

water 4-6 Dec (SH, GHR), and another was at Rio Salado, Phoenix 28 Jan-16 Feb (ph. PD); this species is also casual at best during winter in s. Arizona. No fewer than 7 Black-and-white Warblers were found during the winter season, more than usual. The only American Redstart was one at Topock 15 Dec (MMS, MPo). A Worm-eating Warbler attempting to winter along the Santa Cruz River near Tubac 22 Dec-17 Jan (S. Johnsen et al.; ph C. Cathers) was quite unusual. Unprecedented were four different winter reports of MacGillivray's Warblers, one at Sweetwater 20 Dec-9 Jan (C. Taylor), one at Soldier Creek, Sierra Vista 22 Dec (D. Beaudette, SH), one in Tucson 27 Dec (P. Sockness), and one at the B.T.A. 16 Jan (R. Wilt); this species is casual in Arizona during the winter, and none of the above reports were documented. A Hooded Warbler, also casual during winter, was reported along the Hassayampa River s. of Wickenburg 12 Dec (R. Strickland, D. Ghiglieri). At least 10 different Wilson's Warblers were reported, above average for a winter; most were during Dec and before the heavy freeze in mid-Jan. Almost unheard of in winter, Red-faced Warblers were found along South Fork of Cave Creek Canyon 16 Dec (J. Puschock) and in Humboldt Canyon, Patagonia Mts. 14 Feb+ (Matt Brown).

Small numbers of Clay-colored Sparrows appeared to be present all winter along the S.P.R. (M. Marsden, EW) and at San Bernardino N.W.R. (REW); this species is an irregular fall and winter visitor mostly in the extreme se. portion of the state. At least 20 Fox Spar-

rows were reported statewide, most of which were the expected Slate-colored form from the Rocky Mts., while a few were the Red type. A Lincoln's Sparrow at Flagstaff 30 Dec (CL) provided one of the few winter reports ever for n. Arizona. At least 6 different Harris's Sparrows were found during the winter, an above-average number for this rare wintering sparrow. Still considered a review species by the A.B.C., and still surprisingly rare in Arizona, single Lapland Longspurs were at Rousseau Sod Farm, Scottsdale 6 Dec (ph. R. Widner) and in the Sonoita Grasslands near Elgin 12 Feb+ (ph. CDB, ph. GHR; MMS, MPo). Chestnut-collared Longspurs away from known wintering areas included 5+ at Reservation Tank 9 Dec (CL), 2 at Scottsdale 9-11 Dec (M. Scott, H. Beatty), one at Palo Verde 26 Dec (KR), and 7 e. of Flagstaff 28 Jan (CL).

Winter Rose-breasted Grosbeaks included one in Ash Canyon 13 Jan (R. Behrstock) and a male at Sweetwater 27 Feb+ (P. Kline; ph. C. Postmus). Up to 2 Common Grackles were in Bisbee 20 Dec-10 Feb (ph. WW; J. Hirth, m.ob.); there have been only about 10 prior documented reports from Arizona accepted by the A.B.C. Four different Orchard Orioles were well documented with photographs this winter, with one at Phoenix 22 Dec (*vide* J. Burns), one at a different location in Phoenix 24 Dec (ph. B. Grice), one in Surprise, Maricopa 28 Dec (ph. D. Bradford), and one in Mesa 21 Jan (ph. L. Fetter); most of the records of this species in recent years have been during the winter season. The Streak-

backed Oriole that returned to G.W.R. during the fall season was seen regularly throughout the period (m.ob.). Numerous Lawrence's Goldfinches were detected in normal wintering areas where this species irregularly appears (Santa Cruz River Valley), but 8 in Elmerville on the Sedona C.B.C. 23 Dec and 2 at San Bernardino N.W.R. 3 Feb (REW) were both in areas away from their normal winter distribution in the state (that is, when they occur).

