

**STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS  
USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS**

**Abbreviations used in  
place names:**

In most regions, place names given in  
italic type are counties.

**Other abbreviations:**

Cr	Creek
Ft.	Fort
Hwy	Highway
I.	Island or Isle
Is.	Islands or Isles
Jct.	Junction
km	kilometer(s)
L.	Lake
mi	mile(s)
Mt.	Mountain or Mount
Mts.	Mountains
N.F.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
Pt.	Point (not Port)
R.	River
Ref.	Refuge
Res.	Reservoir (not Reservation)
S.P.	State Park
W.M.A.	Wildlife Management Area

**Abbreviations used in the  
names of birds:**

Am.	American
Com.	Common
E.	Eastern
Eur.	European or Eurasian
Mt.	Mountain
N.	Northern
S.	Southern
W.	Western

**Other abbreviations and symbols  
referring to birds:**

ad.	adult
imm.	immature
juv.	juv. or juvenile
sp.	species
†	means that written details were submitted for a sighting
*	means that a specimen was collected
♂	male
♀	female
CBC	Christmas Bird Count

# THE WINTER SEASON

December 1, 1991–February 29, 1992

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# ATLANTIC PROVINCES REGION

Ian A. McLaren

More than two decades ago on these pages, Ruth Emery coined the phrase "Scotia shadow" to epitomize the phenomenon of migrants routinely caught by winter in Nova Scotia, but which should otherwise be wintering in southern New England or beyond. If we throw in fall reverse migrants and western strays, it seems that both Nova Scotia and the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland and the Atlantic provinces indeed. There were deep snows and sustained cold in the Maritimes, somewhat less severe in insular Newfoundland. Despite this, a few "softer" waterbirds and shorebirds remained into the new year, and excellent wild food crops, particularly dogberry and mountain ash (*Sorbus* spp.) sustained landbird laggards, including hordes of American Robins, through harsh weather. A near-record snowfall in early February (5 feet in Moncton, New Brunswick) set off much winter movement of birds. Winter finches put on their best show in years. Outstanding finds included Tufted Ducks in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, an apparent Swainson's Hawk and a first confirmed Mountain Bluebird in Nova Scotia, a dozen warbler species, and a Western Meadowlark in New Brunswick. Reporting was excellent from all quarters. As usual, use is made of "unofficial" Christmas Bird Counts that will not appear in *American Birds*.

**Abbreviations:** S.P.M. (*Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*). Place names in *italics* are counties.

## LOONS TO WATERFOWL

The only post-CBC Pied-billed Grebe was Mahone Bay, NS, through mid-January. Two Leach's Storm-Petrels Dec. 29 on the Stephenville, NF, CBC (Andrew Macfarlane) were unusual, but not unprecedented in the Region. Numbers of N. Gannets were seen through late December from Halifax, NS, to Grand Manan, NB, and 15 appeared after SE gales Jan. 24 near Deer I., NB (REI). As usual a few Double-crested Cormorants lingered, including one Dec. 22 at Ferryland, NF (RB), and one Feb. 16 in Halifax, NS (JSC). Brian Dalzell speculates that some now stay through December to prey on scavenger fishes around burgeoning salmon farms in s.e. New Brunswick.

A Great Blue Heron to Jan. 6 (BMct, ST) near Fermeuse was

the latest ever for Newfoundland. Although 27 were on Nova Scotia CBCs, only one was noted through February. A Great Egret and a Little Blue Heron lingered at W. Chezzetcook, NS, to Dec. 1 (BM, JWT). The latter and an imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron Dec. 21 on the Wolfville CBC produced latest records for Nova Scotia.

Last winter's "Lesser" Snow Goose at Yarmouth, NS, has become resident, supporting its origin as an escapee. A few Brant wintered in s.w. Nova Scotia, and 125 staying around Grand Manan I., NB, were augmented by arrivals in mid-February (BD). Among waterfowl in urban parks, sewage ponds, and other organically enriched sites in Nova Scotia (v.o.), were a ♀ Wood Duck in Dartmouth, a ♂ "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal Jan. 29–Feb. 6 near Greenwich, two of this race at Yarmouth, Jan. 20 through February, and a N. Shoveller at Windsor, Dec. 29. Unusual were up to 18 N. Pintails through January near Souris, P.E.I. (v.o.), and two Gadwalls Dec. 27 at Crescent Beach, NS (SF). An unprecedented influx of Eur. Wigeons involved six in St. John's, NF, late November to Dec. 18 (v.o.), three males and three females Dec. 7–16 on Sable Island, NS (ZL), and a male Dec. 24–Jan. 11 in Dartmouth, NS (PP *et al.*).

In Nova Scotia a ♂ Redhead was at E. Lawrencetown Dec. 15 (JSC) and another stayed in Sydney for the 3rd winter. **Tufted Ducks** again made the news (v.o.). Three females in St. John's, NF, Nov. 30–Dec. 18 were followed by two females around Halifax Harbour, NS, Dec. 20 through January, and by a male at Yarmouth, NS, Feb. 18–29. A possible imm. ♀ Greater Scaup X Tufted

Duck was in the flock of scaups and Tufted Ducks near Halifax, 18 Jan. (IAM); such hybrids are known in Iceland. Identifying the Old World race (finer vermiculations) among the region's wintering Greater Scaup would be an instructive challenge. At least four Lesser Scaup wintered in Nova Scotia (v.o.). Large counts of Com. Eiders were ca. 7000 off Cape Spear, NF, Feb. 22 (BMct), 2950 off S.P.M., Dec. 21–22 (Bruno Letourneau), 2400 off Halifax, NS, Feb. 18 (PM), and 1500 on the St. Andrews, NB, CBC. The Cape Spear, NF, flock included 19 ♂ King Eiders (BMct), but Nova Scotia and New Brunswick produced only one or two each. There were 20 Harlequin Ducks on the Cape Race, NF, CBC, and 30 in early February near the Wolves I., s.e. New Brunswick (Peter Hicklin), with disappointing reports of single birds elsewhere in Newfoundland and New Brunswick, one (shot) at S.P.M., and seven in Nova Scotia.

A surprising 238 Black Scoters were on Green Bay, NS, Dec. 28 (JSC), and they were thought to have increased relative to White-winged in s.e. New Brunswick (BD). Provincial totals of Barrow's Goldeneye were five in s.e. Newfoundland, nine in Nova Scotia, 139 on New Brunswick CBCs, and up to 65 in Prince Edward Island. A ♂ Common X Barrow's hybrid was at Cocagne, NB, Dec. 6 (ST) and another was on the N. River, PEI, through February (DS, ph. S. Makepeace; also last winter). Hooded Mergansers have become increasingly more evident in early winter in the Maritimes, and five and seven remained around Halifax, NS, and Saint John, NB, respectively. One to Jan. 20 on West R., PEI, was less routine. A late Ruddy Duck Dec. 15 at Fredericton, NB, was outstayed by a male Jan. 20 at Green Bay, NS (*vide* PP).

## DIURNAL RAPTORS

A **Black Vulture** was sustained on offal at Grande-Anse, NB, until Dec. 2 (v.o.). In Nova Scotia, individual Turkey Vultures wintered on Brier I. and around Wolfville (v.o.). Fifty-two Bald Eagles at Blacks Hbr., NB, gave a CBC high for the province. This year's high count of 144 Bald Eagles in *King's*, NS, was probably incomplete. A record 23 post-CBC Northern Harriers were reported in Nova Scotia. By contrast, Sharp-shinned Hawks were rated scarce in Nova Scotia, but were probably underreported from elsewhere. A well-studied ad. ♀ Cooper's Hawk (†Therese d'Amour) wintered around Kildare, PEI, supplying a first provincial winter record. At least 20 N. Goshawks began winter at the St. John's, NF, dump (BMct), but numbers were rated as average or below elsewhere.



Two Red-shouldered Hawks wintering at Yarmouth, NS (JG *et al.*) continued this trend in the province. For the 5th successive winter imm. Broad-winged Hawks were reported from the Maritimes. December sightings of two on the Moncton, NB, CBC and three in Nova Scotia (v.o., no details) were less surprising than well studied individuals Feb. 18 near Halifax, NS (PM, †Bev Sarty), and 30 mi distant at Chester, Feb. 27 (†JSC). Photographic documentation is clearly desirable. Astonishing was an apparent near-adult, light-morph **Swainson's Hawk** closely studied at rest and in flight in Halifax, NS, late afternoon Feb. 15 (†PM). Although vigorously sought, it remained elusive until reported Feb. 23 by a caller to a nature-store "feeder line," unaware of the earlier sighting, who described her field-guide match to an "adult, light-phase" bird Feb. 23 being harassed by crows on her property! Finally, it was again studied (PM) Feb. 29 in heavy rain, preceding a punishing stretch of cold weather. Sightings were along 1.5 mi of railroad right-of-way, margined by woods and scrub. Sceptics might recall 2 winter sightings for s. New England (1971, 1973), and an immature banded in September 1988 in New Jersey and found dead next spring in Nova Scotia.

Wintering Rough-legged Hawks were slightly more common than usual in Nova Scotia, but less so elsewhere. The traditional ad. Golden Eagle wintered around Shepody Mt., NB (v.o.), and another was reported in mid-December near Letete, NB (REI). Only six post-CBC Am. Kestrels and two Merlins were reported from Nova Scotia, none elsewhere. Two December Peregrine Falcons in s.e. Newfoundland and one on S.P.M. Dec. 7 were unusual (v.o.). The breeding tercel of Saint John, NB, again wintered. A falcon that titillated non-birders through winter with spectacular Rock Dove kills in Halifax, NS, was finally diagnosed (ELM) as an imm. ♀ *anatum*; another wintered on Sable I, NS (ZL). Presumably all wintering birds are of this race. In Newfoundland, a record six Gyrfalcons wintered in the St. John's area (v.o.), and were "in good numbers" near St. Anthony as well (*fide* BMct). In New Brunswick, two wintered around Moncton (v.o.) and another on Grand Manan I. (BD *et al.*).

#### PARTRIDGE TO ALCIDS

Gray Partridge are in serious decline in Nova Scotia, with only 100+ remaining in their *King's* stronghold (NS Dept. Natural Resources). Small numbers persist on Prince Edward Island (*fide* DM). Ruffed Grouse were in above-average numbers in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. As usual, an Am. Coot wintered in Dartmouth, NS. A Sora Jan. 4–15 in St. John's, NF (ST *et al.*) supplied a provincial late record.

The usual scattering of shorebirds wintered or attempted to. A Black-bellied Plover was at Renewes, NF, Jan. 9 (BMct *et al.*), and another on Sable I., NS, Jan. 20 (ZL). Late Killdeers were near Kingsburg, NS, Jan 19

(ELM) and on Grand Manan I., NB, Dec. 27 ("less-than-annual," BD). Three Ruddy Turnstones wintered at Carbonear, NF (v.o.). Up to 200 Sanderlings wintered on Sable I., NS, and a few elsewhere in the province. Less usual were one Feb. 23 at Bay Roberts, NF (ST), another Jan. 2 at Grand Barachois, S.P.M. (RE *et al.*), and 15 in early December in s.e. New Brunswick (Andrew Sharkey). The latest Red Knot was at Renewes, NF, Dec. 15 (BMct). Late Com. Snipe included two Jan. 4 at St. Pierre, S.P.M. (Laurent Jackman), one Feb. 12 at Brackley Beach, PEI (Ray Cooke), and four in Nova Scotia, Jan. 2–Feb. 15 (v.o.). Less routine than three Am. Woodcocks in Nova Scotia and one in New Brunswick (all during December) was a bird Jan. 26 at Lockport, NS, "trying to probe in ground . . . rock-solid for at least ten days" (Donna Crosby). A **Red Phalarope** Feb. 21 at the mouth of Halifax Harbour, NS (†FL *et al.*), was unprecedented in the Region at this season.

