

"3. The adult male fragment, color doubtful, wing 80.5, culmen 15×9.2 . This bird exactly matches intermediates between *minor* and *bendirei* from southern British Columbia discussed in my monograph on page 122, paragraph 3, of the systematic discussion."

Through these specimens therefore West Virginia is added to the States reached by the 1940-41 Sitka Crossbill migration. The last (and only) previous record for this bird in the State was made in 1889 (see Griscom: 'A Monographic Study of the Red Crossbill,' Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., 41: 124, 1937). It seems highly interesting that both Sitka Crossbills and White-winged Crossbills lingered through the summer so far south as West Virginia.

We are convinced that the best time to find crossbills in the West Virginia mountains is during the first three weeks in June when the young spruces are often bearing good flower crops. The individual carpels of these flowers are loaded with waxy grains, and have a decided sweetish taste. Birds which had obviously been feeding extensively on these blossoms were very fat, the fatty tissues hard and firm.—MAURICE BROOKS, *West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia*, AND WILLIAM A. LUNK, *Fairmont, West Virginia*.

January 1940 in southern Mississippi.—January 18, 1940, was a normal winter day in every respect on the Gulf coast of Mississippi. The temperature was well above freezing, the sun shone, and a mild wind blew from the northwest. As evening approached, however, this wind increased in velocity, the temperature rapidly dropped, and by the following morning southern Mississippi, in common with all the Southeast, was experiencing the first day of a cold wave that was unprecedented in the history of the Weather Bureau. The temperature registered 14 degrees Fahrenheit the morning of January 19, and during the succeeding thirteen days there was little evidence of thawing even during the middle of the day, and at night the temperature dropped 21 degrees or lower. Lower temperatures have been recorded in past years, but only for very brief intervals, and never for such long duration or intensity. At Hattiesburg, 52 miles north of Gulfport, snow reached a depth of three inches during this abnormal cold weather, and at Saucier, 25 miles north of the coast, sleet on January 23, and the two following days, covered everything with a coating of ice. South of this point, however, the ground remained bare; not even a trace of snow was reported.

The first apparent effect of the heavy snowfall and abnormally low temperatures farther north on the bird life of the coast region was the sudden abundance of Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) and Pipits (*Anthus spinoletta rubescens*). Robins winter about Gulfport in small scattered flocks, and are a recognized part of the winter bird life, but never before have they been so numerous. Flocks numbering several hundred individuals were literally everywhere during this interval, and for at least a month there was little decrease in their numbers. Pipits are likewise not uncommon here during the winter, but the third day of the cold wave small flocks were noted feeding on the roads and in open fields and pastures, and for several weeks these birds were a conspicuous part of the winter bird life.

January 23 witnessed what might be considered the first major ornithological event in this unusual winter. On that day a flock of fully 300 Bronzed Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula aeneus*) was observed feeding in a stretch of open pine woods. During the preceding five years no grackles of any of the present recognized races had been recorded during the winter months in southern Mississippi. Breeding

birds invariably disappeared early in October, and it was February before they were seen again. Apparently, however, for this one time at least conditions farther north were such as to force even such a hardy bird as the Bronzed Grackle far south of its usual winter range. Flocks seen on subsequent days were much smaller, but through February 21, grackles were noted at intervals about farm yards and in the open fields. Without exception, specimens taken proved typical *aeneus*.

The Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca iliaca*), heretofore unrecorded on the coast over this same five-year interval, was another species that almost at once showed its inability, or lack of desire perhaps, to face the deep snows and subzero temperatures throughout its normal winter range. On January 24, four of these birds were seen for the first time, feeding about a thicket at the side of a road, and within a day or so they were actually plentiful. The numerous flocks seen daily usually comprised from four to ten or twelve individuals, although by the last of the month it was not uncommon to find as many as thirty of these birds feeding together in swampy woods bordering the streams. The suddenness with which they appeared on the coast is indicated by the fact that on January 25 they were not only fairly common on the mainland but were equally numerous on Deer Island, lying a mile offshore from Biloxi. Throughout the greater part of February no perceptible decrease in their numbers was noted, and it was not until February 25 that the last bird was seen, a lone individual feeding with a flock of White-throated Sparrows. As late as February 22, however, small scattered flocks were seen, so it would appear that the Fox Sparrows departed as abruptly as they had arrived.

It was anticipated that the Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*), rather scarce but of regular occurrence here during the winter, would be really plentiful for the first time, but oddly enough this did not prove to be the case. Practically no increase in its numbers was observed, and the only occurrence at all out of the ordinary so far as this species is concerned was the presence, on February 4, of three birds, all females, on Cat Island, one of the barrier islands nine miles offshore from Gulfport. There is no previous record of the occurrence of the junco off the mainland.

Although apparently not the case in other parts of the Southeast, bird mortality here on the coast during this period of exceptionally severe winter weather was not very great, and was limited to a few species. This was possibly due to the fact that the snow did not reach this far south, and that the normal food supply was relatively unaffected. Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) had an abundance of myrtle berries to rely upon, and during this interval concentrated in enormous numbers where the thickets of myrtle bushes fringed the salt marsh. Two that were collected then from a flock numbering fully a thousand individuals were found to be in good condition physically, and had sufficient fat on their bodies to have enabled them to survive for an indefinite period. The species that did suffer, however, were the Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*), the Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata celata*) and the Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula calendula*), birds depending on insects for the bulk of their food. Reasonably plentiful until the cold wave appeared, they disappeared almost at once, and never did regain their normal numbers during the remainder of the winter. In late February and early March an occasional Blue-headed Vireo and Orange-crowned Warbler were seen, but not a single Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Despite the fact that no dead birds were found, it appeared as if the Kinglets wintering in this region were practically exterminated by the subfreezing temperatures that persisted for such a long period. This was the more apparent because of the fact that this species in past years was seen daily until the middle of April, and was a common bird during the early spring months. It will be interesting to note its relative abundance during the coming fall migration.—THOS. D. BURLEIGH, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulfport, Mississippi.*