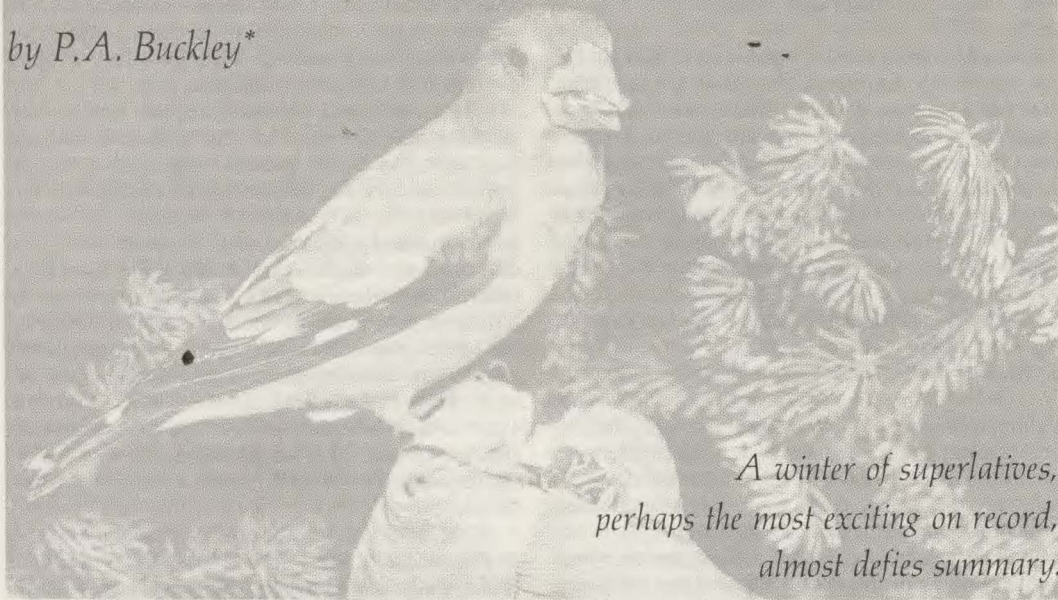


THE CHANGING SEASONS

by P.A. Buckley*



*A winter of superlatives,
perhaps the most exciting on record,
almost defies summary.*

Photo/Allan D. Cruickshank from N.A.S.

The winter of 1971-72, from a continental viewpoint, had almost every possible ornithological phenomenon except perhaps a hurricane. It gave us the largest Gyrfalcon invasion in recorded history, huge incursions of Snowy Owls, all the winter finches with record numbers of Hoary Redpolls, plus Bohemian Waxwings and Rough-legged Hawks. It brought to the Atlantic coast a large non-Dovekie alcid flight and inland a dispersal of kittiwakes that defies explanation; to Atlantic and Gulf coasts unprecedented numbers of tubenoses with five species of shearwaters reported. The season also saw the usual but increasing vagrants from Europe/Asia, the West Indies (notably) and Mexico. For most of North America east of the Rockies and for the Pacific coast, some of the warmest winter temperatures on record produced a list of stragglers that is so overwhelming as to defy summary. The numbers of eastern birds west, westerns east, and southern north can also only be briefly summarized. It was a winter of superlatives.

GYRFALCONS

The highlight of the winter for observers in the northern states and Canada was the explosive invasion of Gyrfalcons. Table 1 lists the approximately 60 known to me at the time of writing [Western Great Lakes Region report received

late, added one record—Ed.], and I have heard of one report from coastal Virginia in November, but have been unable to track it down. Persons with knowledge of records not listed here, or having details of color phases or ages (immatures have slaty blue ceres, adults yellow) are asked to send them to the writer, so that this invasion may be fully documented at a later date, and the probable origins of the birds ascertained.

