



Rick Fridell

There was a marked contrast between winter weather in the northern and southern parts of the Region, with the northern portion receiving average to above-average snowfall, the southern persistent dry conditions. It was also a mixed bag for northern birds wintering in the Region: high numbers of several species, such as Bohemian Waxwing, were offset by moderate-to-low numbers of most irruptive species, such as Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Shrikes. Although Snowy Owls were found this winter in neighboring northern states, there were no confirmed sightings in the Great Basin. Two Boreal Owls, however, were photographed in Utah. As these were only the third and fourth Boreal Owls confirmed in the state, they may have been part of a southward winter irruption. Other highlights include three Fulvous Whistling-Ducks in Utah and a male Broad-billed Hummingbird in Nevada.

Abbreviations: Antelope I. (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT); Bear River (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); Lake Mead (Lake Mead N.R.A., Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills Golf Course, St. George, Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

WATERFOWL THROUGH VULTURES

One of the highlights of the winter season was the brief appearance of 3 Fulvous Whistling-

Ducks at Bear River 21 Jan (ph. PH, RC, †KP). Although there were several reports of vagrant Fulvous Whistling-Ducks from elsewhere in the sw., this was by far the northernmost location reported. Trumpeter Swan sightings have been on the increase in the Region, and this winter was no exception, with 10 reported 12 Dec–25 Feb from four Utah counties (Juab, Millard, Utah, and Washington). Remarkably, a male Eurasian Wigeon showed up for the 6th consecutive winter 21 Nov+ at Lakeridge G.C., Washoe, NV (GS et al.). Washoe, NV provided all other reports of Eurasian Wigeon, with males at Sparks 8 Jan (FP) and Lemmon Valley 21 Feb (MM). A female Black Scoter, first reported during the fall period, lingered until 11 Dec at Antelope I. (ph. TA). As usual, Long-tailed Ducks made a strong winter showing at Antelope I., with up to 6 reported this winter (12-16 Dec; TA et al.). Utah supplied all additional Long-tailed Duck reports, with females at East Canyon

were in short supply this winter. Twelve Least Sandpipers were an unusual find on the Carson City C.B.C., Carson, NV 18 Dec (GS et al.). Up to 4 Dunlins were observed 2 Jan at the H.B.V.P. (JBr), with at least 2 remaining throughout the season. An ad. Mew Gull made a rare Utah appearance 17-20 Dec at the Orem Sewage Treatment Ponds, Utah (KCh, ph. JK). Thayer's Gulls were reported 15 Dec–15 Feb from four Utah counties (Box Elder, Davis, Cache, and Salt Lake). A Lesser Black-backed Gull was located 15-19 Dec at the Bountiful Landfill, Davis, UT (CN, TA et al.). Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported from three Utah locations: 16 Dec–6 Jan at the Bountiful Landfill (JBi, BH et al.); 21 Jan–15 Feb at Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis (BS, TA); and 28 Jan at the Logan Landfill, Cache (J&KE). Glaucous Gulls also made a strong showing this winter in Utah, with singles at the Bountiful Landfill 16 Dec–4 Feb (JBi, BH ph. TA et al.), Salt Creek W.M.A., Box Elder 5



Large flocks of Bohemian Waxwings were observed in the northern portion of the Great Basin in late winter. This flock containing approximately 300 birds remained at Rye Patch Reservoir, Pershing County, Nevada for much of the season (here 7 February 2006). Photograph by Martin Meyers

S.P., Morgan 11 Dec (KP), Bear River 4 Feb (KM), and Quail Creek S.P., Washington 28 Feb (RF).

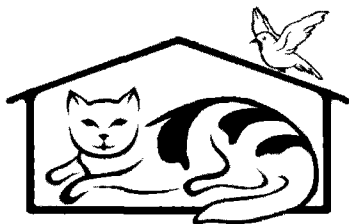
HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

The only Red-shouldered Hawk reported this season was found 10 Jan in Cedar Valley, Iron, UT (KG). Several contributors reported moderate numbers of Rough-legged Hawks in the n. portions of the Region; however, their numbers in the s. were well below average this winter. Significant shorebird sightings

Feb (KP), and Farmington Bay W.M.A., Davis 15 Feb (TA et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Just a few years ago, Eurasian Collared-Doves were big news in the Great Basin, and now they are regularly observed throughout Utah and Nevada, with flocks of several hundred individuals reported in s. areas. White-winged Doves are always rare winter visitors in the Region; however, a flock of 10-12 spent a 4th straight winter in Washington City



CATS INDOORS!

THE CAMPAIGN FOR SAFER BIRDS & CATS

WHAT DO INDOOR CATS MISS?

- ★ Killing Birds
- ★ Getting Lost
- ★ Getting Stolen
- ★ Getting Hit By A Car
- ★ Fatal Feline Diseases
- ★ Dog Attacks
- ★ Abscesses
- ★ Worms
- ★ Fleas
- ★ Ticks

**Protect cats, birds,
and other wildlife by
keeping cats indoors!**

For more information, contact:

**AMERICAN BIRD
CONSERVANCY**
Cats Indoors!

The Campaign for Safer Birds and Cats
1834 Jefferson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-452-1535;
Fax: 202-452-1534;
E-mail: abc@abcbirds.org;
Web: www.abcbirds.org



