

## The Changing Seasons

*A spectacular hawk migration and some noteworthy changes in population dynamics highlighted a warm, dry fall*

*Ann L. Schimpf and Kimberly G. Smith*

**T**RADITIONALLY, THE FALL MIGRATION report has dealt with weather patterns and their relationship to avian movements. This season was unique in that almost all regions experienced a very mild fall, with many reporting it as one of the duller of autumns as far as perceived bird migration was concerned.

By the end of August, cold fronts were moving rapidly across the northern United States, a trend which continued into September with snow falling heavily in the Rockies by mid-month. North-eastern Maritime editor Vickery suggests that the large number of rapid cold fronts during the early fall moved most of the migrants out early so that by mid-October few birds remained in the northern areas.

Nevertheless, there was plenty of sunshine during September, with the area between the Rockies and New England experiencing above-normal temperatures. But the opposite pattern was evident during October, when western United States had above-average temperatures and the East had slightly below-average temperatures. Except for in the Appalachian Region and the Southwest, October was also a very dry month, with few fronts that produced precipitation. The only major fronts during the entire fall occurred during the last week of September and one in each of the first two weeks of October. Some waves of migrants occurred with these October fronts, as witnessed by the Saw-whet Owl movement through Duluth on October 7-8, the number of migrants on the outer islands of North Carolina during the same time period, and the "best birding day in Florida" on October 15. No northeasters crossed the Atlantic coast in either month and no hurricanes of any strength touched the southern coast.

This mild fall continued through November in most areas.

**I**N A RECENT REVIEW of the timing and amount of bird migration in relation to weather, Richardson (*Oikos* 30:224-272, 1978) synthesized a mass of research and drew conclusions concerning not only the weather patterns and their effects on birds in general, but also on specific groups like raptors, waterfowl and passerines. (We highly recommend this article to any readers interested in the study of bird migration.) Specifically, he was able to show that weather conditions affect different groups of birds in rather dissimilar fashions. For example, some raptors will fly on clear days, no matter what the wind conditions, although mild winds seem to suit them best. The hawk migration witnessed this fall may be owing in part to weather conditions that were almost perfect for hawk migration in early September. Conversely, conditions were not ideal for the "waves" of migrant passerines expected by birdwatchers on the East Coast. Without the alternating cold fronts and high pressure cells, the migrants trickled through, accompanied by moans from the "week-end" birders. On the other hand, as H. E. LeGrand points out in the Southern Atlantic Coast report, those afield several times a week saw most of the usual migrants.

Since the weather is not the big news this fall, we have the opportunity to discuss another important aspect of the fall season. In a report on the timing of habitat selection in birds, Brewer and Harrison (*Ibis*, 117:521-522, 1975) argued that late summer and early fall are the times when first year birds should select the habitat to which they will return in the spring. Previous workers have

seemed to assume that this selection takes place in the spring. Brewer and Harrison listed several advantages of this strategy; for example, more energy can be spent on breeding activities the following spring if habitat selection has already taken place. If these authors are correct, the population dynamics that occur during the fall months may be critical in determining the extent of the breeding range the following year. As pointed out to us by Tex Sordahl, fall would also be the best time for post-breeding adults to assess their relative breeding success and attempt to "select" a better site for the next year.

Another interesting study is that of Ralph and Mewaldt (*Auk*, 92:698-705, 1975) on the White-crowned Sparrow wintering in California. They discovered that if the birds were captured in fall and displaced a distance of several miles, the birds did not return to the original site, but rather remained at the new site and returned to that site in subsequent years. However, if the birds were moved *after the first of the year*, they returned to the *original site* later that year and in subsequent years. Putting the results of these two studies together, it is conceivable that the total area that an individual will inhabit is determined within the first six months of a bird's life. With this in mind, the population dynamics that occur during the fall may be important for range extension and determination of the breeding range the following summer.

### HAWK MIGRATION

**A**S MENTIONED EARLIER, the lead story in the 1978 Fall Changing Seasons report is the spectacular hawk migration. The species which captured most of the attention was the Broad-winged Hawk. On September 14 a phenomenal 21,447 passed over Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, nearly doubling the lookout's previous one-day record (11,349 on September 10, 1948). Other eastern lookouts recorded similar stunning mid-September peaks. Not to be outdone, Hawk Ridge at Duluth, Minnesota set an all time daily record on September 15 when 33,370 hawks (almost all Broad-wingeds) soared overhead!

