

# Field Records

## December

### 1984



by George W. Gove, Robert H. Stymeist, Lee E. Taylor

December 1984 was cloudy and very warm; the temperature averaged  $39.5^{\circ}$ ,  $5.8^{\circ}$  above normal, it was the seventh warmest December in 114 years. The high mark was  $73^{\circ}$  on December 29,  $32^{\circ}$  above normal for the date, and set weather records for future history books not only as the warmest December day on record but also as the warmest day ever in the entire winter season, December through February. The month's low was  $13^{\circ}$  on December 27. Precipitation in the form of rain totaled 2.93 inches, 1.55 inches less than normal. Snow totaled only 3.7 inches, 4.2 inches less than normal. The wet snow changing to rain early on the sixth caused slippery roads. Glazing was also noted on December 15-16 and on December 28.

#### LOONS THROUGH HERONS

An Arctic Loon was found on the Cape Ann CBC on December 16 at Folly Cove but could not be located on subsequent searches. The mild December weather surely accounted for the numbers of Pied-billed Grebes reported. A Western Grebe was noted in Rowley on December 22, and another continued to be seen in the Siasconset area of Nantucket.

A Greater Shearwater was carefully studied off Low Beach, Nantucket, during the CBC, not unprecedented for December with 19 having been noted in December 1981 and 10 reported well offshore in December 1979. The Nantucket bird is the latest winter date of record, the previous late date being December 16, 1979. A Manx Shearwater on December 1 at Low Beach was also one of very few winter records with the only other December record occurring in 1979. Northern Gannets were found in large numbers with 6552 noted on the Cape Cod CBC and 8622 tallied on the Nantucket CBC, where large numbers were found all month especially off the south side. Double-crested Cormorants were "around" just about everywhere, and the status of this species as an unusual winter straggler is being redefined [see J. Hatch, *American Birds*, 36(6): 984, 1985].

Lingering herons included Great Egrets on Nantucket and in Eastham, Snowy Egrets at Katama (M.V.), Westport, and Hyannis, a Little Blue Heron in Framingham, a Cattle Egret in North Attleboro, and a Green-backed Heron in Concord. Great Blue Herons were noted in good numbers on many CBC with 132 in the Cape Cod CBC. R.H.S.

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	DECEMBER 1984
Red-throated Loon:				
16,30	Cape Cod, Nantucket	55, 216	CBC	
30,31	M.V., Tuckernuck	73, 55	CBC	
Arctic Loon:				
16	Rockport (Folly Cove)	1	CBC (F.Hamlen)	
Common Loon:				
1	P.I., Gloucester	14, 15	G.d'Entremont#, E.Nielsen	
12,16	Nantucket (2 locations)	156, 60	E.Andrews, M.Litchfield	
30	M.V., Nantucket	531, 863	CBC	
Pied-billed Grebe:				
1	Nantucket, Cambridge	4, 3	E.Andrews, L.Taylor	
16,30	Cape Cod, Nantucket	25, 17	CBC	
Horned Grebe:				
15	Quincy, Buzzards Bay	27, 335	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	6, 55	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	28, 5	CBC	
Red-necked Grebe:				
9,12-14	Plymouth Beach, Manomet Bluff	3, 15+	D.Evered, D.Evered	

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>DECEMBER 1984</u>
Red-Necked Grebe (cont.):				
15,30	Cape Ann, M.V.	24, 15	CBC	
Western Grebe:				
17-30	Nantucket (from Nov.)	1	K.Able + v.o.	
22	Rowley	1	CBC (R.Alexander)	
Greater Shearwater:				
30	Nantucket (Low Beach)	1	CBC (W.Boyle, P.W.Smith)	
Manx Shearwater:				
1	Nantucket (Low Beach)	1	M.Litchfield	
Northern Gannet:				
3,30	Nantucket	2000 (Low Beach),	8622	M.Litchfield, CBC
16,23	Cape Cod, S.Monomoy	6552, 1000+		CBC, W.Petersen
Great Cormorant:				
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	496, 96, 129		CBC
Double-crested Cormorant:				
2,8	Braintree, P.I.	1, 2		R.Abrams#, E.Nielsen
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	3, 2, 9		CBC
27,30	Plymouth, Nantucket	2, 1		CBC
American Bittern:				
9,22	P.I.	1, 1		E.Nielsen, CBC
Great Blue Heron:				
15	Buzz.Bay,Millis,Quincy	53, 3, 12		CBC
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	7, 132, 11		CBC
30	Marshfield, M.V.	26, 80		CBC
Great Egret:				
thr.,2-16	Nantucket, Eastham	1, 1		M.Litchfield# + v.o., C.Ewer + v.o
Snowy Egret:				
8,30	Katama	1, 1		V.Laux, CBC
12+26,22	Westport, Hyannis	1, 1		R.Laubach, B.Nikula#
Little Blue Heron:				
1-15	Framingham	1 imm.		K.Hamilton
Cattle Egret:				
2	N.Attleboro	1		B.Sorrie
Green-backed Heron:				
15-31	Concord	1		S.Clark#
Black-crowned Night-Heron:				
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	29, 16		CBC
30	Nantucket, M.V.	6, 6		CBC

#### WATERFOWL

With the warm December weather, counts of puddle ducks were higher than usual on the CBCs; especially note the Newburyport CBC (where more often than not Plum Island is under ice and snow) that this year tallied 351 Green-winged Teal, 74 Northern Pintail, 5 Northern Shoveler and 43 Gadwall. Blue-winged Teal, normally very unusual in December, were noted from two locations, and Eurasian Wigeons were found in Plymouth and on Nantucket. The combined Brant total on the CBCs from Boston to Cape Cod was 7597. Tundra Swans were noted from Plymouth and from the usual hard-to-get-to spot on Martha's Vineyard.

