

The Changing Seasons

A summation and analysis of the effects of "the endless winter" of 1981-82 on the birdlife of North America

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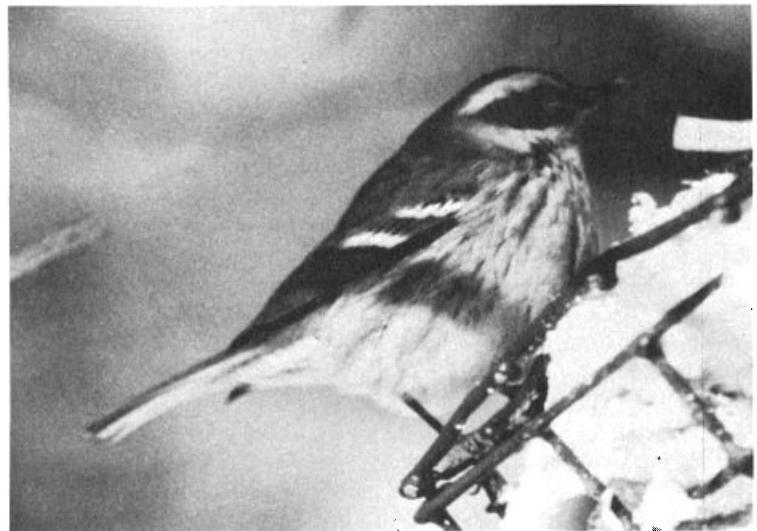
ANALYSES OF short-term trends in North American avifauna during the winter months are primarily concerned with one aspect: survival. How did adverse weather conditions affect survival of bird populations across the continent? Did the bitter cold weather of the northern states and southern Canada result in high mortality of species sensitive to inclement weather? What was the effect of torrential rains on the West Coast? Subsequent "Changing Seasons" reports may reveal answers, perhaps from sources such as Breeding Bird Censuses or Surveys or the various Atlas projects which are currently under way across the continent. It remains to be seen if the general impressions of eastern and northern reporters are borne out—that populations of several species were substantially reduced this past winter.

It is generally acknowledged that severe weather causing hardships among various species is a short-term agent; it may cause temporary setbacks to those species expanding or attempting to consolidate their ranges. However, it is long-term trends which give us the actual picture of what a species is doing. A particularly harsh winter may reduce populations to low levels, but most passerine species can rebound from low populations, given high breeding success and/or low winter mortality. If winters are becoming colder on a long-term basis, then certain species are obviously in for a period of range contraction. Certainly the vast amount of food supplied each winter at bird feeders helps some birds survive during spells of inclement weather; one can guess at several species—Cardinal is probably one of the best examples. Perhaps

northern species are encouraged to winter farther north because of food at feeders; juncos and Tree Sparrows, for example. Possibly selection pressures are being constantly applied to populations at the fringe of a species range, such that different genotypes will be selected for withstanding inclement weather; such an area seems ripe for investigation.

As stated weather is all-important in any winter season analysis; therefore, what was the winter of 1981-1982 like? It started on a mild note. Early December was relatively warm across much of the continent, inducing many migrants to linger somewhat later than normal and thus appear on Christmas Bird Counts. Winter, however, started in earnest east of the Rockies during mid- to late December, and it turned bitter cold. Doug Kibbe's graphic comments on the

weather in the Niagara-Champlain reflect what many others felt, that it was a "long, grim, dull, cold, snowy winter" with severest weather coinciding with most weekends! A bitter January set record cold levels in the Hudson-Delaware Region; it was possibly the coldest winter in modern times in the Appalachian Region, below-normal temperatures occurred in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, there was one of the coldest-ever spells in mid-January in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region; this same cold spell reached into Florida. Ontario and Quebec experienced long, unabated, very cold conditions from December into mid-February with no significant mild periods. The Western Great Lakes Region also experienced extreme cold—as Kim Eckert puts it, "the extremes of cold and snow simply defy description for a family



Townsend's Warbler, Durham, N.H., Dec. 7, 1981. Photo/Elisabeth Phinney. See Northeastern Maritime Region.

magazine " The Prairie Provinces dared to start out as mild, but had a rude, frigid awakening in late December. The Middlewestern Prairies suffered bitter cold and excessive precipitation, with record-low temperatures being commonplace. The Southern Great Plains suffered record low temperatures in January; even South Texas did not escape the cold, with record lows reported inland and on the Gulf Coast. The Central Southern Region seemed to be a bit of a haven from the extreme cold, although even here a severe cold front passed through in mid-January. The West escaped the extremes of cold, although the average January temperature at Whitehorse in the Yukon was 12°C below normal. In fact it was a relief to read that *no* record low temperatures were set in Alaska. The Rocky Mountain states and provinces experienced bountiful snow and cold, in contrast to the relatively balmy winter of a year ago. The Pacific Coast was a mixed bag of weather conditions; heavy rains in the Hawaiian Islands and torrential rains in northern California, whereas southern California reported a mild winter with below-average rainfall.

One gets the picture. A winter of long unbroken periods of bitter cold east of the Rocky Mountains, heavy snows in the Northeast across the prairies to the mountains and the Northwest, and rains along the middle Pacific coast area. A mere handful of areas on the continent reported mild and/or "normal" weather conditions.

EFFECT OF THE WEATHER ON SPECIES POPULATIONS

Loons, Grebes and Herons

LOONS AND HORNED GREBES were reportedly scarce in the Hudson-Delaware Region, where an immature Great Egret was a victim of cold weather, evidently severely frostbitten. Loons, however, seemed in normal numbers in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. There is growing concern in the East over the scarcity of Horned Grebes: in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, it is suggested that high mortality was caused by adverse weather conditions grounding large numbers of migrating Horned Grebes onto glare ice (such as along highways). Perhaps the inclement weather drove numbers farther south along the Atlantic coast,

since numbers in North Carolina were reported as higher than during the last two winters. The population of Horned Grebes wintering in the West appears to be faring better. Brown Pelicans were noted as starving to death in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region, attributable to the cold, although elsewhere the species fared much better. Herons were reported in low numbers, for whatever reason. One might have predicted that the extreme cold would have driven species such as Great Blue Heron south into more southerly latitudes; no unusually large numbers were reported from Florida or the Central Southern Region. Great Blue Herons suffered losses in Washington state, apparently because of freeze-up.

Waterfowl

ONE WOULD PREDICT that the deep freeze would force waterfowl to leave the northern regions and to concentrate in the South or to congregate at the few areas of open water. The latter case occurred in the Hudson-Delaware Region, where Canvasback, scaup and Common Goldeneye were in good numbers. Paxton, however, draws attention to the fact that a traditional wintering place for thousands of Ruddy Ducks in the lower Delaware River valley seems to have become completely defunct; only a scattering remain where 20,000 wintered a few years ago. The location of a new wintering area, if it exists, is being searched for. Duck populations do not seem to be doing too well in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region; American Wigeon especially were low in numbers, probably not as a result of the weather but more likely the loss of food resources in Chesapeake Bay. If the cold did force large numbers of waterfowl south, they were not to be found in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region or in Florida. Open water along the St. Clair River between Michigan and Ontario hosted 7000 Redheads and 5000 Canvasbacks, high totals for mid-February. Similarly, a concentration of diving ducks on Lake Ontario near Rochester held 5000 Greater Scaup, 2000 Oldsquaw and 3-5000 White-winged Scoters.

