



Field Records February 1986

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

February was cold, dry, and cloudy; the temperature averaged 28.9°, 1.8° less than normal, and was the lowest since February 1980 (27.9°). No temperature records were broken in Boston: the 47° came on the second; and the low of 13° on the seventh. Precipitation totaled 2.83 inches, a little less than normal, but 1.00 inch more than last year. Snowfall totaled 10.4 inches, 1.2 inches less than average. There was no big storm; all of this came on just 13 days. The seasonal snowfall stands at 15.5 inches, 17.2 inches less than normal and the seventh least in 96 years of record. An ice storm on February 18-19 brought treacherous conditions, and glaze built up on twigs and wires, causing much damage and many accidents in western suburbs.

LOONS THROUGH AMERICAN COOT

Unlike last year, during February there was no buildup of Red-necked Grebes noted. At Salisbury, an American Bittern was seen on 2 occasions, for the only heron highlight of the month.

A drake Wood Duck has been with feral Mallards in downtown Ipswich since mid-December. The bird has become so tame that it will practically eat out of your hand and is one of the more aggressive feeders in the flock. The Harlequin Ducks continued all month in North Scituate, and the King Eider at Scusset Beach was probably present all month as well.

A Turkey Vulture was reported from 3 locations on the upper Cape, probably the same individual; there were 5 reports last February. Along the Merrimac River at least 3 individual Bald Eagles were noted during the month. Other eagles reported were 2 adults in Pembroke and 2 adults in Lakeville. At Gate 43 in Quabbin 3 immature eagles were noted. An adult Red-shouldered Hawk was noted in Orleans, where an adult was present all of last February. In the Plum Island - Salisbury area, as many as 7 Red-tails, 8 Rough-legs and 4 Northern Harriers were noted most of the month. R.H.S.

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 1986</u>
Red-throated Loon:				
8	Plum Island	4	W.Petersen#	
23	Provincetown, Falmouth	12+, 6	B.Nikula#, P.Trimble#	
Common Loon:				
1	Plum Island-Salisbury	15	BBC (F.Bouchard)	
2,8	Cape Ann	8, 8	BBC (A.Blaisdell, R.Vernon)	
Pied-billed Grebe:				
15,16	Wayland, Norwell	1, 1	R.Forster, B.+M.Litchfield	
Red-necked Grebe:				
2;8,9	N.Scituate,P.I.,Gloucester	4+; 1, 6	J.Cumming; W.Petersen	
20,23	Marion, Provincetown	1, 6	K.Holmes, B.Nikula#	
Great Comorant:				
1,2	Duxbury, Cape Ann	4, 40	D.Clapp, BBC (A.Blaisdell)	
3,16	Assonet, Nauset	3 imm., 200	R.Titus, B.Nikula	
23	Woods Hole	40	P.Trimble#	
Double-crested Cormorant:				
2,16	Manomet, Nantucket	1 ad., 2	R.Titus, B.Hallett#	
23	Falmouth	3	P.Trimble	
American Bittern:				
9,24	Salisbury	1, 1	N.+A.Clayton+v.o., J.McLean#	
Great Blue Heron:				
2	S.Scituate	1	J.Cumming	
Black-crowned Night-Heron:				
1;22	Nant., Eastham; E.Boston	4, 2; 1 ad.	M.Litchfield, W.Petersen; J.Cumming	