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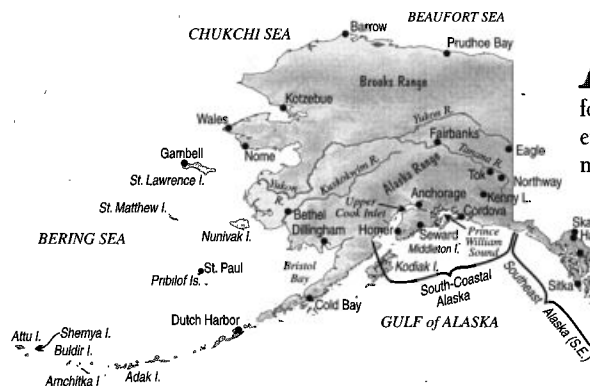
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Alaska



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An intense and lengthy high-pressure system that sprawled over the Region for the entire month of November eventually gave way to nearly a month of winter low-pressure systems. Heavy snows then blanketed the state south of the Alaska Range, and the same storms brought endless rain and wind to most of the Southeast. The strong November

freeze-up seemingly gave little hope for late southbound birds or lingering semi-hardy forms, which is more typical. But there were near-record numbers and a nice diversity of December passerines, mostly on the

immediate North Gulf Coast. The remainder of the season alternated from high-pressure cold spells to large low-pressure storms, punctuated by a near month-long continental high drifting over the Mainland from the High Arctic in February. This ridge pushed all storms from the Aleutian Low well south of the North Gulf Coast, and these hammered the Southeast with near-record snows and rains farther south. The season ended with well above-average snow accumulations south of the Alaska Range. It was otherwise a very quiet season, more like winters from the 1970s and 1980s.

WATERFOWL THROUGH CORMORANTS

Whooper Swans again ventured eastward in the Aleutians to Adak, where 3 were present



Two Kumlien's Iceland Gulls frequented the Ketchikan, Alaska waterfront in February 2007 (here 8 February), feeding at fish processing plants. This species is casual in the Region, known mostly from a few coastal records in late fall and midwinter. Photograph by Steve C. Heintz.

at Clam Lagoon 10-11 Feb (MT) into Mar. Small flocks or family groups of Whooper Swans are occasional through the winter, usually after Nov at larger fresh water bodies, typically from Amchitka and Adak in the cen. Aleutian Chain. Ketchikan's drake Wood Duck from Nov remained at its favored site through 16 Dec (AWP, ph. SCH), while a pair appeared in Juneau 11 Jan-26 Feb (m.ob.). The season's only Eurasian Wigeon reports were a pair in Juneau 19 Feb (PS) and a single male on the Homer Spit 15 Feb (CS). Notable dabbling highlights, probably neutralized by the heavy Nov freeze, were limited to a few Northern Pintails in the Anchorage area through the season (TT), a hardy Northern Shoveler at a Fairbanks cooling pond through 20 Dec (ABO), and a Eurasian Teal in Cordova 4 Dec (AL). Kodiak however, posted record-high dabbling numbers, including 223 Gadwall, 25 Northern Pintail, and amazing 60 Green-winged Teal on their 17 Dec C.B.C. (RAM). These numbers must have been supplemented by Mainland groups seeking suitable habitat after the Nov freeze. Another Tufted Duck wintered on Cordova's very productive Eyak L. 4 Dec+ (AL), the Region's most consistent Tufted Duck site away from the Aleutians. Although White-tailed Ptarmigan are regular and local in the Chugach Mts., a group of 7 in the South Fork Valley of Eagle R. 23 Dec (BM) made a new Eagle River area C.B.C. high count. These South Fork ravines and the nearby Arctic Valley Bowl are the

most consistent and accessible winter ptarmigan sites in Upper Cook Inlet.

Coastal loon concentrations seemed about average, although 4 Yellow-billed in Ketchikan 28 Jan (AWP, SCH) was a new local high and unusual for s. Southeast. The Region's Brandt's Cormorant hotspot in protected waters near Ketchikan produced only 3 this season off Mountain Pt. 28 Jan (AWP, SCH).

RAPTORS THROUGH DIPPER

Bald Eagles were well accounted for at their n. winter limits in Upper Cook Inlet, with season peaks of 255 estimated in the Palmer-Wasilla area 23 Dec (BW) and another 32 for the Anchorage C.B.C. 16 Dec (SM). Probably because of widespread atypical early winter redpoll concentrations, Sharp-shinned Hawks and Merlins made a surprisingly strong showing, especially s. of the Alaska Range. Single Sharp-shinned were noted, mostly in Dec, from Fairbanks 30 Dec (*vide* ND), where they are casual, around Anchorage through 16 Dec (SS) and at Kodiak in mid-Dec (RAM), while 2 were found in Homer 16 Dec (*vide* DE), and up to 6 hunted around Juneau all season (GVV).