The bay ducks moved farther south with fewer Canvasbacks, Redheads, and Ring-necked Ducks being reported. The total of Redheads remained high on Nantucket where 157 were logged in on the CBC.

The population of Common Eider off our coast is mind-boggling. The total number recorded on the eastern Massachusetts CBC amounted to approximately 301,921 individuals, 202,000 of which were reported from the Tuckernuck CBC. The latter estimate was made by two separate airflights over the rafting eiders between Skiff Island off Chappaquiddick, Tuckernuck, and Muskeget islands. With the help of the pilot, Kevin Shore, we were able to fly over the eider at various levels. They were packed in solid, and one group stretched for over a mile. It was AWESOME!

The count of Oldsquaw at Nantucket was down, and speculation as to where the majority are now rafting was raised, especially since more and more White-winged Scoters and especially, Red-breasted Mergansers are rafting in nearby waters. Of the more unusual ducks, as many as eight King Eider were reported, and fifteen Harlequin Ducks were seen, all from traditional locations. Hooded Mergansers were in good supply with high counts on many CBCs whereas Common Merganser counts were down due to the warm weather and open water; many were still noted in northern New England. R.H.S.

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>DECEMBER 1984</u>
Tundra Swan: 7,13-30	Plymouth, M.V.	1 imm., 12	D.Brown, V.Laux + v.o.	
Mute Swan: thr.	Arlington	2	L.Taylor + v.o.	
15,27	Buzz.Bay, Plymouth	54, 104	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	344, 75	CBC	
Snow Goose: thr.	P.I.	max. 26 (12/22)	v.o.	
7,15	Plymouth Beach, Quincy	42, 2	D.Evered, CBC	
Brant: 15	Buzz.Bay, Quincy	186, 1203	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	2612, 441	CBC	
27,30	Plymouth, Marshfield	1037, 2118	CBC	
Canada Goose: 15	Buzz.Bay, Millis	983, 1121	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston, Cape Ann	1377, 1023, 2222	CBC	
22	Newburyport, Monomoy	2313, 600	CBC, W.Petersen#	
30	M.V., Nantucket, Concord	2851, 869, 6349	CBC	
Wood Duck: 16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	1, 2	CBC	
26,30	Stoughton, M.V.	1, 4	R.Titus, CBC	
Green-winged Teal: 22,30	Newburyport, Nantucket	351, 54	CBC	
American Black Duck: 16	Cape Ann, Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	552, 3483, 1195	CBC	
22,27	Newburyport, Plymouth	2005, 1359	CBC	
Mallard: 15,16	Buzz.Bay, Gr. Boston	382, 1616	CBC	
Northern Pintail: 22	Newburyport	74	CBC	
Blue-winged Teal: 2,30	Mashpee, Madaket	1, 1	P.Trimble, CBC (F.Purnell)	
Northern Shoveler: 9,22	S.Monomoy, Newburyport	20, 5	B.Nikula#, CBC	
24,27	Watertown, Plymouth	1, 1	M.Hall, CBC	
Gadwall: 16,22	Cape Ann, Newburyport	16, 43	CBC	
Eurasian Wigeon: thr.	Plymouth, Nantucket	1 m., 2 m.	v.o., v.o.	
American Wigeon: thr.	Belmont, Cambridge	max. 50, max. 28	v.o., v.o.	
30,31	Nantucket, Tuckernuck	91, 145	CBC	
Canvasback: thr.	Cambridge (F.Pond)	max. 80	J.Barton	
2,15	Mashpee, Buzz.Bay	150, 234	P.Trimble, CBC	
Redhead: 2,15	Braintree, Buzz.Bay	1 f., 1	W.Petersen, CBC	
16-25,16	Brookline, Cape Ann	1 f., 2	M.Greenwald#, CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	4, 157	CBC	
Ring-necked Duck: 15	Buzz.Bay, Quincy	24, 22	CBC	
16	Cape Ann, Cape Cod	10, 66	CBC	
Greater Scaup: 15,16	Buzz.Bay, Gr. Boston	2609, 3464	CBC	
Lesser Scaup: 2,15	Mashpee, Millis	10, 8	P.Trimble, CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	11, 9	CBC	
27,30	Plymouth, Nantucket	4, 7	CBC	
Common Eider: 15,16	Quincy, Gr. Boston	1145, 3197	CBC	
16	Cape Ann, Cape Cod	636, 18842	CBC	
22,27	Newburyport, Plymouth	36, 8430	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	6745, 58270	CBC	
31	Tuckernuck	202,000	CBC	
King Eider: thr.,8	Manomet, Eastham	3-4, 1 f.	D.Evered + v.o., C.Ewer	
23-31	Nantucket	2-3 ad.	M.Litchfield + v.o.	
Harlequin Duck: 2,16	N.Scituate, Cape Cod	1 f., 6	SSBC, CBC	
17-30	Nantucket	pr.	E.Andrews + v.o.	
29,30	Rockport, M.V.	1 imm. m., 5	G.d'Entremont, CBC	
Oldsquaw: 2	Braintree (Great Pond)	1	SSBC (W.Petersen)	