SPECIES/DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	FEBRUARY 1986
Mute Swan: thr., 3	N.Scituate, Assonet	2, 12	v.o., R.Titus	
Greater White-fronted Goose: 2	Rochester	1 ad. (from Nov.)	W.Petersen#	
Snow Goose: 1	Plum Island	5	G.Gove#	
Brant: 6, 23	Cohasset, Nantucket	275, 76	R.Titus, M.Litchfield	
Canada Goose: 2	Sudbury River	800	G.Gove	
Wood Duck: thr., 10	Ipswich, Abington	1, 1	v.o., W.Petersen	
Northern Pintail: thr., 1, 16	Lexington, Nant., Wareham	3, 4, 2	L.Taylor, M.Litchfield, M.Lynch#	
Eurasian Wigeon: 2	Wollaston	1 m.	J.Cumming	
American Wigeon: 2	Lexington, Wareham	33, 25	L.Taylor, R.Titus	
17, 23	Wellesley, Falmouth	1, 15	C.Ewer, P.Trimble#	
Canvasback: 3, 16	Assonet, Eastham	772, 1	R.Titus, M.Lynch#	
23	Falmouth	40	P.Trimble#	
Ring-necked Duck: 16, 23	Eastham, Falmouth	68, 25	M.Lynch#, P.Trimble#	
Greater Scaup: 20, 23	Marion, Lakeville	50, 80	K.Holmes, W.Petersen	
Lesssr Scaup: 23	Falmouth	6	P.Trimble#	
Common Eider: 1, 2	Nantucket, Plymouth	300, 2350	M.Litchfield, R.Titus	
King Eider: 2	Sandwich (Scusset Beach)	1 imm. m.	R.Titus	
Harlequin Duck: thr., 16	N.Scituate, Nantucket	2, 3	v.o., B.Hallett#	
Oldsquaw: 1	Duxbury	30	D.Clapp	
Black Scoter: 2	N.Scituate (Third Cliff)	19	J.Cumming	
Surf Scoter: 1	Duxbury Beach	8	D.Clapp	
Common Goldeneye: 1	Newburyport, Nantucket	85, 60	BBC(F.Bouchard), M.Litchfield	
Barrow's Goldeneye: 1, 2+6	Newburyport, N.Scituate	2, 1 m.	BBC(F.Bouchard), J.Cumming+v.o.	
20	Marion	1	K.Holmes	
Bufflehead: 1; 16	Nant., Duxbury; Eastham	55, 60; 35	M.Litchfield, D.Clapp; M.Lynch#	
Hooded Merganser: 8, 11	Watertown, Hyannis	5, 16	J.Heywood, J.Aylward	
15, 16	Middleboro, Eastham	1, 4	K.Holmes, M.Lynch#	
16, 17	Nantucket, Wellesley	17, 5	B.Hallett#, C.Ewer	
23	Middleboro	8	W.Petersen	
Common Merganser: 16, 19	Eastham, Marshfield	25, 4	S.Carroll#, D.Clapp	
Red-breasted Merganser: 1	P'town (off Herring Cove)	1000's	W.Petersen#	
6, 8	Avon, Watertown	3, 16 (courting)	R.Titus, J.Heywood	
9, 17	Arlington, Wellesley	3, 2	L.Taylor, C.Ewer	
20, 27	Lakeville, Millis	2, 1	K.Holmes, B.Cassie	
Ruddy Duck: 9	Medford (Lower Mystic Lake)	1 f.	L.Taylor	
Turkey Vulture: 8	Barnstable	1	fide B.Nikula	
	Also reported from Mashpee and Falmouth			
Bald Eagle: thr.	Newburyport (Merrimac River)	max. 3 (2 imm., 1 ad.)	v.o.	
7, 9	Pembroke, Quabbin (Gate 43)	2 ad., 3 imm.	J.Metcalf, M.Lynch#	
16, 23	Lakeville, Wayland	2 ad., 1	K.Holmes, R.Forster	
Northern Harrier: 1, 2	Duxbury, Bridgewater	2, 4	D.Clapp, K.Anderson#	
6, 16	Marshfield, Eastham	3, 1	R.Titus, M.Lynch#	
16	Chatham, P.I.-Salisbury	1, 4	M.Lynch#, BBC (S.Bolton)	

