

The Changing Seasons

*An irruptive-rich winter,
enhanced by warblers in the West
and Varied Thrushes all over*

Claudia P. Wilds

IT WAS A WINTER of memorable weather — very cold, very wet, or very dry almost everywhere except in parts of the Southwest. West of the Continental Divide the rains that had begun to break the drought along the coast north of San Francisco had moved far south by mid-December and east to the Rockies a little later. From then to the end of February it rained almost constantly everywhere except where it snowed at appropriately high elevations. Throughout the period temperatures were abnormally balmy, and the area was blessed with stray and laggard species that found conditions to their fancy.

In the far north Alaska was unusually cold in December, but relatively mild in the new year, with abnormal precipitation only around Kodiak (which had numerous avian compensations), while Northwest Canada endured the coldest December ever recorded (an average of -26.1°C at Whitehorse) before warming up to normal temperatures, with unusually little snow.

The rest of the continent paused before settling down to the horrid season to follow. The East Coast north of Georgia, the Gulf Coast and part of the Southern Great Plains Region actually enjoyed above-normal temperatures in December, but by the last week of the Christmas Bird Count (hereafter, CBC) period severe cold had engulfed every state and province and it continued virtually without a break into March. Snowfall was far above normal, and with no midwinter thaw snow stayed on the ground interminably. Along the East Coast fresh water remained open as far north as Virginia, but inland the only unfrozen expanses were around warm-water outlets. One of the most spectacular blizzards

on record struck the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes regions January 26, with barometric pressure so low that it blew out windows in Toronto. Ten days later New England was paralyzed by its worst winter storm in history. Houston suffered its coldest month ever (January), Florida its coldest February since 1895, and the chill drought in west Texas delayed plant growth by up to a month.

Nevertheless, with local exceptions, the prolonged stretch of below-normal temperatures did not include periods of acutely frigid conditions, with the result that very few bird populations suffered further conspicuous reductions over last year. On a number of wintering grounds, however, the lack of recovery of several species during the summer became obvious and thoroughly documented on the CBCs.

Birds in trouble

TO START ONE'S READING of the regional reports with Florida, this year and last, invokes a sense of alarm which is borne out only in part by accounts from other regions, this feeling lessened either from a lack of the same intense coverage and comparative analysis or (it is to be hoped) from a considerably rosier body of evidence. All but one of the species, however, for which widespread concern is expressed were very scarce in Florida.

The only non-passerine included here is the Brant, down from a recent high of 100,000 birds to only 40,000 by February this year along the entire East Coast.

The two species that continued to be reported at or near all-time lows everywhere (except in the Southwest and California,

where they are above-average) were the Winter Wren and the Golden-crowned Kinglet. In only slightly better shape were Carolina Wren and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, while House Wren, American Robin, and Eastern Bluebird were in low numbers in several localities. Only Florida reported a drastic decline of Yellow-rumped Warblers, but it seems unlikely that they actually fared better farther north.

In addition to major population reductions, a number of local catastrophes were reported. A blizzard and ice storm in early January caught a huge flight of Horned Grebes and forced it down over a sizable area from Erie, Pa., to Pico Peak, Vt. Some crashed into ice-covered lakes and died of injuries; others were lucky enough to be rescued and taken to open water. Ten to fifty thousand Eared Grebes in the Great Salt Lake died of a streptococcal infection, and 4000 Mallards apparently starved along the Big Horn River in Wyoming. In the Southern Great Plains Region waterfowl found moldy peanuts in the fields, ate them, and died in large numbers from the aflatoxins in the mold. A major oil spill in Chesapeake Bay in February wiped out many Oldsquaws and scoters. Finally, you may have mixed feelings about the enormous (90%) success of the Rock Dove poisoning campaign in Duluth-Superior harbor, but it was obviously hard on the local predators.

Laggards and Wintering Birds.

