

mountain west region



VAN A. TRUAN
and **BRANDON K. PERCIVAL**

It appears that again storm fronts moved to the north of the Region except for Nevada, which had more moisture than normal. The eastern plains of the Region were very dry. Mild weather this winter provided open water and exposed ground. More species stayed farther north than usual. One birder said "I am sure northern observers would pretty much agree that cormorants, towhees, kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, thrashers, doves, bluebirds, migratory blackbirds, etc., were easier to find this year than most." Several states reported new winter records for summer/migrating species. We received only one report this season from Wyoming. In this vast Region, we ask for reports from anyone who lives in or visits the states.

Abbreviations: S.W.A. (State Wildlife Area).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

Single Pacific Loons were at Douglas Res., Larimer, CO, Dec. 8 (RK); Barr L., Adams, CO, Dec. 12–18 (JV, m.ob.); and Sunset Park, Las Vegas, NV, Dec. 13–Feb. 28 (fide RPS); four wintered at Pueblo Res., Pueblo, CO, Dec. 23–Feb. 20 (JK, CLW, m.ob.). An imm. Yellow-billed Loon was at Pueblo Res. Dec. 26–Feb. 20 (DQ, JRo, NE, m.ob.), and one graced L. Powell, Kane, NV, Feb. 1 (CL, LD, JS). Three Horned Grebes were at Pyramid L., Washoe, NV, Dec. 12 (MM), and two were there Feb. 13 (MM); one visited L. Mead, Clark, NV, Jan. 23 (RPS). One or two Red-necked Grebes were seen at Hamilton Res., Larimer, CO, Dec. 4–5 (WPL) and Jan. 19–Feb. 9 (DAL, m.ob.). A very high count of 232 Eared Grebes was

made at Barr L., Adams, CO, Dec. 5 (TL, JK). Late Am. White Pelicans included singles at Cherry Creek Res., Arapahoe, CO, Dec. 6–7 (TL, RO, SC, NK, m.ob.); in Mesa, CO, Dec. 20 (fide CD, RLe); and in Denver Jan. 1 (fide HEK). A late Double-crested Cormorant was at Jumbo Res., Sedgwick, CO, Dec. 12 (DAL). A Green Heron at the Oxbow section of the Provo R., Utah, Dec. 19 was quite late for n. Utah (MW). A Great Egret was reported from Mesa, CO, Dec. 20 (fide CD, RLe), and a late Cattle Egret stayed to Dec. 1 in Penrose, Fremont (fide J&RW). Eight Black-crowned Night-Herons appeared to winter in Denver (fide HEK). Several late White-faced Ibis were at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT, Dec. 18 (CW).

WATERFOWL

This season Colorado birders reported eight Tundra Swans. A "Bewick's" Tundra Swan was observed in Box Elder Jan. 28, providing the first for this race in Utah (ACo). Fourteen Trumpeter Swans were reported from Colorado this season. Two Wood Ducks were at Virginia L., Reno, NV, Dec. 9 (MM). Rare in Colorado, single male Am. Black Ducks were at Long Pond, Larimer, Jan. 7–9 (SJD, m.ob.) and at the Great Plains Res., Kiowa, Feb. 7 (MJ, BKP). Single male Eur. Wigeon were at Ft. Collins, CO, Dec. 15–Feb. 2 (DCE, m.ob.); in Hart's Basin, Delta, CO, Feb. 11 (EH); and in Box

Elder, UT, Feb. 13–15 (CR, J&KB, MS). Nine Oldsquaws were reported from 5 e. Colorado counties; also, four females were along Antelope I. Causeway, Davis, UT, Dec. 5–6 (D&MS). The female Harlequin Duck at Saltair, Salt Lake, UT, stayed to Dec. 7 (SCa, MS). Two female Barrow's Goldeneyes at Kanarrville Rest Area, UT Dec. 7 were the first for Iron (SS), and one

SA Winter waterfowl populations have become extremely scarce on the Great Salt Lake. Virtually no birds could be found on the lake from mid-December through the period. In a normal winter from 5000–10,000 Common and Barrow's goldeneyes can be seen along the Antelope I. Causeway, and 50,000+ N. Shovelers along the s. shore. On an early February trip to the s. shore, the only bird within scope range was a single Com. Goldeneye. The lake ecosystem problems appear to be related to over-harvesting of brine shrimp and salinity imbalance, possibly caused by the railroad causeway at Promontory Point. It appears that as a result of these adverse impacts to the lake's ecosystem, goldeneyes and other ducks usually on the lake are being attracted to freshwater systems elsewhere in Utah. This could also explain why inter-mountain areas within Colorado have shown marked increases in wintering Barrow's.