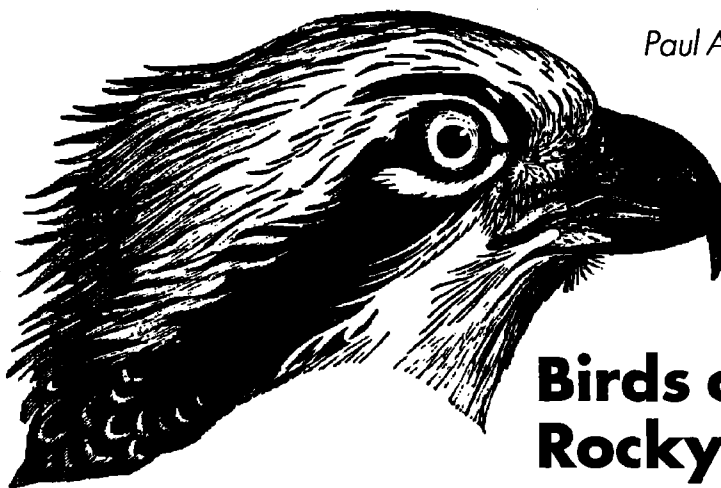
A recently dead Great Skua was found on Sable I., NS, Jan. 23 (ZL); unidentified skuas on the Wolfville, NS, CBC and on Sable Island Jan. 7 (ZL) were presumably this species. Could the "immature" **Franklin's Gull** seen until Dec. 11 at St-Pierre, S.P.M. (*fide* RE), have been the same as the first-winter bird Dec. 15–16 at W. Lawrencetown, NS (†R. Foxall, ELM), which supplied the latest of a handful of Regional records? Two Little Gulls were at Deer I., NB, Dec. 23, one staying to Jan. 5 (v.o.). In Nova Scotia, two

were near Pictou Dec. 6–10 (Harry Brennan *et al.*), and a third Jan. 13 at Grande Anse, *Richmond* (Angus Maclean), produced a Regional late record. The hundreds of Bonaparte's Gulls into early January in s.e. New Brunswick and the few wintering in Nova Scotia were as expected, one at St. John's, NF (v.o.), less so. An adult and two 2nd-winter Mew (Common) Gulls at St. John's, NF, and a single first-winter bird at Dartmouth, NS, were not noted after December. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was at St. Pierre, S.P.M., to Dec. 10 (RE). Three adults wintered in St. John's, NF, where a less obvious first-winter bird turned up Feb. 9 (BMct *et al.*). In Nova Scotia, three adults wintered around Halifax and a 4th near Lockport (v.o.). An ad. **Ross' Gull** and a first-winter Ivory Gull at Cow Head, NF, Dec. 14, were lucky finds for 2 visiting birders (†Ed Mahlin, *fide* BMct).

Sporadic Dovekie "wrecks" through winter in the Maritimes included a major one originating along Northumberland Strait following an early February storm (v.o.) Thirteen dead birds averaged 98.5 g, compared with the normal 150–160 g (DSC).

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

Mourning Doves were in record numbers on CBCs in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, most resoundingly in agricultural *King's*, NS, with almost 1000 on the Wolfville CBC. Two at Miquelon village, S.P.M., to Jan. 10 were pushing the limits. It was clearly a



Paul A. Johnsgard

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**One of two Northern Hawk Owls at Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, in February 1992. The big Hawk Owl invasion farther west barely reached the Maritime Provinces. Photograph/Avan Covert.**

Snowy Owl winter, although fewer remained after December. Reported totals were 20+ in s.e. Newfoundland (and "plentiful" at the northern tip; *fide* BMct), at least six on S.P.M., 12+ in Nova Scotia, four on Prince Edward Island, and 15 on New Brunswick CBCs. Two N. Hawk Owls were found in New Brunswick. In Nova Scotia, which is rarely reached by them, one arriving on Brier I. in mid-December was tolerated after killing several bantam fowl! Another wintered on Pictou I., and two from early December at Tatamagouche showed mating behavior in February. Eruptions of Great Grey Owls also rarely reach Atlantic Canada; a dead bird Oct. 29 at Alberton, PEI (*fide* BD, a provincial first not previously reported), was concrete, but a plausible sighting near W. Lawrencetown, NS, was not detailed. A Short-eared Owl lingered to Jan. 1 on St-Pierre, S.P.M. (RE). About three Boreal Owls were seen on S.P.M. and five around St. John's, NF (v.o.), but only one in Nova Scotia, near Kentville, Feb. 9 (RS).

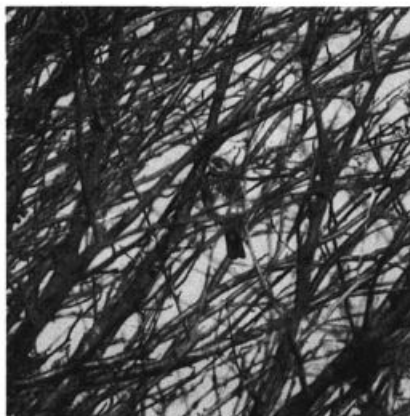
A record 14 post-CBC Belted Kingfishers were noted in Nova Scotia. An imm. ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker around Halifax, NS (v.o.), was the first known to have survived winter in the Region. A record 36 post-CBC N. Flickers were reported from Nova Scotia and ca. 10 were evidently on the move (DSC) in e. New Brunswick Feb. 5 after heavy snows; individuals were not seen beyond mid-December on S.P.M. and Prince Edward Island.

#### SWALLOWS TO WARBLERS

A Tree Swallow Feb. 24 at Musquodoboit Hbr., NS (*fide* R. Dickie), was presumably storm-driven. What do we make of a chickadee that appeared during a Dec. 29 storm at William Boudreau's feeder, Lower Wedgeport, NS, and the similar (same?) bird, again in a storm, Feb. 3 at the Oliver Ross' feeder,

ca. 28 mi s.e. on Cape Sable I.? Both birds had distinct white lines over the eye, but other critical marks were not noted. Unless wildly errant Mountain Chickadees have turned up this winter elsewhere in the east, it seems best to withhold boldface. A **Tufted Titmouse** Dec. 10 in Halifax, NS (†PM), the province's 2nd, could not be relocated. Carolina Wrens continued to consolidate in New Brunswick, with two through winter in Saint John and up to three (one through winter) in Fredericton. A **House Wren** that blundered into a house at Maddox Cove, NF, Jan. 1, was the province's 4th (\* *fide* RB). The only reported post-CBC Winter Wren was on Cape Sable I., NS, in February (Oliver Ross). Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets survived into February in Dartmouth, NS (JWT).

No details are available for a CBC Townsend's Solitaire at Plaster Rock, NB. In Nova Scotia, eight **Eastern Bluebirds** wintering near Canning, and nine near Yarmouth (at least two into February), were unprecedented in the Region. More exciting was a first-winter ♂ **Mountain Bluebird** at Brooklyn, NS, Jan. 27–Feb. 10 (ph., v.o.), providing a 2nd provincial (first confirmed) and 3rd Regional record. A **Swainson's Thrush** at Petite Riviere, NS, in late February (†JSC) contributed a 3rd provincial (and Regional) winter record. A **Hermit Thrush** Jan. 11 at Cape Broyle (BMct) was the 2nd for this season in Newfoundland. At least three post-CBC birds were found in Nova Scotia. A **Fieldfare** in St. John's, NF (ph. BMct) was sighted (v.o.) only 6 times, Dec. 22–Feb. 3. American Robins stayed in large numbers in all 4 provinces, sustained by bumper crops of wild berries. Some 5000–10000 were



**Fieldfare in St. John's, Newfoundland, on January 26, 1992. This elusive thrush was present for more than six weeks but was actually sighted only six times. Photograph/Bruce Mactavish.**

around St. John's, NF, Dec. 20–Feb. 5 (BMct). In New Brunswick, there was a record CBC total of 1441 (on 22/46 counts) and Nova Scotia's 800 (on 22/26 counts) was well above average. The big storm in early February set off much movement, with birds largely leaving St. John's, NF, and appearing in numbers through mid-February in s.e. New Brunswick and especially in Atlantic coastal Nova Scotia, where flocks of hun-

dreds were reported. Very few "black-backed" birds were among those in coastal Nova Scotia. Bruce Mactavish notes that birds in insular Newfoundland, summer or winter, rarely show this putative trait of males from n. Quebec, Labrador, and Newfoundland.

Northern Mockingbirds are increasingly entrenched in the Maritimes, with 20 on New Brunswick CBCs, and 25+ wintering in Nova Scotia. At the fringe were three wintering in St. John's, NF (RB), and one to Feb. 9 at St-Pierre, S.P.M. (RE). Three Brown Thrashers wintered in Nova Scotia, and one at Bristol, NB. A few Am. Pipits were noted to mid-January from s.e. Newfoundland to s. Nova Scotia; one Jan. 19 at Waterside, NB, was the latest ever in the province (DSC). Bohemian Waxwings were more common than usual in n. New Brunswick during December (DSC), but largely appeared after mid-January, in below-average numbers, in s. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and s.e. Newfoundland (v.o.); they too may have fled heavy snows and depleted berry crops inland. Cedar Waxwings, often with robin flocks, were more common than usual in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Northern Shrikes were "very scarce" (BMct) in s.e. Newfoundland, but in average or slightly above average numbers in the Maritimes. A closely studied Loggerhead Shrike, no longer annual in the Region, was at Tatamagouche, NS, Dec. 1 (†Clarence Stevens *et al.*).

Laggard and vagrant warblers offered the usual poignant pleasures. About seven Orange-crowned Warblers were found during December in Nova Scotia, one surviving through February in Halifax. Two in St. John's, NF, lasted at least to Jan. 5 and Jan. 15 respectively (RB). A Nashville Warbler was last seen Dec. 4 in St. John's, NF (BMct). A Yellow Warbler was at a Minto, NB, feeder in late December (L. Girouard). A Magnolia Warbler was on Sable I., NS, Dec. 7 (ZL). A **Townsend's Warbler** at St. John's, NF, to Dec. 4 (RB, BMct), was outlived by one at Hartlen Pt., NS, Dec. 26 (Chris Field). A **Black-throated Green Warbler** was in St. John's, NF, to Dec. 4 (BMct). The more routine Pine Warblers did not appear in numbers: about 11 in Nova Scotia (latest mid-January), four in New Brunswick (two until Jan. 30), and one at Carbonear, NF, Dec. 30. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Bathurst, NB, to Dec. 7 was yellow-lore (\* NB Museum); another feeder bird at Big Pond, *Cape Breton*, NS, Dec. 20–Jan. 23 (latest for the Region), was white-lore (v.o.). A 3rd bird at Antigonish, NS, in late December (v.o.), was not detailed. Palm Warblers, which a few years ago were the only regular *Dendroica* other than Yellow-rumped in early winter, are now seldom seen then; one was at Ferryland, NF, Dec. 14 (Chris Brown, John Wells). Three Black-and-white Warblers survived to Dec. 4 at St. John's, NF, where another appeared Dec. 20 (BMct *et al.*). A weakened Am. Redstart was at Shediac Cape, NB, Dec. 3 (ST). A Com. Yellowthroat was at Wolfville, NS,

Dec. 21. Latest Yellow-breasted Chats were at St. John's, NF, Dec. 1, Sackville, NB, to Dec. 4, and Dartmouth, NS, through December.

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

A ♂ **Western Tanager** appeared Dec. 5 at the same feeder in S.W. Port Mouton, NS (R. Trivers), as last year's. Northern Cardinals were "above average" (DSC) on New Brunswick CBCs, but seemed less common in s.w. Nova Scotia (DAC). Late Dickcissels were at St. John's, NF, Feb. 9 (RB) and at R. Bourgeois, NS, Jan. 11 (G. & S. Digout). Of three Rufous-sided Towhees each in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, only one, at Fredericton, NB, remained through the period (D. Gibson).

Record numbers of Chipping Sparrows (at least 36, DAC) attended Nova Scotia feeders. Among them, a Clay-colored Sparrow at Greenwich remained to at least Jan. 3 (v.o.). A Vesper Sparrow at Canning, NS, was last noted Jan. 23 (BM). Savannah Sparrows stayed on the Avalon Peninsula, NF (BMct) and in Nova Scotia (DAC) in exceptional numbers through December, but few remained beyond mid-to-late January. One Jan. 1 near St. Pierre, S.P.M. (RE), was unusual. A Sharp-tailed Sparrow near Wolfville, NS, Dec. 21-Jan. 12 had characteristics of the James Bay *altera* (†B. Forsythe *et al.*). An imm. Seaside Sparrow was found at Cole Hbr., NS, Jan. 31-Feb. 2 (BM, JWT), characteristically after snow had smothered the salt marshes. Oddly, a few Lincoln's Sparrows usually attempt to winter on the Avalon Peninsula, NF (BMct); this year, six were found, three still present Jan. 11 (v.o.). One on Sable I., NS, was in distress Dec. 16 (ZL). Among the usual woodland sparrows, only White-throats and Dark-eyed Juncos in Nova

New Brunswick and in Nova Scotia appeared abundantly only after the big snowfalls of early February.