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 1986</u>
Sharp-shinned Hawk:				
1,9	Lexington, Sharon	1 imm., 1 ad.	L.Taylor#, R.Titus	
17	Brookline, Ipswich	1, 1	H.Wiggin, J.Berry	
24	Dartmouth	1	L.Taylor	
Cooper's Hawk:				
2,9	Concord, Quabbin (Gate 40)	1 imm., 1	J.Gordon#, J. Cumming	
Northern Goshawk:				
1,14	Plum Island, Rochester	1 imm., 1	L.Taylor#, K.Holmes	
Red-shouldered Hawk:				
8,24 on	Orleans, E. Middleboro	1 ad., 2	B.Nikula, K.Anderson	
Red-tailed Hawk:				
1	Salisbury, Plum Island	7, 3	G.Gove#	
6	Marshfield	3 at nest	D.Clapp	
8	Weston-Palmer (Mass. Pike)	10	L.Taylor#	
9	Belmont (A.D.Little)	2 imm. (on carrion)	L.Taylor	
20	Marion, Rochester, Lakeville	1, 1, 1	K.Holmes, D.Briggs	
Rough-legged Hawk:				
1	Salisbury-Plum Island	8	BBC (F.Bouchard)	
1	Halifax, E.Middleboro	1, 1	K.Anderson	
2,3	Bedford, Newburyport area	2, 4	N.Clayton, M.McClellan#	
6,10	Marshfield, Nantucket	6 (4 dark), 1 (dark)	R.Titus, E.Andrews#	
19,23	Marshfield, N.Truro	7, 1	D.Clapp, B.Nikula#	
23	Bridgewater	2	W.Petersen	
American Kestrel:				
thr.	Framingham (MCI)	1-2	G.Gove	
8,9	Lakeville, Mansfield	2, 4	K.Holmes, G.Gove	
Merlin:				
1,16;21	Nantucket; Plum Island	2, 1; 1	M.Litchfield, B.Hallett#; B.Hallett	
23,24	Falmouth, Salisbury	1, 1	P.Trimble#, J.McLean#	
Ruffed Grouse:				
14,15	Stoughton, Hardwick	4, 4	R.Titus, M.Lynch#	
American Coot:				
thr.	Medford	3	L. Taylor	

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Reports of shorebirds, the number of species of shorebirds, and the numbers of shorebirds were very low this February. Of 10 species usually reported in February, only these 6 were reported: Black-bellied Plover, Purple Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Dunlin, Sanderling, and Common Snipe. An adult *Mew* or *Common Gull* was found in the Hough's Neck area of Quincy and was seen by many observers. Another adult of this species was seen in Provincetown on the first of the month. It may be the same bird that has appeared in Provincetown for the past 3 winters. A *Thayer's Gull*, in first-winter plumage, spent most of the month scavenging at the fish pier in Chatham and was also seen by many observers.

A book to be published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society lists all of the known Massachusetts records of these 2 gull species through 1981. These records are supplemented by the Field Records appearing in *BOEM* since 1981. For the *Mew Gull* there are 23 records through 1981; 18 of these are spring (January 1 to May 9) records, and two specimens collected in the spring proved to be of the European race, *Larus canus canus*, the Common Gull. Of 5 fall (August 6 to October 10) records, 2 specimens collected in the fall proved to be of the western U.S. race, *Larus canus brachyrhynchus*, the *Mew Gull*. These races are said to be separable in first basic plumage. See the description of the Common Gull that appeared in the February 1984 *BOEM* (Vol. 12, No. 1, page 18).

Since 1981 and through February 1986, 11 reports of *Mew* or *Common Gull* and 6 reports of *Thayer's Gull* appear in *BOEM*. All of the *Thayer's Gull* reports were of subadult birds, and all but 1 was in first winter plumage. All of the reports of this species occurred between December 17 and April 22. All but 2 of the *Mew* or *Common Gull* reports were of adult birds, and all of the reports occurred between November 30 and April 12, which indicates that they may be *Larus canus canus*, the Common Gull of Europe.

On February 1, large alcids were noted moving past Race Point at a rate of more than 600 per hour. Large numbers of Razorbills have been seen at this time of winter in the past, probably feeding on the abundance of sand eels that have been offshore of Cape Cod. There were 8 species of owls reported, including a Great Horned Owl on a nest in Lexington and another on a nest in Bridgewater. Pileated Woodpeckers were reported from 6 locations, including a female that has been in Newton since November.

