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*Cover: Kelp Gull. Photo by Norm Saunders from Sea Breeze Restaurant parking lot, February 20, 1999.*



## **KELP GULL VISITS ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MD PART I**

**JANE KOSTENKO**

Maryland has had more than its fair share of truly great birds, and St. Mary's County has become known as a place where out-of-range birds can often show up. But when a Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) was identified, unprecedented nationwide birding excitement reigned.

The initial finding of the Kelp Gull and its subsequent relocation one year later are only part of the story of this gull. Its normal range, geographical variations in plumage and subtle differences between similar gulls, the shortcomings of field guides, and difficulties in making bird identifications through Internet-posted descriptions and photos are all integral to how this gull came to surely be one of Maryland's most-seen rare birds, after almost being passed over.

This is the first in a two-part series; part two will describe the widespread birder visitation that this discovery initiated.

### **January and February, 1998**

Patty Craig and Kyle Rambo have been the top two Maryland Ornithological Society listers for St. Mary's County for many years, and have found numerous rare birds in the county. But in January of 1998, Patty took a side road that curved down to the Patuxent River, and came to two crab houses built right on the river in the hamlet of Sandgates, Maryland in St. Mary's County. Both restaurants have piers on the river. It was on one of these piers that Patty noticed a flock of resting gulls. And it was one of these gulls that caught her eye.

Patty reported, "On January 25, 1998, I found an unusual gull at the Sea Breeze pier. It was as dark as the Great Black-backed Gulls [*Larus marinus*], but smaller, rounded headed, and had one small mirror and yellow legs. I thought it might be a different subspecies of Lesser Black-backed Gull [*L. fuscus*]. So I called Kyle Rambo to see if he could check it out since he lives close [to the Sandgates area]."

In a report to the Maryland Records Committee, Kyle documented his sighting: "On or approximately on the 7th of February, 1998, I went to the Sea Breeze Restaurant to view a Lesser Black-backed Gull reported to me by Patty Craig a week or more earlier. I found what I also believed to be Lesser Black-backed Gull at the time... I recall the gull being Herring Gull-sized and having a dark mantle, approximately the same color as the Great Black-backed Gulls in its company. Its legs were a dull yellow, perhaps greenish-yellow, but duller than I expected for Lesser Black-backed Gull."

## January and February, 1999

Remarkably, one year later, Kyle re-found the bird on a Christmas Bird Count on the morning of January 3, 1999.

Kyle wrote to the Records Committee, "While conducting the Naval Air Station Patuxent River CBC, I observed this gull sitting on a close-up pier piling at the Sea Breeze Restaurant. The bird was a medium-sized gull, approximately the size of a Herring Gull [*L. argentatus*] and much smaller than the nearby Great Black-backed Gulls. It was dark-mantled (apparently more so than even the GBBGs), but with a slightly noticeable contrast to the even darker primaries. Its legs were greenish-yellow, and the back of its white head was lightly covered with fine brown flecks. The bill had an orange spot on the gonys, with a very pronounced gonydeal angle. The bird had yellowish eyes with a distinct orange eye ring. At the time, I believed it to be one of the darker subspecies of Lesser Black-backed Gull (*L. f. fuscus* or *L. f. intermedius*). In fact, I thought it might be the same bird observed as a LBBG by Patty Craig (and later myself) a year earlier."

Kyle told Patty about relocating the gull, and Patty noted, "I went to look at [the gull] on the 7th of January [1999]. I was still not confident on an identification, but it was at this time that I considered Kelp Gull. I had no resources to separate the species so I tried to get others to see it by calling and e-mailing..."

Since any subspecies of Lesser Black-backed Gull other than *L. fuscus graellsii* would not be expected in North America, field guides are of limited use. Patty wrote, "In the mean time I saw [the gull] a few more times and obtained photographs (1-31-99) that showed that the tail ended at P7. I felt that this verified an identification of *intermedius* LBBG." An article on LBBG in the American Birding Association's *Birding* magazine (October 1995), indicated that this would separate *intermedius* from *graellsii*.

Patty's description was enough to get Marshall Iloff interested in seeing the bird. Marshall made several unsuccessful attempts, during which time he circulated Patty's photo to several birders through the Internet. Marshall later wrote, "The general opinion was that the image in the photo was not inconsistent with that of an *intermedius* Lesser Black-backed Gull. But [I] voiced some doubts, so it was only then that Patty mentioned Kelp Gull [to me on] February 8, 1999."

Kelp Gull, a non-migratory, four-year gull from the Southern Hemisphere, breeds in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and southern South America. A pair of "mated" birds was discovered off the coast of Louisiana in the Chandeleur Islands in 1989, and one bred there with a Herring Gull in 1990 (AOU 1998). Other sightings of Kelp Gull have been reported in Tamaulipas, Mexico, and the Yucatan Peninsula, and in the United States: in Galveston, Texas (in two separate years) and once in Indiana. Given the rarity of this gull north of the Equator, even suggesting Kelp Gull was going out on the proverbial limb.

Marshall made another trip to St. Mary's County and saw the gull on February 11, 1999. He posted the following message on February 12, 1999, to the Internet birding discussion group MDOsprey: "I made my third trip down to St. Mary's County today to look for an unusual gull that Patty Craig had alerted me to. She, Marty Cribb, Kyle Rambo, Tyler Bell, Jane Kostenko, and several other MD birders had seen the gull and were of the opinion that it was an *intermedius* Lesser Black-back. Patty sent me a photo via e-mail a couple days ago that

showed the bird's long wings and dark mantle. I saw the bird well today and concur with their ID. To my knowledge, it is the first such bird for MD and is certainly the first one photographed.

"...The bird in question is a full adult. At first glance (naked eye) I passed it off as Great Black-backed because of the darkness of the mantle (even though I was expecting a dark-mantled bird). It was quickly obvious though that this was a smaller bird, smaller billed, etc. Structurally I found it like a fairly large *graellsii* Lesser Black-backed, and I believe it is likely a male. The head was white with almost no streaking except a tiny bit above the eye and crossing the crown and a few thin streaks on the nape. The orbital ring is bright red, the bill is brightly colored with a prominent red gonydeal spot, and the legs are grayish-yellow. The back is very close to the color of a Great Black-backed Gull (none were present for direct comparison) or perhaps a tad lighter. The back did contrast with the primaries, but not obviously. The white primary tips were very small. The outermost primary has a very small white mirror restricted to the inner web of the feather. The 4th primary in [P7] falls even with the tail tip. In flight the inner wings and back barely contrasted with the black primary tips.

"The gull did not chum in though quite a number of Ring-billed [ *L. delawarensis* ] came in to pretzels (all I had to offer). It is, however, extremely approachable. I walked within 10 feet or so and the bird hardly seemed nervous. It spent most of its time perched on the pilings around the Sandgates Restaurant on the Patuxent River. It did spend a small amount of time feeding along the rocky shoreline to the north, and could be viewed from the roadside as it flew up and down the shore."

Marshall's post continued, "I watched the bird from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. and it was still present when I left. It has been present throughout the day and is usually easy to find, though it is not always there (I have missed it at 10, 2, and 3:00 on previous attempts)."

