Eastham (BN), 7 and 27 Dec, respectively. The latest Pomarine was at Rockport 12 Jan (RH). A Laughing Gull on M.V. 5 Jan (T. M. Day) was one of only a few post-Dec records for the Bay State. Almost all records of Mew Gull from Massachusetts are from

the immediate coast, so a bird at Haverhill (Essex) 29 Jan (RH) was noteworthy. The gull of the season was the first-winter California Gull on Nantucket 3–20 Jan (ph., P.

Dugan, m.ob.), marking only the 2nd time this w. species has been recorded in Massachusetts. Iceland Gulls seemed more common than usual, with peak counts of 161 on Nantucket (ER), 43 at Gloucester (RH), and 15 at Rochester, Strafford, NH (J. Smith), with state totals of 20 in Connecticut and 9 in Rhode Island. The latter is the highest total for the Ocean State since 1988 (*fide* RF). The only terns in the Region were a remarkable 6 Forster's at Wellfleet, Barnstable, MA 12 Dec (BN) and a late Forster's at Freetown, Bristol, MA 2 Jan (JB).



First found in November, this White-winged Dove lingered on Nantucket through 17 January 2005 (here 31 December 2004), providing the New England region with its first winter record of this increasing vagrant. Photograph by Stephen Mirick.

Impressive numbers of Common Murres were tallied at Rockport, with a high count of 43 on 7 Dec and 27 on 4 Feb (RH). Thick-billed Murres staged something of a minor invasion beginning in late Jan. The seasonal total for Maine was 25, almost twice any other total since at least the early 1990s, and the six reports from Rhode Island represent the 5th highest ever for the state (*fide* RF). In the traditionally alcid-rich waters of Massachusetts, numbers peaked at 110 off Rockport 4 Feb (RH), with regular counts of 10 or more at P'town. Razorbill numbers from traditional locations in the Gulf of Maine were not unusual, but the species continues to increase in Long Island Sound, where the high count was 29 off Mystic, New London, CT 1 Jan (B. Dewire).

## DOVES THROUGH VIREOS

The White-winged Dove that appeared on Nantucket in late Nov was last seen 19 Jan (m.ob.), providing the Region with its first winter record and also the longest-staying individual to date. Snowy Owls made a better showing this year, with at least 9 in Maine, 6 in New Hampshire, and 15 in Massachusetts. None made it to the southernmost states of Connecticut and Rhode Island. To the w. of the Region, one of the major events of the season was an invasion of Great Gray Owls. Despite several individuals



This female Ruby-throated Hummingbird visited a feeder in Tiverton, Rhode Island from November through 25 (here 4) December 2004, a first winter record for the New England region. Photograph by Geoff Dennis.

as close as Montréal, only one made it to New England, at Gray, *Cumberland*, ME 16 Jan (ph., *fide* DL).

In Rhode Island, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird remained at a Tiverton, *Newport* feeder until 25 Dec (ph. m.ob.), a first winter record for the Region, while nearby at Little Compton, 2 Rufous Hummingbirds visited the same house (but consistently used different feeders) through 21 Dec and 18 Jan, respectively (ph., m.ob.). Both birds, an imm. female and an imm. male, appear to have perished during windy nights with temperatures at or near 0° F (*fide* RF). Another Rufous, an imm. male, was at Ashfield, *Franklin*, MA 1–15 Dec (m.ob.). After a good fall flight, it was not surprising to have above-average numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers in the Region: Massachusetts hosted 4, Connecticut 3, Maine 2, and New Hampshire one. Red-bellied Woodpeckers also surged northward during the fall, and as winter progressed, it appeared that the species had probably made new gains in n. New England. Maine reported at least 246 individuals, surely only the tip of the iceberg (*fide* WT), and 4 made it at least as far “down east” as Mt. Desert I., *Washington* 3 Jan. In New Hampshire, at least 2 were recorded n. of the White Mts. to Lancaster and Randolph, both *Coos*. Red-bellieds even made news in Rhode Island, as evidenced by a record total of 29 on the *Newport–Westport C.B.C.* 18 Dec.

An interesting mix of flycatchers graced the Region this season. There were the re-

quisite Eastern Phoebe, the latest of which was at Little Compton, RI 15 Jan (GD). Lingering from Nov was Rockport's Ash-throated Flycatcher, last reported 19 Dec. Also at Rockport was one of Massachusetts's 2 Western Kingbirds 21–22 Dec (S. Hunt); the other was at a less-expected locale, inland at



This Yellow-throated Warbler of the *albiflora* subspecies spent the entire winter at a feeder in Dover, New Hampshire, eating mealworms (here 11 January 2005). Photograph by Tom Murray.

Northampton, *Hampshire* 17 Dec (L. Therman). Northern Shrikes had something of a mixed flight, with good numbers early in the season as far s. as Massachusetts, but few after early Feb and only 5 in all of Connecticut and Rhode Island. This season's Blue-headed Vireos were at Wayland, *Middlesex*, MA 7 Dec (H. Norwood) and on the *New Haven C.B.C.* in Connecticut 18 Dec.