G.W.G.

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 1986</u>
Black-bellied Plover:				
16	Chatham	4	M.Lynch#	
Ruddy Turnstone:				
6	N.Scituate	4	R.Titus	
Sanderling:				
8	Plum Island	6	W.Petersen	
Purple Sandpiper:				
6,26	N.Scituate	150, 200	R.Titus, K.Anderson	
8	Rockport, Salisbury	10, 13	R.Titus	
Dunlin:				
6,23	N.Scituate, S.Dartmouth	30, 82	R.Titus, G.Gove#	
Common Snipe:				
9	Woburn	1	C.Gaffney	
Common Black-headed Gull:				
thr.	Yarmouth	1 ad.	v.o.	
2,23	Gloucester, Newburyport	1, 1	BBC (A.Blaisdell), E.Nielson#	
Common Gull:				
thr.	Quincy (Hough's Neck)	1 ad. (details)	R.Abrams + v.o.	
1	Provincetown	1 ad. (details)	W.Petersen#	
Ring-billed Gull:				
6	Brockton	305	R.Titus	
Thayer's Gull:				
1-23	Chatham (Fish Pier)	1 (1W)	B.Nikula# + v.o.	
Iceland Gull:				
1,2	Newburyport, Gloucester	2 (1W), 5	G.Gove#, BBC (A.Blaisdell)	
1,8	Provincetown, Plum Island	3, 26	W.Petersen	
16;9,23	Nantucket; Provincetown	14; 8, 14+	B.Hallett#; B.Nikula#	
Glaucous Gull:				
1	Newburyport, Provincetown	1 ad. + 1 (1W), 1	L.Taylor#, W.Petersen#	
2,8	Gloucester, Plum Island	2, 1	BBC (A.Blaisdell), R.Titus#	
9	Provincetown	2	C.Floyd#	
Black-legged Kittiwake:				
22	Dennis	135	J.Aylward	
large alcid sp.:				
1,23	Provincetown	215 in 20 min., 75+	B.Nikula#	
Thick-billed Murre:				
2,8	Rockport, Cape Ann	1, 1	A.+N.Clayton, BBC (R.Vernon)	
Razorbill:				
8	Plum Island	1 (dead)	R.Titus	
Black Guillemot:				
1,9,23	Provincetown	1, 2, 1	B.Nikula#	
8,9,23	Cape Ann, Rockport	4, 29, 2	BBC(R.Vernon), J. Kenneally,	
Mourning Dove:				
2	Brookline	40 (at feeder)	R.Stymeist# H.Wiggin	
Common Barn-Owl:				
6,19	Nantucket	1 (from Jan.)	E.Andrews#	
Eastern Screech-Owl:				
8,23	Lakeville, Bridgewater	1, 1 (dead)	K.Holmes, W.Petersen	
Great Horned Owl:				
1	Halifax, Plympton	1, 1 (heard)	K.Anderson	
8-28,15	Lexington, Lakeville	1 (on nest), 1	S.Sanders + v.o., K.Holmes	
15-28,23	Stoneham, Bridgewater	1, 1 (nest)	M.Martinek, W.Petersen	
Snowy Owl:				
1	Duxbury	2	D.Clapp	
9,16,21,22,24	Plum Island	1, 1, 1, 1, 1	(very dark) v.o.	
22,28	E.Boston(Logan), N.Monomoy	1, 1	J.Cumming, R.Prescott#	
Barred Owl:				
1;15,17	Ipswich; Hamilton	1; 2, 1	A.+N.Clayton; J.Berry	
Long-eared Owl:				
1,16	Hamilton, Salisbury	1, 1	A.+N.Clayton, J.Cumming	
Short-eared Owl:				
1,8,23,24	Salisbury	1, 2, 4, 1	J.Nove, W.Petersen, R.Stymeist#, J.McLean#	
15,17	Chatham, Nantucket	2, 1	B.Nikula, B.Hallett#	
27	Lexington	1	R.Heil	
Northern Saw-Whet Owl:				
1,19	Plum Island, Nantucket	1, 1	L.Taylor#+v.o., E.Andrews	
Belted Kingfisher:				
20,23	Marion, Falmouth	1, 3	K.Holmes, P.Trimble	
Red-headed Woodpecker:				
thr.	Dover	1	v.o.	