A Yellow-headed Blackbird was near Waverley, NS, Jan. 12-26 (v.o.). Harsh weather extinguished most of 15+ N. Orioles (including a ♀ "Bullock's") found in Nova Scotia during December, although three survived into February; one got through January at St. John's, NF (RB).

It was an impressive season for winter finches, with large movements and interesting patterns within the Region (as summarized by regional subeditors plus DS). Hundreds of Pine Grosbeaks invaded St. John's, NF, in January, mostly departing with the robins by Feb. 10. They were also more common than usual on S.P.M. Although "many" appeared Feb. 4-5 on Prince Edward Island, and they were in above average numbers in n. and central Nova Scotia, they remained "average" in New Brunswick. Diminished wild berry crops and heavy snows in early February had more profound effects on Purple Finches. They were very common in St. John's, NF, in January, less so thereafter. In above average numbers on CBCs in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, they mounted truly massive invasions in February, everywhere converging on feeders. House Finches set records of 34 on New Brunswick CBCs, ca. 20, mostly at Yarmouth, in Nova Scotia, and two on P.E.I. White-winged Crossbills were rated as common to abundant, while Red Crossbills remained relatively scarce. A huge early winter invasion of Com. Redpolls was evident in Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and n. and central Nova Scotia; ca. 14,000 were moving NE (!) during the Cape Tormentine, NB, CBC (ST). They seemed to stay in those parts of the Region (remaining "scarce" in St. John's, NF, BMct), although huge flocks (ca. 5000 on Dec. 12) on Grand Manan I. disappeared by month's end (BD). Pine Siskins were abundant, except on Prince Edward Island, becoming more evident at feeders after the early February snowfalls. American Goldfinches and Evening Grosbeaks were scarce in Newfoundland, S.P.M. and Prince Edward Island, and common to abundant elsewhere in the Maritimes (record CBC totals in New Brunswick), diminishing somewhat in late winter.

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## QUEBEC REGION

Richard Yank and  
Yves Aubry

While the far-reaching effects of El Niño warmed central and western portions of the continent, Quebec experienced a winter that could best be characterized as unexceptional. Temperatures averaged colder than normal, and very few migrants lingered beyond early December. Although much of the Region received average or below-average snowfall, the persistent cold and absence of mild spells left substantial accumulations on the ground. In extreme southern Quebec, frequent February snowfalls set the stage for a late spring. Fortunately northern invaders, especially owls, did provide some birding interest during an otherwise quiet season.

#### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

Loons have seldom wintered in the Region. Noteworthy was a Com. Loon seen throughout the season on fresh water at Cabano and nearby Auclair on the Gaspé Peninsula (MBa, v.o.). Another Com. Loon was at a seldom-visited spot off Verdun, *Montreal I.*, from Feb. 13 on; possibly the same bird was in the vicinity at the beginning of January (PB). Exceptionally late was a Double-crested Cormorant at Longueuil, *Chambly*, Jan. 7 (MBr).

A flock of 40 Snow Geese remained at Saint-Laurent, *Montmorency*, Dec. 16 (JRG), while a single bird again overwintered at the Hemmingford zoo in the company of 75 Canada Geese (PB). A lone Canada Goose also survived the season at Gatineau (MG) while another on the Magog R., near Sherbrooke, throughout January and February was accompanied by a Greater White-fronted Goose (RC, SB). Provided it was not of captive origin, this would constitute Quebec's first overwintering record for the latter species.

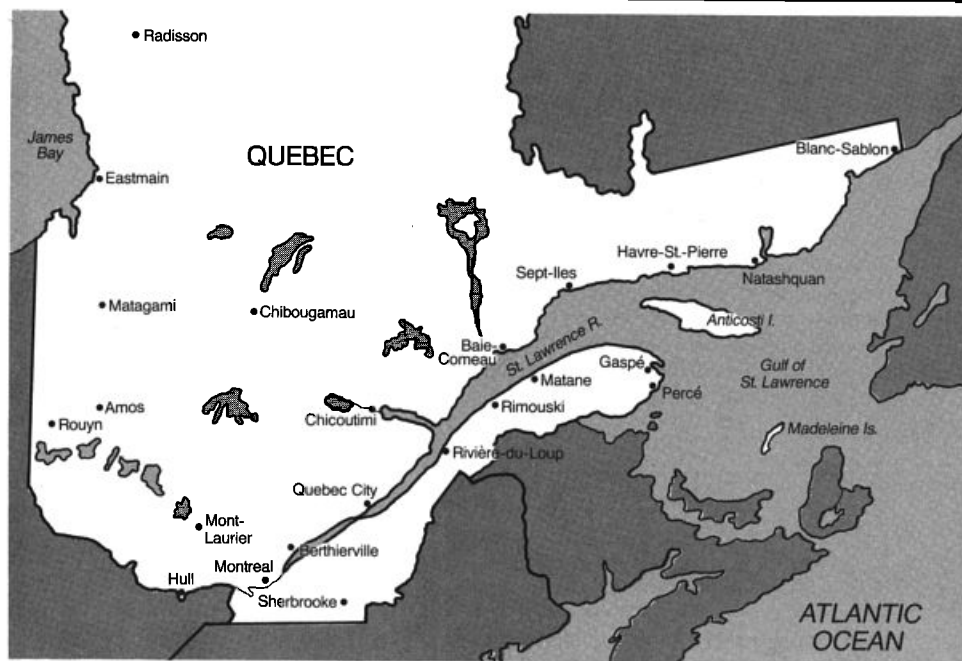
A ♂ Wood Duck at Châteauguay and a female on the Richelieu R. added to 6 or so previous wintering records (m.ob., *fide* PB); a ♂ Blue-winged Teal Dec. 3 on the Richelieu R., at Saint-Jean, broke the provincial departure record by one day (ph. DDo). Montreal's mid-February waterfowl census produced an above-average 3800 geese and ducks, mainly due to the unprecedented tally of 1379 Mallards (PB *et al.*). Among notable mid-winter ducks were Gadwall at Sherbrooke Jan. 19 (MMo), and single ♂ Ring-necked Ducks at Côte-Sainte-Catherine, *Laprairie*, Jan. 5 and Feb. 22 (BB, MMc) and at Dorion, *Vaudreuil*, Feb. 14 (RGo).

The gathering of 60,000+ Oldsquaw off Cap-d'Espoir Jan. 1 (JW) represented most of the known-winter population of the Gulf

#### S.A.

Meadowlarks wintering in the region are often casually taken as Eastern, but a bird at Fredericton, NB, from Jan. 2 (Peter Pearce) through the period was photographically diagnosed (Jim Edsell) as a **Western Meadowlark**, and was subsequently confirmed by plumage and vocalizations (v.o.). Examination of winter specimens from the province (NB Museum) exposed two of six as Westerns. Two previous Maritime records have been based on call note. Plumages of subspecies expected in the region can be most readily distinguished by widely separated bars on central tail feathers of Westerns, confluent in Easterns. Two other December birds in New Brunswick and six in Nova Scotia, including four Jan. 25 at Lower W. Pubnico, were not closely scrutinized. We can no longer assume that late-autumn and winter meadowlarks in Atlantic Canada, and probably coastal New England, are Easterns.

Scotia seemed substantially more numerous than in recent years. Snow Buntings in s



of St. Lawrence (see Bourget and Reed 1987, *Nexus* 9(2):8). In contrast, scoters are rare in the Gulf at this season; unusual were up to four White-winged Scoters at Bonaventure Jan. 10–Feb. 3 (JMP) and a group of five at Cap-d'Espoir Feb. 15 (DS, NG).

#### RAPTORS TO OWLS

The Region's 11th Black Vulture visited a Sainte-Monique backyard, *L. Saint-Jean*, in a weakened condition on the late date of Dec. 17 (MT *et al.*); the bird was found 2 days later, dead of a shotgun wound. A N. Harrier at Maple-Grove, *Beauharnois*, Jan. 15 (*vide* PB) provided the only mid-winter sighting, undoubtedly owing to persistent snow cover. At least 6 Lower St. Lawrence feeders were visited by Sharp-shinned Hawks (*vide* PF), more than usual, but sightings of Cooper's Hawk were down compared to recent years, with only three seen after December. Six Merlins were observed in January and February, and a Peregrine Falcon wintered at Hull (*vide* RLD). This fall and winter saw approximately 30 Gyrfalcons reach s. Quebec, a total similar to last year's outstanding invasion.

Rare in mid-winter, a lone Purple Sandpiper was observed at Les Escoumins, *Saguenay*, Feb. 14 (JI, CG). Not unexpected were overwintering Com. Snipe at La Pocatière, *Kamouraska* (one—CA *et al.*) and Beauport, *Quebec* (two—RGI *et al.*). An Am. Woodcock at Cap-Tourmente, *Montmorency*, Jan. 3 (RLe, FBé, LM) was record late by almost 3 weeks! Also record late were two Little Gulls at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Dec. 12–15 (RLa, BB *et al.*), and a group of four Com. Black-headed Gulls still at Cap-aux-Meules, *Magdalen Is.*, Jan. 18 (CAG, DGG). An ad. Mew Gull identified at Cabano Dec. 10 (MBa, RD) was only Quebec's 10th. Up to two ad. Thayer's Gulls were good finds at the Beauharnois dam Dec. 27 and at Côte-Sainte-Catherine Jan. 5 (BB, MMc); an ex-

cellent total of 150 or more Iceland Gulls wintered in the Montreal area (JMB, PB, v.o.). A Black-legged Kittiwake was late at Les Escoumins Dec. 27 (AB). Mourning Doves attempted to overwinter along the Lower St. Lawrence; but a flock of 23 at Sainte-Blandine Jan. 1 (*vide* PF) disappeared during the subsequent cold spell.

It would appear that the Snowy Owl movement was over by early December. Subsequently, good concentrations were at Kamouraska and Quebec City (*vide* YA); in s.w. Quebec, 15 were tallied between Longueuil and Verchères Dec. 31 (DDa), and a high count of 20 Snowies was made at Saint-Barthelemy, *Berthier*, Jan. 11 (*vide* PB). Owls of the boreal forest, on the other hand, continued to appear throughout the season. As stated in the Fall report, N. Hawk Owl numbers were the highest ever recorded. An estimated 40 birds were added to the 70 or so reported October–November. These birds apparently originated in the northeast, as in late October concentrations were noted at L. Saint-Jean, along the North Shore, and on

the Gaspé Pen.; by mid-November many had reached s.w. Quebec. Numbers increased in the southwest in December. Few new locales reported the species thereafter, but some individuals remained into March.

Great Gray Owls displayed a different pattern. The total of 60 or so birds was similar to that recorded in peak years 1978–1979 and 1987–1988 but was only one-fifth the exceptional incursion of 1983–1984. Although initial scattered sightings occurred in late October, larger concentrations did not appear until late December (Saguenay and North Shore) or even February (Montreal and area). The total of 15 Boreal Owls (in addition to five on the Magdalen Is., where the species is resident) this fall and winter was possibly our best ever. However, this winter mirrored last year's for N. Saw-whet Owls, with only one mid-winter sighting, at Montreal Jan. 22 (PE).

#### KINGFISHERS TO SHRIKES

Only one Belted Kingfisher lingered into January, at Drummondville Jan. 10 (PM). The imm. Red-headed Woodpecker at Bonaventure in the fall visited feeders there throughout the winter (CD *et al.*); another was at Joliette Dec. 15–Jan. 12 (*vide* RLo). Both species of 3-toed woodpeckers were virtually unreported this winter, while a few N. Flickers wintered farther north than usual, with three at Sacré-Coeur, *Rimouski*, all season (RC), one at Chicoutimi Dec. 8–Feb. 27 (LI), and another at Saint-Augustin, *Portneuf*, Feb. 9 (PPE). Unusual were up to 27 Horned Larks at Bonaventure in January and February (JMP). Last winter's invasion of Tufted Titmice was not repeated; in addition to two birds in the Fall report, only one appeared this winter, at Saint-Hyacinthe Dec. 21 (RR *et al.*). In addition to the nine Carolina Wrens in the fall, 10 birds, including one at Sainte-Foy, *Quebec*, enlivened s. Quebec feeders this winter (RGI, FBé, JFB), while a hardy Winter Wren again survived the season on I. des Soures, *Montreal I.* (m.ob).