The Region's bird of the season was a female King Eider shot by a hunter at Carson Lake December 6, 1998, constituting the first Nevada record. Photograph/Martin Meyers

dropped by Warm Cr. Bay, L. Powell, NV, Feb. 1 (CL, LD).

The Region's bird of the season was a female **King Eider** shot by a hunter at Carson L. Dec. 6 (JRh, ph. MM, GC), providing the first Nevada record. A female Black Scoter at Pueblo Res. Dec. 2 (BKP), a White-winged along Antelope I. Causeway, UT, Dec. 20 (SR), and two at N. Poudre Res. #3, *Larimer*, CO, Dec. 12–19 (DCE, m.ob.) were the only scoters reported.

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

The 5th Utah **Red-shouldered Hawk** was observed in Cedar Valley, *Iron*, Dec. 9 (P&SS). Also, single Red-shouldered were at Chatfield Res., *Jefferson/Douglas*, CO, Dec. 18–Jan. 8 (CLW, JK, m.ob.) and in Rocky Ford S.W.A., *Otero*, CO, Jan. 23–31 (BKP, TD, m.ob.). Single Peregrine Falcons were at Rocky Ford S.W.A. Dec. 10 (SO), Denver Jan. 2 (*fide* HEK), and Colorado City, *Pueblo*, CO, Jan. 2 (DSi); a pair stayed at Willard Bay State Park, UT, Dec. 2 (KE, JRe, AS).

Single Soras were noted in Mesa, CO, Dec. 20 (CD, RL) and at John Martin Res., *Bent*, CO, Feb. 18 (BKP, TD). Late Sandhill Cranes in Colorado included six in *Adams* Dec. 26 (SB, MJ) and one near Canon City, *Fremont*, Jan. 31 (PG, LM).

A late Am. Avocet was at Quichapa L., *Iron*, UT, Dec. 19 (SDS). Other late shorebirds in Colorado included a Greater Yellowlegs at Boyd L., *Larimer*, Dec. 5 (PS); a Solitary Sandpiper in Boulder Dec. 10 (BK); and three Spotted Sandpipers in *Mesa* Dec. 20 (*fide* CD, RLe). A Spotted Sandpiper was also at Deer Creek Res., *Wasatch*, UT, Feb. 28 (LL, MS, DW). Two Dunlins were at L. Henry, *Crowley*, CO, Dec. 6 (BKP, MJ) while one visited White Rocks, *Boulder*, Dec. 20 (BK, PS, BP). An amazing 100–200 were in *Box Elder* Feb. 15 (L&RR, MS), perhaps the largest group of Dunlins ever recorded in Utah. Rare in winter, 15 Marbled Godwits were at Bear R. Migratory Bird Refuge, *Box Elder*, Dec. 18 (CW).

GULLS THROUGH TERNS

An early Franklin's Gull was in Salt Creek W.M.A., *Box Elder*, Feb. 6 (KE, JRe, AS). A 2nd-basic Mew Gull was reported from Union Res., *Weld*, CO, Dec. 5 (BP, PS). Colorado's first **Iceland Gull**, a first-winter bird, was observed on a frozen pond w. of Pueblo Jan. 9–10 (RO, DQ, SC, TD, m.ob.). A record number of Lesser Black-backed Gulls was reported in Colorado this season: an adult at Loveland Res., *Larimer*, Dec. 12 (NK); a 2nd-basic at Loveland Res. Dec.