<u>SPECIES/DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>OBSERVERS</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 1986</u>
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 14;6,22	Stoughton; Norwell	1 m., 1 f.	R.Titus; M.+B.Litchfield	
Northern Flicker: 1,9 10-14	Plum Island, Belmont Stoughton	1, 1 3	L.Taylor R.Titus	
Hairy Woodpecker: 10-15	Stoughton	8	R.Titus	
Pileated Woodpecker: 1,9 2,6 18,24	Quabbin (G.37), Quabbin (G.43) Manchester, Newton Acton, Townsend	1, 2 1, 1 f. (since Nov.) 1, 2	M.Lynch#, S. Carroll# BBC(A.Blaisdell), M.Rugo C.Busse, L.Young	

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH EVENING GROSBEAK

An Eastern Phoebe was seen in Wellesley on the seventeenth, constituting the only February report in the last 10 years. On Nantucket the Eurasian Jackdaw continued to be seen in the Slozak Farm area, its usual winter haunt. Reports of hundreds of American Crows were received from the Sudbury River Valley, but these were miniscule compared with the tens of thousands seen around the Framingham roost in January. Single Bohemian Waxwing individuals were seen at 3 widely dispersed locations, continuing the trend of a good flight this winter. Cedar Waxwings were reported in numbers during the earlier part of February, but began to disperse toward month's end. A Palm Warbler in South Attleboro on the twenty-third was only the third February report in the last decade. Another surprising warbler report was that of an Ovenbird on Nantucket on the ninth. This individual was well observed several times during the day, at one time in association with a Hermit Thrush. Last winter Lexington was the site of a February Ovenbird visit.

There was little evidence of any significant blackbird migration in February, although individuals of all the expected species were reported. Similarly with winter finches, most of the species were represented in the flight this February, but the overall magnitude was small. The only exception was redpolls, which occurred in modest numbers and were widely distributed.

L.E.T.

Eastern Phoebe: 17	Wellesley	1	C.Ewer	
Horned Lark: 1,17 22,26	Quabbin (G.37), Ipswich Plum Island, E.Boston	20, 102 4, 35	M.Lynch#, J.Berry S.Carroll#, J.Thomas	
Blue Jay: 8,10-15	Hardwick, Stoughton	20, 243	G.Gove#, R.Titus	
<u>Eurasian Jackdaw:</u> thr.	Nantucket	1	E.Andrews#	
American Crow: 2	Sudbury, Concord	500, 150	G.Gove#	
Fish Crow: 1-12,7	4 locations, Millis	1-5, 20	v.o., B.Cassie	
Common Raven: 1,16	Quabbin	3, 9	M.Lynch#, N.Osborne	
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 8,20	Plum Island, Lakeville	8, 2	R.Titus, K.Holmes	
Carolina Wren: thr. 3,10 22,23 24	Middleboro, Ipswich Berkley, Billerica Norwell, Falmouth Dartmouth, Westport	6, 1 3, 1 2, 12 6	D.Briggs#, J.Berry R.Titus, R.McLay M.+B.Litchfield, P.Trimble# G.Gove#	
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 2,9	Waltham, Quabbin (Gate 43)	2, 11	L.Taylor, S.Carroll#	
Eastern Bluebird: 23	S.Attleboro	4	B.Hallett#	
Hermit Thrush: 9,10 14 19,23	Nantucket, Marshfield Lincoln Concord, Norwell	1, 1 1 (dead) 1, 1	J.Van Vorst, D.Clapp R.Forster S.Hecker, M.+B.Litchfield	
American Robin: 15 17,22	Norwell Ipswich, Osterville	50+ 25, 75	M.+B.Litchfield Canzanelli, B.Barber	
Gray Catbird: 15,24	W.Newbury, Westport	1, 1	I.Giriunas, L.Taylor#	
Bohemian Waxwing: 4,6 14-17	Worcester, Marshfield E.Orleans	1, 1 1	M.Lynch, D.Clapp J.Russell#	