A number of editors have cautioned against comparing present numbers with those of years past because of the greatly increased numbers of hawk watchers today. Maurice Broun, Director Emeritus of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, explains that oldtime counts often employed single observers whereas modern counts boast brigades of hawk watchers, suggesting that increased numbers of birds observed may be due largely to improved observation. However, the magnitude of increase in this year's Broad-winged flight seems attributable to a healthy population of certain of the hawks.

**W**ESTERN HAWK WATCHING perhaps best exemplifies the increased popularity of the activity. In the 1975 Fall Changing Seasons report, the first significant change in traditional hawk-watching patterns was noted by Paul A. DeBenedictis, who pointed out that in previous years eastern lookouts garnered all of the publicity and western hawk watchers scanned the skies at random points watching individual hawks with only occasional, small migrant flocks sighted. Since that year, numerous western lookouts have been established. Steve Hoffman's lookout near Logan, Utah (manned daily by observers who must brave a 4-mile, 3500-foot climb) finished its third year of observations and averaged 12.8 birds/hour during the months of observation. These data, plus those gathered at lookouts in Arizona, on Vancouver Island and at Pt. Diablo, San Francisco, are building the framework for a greater understanding of western hawk migrations.

The numbers of hawk watchers and Broad-wingeds were up this fall, but the numbers of Rough-leggeds were notably down. The Middle Pacific Coast reported Rough-leggeds "down at least 90 per cent from last year's high total." The observation was supported with only one sighting from the Southern Pacific Coast. Some movement was recorded in the Ontario and Middlewestern Prairie Regions, but silence from the other regional editors (better supplied with hawk watchers than ever before) must indicate a return to conditions of the fall of 1975 when this irruptive species was last cited as low. The 1977 Fall Changing Seasons report listed a major flight of Rough-leggeds into central California, Colorado and Minnesota by mid-September. The 1976 fall report also recorded good numbers of Rough-leggeds.

Should the low reports of Rough-leggeds be a matter of concern? Did the raptors merely stay north later due to good hunting and/or weather; has some misfortune since last fall befallen the birds; or did they come through in usual numbers in all but the four aforementioned regions and the editors just failed to mention their passage because it was "normal"? A related question could be posed: does the almost complete lack of reports on Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Marsh hawks plus the American Kestrel mean that the populations of these birds are healthy in 1978? The pleas from Changing Seasons editors to regional editors to field editors for information on *all* species is beginning to sound like a broken record, but it is vital that we take heed and respond if we are to effectively monitor population changes.

Turkey and Black vultures were reported in nine regions with comments once again supporting observations of previous fall reports that the range of the Black Vulture is expanding. (Sightings were recorded in the Northeastern Maritime, Appalachian and in the Mountain West.) Large concentrations of Turkey Vultures were seen in the Northern Great Plains (61 at one roost in Manitoba August 29), the Northern Pacific Coast (228 passed over October 1) and the Middle Pacific Coast (600 passed over September 23-24). These healthy reports of expansion and numbers may point to a reverse in the trend stated by Brown (*Am. Birds* 31:909, 1976) who concluded (based on 24 years of Christmas Bird Count data) that the populations of both species are declining steadily.

The reports on Sharp-shinned Hawks are also encouraging. A 20-year high was reported in the Hudson-Delaware Region and even in Florida, where numbers were generally down, two good flight days (202 on October 7 and 513 on October 9) occurred. The reports on Cooper's Hawk were less cohesive, with the Southern Great Plains and Central Southern Regions asserting them to be lower; but, the Middlewestern Prairie, Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain and Northern Pacific Coast all reporting *accipiter* numbers (including Cooper's) to be higher.

Reports of the Swainson's and Ferruginous hawks in the East are becoming more common in recent years but range expansion reports on the Mississippi and White-tailed kites are still sparse. The Mississippi was mentioned only in the

Southern Atlantic Coast and Southwest regional reports and the White-tailed also rated but two mentions: the Middle Pacific Coast and the Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain.