Marshall's post heightened interest in the gull within the birding community, and while Patty Craig headed for Florida for a family visit, Maryland birding history was about to take place. Three birders from the DC area were the first to come to St. Mary's County in response to the prospect of seeing a new subspecies.

Rob Hilton and Ottavio Janni contributed the following summary, narrated by Rob: "Ottavio Janni, Lisa Shannon, and I went to the Sandgates Restaurant on February 14 to check out the gull which had been reported earlier that week and season as being of the darker-backed *intermedius* subspecies of Lesser Black-backed Gull. This form breeds in eastern and southern Scandinavia and winters from there west to Ireland and south in to Spain and Portugal. At that time none of the observers had seen this form.

"When we arrived at the restaurant, we saw a dark-backed gull perched on a piling behind the Sea Breeze Restaurant. After we parked at the Sandgates Restaurant, Ottavio got out of the car to look at that dark-mantled gull, then rushed back saying something about a GBB with yellow legs. All three of us went to the pier, to find that the bird had flown. However, it quickly returned. We quickly realized this was the bird and Ottavio excitedly said something like, 'It has a huge bill for a Lesser Black-backed Gull.' His immediate reaction was that it did not seem like a LBB. I soon noted and commented on the greenish legs (at the time Ottavio didn't realize the significance of this), and then said that Kelp Gulls have greenish legs. I was aware of the Kelp Gulls, which had been reported some ten years before as breeding on islands off the coast of Louisiana, and knew that this species had very dark upperparts.

"After studying the bird for a little while, we both thought it was likely not a LBB. We then went to my car to retrieve our cameras, notebooks, and sketch pads. Lisa and I soon hunkered down next to [a horseshoe pit backstop] near the pier, to stay out of the strong winds...the wind chill was below 20 degrees, and the ink in my pen was so congealed I could barely write. Lisa made some nice pencil sketches. Ottavio slowly walked, then crawled out on to the pier where perched the gull, and began taking pictures. After more than an hour, we went home and consulted reference books.

"Ottavio and I talked again in the afternoon and the Kelp Gull hypothesis was getting stronger. We had both looked carefully at the primary pattern and it seemed an excellent match for Kelp after looking at photos. While Lisa and I went to our offices, Ottavio called some local birders. Their reactions to his description of the bird were strikingly similar: Paul O'Brien said, 'Oh my god, it's a Kelp Gull!' (this before Ottavio had mentioned the 'K word')...

"When we returned to St. Mary's County the next day, Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd were already present. Unbeknownst to the five of us, Paul and Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis had already seen the bird, identified it as a Kelp Gull, and departed while spreading the word. Birders started drifting in that afternoon (Mark Hoffman, Jane Kostenko, Tyler Bell, Greg Miller among others) as we stood, talked, watched, and (in the restaurant) ate."

On February 15, 1999, shortly after 12:30 p.m., Michael O'Brien sent out the first Internet post with the subject header, "Kelp Gull (?) in St. Mary's County" that read, "...This morning between 7:00 and 8:30 a.m., Paul O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis and I saw the bird at close range and agree that it looks most like a Kelp Gull...It has already been photographed extensively but a large series of close-up photos may be needed to resolve the identification so all photographers are urged to make a visit..."

The unparalleled commotion in the national birding community that followed will be the subject of Part II.

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23035 Forest Way, California, MD 20619

## SUBURBAN HABITATS OF WATERFOWL IN LOWER DELMARVA

JOHN V. DENNIS

Generally overlooked in taking waterfowl censuses are bodies of water within residential areas. But as I reported in an article in the September 1996 issue of *Maryland Birdlife*, ponds in residential neighborhoods near the coast from Virginia to Delaware hold sizable waterfowl populations the year round. Ponds near Ocean City, Maryland and at Rehoboth Beach, Delaware have been visited by the writer since 1990 and numbers of waterfowl using them counted. As many as two visits per month were made to each pond. Other suburban locations where waterfowl may gather were later added to the census program. These included ponds in and around Salisbury, Maryland beginning in January 1994 and the waterfront at Cambridge, Maryland, beginning in November 1998 (see maps).

I was interested in seasonal use by waterfowl at these gathering places, species using them, their numbers, population changes, and presence of water birds other than ducks and geese. Among the non-waterfowl users were cormorants, grebes, Belted Kingfishers, Ospreys, herons, egrets, gulls, and terns. The last two were not included in the counts.

Waterfowl find suburban areas with abundant water attractive for several reasons. They are safe from hunting and there are varying amounts of food in the form of aquatic plants and animal life. Moreover, artificial feeding was conducted at most sites. Lawns, present at most sites, were extensively grazed by Canada Geese, and Mallards foraged for food in nearby farmers' fields. After feeding on waste grain, they would return to the safe quarters of the suburban ponds.

Although trampling of lawns, along with the mess left by droppings, constitutes a nuisance, the waterfowl provide a recreational outlet for residents and visiting bird watchers. At both park areas and planned residential developments, there are signs urging people to keep dogs on leashes and warning motorists of waterfowl crossings. At Ocean Pines there are signs telling people to offer grain and *not* bread. One suspects that there had been an over-use of bread; therefore the advice to offer more nutritious food in the form of grain.

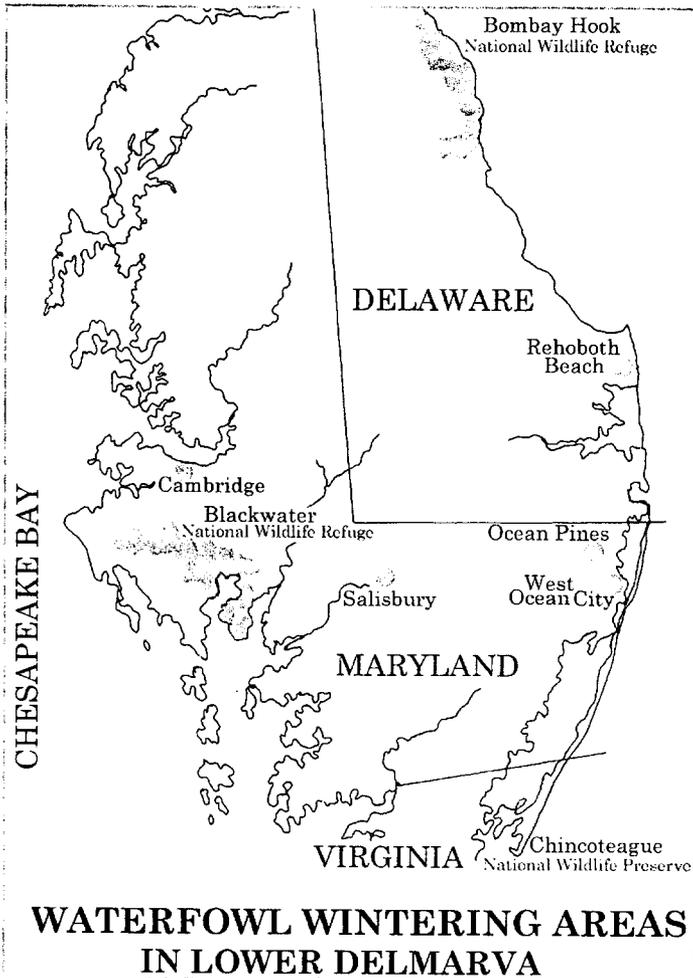
### Recent changes among Delmarva waterfowl

In addition to suburban-type habitat, there is still enough good habitat to accommodate the waterfowl that come to the region to spend the winter or breed. There are now more species than ever on hand throughout the year. With the exception of the Labrador Duck, not a single species has been lost during historic times. The extinct Labrador Duck was last recorded in 1878 at Elmira, New York (American Ornithologists' Union 1998).