Washington, UT (RF et al.). More surprising was an extralimital White-winged Dove observed 10 Dec+ at Bluff, *San Juan*, UT (LG). Up to 7 Long-eared Owls were observed at Corn Cr. 19 Feb+ (DaS, DeS et al.). Utah's 3rd and 4th confirmed Boreal Owls were photographed in n. Utah in mid-Jan. The first was found 21 Jan in Card Canyon, *Cache* (ph. KE), the other 24-25 Jan along the Bluebell Hwy., e. of Bluebell, *Duchesne* (AB, ph., †BM). A small population of Boreal Owls has long been rumored in n. Utah's Uintah and Wasatch Mts.; however, whether these recent sightings were rare resident owls or part of a southward winter irruption is unknown. A male Broad-billed Hummingbird made a rare appearance in the Region at a Las Vegas, *Clark*, NV residence 16 Dec-5 Feb (SPe, *fide* PG, ph. PW, ph. SPa et al.). A tough male Anna's Hummingbird feeding in the snow was an unexpected sight during the Carson City C.B.C., *Carson*, NV 18 Dec (GS et al.).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Utah's first winter *Empidonax* flycatcher records were documented during this period. Two flycatchers at Red Hills caused some initial confusion before their identification was sorted out in mid-Jan. The first *Empidonax* was observed 26 Dec at Red Hills (MT) and reported in late Jan. On 15 Jan, a Dusky Flycatcher was photographed at Red Hills (ph. IA, MW, RF); a Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatcher was also observed there that day (IA, ph. RF), and another was photographed along the Virgin R. near the Washington Fields Diversion, *Washington*, UT 16 Jan (KCo, ph. RF). All 3 flycatchers remained through at least the end of Jan. Conventional wisdom suggests that Pacific-slope Flycatchers are much more likely to winter in the Southwest than Cordilleran; the species is currently not on the official Utah checklist. An Eastern Phoebe reported at Lytle 12 Feb (LT) was another surprising winter visitor to the Region.

Varied Thrushes, very rare winter visitors in Utah, were observed at Emigration Canyon, *Salt Lake* 29 Dec (SPr), Millcreek Canyon, *Salt Lake* 1-21 Jan (J&KB et al.), and at Brigham Young University, Provo, *Utah* 2-22 Feb (NN, JK). A Brown Thrasher visited Corn Cr. 19 Feb+ (DaS, DeS et al.). Bohemian Waxwings made an outstanding showing in the n. portion of the Region but went unreported in the s. portion. Flocks with 300+ individuals were observed in several n. Utah locations (*Cache*, *Summit*, *Salt Lake*, and *Weber*), and at Rye Patch Res., *Washoe*, NV 7 Feb-3 Mar (ph. MM, DSe et al.). A Black-throated Magpie-Jay, first discovered 15 Sep,

continued to brighten a Las Vegas neighborhood through at least 17 Feb (CT et al.); it is certainly an escapee.

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A Green-tailed Towhee, observed 28 Dec in Provo, *Utah*, UT (KCh), was perhaps the first ever reported in the Region during winter. A Swamp Sparrow was a nice find 4 Feb at the H.B.V.P. (MB). White-throated Sparrows were found at Carson Lake, *Churchill*, NV 16 Dec (DM), Orem, *Utah*, UT the next day (KCh, JK), and City Creek Canyon, Salt Lake City, *Salt Lake*, UT 7 Jan (ph. J&JB). Harris's Sparrows made a strong winter showing, with 2 in *Washoe*, NV 1 Dec-1 Jan (RSt, CD, JT) and 3 in *Salt Lake*, UT 17 Dec-1 Jan (BW, PE, EL). Carson Lake, *Churchill*, NV was again the hotspot for longspurs in the Region, with 4 Lapland and 25 Chestnut-collared observed 15 Dec (MM et al.) and 5 McCown's found there 22 Jan (GS et al.). Numbers there peaked 24 Jan, with over 40 Lapland and 50 Chestnut-collared observed (MM, DSe et al.). Five Chestnut-collared Longspurs were found 18-29 Dec at Washoe Lake, *Washoe*, NV (GS et al.), and 8 were at Swan Lake, Lemmon Valley, *Washoe*, NV 3 Jan-21 Feb (FP, BG et al.). Great-tailed Grackles are now being observed throughout most of Nevada and Utah, as attested by a flock of 50 in n. Nevada near the Oregon border at Winnemucca, *Humboldt* (MM et al.). A female Hooded Oriole made a very late appearance at a hummingbird feeder 6 Dec in Las Vegas, *Clark*, NV (RSc).

Contributors and cited observers: Tim Avery, Jim & Judy Bailey, Mike Baker, Joel & Kathy Beyer, Jack Binch (JBi), Je Anne Branca (JBr), Analisa Burton, Rudy Chatelain, KC Childs (KCh), Kristen Comella (KCo), Jim & Marian Cressman, Connie Douglas, Kirk Earl, Judy & Keith Evans, Rick Fridell, Pamera Fronce, Patrick Gaffey, Lu Giddings, Bob Goodman, Kate Grandison, Paul Higgins, Bob Huntington, Josh Krietzler, Edson Leite, James Lofthouse, Christiana Manville, Kelly Mathis, Brian Maxfield, Martin Meyers, Don Molde, Colby Neuman, Nate Nye, Scott Page (SPa), Suellen Pearson (SPe), Fred Petersen, Stephen Peterson (StP), Susan Prescott (SPr), Kristin Purdy, Rita Schlageter (RSc), Greg Scyphers, Dennis Serdehely (DSe), Bryan Shirley, Darrin Shirley (DaS), Dennis Shirley (DeS), Rose Strickland (RSt), Jane Thompson, Carolyn Titus, Marshall Topham, Larry Tripp, Barbara Watkins, Merrill Webb, Kit & Janelle Wilkinson, Phillip Worts. ●

Rick Fridell, 3505 West 290 North, Hurricane, UT 84737, (rfridell@redrock.net)