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	DECEMBER 1984
Oldsquaw (cont.):				
30,31	Nantucket, Tuckernuck	8122, 5125	CBC	
Black Scoter:				
16	Cape Ann, Cape Cod	82, 230	CBC	
30	Nantucket, M.V.	100, 929	CBC	
Surf Scoter:				
15,27	Buzz.Bay, Plymouth	267, 58	CBC	
29	Nantucket Sound	300+	G.Gove, R.Stymeist	
White-winged Scoter:				
15	Buzz.Bay, Quincy	954, 528	CBC	
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	824, 658, 394	CBC	CBC
30,31	M.V., Tuckernuck	15204, 2170	CBC	
Common Goldeneye:				
15	Athol,Buzz.Bay,Quincy	270, 1025, 770	CBC	
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	522, 655, 1251	CBC	CBC
30	M.V., Nantucket	2314, 2582	CBC	
Barrow's Goldeneye:				
2-7,14	N.Scituate, Manomet	1 m., 1 f.	W.Petersen#, D.Evered	
15	Buzz Bay, Quincy	3, 2	CBC	
16	Gr. Boston, Cape Cod	2, 1	CBC	
27,30	Plymouth, Nantucket	4, 7	CBC	
Bufflehead:				
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Gr. Boston	2974, 1410	CBC	
16,30	Cape Cod, Nantucket	1502, 611	CBC	
Hooded Merganser:				
9,11	S.Monomoy, Cambridge	30, 7	B.Nikula#, v.o.	
15	Buzz.Bay, Quincy	177, 59	CBC	
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	4, 44, 48	CBC	
22,27	Newburyport, Plymouth	14, 86	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	40, 22	CBC	
Common Merganser:				
1-31,2	Framingham, Braintree	max. 85, 100+	v.o., SSBC	
15	Athol, Quincy, Millis	182, 125, 6	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	10, 168	CBC	
27,30	Plymouth, Concord	424, 187	CBC	
Red-breasted Merganser:				
15	Buzz.Bay, Quincy	2408, 1762	CBC	
16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	394, 1100, 1772	CBC	CBC
22,27	Newburyport, Plymouth	96, 268	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	16855, 4889	CBC	
Ruddy Duck:				
1-18,2	Framingham, Braintree	max. 15 (12/7), 2	K.Hamilton, SSBC	
9	S.Monomoy, Lakeville	230, 22	B.Nikula#, D.Briggs	
15	Buzz.Bay, Millis, Quincy	4, 8, 31	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	36, 61	CBC	
30	M.V., Concord	1, 34	CBC	

#### RAPTORS THROUGH NORTHERN BOBWHITE

An Osprey was found in Dorchester on the Boston CBC, and it remained in the Neponset-Milton area through December 24. Four Bald Eagles were recorded, with two seen along the Merrimac River in Amesbury. On the Millis CBC, a Red-shouldered Hawk was found; Northern Goshawks made appearances in five locations, while Cooper's Hawks were noted in three areas, with two together (!) in Ipswich.

Falcons caused much excitement - they always do - but more so this month with Gyrfalcons, Peregrines, Lanners, Prairies and Sakers all mentioned. Peregrines totaled thirteen individuals from eleven locations all coastal with the exception of Cambridge. Gyrfalcons were reported from Monomoy and Tuckernuck, the latter bird watched at close range locking talons with Short-eared Owls and Northern Harrier. Another Gyrfalcon was well-described at Fresh Pond in Cambridge on December 9. The observer noted a falcon with "a lack of facial markings, long and heavy tail, light gray above and below, back mottled brown and flew with deep wing beats". Subsequently, other observers at Fresh Pond reported a large falcon flying toward Watertown. Then - a falcon was found roosting each night at 700 Huron Avenue across from Fresh Pond. Through telescopes, this bird was seen to be wearing a bell and "jesses," straps that falconers use to hold their birds. Other observers had earlier noted a falcon with jesses, possibly a Peregrine and probably the same bird, in other areas of Cambridge and Belmont. The many descriptions that streamed in varied greatly from one to another, but this observer cannot be persuaded that there was a platoon of falcons floating around Cambridge.

R.H.S.

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>DECEMBER 1984</u>
Osprey: 16-24	Dorchester-Milton	1	D.Brown# + v.o.	
Bald Eagle: 1	Amesbury	1 ad., 1 imm.	v.o.	
5,30	Wayland, M.V.	1 imm., 1 imm.	H.Parker, CBC	
Northern Harrier: thr.	P.I.	max. 6 (12/1)	v.o.	
16,22	Cape Cod, Newburyport	13, 14	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	25, 37	CBC	
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 15,16	Buzz.Bay, Cape Cod	5, 9	CBC	
30	M.V., Concord	8, 6	CBC	
Cooper's Hawk: 22	Ipswich	2 ad.	CBC (J.Berry)	
30	M.V., Concord	1, 1	CBC	
Northern Goshawk: 1,15	E.Middleboro, Millis	1 imm., 1	K.Anderson, CBC	
22	Newburyport	2	CBC	
30	Marshfield, Concord	1, 2	CBC	
Red-shouldered Hawk: 15	Millis	1	CBC	
Red-tailed Hawk: 15	Millis, Quincy	11, 8	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	13, 37	CBC	
22,29	Newburyport, Uxbridge	30, 14	CBC	
30	M.V.,Nantucket,Concord	44, 21, 60	CBC	
Rough-legged Hawk: 16,22	Gr. Boston, Newburyport	3, 5	CBC	
30,31	Marshfield, Tuckernuck	1, 2	CBC	
American Kestrel: 16	Cape Ann,Cape Cod,Gr. Boston	13, 19, 20	CBC	
30	M.V.,Nantucket,Concord	11, 19, 11	CBC	
Peregrine Falcon: 2,9	N.Monomoy	1 ad.	B.Nikula#	
5-11	Marion	1	filed R.Harlow	
17,31	M.V., Tuckernuck	1, 1	P.Huntington, CBC	
	Other reports of 7 to 9 individuals from 7 locations			
<u>Cyrfalcon:</u> 9	Cambridge	1 (details)	K.Hartel	
9;16,31	S.Monomoy; N. Monomoy	1 gray(details)	B.Nikula#;W.Bailey#,R.Clem	
31	Tuckernuck	1 (details)	S.Perkins, R.Stymeist + v.o.	
Ring-necked Pheasant: 16	Gr. Boston, Cape Cod	162, 1	CBC	
Ruffed Grouse: 15	Athol, Millis	6, 26	CBC	
22,23	Newburyport, Westminster	9, 7	CBC	
Northern Bobwhite: 16,22	Cape Cod, E.Middleboro	107, 20	CBC, K.Anderson	