In the center of the continent, Common Goldeneyes were reported as being down in numbers in Michigan; perhaps they had moved farther south into the Middlewestern Prairie Region where

they were "well reported" The cold weather may have forced both Canvasbacks and scaup south to the southern Gulf regions; one-half million reported in Louisiana is encouraging. It is difficult to determine if low numbers of most wintering waterfowl in South Texas were due to the winter cold pushing the birds south into Mexico or the lure of new grain plantings in northeastern Mexico. In either case, numbers were low. In Utah, the January total of 16,532 was one-fifth of the previous winter's low count; perhaps the birds had moved to the west as Washington and Oregon hosted high numbers of Mallards, American Wigeon and Redheads. High numbers of waterfowl were in northern California; the abundance of water from torrential rains provided abundant habitat for many species.

Raptors

ACCIPITERS WERE WIDELY reported across the continent. Possibly in the case of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks, the inclement weather forced small birds to concentrate at feeders, thus the Accipiters haunted feeders more frequently and were more conspicuous (but see Kibbe's comment on the distribution of weekend birders!) A remarkable suet tray in Pennsylvania was visited by three Turkey Vultures, three Red-shouldered Hawks and three Red-tailed Hawks during excessively cold weather in January! Amherst Island in eastern Ontario produced dead Short-eared, Long-eared and Saw-whet owls, and three Screech Owls coming down chimneys suggest searching for warmth. Barn Owls suffered severely in Idaho and eastern Oregon, with many found dead, and there were reports of attacks on unusual prey (*e.g.*, California Quail). In general, however, birds of prey seemed to have survived the winter remarkably well; certainly, raptors in some areas were the highlights of the birding season.

Other non-passerines

BOBWHITE WERE REPORTED as being down in numbers in the East and north-central United States and in Ontario. They undoubtedly suffered in areas of intense cold where the ground was covered by snow and ice, although the species then is quiet and clumped in coveys, as LeGrand points out. Be-

cause the species was reported in low numbers or absent in several areas, this may afford us a good opportunity to correlate general impressions of a species' status in winter with information on distribution and abundance during the spring and summer.

Ring-necked Pheasant may be declining on the northern edge of its range, as in Ontario, possibly owing to successive severe winters, and Turkeys probably suffered in Vermont. Other gallinaceous birds suffering from the weather included California Quail in parts of Oregon. Otherwise, there was surprisingly little unanimity among regional reporters about which species were hard-hit by the weather. Belted Kingfishers evidently suffered in the Middle Atlantic Coast and the Middlewestern Prairie regions, but went without comment elsewhere. No woodpecker species appeared to have suffered. The cold forced a Virginia Rail to a feeder at Amherstburg, Ontario; another Ontario Virginia Rail froze to death at Kingston. Common Snipe wintered successfully in Ontario despite the harsh weather, but a Red Phalarope was less fortunate: it was found exhausted during a heavy blizzard and died later. The cold weather of mid-January that extended into Louisiana was probably responsible for the disappearance of over-wintering hummingbirds; a Black-chinned and two Rufous hummingbirds were found dead in January.

Passerines

IF THERE WAS NO general consensus among reporters about the effect the harsh weather had on non-passerines, the general feeling was that several species of passerines were hard hit. Carolina Wren was mentioned as having suffered from inclement weather across the northern part of its range; both kinglets, Eastern Phoebe, Hermit Thrush and some warblers probably also had their populations substantially reduced. Whether these feelings actually are correct and some bird populations have severely declined awaits breeding census information. In the Florida Region, Stevenson continued his survey of comparative data on population trends; see the first part of his report. It is sufficient to say here that species with below-normal levels of abundance comprised fully 80% of all species surveyed, that these species covered insectivores, frugivores and omnivores (hence, no

single factor is involved), but that the cold weather of this and recent past winters contributed significantly to declines in insectivores. The paucity of birds in Florida is made all the more alarming if one assumes that the intense cold pushed species farther south than normal, and hence areas such as Florida should have reported increases in wintering bird population numbers.

Many reports comment on the disappearance of lingerers and more sensitive species during the January deep-freeze across the continent. However, evidently just as devastating were the rains of the century on the West Coast which probably resulted in severe mortality of some landbirds (both kinglets, Townsend's Warbler, Hutton's Vireo and Winter Wren) and in some way were responsible for large scale movements of some frugivores, primarily thrushes, across northern California.

IRRUPTING SPECIES

Raptors

GOSHAWKS WERE IN GOOD numbers in the East, after a reasonably high fall flight. Rough-legged Hawks staged a minor, if localized, invasion; good counts in New Jersey and excellent numbers in Virginia, but nothing special from the Carolinas south, although one did reach Palm Beach County, Florida. Numbers in Ontario were high in December, but dropped sharply after the intense cold set in in early January, and a similar situation occurred in the Niagara-Champlain Region where Rough-leggeds were "common to abundant" before the cold snap. Rough-leggeds were scarce or in unexceptional numbers across the prairies and in the West except in Illinois, Missouri, and in parts of Idaho where they may have been attracted by the high numbers of jackrabbits.

Gyrfalcon had one of its best years with birds being reported from southern Quebec (many), Pennsylvania (three), Ontario (two in the south, five in the north), Minnesota (probably five individuals), Wisconsin (one), Michigan (two), Idaho (at least 19!), and finally a pale gray individual seen by many in northern California for that state's second record.

Owls followed no consistent trend as a group. Hawk Owl was the owl of the season in many locations. There were five in Quebec, 20 (17 south of their

normal range) in Ontario, two in upstate New York, one in Iowa for that state's first record, and a scattering from Alaska through the Yukon to southern British Columbia. Short-eared Owls were also widely reported; good numbers occurred from New Jersey and western New York down the Atlantic coast (unprecedented numbers in the Baltimore area) and through the Appalachian Region to South Carolina (15 or so individuals) and to Florida (one in Hillsborough County). Elsewhere, the species was widespread in Illinois, the Southern Great Plains and southern Texas, and parts of the West. The Yukon had its second winter record—a bird in Dawson in early December.

Otherwise, northern owls stayed north or were difficult to find. Snowy Owls staged a modest incursion; 15 in the Hudson-Delaware Region were widely scattered, they were fairly evenly distributed across Ontario in low numbers except in traditional areas near Kingston (27 on Wolfe Island in late December), it was an "excellent winter" in Michigan and parts of Wisconsin, 17 were reported in the Middlewestern Prairie Region, and it was reportedly a good year for Snowy Owls in eastern Washington. Elsewhere, Snowy Owls were in very low numbers.

Boreal Owls turned up in Quebec, Ontario, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Alberta, and in Colorado where nesting was confirmed last year. Saw-whet Owls, while traditionally not considered an irruptive species, showed up in reasonably good numbers over a large part of the continent, from Quebec (four records, possibly indicating an overwintering population higher than previously believed) through the eastern states ("one of the better years in a decade" in Maryland) to North Carolina, and from Ontario and Minnesota (exceptional numbers, with 12 individuals at six locations) through the middle-western prairie states (24 were banded near Cincinnati) to Tennessee. Saw-whet Owls also occurred in a few localities from British Columbia to central California. Great Gray Owls were found in reasonable numbers in Ontario (five in the north, four in the southeast) and made a better-than-average showing in the Western Great Lakes Region with one in Michigan, four in Wisconsin, and several in Minnesota. Curiously, southeastern Manitoba, one of the species' strongholds in the last few years, reported very few. Great Gray

Owls were more in evidence in Alberta (Calgary-Sundre area) and the species was reported from southern interior British Columbia to central California in modest numbers.