AFTER LAST YEAR'S remarkable number of individuals that lingered far to the north of their normal wintering grounds in spite of excessively harsh conditions, this year's eccentrics seem somewhat less surprising. Notable among them were the Western Grebe at Ortonville that provided Minnesota's first winter record and the Pied-billed Grebe that stayed in Cordova, Alaska for that state's second south coast record, both of them lasting out the season. Several of the latter species were scattered about Minnesota, Ontario, and Québec in midwinter. Double-crested Cormorants overwintered near Pasco, Wash., and tarried into December at Rochester, N.Y., and elsewhere.

Turkey Vultures were in various Washington locations every month of the season and were widely if scantily dispersed in the East from Wisconsin to Connecticut, while single Broad-winged Hawks were reported from northern California and Alexandria, Va. A late Swainson's Hawk was seen in Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge, N.D., two were reported from Idaho, and one appeared on the Yakima Indian Reservation in Washington. A Ferruginous Hawk showed up near Portland, Oreg., in late January, and the northernmost Marsh Hawk was seen at Haines Junction in the Yukon.

Two American Coots were reported from Alaska, the second from Petersburg in late January. Most shorebirds away from the West Coast moved prudently south, but a Killdeer stayed in Hamilton, Ont., to early February, and some overwintered in three South Dakota locations. The last Sharp-tailed Sandpiper sighting was on a new late date of December 3 at Goleta, Calif. Over 50 Sanderlings were found at Lawson Bay, Kodiak, in mid-January. Five thousand Bonaparte's Gulls were off Victoria, B.C., as late as December 17; Heermann's Gulls were also late and abundant at Bodega Bay, Calif. A Caspian Tern near Conway, Wash., in February was astonishingly out of season.

Whip-poor-wills in Texas and North Carolina, Chuck-will's-widows in Louisiana and Mississippi, and Lesser Nighthawks in California may all have overwintered, while five species of hummingbirds from British Columbia to Arizona chose to stay put. Fourteen species of flycatchers were reported this winter.

In view of the presently disastrous state of Winter Wren populations, the one that lingered in Fall River County, S.D., until at least December 21 is to be deplored rather than admired; but surely the doughtiest bird of the season was the Long-billed Marsh Wren that was flushed from cattails along Prioux Lake, Manitoba two weeks after a blizzard. A close second was the Mountain Bluebird that wintered in LeSueur, Minn., although the doughty Water Pipit in Duluth January 19 was also in the race. A baffling number of other Water Pipits either came north in the dead of winter or survived all the snow and ice.

THE MILD WINTER in the West resulted in records of an extraordinary number of vireos and warblers. After a ruthless pruning of November and March sightings, four vireo and 31 warbler species can still be counted for the season, a number of them record-breakers, being displacements as much as they are lingerers: Oregon's first winter Black-and-white, Arizona's first January Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Yellow and Magnolia Warblers; northern California's second wintering Worm-eating, ten incredible Tennessees and their first wintering Magnolia; southern California's first inland Pine Warbler, and a Hooded Warbler in San Diego, the first for the state in winter. Farther east, Ontario had a surprising December collection which included Magnolia, "Audubon's", and Yellow-throated.

Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles were sprinkled throughout the Northern Great Plains all winter, and a Great-tailed Grackle stayed through the season in Kansas. An assortment of orioles lingered in the Southwest, the Scarlet-headed Oriole at Furnace Creek Ranch until December 11. Northernmost among many Northern Orioles were a "Bullock's" at Ladner, B.C., in January, and "Baltimores" in Kingston, Ont., and Springfield, Vt., in December.

Although Cardinals were often found dead in the prairies, several survived such northerly latitudes as Québec, Ontario, and the Dakotas. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were equally hardy, the most unusual being Montana's (perhaps the Northwest's) first winter bird.

Representatives of many species of sparrows wintered well north; perhaps the most welcome among them were two Tree Sparrows which brightened February in the Yukon by appearing in Whitehorse — the rarest birds in the region.

Irruptives.

Unlike last year, even house-bound observers were blessed by the best winter for irruptive species of the decade, and bird seed vendors should be ready to retire. While some species made a headlong rush as far

south as they could go, others virtually blanketed the country, and a few impelled birds north to temperatures even worse than those at home.