Our national bird seems to be doing well where reported. The Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain and Middlewestern Prairie Regions both cited particularly high numbers. The status of Golden Eagles was mentioned only half as often and neither species received nearly enough comments on the ratio of immature: adult birds.

**A**TENTION CONTINUES TO BE PAID the Endangered Peregrine Falcon and reports on its status have become increasingly optimistic since 1975. Noteworthy was capture of a previously banded bird at Cape May, New Jersey, and the 42 birds seen in the Western Great Lakes Region. The eastern Peregrine Project released 53 young Peregrines at 11 sites in six states in 1978. It was the largest release group since the project began in 1974 and brings the total number of Peregrines released in the East to 154 birds. The total number of young Peregrines reared last year for both the eastern and western release programs was 95. Although the bird was reported in 12 of the regions, the bird's numbers are far from "safe" and still merit the most careful scrutiny. And, until we begin to see positive breeding results from released parents, the repopulation projects are still unproved.

Other falcons are mentioned by regional editors, but overall conclusions are difficult to draw. For example, the Florida Region reported the number of Merlins down whereas on the Pacific Coast they appeared in good numbers. Again, is this meaningful? Is the status of this less-publicized falcon a cause for concern just in the East, continent-wide, or not at all? Regional Editors please comment next autumn.

Another species flagged for concern, the Osprey, was given a strong vote of confidence in six regions — including a report of 66 young fledged at Cascade Reservoir, Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region. The exotic Gyrfalcon was reported 19 times (in seven regions) — about par for all recent Changing Seasons reports save 1971, which saw the "first major invasion of Gyrfalcons in memory."



## POPULATION DYNAMICS

### *Pelagics —*

**A**S AUTUMN OFFSHORE FIELD TRIPS are becoming more popular, our knowledge of pelagic movements off all coasts should increase greatly. A great variety of sightings was reported this season including a large number of species that was only dreamed about 10 years ago.

Two Laysan and three Short-tailed albatrosses were reported from the Pacific Coast. Manx Shearwaters appeared in record numbers on the Middle Pacific Coast and over a million Sooty Shearwaters were estimated passing the Northern Pacific Coast. Two Flesh-footed Shearwaters were also reported from that region. Large numbers of Black and Ashy storm-petrels were present along the Middle Pacific Coast and Least Storm-Petrels were relatively common on the Southern Pacific Coast. A Mottled (Scaled) Storm-Petrel was reported from Alaska.

In the East, two Northern Fulmars were reported off North Carolina, as were 2-4 of the extremely rare Little Shearwater. Many Audubon's Shearwaters were reported in the middle Atlantic states, but only a few Manx. Impressive numbers of Greater Shearwaters were observed in the Bay of Fundy and off the coast of New Hampshire. Also, 40 Black-capped Petrels were observed and a specimen collected off the coast of North Carolina was tentatively identified as a South Trinidad Petrel. Surprisingly, Alabama's first record of Leach's Storm-Petrel was one found dead over 100 miles inland. White-tailed Tropicbirds wandered as far north as North Carolina. Masked Boobies are now seen with regularity off the coast of Alabama and three turned up on the coast of Florida.

Jaegers seemed to be down in numbers in most areas, with the only concentration being reported from Newfoundland. North Dakota did pick up its first record of Long-tailed and the first record of Parasitic was reported in Tennessee. Only two skuas were reported on the Pacific Coast, while 253 were seen off the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland. There were only scattered reports of Red Phalaropes, Sabine's Gulls and Black-legged Kittiwakes, with no reports of any large numbers. Red-necked Grebes remained in the breeding grounds in the Western Great Lakes Region until late September and were virtually unreported

from other areas suggesting that this Blue-listed species should be watched.

### *Pelicans, Waterfowl —*

**N**EARLY EVERY EASTERN REGION reported White Pelicans, with the Central and Pacific flyways counting particularly high numbers. However, its darker counterpart did not fare as well. The Northern Pacific Coast reported Brown Pelican numbers down dramatically, although Brown Pelicans lingered late in large numbers in the Middle Pacific Coast. No mention was made of its status on the Southern Pacific Coast, along the Atlantic seaboard, or on the Gulf Coast.