#### RAILS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

This is the month of the annual Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) held under the auspices of the National Audubon Society, and many observers are in the field ferreting out every last bird to get the local count numbers and rarities to new record highs and, certainly, higher and better than someone else's count. This is reflected both in the total numbers reported for each species and in the number of species reported.

A possible Yellow Rail was reported in a cattail marsh on Nantucket the day after the Christmas count there. Details on the sighting were submitted. Only a fleeting glimpse of the bird was had in the early morning light, and the report was not entirely convincing. American Coot were present here in low numbers as was noted in the November records and as can be seen in these records.

Black-bellied Plover reports include the highest December totals in BOEM records, and there are only three other December reports of Semipalmated Plover. Lesser Yellow-legs is another bird that is not usual in December, and Willet has been reported only twice in the last twelve Decembers. On the other side of the coin, this is the first December in the last eight years that dowitcher, of one form or another, has not been reported. G.W.G.

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	DECEMBER 1984
Clapper Rail:				
16	Cape Cod	1	CBC	
Virginia Rail:				
16,30	Cape Cod, Nantucket	21, 15	CBC	
30	Marshfield	4	CBC	
Common Moorhen:				
1,8,16	Chatham	1	B.Nikula#	
American Coot:				
thr.	Cambridge	max. 11 (12/2)	D.Arvidson	
2,9	Braintree, Lakeville	30, 20	SSBC, D.Briggs	
16,30	Gr. Boston, Nantucket	18, 71	CBC	
Black-bellied Plover:				
1,8	Nantucket, Newburyport	27, 5	P.Gardner, BBC	
15,16	Quincy, Cape Cod	15, 26	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	66, 39	CBC	
Semipalmated Plover:				
2,9	Duxbury, M.V.	1, 1	SSBC, W.Manter#	
Killdeer:				
3,6	E.Middleboro, Nantucket	3, 1	K.Anderson, M.Litchfield	
16,29	Gr. Boston, S.Dartmouth	3, 7	CBC, T.Raymond	
30	M.V., Nantucket	12, 10	CBC	
Greater Yellowlegs:				
8,16	Eastham, Cape Cod	6, 12	C.Ewer, CBC	
Lesser Yellowlegs:				
1	Norton	1	J.Kricher	
Willet:				
14	Nantucket	1	R.Veit	
Ruddy Turnstone:				
15	Quincy, Buzz.Bay	1, 1	CBC	
16,30	Gr. Boston, Nantucket	1, 55	CBC	
Red Knot:				
16,30	Cape Cod, M.V.	45, 8	CBC	
Sanderling:				
16,27	Cape Cod, Plymouth	380, 25	CBC	
30,31	Nantucket, Tuckernuck	324, 99	CBC	
Purple Sandpiper:				
1,16	Rockport, Boston	110, 75	E.Nielsen, CBC	
15,30	Quincy, Nantucket	340, 55	CBC	
Dunlin:				
2,9	Westport, Winthrop	600, 70	G.Gove, J.Cumming	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	1070, 219	CBC	
29,30	S.Dartmouth, Marshfield	200, 260	T.Raymond, CBC	
Common Snipe:				
8,15	Newburyport, Buzz.Bay	2, 20	E.Nielsen, CBC	
22,27	Newburyport, Plymouth	15, 6	CBC	
30	M.V.	3	CBC	
American Woodcock:				
1,16	E.Middleboro, Cape Cod	1, 3	K.Anderson, CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	3, 2	CBC	

#### GULLS THROUGH ALCIDS

Laughing Gulls were still present at month's end on the Vineyard, and Little Gulls were found on the Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard CBCs. A total of six Common Black-headed Gulls were found in the Greater Boston area, and four were noted on the Vineyard. The counts of Bonaparte's Gulls numbered in the hundreds.

A Mew Gull (Common Gull of the Old World) was reported from Nantucket on December 14, and a Thayer's Gull was reported from there on December 17, both birds being noted as in first winter plumage. No details were submitted although the observers are experienced and reliable and are familiar with these birds. Both of these birds are rare enough and difficult enough to identify that extreme care and attention to details is warranted in their identification. A book compiled by R.R. Veit and R.A. Forster and soon to be published by Massachusetts Audubon lists all the known Massachusetts records of these birds. For the Mew Gull, there are a total of 23 records through 1981; 18 of these are spring (January 1 to May 9) records, and two specimens collected proved to be of the European race, Larus canus canus. Of five fall (August 6 to October 10) records, two reports were considered to be of the western U.S. race, Larus canus brachyrhynchus. These races are said to be separable in the first basic plumage, assuming first, of course, that you can separate them from Ring-billed Gull. See the description of Mew Gull seen November 30, 1983, that appeared in the February 1984 BOEM, 12(1): 18 and the letter from Eirik A. T. Blom in this issue about the March 1984 sighting of this species.