Raptors: Most editors from coast to coast (except for Ontario) thought it a heavy flight year for Rough-legged Hawks, with all of California reporting high numbers, two counties in Kansas yielding an average of two per square mile in December, and several sightings in the Carolinas. It was not a big year for Gyrfalcons; only 21 at most were reported south of Canada, the most southerly of them at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Mo

It was an off-year for Snowy Owls as well. Although widespread through the northern half of the United States, numbers were well below average. Hawk Owls trickled south as far as Ithaca, N.Y., and Brookings, S D. Great Gray Owls exploded in southern Manitoba and northern Minnesota for the second largest invasion on record, and reached Utah and Nebraska. Several regions flagged their Boreal Owl reports, but none could hold a candle to Minnesota's dazzling record of 65, four times the previous high. Saw-whets were normal-to-high in most of the country, being found in unprecedented numbers in Connecticut, coming to feeders in the snow-struck Niagara-Champlain Region, reaching the south rim of the Grand Canyon for the first time, and expiring as road-kills (11 of them) in northern California.

Nuthatches to Shrikes: Red-breasted Nuthatches were distributed with marked unevenness, with counts up in northern Florida, the Gulf Coast, and northern Wisconsin, above average in Minnesota in December, in the southern Appalachians and parts of Texas, but down in the Northeast, by 80% in Québec. Bohemian Waxwing continued its major invasion of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Champlain Valleys, Ontario, northern Minnesota, and the Northern Great Plains Region, but farther west it was considered an average year, and it was thought scarce on the Northern Pacific Coast. Northern Shrikes fulfilled autumn's promise of record-breaking numbers. Leaving some Canadian regions in January they moved well south, for new highs in New Mexico and southern California, and reaching Lubbock,

Tex., and Rockingham County, Va.

Finches and Buntings: Most eastern Evening Grosbeaks apparently headed right on down to the Carolinas, Georgia, and northern Florida, leaving eastern Canada and the states in between with just a sprinkling after December. Numbers were normal or above, farther west; this was the only irruptive this year to be found all the way to the West Coast down to Southern California and into South Texas. Purple Finches were virtually absent north of Kentucky in the East but reached abundance levels in the Carolinas and the southern Appalachians. They invaded the Florida Keys for the first time and were present in South Texas. The westernmost reports came from Sheridan, Wyo., in the north and Parker, Ariz., in the south; they were generally scarce in between.

Pine Grosbeaks, on the other hand, moved solidly into the northern regions and stayed there, with many editors reporting the largest invasion of the decade. They were exceptionally plentiful as far west as the Rockies and fairly common in Alaska and northwestern Canada, extending in smaller numbers all the way to College Station, Tex., with one reaching Arkansas for a first record.

AS IN 1971-72, redpolls were the invaders of the year, pouring down in early January into all but the southernmost tier of states, with superlatives everywhere except on the West Coast. North Carolina had five, probably an all-time high, and three reached Oklahoma. Farther north the country was flooded with extraordinary densities. Even Alaska regarded the numbers south of the Alaska Range as exceptional. Along with the Commons, Hoaries were reported in varying numbers (up to 25% around Winnipeg) with barely a flicker of skepticism along the way except from a couple of East Coast editors. (If you saw Hoaries in every other flock, a perusal of the thoughtful "S.A." in the Hudson-Delaware report should be unnerving; a survey of the literature is second only to a leisurely inspection of museum skins as a deflator of confidence in rules of thumb about these two (?) species.)

Those who did not have redpolls, and many who did, were swamped (except in the

Northwest and California) with Pine Siskins which streamed south in November and December to invade Florida down to the Keys, blanket the Gulf Coast states and the Southwest and become a "plague" in the Southern Great Plains. After the migration, numbers were lower along the Canadian border and above, except for Kodiak where they were abundant.

Red Crossbills were rare or absent everywhere this year; White-winged Crossbills did somewhat better, with scattered reports, often of good numbers, from seventeen regions.