Frugivores (thrushes, mimids, and waxwings) were in fairly good numbers. A Townsend's Solitaire briefly appeared at Sainte-Foy Dec. 28 (RF, JL), and a Hermit Thrush lingered on Mt. Saint-Hilaire until Jan. 16 (AT). A few Am. Robins were scattered along the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé Pen. (*vide* PF, PPO), while the season's only Varied Thrush was at Saint-Gérard-des-Laurentides, *Saint-Maurice*, in December (MSo). No fewer than 12 N. Mockingbirds were reported, and a Brown Thrasher carried at Boucherville, *Chambly*, Dec. 14–Jan. 17 (FBI). As occurred last winter, spectacular concentrations of Bohemian Waxwings were

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in c. Quebec, including 6180 at Alma, *L. Saint-Jean*, Dec. 1 (CG, MSa, AJ), 2000 at Rimouski Jan. 18 (RP), and 1800 at Perce, *Gaspe*, Jan. 8 (JW). Smaller numbers were in s.w. Quebec, the largest flock being the 580 at Hull Dec. 15 (*vide* RLD). Northern Shrike numbers were considered at or slightly above average numbers following a strong showing last year.

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

The latest Yellow-rumped Warbler this season was at Beaconsfield, *Montreal I.*, Dec. 21–23 (JMB). There were indications of a late Pine Warbler movement, with singles at Cap-aux-Meules Dec. 9–26 (DGG), at Rimouski Dec. 14–31 (SR), and at Beaconsfield until Jan. 17 (PT, m.ob.); this individual died one day short of the departure record after hitting a window. The only other warbler worthy of mention was a late Com. Yellowthroat at I. des Soeurs Dec. 1 (JM).

Northern Cardinals continue to do well in s. Quebec, evidence the count of 20 at Mystic, *Missisquoi*, Feb. 16 (MMc, BB), and to appear more regularly at the n. limit of their range: a female turned up at Pointe-au-Père, *Rimouski*, Dec. 22 (MH), the male at Jonquière in November survived through February (RGU), and a 2nd male was at Hébertville, *L. Saint-Jean*, Dec. 27–29 (LSL). Inconsistent with the cold weather, "many" Song Sparrows were at Cap-Tourmente throughout the season (*vide* LM); 12 were still at Fabreville, n. of Montreal, Jan. 12 (FH). One also wintered on the Gaspé Pen., at Chandler (HB). Other notable emberizines were a Field Sparrow at the latter site Jan. 4–Feb. 29 (JRL) and a White-throated Sparrow at Dégelis, *Témiscouata*, Dec. 7–Feb. 15 (JC, DK).

A few icterids were in the province despite the relatively harsh weather. Worthy of mention was a ♂ Yellow-headed Blackbird that survived at least into March at Saint-Anaclet, *Rimouski* (BL, PL), as was a female at a Châteauguay feeder Feb. 8–16 (MMc, BB). Small flocks of Com. Grackles were reported throughout the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé Pen. (*vide* PF, PPo), including 13 at Bonaventure Jan. 22 (JMP) and one at Port-Daniel Feb. 15 (MC). Châteauguay produced the largest flock of icterids, comprising 750 Brown-headed Cowbirds Feb. 16 (MMc, BB).

Pine Grosbeaks were in fairly good numbers, but few reached the most s. portions of the province. While Purple Finches again moved outside the province this winter, House Finches continued to increase. Impressive totals included 300 at Les Cèdres, *Soulanges*, Dec. 28 (BB, MMc) and 200 at Laval, n. of Montreal, Dec. 22 (GL). Crossbills were generally scarce; Red Crossbill reports outnumbered those of White-winged. The highest Red Crossbill counts involved 24 at Chicoutimi Dec. 24 (JI, SF) and 15 at Saint-Joachim, *Assomption*, Feb. 2 (DJ). It was a redpoll invasion year. The first large concentration was of 1000 Com Redpolls at

New-Richmond on the Gaspé Pen. Nov. 2 (JMP); the species was noted throughout s. Quebec afterward. Not unexpectedly, four Greater Redpolls (*C. f. rostrata*) were among these birds (see *AB* 41:406). Most areas also commented on the presence of Hoary Redpolls, the largest group being of nine at Caplan, *Bonaventure*, Feb. 1 (JMP). Two birds of the rarer *hornemanni* ssp. were identified at Saint-Elzéar, *Témiscouata*, Dec. 21 (RD); singles of this ssp. were at Rimouski Jan. 22 (JRP, RC) and Cabano Feb. 28 (MBa). Pine Siskins were scarce until late in the period, but Am. Goldfinches were in good numbers, including 400 at Mystic Jan. 19 (JGP). Evening Grosbeaks were again uncommon along the St. Lawrence lowlands; it has been several years since the last invasion.

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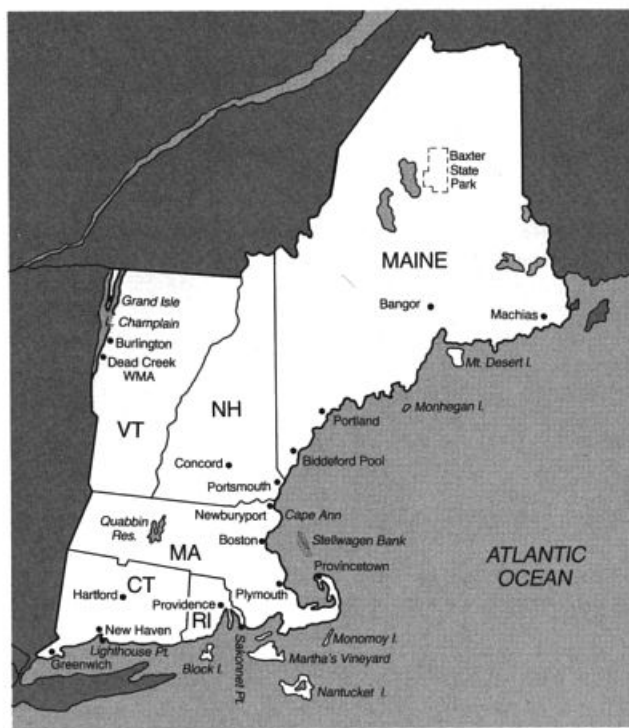
## NEW ENGLAND REGION

Blair Nikula

Throughout most of the Region, Old Man Winter again made only brief and feeble inroads, primarily from mid-January to mid-February. Temperatures in Boston were 1.8°F above normal for the period, and precipitation was only 65% of normal and fell mostly as rain. Boston recorded only 10.2" of snow, a mere third of normal. Bare ground was thus the rule rather than the exception across the southern two-thirds of New England, with appreciable snowfall only in northernmost New England and downeast Maine.

The mild weather of October and November continued into December (+2.3°F) and the first ten days of January (+8°F). The avian response to the mild, open conditions was predictable: many typically late migrants lingered, and CBC species totals were generally inflated as a result. Most prominent in this category were herons (8 species in December!), dabbling ducks, flycatchers, and warblers (15 species in December). Temperatures returned to more typical levels in mid-January and remained on the cold side into mid-February, resulting in the only significant icing of the season. Nonetheless, many species that generally are unable to survive New England winters were still being found into February this year, and the weather warmed again during the last half of the month, triggering an early movement of northbound migrants.

In stark contrast to the weather, several species of northern raptors appeared in the best numbers in many years, demonstrating



once again that the weather locally has little, if any, direct influence on the southward movements of these predatory nomads. Gyrfalcons, Snowy Owls, Northern Hawk Owls, and Boreal Owls all made headlines this season, while Northern Shrikes were numerous as well.

Many of the species that have been increasing as winterers were again found in high, and in many cases record-breaking, numbers. Most prominent among this group were Double-crested Cormorant, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Turkey Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, and Carolina Wren. Relatively few species seemed noticeably scarce this season, but among these were Black-legged Kittiwake, Short-eared Owl, Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, and both crossbills.

**Abbreviations:** CCL&PWS (Cape Cod Lake & Pond Waterfowl Survey); M.V. (Martha's Vineyard).

#### LOONS TO HERONS

A Pacific/Arctic Loon was reported from Manomet, MA, Jan. 5 (M. Sylvia); one, perhaps the same, was a few miles down the coast in Sagamore, MA, Jan. 26 (T. Hall); another was in Provincetown, MA, Jan. 3–Feb. 29 (†PT, v.o., ph.). The latter bird had a faint chin strap and lacked a conspicuous flank patch which, based on our current knowledge, suggests Pacific rather than Arctic (as would be expected in this area). Single Pied-billed Grebes lingered into mid-December in New Hampshire and Vermont, and one was particularly late above the Vernon Dam, VT, Jan. 7 (T. Maloney). Good numbers of Horned Grebes were present on Lake Champlain through Jan. 10 (JN), and up to 89 were on the Quabbin Res., MA, through mid-January (*vide* SK), but very few were reported from coastal areas. The surreptitious comings and goings of Red-necked Grebes in this area continue to puzzle; typically the largest concentrations are present from late February to late March when an influx, often pronounced, is noted in s. New England (from where these birds originate is anyone's guess, as the species is scarce south of this area). This season, peak Red-necked numbers occurred early in the season when a maximum of 157 was noted at Hull, MA, Dec. 26 (RA). The only Eared Grebe was in Stamford, CT, Feb. 27–28 (DP *et al.*), and for the 15th consecutive year a Western Grebe wintered in the Georgetown area of Maine (v.o., *vide* JD).

A Manx Shearwater at Pt. Judith Jan. 4 (RLF) provided a first winter record for Rhode Island and one of only a handful anywhere in the Region. Following their unprecedented displacement in the fall, N. Gannets remained numerous off Rhode Island into December, as evidenced by 1476 on the Kingston CBC, Dec. 21 (*vide* DE), and a few lingered in Long Island Sound off Connecticut where 3 sightings totalled six



**Least Bittern at Saybrook, Connecticut, on January 18, 1992. Apparently the first mid-winter record for New England. Photograph/Gilbert Kleiner.**

birds Dec. 2–Jan. 2. Single Great Cormorants were inland at 2 sites in New Hampshire and one in Connecticut. Notable totals of the ever-increasing Double-crested Cormorant included 65 in Boston Harbor Jan. 19 (T.A.S.L.) and 55 in Jerusalem, RI, Feb. 17 (DE).

One of the more amazing finds this season was a Least Bittern in Saybrook, CT, Jan. 18 (BK, G. Kleiner ph.), apparently the first mid-winter record for the Region. Another Least Bittern found road-killed in Wesquage Dec. 20 (DLK) established a late date for Rhode Island. Also included in a remarkable heron list from Rhode Island were a Great Egret in Jamestown Dec. 16 & Jan. 13 (C. Powell, W. Gardner); a Little Blue Heron on the Kingston CBC Dec. 21; a Cattle Egret in Little Compton Dec. 4 (DE); and a Glossy Ibis at Quonochontaug, Dec. 4 (DLK). Exceptionally late elsewhere were a Great Egret on Nantucket Jan. 21 (E. Eberhardt) and a Little Blue Heron in Marion, MA, Jan. 5–10 (R. Harlow *et al.*).

#### WATERFOWL

Five Tundra Swans were a good find at Sebago Lake S.P., ME, Jan. 22 (G. Hazelton, *vide* JD); two were at their traditional site on M.V., through at least late December (WM *et al.*); and four were in Essex, CT, Dec. 29, with two nearby at Haddam Neck, Feb. 15, presumed to be some of the same birds (*vide* BK). Single Greater White-fronted Geese were in Southbury, CT, Dec. 24–27 (NC *et al.*); Concord, MA, Dec. 1 (from the fall; RHS); and throughout the period in New Bedford, MA (D. Zimmerlin). Over 1000 Snow Geese were still present at Dead Creek W.M.A., VT, Dec. 2 (WGE *et al.*), but most were gone shortly thereafter. As is now usual, several Snows lingered into early January or

later in s. New England. A Barnacle Goose in Southbury, CT, Dec. 29 and Feb. 2 (C. Naylor *et al.*) was reported as “probably an escapee”; will we ever feel comfortable counting this species in New England?

Dozens of Wood Ducks were present in s. New England in December and at least a few successfully wintered. Other dabbling ducks were also in relative abundance, particularly in Rhode Island. Eurasian Wigeon were in near-record numbers in Massachusetts where at least 12 (all males) were found; three in Rhode Island and two(?) in Connecticut were more typical.