The migration of Whistling Swans was particularly strong in fall 1978. Middle Atlantic Coast, Appalachian, Mountain West and Southwest Regions reported huge flocks of these majestic birds. Most noteworthy was a count of 15,654 in Utah October 15-23. A total of 235 Trumpeter Swans was recorded at Red Rock Lake, Minnesota, a number of which were color-banded by refuge personnel. Observers in that part of the country should be on the lookout for these birds. A single Trumpeter appeared in San Francisco in early November. Brant were in extremely low numbers and must still be down from the disastrous winter of 1977 when conceivably over 50 per cent of the entire population succumbed. This species should be watched closely in the coming seasons. Large numbers of Snow Geese were reported in November in Nebraska, Oklahoma and Montana — most noteworthy being 125,000 in Nebraska November 24-26, but almost no Snows were reported in the Middle Pacific Coast.

Ducks did not start to move in large numbers until November, probably due to the warm fall in northern areas. Fulvous Whistling Ducks again appeared on the East Coast with 10 making it as far as Massachusetts in early November. Four pair of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks were reported to have nested in Arizona. Canvasbacks showed strong in Northeastern Maritime, Middlewestern Prairie, Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain, and Mountain West Regions suggesting populations of this once-threatened species are healthy. Scoters and Oldsquaws were widely reported at inland locations in November and 250,000 Red-breasted Mergansers were counted in Cleveland on November 19.

### *Quail to Cranes —*

**A**BOUT 35 MILLION BOBWHITES are taken annually by hunters in the United States (T. G. Tucker, "Bring Back the Bobwhite" *The Minnesota Volunteer* 41:241, 24-31). The pheasant "harvest" is a distant second at 12 million. And yet two regional editors (Appalachian and Middlewestern Prairie) reported Bobwhite numbers as extremely low. Like their endangered cousins, the Greater Prairie Chickens, these birds are threatened by the inevitable loss of habitat that is the result of ongoing efforts to pave America. Ironically, it was man's efforts to clear the prairies and plant windbreaks and fence lines that initially expanded the range of the Bobwhite. It appears that man's intervention will again be necessary if this bird's population is to be prevented from plunging. The Bobwhite Quail Society of Minnesota, where the bird's range has diminished to the southeastern corner of the state, maintains an active corn feeding program for Bobwhites and is working to create more areas of cover. In much of the northern areas of its range, however, the Bobwhite seems to be only marginally viable, and appears to survive only through repeated restocking.

"Wyoming became the last of the lower 48 to be conquered by the Cattle Egret." (Kingery, Mountain West). With that report this fall must come a complete revision of the range maps for this Old World species recently naturalized in North America. Just as was true for the 1977 Fall Changing Seasons report, the Cattle Egret shows strong numbers throughout the country. The Southwest Region claimed "the largest-ever influx", the Southern Pacific Coast reported "Cattle Egret is now the most common 'white heron' on the coast" and the Western Great Lakes boasted "more Cattle Egrets in Wisconsin than ever" Only in the Middlewestern Prairie was concern expressed for Great Blue Herons, while Wood Storks moved north with at least eight reported from Virginia.

The 1975 Fall Changing Seasons report was the last to mention progress of the Whooping Crane. In 1978 the regional editors were diligent in their reporting of the bird which symbolizes the fight to save our endangered species. A Whooper was banded in North Dakota, 17 rested in Kansas (October 21 - November 11) and by December 15 Aransas Nat'l Wildlife Refuge reported

68 adult Whoopers and six immatures. Again this summer transplanted Whooper eggs were successfully hatched by Sandhill Crane adults at Grays Lake Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in Idaho. The area also reported the return of four subadult Whoopers raised by Sandhills during 1975-1978. Sandhill Cranes are also doing well, being widely reported on the East Coast and now regularly in the Hudson-Delaware Region.

### *Shorebirds, Gulls, and Terns —*

**S**NOWY PLOVERS WERE REPORTED as down in the Southern Great Plains, Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain and along the Northern Pacific Coast, although numbers seemed to be up in the Central Southern Region. A flock of 1000 Mountain Plovers feeding on crickets in a field in California was certainly noteworthy. Hudsonian Godwits seemed to be well reported in the Hudson-Delaware Region, but scarce in Ontario, with sightings in ten other regions, including the first for Oregon. Eighteen regions mentioned Buff-breasted Sandpipers, with very few in the East, but invasion levels in the far west. Red Knots were more common than usual in the mid-eastern part of the country, with impressive numbers of Western Sandpipers around the Western Great Lakes.