Lapland Longspurs were erratically distributed, with high counts in Niagara-Champlain, exceptional numbers in the Southern Great Plains and the Middlewestern Prairies Regions, a range extension to Jackson Hole, Wyo., and a new high for the Lower Colorado River Valley. They were often with Snow Buntings, which were nearly as common and widespread as the redpolls, appearing in enormous flocks between the Rockies and the Appalachians, mostly in the United States. Although none was recorded in Kansas or Oklahoma, a Snow Bunting observed at Lake Livingston represented a first Texas record.

Visitors:

SPEAKING ON THE SPECIES level, a scan of the reports covering the continent's edge and of a few others shows only one first-time tourist (a hypothetical one at that), several repeat visitors, a number of expatriates exploring new wintering spots, and three foreigners with questionable credentials.

Palaeartic: One Bewick's Swan was on Victoria Island, Calif., in late December, and several Bewick's x Whistling Swan hybrids were reported there and elsewhere. A Lesser White-fronted Goose near Pittsburgh was reported firmly as the second North American record, but in view of all the previous suspect sightings, the ordinal to be assigned (if any) is surely open to debate. A Tufted Duck at Kodiak was the second ever recorded there, and four were seen in northern California. A (The ?) Smew was back in Rhode Island, but generally less

cooperative than in 1976. The annual Massachusetts drawing card this year was the Eurasian Curlew on Martha's Vineyard, very likely the one seen on Monomy Island in the fall of 1976, this time much more stable and accessible. A Ruff appeared in Pacific Grove for the second year in a row, but was identified as a different bird. A Slaty-backed Gull visited bird-rich Kodiak in late February. The Lesser Black-backed Gull population keeps spreading and has finally reached California, where one was seen in Monterey County in January. One Black-headed and one Little Gull (if they can still be thought of as foreigners) were reported up the coast at Arcata; all other reports of these species were in the usual range.

Alaska's fall Brambling was found again in January, and up to four Bullfinch reports had come in by February. More astonishing birds were a Brambling in Allegheny County, Pa. (six miles from the Lesser White-fronted Goose!) and a European Goldfinch in Chili Center, near Rochester, N.Y., which were recorded with wary open-mindedness by the respective regional editors.

Hawaii's choice list includes a well-observed Garganey, a European Wigeon, and a Black-headed Gull on Oahu, and a sea eagle on Kure Atoll, feeding on young Laysan Albatrosses.

Neotropical: Louisiana's second Least Grebe was found in Cameron Parish, and another wintered in southern Arizona. Olivaceous Cormorants were reported from Texas, New Mexico, and Cibola Lake in the Lower Colorado River Valley — the first on record in western Arizona. Following last summer's invasion of Roseate Spoonbills into Arizona and California three birds in California established the first winter records for this species in the Southwest. Two Masked Ducks were seen at Freeport, Tex., and a third spent several weeks at Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Hook-billed Kites were still at Santa Ana in late December, and upriver at Falcon Dam there were several reports of a Gray Hawk in the same month. California had its third winter sighting of a Zone-tailed Hawk; an adult and an immature Common Black Hawk continue at Greynolds Park in Florida. The Jacanas at Manor Lake,

Tex., were up to 35 or 40 on New Year's day, but only two were still there at the end of January.

A Ruddy Quail Dove was seen in the Dry Tortugas in December, and a Tropical Kingbird may have been seen on Torch Key. The most interesting hypothetical record of the season was surely the Blue Bunting seen in the lower Rio Grande Valley in February by an observer familiar with the species. The first winter records of Five-striped Sparrows came from several locations in southeast Arizona.

Displacements

Western Birds East: There was a surfeit of these, the more spectacular of which should probably be divided into lucky Florida (A) and Elsewhere (B): A) a *Surfbird* off Fort Myers Beach, a Black-chinned Hummingbird, three Cave Swallows at Flamingo, Sprague's Pipits, a flock of 200 Brewer's Blackbirds at St. Petersburg, and several Bronzed Cowbirds; B) Arctic Loons off Provincetown, Mass., and Gulf Shores, Ala., a Ferruginous Hawk in Wisconsin, a Prairie Falcon in Missouri, a Glaucous-winged Gull in Idaho, a Rufous Hummingbird in South Carolina, a Black-chinned in New Orleans, and a probable Allen's in Texas, a Say's Phoebe in Ithaca, N.Y., Black-headed Grosbeaks in Connecticut, New Jersey, and Virginia, and two Golden-crowned Sparrows in Michigan.