12–13 (NK, PS); a adult-basic at Boulder Res., *Boulder*, Dec. 17 (BK, AC, JV), which may have been the same as the Loveland Res. bird; a 4th-basic with pink legs at Pueblo Res. Dec. 19–Jan. 16 (TL, m.ob.); an adult-basic at Canon City Dec. 20 (BKP, CLW, ph. TL); an adult-basic near Rocky Ford Dec. 21 (TL, PG, SB); a 2nd-basic at Douglas Res. Jan. 6–9 (SJD); a 2nd-basic at Pueblo Jan. 8 (MJ); a adult-basic at the Great Plains Res. Feb. 7–20 (MJ, DN); and an adult-basic at Windsor Res., *Weld*, CO, Feb. 10 (SJD). A first-basic **Glaucous-winged Gull** was reported from *Pueblo*, CO, Jan. 5 (BBH) and a first-basic at Bear R., UT, Jan. 9, (MS, MTh, m.ob.) and Feb. 15 (L&RR). At least ten Glaucous Gulls were found in Colorado and seven in Utah this season.

It appears that the usual ad. Great Black-backed Gull returned to Pueblo Res., CO, Dec. 23–Jan. 31 (CLW, JK, m.ob.). Other Great Black-backed included a 2nd-basic bird also at Pueblo Res. Jan. 23 (BKP, TD); an adult-basic, perhaps the Pueblo bird, at the Great Plains Res. Feb. 18 (BKP, TD); and one at L. Henry Feb. 20 (DSi, DJ). An unexpected *Sterna* tern was reported at Barr L., *Adams*, CO, Dec. 3 (TD); there were previously no winter reports for any terns in Colorado.

DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

Band-tailed Pigeons again wintered at Green Mt. Falls, *Teller*, CO, Jan. 5 (RB), and two early individuals were in Woodland Park, *Teller*, Feb. 22 (JJ). A record-high 34 Eur. Collared-Doves were counted in Rocky Ford, CO, (v.o); and another 14 were in Springfield, *Baca*, CO, Jan. 2–Feb. 20 (Dsv, IS). A high count of 42 W. Screech-Owls was tallied on the Grand Junction CBC, CO, Dec. 20 (*fide* CD, RLe). Northern Pygmy-Owls were reported from Palmer L., *El Paso*, CO, Dec. 6 (BM); in Rist Canyon, *Larimer*, CO, Dec. 31 (NK); and at Glenwood Springs, *Garfield*, CO, Feb. 18 (VZ). Single Short-eared Owls were reported from Wellington S.W.A., *Larimer*, CO, Dec. 6–Jan. 23 (JRI, m.ob.); in *Baca*, CO, Jan. 1 (TL, Dsv); at Barr L., CO, Jan. 10 (TD); and at L. Cheraw, *Otero*, CO, Jan. 26 (DSi). Five Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered in e. Colorado. Rarely reported in winter, a female Red-naped Sapsucker was in Grand Junction Jan. 24 (RL). Also rare in winter, three Williamson's Sapsuckers were found near Westcliffe, *Custer*, CO, Dec. 26 (MY). Three Say's Phoebe were reported in Colorado. Possibly a first county record, a Blue Jay was in Meeker, *Rio Blanco*, CO,

Dec. 6 (CD, RLe, KP, TM), and eight were reported from Utah. Rare in extreme e. Colorado, a Bushtit was seen in *Baca* in December (DSv) and four at Two Buttes Res., *Baca*, Feb. 8 (DAL). Three Carolina Wrens were reported in e. Colorado, and single House Wrens were at Canon City, *Fremont*, CO, Dec. 20 (PHu, m.ob.), at Boulder Dec. 20 (PH); and along Hard Scrabble Cr. at Pyramid L., *Washoe*, NV, Feb. 13 (MM, GC, m.ob.). Western Bluebirds were found in late December in *Baca*, CO (DSv), where they are rarely reported. Wintering Hermit Thrushes included singles in *Mesa*, CO, Dec. 20 (*fide* CD, RLe), at Ft. Collins, CO, Dec. 24–26 (DAL); and e. of Pueblo, CO, Jan. 3 (MJ, TL). In Colorado, single male Varied Thrushes were reported at El Dorado Springs, *Boulder*, Dec. 20 (MG, JC) and at Bonny Res., *Yuma*, Jan. 1 (PG, LM).