A large concentration of gulls occurred in Virginia during September with as many as ten species present. Four single sightings of Thayer's Gull occurred in the Northeast with five seen in early October in southern Nevada. Two Heermann's Gulls pushed into southern Arizona. Arctic Terns were down on the Middle Pacific Coast although one was found in Idaho. Black Terns were reported as declining in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region and in the Southern Great Plains and should be watched closely in the future.

### *Anis to Woodpeckers —*

**A**N EXPANSION OF THE Groove-billed Ani was particularly well-documented this fall. Missouri's fourth record was established, 1000 were seen in South Texas, 13 in Mississippi and Alabama, six in the Southwest, and California reported its second record.

No invasion of Snowy Owls occurred in the Northwest as was true last fall. However, there was a mild influx in cen-

tral New York and varying numbers reported in nine separate regions. Mild invasions of Saw-whets were reported from the Great Lakes eastward with 376 at Hawk Ridge in Duluth, Minnesota taking the honors (87 seen on October 6-7). The number is comparable to 1974 when 300 of the tiny tuftless owls were banded at Duluth. Nearly every editor mentioned the presence of some owl species, with Western Great Lakes getting the bouquet for completeness, including an account of the first nest of a Great Gray in Wisconsin. Regional editors have responded well to the 1973 Fall Changing Seasons report that cited "frighteningly little information exists on owl populations."

Both the Hudson-Delaware and Appalachian Regions reported reduced numbers of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. New Orleans is fast becoming the "eastern" hummer capital with five (and perhaps even six) species seen. Five species wintered in the state during 1976.

Woodpecker reports were scarce with a major movement of Lewis' Woodpeckers into the southern Arizona lowlands and a mass exodus of Red-headed to higher elevations in mid-October in the Middlewestern Prairie Region. A Pileated Woodpecker was seen drilling in southern Idaho with eight reported from northern California.

### *Flycatchers to Shrikes —*

**W**ESTERN KINGBIRDS ARE WELL established as regular eastern fall vagrant migrants; they were reported in every eastern region this year. However, Edscorn, the Florida editor, believes that the numbers of Western Kingbirds is lower today in all regions than before the severe freeze of winter 1977. Field observers should also keep an eye out for Purple Martins. Although as many as 3000 were seen in Winnipeg September 9, the other five regions mentioning America's only completely dark swallow reported that very low numbers were evident.

Despite a plea for greater attention to the populations of Brown Jays in the 1977 Fall Changing Seasons report, they were not mentioned this Fall. The Blue Jay continued its efforts at ubiquity with breeding continuing to expand in New Mexico and sightings in Montana, British Columbia and Humboldt Bay, California. In the East, Green Springs (Middle Atlantic Coast) reported 23,182 Blue Jays in 102 hours September 25 - Octo-

ber 10. Other noteworthy comments on jay included: Southern Pacific Coast (Steller's and Piñon), Southwest (Steller's, Scrub and Piñon), Mountain West (Scrub), Southern Great Plains (Blue, Scrub and Piñon). The Southwest reported the largest fall downslope flight in years of corvids, titmice and nut-hatches. The range of the Common Raven continued to expand in the East with movement documented by the Northeastern Maritime, Hudson-Delaware, Ontario and Appalachian editors.

**T**UFTED TITMICE INVADED the Northeast in substantial numbers, being reported as far north as Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire. Southern records for the Black-capped Chickadee were established in the Middle Atlantic Coast, the Appalachians (a first breeding record in North Carolina) and the Southwest.

Concern for the Carolina Wren continued to be manifested in the Middlewestern Prairie and Niagara-Champlain due to several severe winters. Eastern Bluebirds were generally sparse, with an influx into the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Mountain Bluebirds were reported as common only in western Texas and eastern Washington. Although the 1976 Fall Changing Seasons report pointed out that kinglet numbers have been building for six years, the effects of the severe winter of 1977 continued to be felt in the Ontario, Appalachian and South Texas Regions. However, Middlewestern Prairie and Southern Great Plains reported increased kinglet numbers over last year. As was true for 1977, Northern Shrikes were seen widely. Major flights were reported in the Northeastern Maritime, Hudson-Delaware, Middle Atlantic Coast and Ontario.