Certainly one puzzling aspect of the entire invasion is that with few exceptions, mostly notably Brigantine Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in N.J., a few in Mass., Sask., and one in Minn., all reports were of birds passing through. Gyrs are not easily overlooked, especially when word is out that an invasion is underway. *Where were these birds going, where did they winter, when did they depart their wintering-grounds, and how many were seen on return migration northward?*

One disconcerting aspect of the invasion was at least two reports of attempts by falconers to capture wintering Gyrs. Anyone fortunate enough to watch the majestic power of a hunting Gyr this winter will be outraged to learn that two were captured in Washington State, one subsequently dying, and that on two occasions Refuge personnel at Brigantine N.W.R. prevented falconers from capturing the black immature there. It is distressing to realize that we still must be careful about publicizing such birds even when they are on national wildlife refuges. Where are they safe?

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Table 1 is unfortunately incomplete in that very many reports did not include color phase or age data. However, white Gyrs are always reported with elation and pride, so the 5 reported is probably a complete total. To a lesser extent, most grey birds are also reported as to color; it is probably safe to assume that most of those undescribed were "dark" or "black." However,

almost none were listed as to age, and were it not for that fact that some dispute arose over the number of Gyrs present (!) at Brigantine Refuge this winter, observers would not have taken pains to note that that black bird had a blue cere, and the grey bird a yellow one. Doubts were removed finally, when in mid-March, several observers saw both fighting together in mid-air. It is not

Table 1. Distribution of records of Gyrfalcon for 1971-72 winter invasion.*

Location	Date(s)	Number	Color/age
Frazer River Delta, B.C.	Sept. 5, 1971	1	
Duluth, Minn.	Sept. 16	1	dark
Nobles Co., Minn.	Sept. 22	1	dark
Seal I., N.S.	Sept. 26	1	dark
Hitchinbrook I., Alaska	Oct. 7	1	
Frazer River Delta, B.C.	Oct. 11	1	
Newburyport, Mass.	Oct. 10-14	1	dark
Seal I., N.S.	Oct. 16-18	1	dark
New Haven, Conn.	Oct. 19	1	white
Saskatoon, Sask.	Oct. 23-Dec. 27	1	dark
Kettle Point, Ont.	Oct. 27	1	
Jo Davies Co., Ill.	Nov. 6	1	gray/imm.
Columbia R. Mouth, Ore.	Nov. 6	1	
Frazer River Delta, B.C.	Nov. 13	1	
Ottawa, Ont.	Nov. 14	1	
Monomoy, Mass.	Nov. 14-21	1	dark
Plum I., Mass.	Nov. 21-Dec. 12	1	dark
Pierre, S.D.	Nov. 22-28	1	
Skagit Co., Wash.	"early" (Nov/Dec?)	2 (captured)	
Edmonton, Alta.	Nov. 14-?	6	gray
Montreal, Que.	"all winter"	2-3	dark
Gunton, Man.	Dec. 12	1	
Eugene, Ore.	Dec. 17	1	dark
Plum I., Mass.	Dec. 21	1	gray
Newburyport, Mass.	Dec. 26	1	gray
Saskatoon, Sask.	Dec. 29	1	white
Vancouver, B.C.	Dec. 31	1	
Rosetown, Alta.	Dec. 4-Feb. 8	2	dark
Brigantine N.W.R., N.J.	Dec. 19-± Apr. 15	1	dark/imm.
Prince Edward I.	Dec. 27-Feb. 20	2	?/dark
Brunswick, Me.	Jan. 1, 1972	1	
Ottawa, Ont.	Jan. 1—"late March"	1	
Bonne Bay, Nfld.	Jan. 2	1	
Brier I., N.S.	Jan. 2	1	
Sheridan, Wyo.	Jan. 5	1	
Prince Edward I.	Jan. 6	1	dark
Piney, Man.	Jan. 13	1	
Easthampton, N.Y.	Jan. 15	1	gray
Duluth, Minn.	Jan. 18-Mar. 10	1	dark
Knox Co., Me.	Jan. 29	1	white
Thunder Bay, Ont.	Jan. 30-Feb. 11	1	
Cape Cod, Mass.	Feb. 10	1	dark
Cape Cod, Mass.	Feb. 21-Mar. 6	1	gray
Brigantine N.W.R., N.J.	Feb. ?-± Apr. 15	1	gray/adult
Toronto, Ont.	"end of Feb."	1	
Pocatello, Ida.	Mar. 4	1	
Curlew Valley, Ida.	Mar. 11	1	
Near Saskatoon, Sask.	Mar. 26	2	white
Mattice, Ont.	"late March"	1	

(48 locations: probably 59 individuals.)

likely that such a sight has been seen in the State of New Jersey before. The cover photograph shows the black immature that allowed cars to drive to within 15 feet of it.