Canvasback populations in s. New England continued at rather anemic levels, evidence of which was only 141 on the CCL&PWS, Dec. 7–8 (C.C.B.C.), the lowest total in the 8 years of that effort. However, 13 Canvasbacks in Durham Feb. 29 (SM) were considered a noteworthy concentration for New Hampshire. Redheads likewise remained scarce, although numbers were up somewhat over recent years. A ♂ Tufted Duck was seen by many in Brewster, MA, Dec. 7–Jan. 1 (R. Comeau, S. Highley, m.ob.). One hundred Lesser Scaup in Shelburne, VT, Jan. 10 (J. Peterson) was a surprising assemblage that far north.

Common Eider were again very scarce, the largest concentration reported a meager 4739 in Boston Harbor Feb. 2 (T.A.S.L.); however, no counts were received from the shoals off Monomoy Island this year. About 18 King Eiders Regionwide constituted a rather poor showing. After several consecutive years of steadily increasing, Harlequin Duck totals dipped a bit this season; the peak at Sachuest Pt., RI, was 64 on Feb. 10 (*vide* DE), down from the record high of 83 two years ago, and numbers on both M.V. and Nantucket were down substantially from recent highs. However, 49 Harlequins at Ogunquit in early January (*vide* JD) was apparently a record number for s.w. Maine, and an imm. male at Montpelier, VT, Dec. 10 (†T. Gaine) was well out of range. The dawn and dusk flights of Oldsquaw on Nantucket, from their evening roost in Nantucket Sound to feeding areas on the shoals offshore, is one of the Region's ornithological spectacles; this season's peak was estimated at 150,000 birds Dec. 31 (EA *et al.*).

Belfast, ME, seems to be the Regional stronghold for Barrow's Goldeneye and this season's peak there was about 25 in February (*vide* M.A.S.). Six Barrow's in Connecticut, including one again inland at Enfield, was above average there, and another was inland in Hadley, MA, Dec. 15 (*vide* SK). Bufflehead is one of those ubiquitous species that rarely elicits comments from reporters, but 2173 on the CCL&PWS Dec. 7–8 (C.C.B.C.) established an 8-year high on that survey. Hooded Mergansers were numerous in Maine (*vide* WT), New Hampshire (*vide* DDL), and Massachusetts, while 150 at Pt. Judith Feb. 14 (DLK) was the biggest flock Kraus has seen in his 60 years of birding in Rhode Island! Red-breasted Mer-



gansers, on the other hand, were exceptionally scarce along the entire coast, although on Cape Cod unusual numbers were found on freshwater ponds as demonstrated by a record high 506 on the CCL&PWS Dec. 7-8 (C.C.B.C.), about 5 times the 8-year average. Presumably this anomalous distribution was indicative of a food shortage in their normal coastal haunts. Smews at two sites on Cape Cod, a male Jan. 13 in Chatham (M. Silke *et al.*) and a female a few days later in Provincetown (D. Reid *et al.*), were presumed escapees as a waterfowl breeder in Kingston, RI, reported having recently lost some of this species (*vide* SAP).

#### DIURNAL RAPTORS

By mid-February, migrant Turkey Vultures began appearing and one newly arriving group was accompanied by a **Black Vulture** in Milton & Randolph, MA, Feb. 28-29 (NS). Exceptionally late Ospreys were in Bourne, MA, Jan. 8 (F. Bygate) and Brewster, MA, Jan. 23 (L. Tilson, *vide* BN). Bald Eagle totals on the annual census in January included 25 in New Hampshire, 13 in Vermont, and 60 in Massachusetts.

Cooper's Hawks were again widely reported from the s. two-thirds of the Region and, if current trends continue, may soon be as common a winterer as Sharp-shinned Hawks have become. A Cooper's in Island Pond, VT, Dec. 11 was considered "remarkably far north for the date" (FO *et al.*). Northern Goshawks were "well reported" in Vermont (JN) and 3 reports from Rhode Island were more than normal, but the species drew little comment elsewhere. Wintering Red-shouldered Hawks have become fairly routine across s. New England, and for several consecutive years now, two adults have frequented a feeder in Lincoln, MA, where they are fed assorted meat products (*vide* W. Harrington, ph.!). Good numbers of Rough-legged Hawks were present in Vermont, but elsewhere totals were at best only average. As usual, a Golden Eagle wintered at the Quabbin Res., MA (*vide* SK), and another was in Canaan, CT, Dec. 2 (NC).

Merlins were either scarce or scarcely reported. Peregrine Falcons, in contrast, were present just about everywhere except, apparently, Maine; several were found in Vermont, a dozen or more in New Hampshire, 20+ in Massachusetts, two in Rhode Island, and two in Connecticut. Gyrfalcons staged their biggest invasion in years, and among the dozen or more reported Regionwide were three or four white birds. In Vermont, at least five and perhaps as many as seven (one white morph) were found, almost all in the Champlain Valley (*vide* JN). Three Gyrfalcons in Maine included a white bird in Clinton, Dec. 15 (F. Davis, *vide* JD), and another white morph present sporadically in Scarborough, Dec. 15-Jan. 31, which apparently eluded a falconer's attempt to capture it (*vide* JD). Yet another (?) white Gyr was reported about 30 mi to the south in Rye, NH, Jan. 26 (C. Deek, *vide* DDL), while in Massachusetts two or three dark birds were present.

#### S.A.

As if sorting out fugitive waterfowl were not headache enough, birders must now closely scrutinize any atypical falcon they find. This winter, Norm Smith discovered a large falcon at Logan Airport which at first appeared to be a Gyrfalcon, but upon closer inspection proved to be a hybrid of indeterminate lineage, complete with some of the accouterments of captivity. Falconers, in their quest for the ultimate falcon (as if nature hasn't done well enough), are producing a disturbing and bewildering array of mixed-breed birds. One falconer on Nantucket lost a bird last year that was one half Gyrfalcon, one quarter Prairie, and one quarter Lanner. Let the birder beware!

#### RAILS TO SHOREBIRDS

Late Clapper Rails were in Newburyport, MA, Dec. 29 (RSH) and S. Dartmouth, MA, Jan. 26 (MB), and a Sora revealed itself in Saybrook, CT, Jan. 12 (S. Mayo *et al.*). A few Virginia Rails occasionally survive the winters in extreme s. coastal sections, but a bird inland at S. Quabbin, MA, Feb. 15 (T. Gagnon) was most unusual. The only Com. Moorhen of the season was in Branford, CT, Jan. 2-9(?) (NP). American Coots remained in short supply, the only concentrations being at their stronghold in Plymouth, MA, where up to 185 were present throughout the season (GdE *et al.*) and in Arlington, MA, where 54 were noted Dec. 12 (L. Taylor). A Sandhill Crane of unspecified age was in Lyme, CT, Dec. 11-Jan. 2 (JK, ph.); an immature in Little Compton, RI, Dec. 10 (C. Mercer *et al.*) was perhaps the same as a bird a few miles away in S. Dartmouth, MA, Dec. 8-30 (MB *et al.*); and an adult was in Middletown, RI, Feb. 1 (H. Morgan).

Late or wintering shorebirds included five Am. Oystercatchers at Groton, CT, Dec. 7 (JK); single Greater Yellowlegs in Yarmouth, MA, through Jan. 31 (K. Hamilton) and Eastham, MA, Feb. 15 (ML *et al.*); a Lesser Yellowlegs in Warren, RI, Jan. 1 (W. Nichols); a yellowlegs sp. in Boston Jan. 19 (T.A.S.L.); a Spotted Sandpiper on the Newport CBC, RI, Dec. 14 (RLF); 22 Red Knots at Scituate, MA, Jan. 12 (RA); and a Long-billed Dowitcher photographed and heard in Eastham, MA, Jan. 18 (PT, ph.). Good winter totals of Ruddy Turnstones were 53 in Scituate, MA, Dec. 19 (RA) and 38 on Nantucket, Feb. 8 (EA). Exceptional was a count of 750+ Purple Sandpipers in Scituate, MA, Jan. 12 (RA), the largest concentration in the Region in recent memory. Common Snipe were more widely reported than usual in s. New England and one survived the season in Tinmouth, VT (P. Ballou).

#### SKUAS TO ALCIDS

A Great Skua was carefully identified during a northeast gale in Rockport, MA, Jan. 4

(†RSH). The only Little Gulls of the season were one on Lake Champlain at Ferrisburg, VT, Dec. 2 (*vide* JN) and two on the Greater Boston CBC, Dec. 15. Common Black-headed Gulls are extremely rare inland, but this season there were four such birds: a first-winter bird in Burlington on three dates, Jan. 19-Feb. 23 (†G. Hall, †WGE *et al.*) was only the 2nd ever in Vermont; a first-winter bird in Rochester Feb. 9 (SM) was New Hampshire's first inland; another in Hadley-Amherst Feb. 22-29 (*vide* SK) was w. Massachusetts' 3rd; and a bird of unspecified age was in Mansfield, MA, Jan. 22 & 26 (J. Berger *et al.*). At their more traditional coastal hangouts, Black-headed's totaled at least eight in Maine, 26+ in Massachusetts, 13 in Rhode Island, and two in Connecticut.

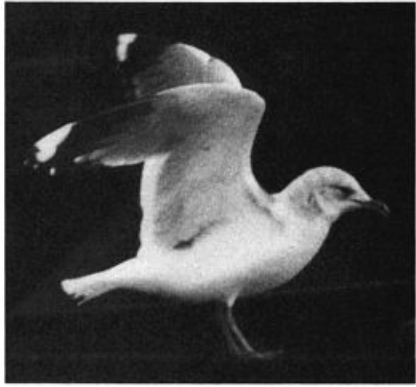
Another very rare find inland was a Mew Gull in Hadley-Amherst, MA, Feb. 26-29 (P. Champlin *et al.*, ph.), the first ever in w. Massachusetts. An injured 1W gull picked up in Manchester, NH, Dec. 18 (H. DiPrima) and subsequently treated and released in Massachusetts was identified as a Mew Gull of the western race *brachyrynchus* (*vide* DDL), a species not yet recorded in New Hampshire; confirmation awaits examination of photos taken of the bird in captivity. Exhaustive details were provided for a first-winter Thayer's Gull in S. Portland, ME, Jan. 31 and Feb. 22-23 (†L. Brinker *et al.*, †JD). Lesser Black-backed Gull reports numbered one in New Hampshire, ten in Massachusetts, and three in Connecticut. An ad. Herring X Glaucous Gull hybrid was in Provincetown, MA, Feb. 15 (BN) and a Herring X Great Black-backed Gull in Lynn, MA, Jan. 31 (J. Quigley, *vide* RAF). The Jan. 4 storm drove 742 Black-legged Kittiwakes past Rockport, MA (RSH), but otherwise they were extremely scarce.

It was not a very good winter for alcids, with only Razorbills seen in any numbers. Only a handful of Dovekies were reported, all in Maine and Massachusetts, and the few Common and Thick-billed murrelets were virtually all in Provincetown, MA (the most reliable site in the Region for seeing alcids). Noteworthy counts of Razorbills were 820 storm-driven birds at Rockport, MA, Jan. 4 (RSH) and 306 in Provincetown, Feb. 15 (ML *et al.*). In Rhode Island, where not too long ago alcids of any sort were almost unheard of, Razorbills shattered old perceptions: day-long watches at Pt. Judith recorded 100± Dec. 21 and a phenomenal 546 flying past Jan. 5 (RLF *et al.*); close to 100 others were reported in that state during the period.

#### PARAKEETS, OWLS

Ominous was the total of 98 Monk Parakeets in Warwick, RI, Jan 1 (*vide* DE), while four in Lakeville, Jan. 1 (M. Shaw) apparently established an unwanted record high for Massachusetts.

It was a memorable season for owl lovers (and who among us isn't). Snowy Owls staged a major invasion; the number of sight-



**Mew Gull at Hadley, Massachusetts, on March 3, 1992 (present since late February). Very rare inland in New England. Bill shape and wingtip pattern indicate the European form, *L. c. canus*, rather than *L. c. brachyrhynchus* from western North America. Photograph/Peter Yeskie.**

ings and nomadic nature of these Arctic phantoms makes it impossible to determine with any accuracy just how many birds were seen, but Norm Smith's continuing banding and color-marking efforts at Logan Airport resulted in 36 individuals captured there (through early April) and Smith felt that another 10–20 birds passed through without being caught; 10 additional birds were banded on the north shore of Massachusetts. Although the number of owls banded at the airport was below his record of 43 in 1986–1987, Smith believes that there were just as many birds present this year. My crude guesstimates of the minimum statewide totals of Snowies are: 30+ in Maine (including one bird that landed briefly on the Bluenose ferry 10 miles offshore); at least eight in New Hampshire; 16+ in Vermont; 70+ in Massachusetts; at least six in Rhode Island; and eight in Connecticut.