### *Warblers —*

**S**INCE THE BEGINNING OF this decade, the number of fall and winter sightings of "displaced" warblers across the continent has increased drastically. (See 1974 Fall Changing Seasons report.) This in part must be owing to birdwatchers seeking out the "bird traps," such as clumps of trees on the southern Texas floodplain or the springs in Death Valley. These areas, once discovered, are checked regularly (and in some cases daily, as in the Southern Pacific Coast Region) so that no migrant slips by unnoticed. A case in point is the fantastic results of the expeditions to the

extreme northeast corner of Arizona that turned up eastern migrants in unprecedented numbers (see Southwest Region report). One can bet that those areas will be "patrolled" in the future.

In the West, the Middle Pacific Coast boasted 22 species of displaced warblers (219 individuals) in what was called a relatively poor year compared to last year's invasion. The Southern Pacific Coast reported 21 species (167 individuals), and the Southwest 15 species (43 individuals). All three regions reported Tennessee, Magnolia, Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Palm, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, and Hooded warblers. Black-and-white, Prothonotary, Northern Parula, Cape May, Cerulean, Yellow-throated, Prairie, Connecticut, and Canada warblers also appeared in both Southern and Middle Pacific Coasts, with the Middle Pacific also having two Worm-eating Warblers. The first state record of Pine Warbler occurred in New Mexico, the second sight record of Magnolia Warbler in Washington, the first Black-throated Green was found in Nevada.

In the East, all the warblers associated with the spruce budworm outbreaks were numerous (*e.g.*, Cape May, Tennessee, Bay-breasted, and Blackburnian). Single Kirtland's Warblers were sighted in Québec and Florida, and a MacGillivray's was discovered in Massachusetts. For the first time, a Colima Warbler was discovered in Texas away from the mountains of Big Bend, and South Texas had its first record of a Connecticut Warbler. As noted earlier, weather conditions were such that large waves of warblers were not seen.

### *Blackbirds, Finches and Sparrows —*

**A**LASKA HAS THE DUBIOUS DISTINCTION of being the only region to report Starlings. Five were reported as far west as Kodiak Island. Great-tailed Grackle populations continue to expand northward with reports from Southern Pacific Coast, Middle Pacific Coast and the Southwest. The continued extension of Brewer's Blackbirds into the East was substantiated by reports in the Northeastern Maritimes, Hudson-Delaware, Southern Atlantic Coast, Florida and Middlewestern Prairie. Blue Grosbeaks were very scarce, with speculation from the Middle Pacific Coast that this species may be in danger.

As in Fall 1976, there was almost a complete non-movement of winter finches. Evening Grosbeaks were scarce in all regions that reported them. Equally scarce were Pine Siskins. They were virtually unreported as far north as Oregon and Washington. Only Kodiak Island reported siskins as common which leaves one to speculate that good cone crops farther north and at higher elevations caused the scarcity. Purple Finches were reported particularly scarce in Central Southern and South Texas. As was the case in Fall 1976, House Finches still seem firmly entrenched in the East, with continued expansion in the Hudson-Delaware, Niagara-Champlain and Appalachian Regions. The erratic crossbills were just that. White-winged were common in Nova Scotia, Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region, Alaska, Northern Pacific Coast and were reported for the first time ever in California. However, their numbers were non-existent or low in the Hudson-Delaware, Ontario, Western Great Lakes and Saskatchewan, to name but a few. A similar "hit and miss" pattern was evidenced for the Red Crossbill with only the North Carolina and Colorado mountains reporting substantial numbers.

Grasshopper Sparrows were in the Northeast in good numbers with a Henslow's in Nova Scotia. A Tree Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow both turned up in Montana and Harris' Sparrow was unreported in Alaska for the first time in 14 years. Snow Buntings occurred on the Northern Pacific Coast in the first week of September and Lapland Longspurs were in the Appalachian Region by the second week of September. McCown's Longspurs were recorded along the coast of California by November.