Newcomers include the Mallard, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon, Lesser Snow Goose, and Mute Swan. At the turn of the century in 1900, the first four were regarded as Midwestern species whose ranges extended no farther east than the Mississippi Valley. It is hard to believe that these abundant species have been in the East only a relatively short time. The Mallard is now our most abundant duck. Not far behind the Mallard is the Gadwall.

Almost as many changes have taken place among the geese as the ducks. The Canada Goose, now seen the year round in marshes, agricultural fields, parks, golf courses, and bodies of water, was almost a rarity thirty years ago. Formerly, the flocks that came down from the Hudson Bay region and eastern Canada spent the winter farther south. Better feeding conditions, as well as milder winters, have been factors in a change that has seen most of the population spending the winter in the Delmarva region. The advent of mechanical corn and soybean pickers in the 1970s has resulted in more leftover food in the fields for geese, ducks, and swans. In addition, the geese feed on the green blades of winter cover crops. As many as half a million Canada Geese now spend the winter, and sizable numbers stay behind to nest.

The changes that have benefited the Canada Goose have also benefited the Lesser Snow Goose. This goose, which comes in two color phases — blue and white — flies all the way from easternmost Siberia, arctic Alaska, and Canada to spend the winter along the Texas and



Louisiana Gulf coasts, and the Chesapeake Bay region. Formerly absent from the Bay region, this goose has added another thousand miles to its long migration journey and is now wintering in increasing numbers at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and elsewhere along the eastern side of the Bay.

A larger subspecies, known as the Greater Snow Goose, reaches coastal sections of Delmarva and the Outer Banks of North Carolina in good numbers every fall. The Greater Snow Goose comes only in a white phase and flies all the way from breeding grounds in northwest Greenland and arctic Canada.

### **Artificial feeding**

Extensive use of bakery products and grain in feeding waterfowl is made at the Town Park in Salisbury, the Cambridge waterfront, Ocean Pines, and Greer and Silver Lakes in Rehoboth Beach. Most species will accept food either if it is tossed into the water or on dry land. But diving ducks, including scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Redheads, and Canvasbacks, will only accept food tossed into the water. As there is little water-feeding in Rehoboth Beach where there are diving ducks, these species do not participate as fully in the artificial feeding. On the other hand, along the Cambridge waterfront food is tossed into the water, and diving ducks, including hundreds of Canvasbacks, come close to shore to dive for it.

The Ruddy Duck, in a group of its own, is so specialized for diving (with its legs well toward the rear of its body), that it is helpless on land. It feeds primarily on aquatic vegetation. I have no records of its accepting artificial food in the East.

### **Competition from gulls and feral pigeons**

Almost as soon as anyone arrives at the places where waterfowl are fed, gulls appear in large numbers and also feral pigeons. They are particularly eager for bakery products and the occasional popcorn that is offered. Foods of this kind are taken so quickly that little, if any, is left for the waterfowl. This is another good reason not to offer bakery products.

Gulls, including the Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls, will sparingly eat small pieces of grain. Grain tossed into the water is safe from competition by both gulls and feral pigeons.

### **Hybrids and domestic stock**

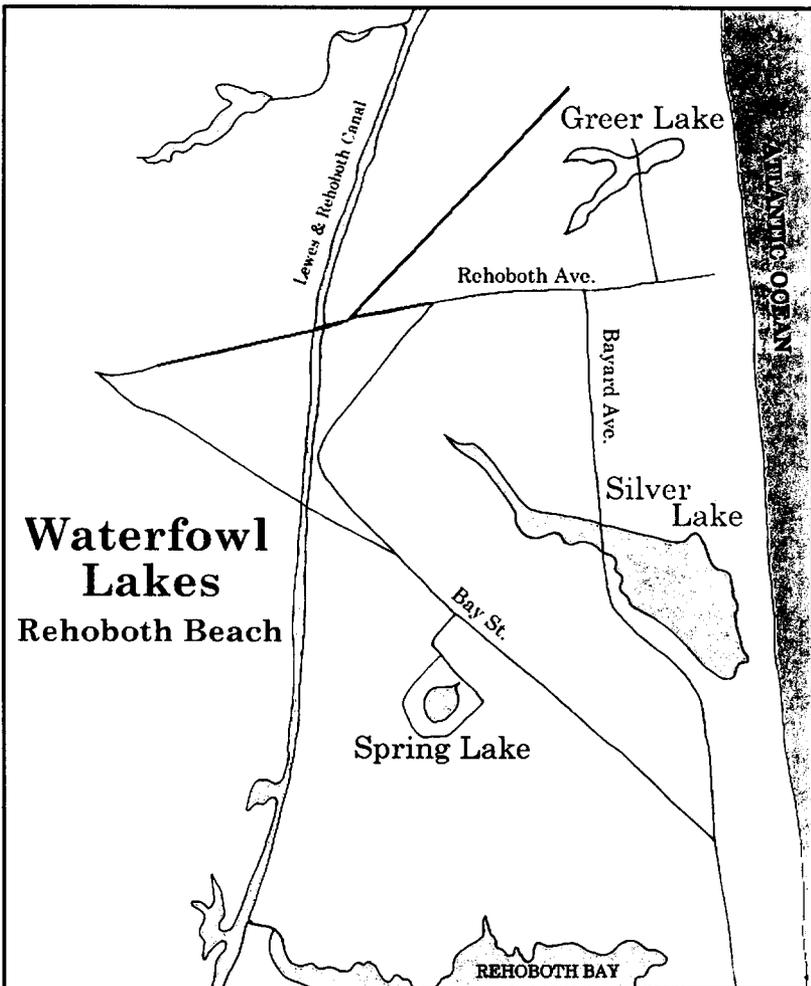
One is greeted at feeding places not only by well-known species of waterfowl but also by what might be called a motley group of hybrids and feral domestic geese and ducks. Especially evident among the hybrids are Mallard crosses. It is reported that the Mallard has hybridized with at least forty other species. In most cases these hybrids are sterile. But crosses between Mallards and the American Black Duck are fertile. This is a cause for concern because the Mallard gene pool is swamping out that of the Black.

People have released domestic breeds on some of the lakes and ponds with unfortunate results. In the scramble for food are domestic geese, which seem to include strains of both the domestic Chinese Goose and Greylag goose. Pekin Ducks, the white domestic form of the Mallard, may be present, as may Muscovy Ducks. The latter are a tropical American species that has been successfully domesticated. The Muscovy breeds with other waterfowl but the progeny are sterile.