Shrikes to Nuthatches

THIS WAS EVIDENTLY an invasion year for Northern Shrike; it was common in southern Ontario, the Western Great Lakes Region and the Northern Great Plains. It staged a strong movement across Ohio (14 reports), Illinois (10), Iowa (8), Indiana (7) and Missouri (4) into Nebraska (3 counties), Kansas (2 counties) and Texas (one county). A Northern Shrike caught a goldfinch in mid-air in southern Nevada. A total of 25 Northern Shrikes in the Middle Pacific Coast Region also seemed high.

Chickadees irrupted in the East: the "second big chickadee year in a row" for Black-capped Chickadees in the Northeast south to Delaware. South of there, however, no noticeable flight took place. Unlike last year, a few Boreal Chickadees moved south with the Black-capped Chickadees; for example, there were seven in Carbon County forests in southern Pennsylvania.

Red-breasted Nuthatches irrupted in very large numbers into the Northeast. There were 300 at Octoraro Reservoir, Pennsylvania, alone, and the Princeton CBC had its highest-ever total 162 birds. CBCs in the Middle Atlantic Coast and Appalachian regions reported high or record numbers, but the flight did not extend as far south as last year's, which reached Florida. The source of Red-breasted Nuthatches and of both Black-capped and Boreal chickadees in the East could well have been Ontario, where all three species were scarce in some traditional areas; for example, only two Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported on the Algonquin Provincial Park CBC in contrast to the continent high of 1384 held by the park. Red-breasted Nuthatches were common on the Middlewestern Prairies and parts of the Southern Great Plains, numbers were substantially higher in Arkansas, and birds from last fall's movement were still in evidence in the Yukon. The species was also in invasion proportions in parts of Colorado. In contrast, Red-breasted Nuthatches were scarce in central British Columbia and down the Pacific Coast to central California (with

the exception of the Monterey Peninsula)

Frugivores

SEVERAL AREAS REPORTED incursions of Bohemian Waxwings. The species moved east into Quebec, and for the second successive winter they were present in large numbers in Ontario, actually within a strip of the province from Lake Superior eastwards across the boreal forest to the Ottawa valley and the Kingston area. Michigan witnessed its largest invasion in many years with records from 14 counties, and Bohemian Waxwings were abundant around Duluth, reaching 1000+ in early January. Large numbers occurred on the Northern Great Plains, and individuals appeared in Iowa, Ohio, Nebraska and Pennsylvania. The species moved into the Mountain West Region in early December, into northern Wyoming, and south as the winter progressed at least to Las Vegas, the first southern Nevada record in three years. There was an incursion into the Farmington, New Mexico, area with 650 there in late February. Bohemian Waxwings also staged a widespread invasion through the Northern Pacific Coast Region and appeared in very large numbers in eastern Washington, Idaho, Oregon and as far south as Klamath Falls "where they appear only every 5-10 years", and the Middle Pacific Coast Region.

The Virginia Piedmont held huge numbers of American Robins, attributable to an abundant food crop. A careful estimate in early January gave a minimum of 45,000 at a roost near Amherst. Cedar Waxwings also benefited from the good food crop in the same general area, with two CBCs exceeding 1000 individuals each. The species drew little comment in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region (although 200,000 in the Winston-Salem area is enough to raise the odd eyebrow!). There were large concentrations in the Appalachian Region; 4000 at Roanoke is noteworthy. The numbers of robins wintering in most of the Middlewestern Prairie Region were far fewer than last year but numbers were not high farther south; mid-winter counts of robins in Louisiana were one-sixth of normal, the Southern Great Plains revealed nothing special about robin populations, and in south Texas Clay-colored Robins were reported

more often than American Robins in the Rio Grande Delta. One wonders where they went, or perhaps they were just missed (see Webster's comments in the South Texas Region). In the West, large numbers fed at Russian olive plantings in Washington in early winter. On the coast, the torrential rains evidently caused mass movements of robins. Varied and Hermit thrushes, movements apparently unrelated to abundance of food, such that all lowland areas reported huge numbers. Southern California apparently supported more than usual numbers of both robins and Varied Thrushes, perhaps birds driven south by the rains.

Winter Fringillidae

THIS WAS A BANNER YEAR for redpolls. They invaded practically all provinces and states from Quebec, Ontario, Minnesota and North Dakota south to North Carolina and Illinois. Redpolls appeared in the provinces and western Great Lakes states early and remained abundant throughout the winter. In contrast, the Middlewestern Prairies were invaded primarily in mid-to late January, with one bird reaching as far south as Arkansas, for a fourth state record. The eastern states were not visited in large numbers until February; then an influx occurred sending birds south to Raleigh, North Carolina. The distribution over the rest of the continent was less uniform; the Prairie Provinces and the Mountain West Region reported low numbers, whereas high numbers occurred in the Southern Great Plains, northwestern Canada, central and southcoastal Alaska, Washington, and the Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region.

Hoary Redpoll is reported frequently when Common Redpoll irrupts, and this year was no exception, with Hoaries seen as far south as New Jersey and the Middlewestern Prairies. Ontario alone had 120 reports: 60 of these were at Ottawa where an impressive 25 were banded. Sixty-eight Hoaries were reported across the Northern Great Plains; one in North Dakota provided the state's first photographically-documented record. The proportion of Hoaries to Commons was estimated as 0.5-1:100 in the Niagara-Champlain Region and as high as 10-20:100 in Minnesota.

Pine Siskin also staged an impressive

invasion in parts of the continent. Evidently a movement southwards occurred in the fall and early winter, such that siskins were abundant during winter from the Hudson-Delaware and the Appalachian regions south through the Middle and Southern Atlantic Coast regions, with fair numbers reaching Florida. They were also abundant from the Middlewestern Prairies and the Central Southern region across the Southern Great Plains to the Central Valley and Southern Pacific Coast of California and north throughout the Northern Pacific Coastal Region.

Pine Grosbeak was common in Ontario and appeared in exceptional numbers in the Hudson-Delaware Region, "the greatest invasion since 1972-73" with one flock of 100-120 feeding on multiflora rose in Carbon County, Pennsylvania. The movement did not extend farther south, however; only one county in Ohio reported Pine Grosbeaks. In the West, they were common and widespread from Alaska and northwestern Canada down through central British Columbia to the Mountain West Region.

Red Crossbill did nothing extraordinary. A few flocks ("but not a real invasion") were reported from Quebec and small numbers reached South Carolina and west to the Rocky Mountains, where a flock of 1000 at Fort Collins in January must have been impressive. White-winged Crossbill, on the other hand, was locally outstanding. It outnumbered Red Crossbill over most of the East, and was the "season's champion" in the Hudson-Delaware Region, with a record inundation in upland New Jersey where flocks of up to 600 were reported. White-winged also had an excellent flight into the Middle Atlantic states and good numbers were reported from Vermont and western New York to the western Great Lakes and the Middlewestern Prairies. Elsewhere, the species was reported in small numbers as far south as New Mexico. Perhaps it was not especially numerous in the West because it stayed home in the Northwest; it was reasonably numerous in central and Southeastern Alaska during the winter.

Evening Grosbeak reports indicated that the species was widespread across the continent but nowhere in particularly high numbers, and two regions remarked on its scarcity. At least it was in normal numbers in several areas; the same could not be said for Purple Finch

which was almost universally reported as down in numbers. Comments of regional editors ranged from "scarce" through "surprisingly scarce" to "lowest numbers in recent years", prompting one editor to suggest that it has been displaced by the House Finch. Only in parts of California was Purple Finch reported in good numbers. One wonders if numbers were actually below "normal" (whatever that is) or were below last year's rather high totals (see Petersen and Forster *AB* 35:273). Perhaps we'll know next winter.