Northern Hawk Owls appeared in numbers unprecedented in recent decades, although sightings were confined to Maine and Vermont. In Maine, there were at least seven or eight birds and perhaps as many as 14+ if all the vague, unsubstantiated reports were accurate; most were in the n. half of the state, but one made it as far south as Phippsburg where it entertained many birders Jan. 19 to at least Feb. 15 (m.ob., ph.). In Vermont, four were found, all in the northernmost portion of the state: Dec. 1(?) through at least Feb. 23 in Westford (W. Beecher *et al.*); Dec. 25 in Charlotte (first seen Nov. 12; D. Davis); Dec. 8–24 in S. Hero (R. Olsen *et al.*, ph.); and through at least Jan. 7 (from November) in Craftsburg (FO *et al.*). The only Great Gray Owl was in Ashland, ME, throughout February (A. Lovewell, m.ob., ph.). Following several years of relative abundance, Short-eared Owls were exceedingly scarce, except on Tuckernuck Island, MA, where the CBC recorded 12 birds; elsewhere, only a dozen or so were reported—one of the poorest showings in recent years.

Surprisingly, after last fall's influx, only two more Boreal Owls were found: one was

banded in Canton, MA, Dec. 27 (NS, the sixth in that state since late October, all within a radius of about 20 mi), and Connecticut's first since 1946 delighted hundreds of birders in Middlebury, Jan. 13–Feb. 24 (B. Devine, m.ob., ph.).

#### KINGFISHERS TO SHRIKES

Indicative of the mildness of the season were several Belted Kingfishers wintering in Vermont and New Hampshire. Red-headed Woodpeckers were found in 3 places in Maine, 2 in Massachusetts, and one in Connecticut—about average by recent standards. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continued to increase in s. New England, but apparently only four penetrated the northern 3 states: one in Pemaquid, ME (*vide* WT) and three in s. New Hampshire (*vide* DDL). As usual, a few Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers lingered in s. New England, but a report of one as far north as Saco, ME, Feb. 19 (S. Pollock) was most surprising.

Eastern Phoebe's lingered into December at 3 sites in Rhode Island, 6 sites in Massachusetts, and 2 sites in Vermont, and a particularly hardy individual was in Tiverton, RI, Feb. 14 (P. Dorcus *et al.*). A phoebe in Longmeadow, MA, Feb. 27 was assumed to be an extremely early migrant (*vide* SK). The Ash-throated Flycatcher in Wellfleet, MA, first noted in November, was seen and amply photographed through Dec. 9, by which time it appeared very weak. Late W. Kingbirds were in Chatham, MA, Dec. 7 (BN) and Truro, MA, Dec. 12 (KJ). I have no idea what to make of a detail-less report of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at a feeder (!?) in Vinalhaven, ME, on the unbelievable date of Feb. 5 (M. Davis, *vide* WT).

A remarkable flock of 50 Tree Swallows in Eastham, MA, Dec. 15 had dwindled to five by Jan. 11 (WRP *et al.*). Was the single Tree Swallow in Milford, CT, Jan. 23 (S. Fried *et al.*) southbound or northbound? Or neither? A count of 120 Fish Crows going to roost in Oaklawn Beach, Jan. 5 (DE) established a record high for this enigmatic species in Rhode Island.

There was no evidence of any southward movement of Boreal Chickadees, but Tufted Titmouse numbers were up sharply in Maine and Vermont. Red-breasted Nuthatches were apparently numerous in New Hampshire (*vide* DDL) but scarce virtually everywhere else. The Carolina Wren population explosion continued unabated, and these industrious birds continued their steady march to the Canadian border, with northernmost individuals in S. Hero, VT (*vide* JN); Sugar Hill, NH (*vide* DDL); and Skowhegan and Bangor, ME (*vide* JD). The Rock Wren found in S. Orleans, MA, in early November remained through at least mid-February (S. Thompson, v.o.). A Ruby-crowned Kinglet survived until at least Feb. 23 in S. Windsor, CT (SKo).

Eastern Bluebirds wintered in "incredible numbers" in Vermont (JN), were reported from about two dozen locales in New Hamp-

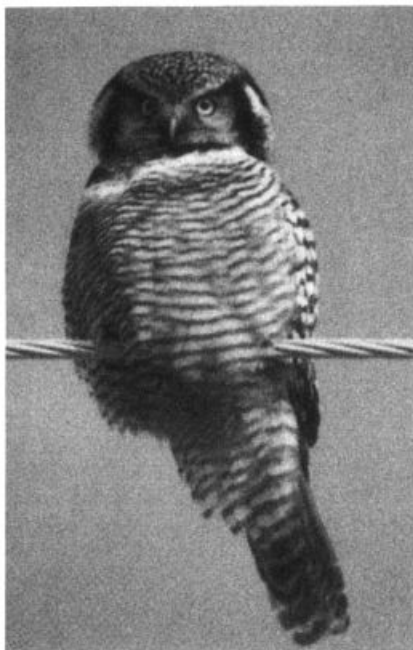
shire (*vide* DDL) and a couple of sites in Maine, and were widespread across s. New England. American Robins wintered in abundance throughout much of the Region, with many flocks numbering into the hundreds, except in extreme s.e. New England where they were essentially absent—almost a complete reversal of their typical winter distribution. Four Varied Thrushes distributed themselves evenly across the n. part of the Region: Oakham, MA, Jan. 1–31 (R. Crombie); Springfield, VT, Dec. 29 & Jan. 5 (†J. Kraft); Dunbarton, NH, Dec. 6 (†J. Goss); and N. Waterboro, ME, Nov. 21 to at least Dec. 9 (J. Grant, *vide* JD).

The mild, snowless conditions apparently induced Am. Pipits to remain in numbers: two in Kittery, ME, Dec. 25 (*vide* WT); a total of 42 in Massachusetts in January and February, highlighted by a remarkable 30+ in Halifax, Jan. 30 (K. Anderson); and 19 in Rhode Island into December, at least one remaining through Feb. 17 (*vide* DE). Bohemian Waxwings were scarce in n. New England, with only a few flocks of 100+ reported; southernmost were single Bohemians at 3 sites in Massachusetts. In sharp contrast, Cedar Waxwings, like robins, were in abundance just about everywhere, except in the extreme north and the s.e. coastal plain. It was another good year for N. Shrike, although there seemed to be somewhat fewer than last year; about seven made it as far south as Connecticut, but none was reported from Rhode Island. A Loggerhead Shrike in Barnstable, MA, Jan. 5–6 (†PT *et al.*, ph.) was a very rare but well-documented find.

#### VIREOS TO SPARROWS

Late Solitary Vireos were found on Nantucket Dec. 13 (P. Dunwiddie *et al.*), and on the Concord, MA, CBC, Dec. 27. Single Orange-crowned Warblers survived at feeders through at least mid-February on Mt. Desert I., ME (*vide* M.A.S.) and in W. Kingston, RI, Feb. 9–12 (G. & A. Taft). Among the exceptionally tardy warblers were a Nashville on the Buzzards Bay CBC, MA, Dec. 14 (PT *et al.*); Cape Mays at two sites in Massachusetts in December and one until Jan. 16 at Assonet, MA (N. Hill); a ♂ Black-throated Blue on M.V., Dec. 27–28 (*vide* WM); a Black-throated Green in Storrs, CT, Dec. 8–14 (MS); a Prairie on the Newport CBC, RI, Dec. 14 (*vide* DE); a Wilson's on the Greater Boston CBC, Dec. 15; and, most remarkable of all, two Blackpoll Warblers in Falmouth, MA, Dec. 1–15 (Gd'E, m.ob., ph.), a record late date for the Region. Amazingly, in the same thicket in Falmouth as the Blackpolls, was a Townsend's Warbler, Dec. 1–12 (Gd'E, m.ob., ph.). A Yellow-throated Warbler, apparently of the yellow-lored nominate race, visited two feeders in Essex, MA, Nov. 7–Jan. 31 (M. Jordan, K. Gentlemen *et al.*, ph.).

Most notable among the more typical lingering warblers were a Pine at a feeder unusually far north in Sheepscot, ME, Dec. 6–Jan. 30 (J. Hamlin); a Palm in a greenhouse in



**Northern Hawk Owl at South Hero, Vermont, January 28, 1992. Vermont and Maine saw their best invasion of this species in many years this winter. Photograph/Richard Lavalee.**

Cabot, VT, Dec. 16–23 (G. Katz); a well-above-average total of 34 Palms in Rhode Island during December; and a very late Com. Yellowthroat in Plymouth, MA, Feb. 25 (RA). There were numerous Yellow-breasted Chats in s. coastal sections in December, culminating in a phenomenal nine on the Cape Cod CBC, Dec. 15 (only one short of the all-time national high!); one survived in Gloucester, MA, Jan. 11–Feb. 29 (J. Mann *et al.*).

A decade or so ago, Western Tanager was a fairly regular vagrant in New England: during the 15-year period 1970–1984 no fewer than 22 were reported during the winter season. However, a weakened W. Tanager at a feeder in Eastham, MA, Jan. 18–Feb. 15 (W. Swift *et al.*, ph.) was our first in winter in 8 years. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak, perhaps the first in winter to be photographically documented, was at a feeder in W. Barnstable, MA, Dec. 15–31 (R. Williams, PT, ph.), while another was reported without details from Sorrento, ME, Dec. 19 (J. Schwartzmiller, *vide* WT). Dickcissels numbered “several” in Maine (*vide* WT), at least five in Massachusetts, and one in Rhode Island. A “Spotted” Towhee visited a feeder in Concord, MA, Dec. 6 through at least Feb. 12 (S. Parker).

December Chipping Sparrows in n. New England included “a few” in Maine (*vide* WT) and three in New Hampshire, while one lingered in S. Londonderry, VT, through Jan. 13 (W. Norse). Although sparrows were not very numerous (or perhaps just widely dispersed), a farm in Sandwich, MA, hosted an exceptional concentration and variety throughout the season, among which were a Clay-colored, Feb. 12; 40+ Fields Feb. 12; one or two Vespers through Feb. 12; 200+ Savannahs Dec. 14 with 80 still there Feb. 5;

and as many as six Grasshoppers through Feb. 12, an unprecedented winter aggregation (PT *et al.*). Other noteworthy sparrows were a Clay-colored in Portsmouth, RI, Dec. 14–22 (R. Emerson *et al.*); five Vespers in Middleboro, MA, Jan. 11 (J. Cameron); single Lark Sparrows in Scituate, MA, Dec. 19–Feb. 9 (RA, v.o.) and W. Roxbury, MA, Feb. 4–29 (T. Aversa, v.o.); a Grasshopper in S. Dartmouth, MA, Feb. 6 & 18 (J. Hill); and yet another Le Conte’s Sparrow in Amherst, MA, Dec. 8–14 (S. Turner *et al.*) which was thought not to be one of the birds present in September.

Sixteen Sharp-tailed Sparrows at a traditional wintering site in Eastham, MA, Jan. 5 (G. Gove *et al.*) was the largest winter count in many years, while four Seaside Sparrows in Newburyport, MA, Jan. 1 (RSH) and three in Eastham, MA, Jan. 5 (S. Arena) were good totals for this increasingly scarce species. White-throated Sparrows were again very scarce, as were Fox and White-crowned sparrows. A Golden-crowned Sparrow at Naugatuck, Dec. 15 (MS) which, unfortunately, could not be found again, established a first for Connecticut, pending acceptance by



**Western Tanager at Eastham, Massachusetts, on February 11, 1992. This was the first New England winter bird in eight years, although it formerly occurred more often at this season. Photograph/Roger Everett.**

their records committee. Single “Oregon” Juncos were at 3 sites in Massachusetts.

#### **LONGSPURS TO FINCHES**

Lapland Longspurs were apparently scarce throughout the Region, as were Snow Buntings. A ♂ Brewer’s Blackbird was reported on the M.V. CBC, Dec. 29 (PT). Seventy-eight E. Meadowlarks in Rhode Island in December and 149 in Massachusetts in January were encouraging totals for this troubled species, although probably a reflection of snowless conditions rather than of any real population increase. Among the lingering N. Orioles in s. New England, was a ♀ “Bullock’s” type oriole visiting a feeder in Branford, CT, during early December (NP, ph.).