The significance of the invasion lies in its magnitude. Birds were reported from Nova Scotia to Alaska and British Columbia, south to Oregon, Wyoming, South Dakota, Illinois, New Jersey (and Virginia?) with more than one individual in several locations. Perhaps associated with this invasion was the white bird that spent at least a week in Sussex in s.e. England; undoubtedly we will be hearing of others. Our flight began with the first report from British Columbia Sept. 5, followed by others on Sept. 16 (Duluth) Sept. 22 (also Minn.) and Sept. 26 (Nova Scotia). Seven were reported in October, all across the continent; probably 12 were or more were reported in November, nine in December, eleven in January, probably five in February, and a few more in March. No reports mentioned April, because the winter season reports' terminal date is Mar. 31, but both birds at Brigantine N.W.R. were still present in mid-April. I have heard of one apparently returning north in April along the coast of Maine, but details are not at hand.

WIDESPREAD DISPERSALS

Waterfowl Whistling Swans, which staged an excellent and widespread flight in late October/early November, continued to cause comment. Flocks wintered on L.I. and N.J. in record numbers, (150 at one location) but were in numbers into S.C., well below their usual N.C. locations; they were in numbers much farther west in Ontario than usual, and staged a slight invasion into S. California, where rare. Several also wintered in Alabama/Arkansas, and more than usual were in the S. Great Plains, even reaching the Houston, Texas area. They wintered in Idaho, were in good numbers in the Great Basin, and even reached S. Arizona and New Mexico. It remains to be seen if the species is actually staging a population/range expansion, as these data suggest. Its change in feeding habits—from tipping to grass browsing—noted by Teulings, might then be of more than passing significance. White-fronted Geese were reported from almost every region, and in increasing numbers; this species' range should also be monitored for possible expansion. Ross' Goose continues to be detected or to occur in more places, even reaching England this winter in a flock of Greenland White-fronteds! The adult first found at Hatteras, N.C. in 1968 returned again this winter, joined by an immature. The first for New Jersey were an adult and an immature at Brigantine N.W.R. from late January to April 23. They also wintered in Missouri, at 2 Colo. locations, and in Ariz. and N.M.

(a flock of 20). Observers are referred to a recent paper in *Auk*, 88: 856-875 (1971) on possible Snow X Ross' hybrids and their identification. The increasing incidence of reports of so-called "Blue Geese" from the East points out the fact that in many e. Canadian Arctic Snow Goose colonies, the blue phase is reaching fixation (*i.e.* 100%): of 3000 geese in upstate N.Y. in spring migration, 2500 were the blue phase, and only 500 white. This also points out that these birds are "lesser" not "greater" Snow Geese—the Atlantic seaboard wintering race—and that "greater" seem to migrate more directly up along the coast in April. At any rate, despite the "technicality" of the 15-year old A.O.U. Check-list's still listing Blue and Snow Geese as separate species, it is time that observers and regional compilers alike recognize biological reality, and refer to them simply as the blue and white phases of the "lesser" Snow Goose. "Blue Goose" X "Snow Goose" hybrids are merely intermediates between the two phases, and certainly not true "hybrids." It should also be pointed out that as the blue phase continues to supplant the white phase and work its way westward across the Canadian Arctic, more and more blue-phase birds will turn up farther west on their wintering grounds; this spread should be documented.

Barrow's Goldeneyes continue what seems to be some sort of wintering range expansion, or at very least, wintering range detection. Large numbers were again reported along the St. Lawrence River, from the Great Lakes (several), from Colorado, from the San Francisco Bay area; the ♂ at Shark River, N.J. last winter, returned this year, and 2 ♀♀ were also seen there in late March. Similarly, Harlequin Ducks continue to occur farther south, and in greater numbers, on both coasts, one even reaching Miami, for the first S. Florida record. Oldsquaws and scoters were also widely dispersed, coastally as well and inland, and to the Gulf coast. Both eiders continue to increase, the Common occurring farther south on the Atlantic coast and in greater numbers each year and the King on both coasts, including 2 reports from the Pacific where it is exceptionally rare.