Shorebirds provided limited highlights or unusual numbers this season, save for a Dec new record maximum count of 301 Dunlins from the Cordova C.B.C. 16 Dec (AL). Observers at two sites provided photographic documentation for Iceland Gulls, with 2 around Ketchikan 8-15 & 6 Feb+ (AWP, SCH,

ph.) and a single n. in Cook Inlet at Kenai 3-14 Feb (ph. TB, TE). Both birds seemed to represent *kumlieni* types, of which there are a few documented Alaska records, mostly from autumn. The only Slaty-backed Gull away from the Bering Sea was a single considered a local returnee to Kenai 30 Dec-14 Feb (TB, TE). Most exciting was a waif Ivory Gull that joined the Kenai R. mouth gull hordes 30-31 Dec (TB, TE)—Upper Cook Inlet's first winter record and about the 5th here overall. Nearly all of the Region's extralimital Ivory Gulls, i.e., away from the Bering Sea, are from Cook Inlet. Marbled Murrelet concentrations did not materialize at traditional sites except for an aggregation of 2000 estimated in Clover Passage near Ketchikan 25 Feb (AWP, SCH). Northern Hawk Owls showed their usual early-winter propensity to wander across the s. edges of their normal range, but a single in the alpine at Juneau's Eaglecrest ski area 2 Dec (DR, KT) was extralimital and casual in Southeast. Three Northern Pygmy Owls in the Ketchikan area 10 Dec-7 Jan (AWP, SCH) and 5 around Juneau for the season were about average and from typical winter sites. The season's first Boreal Owl seemed early, singing from spruce woods near Fairbanks 28 Jan (ND), while the first Northern Saw-whet Owl was close to on cue in the Anchorage area 18 Feb (SBr).

Possibly 2 different Anna's Hummingbirds, one of which first appeared in mid-Nov, may have traded time at a Cordova feeder through 16 Dec (*vide* AL), while the Ketchikan bird, also first seen in Nov, was noted there through 15 Jan (AWP, SCH). Not unexpectedly for this winter, no Northern Flickers were accounted for after mid-Dec. Christmas counts may be showing a long-term local decline in Gray Jays from the more populated and developed South-central communities, but Steller's Jays seem to be doing well and expanding at their n. limits. A new high C.B.C. tally of 14 Steller's from the Eagle River area 23 Dec is indicative of that. In a season with such an extreme and early freeze-up, American Dippers were concentrated in lower-elevation open channels. Although these are eyebrow-raising tallies, they may only hint at the winter distribution and status of this aquatic obligate, at least inland of the North Gulf Coast. The Palmer-Wasilla area C.B.C. produced a phenomenal 80 dippers, including 53 on 13-km stretch of the lower Little Susitna R., while Anchorage included a new local high of 33 on limited open water 16 Dec (SM).

THRUSHES THROUGH FINCHES

Two Townsend's Solitaires each at Anchorage 16 Dec (SM) and Eagle River 23 Dec (LS)

were the season's only report and the fewest seen for many years. American Robins defied the winter conditions and concentrated in record local numbers s. of the Alaska Range. While a single or 2 were noted between Eagle River and Palmer into early Jan, some 246 were tallied on the Homer C.B.C. 16 Dec (GL, *fide* DE) and easily 100+, encountered in a loose flock in s. Anchorage 5-12 Jan (BT, PP), was indicative of extreme numbers there. Some 15 years ago, robins were a big deal anywhere away from the immediate North Gulf Coast after early Dec; a single American Robin was certainly casual in Fairbanks 2 Jan (*fide* KR). A one-day wonder Northern Mockingbird was uncovered in the Ketchikan area 16 Dec (ph. AWP), a 2nd record there. Most of the Region's handful of records have come in fall. With appreciable snow cover delayed across the state until well into Dec, Bohemian Waxwing concentrations materialized later than average at their standard sites. And good numbers remained through the season mostly in the Anchorage area, where exotic landscaping provides plentiful fruit. Farther south, where Bohemians are sporadic in smaller numbers, Ketchikan produced a new local maximum of 120 on 5 Dec (AWP). Far more curious and significant were Cedar Waxwings in South-coastal areas through the season. Following the fall season reports there, which were indicative of the occasional westward drift into the North Gulf Coast of presumably birds from the Southeast Mainland, were 12 on the Homer C.B.C. 16 Dec (*fide* DE). A single surfaced with a robin flock in Anchorage 12 Jan (BT), followed by at least 6 in Anchorage 19 Feb (TT) and then another 9 there, across town, 22 Feb (GF). We have few winter records and perhaps a half-dozen total Dec records collectively between Anchorage, the Kenai Pen. coast, and Kodiak.