POPULATION DYNAMICS

POPULATIONS OF SPECIES are not static; they vary in abundance and distribution over time. Some of the changes are long-term range expansions (or contractions) and consolidations, with attendant increases (or decreases) in actual density. Others are temporary shifts, perhaps most easily correlated to vagaries of the weather. The reader is advised to consult Petersen and Forster's report (*AB* 35:269-278) on their theme of the relationship between weather and time: the differences between short-term fluctuations, often at the periphery of a species' range and influenced by weather, and long term, more permanent trends. It befalls the editor of this report to delve through the mountain of data before him in order to derive some meaningful trends.

Common Loons wintered as far north as Quebec and south to Cape Canaveral, but with no impressive concentrations reported from the East Coast. Similarly, no very large numbers were reported along the West Coast or along the Gulf. One trusts that this means the birds were more uniformly distributed and not that a decline in numbers has occurred. Horned Grebes in the East were in low numbers except off coastal North Carolina, and were evidently scarce on inland lakes although 15 on the Chapel Hill CBC was a record number. Elsewhere the species drew little comment; it was widespread through freeze-up in the Middlewestern Prairies with 100 at Cleveland a noteworthy number, and numbers on inland waters in Arizona seem to be increasing (up to 14 on Lake Havasu during the period). In the West, both Red-necked and Horned grebes were found in above-average numbers on inland localities, usually reservoirs. Otherwise, there

was only a smattering of Red-necked Grebe records

Western Grebes were presumably in normal numbers as few reports even mentioned them. About 3000 covered Lake Mohave in February. The only apparent attempt to separate the two color morphs was made in Arizona, about 2000 on Lake Havasu comprised approximately one-third light morph

Brown Pelican records may give cause for some elation. They were quite common in North Carolina, reported as common up the St. John's River in Florida, and evidently doing well along the Gulf (see early nestings later in this report) with a healthy count of 79 on the Aransas N.W.R. CBC. Cattle Egrets continued to increase in Hawaii; 544 were at Lokoaka Pond in January, a locality near an airport and hence concern about potential threat to air traffic. The Hopewell, Virginia CBC produced a high total of 134 Great Blue Herons, a species reported as being rather scarce in the East and central part of the continent once the deep-freeze set in. Noteworthy Great Egret sightings were of a northward flight of 90 January 1 at Tallahassee, going who knows where, and of a flock of 50+ in December at Phoenix, of all unlikely places! Almost equally unlikely was a flock of 30-40 Snowy Egrets near Phoenix.

Whistling Swans are feeding in inland fields in increasing numbers in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, with thousands in Essex County, Virginia. Armistead notes the growing movement to have a limited hunting season open on them. A few occurred inland in the Carolinas, there was a scattering of records across the Middlewestern Prairies, and unprecedented numbers occurred in eastern Arizona. Trumpeter Swans seem to have held their own in most traditional areas; the midwinter survey in the Yellowstone area showed 1218 which included 266 cygnets, not a bad recruitment rate. However, unusually poor survival occurred among Trumpeter Swans at Cordova, Alaska, where 97 had dwindled to a mere 15 or less by the winter's end.

There may be a growing trend for Canada Geese to overwinter farther north, or at least to remain later. Quebec had many winter observations, for example 100 at Grande-Rivière in January, and a few wintered in extreme southern Ontario, *i.e.* 80 at Fort Erie. Three Western Great Lakes CBCs had record numbers: a total of 52,000 at the

Rochester, Fergus Falls and Allegan CBCs combined. Winter numbers in southern Illinois and western Kentucky peaked in mid-January at 369,000, up considerably from last year. Following the same trend, the Mountain West Region reported higher numbers of wintering Canada Geese. Conversely, the Central Southern Region held very few non-introduced birds. They were reported as being down in numbers in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, perhaps wintering farther north or west.

Snow Geese wintering on the Gulf Coast were in numbers equivalent to last year; a midwinter inventory showed 104,000 birds. The situation on the South Texas Coast is perhaps cause for some concern; Snow Geese were seen flying southward by the thousands in December, presumably to new grain plantings in northeastern Mexico. As noted in past winter reports, this might prove disastrous if they are subject to intense persecution. Brant numbers increased to 104,500 on the Atlantic Coast of Hudson-Delaware, but is still far short of the quarter million of the 1950s. Nevertheless, it is a refreshing sign that the species may be in a recovery phase. Inland grazing seems to be catching on; 5000 fed on winter wheat at Lewes, Delaware, in February.

DUCK POPULATIONS SEEMED higher in a few regions this winter. It would be an encouraging sign if this were a result of a successful breeding season; however, in the East the January freeze concentrated birds in a few highly visible areas of open water. Nevertheless, some species recorded high numbers. The midwinter survey by the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service showed 1500 Gadwall and 22,300 Canvasback in New Jersey and an impressive 447,200 scaup along the Atlantic Coast, one-third above last year's total. The state game agencies of the Central Southern Region reported 84,000 Canvasbacks and two sites in Louisiana held 560,000 scaup. Redheads numbered 7000 along the St. Clair River in mid-February for an encouragingly high count. Also encouraging were the 19,000 at Laguna Atascosa, Texas, after many waterfowl had been pushed south by cold fronts in December; last winter produced very few reports. Puddle duck numbers were reported as high in parts of the Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region; 165,000, mostly Mallards, at

The Columbia N W R , and 100,000 at Crab Creek, Washington are fine totals. Ice formations on Lake Ontario resulted in a notable count of up to 5000 White-winged Scoters at Rochester. The local floodings in California may have dispersed waterfowl; nevertheless, 5500 Ring-necked Ducks and 14,000 Canvasbacks in the Butte Sink in mid-December are noteworthy. One spot in Illinois in late December reported 30,000 Common Mergansers, an exceptional number.

A few species were less common than usual; Common Goldeneyes appeared fewer in number in the East (the lowest in at least 15 years in Michigan). Thus a flock of 1000 at Cornwall, Ontario, in mid-February is noteworthy. There was a general consensus that Harlequin Ducks and both eiders were in smaller numbers. Ruddy Ducks are giving cause for alarm in the East; the reader is directed to Paxton *et al.*'s summary of the situation on the Delaware River and possible causes of the decline there. Some impressive concentrations were reported in the West, primarily in California.

IT WAS A GOOD WINTER for raptors. They were possibly more conspicuous because of the harsh winter, possibly because birders are taking more time to look for them in the right places, or hopefully because several species are actually undergoing population increases, range expansion and/or range consolidation.

Turkey Vulture is wintering increasingly northward, and this year was no exception. There were winter records in Ontario and in interior British Columbia, a roost in Westchester County, New York, and there were a number of records in the Niagara-Champlain Region including one of "several" in Vermont feeding on dead heifers! Black Vultures also appear to be wintering in large numbers at the northern edge of their range, as in New Jersey. An all-time high count of 277 was made at the Rockingham, Virginia, CBC.

White-tailed Kites appear to be still prospering in California and Oregon. Gratifying is the report that the winter roost near Eugene, Oregon, which was temporarily abandoned last winter, was reoccupied on January 3. A White-tailed Kite was at St. Tammany Parish Louisiana, in January, the first record in 90 years. Equally fine was a high count

of 40+ Everglade Kites off the Tamiami Trail. Accipiters seem to be doing well, for the second year in a row; it was a rare CBC in the Hudson-Delaware Region, for example, that missed Sharp-shinned Hawk.