Predators Harlan's Hawk was reported from a variety of locations away from its usual wintering areas: 6 from Illinois/Missouri; as well as Colorado, Oklahoma (3), Montana, e. Washington, and c. coastal California (2); one wintered at Tucson, Ariz. Rough-legged Hawks staged a major invasion over almost the entire US and s. Canada, except perhaps in California. The highest count, from (ca. 7 × 15 mi.) Wolfe I., near Kingston, Ont., was a staggering 106 birds on January 23. Peregrine Falcons were reported in good numbers; one suspects that these were largely if not

exclusively Canadian birds that came south along with, it seems, all other avian arctic predators this year. Pigeon Hawk was reported in excellent numbers even far north of its "supposed" or "normal" winter range; in fact, it is proving to be a regular if scarce *winter resident* over much of the U.S. and even s. Canada, (cf. CBCs for records). Both Eagles were reported again in good numbers. Estimates of wintering eagles in just the state of Wyoming were in excess of 11,000 Golden-ens, 413 Bald and 481 unidentified. [I cannot comment on the reliability of the sampling and extrapolating because I do not know the techniques.] Golden Eagle continues to increase as a wintering bird in the east, probably reflecting nesting success in the Northeast, and in e. Canada. Ospreys were recorded in unusual numbers, especially inland, for a species that normally occurs in winter only near the Gulf coast, s. Calif., and s. Florida; this probably merely reflects the very mild winter. Great Gray Owls were recorded (detected?) again this year in record numbers: 3 from the N.E./Maritime, 7 from Ontario, 16 from the N. Great Plains, and one from Idaho for a total of 24. Snowy Owls staged one of the great flights this century, with most numbers from the N. Great Plains (465 separate reports; number of birds unstated), the Great Lakes area (87 just on Wolfe I., near Kingston, Ontario) W. N.Y./Penna. (about 30), and New England/L.I. (perhaps a total of 150 birds) although none were recorded below s. N.J. or Penna. They penetrated down the Appalachians to Louisville, Ky., to Wash. Co., Ohio, barely reached Iowa (1), did not reach South Dakota, only 2 were recorded from the N. Rocky Mountain states, but a few did reach as far s. as Reno, Nev. The flight was confined essentially to east of the Rockies.

Gulls Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were widespread along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, as well as inland with a few Glaucous along the California coast. Franklin's continued to be found along the Pacific coast, probably lingerers from last fall's flight. Other notable inland gulls (besides kittiwakes, discussed elsewhere) included Heermann's Gull twice near Tucson, Ariz., and at Lake Mead, Nev., were Glaucous-winged (also at Salton Sea), Thayer's and Mew Gulls—all three new to Nevada, and also present at local garbage dumps. The species' identifications on all apparently were verified.

Alcids Pacific alcids were relatively spectacular, except for a flock of 50,000 Crested Auklets in Alaska, whence also came 2 Kittlitz's Murrelets. Only one Tufted Puffin reached mid-California, but Ancient Murrelets were up. On the Atlantic Coast, late December-early January saw a murre flight, with numbers of Thick-billed

in N.E./N.Y./N.J. for the first time in many years; Commons were recorded on L.I. and as far south as Florida, for a state record, Thick-billed reached s. North Carolina, and a Razor-bill was on Lake Ontario, where it is very rare.

Bohemian Waxwings This species staged a major flight, especially in the Maritimes and N. Great Plains, reaching as far south as West Virginia and Washington D.C., although not reaching the Atlantic coast south of c. Maine. Both Houston and Finch comment on their food preferences in their respective regions.

Shrikes Northern staged a small, but spotty invasion, even reaching, in California, as far south as Antelope Valley, and into n. Arizona. In the Northeast, it was confined to north of the Penna./N.J. area, and further west, around the Great Lakes. Loggerhead, on the other hand, was reported in far greater numbers than almost any year previously, even into Canada, from the Maritimes to B.C., as well as to the south, probably because of the generally mild weather.