### WANDERINGS

**W**ITH SUCH A MILD FALL, one might expect that southern species might wander farther northward than usual, and there is a suggestion that some "southern" species did in fact show up north of their usual range. However, the trend in recent years has been for birds to appear in strange places so we conclude that probably observers are more diligent in seeking out the rare bird. Therefore, we present here the highlights of the wandering for your enjoyment, with no comments on the significance of these findings. Indeed, what can one say about such things as the

Flammulated Owl that was found in Florida or the Purple Gallinule that appeared in Colorado? "Both obviously first state records" is about all.

Three Arctic Loons appeared on the East Coast, with two in Wyoming along with a Red-throated and Yellow-billed (first state record). Three Western Grebes were reported from the East Coast, with an Anhinga in Maryland. A frigatebird appeared in southern California and Mississippi had its first state record of Great Cormorant. Black Ducks strayed to Montana and the Southern Pacific Coast and a Barrow's Goldeneye was discovered in Tennessee. A Gray Hawk appeared in South Texas. Reddish Egrets wandered into Virginia and Kentucky and a Louisiana Heron was spotted at Green Bay, Wisconsin.

California Gulls turned up near the Hudson River, in Oklahoma and in Florida, all first state records, and in Virginia and Michigan. A Franklin's Gull was found in Nova Scotia, a Laughing Gull was spotted in Minnesota, and two Mew Gulls were found in Virginia. A Sooty Tern also wandered into Virginia, with several reports of Bridled Terns from the Southern Atlantic Coast.

**O**THER SIGHTINGS OF NOTE include Ground Dove in Virginia, Band-tailed Pigeon in Ontario, Inca Dove in Louisiana, Rufous Hummingbird in Minnesota, Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Louisiana, Broad-billed Hummingbird in Utah, White-throated Swift in Kansas (first record), three Anna's Hummingbirds in Alaska, six Black Swifts in Las Vegas, Nevada, Acorn Woodpecker in Washington, Red-breasted Sapsucker in southeastern Alaska, Great Kiskadee at New Orleans, Western Wood Pewees in Mississippi and South Texas, Gray Flycatcher in Wyoming (first state record), Tropical Kingbird on Victoria Island, Thick-billed Kingbird and Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher in southern California, Rock Wren and Mountain Bluebird in Alabama, Sage Thrasher in Ontario and Nebraska, Townsend's Solitaire in Québec, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin, Wood Thrush in Arizona and southern California, Veery in southern California, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Washington (first state record), two Yellow-green Vireos in California, two Philadelphia Vireos in Arizona, four Bronzed Cowbirds in Florida, a Scott's Oriole in Kansas, and a Lazuli Bunting in Maine (the first record for the Northeast).

## ACCIDENTALS

**L**AST, BUT IN MANY WAYS NOT LEAST, we report the species that have appeared from east, west, south, and in probably one case, north of the area covered by the regional reports. These are the most exciting records for the field-oriented birdwatcher, but certainly statements like Guy McCaskie's that Red-throated Pipits are now annual winter visitors to the southern part of California must intrigue even the professional ornithologist. One wonders what to think about the 20+ Ruffs that were reported, or the good numbers of Lesser Black-backed and Little gulls that were also mentioned along the East Coast. Ten Wheatears were also reported from the Northeast.

Some other outstanding Eurasian rarities did occur this fall: Emperor Goose in Oregon; Tufted Duck in Indiana (first record) and Southern California; European Wigeon in Denver; an unconfirmed European Sparrowhawk at Cape May and a Eurasian Kestrel in Alaska; three Curlew Sandpipers on the East Coast; three Bar-tailed Godwits in New England and one in Oregon; Spotted Redshank at Brigantine Nat'l Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey and Great Snipe in Virginia. Ten species of Eurasian sandpipers were found in Alaska, with Rufous-necked Sandpipers in British Columbia and in southern California, where a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was also spotted. A Bluethroat and four Siberian Rubythroats were seen in Alaska, Yellow Wagtails and Red-throated Pipits in the Middle Pacific Coast, and White Wagtails in southern California. Bramblings were reported from Montana and Nevada.

Two of the most exciting finds of the season are the Ross' Gull that accommodated many birders by staying around Chicago for two weeks near the end of the period and the Bahama Duck (White-cheeked Pintail) that appeared about the same time in South Texas.