The Thayer's Gull is more problematical due to confusion with Iceland Gull plumage. The fact that Thayer's Gull has occurred in the state is attested to by a specimen taken in 1982. There are several reliable reports of this species, all in first basic plumage, spanning the period from December to April. The exact status of this species in the state remains to be determined.

Numbers of Iceland Gulls seen on CBCs seem low with the exception of those counted at Nantucket. A total of eight Lesser Black-backed Gulls was reported for the month. Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen in abundance close to shore, probably feeding on the abundance of sand lance (*Ammodytes* sp.).

A Ross' Gull was noted in Newburyport Harbor on December 3, first at the old Coast Guard station and then at the boat ramp at the seawall. Identifying features were long wings, long wedge-shaped tail well seen, short bill, rounded head, and dark smudge near the eye. The bird had no neck ring and was washed with pink on the underparts. For further details see the report by Stu Tingley elsewhere in this issue.

A late tern was noted in Woods Hole on December 31, and Forster's Terns were seen on the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket CBCs. All of the expected (but not always seen) alcids were reported as were two not expected: two Common Murres at Nantucket and two Atlantic Puffin at Rockport.

G.W.G.

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	DECEMBER 1984
Laughing Gull:				
16	Gr. Boston, Nantucket	3, 1 ad.	CBC, M.Litchfield	
30	M.V.	5	CBC	
Little Gull:				
15,15-17	Quincy, Nantucket	1, 1 (1 W)	CBC, M.Litchfield#	
12-14,30	M.V.	1, 2	V.Laux, CBC	
30	Nantucket	2	CBC	
Common Black-headed Gull:				
12-14,19	M.V., E.Boston	1 ad., 2	V.Laux, J.Cumming	
16,30	Gr. Boston, M.V.	6, 4 (2 ad. + 2 imm.)	CBC	
Bonaparte's Gull:				
2	Westport, S.Dartmouth	200, 150	G.Gove#	
15,16	Quincy, Cape Cod	1861, 357	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	1131, 1092	CBC	
Mew (Common) Gull:				
14	Nantucket	1 (1 W)	R.Veit	
Ring-billed Gull:				
3,9	Halifax, Framingham	200, 65	K.Anderson, K.Hamilton	
16,27	Gr. Boston, Plymouth	2474, 703	CBC	
30	M.V.	1419	CBC	
Herring Gull:				
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	13500, 9773	CBC	
16,30	Cape Ann, Nantucket	12601, 53000	CBC	
Thayer's Gull:				
17	Nantucket	1 (1 W)	K.Able (fide B.Nikula)	
Iceland Gull:				
16	Cape Cod, Cape Ann	3, 11	CBC	
22	Newburyport	6	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	2, 38	CBC	
Lesser Black-backed Gull:				
8,16	Gloucester, Cape Cod	1 (ad.), 2	G.Gove, CBC	
14,30	Nantucket	2(1 W, 3 W), 3	R.Veit, CBC	
Glaucous Gull:				
16,30	Cape Ann, Nantucket	7, 6	CBC	
	Four from four locations.			
Great Black-backed Gull:				
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	3520, 821	CBC	
16,30	Cape Ann, Nantucket	4178, 3991	CBC	
Black-legged Kittiwake:				
16	Cape Cod	16,643	CBC	
23	Monomoy	8-10,000	W.Petersen#	
30	Nantucket	24,303	CBC	
Ross' Gull (Details submitted):				
3	Newburyport	1 ad.	S.Tingley#	
tern sp.:				
31	Woods Hole	1	A.Poole	
Forster's Tern:				
30	M.V., Nantucket	2, 1	CBC (S.Whiting), CBC (P.Buckley)	
large alcid sp.:				
1	Rockport	4	E.Nielsen	

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	DECEMBER 1984
large alcid sp. (cont.):				
4,7	Eastham	45, 200	B.Nikula	
16	Cape Cod	89	CBC	
Dovekie:				
1,16	Rockport, Cape Cod	3, 17	E.Nielsen, CBC	
17,18	Nantucket	1	E.Andrews	
Common Murre:				
30	Nantucket	2	CBC (E.Andrews)	
Thick-billed Murre:				
15;16	Buzz.Bay;Cape Cod,Cape Ann	1; 1, 1	CBC	
Razorbill:				
1,4,7,13	Manomet	1-2 each day	D.Evered	
16	Cape Ann, Cape Cod	44, 676	CBC	
30,31	Nantucket, Tuckernuck	58, 251	CBC	
Black Guillemot:				
6,16	Manomet, Cape Ann	3, 7	D.Evered#, CBC	
16,30	Cape Cod, Nantucket	2, 3	CBC	
Atlantic Puffin:				
1	Rockport	2	E.Nielsen	

#### MOURNING DOVE THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Common Barn-Owls were seen on the Quincy and Martha's Vineyard CBCs and one was found dead on the Greater Boston CBC. All of the owls on the Massachusetts checklist were found on the CBCs as were all of the woodpeckers. Belted Kingfishers were noted in high numbers on the Buzzards Bay, (Outer) Cape Cod, and Martha's Vineyard CBCs. The ratio of Downy to Hairy Woodpecker on Cape Cod was 6 to 1 and in Concord was 3.25 to 1. G.W.G.