There were some encouragingly high totals of eagles. Bald Eagles especially were well reported across the continent, but with numbers in parts of the Northeast and Tennessee being nothing remarkable. Several regions mentioned counts from midwinter eagle surveys; 986 in Missouri, 298 along the Mississippi River in Iowa, 763 in Central Southern Region, 393 Bald and 54 Golden in Nebraska, and high numbers elsewhere (numbers one-third higher than January 1981 in New Mexico). Some noted the proportion of adults to immatures, for example 150:40 in eastern Montana, 53:59 in Maryland, and an encouraging 3:13 at Lake Harney, Florida.

Marsh Hawks were well reported also; one roost in New Jersey held at least 14, a reflection of the situation in that area, and good numbers were reported particularly in the Western Great Lakes and Mountain West regions. The cotton rat population in west Texas was extremely high (estimated 252/acre), and presumably as a consequence Ferruginous Hawks were abundant there.

Are Merlins wintering in increasing numbers north of their usual range? The reports of Merlins this winter might indicate so, as individuals were reported in the East as far north as Rimouski, Quebec, and in the center of the continent there were five records in Minnesota and the species was unusually well distributed in the Northern Great Plains Region. Although no region recorded exceptional numbers of Peregrines, the species was clearly widespread across the continent, and individuals attempted to winter quite far north, for example two at Winnipeg and one at Nipawin on the Canadian Prairies.

BOBWHITE APPEARED TO BE scarcer in several regions, possibly a short-term effect of weather conditions. Ring-necked Pheasants are not doing well at the northern edge of their range, for example in Ontario and the Niagara-Champlain Region. Indeed, a mortality rate of about 80% was reported in one locality in North Dakota. Gray Partridge followed no discernible trend;

numbers decimated in one spot, elsewhere numbers increasing with attendant range expansion—they evidently have spread across southeastern Minnesota to the banks of the Mississippi River and are spreading into northeastern Nebraska. About 15 Chukar near Billings, Montana, were the first reported in several years. California Quail were decimated by the weather at Malheur, Oregon; the species went unmentioned elsewhere.

Aransas N.W.R. supported 71 adult and two juvenile Whooping Cranes, and the Rio Grande Valley in New Mexico accounted for 13 birds, a reasonable showing. Sandhill Crane reports were about average. However, about 100 were found dead at Cedar Lake, Texas; the cause of death was diagnosed as aflatoxin, which can result from fungal growth on peanuts. The field nearby which contained the peanuts was ploughed following the discovery of the dead birds. Black Rails continue to be reported around the San Francisco Bay area. However, a bit disturbing were the reports of Black Rails being eaten by Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons at the Palo Alto Baylands.

Shorebird records mostly centered around late fall migrants and late lingerers into the winter. A few trends appear discernible, however. Lesser Yellowlegs appear to be wintering in larger numbers north along the Atlantic Coast; 41 on New Jersey's CBCs outnumbered the 35 Greater Yellowlegs reported in the region. Peeps on the Atlantic Coast north of Florida have been determined as Western Sandpipers (*cf.* Phillips *AB* 29:799-805, 1975); there is growing suspicion that Semipalmated Sandpipers also occasionally winter there. As Paxton *et al.* point out, the dilemma will probably not be resolved until specimens, or at least caught individuals, have been examined in the hand. Estimates of abundance of shorebirds wintering on the Gulf Coast are rarely made; therefore the number roosting on Grand Terre Island (a 3-mile long barrier island) is of interest (see the Central Southern Region report). Perhaps similar estimates can be made in the coming years for purposes of comparison.

For many regions, the most exciting group was the Laridae. Glaucous Gulls were reported from virtually all regions south to Florida and the Central Southern Region, and to southern California. The species appears to be increasing in

numbers at inland localities, this year was termed a banner year for Glaucous Gull on the Middlewestern Prairies away from the Great Lakes, and there were several records from the Northern Rocky Mountain-Intermountain Region, from the Southern Great Plains and the Middlewestern Prairies. The Great Lakes also turned up good numbers. Iceland Gulls also appeared in fairly good numbers, with many reported from inland localities. However, the stars of the gulls this winter were two black-backed species. Great Black-backed Gull occurred inland in unprecedented numbers. Evidently it is penetrating ever deeper inland in northeastern Pennsylvania. In Florida, there were ten at Lake Harney; there was one in Tennessee, one at Denver for a second state record, several in Illinois and Indiana (but see Peterjohn's reservations about some of the identifications of inland Great Black-backed), and one at the Duluth dump for a fourth record for Minnesota. They also occurred along the Gulf west to Texas where Galveston Bay's "controversial" black-backed gull returned in adult plumage and was identified as a Great Black-backed, a first for Texas. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are also occurring in ever-increasing numbers. They appeared from Quebec and Ontario down the Atlantic Coast to Florida and inland through the Middlewestern Prairies to coastal Texas. The presence of this gull is becoming almost mundane.

Thayer's Gull is another of the large white-headed Larids which is increasingly reported. Most of the eastern and central regions reported the odd one or two, presumably as birders become more proficient with identifying it. The six at the Duluth dump is an excellent number for that region. Finally, Ring-billed Gull, ever the opportunist, occurred in unusually high numbers in the Southern Atlantic Coast Region where five to ten times the normal number gathered to feed on a major fish kill, a result of the five days of sub-freezing temperatures in mid-January. One wonders how the birds found the kill in the first place.

Barn Owls were reported from several localities, often unfortunately the result of mortality. A bird on the Gaspé in Quebec was road-killed, one of three seen in Vermont and New York was found dead, of two in interior British Columbia one was found frozen, and

eighteen were found dead in southeastern Oregon. Barred Owl appears to be consolidating its range extension into the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia and in eastern Washington. A noteworthy total of Great Horned Owl was the 51 at Moscow, Ontario, in late December. Long-eared Owls also occurred in reasonable numbers, from Quebec City through the Hudson-Delaware Region to the Middlewestern Prairies (30 reports) to Louisiana and the Southern Great Plains. A couple was also found away from regular locations in southern California. Owlers on the St. Michaels, Maryland, CBC turned up a remarkable total of 140 Screech Owls. Otherwise the species attracted little attention. An encouraging record was the occurrence of a Screech Owl in Death Valley, a spot away from any area of normal occurrence in California. Whip-poor-wills were recorded twice north of the species' usual range in the Carolinas.

Red-bellied Woodpecker is still increasing on the northern edge of its range, as in the Hudson-Delaware and the Niagara-Champlain regions. However, a spectacular irruption occurred into Ontario, with no fewer than 60 reported from the Southwest north to Manitoulin and Ottawa, and this in a particularly severe and harsh winter. Feeders clearly kept many of them alive; evidently several were still present at the winter's end. Red-bellieds were also farther north than usual in Michigan and Minnesota, more than ever before in South Dakota, and three reached southeastern Manitoba.

Red-headed Woodpecker was more common than usual in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region; see that report for a suggested correlation between Red-headed Woodpecker numbers and the size of the pin oak acorn crop. Southern Pines, North Carolina, put in a bid for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker capital of the world; 66 were recorded on its CBC. A few more Downy and Hairy woodpeckers were noted in Northwestern Canada than usual, and Downies are thought to be on the increase in the Central Valley, California, after a stretch of lean years. Both Lewis' Woodpecker and Williamson's Sapsucker were numerous around Prescott, Arizona, and a large colony of Lewis' Woodpeckers was reported along the White River in Oregon, an encouraging report for a species potentially in trouble.