Winter finches The only uniform mover this winter was redpoll, with large, often record, numbers in the northern tier of states, although not widespread west of the Rockies. Associated with it were possibly some of the greatest numbers of Hoary Redpolls in recent years, of which several are now specimens. High counts were 20+ in the N.E./Maritime region; singles south to Va. (spec.), and Penna., up to 30 in Ontario, hundreds (sic!) in Saskatchewan, and even 5 in the N. Pacific region. Most editors commented that they were chary of Hoary Redpoll records, and demanded extraordinarily complete details, as should be the case. Pine Grosbeaks also irrupted in the east, reaching over 100 per flock in N.J.; one even making it to S.C., for the second state record. Siskins moved far down the Atlantic coast, but away from it were sporadic, probably indicating several different populations in the movement. Crossbills did likewise, all over the continent. In a word, it was a generally good year for winter finches, but not everywhere, except perhaps for redpoll.

Half-hardy stragglers North and south, east and west, it may have been one of the best seasons on record for birds that normally don't attempt to winter. Every region had its unbelievable list, especially of warblers, vireos, and flycatchers, and there were western warblers east, eastern warblers west, etc. Some of the highlights included: inland Glossy Ibis in upstate N.Y. in late December; Broad-winged Hawks, including a Maine specimen, several in s. U.S., and one that wintered at Tucson; Swainson's Hawks from far more locations in the south and west than the usual c. and s. Florida ones; a Willet in December

from B.C.; late Marbled Godwits as far north as Cape Cod in Dec.; Wilson's Phalaropes: 2 in Ariz. in December, one in February in El Paso; Gull-billed Tern, first Calif. winter record at Salton Sea Dec. 31; many late flycatchers, including Eastern, Western and Grey Kingbirds at Jekyll I., Ga., between Jan. 2 and Feb. 18; Great Crested Flycatcher in Miss. on a CBC; Western Flycatcher at Berkeley on Jan. 2-3; Olive-sided Flycatcher, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 30; 6 Barn Swallows at an Oakland Robin roost on Dec. 31; Wood Thrushes at a preposterous number of locations for a bird not supposed to winter in the U.S.; Yellow-throated Vireos from Ala. (Dec. 11) and S. Tex. (Jan. 19 & 31); White-eyed Vireos in Md. (Dec. 27) and Va. (Dec. 29); Black-and-white Warblers in many places, but at least 4 in the Central Pacific Region; Worm-eating Warbler in La. (Dec. 30); Lucy's Warbler, San Francisco (Mar. 10); 2 Yellow-throated Warblers in N.J. (Dec. 19), where very rare at any time; Yellow Warbler, Bodega Bay, Calif. (Dec. 18); Black-throated Grey Warbler, Eugene, Ore. to Jan. 2 and two Hermit Warblers in Ore. at the same time; Blackpoll Warbler in S.C. Jan. 2, and a Mourning (date not given) in N.C.; an Am. Redstart in Santa Barbara, Calif. in Dec.; great numbers of tanagers and orioles of many species all over the country; a Bobolink in Ottawa, Ont. Dec. 5; and Clay-colored Sparrows in Mass. in January, and in Md. in February.

DISPLACEMENTS

Many of the usual species repeated this year, probably remaining in even greater numbers than normally because of the mild weather everywhere except in the Rockies and Alaska. Some of the more unusual ones included the following:

Western Birds Eastward Harris' Hawk to New York (see *AB*, 26: 39, for details, although the bird remained to early January, 1972); White-tailed Hawk to La.; Inca Dove to Ark.; Band-tailed Pigeon to N.H.; at least 50 Groove-billed Anis along the La. coast, where they now seem established; Flammulated Owl to Mont.; Verdin to Okla.; Rock Wren to Ark.; Sprague's Pipit to N.C.; Mountain Bluebird to Ontario; Townsend's Warbler to N.J.; Hermit Warbler to La.; Lawrence's Goldfinch to s. Texas; Black-throated Sparrow to S. Dak.; and a "very dark" Fox Sparrow, no specimen obtained, that wintered at Fargo, N. Dak.