### Order in which the waterfowl come for food

At Ocean Pines, where there is extensive feeding by residents, even a car drawing up to park by the edge of a 50-acre pond brings a quick response from the waterfowl. First to come are the domestic geese. As soon as someone leaves his or her car, they crowd in, often tugging at one's clothing with their bills. They are quickly followed by Pekin Ducks, Mallards, and American Coots. The Pekins are particularly aggressive about getting their share. Last to arrive are the Canada Geese. An occasional Canada, with neck outstretched and wings flapping, will attempt to chase off all the other waterfowl but with little success.

The domestic geese at Ocean Pines proved to be such a nuisance that the grounds authorities rounded up about fifty of them, placing them at other locations. Seven escaped the roundup and are still present.



Aloof from all this activity are Canvasbacks and other diving ducks, which as already mentioned, do not respond to food offered on dry land. They stay well out in the pond.

### Comparative use by waterfowl

Ponds or waterfronts covered in this study are as follows:

- Ocean Pines, Maryland, at South Gate (large pond)
- Ocean Pines, Maryland, at North Gate (small pond)
- Silver Lake, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
- Greer Lake, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
- Spring Lake, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
- Salisbury, Maryland (several ponds)
- Records Pond, Laurel, Delaware
- Cambridge waterfront, Cambridge, Maryland

Of the twenty species of waterfowl that make use of these bodies of water in or close to suburban habitats on lower Delmarva, some are present at only one or two and others are present at all of them. Listed below in order of number of sites used are the waterfowl species.

SPECIES	NO. OF SITES	SPECIES	NO. OF SITES
Canada Goose	8	Hooded Merganser	3
Mallard	8	Snow Goose	3
American Black Duck	6	Red-breasted Merganser	3
Canvasback	6	Gadwall	2
American Wigeon	5	Ring-necked Duck	2
Northern Shoveler	5	Lesser Scaup	2
Bufflehead	5	Common Goldeneye	2
American Coot	5	Tundra Swan	1
Pied-billed Grebe	4	Wood Duck	1
Ruddy Duck	4	Redhead	1

The Pied-billed Grebe is not strictly a waterfowl species. Double-crested Cormorants were recorded at four of the locations. Not included in the list are introduced or domestic species, including Mute Swan, domestic geese, Muscovy Duck and Pekin Duck.

Absent from the suburban bodies of water were most of the sea ducks, including Harlequin Duck, eiders, Oldsquaw, and the scoters. More expected but absent were the Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, and Green-winged Teal. Yet, as many as 2,000 Northern Pintails are present at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge near Cambridge during some winters. However, Henry Armistead (*pers. comm.*) states that a precipitous decline in the Northern Pintail has taken place in the East in recent years, and that they usually do not frequent ponds in urban areas.

### Changes in population

Since I began my census work in 1990, there have been several pronounced changes in populations of species using the suburban ponds and waterfronts. A dramatic increase in numbers has been noted for the Ruddy Duck, Northern Shoveler, and American Coot.

Populations of Canada Geese, Mallards, American Black Ducks, and Canvasbacks have remained consistently high throughout the period. For example, winter and spring counts in 1994–95 at Greer and Silver Lakes in Rehoboth Beach showed about 800 Canada Geese, 1000 Mallards, 640 American Black Ducks, and 400 Canvasbacks present on these lakes. These figures indicate a decline in numbers between the 1994–95 period and the more recent one for the Mallard and American Black Duck, but a dramatic increase for the Canvasback.

It should be borne in mind, however, that, with waterfowl trading back and forth between the different ponds and sometimes leaving the area to feed in agricultural fields, it is impossible to obtain accurate figures from the ground. This could better be accomplished through aerial surveys.

The Lesser Snow Goose, which has been making headline news because of its dramatic increase in numbers, is absent from the ponds and other water areas covered in my survey. In winter, it gathers in huge numbers on agricultural fields in Delmarva. Through sheer weight of its numbers, it is grubbing up and destroying the tundra on its arctic breeding grounds.

### Concluding remarks

Thanks to the benefits of artificial feeding and freedom from hunting pressure, a number of waterfowl species on Delmarva are making extensive use of bodies of water within or close to populated districts. The species taking advantage of this opportunity were recorded and figures were gathered on their numbers. Widespread use of these waters was made by the Canada Goose, Mallard, American Black Duck, and Canvasback.

Ability to adapt to man-made conditions should help ensure the survival of species having this capacity. Among the species that were not well represented were the Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, and Redhead. Not recorded at all was the Northern Pintail.

Adapting well to artificial feeding and man-made conditions were the Muscovy Duck, Pekin Duck, and feral domestic geese. These barnyard types are a nuisance and should not be allowed on waters occupied by native waterfowl.

Waterfowl are present in Delmarva in good numbers throughout the year. Many species are finding additional habitat and sources of food by spilling over into habitats close to man. Their presence in these habitats is a source of pleasure to people and provides them with a close tie to nature.

I wish to thank Henry T. Armistead for assistance in regard to several points.

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## WINTER: DECEMBER 1, 1997–FEBRUARY 28, 1998

DANIEL R. SOUTHWORTH

This *El Niño*-affected winter was one of the warmest on record. December was mild, and January and February were exceptionally warm. There was a good bit of rain with a couple of nor'easters hitting the region, but there were only traces of snow during the period.

*Observers:* Henry Armistead, Rick Blom, Bob Boxwell, Dennis & Jane Coskren, Patty Craig, Ralph Cullison, Sam Dyke, Darius & Paula Ecker, Ethel Engle (reporting for Caroline County), Marshall Iliff, George Jett, Ryan Lesh, David Mozurkewich, Dotty Mumford, Mariana Nuttle, Bonnie Ott, Elizabeth Pitney (reporting for the Wicomico Bird Club), Fran Pope, Kyle Rambo, Jan Reese, Sue Ricciardi, Robert Ringler, Chandler Robbins, Norm & Fran Saunders, Eugene Scarpulla (reporting for Hart-Miller Island), Bill Scudder, Stephen Simon, Susan Sires, Connie Skipper, Jo Solem (reporting for Howard County), Jim Stasz, Mark Wallace, Dave Webb, David Weesner, Leo Weigant, Marcia Watson-Whitmyre, Hal Wierenga, Howard Youth, Helen Zeichner.

*Abbreviations:* CBC — Christmas Bird Count, DC — District of Columbia, NWR — National Wildlife Refuge, PRNAS — Patuxent River Naval Air Station (St. Mary's), PWRC — Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Prince George's), PWRC/N — Patuxent Wildlife Research Center North (Anne Arundel), SP — State Park, UMCf — University of Maryland Central Farm (Howard), WMA — Wildlife Management Area, WS — Wildlife Sanctuary.

*Locations:* Place names (with counties in parentheses) not in the index of the State highway map: Assateague Island (Worcester), Blackwater NWR (Dorchester), Broad Creek Scout Camp (Harford), Browns Bridge (Howard), Brown's Station Landfill (Prince George's), Deep Creek Lake (Garrett), E. A. Vaughn WMA (Worcester), Greenbrier SP (Washington), Hooper Island (Dorchester), Horsehead Wetlands Center (Queen Anne's), Hughes Hollow (Montgomery), Irish Grove WS (Somerset), Jug Bay WS (Anne Arundel), Little Seneca Lake (Montgomery), New Germany SP (Garrett), Swallow Falls SP (Garrett), Terrapin Point Park (Queen Anne's), Washington Monument SP (Washington).