Eastern Birds West: Out of a crowd too large to enumerate, there are three not to be overlooked — the extraordinary Purple Sandpiper in Oklahoma City, California's first Blue-throated Hummingbird, and the most westerly easterner of all, the Belted Kingfisher in Hawaii.

Southern Birds North: Striking among this foolish bunch were three Wood Storks in Asheville, N.C., one in Virginia, and one found dead in Lexington, Ky., a dead Purple Gallinule in Nova Scotia, and a rugged Painted Bunting that endured Cape Cod's worst storms and stayed into March.

Northern Birds South: Of the four Yellow-billed Loons this winter, only one was south of Washington, a February bird at Pacific

Grove, Calif. Two Great Cormorants reached Louisiana for the first time. It was a dandy winter to see Emperor Geese, with six of the reported ten in California, one staying as far south as Pt. Mugu for seven weeks, and two wandering all the way to Hawaii. Both King and Common Eiders reached North Carolina but were scarcer than usual farther up the East Coast. Ivory Gulls came as far south as Ontario, the St. Lawrence, Québec City and Maine. The most southerly of several Boreal Chickadees was the bird that spent the entire winter and beyond in Baltimore.

Pelagics

AS USUAL THE WINTER conditions for sampling pelagic species were much more favorable off the West than the East Coast, and Gulf Coast waters were tantalizingly underexplored.

In the Pacific three tubenoses were plentiful. Northern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, and Short-tailed Shearwater, the last of which appeared in the highest numbers in two or three decades. Five Black-footed Albatrosses were seen off Morro Bay in January; small numbers of Pink-footed and a handful of Flesh-footed Shearwaters were observed from that point north, while Sooty Shearwaters were limited to the North Pacific region.

In the East coverage south of New England waters was virtually nonexistent after early December. Fulmars were abundant in the Gulf of Maine; a remarkable Sooty Shearwater was seen 75 miles south of Block Island February 2; two Cory's were reported from Florida; and 20 Leach's Storm-Petrels came into a Maine harbor after a major January storm.

Blue-faced Boobies made use of an oil platform well off the Louisiana coast. Extremes of the Gannet reports were Port-Daniel, Qué., in *February*, and Port Aransas, Tex. High counts were 1300 near Sebastian Inlet, Fla., 1400 off Maryland and 1300 off south east Virginia, the last two on the same day.

Red Phalaropes were in fair numbers all along the West Coast and off Massachusetts; two notable individuals were at Palm Beach and Cleveland.

Pomarine Jaeger reports were almost entirely restricted to Southern California and offshore Maryland, but Parasitics were all along the Pacific Coast. In the East one was in Buffalo harbor December 1, and three appeared off North Carolina later in the month. Several skuas of debatable identity were seen in the western Atlantic through the period.

Black-legged Kittiwakes were plentiful as usual off New York and Maryland in December; remarkable singles turned up in Mississippi and Louisiana waters. Two Sabine's Gulls were seen off Point Reyes, and three Bridled Terns were reported around the Dry Tortugas.

Alcids were generally scarce in the East except for the 1590 Thick-billed Murres seen on the St. Anthony's, Nfld., CBC. The prime wanderers were Virginia's third Common Puffin, Florida's second Thick-billed Murre, and upstate New York's first Black Guillemot, at Westport on Lake Champlain.

A wreck of Common Murres penetrated the Matamska Valley in Alaska, with at least one finding its way 200 kilometers inland; 1431 of the same species provided a high count on the Campbell River, B.C., CBC. Marbled Murrelets were unusually numerous and widespread on the Puget Sound CBCs, and 5200 flew by Point Roberts, Wash., one January day. The Victoria CBC had record highs of Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets.

Population Trends.