Single Gray Catbirds in Colorado were at Rocky Ford S.W.A. Dec. 22–28 (CLW, SO) and at Longmont, *Boulder*, Jan. 17 (SF). Three N. Mockingbirds were reported in e. Colorado. Possibly two Brown Thrashers wintered near Cheyenne, WY (EL, R&JD), and seven were reported from e. Colorado. Bohemian Waxwings invaded Colorado with high counts of 1000–4000 at Sunset, *Boulder*, Jan. 28 (TVZ); others included one near Canon City Dec. 20 (BKP, CLW), 20 at Pueblo Dec. 31 (BKP, DSm), and 35 at Colorado City Jan. 31 (DSi). Rarely observed n. of Palmer Divide, CO, in winter, a Loggerhead Shrike was at Douglas Res. Dec. 8 (RK).

Two Pine Warblers were reported from Colorado, a male at Ft. Collins Dec. 19–Jan. 14 (BC, m.ob.) and one in Boulder Dec. 20 (E&PP). Last fall's N. Parula at Willard Bay S. P., UT, stayed to Dec. 2 (m. ob.). An unexpected female **American Redstart** was reported from Colorado Springs, CO, Dec. 3–4 (WW), providing the first winter record for Colorado. A late Com Yellowthroat was at Rocky Ford S.W.A., CO, Dec. 13 (BKP, MJ, SO). A female W. Tanager stayed at a suet-feeder in Holladay, *Salt Lake*, UT, Jan. 22–Feb. 14 (JB). An unexpected male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was observed in Orem, *Utah*, UT, Dec. 2 (CP), and a male Black-headed Grosbeak was at a feeder in Manitou Springs, *El Paso*, CO, Dec. 20–23 (RS). Rare in winter, Green-tailed Towhee reports included one in Morgan, UT, Dec. 12–Feb. 28 (AS); one in Boulder, CO, Dec. 17 (BK, AC); and up to two at South Platte R. Park, *Jefferson*, CO, Dec. 19–Feb. 13 (DSc, m.ob.). A surprising wintering/resident group of four Rufous-

crowned Sparrows was discovered near Canon City, CO, Dec. 20–Feb. 21 (DSi, DJ, m ob); the birds were in preferred habitat, farther west than normal. Utah's first **Field Sparrow** was reported from Lindon Boat Harbor, *Utah*, Jan. 9–Feb. 27(MW, m.ob.). In Colorado, single Field Sparrows were at Red Rocks Trading Post, *Jefferson*, Jan. 23 (GP) and in Wheat Ridge, *Jefferson*, Feb. 22 (TD)

A **Lark Bunting**, Colorado's migratory state bird, frequented a feeder in Canon City from November to Dec. 20 (v.t. BA), the first winter record away from *Baca*. A Savannah Sparrow was reported from Ft. Carson, *El Paso*, CO, Jan. 12 (RB). Rarely reported from Utah, a Swamp Sparrow was at Lindon Sewage Treatment, *Utah*, Feb. 28 (CC, DG, JVM), and one was at Henderson Bird Preserve, *Clark*, NV, Jan. 23 (SDS, PRS) Five White-throateds were reported in Utah and one in Nevada. Approximately 10 Harris's Sparrows were reported from the Great Basin this winter. An imm. Golden-crowned Sparrow was photographed at Wellington, CO, Dec. 18–Feb. 17 (ph. S&KM, m.ob.).

Winter reports of McCown's Longspurs included four in *Otero*, CO, Dec. 21 (MJ, TL, PG, SB); seven at Townsend Res., *El Paso*, CO, Jan. 25 (BM); one at L. Henry, CO, Jan. 31 (MJ); and nine at Haymes Res., *El Paso*, CO, Feb. 5 (BM). Rare in Utah, a Lapland Longspur was at Utah L. Dec. 24 (SH) and Jan. 2 (B&EH), and two were observed along the Antelope I. Causeway Dec 25 (TW). Five Chestnut-collared Longspurs were reported at the *Lincoln/El Paso* lines, CO, Feb. 6 (RB); two males at Big Johnson Res., *El Paso*, CO, Feb. 6 (DE); and 15 at the Great Plains Res., CO, Feb. 21 (TL) Single brown-plumaged Purple Finches were in Ft. Collins, CO, Jan. 8 (TD, JRI) and in Coal Cr. Canyon, *Jefferson*, CO, Jan. 24–27 (PH). Approximately 85 Lesser Goldfinches were reported on both sides of the Rockies in Colorado. If accepted, Utah's first **Hoary Redpoll** was reported from Hyde Park, *Cache*, Feb. 26 (L&RR).