HORNED LARK WAS ERRATIC in its distribution; in the East, the Cape May CBC missed it for the first time in 61 years, but there were more than the usual inland in the Hudson-Delaware Region and they were locally common inland in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. The usual northward flight through Ontario was evidently stalled by the cold; an interesting observation was at Prince Edward Point, where in late February the Prairie race was pairing off while the Northern race was flocking on fields. An astounding 50,000 were near Cincinnati in February.

Common Raven was noted in high numbers in Ontario, it put on its best showing in New York this century, and it appears to be slowly increasing along the Appalachian Mountain chain. Blue Jays were abundant in many areas in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, possibly owing to the excellent wild food crop there. Tufted Titmice maintained their recent northward extension into the Niagara-Champlain and Ontario regions, Michigan, and the eastern townships of Quebec, no doubt aided by feeders.

Most comments on wrens in the East were negative; many observers felt the big freeze had severely decimated numbers of both Winter and Carolina wrens, after numbers of both had shown considerable improvement after the cold winters of the late 1970s. One possible note of hope was that numbers of survivors was greater than those following the severe winters of the late 1970s. The Middlewestern Prairies appear to be losing their Bewick's Wren populations, with very few reported this year.

The Eastern Bluebird recovery continues; numbers were relatively high in the Hudson-Delaware and Middle Atlantic Coast Regions and good numbers survived the winter in Kentucky and Missouri. A few evidently wintered at Yankton, South Dakota. Both Western and Mountain bluebirds seemed to be faring well; 256 Westerns on the Medford CBC was double the previous high count there, and 77 Mountains on the Peace Valley CBC was three times the previous high.

Golden-crowned Kinglets put in a strong showing in the West, from Alaska down to California, although the severe winter storms evidently drastically reduced populations along the Middle Pacific Coast Region. Loggerhead Shrike records were few in the Hudson-Delaware Region; the species

is still in low numbers in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. It reportedly held its own in Kentucky and Missouri, and an encouraging 25 reports were made at Rockingham, Virginia. Boat-tailed Grackle was abundant on the New Jersey coast and a few made it inland.

SOME HIGH COUNTS of sparrows were made; for example, 128 Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Cape Charles CBC. Sparrows were very common in Texas, with Lincoln's Sparrow being described as unbelievably abundant. Lapland Longspur was abundant in the Southern Great Plains and Central Southern regions, and scarce northwards across the prairies. Presumably the weather pushed the birds south; 100,000 moved across Rush County, Kansas, in mid-January with the passage of a cold front. Snow Buntings were abundant in the Hudson-Delaware Region only in northeastern Pennsylvania. There were some reasonably-large flocks in interior Maryland, and the species made it to Anastasia Island, Florida, as far south as the species has been found in Florida. Elsewhere the species was common in Ontario, the Niagara-Champlain Region, Michigan and Wisconsin, and it staged one of its strongest movements ever into the Middlewestern Prairies.

LINGERERS

COMMON LOONS LINGERED into December in Minnesota and Manitoba. Late grebes included Horned and Pied-billed in Manitoba and Western at Banff, Alberta. White Pelicans stayed into December in Minnesota, one lingered in Iowa until December 23 and one at Malheur N.W.R., in December furnished the third winter record there.

Many herons lingered well into December in the East, before the extreme cold set in. Great Blue Herons attempted to overwinter in southern Ontario, lingered into December in Minnesota and North Dakota, and occurred in winter at Seward, Alaska, where it is rare. Great Egrets occurred in Malheur N.W.R., for the area's first winter records. White-faced Ibises occurred in unprecedented numbers in Arizona in mid-December. Two Wood Storks in Carlsbad, southern California, in early January were a real surprise, as the species is virtually unknown anywhere in California in winter.

Late waterfowl records included one white-phase and one blue-phase Snow Geese in Ontario, American Wigeon, Wood Duck and Ruddy Duck in Quebec, and a few Blue-winged Teal recorded in mid-winter in the Hudson-Delaware Region, the Western Great Lakes Region and Ontario. A Northern Shoveler attempted to overwinter at Austin, Minnesota, and a Wood Duck at Fort Peck, Montana, on New Year's Day was very late. Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks wintered at Tucson for the third time. Three Hooded Mergansers at Delta Junction provided only the second record, and first in winter, of this species north of the Alaska Range.

More Turkey Vultures than normal were sighted north of their usual wintering range, such as in Ontario, interior British Columbia and the Niagara-Champlain Region. The Red-shouldered Hawk at Klamath Falls lasted out the winter. Probably eight Broad-winged Hawks were reported in Louisiana, for a good winter showing.

A Yellow Rail was at Back Bay, Virginia, in late December, and a Virginia Rail in North Dakota in mid-December was well-described for a first state winter record. The Caribbean Coot reported from Chickamauga Lake, Tennessee, in the Autumn Migration summary (*AB* 36:177) remained through the winter season. Shorebirds lingering on the Atlantic Coast included 21 American Oystercatchers on the Oceanville, New Jersey, CBC, four Lesser Yellowlegs on Long Island CBCs, and both dowitchers in January in the Hudson-Delaware Region. Six Least and two Western sandpipers and 800 Dunlin in mid-December in Virginia are noteworthy late records, as was a Wilson's Plover in early February in North Carolina. A Spotted Sandpiper in early January at Toronto was very late, were Killdeers at Pickering in mid-January and at Manitoulin in mid-February overwintering birds or early migrants? The Middlewestern Prairies reported several shorebirds lingering into December, including an amazing Wilson's Phalarope near Columbus in early December. The Mountain West Region also held several species, 14 in all, where normally only Killdeer and Common Snipe are seen. Lake Havasu, Arizona, produced a late Semipalmated Plover in December and a Snowy Plover (rare and irregular in winter) in January, and first winter records of Semipalmated Plovers were made at two spots

on Vancouver Island Mountain Plovers again wintered in southeastern Arizona, and up to 75 occurred all winter in Yolo County, an area where they were formerly reported more regularly. The south end of Salton Sea produced a number of excellent winter shorebird records: a Lesser Golden Plover (of the Eurasian form *fulva*) for only the second inland record, a Ruddy Turnstone for the first inland record in winter, and a Pectoral Sandpiper for the first winter record in California and one of the very few winter records in North America.

Forster's Terns lingered in large numbers in Delaware; there were 350 at Henlopen S.P., in mid-December. These were presumably pushed south by harsh weather. A Common Tern at Barnegat, New Jersey December 13 was extraordinarily late, and a Common Tern in the Lower Puget Sound area, two Royal Terns at Back Bay, Virginia, seven Caspian Terns at Yuma, and a Black Tern in Florida, all in December, were all tardy.

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo in South Carolina in early December was at least six weeks late. White-throated Swifts commonly winter in the El Paso area; this year particularly large groups comprising 300 birds were seen foraging above water areas on warm afternoons. A Black Swift on November 29 at Año Nuevo, California, is noteworthy; the species is unrecorded in California in winter. Vaux's Swifts continued last year's trend of occurrences in northern California; numbers this winter surpassed all previous records. An amazingly late Ruby-throated Hummingbird spent the entire winter at a feeder in Newport News, Virginia. A female *Archilochus* hummingbird was late in departing Beaufort, North Carolina, before mid-December, and several hummingbirds attempted to overwinter in Louisiana. Three were found dead during the January cold spell. Two Buff-bellied Hummingbirds were also present during the winter in Louisiana. Four Black-chinned Hummingbirds wintered in southern California; until recently there was but one winter record for the state. A Common Nighthawk was well seen at Port Charlotte, Florida, in mid-January.