IN THIS REALM OF SHIFTS and fluctuations, sensible analysis is dependent on clues from the regions on what is normal and what is not. Where numbers are reported without comment, there is no way to assess change in the pattern without reconstructing the continental scene over the past few years for oneself, a task, for most species, beyond the time available. Hence the species mentioned below are those for which evidence goes somewhat beyond speculation.

Brown Pelicans are apparently doing well on the West Coast, with high numbers early in the season, unusual numbers of lingerers, and several wanderers inland, including a hypothetical record in New Mexico. Cattle

Egrets sustain their steady expansion in the West, including Hawaii, with all Pacific Coast regions south of Alaska reporting fairly substantial numbers at least through December. Mute Swans are on the increase from Ontario to Wisconsin and in much of the Middlewestern Prairie Region; Whistling Swans are widespread and increasing, reported in every region that had open water; Trumpeter Swans continue to expand their numbers and range. Snow Geese, Greaters in particular, are numerous and are extending their wintering grounds inland. Counts of Barrow's Goldeneyes along the Lower Colorado River continue to grow, and Harlequin Ducks are turning up all over, from Cocoa, Fla., to San Diego County, the second on record to appear in New Mexico. Common Mergansers increased sharply in many parts of the continent.

White-tailed Kites, while down in parts of northern California, doubled their numbers over last fall farther north, extended their range eastward in Southern California, and were more commonly seen than usual in South Texas. All three Accipiters were conspicuous at feeders in snow-covered regions; Goshawks and Cooper's Hawks showed some local increases, but Sharp-shinned were reported above normal to abundant almost everywhere south of Canada, with many CBCs counting all-time highs. Red-tailed were in very high numbers in almost every region that commented on them, for Hudson-Delaware "the best winter in memory." Red-shoulders were widespread, notably in the Southwest, and more numerous than usual. Golden Eagles apparently had a good winter and Bald Eagles an excellent one, with several surveys showing the highest totals in years, even as the species was finally declared endangered in 43 states. Merlins and kestrels were on the increase in a number of scattered regions.

Gallinaceous species seemed to be thriving: Ruffed Grouse, Willow and White-tailed Ptarmigan, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Gray Partridge and Turkey were all more common than usual in parts of their range, and Kalij Pheasants were spreading into new habitat in Hawaii.

Snowy Plovers were more plentiful than

had been thought both in Louisiana and along the Pacific Coast north of San Francisco. Dunlin caused comment in a half-dozen widely dispersed regions by wintering well inland.

THAYER'S GULLS TURNED UP in Baltimore, St. Petersburg, Las Vegas, and in three inland locations in Southern California, as well as in a number of more northerly sites, it would be interesting to know which individuals are immatures, a category that caused cold panic in most parts of the country only yesterday.

Band-tailed Pigeons had a boom year—a large flock wintered in the Nevada mountains, the northern Central Valley of California was subject to a huge invasion, probably attributable to heavy snow in the adjacent mountains; and a few reached the Mustang and Chiricahua Mountains of Arizona. Mourning Doves are increasing rapidly in Ontario and were reported in large numbers in the Appalachian and Middlewestern Prairie Regions. Common Ground Doves were found in locations far inland in South Carolina and Louisiana.

Screech Owls are enduring in such icy domains as the Lake Champlain Valley and Bismark, N.D., but in the Appalachians and prairies the severe decline seemed to be the result of the harsh weather of the last two winters. Pygmy Owls were widely reported in their normal range, invading Victoria, B.C., and Oregon, occurring commonly in Flathead Valley, Mont.; 27 were found in Colorado, and one made a first appearance in Salmon, Ida. Barred, Long-eared, and Short-eared Owls were all reported with marked frequency over a wide range.

Belted Kingfishers provided several surprises; aside from visiting Hawaii, they appeared in record numbers on two northern Pacific CBCs and survived more commonly than expected in the prairie states; two doubled Québec's all-time midwinter total.