CORRIGENDUM

The Barred Owl reported last fall as hit by a train in n.e. Colorado was apparently hit in Nebraska and dropped off at a rehab center in Colorado.

Cited Observers: Bob Abbott, Jim Bailey, Joel & Kathy Beyer (J&KB), David Bolton, Sue Bonfield, Ann Bonnell, Leon Bright, Richard Bunn, Steve Carr (SCa), Sherry Chapman (SC), Jack Collam (JC), Brian

Colon (BC), Alan Condie (ACo), Andy Cowell (AC), Calleen Cox, Alex & June Crigan (A&JC), Ruth Carol Cushman (RCC), Jim Dennis, Coen Dexter, Bob Dickson, Lara Dickson, Todd Dilley, Stephen J. Dinsmore, David Elwonger, David C. Ely (DCE), Norm Erthal, Keith Evans, Doug Faulkner, Steve Fyre, Peter Gaede, Merrill Gilfillan, Bob Goycoolea, Dana Green, BB Hahn (BBH), Paula Hansley (PH), Dona Hilkey, Joe Himmel, Sue Hinde, Beula & Ed Hinckley (B&EH), Evelyn Horn, Paul Hurtado (PHu), Mark Janos, Dave Johnson, Jeff Jones, Bill Kaempfer, Joey Kellner, Hugh E. Kingery, Rachel Kolokoff, Nick Komar, Ron Lambeth (RL), Chuck LaRue, David A. Leatherman, William P. Lisowsky, Tony Leukering, Rich Levad (Rle), Laura Lockhart (LL), Joe Mammoser, Lisa Marchet, Steve & Kathy Martin (S& KM), Gary Matthews, Tom Moran, Bill Maynard, Se Etta Moss (SM), Daune Nelson, Ric Olson, Stan Oswald, Christian Peay, Brandon K. Percival (BKP), Eric & Peter Plage, Myron & Suzi Plooster, Kim Potter, Bill Prather (BP), Dave Quesenberry, Sue Reehm, Jack Rensel (JRe), Justin Rink (JRI), Cal Robbins, Joe Roller (JRo), Ron A. Ryder (RAR), Larry & Ron Ryel L&RR), Ira Sanders (ISa), Pearle Sandstrom-Smith (PSS), Rosemary Scheuering (RS), Dick Schottler (DSc), Scott Severs (SS), David Silverman (DS), Arnold Smith, Clif Smith (CS), Drew Smith (DSm), John Spence, Dee & Mark Stackhouse (D& MS), Priscilla & Steve Summers (SSu), Dan Svingen (DSv), Ila Svingen (IS), Paul Sweet (PS), Janeal Thompson, Michael Thompson (MTh), Mary Tucey (MT), Richard Tucey, TimTucey, John Vanderpoel (JV), Julie VanMoorhem (JVM), Alan Versaw, Jim & Rosie Watts (J& RW), Merrill Webb (MWe), Duane Weber (DW), Jeff Webster (JW), Cliff Weisse (CW), David Wheeler (DWh), Tom Williams, Walt Wilson, Christopher L. Wood (CLW), Marvin Woolf (MWo), Mark Yaeger, Tom Van Zandt, Vic Zerbi.

Van A. Truan, 1901 Court Street, Pueblo, CO 81003 (Van.A.Truan@spa02.usace.army.mil) and **Brandon K. Percival**, 835 Harmony Drive, Pueblo West, CO 81007



Birders' Exchange

We'll breathe new life into your old optics, other birding equipment, and books!

Cooperating with Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences,

ABA is gathering used birding equipment that Manomet matches with requirements of those doing bird conservation research in Latin America and the Caribbean.

You can help by donating your used equipment, funds, or by acting as a courier.



Contact Paul Green

(800/850-2473) at ABA if you would like to help or need more information.