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Cedar Waxwing:				
6,9	Marshfield, Lexington	500+, 80	D.Clapp, L. Taylor	
9,17	Hingham, Ipswich	250+, 110	R.Stymeist#, BBC	
Northern Shrike:				
thr.	Plum Island-Salisbury, Eastham	2-3, 1	v.o.	
16,17	Nantucket, Ipswich	2, 1	B.Hallett#, J.Berry	
Yellow-rumped Warbler:				
1,24	Salisbury, Westport	1, 25	L.Taylor#	
Pine Warbler:				
thr.,10	Nantucket, Stoughton	4, 1	E.Andrews#, R.Titus	
19	Sudbury	1	J.Fellemon	
Palm Warbler:				
23	S.Attleboro	1	B.Hallett#	
Ovenbird:				
9	Nantucket	1	J.Van Vorst	
Rufous-sided Towhee:				
15	Whitman	1	W.Petersen	
Field Sparrow:				
thr., 3	Middleboro, Berkley	10 max., 24	D.Briggs, R.Titus	
12	Norwell	6	M.+B.Litchfield	
"Ipswich" Sparrow:				
16	Plum Island	1	J.Cumming	
Fox Sparrow:				
1,27	Mount Auburn, Easton	1, 2	M.Noland, S.Peak	
Swamp Sparrow:				
8,15	Saugus, Sudbury	1, 2	J.Cumming, J.Gordon#	
White-crowned Sparrow:				
17	Ipswich	1	J.Berry	
Lapland Longspur:				
24,26	Salisbury, E.Boston	2, 6+	J.McLean#, S.Thomas	
Snow Bunting:				
1,26	Quabbin (Gate 37), Sharon	30, 15	S.Carroll#, R.Titus	
Red-winged Blackbird:				
4-10,19	Marshfield, Cambridge	130 max.(2/10), 19	D.Clapp, L.Taylor	
Rusty Blackbird:				
12	Stoughton	1 m.	R.Titus	
Common Grackle:				
23	Truro	1	B.Nikula#	
Brown-headed Cowbird:				
9,10	Saugus, Marshfield	3, 24	J.Cumming, D.Clapp	
Pine Grosbeak:				
9,20	Hardwick, Waltham	5, 5	M.Lynch#, J.Horowitz	
24	Lincoln	6	R.Forster	
Purple Finch:				
2,9	Manchester, Lexington	12, 7	BBC, L.Taylor	
Red Crossbill:				
2,16	Lakeville, Plum Island	30, 15	D.Briggs#, BBC	
White-winged Crossbill:				
1,1-16	Mount Auburn, Plum Island	2, 6 max.	M.Noland, BBC	
23	Concord	1 f.	R.Walton	
Common Redpoll:				
thr.,1	Yarmouthport, Plum Island	20 max., 42	R.Scott, BBC	
15,5-27	Hardwick, 3 locations	80+, 6 total	M.Lynch#, v.o.	
11,23	Lexington, Wayland	25, 45	P.Roberts, R.Forster	
Hoary Redpoll (no details):				
15	Hardwick	1	M.Lynch#	
Pine Siskin:				
thr.	Nantucket, Middleboro	10-16, 20	E.Andrews#, D.Briggs	
15	Hardwick	1	S.Carroll#	
23,24	Falmouth, E.Middleboro	2, 5	P.Trimble, K.Anderson	
Evening Grosbeak:				
thr., 9	Middleboro, Hardwick	13, 12	D.Briggs, S.Carroll#	
24	Westport	13	L.Taylor#	