Mourning Dove:				
thr.	Brookline (at feeder)	max. 51 (12/25)	H.Wiggin	
15,16	Millis, Cape Ann	1511, 374	CBC	
22,30	Newburyport, Concord	986, 1636	CBC	
Common Barn-Owl:				
15,16	Quincy, Gr. Boston	1, 1 (dead)	CBC	
30	M.V.	5	CBC	
Eastern Screech-Owl:				
15	Millis, Quincy	18, 10	CBC	
16	Gr. Boston, Cape Ann	27, 5	CBC	
30	Concord, M.V.	25, 7	CBC	
Great Horned Owl:				
15	Millis, Quincy	12, 4	CBC	
16	Gr. Boston, Cape Cod	8, 10	CBC	
22,30	Newburyport, Concord	4, 10	CBC	
Snowy Owl:				
2,7	P.I., Gr. Boston	2, 3	BBC, N.Smith	
22	Newburyport	2	CBC	
Barred Owl:				
15	Millis, Quincy	1, 1	CBC	
16	Cape Ann	1	CBC	
Long-eared Owl:				
2,9	Hamilton, P.I.	1, 1	v.o., R.Heil	
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Gr. Boston	1, 1	CBC	
30	Nantucket, Concord	1, 1	CBC	
Short-eared Owl:				
16;30	Gr. Boston; M.V., Nantucket	1; 1, 6	CBC	
31	Tuckernuck	3	CBC	
Northern Saw-whet Owl:				
1,16	Hamilton, Gr. Boston	2, 1	G.d'Entremont#, CBC	
26-30,30	Nantucket, M.V.	1, 1	E.Andrews, CBC	
29	P.I.	1	L.Taylor#	
Belted Kingfisher:				
15	Quincy, Buzz.Bay	13, 29	CBC	
16	Gr. Boston, Cape Cod	11, 35	CBC	
27,30	Plymouth, M.V.	11, 31	CBC	
Red-headed Woodpecker:				
7,15	Plymouth, Millis	1, 1	D.Brown, CBC	
Red-bellied Woodpecker:				
30	Concord, M.V.	1, 8	CBC	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:				
16,30	Gr. Boston, M.V.	1, 2	CBC	
Downy Woodpecker:				
16	Gr. Boston, Cape Cod	166, 66	CBC	

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	DECEMBER 1984
Downy Woodpecker (cont.):				
22,30	Newburyport, Concord	108, 393	CBC	
Hairy Woodpecker:				
16,30	Cape Cod, Concord	11, 122	CBC	
Northern Flicker:				
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Cape Cod	76, 149	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	173, 162	CBC	
Pileated Woodpecker:				
2,16	Hamilton, Cape Ann	1, 2	J.Berry, CBC	
20,30	Bedford, Concord	1, 4	J.Henley, CBC	

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Flycatchers reports originated only from Cape Cod and the islands. The count of two Eastern Phoebe's equalled last year's December total, but the species was unreported for the month in the preceeding six years. A Common Raven at Fresh Pond in Cambridge was seen and heard by a number of observers for several days at midmonth. Raven reports from the eastern part of the commonwealth have been increasing of late, but are still of high interest. The Buzzards Bay CBC recorded more than double the number of Carolina Wrens than has been the average for the last nine years. Ten Blue-gray Gnatcatchers far exceeded the only other recent December record of a single individual. The generally mild weather allowed many semi-hardy species to hang on in numbers well into December. In addition to the Carolina Wrens and gnatcatchers, there were remarkable numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes, mimids, and unusual warbler species for winter including Black-and-white warblers, and American Redstart. Slightly hardier but still uncommon warbler species for December were represented by reports of several Nashville and Prairie individuals. L.E.T.

Eastern Phoebe:				
30	Nantucket, M.V.	1, 1	CBC	
Western Kingbird:				
from Nov.-14	WBWS	max. 2	v.o.	
30	M.V.	1	CBC	
Horned Lark:				
9,30	Ipswich, Concord	150, 190	R.Heil#, CBC	
Blue Jay:				
15,30	Millis, Concord	2101, 2313	CBC	
American Crow:				
8,30	Ipswich, Concord	100, 2096	G.Gove#, CBC	
Fish Crow:				
1,2	Eastham, Lexington	1, 1	C.Goodrich, L.Taylor	
15,30	Millis, Concord	15, 20	CBC	
Common Raven:				
13-16	Cambridge	1	J.Barton#	
Jackdaw:				
thr.	Nantucket	2	v.o.	
Black-capped Chickadee:				
15,30	Millis, Concord	2724, 2975	CBC	
Tufted Titmouse:				
15,30	Millis, Concord	1338, 794	CBC	
Red-breasted Nuthatch:				
8,16	Newburyport, Cape Ann	2, 7	G.d'Entremont, CBC	
22, 30	Newburyport, Concord	15, 10	CBC	
White-breasted Nuthatch:				
15,30	Millis, Concord	346, 381	CBC	
Brown Creeper:				
15,30	Millis, Concord	46, 69	CBC	
Carolina Wren:				
2-18,15	Westport, Buzz.Bay	2, 50	v.o., CBC	
16	Westport, New Bedford	21, 17	CBC	
30	M.V., Concord	19, 1	CBC	
House Wren:				
2,15	Lexington, Buzz.Bay	1, 1	L.Taylor, CBC	
16,30	Cape Cod, Concord	1, 1	CBC	
Winter Wren:				
2,4	Westport, Middleboro	1, 1	G.Gove#, K.Anderson	
15,16-30	Buzz Bay, 5 CBCs	6, 8 total	CBC	
16,30	Cape Cod, M.V.	5, 3	CBC	
Marsh Wren:				
9,22	P.I., Monomoy	2, 1	R.Heil, W.Petersen#	
16-30,30	4 CBCs, Nantucket	8 total, 9	CBC	
Golden-crowned Kinglet:				
15,16	Millis, Cape Cod	85, 88	CBC	