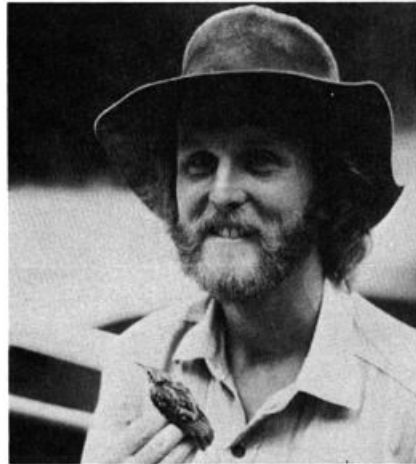
Only a few other species wandered northward from south of the border: Plain-capped Starthroat in Phoenix; Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Wisconsin (first record), Cape May and Maryland; and a single Rufous-backed Robin in Arizona. No fewer than four American Flamingos were reported in the East, suggesting either that zoos are losing quite a few birds or some wild birds are actually straying into the northern states.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

**I**N CLOSING, WE HAVE NOTED the reports of several regional editors who called attention to special projects which have made unique contributions to the waning populations of a number of species.

How can you save a species that is threatened by automobile traffic? Sounds like a question for a mammalogist, not an ornithologist. But in Hawaii the Division of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have joined hands to establish "shearwater aid station" to try and stop the slaughter of the threatened Manx Shearwater on the coastal highways of Kauai. The project succeeded above all expectations according to regional editors R. L. Pyle and C. J. Ralph.

Young Manx leaving the nesting burrows in the inland mountains must cross lighted highways to reach the sea and often perish in the process. So, eight aid stations were established at county fire houses and a shopping center. With the aid of extensive newspaper and radio publicity, many residents brought fallen shearwaters to the aid stations. From the end of September to early December, 867 live shearwaters were processed.



**Kimberly Smith**

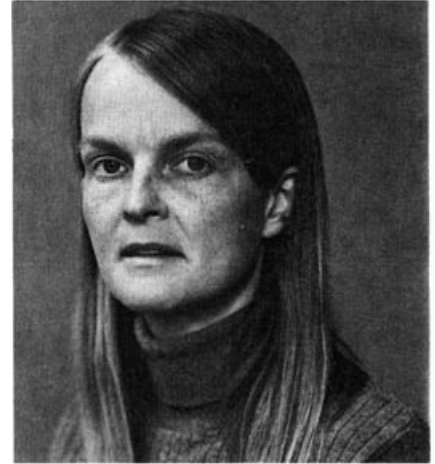
Kim is completing a Ph.D. program in Biology-Ecology at Utah State University. An avid birdwatcher, his research interests have been mainly in avian community studies and bird migration. Current interests included avian resource partitioning within seral stages in the subalpine of Utah, Blue Jay invasion of western United States, and *Catharus* thrush migration across the United States in Fall. He is also currently a research associate at Manomet Bird Observatory.

However, more than 200 dead shearwaters were still counted on the highways.

Efforts of the Minnesota Bobwhite Quail Society, the Peregrine Project and the Whooping Crane Substitute Parent program have been previously mentioned. Operation Bluebird, the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation and the Lake Keystone Bald Eagle Sanctuary warrant similar attention, as probably do other projects left unmentioned by regional editors.

Operation Bluebird at Warren, Pennsylvania fledged 475 Eastern Bluebirds this past summer. Unfortunately, that was 40 per cent below earlier years. The Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation in the Ontario Region received the lowest number of owls (84) in years. The statistic, according to editor Goodwin, fosters pessimistic speculation on the health of owl populations generally. The Tulsa Oklahoma Audubon Society recently completed a successful fund drive to establish a 102-acre Bald Eagle sanctuary at Lake Keystone. At least 60 eagles winter at that location.

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**Ann Schimpf**

Ann has served as a field editor in the Mountain West Region for the past five years. A journalist by profession, but a biologist in training (B.S. Botany/Zoology, Iowa State University, 1971), Ann has authored a number of freelance environmental magazine articles in addition to her daily work as a staff writer for the Logan Herald Journal. She has authored one book, *This is Ski Touring?*; co-authored another, *Cache Tours*; and published and edited a third, *Cache Trails*.