Eastern Birds Westward Little Blue Heron to S. Calif.; Brant to s. Calif.; Black Duck to Washington and Alaska; Piping Plover to Calif.; Franklin's Gull to Calif.; Whip-poor-will, all winter, San Diego; Brown Thrasher to B.C.; La. Waterthrush wintered in Ramsey Canyon, Ariz.; Rose-

breasted Grosbeak to s. Calif.; and Sharp-tailed Sparrow wintered at the same location as last year on San Francisco Bay.

Southern Birds Northward Painted Buntings occurred this winter in Mass., N.J., and Va., states where they are accidental at any time of year.

INVADERS

West Indian/Mexican American Flamingoes at Coot Bay, Fla., reached a peak of 13 during the winter; and one wandered to Va., and then Md., in late fall, to the end of December. Black-bellied Tree Ducks occurred in large flocks in S. Texas, and others were reported from S. Ariz. Fulvous Tree Ducks peaked at an amazing 2000 at Loxahatchee N.W.R. in Fla. There is a new *Jacana* location in S. Texas, where the birds are said to have been breeding for five years. A dead Bridled Tern was found in N.C. A disputed kingbird from s. Fla. in December was called both Loggerhead and Giant Cuban; fortunately it was well photographed, and analysis now favors the former species, *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*. But either species would be new to North America. Mexican Crows have increased near Brownsville, Texas. Two more Rufous-backed Robins were seen in s. Arizona. Two Bananaquits were also reported from S. Fla., and one might have nested; another Bahamian speciality was a Stripe-headed Tanager, also from S. Fla. Finally, the Patagonia (Ariz.) Five-striped Sparrow was back in late March.

European/Asian For the East, this is still the source of the greatest number of winter immigrants, and this year was no exception. An immature ♂ Pink-footed Goose showed up on a L.I., N.Y. duck pond, and fed with feral Canada Geese for a week in January before disappearing; no details were available on its provenance, although a canvass of local fanciers and zoos revealed no reported losses. Barnacle Geese were seen with large flocks of wild Canadas in N.C., and in Okla.; they were almost certainly genuinely wild. Eur. Widgeon continues to spread over the U.S. and Canada, from both Icelandic and Alaskan sources; it was added to a few state lists again this winter and early spring migration; Common (or "Eurasian") Teal was also recorded, but in lesser numbers, and several locations reported apparent Green-winged X Common hybrids/intergrades; surely the correct status of both teal and widgeon are underestimated by about 50%, as only the males are safely identifiable in the field under most conditions. Spot-billed Ducks were not reported from the Aleutians this winter, but at least

two were reported from the N.Y. City region: one was photographed by the writer, and determined to be the non-migratory, identifiable Indian race, popular in captivity; the Chinese race is apparently not held anywhere in captivity in North America; reports of that race are most probably valid. Fewer Tufted Ducks were reported this year; there were singles at San Francisco and in B.C., one as usual on Cape Cod, but there were four in three locations all winter around N.Y. City. A ♀ plumaged Smew was again reported from the Aleutians; probably two Common Crane (*Grus grus*) were reported from two locations in Nebraska in late March in flocks of Sandhills; and the only Eurasian shorebird was a northbound Ruff seen in late March in Pennsylvania.

European (?) gulls continue to occur with increasing frequency farther and farther down the Atlantic coast, as well as inland. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were all in the east: one wintered in Nova Scotia; at least 2 were seen around N.Y. City in mid-winter on their usual garbage dumps; one was at Washington, D.C. in late March; the Ithaca, N.Y. bird, first seen the winter of 1962-63 and every winter thereafter except last year, came back this year in January, and remained to late March; and finally, s. Florida seems to have made up for its poor past and recorded what seems to have been at least 4 Lessers this winter. Mew Gull is still the rarest of the Europeans, and as last year, was recorded only in 2 locations, St. Johns, Nfld., and Newburyport, Mass., spending some time at each location. Little Gull is still more widely distributed—especially on the Great Lakes and in the s. U.S.—than Black-headed, but this year the latter species was recorded in Va., Md., S.C. (second record), Fla. (second record), and several times near Buffalo, N.Y. In the Northeast, it is almost common, with an estimated 72 in the Maritimes, 24+ in Mass., and R.I., and about 10 in the N.Y. City region. South of there, its numbers drop off precipitously, despite large Bonaparte's Gull flocks all the way to Florida.