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>DECEMBER 1984</u>
<u>Ruby-crowned Kinglet:</u>				
15,15-31	Buzz.Bay, 12 CBCs	29, 43 total	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, New Bedford	24, 11	CBC	
<u>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:</u>				
1,15-16	Rockport, 4 CBCs	1, 4 singles	B.Weissman, CBC	
16,30	Cape Cod, Marshfield	3, 2	CBC	
<u>Eastern Bluebird:</u>				
2	N.Attleboro, E.Taunton	4, 9	B.Sorrie, R.Turner	
16,28	Boston, E.Harwich	1, 4	D.Brown#, R.Fish	
<u>Hermit Thrush:</u>				
4,12	Cambridge, Dartmouth	1, 1	L.Robinson, C.Laubach	
15,15-30	Buzz.Bay, 6 CBCs	30, 27 total	CBC	
16	Cape Cod, Cape Ann	20, 5	CBC	
<u>American Robin:</u>				
2,8	Middleboro, Ipswich	50+, 12	D.Briggs#, G.Gove#	
15,30	Buzz.Bay, M.V.	1940, 557	CBC	
<u>Gray Catbird:</u>				
2,3	Westport, Nantucket	2, 2	G.Gove#, E.Andrews	
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Cape Cod	22, 36	CBC	
16,22	Westport, Mid-Cape	17, 10	CBC	
27-30,30	3 CBCs, M.V.	13 total, 22	CBC	
<u>Northern Mockingbird:</u>				
16,30	Gr. Boston, Concord	154, 242	CBC	
<u>Brown Thrasher:</u>				
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Cape Cod	3, 2	CBC	
22,27	Mid-Cape, Plymouth	2, 1	CBC	
<u>Water Pipit:</u>				
16,30	Cape Ann, Nantucket	1, 1	CBC	
<u>Cedar Waxwing:</u>				
1,11	IRWS, Concord	30, 50	J.Berry, S.Henderson	
15	Buzz.Bay	1090	CBC	
<u>Northern Shrike:</u>				
16,18	Gr. Boston, P.I.	1, 1	CBC, v.o.	
30,31	Nantucket, M.V.	1, 1	CBC, W.Petersen#	
<u>Orange-crowned Warbler:</u>				
1,16	Falmouth, Hull	1, 1	C.Ewer, R.Abrams	
16	Cape Cod, Gr. Boston	1, 1	CBC	
<u>Nashville Warbler:</u>				
16	Gr. Boston, Cohasset	2, 1	CBC, R.Abrams	
<u>Yellow-rumped Warbler:</u>				
16,30	Cape Cod, Nantucket	2605, 1692	CBC	
<u>Pine Warbler:</u>				
9,16	Lakeville, Cape Cod	1, 3	D.Briggs, CBC	
22,27	Mid-Cape, Plymouth	1, 1	CBC	
30	Marshfield, Nantucket	1, 6	CBC	
<u>Prairie Warbler:</u>				
27-31, 30	Nantucket, M.V.	1, 1	E.Andrews#, CBC	
<u>Palm Warbler:</u>				
4,15-31	Cambridge, 7 CBCs	4, 17 total	L.Robinson, CBC	
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Cape Cod	14, 20	CBC	
30	M.V., Nantucket	40, 18	CBC	
<u>Black-and-white Warbler:</u>				
15,30	Buzz.Bay, Marshfield	1, 1	CBC	
<u>American Redstart:</u>				
10	Brewster	1	C.Goodrich	
<u>Common Yellowthroat:</u>				
15,16	Buzz.Bay, Cape Cod	6, 18	CBC	
16-30,30	5 CBCs, Concord	9 total, 2	CBC	
<u>Yellow-breasted Chat:</u>				
1,2	Falmouth, Westport	1, 1	C.Ewer, J.Gordon#	
9,16	Chatham, Cape Cod	1, 4	T.Vose, CBC	
22,30	Newburyport, M.V.	1, 1	CBC	

#### TANAGER THROUGH EVENING GROSBEAK

Two reports of Western Tanager were received, one individual in Millis for two weeks and another on the Cape Cod CBC. That same CBC effort turned up a LeConte's Sparrow, always rare in our region but even more so in December. Other unusual reports included, from the Greater Boston CBC a single Grasshopper Sparrow in Winthrop and a single Lincoln's Sparrow in Lexington. Continuing the trend from the fall, winter finches were very sparsely reported, mostly from interior locales.

L.E.T.