If anything, Red-bellied Woodpeckers seem encouraged by the bad winters, with increased numbers in northwestern Pennsylvania and in Westchester and Dutchess Counties, N.Y., with notable visits to Thief River Falls, Minn., and Alcove, Qué. More than a few Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers endured

very hostile conditions in the Northeast. Hairy Woodpeckers increased in the Appalachians; six of them and three Downies were particularly gratifying to birders in Northwest Canada where only Northern Three-toed Woodpeckers are common!

For a species not normally considered an irruptor, the Horned Lark was found in incredible numbers between the Rockies and the Appalachians; flocks of 10,000 were seen in the Pawnee National Grasslands, Colo., and in Montana, and flocks of 1000 or more were reported from the prairies to Louisiana.

Almost every northern corvid was regarded to be expanding its range, Gray Jays, Blue Jays, Scrub Jays especially in the Northwest, Black-billed Magpies in the East (Minnesota and Ontario) as well, and Common Crows, here and there from Ontario to the Lower Colorado River Valley.

Last year 26 Varied Thrushes were reported from the regions east of the Rocky Mountain states, for an unprecedented high. This winter the total was more than triple; of the 80, 15 were in Massachusetts, two came as far northeast as Nova Scotia and three others as far southeast as Maryland and Virginia. Not just a western species east, ten individuals were a record-breaking total in the Southwest, California reported a massive invasion, and in Kodiak, Alaska, there were a remarkable 30-50 per day at feeders.

Pyrrhuloxias were found in unusual numbers from west Texas to Galveston Island, north and east of their usual range. House Finches continue their inexorable expansion, consolidating as they go. First records were reported this year in two Louisiana sites,

Bozeman, Mont., and Kalispell, Ida.; flocks of dozens to hundreds were seen as far west as Ohio and Kentucky and south to piedmont North Carolina. The scarcity of Tree Sparrows in the Northeast contrasted with the usual abundance in Nebraska and Kansas and well-above-average totals in Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee and Arkansas.

Happenings.

IN THE MOUNTAIN of sober and instructive data that follows, an occasional tale is buried which only cover-to-cover reading is likely to expose. One birder's Starling may be another's Ross's Gull, but who would not be the owner of the garden swing in Québec where a pair of Short-eared Owls was wont to roost, or the observer in a Texas research institute when it was inspected by a confused Cave Swallow? You may be glad that you do not have the problem of Churchill birders scoping through ice crystals in the air, or that you were not the witness of the encounter between a Golden Eagle and a porcupine somewhere in Ontario. Our outrage at a Nebraska hooligan's shooting of the state's first Great Gray Owl since 1893 is matched only by our satisfaction in his apprehension by the Law. Finally, if you must be confined to a seventh story office in, say, a city in the hills, what could be a better way to have the day turned upside down than to have three Wood Storks fly by your window?

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Abbreviations frequently used

ad : adult, Am. : American, C : Celsius, CBC : Christmas Bird Count, Cr. : Creek, Com. : Common (bird name), Co. : County, Cos. : Counties, *et al* and others, E. : Eastern (bird name), Eur. : European, Eurasian (bird names), F : Fahrenheit, *fide* : reported by, F.&W.S. : Fish & Wildlife Service, Ft. : Fort, imm. : immature, I. : Island, Is. : Islands, Isles, Jct. : Junction, L. : Lake, m.ob. : many observers, Mt. : Mountain, Mts. : Mountains, N.F. : National Forest, N.M. : National Monument, N.P. : National Park, N.W.R. : Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, N. : Northern

(bird name), Par. : Parish, Pen. : Peninsula, P.P. : Provincial Park, Pt. : Point, not Port, Ref. : Refuge, Res. : Reservoir, not Reservation, R. : River, S.P. : State Park, sp. : species, spp. : species plural, ssp. : subspecies, Twp. : Township, W. : Western (bird name), W.M.A. : Wildlife Management Area, v.o. : various observers, N,S,W,E. : direction of motion, n., s., w., e., : direction of location, ♂ : male, ♀ : female, Ø : imm. or female, * : specimen, ph. : photographed, † : documented, ft : feet, mi : miles, m : meters, km : kilometers, date with a + (*e.g.*, Feb. 28+) : recorded beyond end of period. Authors may also abbreviate often-cited locations.