The last 2 Eurasian species are both passerines, and represented by old records: a Brambling that spent the month of February, 1971 at a Graham I., B.C., feeder, and a pair of Rustic Buntings seen well and apparently carefully described, from Queen Charlotte City, B.C., on Oct. 26, 1971. While the former species has been represented by an increasing number of reports from North America in recent years, especially in winter, and is a hardy, Scandinavian bird, the latter is unreported from the continent except for Aleutian records and one recent but somewhat uncertain report from California. It is hoped that details will be published soon.

PELAGICS AND LITTORALS

The amount of material available for discussion this winter is astonishing. Normally, Gannets, a few errant boobies and Fulmars and some jaegers provide the only Atlantic and Gulf pelagic fare, the bulk of winter seabird data coming from the Pacific. While the Pacific was not exactly wanting this year, an absolutely unprecedented total of 5 shearwater species (*all 5!*), 3 species of jaegers (*sensu lato*), and Fulmars were seen in Atlantic/Gulf waters.

Four Gannets were seen off Galveston Tex., and Alabama's third Blue-faced Booby was recorded from shore; on Lake Mead (Ariz./Nev.), 3 Blue-footed and a Brown Booby spent most of the winter, and a completely unseasonal, out-of-place, adult ♂ frigatebird was at the Salton Sea in February. Scaled Petrels were again recorded from coastal Ore. but this winter two were picked up dead *onshore*, and a third was found dead on a ship not far offshore, all in mid-March. At the same time, both 6 Black-footed and at least 1 Laysan Albatross were seen from ships offshore. The only storm petrel reported from either ocean was a Leach's, again in late March, off Oregon. A few Pink-footed Shearwaters were seen at Monterey Bay, Calif., where only 1 Slender-billed was seen, the same day (Dec. 16) and place as the only Manx on that ocean.

On the Atlantic side, what must be called the first winter season for pelagics began with increased numbers of Fulmars on the Bay of Fundy, down into Cape Cod Bay, and followed with a Manx on Dec. 22 off Nova Scotia, a Greater Feb. 20 and Mar. 31 in the Bay of Fundy (and on Jan. 22 off Jacksonville, Fla.); a Sooty Shearwater off Nova Scotia on Dec. 2 (and on Jan. 8 off Cape Hatteras); and a Cory's on Mar. 18 off Md., where it is rare even in season! Coastal La. added an Audubon's in late March to complete the winter's eastern shearwater list.

A Skua was seen on Jan. 23 off Block I., R.I., and other jaeger reports are as follows: Parasitic and Pomarine in late December, off Hatteras, N.C. and Ga.; Pomarine outnumbering Parasitic off S. Fla. this winter, as it did on the Gulf coast off Galveston, and off s. California. Odd inland reports included a Pomarine Dec. 16 on Lake Erie, and an unidentified jaeger Dec. 1 on the Ohio R. near the Ohio/West Va. border!

Winter phalaropes included Northern's at Cleveland, O. Jan. 6, and the usual wintering flock near San Diego, Calif. Reds were reported Dec. 11 from Detroit, Dec. 17 from Jefferson Co., Ky., and Jan. 5-9 on Lake Purdy, Ala., in addition to the (only recently) usual coastal records. And

finally, the highly pelagic Black-legged Kittiwake seems to have gone mad this winter, spreading down the Atlantic coast to Florida, into the Gulf of Mexico, the Great Lakes, and to practically all inland Regions: even Utah recorded its first. Several wintered on inland lakes and reservoirs. Even a Red-legged Kittiwake was recorded in off-shore Alaska waters, the first known winter record for that state.

