

analyst probes into the Rio Grande Delta a general scarcity of all sparrows is discernible, a conclusion which Hudson affirms for his San Benito area.

CONTRIBUTORS AND OBSERVERS—Margaret Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Anderson, Charles R. Bender, Jean Bensmiller, Gene W. Blacklock, Elisabeth R. Blount, Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Bone, Robert C. Brown, Nettie Busby, Russel W. Clapper, Clarence Cottam, Nils Ekfelt, T. B. Feltner, Charles D. Fisher, Raymond J. Fleetwood, Mrs. A. H. Geiselbrecht, Mrs. Frances Hames, Adele Harding, Gerald B. Harding, Dan H. Hardy, Bill Harwell, Jean Harwell, C. E. Hudson, Jr., Joe Kennedy, Ed Kutak, Mrs. J. A. LaCoke, Mr. and Mrs. H. Grady Loftin, L. B. Marlatt, Ernest W. McDaniel, L. W. McDaniel, Doris N. McGuire, Elric McHenry, Arlie K. McKay, James A. Middleton, Lisette Mueller, Norma C. Oates, Mike Perrone, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Pierce, Barbara Ribble, Mark B. Robbins, Bettie Roberts, Jane Robinson, San Antonio Audubon Society, Wayne A. Shifflett, Jerry R. Smith, Wini Smith, Linda Snyder, Robert W. Storer, John W. White, Stephen G. Williams, David Wolf.—**FRED S. WEBSTER, JR., 4926 Strass Drive, Austin, Texas 78731.**

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN—INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

/ Thomas H. Rogers

Most of the Region's wintry weather came in December, s. interior British Columbia excepted. Temperatures for that month were subnormal but not severe at many localities. Indications



were that in the United States portion of the Region more snow fell in December than in any succeeding month. January, w. of the Continental Divide at least, was remarkably warm, almost springlike. At Spokane, Wash. temperatures aver-

aged 6.5° F. above normal and nearby Turnbull Nat'l Wildlife Refuge at Cheney posted a record high of +58°. Precipitation was somewhat deficient in many areas, contributing to lack of snow cover in the valleys. British Columbia had more snow and freezing rain than usual. February continued warmer than normal but at Spokane, at least, gave the impression of coldness after so mild a January. Precipitation was even more deficient, except for British Columbia, where snowfall exceeded the normal. March turned abnormally cold, being only slightly warmer than February and decidedly wetter, with precipitation well above normal. Ponds in the vicinity of Ninepipe Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Charlo, Mont. froze again.

In summary, the winter, in the valleys at least, was generally mild and open, except in British Columbia. Ponds in central Washington were unfrozen most of the winter. Several reports noted the winter as decidedly windy. Spokane had the highest wind velocity ever recorded there, up to 65 m.p.h. on Mar. 26. Birds wintered in good numbers and variety. Food supplies appeared adequate and in some instances encouraged spectacular invasions. Some northern species were scarce, perhaps detained in Canada or at higher elevations by good food supplies. The cold, wet March slowed vegetation but the extra moisture it brought promised good growing conditions after a dry winter.

LOONS AND GREBES—Small numbers of Com. Loon were present on the Columbia R. in the Tri-cities (Pasco-Richland-Kennewick) area of Washington from late December at least through the first week of March. Two Red-throated Loons were seen at Okanagan Landing, B.C. on Dec. 26 (KG). Horned Grebes wintered on Okanagan and Kalamalka Lakes, B.C. Eared and W. Grebes remained during the winter in the Tri-cities area and a few of the latter wintered in the Okanagan Valley. The usual small numbers of Pied-billed Grebes were noted in the w. part of the Region. One seen at Livingston, Mont. on Jan. 16 probably wintered.

PELICANS AND HERONS—A group of 20 White Pelicans was observed on Dec. 5 on the Yakima R. near the Tri-cities (EM). A flock of 20 was seen near Cataldo Mission, w. of Kellogg, Ida. on Mar. 26 (JHR) and a flock was noted at Canyon Ferry e. of Helena, Mont. on Mar. 31 (LM). Great Blue Herons were not noted as wintering in s. interior British Columbia or in the Helena area but appeared in normal numbers in many other localities. An estimated 60 wintered in and around Ninepipe Refuge (RLB). Black-crowned Night Herons were noted in small numbers in the Tri-cities area.