It was another generally poor year for boreal finches, although some species appeared in modest numbers. A handful of Pine Grosbeaks were present in n. Maine and n. New Hampshire (*vide* DDL), but there were “al-

most none” in Vermont (JN) and only one made it as far south as Massachusetts. For the first time in several years, Purple Finches made at least a modest appearance with good numbers across n. New Hampshire and Vermont; 190 in Island Pond, VT, Jan. 26 (WGE *et al.*) were particularly noteworthy. Beginning in late January, an influx of Purples was evident in s. New Hampshire, interior Massachusetts, and n. Connecticut. Red Crossbill reports were limited to a couple in northernmost Maine, 3 reports totaling 16 birds in w. Massachusetts, and one bird in Connecticut. A few White-winged Crossbills were scattered across n. Maine and New Hampshire, as well as in n.e. Vermont, where nesting was suspected to be either underway or imminent on Jan. 26 (WGE *et al.*); none was reported from the southern 3 states.

Small flocks of Com. Redpolls were widely distributed across Maine and n. New Hampshire, but only a few were detected in Vermont and interior Massachusetts, and one group of three made it as far south as Sherman, CT. Single Hoary Redpolls were reported from Plymouth, ME, Jan. 4 (†BS), and Charlotte, ME, Feb. 14 (BS *et al.*). Pine Siskin distribution across the Region closely matched that of redpolls during the first half of the season, widespread across n. New England but few farther south. A distinct influx was evident in many areas in late January when flocks of up to 100 arrived in w. Massachusetts and a handful penetrated into n. Connecticut and Rhode Island. American Goldfinches drew comments from throughout the Region, with several flocks of 100+ seen. Evening Grosbeaks were present in good numbers across Maine, n. New Hampshire, and n. Vermont, but to the south they were again very sparse and confined mostly to the interior.

**Corrigenda:** Convincing details were received for a Townsend’s Solitaire in Leyden, MA, Dec. 30, 1990 (D. Potter *et al.*). The two House Wrens in Narragansett, RI, Jan. 14, 1991 should have been attributed to K. & D. Karlson.

**Subregional editors (boldface), contributors (italics), and observers:** Robert Abrams, Edith Andrews, *Jim Berry*, Mike Boucher, Cape Cod Bird Club, Neil Currie, Walter G. Ellison, Glen d’Entremont, *Diane De Luca*, *Alan & Barbara Delorey*, *Jody Despres*, *David Emerson*, Richard L. Ferren, *Richard A. Forster*, Richard S. Heil, *Kyle Jones*, Jay Kaplan, *Seth Kellogg*, *Betty Kleiner*, *Stephen Kotchko* (SKo), Douglas L. Kraus, Mark Lynch, Maine Audubon Society, Whit Manter, Steve Mirick, *Julie Nichols*, Frank Oatman, *Simon A. Perkins*, Wayne R. Petersen, Noble Proctor, David Provenchar, B Sheehan, Norm Smith, *Robert H. Stymeist*, Mark Szantyr, Take A Second Look (Boston Harbor Census), *William Townsend*, *Peter Trimble*, Vermont Institute of Natural Science.—BLAIR NIKULA, 2 Gilbert Lane, Harwich Port, MA 02646.

# HUDSON-DELAWARE REGION

William J. Boyle, Jr.,  
Robert O. Paxton,  
and David A. Cutler

Although it was not quite as warm as last winter, and certainly not the warmest winter on record, the thermometer stayed about three degrees above normal for the entire season over most of the area. Precipitation, on the other hand, was well below normal, especially in January and February. The New York City area did not record any significant snowfall until just after the end of this reporting period. Only the snowbelt from Syracuse north to Massena in upper New York State experienced heavy snowfalls; western areas, such as Buffalo, were well below normal.

The mild winter, on the heels of a very mild autumn, led to large numbers of lingering half-hardy migrants and unusual concentrations of waterfowl as far north as the great lakes. Vagrants from the west were well represented. In an echo of last year's grand flight, alcids put on a good show along the coast, and white-winged gulls staged a major influx into upstate New York and interior Pennsylvania. They were conspicuously scarce along the coast, however, and for yet another winter, the irruptive species of finches were almost nonexistent.

**Abbreviations:** Bombay Hook (*Bombay Hook Nat'l Wildlife Ref., near Smyrna, DE*); Brig (*Brigantine Unit, Forsythe Nat'l Wildlife Ref., Atlantic Co., NJ*); Cape Henlopen (*Cape Henlopen State Park, DE*); Dunkirk (*Dunkirk Harbor, Chautauqua Co., NY*); Indian River (*Indian River Inlet, DE*); LI (*Long Island*); Manasquan Inlet (*Manasquan Inlet, Monmouth-Ocean counties, NJ*); Middle Creek (*Middle Creek W.M.A., Lancaster, PA*); Montauk (*Montauk Point and vicinity, Long Island, NY*); Moses-Saunders Dam (*Moses-Saunders Dam, New York-Ontario, near Massena, St. Lawrence Co., NY*); Sandy Hook (*Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway Nat'l Recreation Area, Monmouth, NJ*). Place names in *italics* are counties.

## LOONS TO HERONS

Open water encouraged many loons, grebes, and other waterbirds to winter outside usual ranges. A late flight of loons put down in the Susquehanna River at Washington Boro, Lancaster, PA, by inclement weather December 3 included 26 Red-

throated and 404 Common loons. A Pacific/Arctic Loon discovered at Lake Nockamixon, Bucks, PA, Dec. 1 (†JHo) followed by only a week the previously noted bird at Peace Valley, only a few miles away, and may well be the same individual. Another Pacific/Arctic Loon was found in Brooklyn, NY, Dec. 12 by birders scouting their CBC territory (†SSp, RM); fortunately, it hung around to be counted 2 days later.

Red-necked Grebes were not much in evidence. One appeared at Lake Nockamixon, Dec. 7 (B & NM), and two were there Dec. 22–23 (AM). The only report from Delaware was one at Henlopen Acres, Sussex, Feb. 13–23 (PV); in New Jersey, a Red-necked was at Manasquan, Jan. 30, and another took up residence in Belmar, Ocean, Feb. 15, where still present in late April (m.ob.). The species was more numerous, as usual, in New York, but five at Saratoga Lake Dec. 14 were noteworthy (BP). One was at Sylvan Lake, Dutchess, Feb. 8 into March (RO).

Seven reports of Eared Grebe was far above average. Two were found in Delaware, the first at Indian River, Dec. 20 (†MG, BP, J. Dunn) and the second at Cape Henlopen, Jan. 4 (†MG, BP). One was at Holgate, NJ, on the Barnegat CBC Dec. 29, and another was seen January and February at Caven Pier, Hudson, NJ (v.o.). In New York, one was at Dunkirk, Dec. 7–8 (m.ob.), another at Saratoga Lake Dec. 12–15 (B. Boehm), and a third was on the Niagara River for the Buffalo CBC.

An imm. Brown Pelican was found emaciated on the Hudson River waterfront in Hoboken, NJ, Feb. 24; the bird, which had been banded in North Carolina last year, unfortunately died at a rehabilitator's facility later that day (L. Soucy).

In a previously undetected range expansion, the increasing Great Cormorant was found wintering along the Hudson River in s. New York; more than 30 were on the Westchester and Dutchess portions of the river. At least 22 were on the Delaware River north of Philadelphia Feb. 23 (EB), while one was out of place at Lake Assunpink, Monmouth, NJ, Feb. 16 (TBa). A Double-crested Cormorant at Bainbridge, Chenango, NY, Jan. 28, was far from the usual coastal wintering waters (R. Jones). In coastal New York and New Jersey, the species was present in exceptionally high numbers throughout the season.

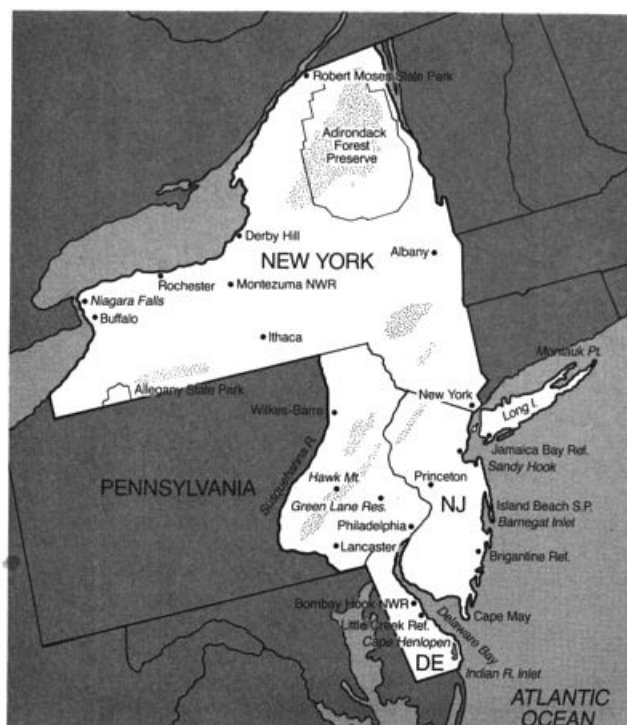
American Bittern were again reported in above average numbers, perhaps owing to the mild weather. Most were along the coast, but one wintered at Allendale Celery Farm, Bergen, NJ (ST), and another was at Mendon Ponds, Rochester, NY, Feb. 15 (CTC, MD). Up to nine Black-crowned Night-Herons were in Buffalo, NY, Feb. 14–19 (B. Brock). A late Glossy Ibis was at Turkey Point, Cumberland, NJ, Jan. 4 (AK).

## WATERFOWL

About seven Greater White-fronted Geese were reported, mostly without details, from all 4 states. Large flocks of Snow Geese again wintered along the Delaware Bayshore, and small numbers wintered as far north as Dunkirk and Iroquois Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, NY. With the estimated 11,000 Snow Geese at Heislerville, Cumberland, NJ, Jan. 13 was a Ross' Goose (CS). Another was at Bombay Hook all season.

Two drake Eur. Green-winged Teal wintered at Peace Valley Nature Center, Bucks, PA; one was on the Speonk River, Suffolk, LI, Feb. 14–23 (JRu, m.ob.), and another was with a flock of 2000+ Am. Green-winged Teal at Goshen Landing, Cape May, NJ, Mar. 1 (CS). The annual buildup of N. Pintail at Oldmans Creek and Raccoon Creek, NJ, peaked at only about 20,000–30,000 in late January (SF); with the mild weather and all the open water, the birds may have been more widely dispersed than usual.

At least two of the four Blue-winged Teal found on the Peekskill, Westchester, NY, CBC, stayed through the season. Eurasian Wigeon were again in above-average numbers, with about 15 in s.e. New York, mainly on LI, nine in New Jersey, and one wintering again in Lancaster, PA (RMS *et al.*). Several groups of 1–2 dozen Redheads were at ponds on e. LI (BK, JRu), where they are being seen annually, but two at Hoopes Reservoir, New Castle, DE, Dec. 26–Jan. 22 were noteworthy (AH). The usual concentrations were typified by groups of 600 and 690 at 2 spots



in *Tompkins*, NY, in late January and February (ABy, NB).

Four to five Tufted Ducks in New York represented an unprecedented influx. The previously noted drake at Saratoga Lake remained to at least Dec. 15 (KA, m.ob.), while a first-winter drake at Rye, *Westchester*, Dec. 25 through February, attracted birders from many n.e. states. A drake was found at Robert Moses S.P., *Suffolk*, LI, Jan. 20 (H. Martin), and another at E. Moriches, *Suffolk*, Jan. 25 (K. Furenlid *et al.*). Yet another found Feb. 17 at Mastic, only about 10 mi from E. Moriches, was not the same bird found there according to observers who saw both, as it was in much less advanced plumage (JRu, R. Adamo).

The Montauk CBC recorded a high 166 Common Eider, and up to 200 were at the point in January. Farther south, groups of up to 10 and 18, respectively, wintered at Barnegat Light, *Ocean*, NJ, and Stone Harbor, *Cape May*, NJ, while one was at Indian River Jan. 3 (PV). Twenty-eight King Eider were found on the Montauk CBC, and a maximum of 11 were at Pt. Lookout, *Nassau*, LI, in January. In New Jersey, about 9 were scattered along the coast from Sandy Hook to Cape May while a full adult drake was with an estimated 10,000–20,000 waterfowl attracted to an abundance of clams off Reeds Beach, on Delaware Bay, during December.