An Eastern Kingbird in Florida in February is noteworthy. A Gray Flycatcher at Rodeo was the first winter report for New Mexico, and two Western Flycatchers in northern California were also notable. Southern California

escaped the rigors of the winter, possibly as a result groups such as flycatchers were well recorded. Impressive were the following: Western Kingbird, and Ash-throated, Least, Hammond's, Western, Coues' (for the third straight winter), and Vermilion flycatchers.

A Barn Swallow at Virginia Beach in early January was noteworthy, as were both Rough-winged and Barn swallows in northern California. House Wrens wintered in the Texas Panhandle for the first time, and they were reported farther north than usual up the Sacramento Valley. A Short-billed Marsh Wren was taken in New Mexico, for a first specimen for the state. A Bewick's Wren wintered on the Farallons, for a second island record. A Townsend's Solitaire was present in December in Anchorage. A Swainson's Thrush in Hull in mid-December was Quebec's latest ever, and Wood, Gray-cheeked and Swainson's in southern Ontario were unusual. Manitoba recorded its first wintering Hermit Thrush. Five Sprague's Pipits gave California its first winter records.

Warblers lingering into December and/or early January included a Common Yellowthroat and Canada Warbler in Quebec, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) in Alaska, Wilson's in New York, a Blackburnian in eastern Ontario for a provincial latest, Cape Mays in the Appalachian Region, Palms in the Appalachian Region and on a Michigan CBC, Magnolia in Illinois, Black-throated Blue in Kentucky, Yellow-throated in Ohio, Black-and-whites in Utah and in New Mexico, a Northern Waterthrush in New Mexico for a first winter record for the state, Wilson's and Nashville in Oregon, and Wilson's in Washington. Long-distance tropical migrants included a Northern Parula at Cape May and a Blackpoll on a New Jersey CBC. A Chestnut-sided and a Northern Parula wintered at Tucson. Twelve Yellow-breasted Chats in the Hudson-Delaware Region is a good number; two survived at feeders well into the winter. A Yellow-throated Warbler turned up at a Billings, Montana, feeder for a first state record; it met an untimely end on January 4, when it fell prey to a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

A Summer Tanager at a Clemson feeder during January established a first winter record for South Carolina away from the coastal counties, and one at Prescott represented the farthest north the species has wintered in Arizona.

Other tanagers included a Scarlet in New York, and a Hepatic in California for the fifth winter in a row. Individual Indigo Buntings were at a Peterborough, Ontario, feeder to December 27, and near Laurel, Maryland, to February 15. A Lazuli Bunting was reported at a Sacramento feeder, and an adult male Painted Bunting wintered near Annapolis, Maryland. A Blue Grosbeak was at Warren, Virginia, in late December. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported in January at two spots in Quebec and at a Jamestown feeder in New York, and a Black-headed Grosbeak at a Livingston feeder provided Montana with its first winter record. Noteworthy sparrow records included Savannah and Chipping in Quebec, Clay-colored in Georgia, Savannah, Chipping and Field in eastern Ontario, a Lincoln's on a Minnesota CBC, a Chipping in South Dakota for a first state winter record, and a Grasshopper in Oregon also for a first state winter record.

PELAGICS

THE HARDY WHO ENDURE the often nasty conditions on the ocean in winter have accumulated data which, once synthesized, will give a much better picture of the distribution and abundance of pelagic birds during this season. At present our understanding of the occurrences of pelagic birds is in its infancy; thus, some of the records now thought to be unprecedented may later be found to be routine.

Northern Fulmars had a good year off California, peaking between January and mid-February; up to 50 off the southern coast showed how relatively numerous they were. Northern Fulmars were also in evidence off the Northern Pacific Coast Region; 20 off Tillamook in December was a good number. Dark-phase fulmars were reported off Vancouver Island and in the straits of Juan de Fuca. A Sooty Shearwater off Washington in December was late. California birders were treated to Pink-footed, Flesh-footed, New Zealand, Short-tailed and Manx shearwaters and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels for an impressive array of tubenoses. A Mottled Petrel was seen from shore in late December for a third Southern Pacific Coast regional record. As usual, a number of tubenoses were found dead; northern Oregon beaches revealed Short-tailed

Shearwaters and Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, and a Leach's Storm-Petrel was found dead in Hawaii.

Gannets created a stir in the East, from Quebec where one was diving off Quebec City on Christmas Day, to off Maryland where 1775 were counted on one pelagic trip in February, many of which were "thermalling in a kettle like Broad-winged Hawks", and off Florida where probably the largest concentrations ever recorded for the state were made off Cape Canaveral (e.g., 3000 February 14).

Parasitic and Pomarine jaegers were noted off North Carolina during December; LeGrand comments that jaegers do not regularly winter off the coast of the Southern Atlantic Coast Region, but simply linger into December, presumably while some Larids that can be kleptoparasitized also linger. A few Pominines were also spotted off Florida in February; would these be northward returning birds rather than overwinterers? A Pomarine at St. Croix, West Indies, and an immature found dead on South Padre Island, Texas, were noteworthy, as were the six Parasitics found 20 miles off Port Aransas. On the Pacific Coast, Parasitics were seen in December off Oregon and Washington, and two Pominines had returned by late February off Washington. A Great Skua was well seen off Ocean City in mid-February during one of the pelagic trips.

Black-legged Kittiwakes occurred along the Atlantic Coast from Quebec south past Ocean City (328 on a mid-February pelagic trip) to Cape Hatteras (one on that area's CBC), a few along the Gulf, and moderate numbers off California. However, there were some remarkable inland records: Orange County, New York, Harvey's Lake, Pennsylvania (via an overland route from the Great Lakes?), several on the Great Lakes, two immatures in Iowa, an adult at Dayton, Ohio, following a severe storm, an immature at Garrison Dam, North Dakota, for the second year in a row, one at Lake Livingston, Texas, and New Mexico's first verified record at Bosque del Apache N.W.R.

Razorbills staged an excellent showing off the Maryland coast, and an oiled bird turned up at the jetty at Ocean City in late February, but it was an "off year" for Alcids on the North Atlantic Coast. Two Thick-billed Murres were present in Monterey Bay for the first in four years. Common Murres appeared to be more numerous in southern California;

150 off Orange County was indicative of their abundance. Three Xantus' Murrelets off Monterey were identified as *scrippsi*. A fascinating report was of a possible Marbled Murrelet at Lake Munroe, Indiana; the bird was killed by a fisherman and the skin sent to the U.S. National Museum in Washington for verification.

VAGRANTS

Western birds east.

Western Grebes occurred in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and in Alabama for a fourth state record. An Eared Grebe at Rocky Point, North Carolina, provided a rare inland find. White Pelicans were reported at several spots in the Middle and Southern Atlantic Coast regions. The frequency of extralimital reports of this species has increased in the last few years; one wonders where they are coming from. A Ross' Goose turned up in Virginia for a first state record, and others were reported in Maryland and North Carolina (Bodie Island as well as the more traditional Pea Island site). One reported in Minnesota was considered most likely a Ross' x Snow Goose hybrid. Two Brant (race?) in Arizona were noteworthy, and Cinnamon Teal wandered to Florida and Louisiana.