WATERFOWL—Two Whistling Swans at Okanagan Landing, Jan. 14 and 6 at Kelowna, B.C., Dec. 20, quite possibly wintered. More evidence of the birds wintering in n.e. Washington has

come in. Eight were flying upriver at Spokane, Jan. 10 (KL). Two were seen at Coeur d' Alene L., Ida. on Jan. 30 (WH). Residents at Priest L. near Coolin, Ida. reported that a flock of about 20 wintered there (MC). On the Pend Oreille R. eleven miles n. of Newport, Wash., 7 swans, presumably Whistling, were observed on Dec. 12 and 47 were there on Jan. 16 (CRO). Two Trumpeters were on Osoyoos L., B.C. on Jan. 24 (SRC) and a few wintered at Ennis, Mont. as usual. The largest concentration of Canada Geese was 13,600 in mid-December at McNary Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Burbank, Wash. Two **Black Brant** at Penticton, B.C. on Dec. 5 and 12 were apparently the first recorded for the Okanagan Valley (SRC). From 1 to 10 Snow Geese were with them from late November through March. This species was noted at Big Timber, Mont. the first week of January (HC). Waterfowl numbers at Columbia Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Othello, Wash. decreased from 106,400 the first week of January to about 700 by the last week. At McNary Refuge Mallards peaked at 30,000, with 71,580 counted at nearby Ringold, in early December. Maximum numbers there for other species at the beginning of winter were: Pintail, 2300; Green-winged Teal, 2100; Am. Widgeon, 1900, and Canvasback, 2100. Other species that normally winter appeared to be about as usual, with a few "rarities". Two Blue-winged Teal on the Tri-cities Christmas Count were a surprise. Single **Eur. Widgeons**, presumably migrating, were seen in e. Washington in March. On Mar. 21 2 were seen on separate ponds s. of Spokane (JA & WH; Mr. & Mrs. SOS). A ♂ was observed about 2 miles s.w. of Reardan on Mar. 27 (WH). At Okanagan Falls, B.C. a ♂ was photographed, Feb. 6 (SRC). From 2 to 6 Oldsquaw were seen on the Spokane R. at Spokane from November to late March (WH; S.A.S.). The Hooded Merganser, not previously recorded in midwinter in the Livingston, Mont. area, was noted there on Jan. 16, a ♂ (PDS), and on 3 occasions Feb. 7-21 (HC; ETH & RAH, LM) and probably wintered.

HAWKS AND EAGLES—Goshawk numbers may well have been up, for the birds were reported from six localities: Bozeman and Helena, Mont.; Spokane, the Tri-cities, and Ahtanum (Yakima), Wash., and in the Okanagan Valley, B.C. At the latter locality they were described as unusually abundant. At Helena an adult was sighted on two dates and an immature on one, all in February. About 20 Red-tailed Hawks were present during the winter at Turnbull Refuge and some 15 Rough-legged Hawks were believed present at the Nat'l Bison Range, Moiese, Mont. From 1 to 3 Golden Eagles were reported from scattered localities. The Bald Eagle was reported from seven localities. Six at L. Helena, Mont. made up the largest concentration there in recent years. Up to 8 were noted at Ninepipe Refuge (RLB). In n. Idaho and e. Washington influx to the larger lakes (Coeur d' Alene, Pend

Oreille, Priest and L. Spokane) occurred in December, fish spawning time (S.A.S.). The scarce Gyrfalcon was noted twice in British Columbia, 1 at Duck L. near Winfield on Mar. 4 (FP), and 1 at Okanagan Landing, photographed, Mar. 13 (DH). The Peregrine Falcon was sighted on three dates in the Helena area, on Feb. 21 w. of Bozeman (LM), and twice in the Pasco-Eltopia area, Wash., singles on Dec. 12 and the Christmas Bird Count (infra "CBC").

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS—Thirteen Sage Grouse were counted on the Yakima Firing Range n.e. of Yakima, Wash. (HD & PH). Populations of California Quail and Ring-necked Pheasant were probably near normal at most localities. Up to 20 Chukars were seen in March in the Clarkston, Wash. vicinity (MJP). At the Nat'l Bison Range the species was described as a common resident. Gray Partridge numbers in the Spokane area had probably not yet been restored to normal since the severe winter of 1968-69 (WH). A flock of Turkeys was seen on March 16 between Bozeman and Livingston, where the birds were introduced in the fall of 1969 (HC). At Turnbull Refuge signs were noted of the lone Turkey still remaining.