*Loons, Grebes, Gannets, Cormorants.* Sixty **Red-throated Loons** was a nice count in the Cobb Island area on Jan. 10, where 25 **Common Loons** were tallied the same day (Jett, Stasz). There were still 23 Red-throated Loons at Hart-Miller on Feb. 28, and other Common Loons included 18 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz+), 3 at Hooper Island on Jan. 29 (Armistead), 12 at Point Lookout on Feb. 16 (Craig), and 15 in the Claiborne and Tilghman

vicinity on Feb. 22 (Lesh, Stasz). The many **Pied-billed Grebes** included 25 at Deal Island WMA on Jan. 14 (Iliff), 2 at Greenbrier SP on Dec. 17 (Weesner), and 41 at Loch Raven on Jan. 17 (Simon). Harry Armistead found 60 **Horned Grebes** at Hooper Island on Jan. 29, and Patty Craig tallied 300 at Pt. Lookout on Feb. 21. Pt. Lookout also hosted an **Eared Grebe** from Feb. 9-16 (Craig). At North Beach on Feb. 7, Jim Stasz and Charles Wetherill saw an adult **Northern Gannet**, which flew into Anne Arundel County. **Great Cormorants** included 3 in the Cobb Island area on Jan. 10 (Jett, Stasz) and 7 at the Sharp Island Light, Talbot County on Feb. 22 (Lesh, Stasz). Among the **Double-crested Cormorant** reports were 2 during the Garrett County CBC on Dec. 20, 28 at Faulkner on Jan. 13 (Craig), and 28 in Scotland on Feb. 25 (Boxwell).

*Hérons, Ibis, Vultures.* With the mild weather, there were at least 10 **American Bittern** reports on the eastern shore throughout the period, and **Great Blue Herons** were very numerous including 1 at Deep Creek Lake on Feb. 7 (Skipper). A **Great Egret** was noted in Georgetown on Dec. 14 (Todd Day), and 7 were checked off at Deal Island WMA on Jan. 13 (Iliff). Smith Island hosted 3 **Snowy Egrets**, 2 **Little Blue Herons**, and 2 **Tricolored Herons** on Jan. 19 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). Other Tricoloreds included 1 at Deal Island WMA on Jan. 16 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), and 3 at Elliott Island on Jan. 29 and 1 at West Ocean City on Feb. 11 (Armistead). A nice count of 133 **Black-crowned Night-Herons**, leaving a roost at sunset, was made at Deal Island WMA on Jan. 16 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). Sam Dyke found 13 **Glossy Ibis** there on Feb. 2. During the Calvert County Midwinter Count on Jan. 11, 493 **Black Vultures** were tallied, including 479 at one roost (Tony Barbour+). In Allegany County, Susan Sires noted a **Turkey Vulture** on Jan. 22, and on Feb. 15, one was noted in the Pleasant Valley area of Garrett County and 4 were at Swallow Falls SP (Stasz).

*Geese.* A **Greater White-fronted Goose** was reported at Blackwater NWR on Dec. 26 (Les Roslund), and also on Jan. 13 (Dyke). Others included 1 at Bayhead Road, Anne Arundel County on Jan. 12, where a hybrid *White-fronted x Canada Goose* was also noted (Iliff); 2 at Critcher Road, Worcester County on Jan. 17 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz); and 1 at Aydelotte Road, Worcester County on Jan. 19 (Coskrens). The 62,600 **Snow Geese** on Dec. 29 was the second highest tally ever for the Ocean City CBC (Robbins+), and one Snow Goose was discovered at Greenbrier SP on Jan. 4 (Weesner). A **Ross's Goose** was discovered at Blackwater Refuge on Jan. 13 (Dyke), where there were 3 on Feb. 16 (Mozurkewich), and 1 was at Critcher Road, Worcester County on Jan. 17 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). Rick Blom tallied 7600 **Canada Geese** migrating over his house in Bel Air on Feb. 27, and 9440 were listed in Essex on Feb. 27 (Kevin Graff). Over 11,600 Canadas were seen flying north over Hart-Miller on Feb. 28. Several of a small race of Canada Geese were reported this winter: 2 at Kershner's Pond, Frederick County on Dec. 5 (Iliff), 1 at Piney Run on Dec. 7 (Ringle) and 4 there on Dec. 17 (Iliff), 2 at Town Point Road, Cecil County on Jan. 2 (Lesh, Stasz), 1 at Roxbury Road, Howard County and 2 at Centennial on Jan. 4 (Stasz), 1 at Loch Raven on Jan. 6 (Iliff, Stasz), 1 at Rising Sun on Jan. 9 (Iliff), 1 at Allens Fresh on Jan. 10 (Stasz), 1 at Brown's Station Landfill on Jan. 12 (Iliff), 1 at Clements on Jan. 13 and 4 at Cobb Island the same day (Craig), 1 at Upper Marlboro on Jan. 15 (Stasz), and 1 at Starr on Jan. 31 (Stasz). Celia Adams reported a lone **Brant** at Sandy Point SP on Feb. 1.

*Dabbling Ducks.* A **Eurasian Wigeon** was found at Assateague on Dec. 29 (Lesh, Stasz), another was noted at Brown's Station on Jan. 12 (Iliff) and Feb. 3 (David Bridge), and 1 was reported at West Ocean City on Jan. 29 (Gail Mackiernan, Barry Cooper), and on Feb. 14 (N. & F. Saunders). Steve Simon found 190 **American Wigeon** at Loch Raven on Feb. 26. **Mal-lards** included 875 at Blackwater on Jan. 29 (Armistead) and 612 at Hart-Miller on Feb. 21.

Some *American Black x Mallard Duck* hybrids were identified with 1 at Terrapin Point Park and 2 at Piney Run on Dec. 17 (Iliff), and singles at Chesapeake Beach on Dec. 22 and at Pinto Marsh on Feb. 16 (Stasz). A **Blue-winged Teal** was reported at Horsehead Wetlands Center on Jan. 10 (Abbie Banks), 2 were at Deal Island WMA on Feb. 2 (Dyke), and 30 were listed at Elliott Island on Feb. 16 (Mozurkewich). The 222 **Northern Shovelers** on Dec. 29 was a new high tally for the Ocean City CBC (Robbins+). The high counts for **Northern Pintail** were 470 at Blackwater on Jan. 29 (Armistead), 150 at Courthouse Point on Feb. 8 (Watson-Whitmyre), and 224 at Hart-Miller on Feb. 28. Harry Armistead checked off 95 **Green-winged Teal** at Blackwater on Jan. 29, and 28 were at Tanyard on Feb. 22 (Lesh, Stasz).