OTHER TRENDS MOVEMENTS AND CHANGES

Loons and Grebes Arctic Loons continue to turn up in new locations, probably as more observers learn the difficult task of distinguishing them from other species. This winter one reached R.I., coastal Tex., and for the first time, Florida. A Red-throated Loon was only Louisiana's second. Yellow-billed Loons continue to be regular on the northern and mid-Pacific coasts, and this winter at least 6 were seen. Good numbers of Western and Eared Grebes occurred in the east and south, with a flock of 5 Eared on the N.C. coast matched by a flock of 6 Horned among the huge flocks (15,000 Eared and 23,000 Western!) on Lake Mead.

Wood Ibis and White Ibis For the first time since 1967, large numbers of both these species bred successfully in south Florida, perhaps reversing what seemed a dismal trend.

Cattle Egrets The species continues to amaze with its changes in habits. While seeming to extend its wintering range, especially into the West, it seems that in Florida it retires from the north in winter, returning again in spring. Contrariwise, in the Miami area, it is now breeding all through the winter.

Whooping Cranes Reached a maximum of 59 in December at Aransas N.W.R., Tex.

Kites Florida's Everglades Kites are still expanding from the Loxahatchee N.W.R. center; a new location is west of Vero Beach. White-tailed Kites also continue their expansion, especially in Calif.; one in Nevada was a first state record.

Thayer's Gull Since its discovery a few years ago as a regular winter resident in some numbers in southern Calif., and in limited numbers in the Buffalo, N.Y. area, attention has been focused on elucidating the species' status elsewhere. But unfortunately, knowledge of the precise field marks of adults seems limited to a small group of experienced *cognoscenti*, but, perhaps more damaging, seems equally misunderstood by many more non-initiates. This past winter a number of "Thayer's" Gulls were reported (particularly on CBCs), and one widely publicized bird was even tracked down by the writer in Gloucester,

Mass., in late January. The latter was almost certainly an obviously white-winged, but dark-primaried, dark-eyed "Kumlien's" race of the Iceland Gull, and it is suspected that other "records" may be similarly mistaken. [Dr. Buckley will present a full discussion of the problems of identification of the Thayer's Gull in a forthcoming issue of *American Birds*—Ed.]

Goatsuckers A surprising number of Caprimulgids was recorded, with record early and late nighthawks, overwintering and often vocal nightjars, all probably reflecting the warm, delayed winter and abundance of insects.

Hummingbirds A fine variety for winter was recorded, although in the Southwest most were merely very early migrants. Interesting winter hummers included Annas north to Ore., Wash., B.C. and Alaska, where one apparently perished when the temperature dropped to 0°F. on a night 19 hours long! In Ore., a torpid ♂ was easily captured. Other Annas occurred east to Tucson, and a Costa's visited Guadalupe Canyon for a first for N. Mex. Identification of some southwestern hummers is discussed in two recent papers that should be examined by all critical observers: Both by G. Stiles, one in *Calif. Birds*, 2: 41-54 (1971), and the other in *Condor*, 74: 25-32 (1972).

Lewis' Woodpecker Staged a modest invasion to s. California and also to S. Texas.

House Finch Seems to be advancing with 7-league boots out in all directions from the center of the eastern establishment in the N.Y. City region. The northwestern-most colony seems to be at Eggertsville, Erie Co., N.Y. (near Buffalo), although the jump into Canada seems imminent. Westward, they seem to be having trouble crossing the Appalachians in Penna., but are spreading rapidly to the south reaching the N.C. coast at Morehead City for the first time, and simultaneously being recorded for the first time in Georgia (Columbus), Alabama (Birmingham), and West Virginia (Charleston) this winter. Last winter they were just about to reach South Carolina, and this year, they have already crossed it! From another direction they are also apparently moving into the Northern Great Plains.

SPRING MIGRATION

Owing to the very early warming trend in the Southwest and in S. Florida this year, a considerable amount of northward migration had taken place before the end of the reporting season in late March, with many species, especially insectivores, setting new arrival dates, and many also began nesting far earlier than usual. How many of these will take advantage of the time and raise multiple broods is of interest, but difficult information to obtain. Perhaps Spring Migration reports will furnish some of these data.