Not surprisingly, but unusual after the past few years, the only warbler for the season was a Yellow-rumped Warbler at an Anchorage suet feeder through at least 16 Dec (DFD). There are about five previous Upper Cook Inlet Dec reports of the species. The Homer area continues to harbor relatively large numbers of winter sparrows, this season highlighted by unparalleled counts of 17 American Tree Sparrows, 31 White-crowned Sparrows, and 24 Golden-crowned Sparrows, all from the local C.B.C. 16 Dec (*fide* DE). The Tree Sparrow tally certainly rivals the highest single-day winter count for the Region. Significant semi-hardy sparrow finds otherwise included a rare winter Savannah Sparrow at Kodiak 17 Dec+ (ph. RAM), a Fox Sparrow, casual in winter in Fairbanks, 6-Feb (ABO), a local record high 4 Lincoln's Sparrows in Kodiak through the sea-

son (*fide* RAM), a first Interior winter record Lincoln's at an Ester feeder s. of Fairbanks all season (DDG), and a good northerly Upper Cook Inlet showing of 5 White-crowns in Butte near Palmer 17 Dec+ (*fide* BW). Three White-throated Sparrows were located in Ketchikan, 2 of which were there all season and the other present 14-26 Dec (JFK, AWP, SCH), and a single was farther nw. at Kodiak 17 Dec+ (*fide* RAM). Dark-eyed Juncos, the hardiest sparrow to winter in the Region, were unremarkable save for about 4 around the Fairbanks area 30 Dec-Feb (ABO) and a "few" that survived in Delta Junction through the season (SD). Interesting Snow Buntings away from their known winter coastal fringe habitats included 3 in Fairbanks 11 Jan (MS, *fide* ND), 40 in the Delta area farm fields 9 Feb (NC), and one n. at Gambell 12 Jan (GK).

The season's Red-winged Blackbird reports included one again in Anchorage, where casual, for most of Dec (*fide* SB) and 5 in the Juneau area through mid-Jan (GVV). A first-ever Aleutian Islands' Brown-headed Cowbird found the only feeder in Dutch Harbor 14 Dec-10 Jan (ph. SG). There are a few Bering Sea area records from fall only, and not many other winter records from the Region. Three Pine Grosbeaks were a long way from boreal forest when they appeared in the willow thickets at Dutch Harbor 12 Jan (SG), a first Unalaska I. area record. Gibson has chronicled a westward Pine Grosbeak expansion over the past 20 years. Small numbers moved from the nw. side of Kodiak I. into the tall-brush habitats on the Alaska Pen., farther into the Shumagin Is. and alpine thickets near Cold Bay, and then near False Pass on e. Unimak I., where he saw them certainly nesting in Jun 2002. Two different Purple Finches were in the Ketchikan area 13-14 Dec and 13 Feb (KM, AWP, SCH), the only Alaska locale where this otherwise casual winter visitor is nearly annual. Common Redpolls staged an unusually early and widespread winter dip into the s. half of the Mainland, with large flocks encountered from Fairbanks to the North Gulf Coast in Dec. A typical redpoll season otherwise advances such numbers southward in late Feb, with early Mar peaks more standard. Interestingly, this year's flocks dispersed in Feb. The harsh early season and heavy Dec snow certainly contributed to huge fringillid numbers out in the North Gulf at Kodiak, where the 17 Dec C.B.C. established local high counts for Red Crossbills (498), Common Redpolls (297), and Pine Siskins (2488) (*fide* RAM).



One of at least 12 Cedar Waxwings that hung around an Anchorage neighborhood all season, this bird was photographed in the Regional Editor's yard 25 February 2007. There had been only one prior Cook Inlet winter record. Photograph by Thede Tobish.

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