A California Gull returned to New York for the fourth consecutive winter. A possible Lesser Nighthawk was reported in Florida. Also in that state Vaux's Swifts again roosted in a chimney on the Florida State University campus at Tallahassee, up to 16 being counted. A White-throated Swift appeared in Arkansas, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds continue to be reported in Louisiana. A Wied's Crested Flycatcher identified by both sight and sound was at the Everglades National Park in December, and the park also turned up Vermilion Flycatchers on two occasions. Say's Phoebe occurred in New York, and Black-billed Magpies wandered east to southern Ontario. However, a Mexican Jay in Wisconsin was thought to be an escape. Townsend's Solitaires were found in Quebec and Minnesota, for a rather poor showing east of the Great Plains. Varied Thrushes were noted in New York, Ontario, the Great Lakes States and the Middlewestern Prairies.

Black-throated Gray Warblers found their way to Florida, for the only ex-

tralimital western Parulid reported. A few Western Tanagers were reported—an annual event of recent years. However, another traditional western wanderer, the Black-headed Grosbeak, was conspicuous by its total absence. One in Michigan was the only one reported. Lark Sparrows occurred at several spots (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland), for a reasonably good showing, and Harris' Sparrows wintered at two sites in New York; the species is not yet reported annually there. The bird of the winter season in Ontario was a Golden-crowned Sparrow near Brighton, for a first provincial record.

Eastern birds west

GREEN HERON and Great Egret were noteworthy sightings in Hawaii. Also in the same state were six Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, for a first on the islands. Three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (subspecies *varius*) were found in southern California. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was in Vancouver, for a second British Columbia record. Traditionally eastern warblers in the West are almost routine nowadays: 29 Palm in California and 24 Tennessee (one in Oregon, 23 in California) show how relatively common these species are in winter. Black-and-white, Worm-eating, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Grace's, Bay-breasted and Mourning (both for first winter records for California), Northern Waterthrush, and Painted Redstart were some of an impressive array of easterners (excluding Grace's) which graced the Southern Pacific Coast. Eight Rose-breasted Grosbeaks was perhaps above average in California where they apparently outnumber Black-headed Grosbeaks in winter. Five Swamp Sparrows in Oregon and one on Vancouver Island were noteworthy.

Northern birds south

A YELLOW-BILLED LOON was discovered in Colorado, for a new state record, and five in California was an excellent showing. Arctic Loons were inland in Texas; the one photographed at Austin qualified as the second documented state record. One in Hawaii also represented a second state record. Great Cormorants staged a mini-invasion of the Central Southern Region where eight individuals were

seen A Snow Goose strayed as far south as Collier County, Florida, and Common Eiders appeared in Florida, one being counted as the second acceptable record for Florida's Gulf Coast. An Ivory Gull was in Quebec in early January, and another visited Saratoga Springs, New York in mid-January. Dead Red-legged Kittiwakes were found at two places in Oregon, the first since 1955. A Great Gray Owl at Seeds-kadee Refuge in the Mountain West Region was particularly far south along the Rocky Mountain chain.

Southern birds north

FOUR ANHINGAS were unprecedented at Stumpy Lake, Virginia. A Mangrove Cuckoo on the Bolivar Peninsula furnished the first documented record for Texas. A Ground Dove in Illinois made an exceptional record. A Broad-billed Hummingbird in northern California represented the farthest north in North America that this species has occurred. The Yellow-throated Warbler which showed up in Montana was an amazing occurrence, as was the report of a Lesser Goldfinch in Pennsylvania. Equally exciting was the Green-tailed Towhee which spent two months at a farm in southern Manitoba.

Palaearctic and Neotropical birds to the Nearctic

A POSSIBLE BEWICK'S SWAN was at Ocean City; see, however, the cautionary note on the difficulty of separating Bewick's from Whistling Swan by the amount of yellow on the bill in the Middle Atlantic Coastal Region's report, but also note Evans and Sladen's analysis (*Auk* 97:697-703) of bill coloration and patterning in these two swan species/subspecies. [Species merged as Tundra Swan in forthcoming 6th Edition A.O.U. Check-list]. A Barnacle Goose was reported in Ontario and three turned up in the Hudson-Delaware Region; readers should pay careful note to the discussion in the Hudson-Delaware Report on whether these birds were wild or not. The take-home message for such species commonly kept in captivity is that there is no unequivocal way to be sure that unmarked birds are genuine vagrants. Eight Emperor Geese in northern California was a good number. Eight Eura-

sian Wigeon were above average in the Hudson-Delaware Region, and in southern California 15 among American Wigeon in Riverside County furnished a high count. Two were in North Carolina and one was in Alabama for a third state record. Two female Tufted Ducks spent the early winter on Central Park Lake, New York City, a male was in Washington, and a male in Oregon for a second or third record. A Smew in California represented one of few records for the Pacific Coast south of British Columbia. A family group of Hook-billed Kites was at Bensten-Rio Grande Valley all winter. Caribbean Coots were reported in Tennessee and twice in Florida; the reader is advised to read Stevenson's comments on this species and to note that there is considerable variability in frontal shield size in American Coots. Little and Black-headed gulls were recorded in small numbers from Quebec along the Atlantic Coast to North Carolina, and in the Great Lakes area. A Black-headed Gull at Lake Livingston in Texas was a good find, one in southern California provided only the fourth record there, and one in Oregon represented a first state record.

A Rose-throated Becard occurred at Big Bend National Park, where it is listed as hypothetical. A Coues' Flycatcher in Los Angeles could have been the same bird present there during the last two winters. Green Jays continued to persist in northern Texas; three birds were present at Keene in February. There were several reports of Clay-colored Robins in the Rio Grande Delta, a minimum of six birds, for a good showing of this Mexican species. The Rufous-capped Warbler found on a Texas CBC was seen subsequently by dozens of birders. Two Bananaquits were at Palm Beach on Boxing Day, [December 26 to the non-British] and Tucson hosted two Streak-backed Orioles. A pair of Blue Buntings in Texas increased the number of occurrences of this Middle American species to North American to four. A Brambling appeared in Seattle for a first Washington record.

EARLY SPRING ACTIVITIES

THE ADVENT OF WARMER weather in February resulted in the vanguard of spring migrants appearing in the East, and the onset of breeding activities of some early nesters. A Common Gallinule in Virginia may have been an

early migrant. Selected early arrivals were Whistling Swans in Illinois, American Woodcock in Iowa, and Greater Sandhill Cranes in Oregon. An Eastern Phoebe arrived at Ithaca in late February. Tree Swallows flocked into North Carolina and Purple Martins arrived earlier in Tennessee and across the Southern Atlantic Coast Region. Pine Warblers were singing in Virginia before the period ended, a sign of spring in that area. Bald Eagles were active about nests as far north as the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, Brown Pelicans were nesting in Louisiana until severe January weather destroyed all nests, however, re-nesting had already started in February, a woodcock's nest was found in Louisiana, Red Crossbills were nesting at Boulder, and Gray Jays were constructing nests in Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario.

POT-POURRI

EDITORS OF THIS REPORT come across some intriguing bits of information; this time was no exception. The Coatsville, Pennsylvania, feeder, already noted, boggles the mind. A Red-breasted Nuthatch took advantage of the warmth of a chimney in Duluth, warming itself "as would a Starling". Two Bar-headed Geese were shot by hunters in Missouri; are they easy targets, does this goose frequently travel the Mississippi flyway? Observers in Hawaii have a task to sort out waxbills, now that careful work has shown that two species occur where only one was presumed to exist. However, pride of place must go to the adult male Ivory Gull at a Saratoga Springs feeder that was fed an elegant fare of roast pork, chicken, and minced clams!

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[Readers will note that the Northeastern Maritime Region is not represented in this analysis; its report was not received in time. Note too that we welcome our first Changing Seasons summary by a Canadian author.—Ed.]