CRANES—Fifty Sandhill Cranes were observed near Sprague, Wash. on Mar. 27 and another flock was reported near St. Andrews, Wash. in late March (S.A.S.). Sixteen feeding in a cornfield at Columbia Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Othello, Wash. on Apr. 2 were the first recorded there. Two were seen near the freeway at Union Gap, just south of Yakima, Wash. (HD).

SHOREBIRDS—A Greater Yellowlegs was still at Ringold, Wash., n. of McNary Refuge on Dec. 8 and a Lesser was seen on Dec. 31 along the Yakima River in the Tri-cities area (EM). Two Dunlin were noted on the beach at Kelowna on Dec. 20. Two Long-billed Dowitchers were still in the Tri-cities vicinity in early January (EM).

GULLS—A **Glaucous Gull** in first-year plumage was at Spokane Dec. 20-Jan. 16 (JA). Two were seen at Penticton, B.C. on Dec. 26 (SRC). Herring Gulls were described as fairly common in the Tri-cities area and at least 100 were seen along with small numbers of California Gulls at Coeur d' Alene L., Ida. on Dec. 20 (JA). The latter species was also considered fairly common at the Tri-cities during the winter. One hundred to 200 Ring-billed Gulls were seen regularly at Walla Walla and the species was very common at the Tri-cities. At Kelowna, 51 were present on Dec. 20. A lone bird in immature plumage rested briefly in a field at Missoula, Mont. on Mar. 31.

OWLS—One or 2 Snowy Owls were seen on several dates from Dec. 26 to Mar. 27 in n.e. Washington (Davenport, Reardan and Spokane) (JA; WH; S.A.S.). The Pygmy Owl showed a marked upsurge in numbers at Bozeman and in the Okanagan of British Columbia. Numerous

sightings were made in the former area, many within the city limits, from Nov. 4 to the end of the report period. The Vernon, B.C. CBC had 9, the highest ever. One was noted at Missoula, in a tree with 25 Evening Grosbeaks and a Song Sparrow! The little owls were seen frequently in the Rattlesnake section of Missoula in December (PW, fide RLH). Their numbers were about normal elsewhere. A pair of Burrowing Owls, the first in a number of years, appeared at Columbia Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Othello, Wash. A sick or injured Great Gray Owl was captured south of Bozeman, Feb. 15 (Mr. & Mrs. JB) and about Mar. 1 a pair was seen for several days near that city (Mr. & Mrs. JM). Short-eared Owls were rather scarce except in three spots: Pullman, Wash.—Moscow, Ida. airport, 25-30 (LMJ); Davenport, Wash., at least 15 on Jan. 23 (WH), and Spokane International Airport, 19 on the CBC. A Boreal Owl was identified at Penticton, B.C. on Jan. 1 (DS).

JAYS—The Blue Jay that appeared in the fall at a feeding station on the Little Spokane R. n. of Spokane stayed there all winter (VN & CS). The Com. Raven appeared in unprecedented numbers in n. Okanagan Valley, B.C. About 90 were seen on the Vernon CBC. The species' numbers were perhaps up in the Spokane area but seemed normal elsewhere. The influx of Clark's Nutcrackers in the vicinity of Spokane was spectacular, in fact the greatest on record. From September through March flocks up to 100 appeared, with numbers dwindling at the end. The CBC revealed 276.

WRENS AND THRUSHES—The Cañon Wren was again seen in December in the Bozeman area, near LaHood, suggesting wintering (Mrs. WMcK). At Spokane the species was noted on the CBC and 2 were seen on the Little Spokane R. on Jan. 29 (S.A.S.). Two at Vaseux L. in extreme s. British Columbia on Mar. 21 were the first seen there since the severe cold spell of December, 1968. A late-lingering Rock Wren was found on the Spokane CBC Jan. 3. Robins wintered at nearly every reporting locality but were generally uncommon or scarce in w. Montana and s. British Columbia, with perhaps the exception at Helena where from 16 to 47 were counted between Dec. 13 and Jan. 2. Spokane had a "robin winter" with flocks up to 50 or 100. Some 500 or more seen on Feb. 9 were perhaps migrants (JR). A few Varied Thrushes wintered in the Okanagan, Tri-cities and Spokane areas. A few Mountain Bluebirds were in the Bitterroot Valley near Hamilton, Mont. as early as Feb. 11 (OF). A single Hermit Thrush lingered at Walla Walla until Nov. 28 (JRW).