## SWALLOWS THROUGH WARBLERS

Tree Swallows remained until at least mid-Jan at both *Napatree* and *Nantucket*, with 9 and 10 on 9 and 16 Jan, respectively. Carolina Wrens, like Red-bellied Woodpeckers, seemed to have a good fall: the total of 15 reported from Maine is the highest this editor has seen in nine years of writing this summary and is likely a new winter high for the state. In the far nw. corner of the Region, observers on the *Grande Isle C.B.C.* found a Northern Wheatear at *Georgia, Franklin*, VT 19 Dec (P. Mallet, L. Rainville). If accepted by the Vermont Bird Records Committee, this would be the first winter record for the Region and one of only a few for North America. A Townsend's Solitaire appeared at *Stacyville, Penobscot*, ME 1 Feb and was last seen just before the close of the season on 26 Feb (ph., BS, m.ob.); another made a one-day showing at *Gloucester* 19 Dec (S. Hedman). Even more notable, if verified, would be the Swainson's Thrush reported at a feeder on *Deer Isle, Hancock*, ME “since Christmas”

(*fide* WT). The more expected thrushes, particularly American Robins and Eastern Bluebirds, continued their recent trends of remaining in numbers throughout the Region all winter. Four of the 5 Varied Thrushes this season were in Massachusetts, the longest-staying bird frequenting a *Newburyport*

feeder 21 Dec–25 Feb, while others were at *Concord (Middlesex)* 29 Dec–4 Jan and *M.V.* 19–23 Jan, and *Sheffield* 2 Jan (the last bird a cat-kill). A 5th was at *Contoocook, Merrimack*, NH 15 Jan.

In light of last winter's major influx, birders in the Region were not expecting the return of Bohemian Waxwings this season. In n. Maine, an excellent fruit crop made for numbers just as impressive as last winter's, including a maximum of 2500 in *Presque Isle*,

*Aroostook*, in late Jan (*fide* JD). Most flocks in Maine, and the relatively few large groups in Vermont and New Hampshire, came in at under 300 birds. The only Bohemian in the s. portion of the Region was one on *Nantucket* 6 Feb (E. Ray). There was some indication that Yellow-rumped Warblers were less common than usual in s. New England this winter. However, Pine Warblers lingered in num-





With very few Regional winter records, Black-throated Green Warbler is only marginally more likely to be found on a New England Christmas Bird Count than its northwestern counterpart Townsend's Warbler. This bird found on the Cape Cod C.B.C. 19 December 2004 furnished a first record of the species for that long-running count. Photograph by Jeremiah Trimble.

bers for the record books, especially in Connecticut (*vide* GH), where at least 15 were reported throughout the season—Massachusetts hosted 14, Rhode Island 5, Maine 4, and Vermont and New Hampshire one each. Among the less-expected warblers were 2 Black-throated Blues: one at a feeder in E. Brunswick, Cumberland, ME through 18 Dec (G. Sergeant; a first winter record for the state), and another at Brewster, Barnstable, MA 12 Jan, almost exactly a year later than an individual of the same species at nearby Chatham! More noteworthy was a Townsend's Warbler at Rockport 19 Dec (M. Goetschkes). One of the more cooperative warblers of the season was a male *albilora* Yellow-throated Warbler at a feeder in Dover, Strafford, NH throughout the season, a bird that subsisted largely on mealworms (ph., D. Carr, m.ob.). Two very late Blackpoll Warblers were at Arlington, Middlesex, MA 19 Dec and South Kingston, Washington, RI 22–25 Dec, the latter the latest ever recorded in the Ocean State. Single Ovenbirds were at Boston 11–16 Dec and far to the n. in Lancaster, Coos, NH 17–24 Dec, and a Hooded Warbler at Cambridge, Middlesex, MA was last reported 5 Dec.

#### TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A female Western Tanager frequented a feeder at Georgetown, Sagadahoc, ME 17 Dec–7 Jan (ph., m.ob.); another, also female, was at Westwood, Norfolk, MA 31

Dec–23 Jan (R. Saunders, m.ob.). Lark Sparrows put in a fine showing. The first showed up on M.V. 2–3 Dec, the next in Walpole,



This Chestnut-collared Longspur was a one-day wonder on Plum Island 15 December 2004. It furnished only the fifth record for Massachusetts and the second winter record for the Region. Photograph by David Weaver.

Cheshire, NH 18 Dec (T. Johansen), and the last at Scarborough, Cumberland, ME 5 Feb–Mar (ph., m.ob.). A Chestnut-collared Longspur at Plum I., MA 15 Dec (ph., B. Gette, D. Weaver) furnished just the 5th record for Massachusetts and 2nd winter record for the Region. Rusty Blackbirds were observed in above-average numbers in the Region. In Lincoln, Providence, RI, up to 68 were present 11 Jan–24 Feb (D. Finzia et al.), and multiples were reported in inland New Hampshire locations, including 2 far to the n. at Errol, Coos 16 Dec. Massachusetts counts, however, were unremarkable. Up to 12 Boat-tailed Grackles wintered in se. Connecticut at the traditional location of Stratford/Bridgeport, Fairfield. A total of 5 Baltimore Orioles in Maine was well above the usual few and in fact was higher than the 4 reported from Massachusetts this season.

Pine Grosbeaks staged a small off-year invasion limited to the n. portions of the n. three states. Most were in Maine, with

flocks of 30 in the n. and 5–10 in the cen. portion of the state. The Regional maximum was 219 on the Pittsburg C.B.C., Coos, NH 15 Dec. Common Redpolls were also back in reasonable numbers for the 2nd year in a row. As with the previous species, most were in n. Maine, where three flocks of over 100 birds were reported from Aroostook in late Feb (BS). Numbers dwindled rapidly to the s., where flocks tended to contain fewer than 10 birds. Common Redpolls did make it to Massachusetts, where most birds were found in the e. half of the state, and Rhode Island, where there were 2 at Providence 3 Jan (RF et al.). Given the reappearance of large redpoll flocks in n. Maine, it was perhaps not surprising that 2 Hoary Redpolls were also reported from Presque Isle, Aroostook from mid-Jan through mid-Feb (*vide* JD).

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