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>DECEMBER 1984</u>
<u>Western Tanager:</u>				
10-24,16	Millis, Cape Cod	1 (details), 1	v.o., CBC	
<u>Northern Cardinal:</u>				
15,30	Millis, Concord	450, 290	CBC	
<u>Dickcissel:</u>				
3,27	Rockport, Plymouth	1 imm. m., 1	R.Norris, CBC	
30	Concord	1	CBC	
<u>Rufous-sided Towhee:</u>				
2,3	Westport, Reading	2, 1 m.	G.Gove#, M.Martinek	
15,16-30	Buzz Bay, 4 CBCs	38, 26 total	CBC	
27,30	Plymouth, M.V.	14, 17	CBC	
<u>American Tree Sparrow:</u>				
15,22	Millis, Newburyport	713, 836	CBC	
30	Concord	889	CBC	
<u>Chipping Sparrow:</u>				
15	Millis, Quincy	1, 1	CBC	
16,18-21	Gr. Boston, Stoneham	4, max. 2	CBC, M.Martinek	
<u>Field Sparrow:</u>				
7,31	Middleboro, Nantucket	3, 2	D.Briggs, E.Andrews	
<u>Savannah Sparrow:</u>				
18,22	E.Boston, Monomoy	9, 12	J.Cumming, W.Petersen#	
<u>"Ipswich" Sparrow:</u>				
16,22	Cape Cod, Newburyport	6, 5	CBC	
27,31	Plymouth, Tuckernuck	16, 9	CBC	
<u>Grasshopper Sparrow:</u>				
16	Winthrop	1	R.Stymeist#	
<u>LeConte's Sparrow:</u>				
16	Cape Cod	1	CBC (R.Heil)	
<u>Sharp-tailed Sparrow:</u>				
16,29	Cape Cod, Dartmouth	4, 3	CBC, T.Raymond	
<u>Seaside Sparrow:</u>				
9,16	Newburyport, Cape Cod	3, 9	R.Heil, CBC	
22	Newburyport	7	CBC	
<u>Fox Sparrow:</u>				
1-21,16	Stoneham, Gr. Boston	max. 4, 11	M.Martinek, CBC	
30	Marshfield, Concord	5, 9	CBC	
<u>Song Sparrow:</u>				
15,16	Buzz Bay, Gr. Boston	407, 468	CBC	
<u>Lincoln's Sparrow:</u>				
16	Lexington	1 (good details)	C.Floyd	
<u>Swamp Sparrow:</u>				
16,22	Cape Cod, Newburyport	124, 25	CBC	
<u>White-throated Sparrow:</u>				
15,30	Buzz Bay, Concord	625, 391	CBC	
<u>White-crowned Sparrow:</u>				
8,15	Arlington, 3 CBCs	1 imm., 4 total	L.Taylor, CBC	
30	Nantucket	1	CBC	
<u>Dark-eyed Junco:</u>				
15,30	Millis, Concord	2386, 1783	CBC	
<u>"Oregon" Junco:</u>				
16	Gr. Boston	1	CBC	
<u>Lapland Longspur:</u>				
2,22	Newburyport, Monomoy	1, 15	F.Hamlen, W.Petersen#	
<u>Snow Bunting:</u>				
1-9,2	P.I., Duxbury	max. 250, 50	v.o., SSBC	
18	Canton	30	J.Hall#	
<u>Red-winged Blackbird:</u>				
1-21,30	E.Middleboro, Concord	50-30, 850	K.Anderson, CBC	
30	Marshfield	1193	CBC	
<u>Eastern Meadowlark:</u>				
12,14	Milford, E.Middleboro	1, 30	C.Quinlan, K.Anderson	
<u>Rusty Blackbird:</u>				
2,9	Middleboro, Medway	12, 12	K.Holmes, W.Reagan	
15,30	Pembroke, Concord	45, 5	E.Pearson, CBC	
<u>Common Grackle:</u>				
16,30	Gr. Boston, Concord	4, 442	CBC	
<u>Brown-headed Cowbird:</u>				
14,20	E.Middleboro, Middleboro	150, 30	K.Anderson, D.Briggs	
26,28	Easton, Whitman	12, 30	R.Titus, W.Petersen	
<u>Northern Oriole:</u>				
16	Westport, Cape Cod	1, 2	CBC	
21	Westwood	1 f.	B.Wicks	

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>DECEMBER 1984</u>
Purple Finch:				
15,16	Millis, New Bedford	102, 73	CBC	
22,30	Newburyport, Concord	60, 245	CBC	
House Finch:				
15,16	Millis, Cape Cod	596, 1288	CBC	
Red Crossbill:				
15	Millis	3	CBC	
White-winged Crossbill:				
15	Quincy	1	CBC	
Common Redpoll:				
15,30	Athol, Concord	22, 3	CBC	
Pine Siskin:				
15,30	Athol, Concord	95, 28	CBC	
American Goldfinch:				
21,30	Milton, Concord	300, 1178	R.Abrams, CBC	
Evening Grosbeak:				
1,4	P.I., Cambridge	20, 22	G.d'Entremont#, L.Robinson	
9,15	S.Middleboro, Athol	35, 883	S.MacDonald, CBC	

#### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ad.	adult	F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham
alt.	alternate (plumage)	F.H.	Fort Hill, Eastham
b.	banded	F.M.	Fowl Meadow, Milton
br.	breeding	gr.	greater as in Gr. Boston area
dk.	dark (phase)	I.	Island
f.	female	M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
fl.	fledge	Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge
imm.	immature	Nant.	Nantucket
ind.	individuals	Newbypt	Newburyport
loc.	locations	P.I.	Plum Island
lt.	light (phase)	P'town	Provincetown
m.	male	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
max.	maximum	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
migr.	migrating	Stellw.	Stellwagen (Bank)
N.S.E.W.	direction	BBC	Brookline Bird Club
ph.	photographed	BOEM	Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts
pl.	plumage	CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club
pr.	pair	DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
thr.	throughout	GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
v.o.	various observers	IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
W	winter (2W = second winter)	MAS	Massachusetts Audubon Society
w/	with	MBO	Manomet Bird Observatory
yg.	young	MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
#	additional observers	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
A.A.	Arnold Arboretum	PRNWR	Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
Buzz.	Buzzards (Bay)	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
C.	Cape as in C.Cod or C.Ann	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester		

I think it was the March Hare who remarked to Alice that it takes a lot of running just to stay in the same place. BIRD OBSERVER apologizes for the inclusion of only one month's Field Records in this issue and promises to do a three-in-one, probably next time.

#### **SPRING PUFFIN CRUISES**

This spring Maine Whalewatch, working with the cooperation of the Puffin Project of the National Audubon Society, will be offering seabird trips geared especially for people wishing to see and photograph puffins and razorbills. All-day trips from Rockland, Maine, will cruise around Seal Island and Matinicus Rock. The cost is \$25 per person and scheduled trips will be on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from May 10 through June 9. For more information and reservations, call 207-288-9595 (Maine Whalewatch).