KINGLETS AND WAXWINGS—Ruby-crowned Kinglets were present all winter in the Tri-cities, Wash. area, where they were last seen on Mar. 21. Bohemian Waxwing numbers were impressive from Missoula to extreme e. Washington and

s. British Columbia. Counts up to 2000 were made at Missoula during late December and early January, dwindling to less than 200 to the end of March. Several thousand wintered along Mission Creek at the Nat'l Bison Range. At Spokane the flocks built up to thousands in January and February, with 4000 recorded in a flock on Jan. 1. As usual the buildup depended upon an excellent crop of mountain ash berries. The birds were abundant in the Okanagan Valley where early departure of Starlings left many berries. A few birds penetrated as far south as Walla Walla, Yakima and the Tri-cities. Cedar Waxwings remained in distinctly greater numbers than usual, particularly at Spokane, where flocks of 50-100 were seen from December to early March, and in the Okanagan, where small flocks of 10-30 remained through the winter in Vernon. A few wintered at Bozeman which is unusual, and 3 were seen at Helena on Dec. 12-13. A few remained at Missoula and they showed moderate numbers at the Tri-cities, with 100 seen in Richland on Feb. 13.

WARBLERS—Audubon's Warbler wintered commonly at the Tri-cities. One pair was noted feeding on grapes remaining on the vines. A few were noted during the winter at Walla Walla (JRW).

HOUSE SPARROW—This species, generally abundant and ignored, was decimated during the winter at Missoula. Sick and dead birds were frequently reported and some sent to the U.S. Public Health Service Laboratory at Hamilton, Mont. were found to contain *Salmonella* bacteria, but no official report had yet been issued.

FINCHES—Evening Grosbeaks staged what might be termed an invasion in Spokane, building up from a few in January to flocks of 40-50 in February and March. In one back yard 75 were banded (THR). In Moscow over 50 were banded (LMJ). "Good numbers" were reported for Bozeman. At Missoula, the birds were irregularly common. In one part of the city the Evening Grosbeak numbers increased as House Sparrows declined, particularly at feeders. In the Okanagan Valley the species was much scarcer than usual, in spite of abundant maple seeds. The birds were absent from the CBC there for the first time in twenty years. Several Cassin's Finches wintered at Bozeman, frequenting feeders. Winter records there are usually sparse. At Spokane a ♂ came to a feeder on Feb. 1 (WH). Birds appearing in late February were probably migrants. A ♀ **Purple Finch** appeared at Bozeman, about October and later a ♂ appeared (HC). They were again seen on Feb. 5, as close as six feet, and compared with accompanying Cassin's Finches (EH, RAH, LM & PDS). A singing male was observed on Feb. 28 there (PDS) and three more records were obtained in late March and early April. Flocks of House Finches, now established at Missoula, ranged up

to 60 and even to 90 birds on Dec. 9, then tapered off to about 15 in late December, with small, irregular numbers thereafter. Pine Grosbeaks made very few appearances in the valleys. Numbers were subnormal at Bozeman. About 20 were seen at Riverside Cemetery in Spokane on Dec. 5 and 2 were noted at Priest L., Ida. on the 13th (S.A.S.). They were scarce or absent in the Okanagan Valley but skiers reported them at 5500-6000 ft. No rosy finches were observed and the Com. Redpoll and Pine Siskin were scarce or absent at most localities. The Com. Redpoll was sighted at Helena on Dec. 20, a small flock; at Ennis, on Dec. 23 (JHR), at Clarkston, Wash., 6 on Dec. 16 (MJP), and in the n. Okanagan, small flocks on a few occasions. Pine Siskins were scarce, being sighted only at Priest L., Ida., small flocks from mid-February into March (S.A.S.); at Helena, 1 on Jan. 17; at Ennis on Dec. 23 (SC, DR & PDS), and in the n. Okanagan. Am. Goldfinches were scarce or absent except for the Tri-cities and Clarkston, Wash. areas. Southern British Columbia had a near-monopoly on Red Crossbills, where they were common in Douglas fir forest following a very good cone crop. Small numbers were noted in the Spokane area, the only other locality reporting them.