*Diving Ducks.* Highs for **Canvasbacks** were 5000 at Cambridge, including an albino, on Jan. 16 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), and 5000 at Elliott Island on Jan. 17 (Dyke). At Loch Raven, Simon listed 56 **Redheads** on Jan. 5, and 350 **Ring-necked Ducks** on Dec. 8. About 420 Ring-necked Ducks were at Schumacher Pond, Salisbury on Jan. 20 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), and at least 530 were at Little Seneca Lake on Feb. 8 (Stasz). An adult male **Greater Scaup** was inland at Rocky Gap SP, Allegany County on Feb. 14 (Stasz), and 50,000 **Lesser Scaup** were massed at Back River on Feb. 22 (Blom, Scarpulla). Many observers noted **Common Eiders** at Ocean City this winter, with a peak of 25, including 2 adult males, on Jan. 18. The Ocean City inlet also hosted **King Eiders** this winter including 10 on Jan. 31 (Dyke+), and the peak for **Harlequin Ducks** there was 13 on Dec. 28 (N. & F. Saunders). Other highs for Oldsquaw were 325 at Herrington Harbor/Rose Haven, Anne Arundel County on Dec. 22 and 1010 at North Beach on the same day (Stasz), 300 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), and 600 around Claiborne and Tilghman on Feb. 22 (Lesh, Stasz). **Surf Scoters** were numerous including 1500 at Pt. Lookout on Dec. 15 (Craig), 110 at Hooper Island on Jan. 29 (Armistead), and 300 around Claiborne and Tilghman Island on Feb. 22 (Stasz). Patty Craig counted 38 **White-winged Scoters** at Pt. Lookout on Dec. 4. **Black Scoters** included 800 at Pt. Lookout on Dec. 15 (Craig), and one inland at Broadford Lake, Garrett County on Dec. 7 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). Glenn Koppel listed 200 **Oldsquaws** at Cambridge on Dec. 11, and 500 were tallied at Pt. Lookout on Dec. 15 (Craig). Terrapin Pt. Park hosted about 700 **Buffleheads** on Dec. 17 (Iliff). Highs for **Common Goldeneyes** were 400 at Terrapin Pt. Park on Dec. 17 (Iliff), and 525 at Herrington Harbor/Rose Haven on Dec. 22 (Stasz). A nice count of 908 **Common Mergansers** was made at Conowingo Dam on Dec. 29 (Scarpulla, Cullison+), Jo Solem and Mark Wallace were treated to 447 at Triadelphia Reservoir, Howard County on Jan. 5, 300 were at Stemmers Run WMA, Cecil County on Feb. 8 (Watson-Whitmyre), and 40 were tallied at Jug Bay on Feb. 10 (Swarth, Mumford+). High counts for **Red-breasted Mergansers** were 110 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), 120 at Elliott Island on Feb. 1 (Stasz), and 131 at Hart-Miller on Feb. 21. About 1200 **Ruddy Ducks** were tallied at Elliott Island on Feb. 1 (Stasz), and 5000 were congregated at Back River on Feb. 22 (Blom, Scarpulla).

*Diurnal Raptors.* With the mild conditions, single **Ospreys** were at Hughes Hollow on Dec. 5 (Iliff), Jan. 25 (Justin Golden), and Jan. 31 (Paul Woodward); at Lyons Creek on Dec. 21 (Pat Melville); at Seneca on Feb. 14 (Dan Eberly); and, on Feb. 28, at Blackwater (Pitney+) and at Denton (Nuttle). Very interesting were the 4 **Bald Eagles** tallied in Garrett County on Dec. 20 (Pope+). Iliff totaled 20 **Northern Harriers** at Deal Island WMA on Jan. 13, and there were numerous reports of both **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and **Cooper's Hawks** throughout the period. David Bridge reported a **Red-shouldered Hawk** eating earthworms at a bog in Suitland on Jan. 1, and at Fulton, Rosamond Munro observed Red-shouldered courtship behavior during the first week of January. A leucistic **Red-tailed Hawk** was at Aberdeen Proving Ground on Dec. 10 (Webb). A light-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was at Alpha Ridge Landfill in Howard County on Feb. 7 (Cullison, Ott, Scarpulla), and a Rough-legged was noted there on Feb. 14

(Eckers, Solem+). A **Golden Eagle** was at Dameron on Feb. 13 (Craig), and an adult and an immature were at Fork Neck Road, Dorchester County on Feb. 27 (Dyke). **Merlins** included an adult at Silver Spring on Dec. 2-19 (Rick Sussman); 1 at the Library of Congress in DC, Jan. 12-14 (Gene Diano); and 1 at Tanyard on Jan. 18 and 26 (Wilbur Engle).

*Gallinaceous Birds, Rails, Coots, Sandhill Cranes.* A single **Ring-necked Pheasant** was at Queenstown on Dec. 9 (Poet). **Wild Turkeys** included 10 at Jug Bay on Jan. 4 (P. Brosnan), and 23 at PWRC/N on Jan. 23 (Stan Arnold). The high for **Clapper Rails** was 21 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz), and a **King Rail** was checked off at Courthouse Point WMA, Cecil County on Feb. 8 (Watson-Whitmyre). **Virginia Rails** included 12 at Chesapeake Beach on Dec. 22 (Iloff), 9 at Elliott Island on Feb. 1 (Stasz), and 5 at Hart-Miller on Feb. 28. Sam Dyke reported a **Sora** at Wetipquin, Wicomico County on Dec. 21. Bethel WMA in Cecil County hosted 400 **American Coots** on Jan. 2 (Lesh, Stasz), and the high was 2200 at Loch Raven on Jan. 5 (Simon). About 1925 coots were on Deep Creek Lake on Dec. 1 (Skipper). An adult and 2 immature **Sandhill Cranes** were observed at Jug Bay WS on Jan. 5-6 (Chris Swarth+).

*Shorebirds.* About 100 **Black-bellied Plovers** were in the vicinity of Ironshire Road, Worcester County on Jan. 13, and 37 were at Vessey's Orchard, Somerset County on Jan. 17 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz). **Killdeer** were numerous at many locations throughout the period, including 60 at Ridge on Jan. 26 (Craig), and 6 migrants near Bittinger on Feb. 20 (Skipper). The high for **American Oystercatcher** was 70 at Ocean City on Jan. 31 (Greg Miller). Thirteen **Greater Yellowlegs** were at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz), and the single birds at Hart-Miller on Feb. 21 and Feb. 28, and the 6 at Elliott Island on Feb. 21 (Lesh, Stasz) may have been early spring migrants. **Lesser Yellowlegs** were also in evidence with 30 at Girdletree on Jan. 10 (Dyke), 7 at Irish Grove on Jan. 17 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz), and 8 at Elliott Island on Jan. 29 (Armistead). The two **Willetts** at Ocean City on Feb. 20 (N. Saunders) probably wintered locally. A **Ruddy Turnstone** was found at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iloff), and 3 **Red Knots** were at Ocean City on Dec. 28 (N. & F. Saunders) where 1 or 2 remained through the period. **Sanderlings** included 32 at Benoni Point, Talbot County on Dec. 21 (Armistead, Paul Spitzer), 4 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz), 22 at Pt. Lookout on Feb. 8 (Craig), and 10 at Flag Ponds, Calvert County on Feb. 11 (Arlene Ripley). Marshall Iliff found a **Western Sandpiper** at Assateague on Jan. 13, and Gene Scarpulla reported a single Western at Hart-Miller, Feb. 15-28, and 7 to 8 **Least Sandpipers** there as well during the same time period. Large numbers of **Purple Sandpipers** were found at Ocean City throughout the winter, and the high for **Dunlins** was 1500 at Assateague on Jan. 13 (Iloff). About 240 Dunlins were also at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz), and on Jan. 29, 235 were at Blackwater and 510 were at Hooper Island (Armistead). Among the many shorebirds found at Smith Island this winter were 14 **Common Snipe** on Jan. 19 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz). More unusual was a Common Snipe on the Oakland CBC on Dec. 20 (Skipper+).