SPARROWS—Rufous-sided Towhees were reported wintering only in the Tri-cities area of Washington. Slate-colored Juncos were reported on a few occasions in the Bozeman-Ennis area during December and January, and a few were seen at Spokane and the Tri-cities. Oregon Junco numbers were low in a number of localities. At Missoula none were seen between late November and the beginning of March although weather conditions favored the ground feeders there. Tree Sparrow numbers there were also low. These birds were seen at Bozeman and Helena. One seen on Jan. 29 at McNary Refuge and about 10 observed near Reardan, Wash. on Jan. 2 may have wintered. At Vernon several appeared in early December but apparently did not winter there. One or 2 immature Harris' Sparrows visited a feeder in the Tri-cities nearly all winter (EM) and 2 appeared at a feeder in Vernon in November, 1 remaining at least until Apr. 9. A single White-throated Sparrow wintered in the vicinity of a feeder at Spokane, having been first seen on Dec. 6 (WH; S.A.S.; RW). Lapland Longspurs were reported only from Helena, 40 on Dec. 24 and again later, and at Ennis 100 on Dec. 23 (SC, DR & PDS). Large flocks of Snow Buntings were seen on the CBC at Ennis, Dec. 23. Small numbers were sighted elsewhere in w. Montana and e. Washington. About 150 were seen at Prince George, B.C. on Dec. 20 (CJ).

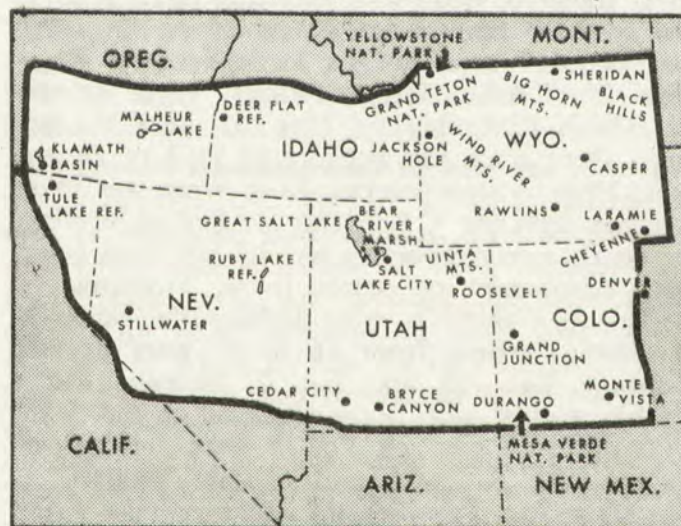
CONTRIBUTORS (sectional editors, in bold face, should receive credit for observations in their respective areas unless otherwise stated)—James Acton, Mr. & Mrs. John Baden, **Robert L.**

Barber: Nat'l Bison Range, Moiese, Mont., **Eugene C. Barney:** McNary Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Burbank, Wash., **Dave Brown:** Columbia Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Othello, Wash., **Steve R. Cannings,** Helen Carlson, Maxine Clason, Sharon Cotterell, Helen Doornink, **Maxine Eller:** Yakima Valley, Wash., **Opal Foust:** Bitterroot Valley, Ravalli Co., Mont., **James Grant:** s. interior British Columbia, Karl Gruener, Warren Hall, Pauline Hager, Dave Hancock, **Ralph L. Hand:** Missoula, Mont. area, Eve T. Hays, R. A. Hays, Conrad Jarosch, Loring M. Jones, Katherine M. Laupp, Mrs. Wilbur McKinney, **Sid Martin:** Helena, Mont. area, Mr. & Mrs. John Montaigne, Elizabeth Moore, Louis Moos, Vee Nealey, Carrol R. Orcutt, Frank Paul, Margaret J. Polumsky, Jan Reynolds, Dan Rogers, Thomas H. Rogers, J. H. Rumely, Daryl Sherman, **P. D. Skaar:** Bozeman-Ennis, Mont. area, Connie Smedley, Spokane Audubon Society, **Mrs. S. O. Stanley:** e. Washington and n. Idaho, Robert Wilson, John Robert Winchell, Paul J. Wolf, **Robert E. Woodley:** Pasco-Kennewick-Richland ("Tri-cities") area, Wash., **Maurice B. Wright:** Turnbull Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Cheney, Wash.—**THOMAS H. ROGERS, E. 10820 Maxwell, Spokane, Wa. 99206.**

GREAT BASIN, CENTRAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

/ Oliver K. Scott

Where did our birds go this past winter? Normally there are good populations of winter residents and visitors such as Bohemian Waxwings, Evening Grosbeaks, rosy finches and many other



species, but not this season. The early part of the winter—December and January—were wet and cold in the north and very dry in the south. The s. portion borders on the Southwest, where severe drought conditions exist.

The Bohemian Waxwings didn't make an appearance in the Region until the end of March. Where they wintered is not known. Gray-crowned Rosy Finches have wintered in good numbers in