*Gulls, Skimmers.* The high for **Laughing Gulls** was 600 at Brown's Station on Dec. 9 (Iloff). Dottie Mumford found one at Jug Bay on Jan. 5, and Norm Saunders checked off a possible early migrant Laughing at Ocean City on Feb. 20. Norm and Fran Saunders identified a **Little Gull** at Ocean City on Dec. 27, and solitary **Black-headed Gulls** were found at Denton on Dec. 26 (Iloff, Stasz), at Conowingo on Jan. 9 (Iloff, Lesh), and at Ocean City on Feb. 28 (Dyke). There were 565 **Bonaparte's Gulls** at Hart-Miller on Feb. 28, and large congregations of **Ring-billed Gulls** included 6000 at Brown's Station on Dec. 9 and 6000 at Ironshire on Jan. 13 (Iloff), and 3400 at Blackwater on Jan. 29 (Armistead). **Herring Gulls** included 4000 at Brown's Station on Dec. 9 (Iloff), 1500 at Choptank on Dec. 26 (Iloff, Stasz), 1000 at the

Charles County landfill on Jan. 10 (Jett, Stasz), and 6000 in the vicinity of the Salisbury landfill on Jan. 13 (Iliff). An adult **Thayer's Gull** visited Conowingo on Dec. 29 (Scarpulla, Cullison+), as did a first-winter bird on Jan. 3 (Stasz, Boyd). A first-winter **Iceland Gull** was reported there on Dec. 31 (Ed Sigda), and seen there by several birders through Jan. 31. An adult Iceland identified as a Kumlien's joined it on Jan. 24 and Jan. 31 (Blom+). An immature Iceland Gull was also at Ocean City from Jan. 31 (Dyke) through Feb. 20 (N. Saunders). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** included 3 at Jug Bay on Jan. 5 (Mumford), 7 at Brown's Station on Jan. 12 and 3 at Salisbury landfill on Jan. 13 (Iliff), 4 at Eastern landfill in Baltimore County on Jan. 17 (Scarpulla, Cullison), 5 at Conowingo Dam on Jan. 31 (Scarpulla, Blom+), and 1 at Lilypons on Feb. 22 (Matt O'Donnell). A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** was spied flying over Liberty Reservoir on Dec. 17 (Iliff, Hoffman+). Another first-year Glaucous was noted at St. Andrew's Landfill, St. Mary's County on Dec. 23 (Rambo), and one was at Conowingo Dam on Jan. 24 (Blom). **Great Black-backed Gulls** were numerous including 200 at Choptank on Dec. 26 (Iliff, Stasz), 300 around the Salisbury landfill on Jan. 13 (Iliff), and 500 at the Easton landfill on Jan. 17 (Scarpulla, Cullison). Sam Dyke identified a **Black-legged Kittiwake** at Ocean City on Feb. 7 and at least 2 there on Feb. 8. Norm and Fran Saunders discovered 5 **Black Skimmers** at Ocean City on Dec. 28.

*Doves, Owls, Sapsuckers.* Jim Stasz counted about 400 **Rock Doves** at North Branch on Feb. 16, and the 47 **Eastern Screech-Owls** tallied during the Ocean City CBC on Dec. 29 was the highest total since 1985 (Robbins+). Quite a few **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were seen throughout the state including one eating honeysuckle berries at Mountain Lake Park, Garrett County on Dec. 6 (Pope).

*Flycatchers, Shrikes, Vireos.* An unidentified *Empidonax* flycatcher was seen in Wicomico County on Dec. 21 during the Salisbury CBC (D. & C. Broderick), and single **Eastern Phoebes** were found at Nolands Ferry and Mink Hollow in Frederick County on Feb. 8 (Stasz). Patty Craig reported an Eastern Phoebe in her yard in Dameron throughout most of the period with 3 there on Feb. 11. Leo Weigant reported a **Loggerhead Shrike** at Tuscarora on Jan. 4. The **White-eyed Vireo** at Mt. Calvert, found on Nov. 18, was seen through the Jug Bay CBC on Dec. 21 (Karen Molines). A **Blue-headed Vireo** was near the Jennings Chapel Road, Howard County on Dec. 28 (D. Ecker); another was found on the Crisfield CBC on Dec. 30.

*Crows, Swallows.* In Garrett County, at Pleasant Valley, Jim Stasz found a congregation of about 650 **American Crows** on Feb. 15, and Marshall Iliff estimated about 5000 **Fish Crows** at Deal Island WMA on Jan. 13. Kevin Dodge saw and heard a Fish Crow among a flock of American Crows on Jan. 18 at Bittering, extraordinary in Garrett County. On Dec. 20, a **Barn Swallow** and 1480 **Tree Swallows** were counted on the Ocean City CBC. Over 100 Tree Swallows were tallied at Assateague on Jan. 1 (Webb, Sue Procell), 250 were at Deal Island WMA on Feb. 2 (Dyke), 30 were at Elliott Island on Feb. 16 (Mozurkewich), and 2 were at Starr on Feb. 21 (Poet).

*Chickadees, Nuthatches, Wrens.* A photo was taken of a *chickadee x titmouse* hybrid at Mechanicsville on Dec. 15 (Rambo). During the Carroll County Midwinter Count on Jan. 24, 183 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were listed (Ringler+). The highest tally on a CBC was 112 at Triadelphia on Dec. 20. Three **Brown-headed Nuthatches** were found at Horsehead Sanctuary on Jan. 10 (Abbie Banks); 48 were counted on the Pt. Lookout CBC, and 29 were seen there on Jan. 21 (Craig). **House Wrens** included 6 on the Salisbury CBC on Dec. 21, 3 at Ocean City on Dec. 29, 2 each on the Port Tobacco and Seneca counts on Dec. 21, and single birds on Jan. 11 at Cove Point and at E. A. Vaughn WMA on Jan. 17 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). Five

nice-to-find **Sedge Wrens** were near Irish Grove on Jan. 14 (Iliff), and 2 were at Elliott Island on Feb. 1 (Stasz). Iliff, Lesh, and Stasz found a **Marsh Wren** at E. A. Vaughn WMA on Jan. 17 and 8 at Irish Grove on Jan. 17.

*Gnatcatchers, Thrushes, Mimids.* A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** was at Hains Point, D.C. on Dec. 20 (Day), and another was in Frederick County on Jan. 4 (Gibbs, Nelson). **Hermit Thrushes** were numerous including 10 at E. A. Vaughn WMA on Jan. 17 and 45 at Hickory Point, Worcester County on the same day (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz); 80 were tallied on the Salisbury CBC, Dec. 21. Among the several **Gray Catbirds** were 19 on the Ocean City CBC, 3 at E. A. Vaughn WMA on Jan. 17 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), 2 at Pt. Lookout on Jan. 26 (Craig), and 3 at Hickory Point, Worcester County on Feb. 21 (Lesh, Jett, Stasz). On Dec. 21, 9 **Brown Thrashers** were found on both the Seneca and the St. Michaels CBCs. The latest report on the Piedmont for a Brown Thrasher was the one at Hipsley Mill Road, Montgomery County on Feb. 8 (Stasz).

*Warblers.* A female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was notched during the Seneca CBC in Montgomery County on Dec. 21 (Paul DuMont), and **Pine Warblers** were also around including 1 at Dameron throughout the period and singing on Feb. 10 (Craig), 1 singing at Bozman on Feb. 22 (Dick Kleen), and 5 at Scotland on Feb. 28 (Ann Bishop, Craig). Dave Mozurkewich found 2 **Palm Warblers** at Blackwater on Feb. 16, and 2 of the western race were noted at Cage Road, Calvert County on Jan. 11 (Iliff, Stasz). A **Black-and-white Warbler** was listed during the Seneca CBC on Dec. 21 (DuMont), and an **Ovenbird** was discovered in Annapolis on Jan. 4 (Iliff). Other warblers enjoying the mild conditions included a female **Common Yellowthroat** near Ironshire on Jan. 18 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), another on the Catoctin CBC on Dec. 20, and solitary **Yellow-breasted Chats** at Back River on Jan. 17 (Blom, Ringler+) and Jan. 21 (Iliff, Lesh), and in Columbia on Feb. 15 (Mary Jo Betts).

*Sparrows, Longspurs, Snow Buntings.* A nice count of 25 **Chipping Sparrows** was made at Hickory Point, Worcester County on Jan. 14 (Iliff), and **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows** included 6 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz), and 2 at Elliott Island on Feb. 1 (Stasz). **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows** were also found with 6 at E. A. Vaughn WMA on Jan. 17, and 6 at Smith Island on Jan. 19 where 25 **Seaside Sparrows** were tallied the same day (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). Norm and Fran Saunders also listed Seaside Sparrows with 3 at Irish Grove on Feb. 15. Jim Stasz discovered a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Decoursey Bridge Road, Dorchester County on Feb. 1. Kyle Rambo found 7 nice **Lapland Longspurs** at PRNAS on Dec. 5 and 1 was still there on Dec. 31. Two Lapland Longspurs were at John Shirk Road, Carroll County on Feb. 8 (Stasz), and **Snow Buntings** included 45 at PRNAS on Dec. 11 (Rambo, Craig), 12 at Greensboro on Dec. 23 through Dec. 30 (Scudder), 87 at Hart-Miller on Jan. 16, 1 in Allegany County on Jan. 22 (Sires), 2 near Route 309, Queen Anne's County on Jan. 31 and 1 near John Shirk Road, Carroll County on Feb. 8 (Stasz).

*Blackbirds and Orioles.* Rick Blom sorted out a nice male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** in a mixed flock flying over Bel Air on Feb. 11, and 250 **Boat-tailed Grackles** were congregated at Smith Island on Jan. 19 (Iliff, Lesh, Stasz). The high for a single flock of **Common Grackles** was 6500 near Lilypons on Feb. 8 (Stasz). Greg Kearns reported a **Baltimore Oriole** at Merkle WMA on Dec. 21, and another was at Breton Bay, St. Mary's County in January and seen until at least March 2 (Kay Christman+).

*Crossbills.* Despite the mild weather, it was a good year for the cyclical crossbills. First reports for **Red Crossbills** included 15 at Rockville on Dec. 8 (Paul O'Brien), 1 at Assateague

on Dec. 11 (Iloff), 14 at Liberty Reservoir on Dec. 16 (Scarpulla), 4 at Fair Hill on Dec. 17 (Sean McCandless), 3 at Broad Creek Scout Camp on Dec. 22 (Ziolkowski, Kovach), and 14 at Pine Ridge Golf Course, Baltimore County on Dec. 23 (Blom). High counts for Red Crossbills included 45 at Deer Park Road, Carroll County on Dec. 25 (Tyler Bell, Jane Kostenko), 20 at Hedgerow, Howard County on Jan. 12 (Zeichner), 30 at Pine Ridge Golf Course on Jan. 17 (Baltimore Midwinter Count), 40 near Beckleysville, Baltimore County on Jan. 17 (Steve Sanford, Pete Webb), 35 at Pine Knob Road, Carroll County on Feb. 12 (Lou Nielsen), and 18 at Broad Creek Scout Camp on Feb. 15 (Blom). **White-winged Crossbills** began with 5 at Swallow Falls SP on Dec. 3 (Kevin Dodge), 18 at New Germany SP on Dec. 5 (Mike and Paul O'Brien), 1 at Liberty Reservoir on Dec. 17 (Blom, Scarpulla), 7 at Broad Creek on Dec. 20 (Les Eastman, Dave Webb), and 4 at Pine Ridge on Dec. 23 (Blom). High counts included at least 15 at Broad Creek on Dec. 21 (Dave Webb), 25 at Deer Park Road, Carroll County on Dec. 23 (Iloff, Jett), 18 at Pine Knob Road, Carroll County on Jan. 3 (Ringler, Bill Kulp, Jr.), and 30 at Swallow Falls SP on Feb. 15 (Stasz).

*Other Cardueline Finches.* **Common Redpolls** included single birds at Laurel on Dec. 7 (Jay Sheppard), at Woodensburg on Jan. 25 (Gail Frantz), and at Mt. Washington, Baltimore City on the same day (Leslie Starr, Joseph Turner). About 20 Common Redpolls were at Susan Sires' residence on Dan's Mountain in Allegany County on Jan. 20 and about 100 were there on Feb. 27. 2 were at a feeder on Sand Flat Road, Garrett County on Jan. 30 (Cheryl Newcomb), and 15 were at New Germany SP on Feb. 15 (Stasz). Dave Weesner found 7 **Pine Siskins** at Washington Monument SP on Dec. 8, and high counts were 106 on the Oakland CBC on Dec. 20, 80 near Oakland on Dec. 24 (Skipper), 50 at Pine Knob Road on Jan. 4 (Youth), and 30 at New Germany SP and 40 at Swallow Falls SP on Feb. 15 (Stasz). **Evening Grosbeaks** began with 5 at Washington Monument SP on Dec. 2 (Weesner), and others included 9 at Leonardtown on Dec. 4 (Beverly & Warren Walker), 30 at New Germany SP on Dec. 6 (Iloff, Lesh, Stasz), 30 at Herrington Manor SP, Garrett County on Dec. 13 (Weigant), 103 on the Oakland CBC, and 8 at Hollywood on Jan. 4 (Rambo).

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