Harlequin Ducks were relatively scarce. The Barnegat Light group grew to seven, with four lingering well beyond the end of the period, while up to 10 wintered at Pt. Lookout. Among the waterfowl at Reeds Beach were 6000+ Greater Scaup, plus 5000+ scoters of all three species. Similarly large numbers of scoters were at Montauk in January.

A record regional total of nine Barrow's Goldeneye were found during the season, all in New York. A female returned to the Throgs Neck Bridge, *Bronx*, for a 2nd winter (SW, m.ob.) and another was at Quogue, *Suffolk*, LI, Feb. 7 (B. Ringle). The winter peak was two pairs at Moses-Saunders Dam, Jan. 5 (BDL), while single drakes were at Three Mile Harbor, *Suffolk*, LI, Dec. 21–23 (J. Ash, m.ob.), Plattsburgh, *Clinton*, Jan. 6 (B. Krueger), and on the Hudson River at

*Washington*, Feb. 22 (BP). Most remarkable were the two ♂ Barrow's X Common Goldeneye hybrids, one at Larchmont, NY, Jan. 11 (TWB) and another at the Moses-Saunders Dam, Jan. 26 (P. Martin), where a similar bird (the same?) was described in November 1988.

#### RAPTORS

Black Vultures continue to edge their way north into New York, with six at W. Haverstraw, *Rockland*, Jan. 1 (ET, J. Senerchia), what may have been the same six as far north as New Paltz, *Ulster*, Jan. 14 (*vide* TWB). A single was in Tuxedo Park, *Rockland*, Feb. 19 (D. & J. Clark). A Turkey Vulture found on the Jamestown, *Chautauqua*, CBC, Dec. 15 was only the 2nd seasonal record for the Niagara Frontier Region of upstate New York. This species has been wintering in recent years about 75 mi to the northeast in Letchworth S.P., where up to 10 were present in January (MD).

A very late Osprey was at East Point, *Cumberland*, NJ, Jan. 4 (AK), but more surprising was the presence of two at Southaven Park and another at Yaphank, both *Suffolk*, NY, at the same time on Jan. 29 (J. Osterlund, W. Kollmer, *vide* JRu). Bald Eagle recovery continues strong, as evidenced by an estimated 175 wintering in the upper Delaware River watershed of s.e. New York (P. Nye); 40+ reports from the Albany, NY, area; 22 on the S. *Lancaster*, PA, CBC; and 46 in s. New Jersey on the annual survey. Northern Harriers were reported in excellent numbers, but did not concentrate into large flocks as they do in some years; the Alpha roost, for example, contained only about 20 birds. Accipiters were everywhere, often raiding bird feeders.

A Broad-winged Hawk was around Montauk Pt. in December and was found on the local CBC, Dec. 14 (v.o.). Even more unusual was one found by a veteran observer at Tinicum, Philadelphia, on the Glenolden CBC the same day (J.C. Miller); a 3rd Broad-winged was an outstanding addition to the Cape May CBC Dec. 22 (F. West, B. Sehl). Rough-legged Hawks came south in excellent numbers, as indicated by 56 found during a survey in the Cayuga Lake area, and 16 on the Bombay Hook CBC in central Delaware.

Golden Eagles picked up considerably from last year, with about eight wintering in New York and nine in s. New Jersey. One was at Kitts Hummock, *Kent*, DE, Dec. 16 (APE), and another was at Muddy Run, *Lancaster*, PA, Jan. 19–Feb. 4 (RMS, m.ob.). American Kestrels were also found in somewhat better numbers than recent winters, a good sign for a species that has declined dramatically over the past 2 decades.

It is hard to account for the recent surge in numbers of wintering Merlins. Whereas ten years ago a report of winter Merlin on the coast would have been noteworthy and an inland bird somewhat suspect, we now find that coastal birds are commonplace and inland records almost routine. This season

there were four in s.e. Pennsylvania in December; a total of 14 reports from New York, including 8 from Buffalo to Syracuse and four in the Hudson Valley Region; at least a dozen in New Jersey; and one at Bombay Hook in January. Many coastal sightings go unreported as not being worth mentioning. A Gyrfalcon was recorded on the Elizabethtown, NY, CBC, Dec. 21 and another was one-day visitor to Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, Jan. 17 (B. Cook, *vide* TWB). Another Gyr was an elusive visitor to the Hackensack Meadowlands, NJ, during January (v.o.).

#### RAILS TO SHOREBIRDS

Two King Rails were still present at Hardyston, *Sussex*, NJ, Dec. 13 and may have decided to winter (SA). Virginia Rails were on numerous CBCs; five were present all season at the Allendale Celery Farm (ST), and another wintered as far north as East Aurora, *Erie*, NY (L. Holmes). A Sora was at Mendon Ponds, Rochester, Jan. 22–27 (A. Clarridge, m.ob.), and individuals made the Montauk and Bombay Hook CBCs.

A Purple Gallinule was picked up as a fresh road kill at Cape May, Jan. 5 (VE), following two there in November. Two Common Moorhens were the surprise of the Philadelphia mid-winter bird census, Jan. 11 (M. Logan, B. Ridgely, C. Witt). A Sandhill Crane visited a cornfield in W. Woodland Twp., *Burlington*, NJ, Dec. 19 (M. Bakely *et al.*), and another was flying over Long Branch, *Monmouth*, NJ, Dec. 21 (J. Burgiel). The following day an individual was reported near Mercer County Park, about 35 mi due west (*vide* F. Coleman).

The previously noted Piping Plover at Greece, *Monroe*, NY, remained until Dec. 15, and made a fine addition to the Rochester CBC. A staggering 275 Am. Oystercatchers were on the Oceanville, NJ, CBC, Dec. 21, surpassing last year's high at Cape May. Returning migrants were noted mid-February, and some were already on territory on LI Feb. 23 (TWB). The Am. Avocet flock at Bombay Hook dwindled rapidly after the beginning of December, and the last was seen there Jan. 1 (PV). Willets were reported on the N. Nassau, S. Nassau (both LI), and Cape May CBCs, with the latter bird remaining until Jan. 24 (BG *et al.*); another was at Stow Neck Road, *Salem*, NJ, Jan. 12 (CS).

A Spotted Sandpiper was an unseasonal visitor to Playland, Rye, NY, Jan. 11–18 (TWB *et al.*) for the second January in a row. The most bizarre story of the season concerns a flock of 20 Am. Woodcock that landed on the second story porch of a house in Calicoon Center, in the Catskills of *Sullivan*, NY, and fed at suet feeders after a Feb. 26 snowstorm (L. Burrill).

#### JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

A Pomarine Jaeger was a New Year's Day surprise for a group of birders at Braddock Bay, *Monroe*, NY, on Lake Ontario (P. Martin,



Eared Grebe at Cape Henlopen, Delaware, on January 4, 1992. Photograph/Mary Gustafson.



**This first-winter Franklin's Gull displayed adolescent traits by hanging out in the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant in Riverhead, Long Island, New York, for a month this winter. It was photographed December 16, 1991, by Mike Cooper.**

CTC *et al.*); two others seen on a boat trip about 68 mi east of Manasquan Inlet were more expected. A highlight of that boat trip were two apparent Great Skuas (ABr *et al.*).

A Laughing Gull, Dec. 7–8 at Oswego, NY, on Lake Ontario was a first December record for the Oneida Lake Region. Very rare for s.e. New York was an imm. Franklin's Gull discovered in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant in Riverhead, Suffolk, LI, Dec. 12 (PG). It apparently fared well on Big Macs and was seen daily until Jan. 10 (m.ob.). Little Gull numbers were up substantially from recent winters, the most impressive being 50 at Durand-Eastman Park in Rochester, Jan. 1 (CTC *et al.*). There were only about five in the Niagara area during the season and three on Long Island, but other concentrations included five at Reeds Beach, Cape May, Feb. 28 (CS), and seven at Indian River Dec. 20 (MG, BP, J. Dunn). A Com. Black-headed Gull was a first for Lancaster, PA, on the Susquehanna River, Feb. 22–23 (RMS *et al.*). Elsewhere, there were about 7 in the New York City-Long Island area, a similar number scattered spots around New Jersey, and three in Delaware.

Landfill activity at Penn Manor Lakes, on the Delaware River in Bucks, PA, attracted an estimated 108,000 gulls during December;

numbers declined thereafter, but still included a variety of the less common species, such as 12–15 Lesser Black-backed, five Iceland, and two Glaucous gulls. A smaller, but still significant concentration at Blue Marsh Lake and Lake Ontelaunee, near Reading, PA, included an even larger variety, among them Pennsylvania's first Mew Gull. First located at Lake Ontelaunee Jan. 2, it relocated to Blue Marsh Lake and remained until that lake froze at the end of the month (†JHe, D. Rich, H. Morrin, m.ob.). Other gulls at the two lakes included a Laughing Gull Jan. 1–3 (v.o.), up to six Lesser Black-backed, seven Iceland, and four Glaucous gulls.

As part of a major influx of white-winged gulls into upstate New York, a probable Thayer's Gull was at the N. Spencer Landfill, Tompkins, Jan. 10 (ph. NB, B. Evans, S. Seely), and a first-winter Thayer's was at the Seneca Meadows Landfill, Seneca, also in the Cayuga Lake Basin, Jan. 30–31 (†NB, ABy, ph. NB). Another first-winter Thayer's Gull was at the Moses-Saunders Dam Feb. 3 along with an impressive 26 Iceland and 54 Glaucous gulls (BDL, N. Crookshank).

At least 12 Iceland and five Glaucous gulls were in the Cayuga Lake Basin during the season (NB), and both species were well represented elsewhere in upstate New York. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also present in high numbers upstate, with at least 9 reports, including one at Dunkirk Dec. 27 for a first local record (TMO). Nearer the coast, the white-winged gulls were quite scarce, but Lesser Black-backed were widely distributed, with about eight in s.e. New York, 12 in New Jersey, and three in Delaware.

A very late Com. Tern was on the Niagara River Dec. 1–15 and made the Buffalo CBC (v.o.). Also notably tardy was a Black Tern on the Niagara River, Dec. 1 (F. Rew).

Alcid numbers were not up to last year's big showing, but were still the second best in many years. Three Dovekies were at Montauk Dec. 5 (M. Levine), and three others were seen on the boat trip off Manasquan, Dec. 14 (ABr *et al.*). A fortunate Dovekie was

found in good condition in a bush at Cape May Point, Dec. 27, and immediately released (*vide* PK). The only Thick-billed Murres were one at Indian River Jan. 28 through most of February (v.o.), and one at Montauk Feb. 29 (A. Baldelli).

The Montauk CBC recorded nine Razorbills, and 28 were at the point Jan. 5. In New Jersey, the highlight of the season was the two to four that took up residence in the inlet at Manasquan, where present daily Jan. 9 through February to the delight of birders from far and near (J. Herder, m.m.ob.). Other Razorbills were at Avalon, Cape May, Jan. 30 (5, DW), Deal, Monmouth, NJ, Feb. 11, Sandy Hook, Feb. 12, and Indian River Inlet, Jan. 28–Feb. 13 (m.ob.).

#### OWLS TO GNATCATCHERS

A Barn Owl seen several times in February at Sandy Hook was one of many reported wintering this year. As noted in the Fall Season report, the winter brought a major influx of Snowy Owls, especially in upstate New York. Upwards of 100 were present from Buffalo to Rochester, and many others were found farther east and south in the state. At least a dozen were on Long Island, and about 10 in New Jersey, almost all of them on the coast from Jersey City to Wildwood. About five were at scattered spots in Pennsylvania, including wintering birds in *Lehigh* and *Lancaster*, but none made it to Delaware.

The previously noted **Northern Hawk Owl** at Fort Edward, Washington, NY, remained throughout the period (m.ob.), while another discovered at Lenox, Madison, NY, was present all of February (S. McCombie, m.ob.). Another highlight was a **Great Gray Owl** found near Jamestown, NY, Jan. 29 (C. Hodges, m.ob.) just a few days after one was located in Warren, PA, only about 10 mi away. Less widely publicized was another Great Gray at Calcium, Jefferson, north of Watertown, NY, Jan. 24–Feb. 5, which met an untimely death at the hands (claws?) of a cat (S.C. Guy, ph. R.D. Murphy).

Other wintering owls were reported in fair numbers. For example, 32 Long-eared Owls were at 8 roosts in Hunterdon, NJ (O. Heck), and about 17 at 4 roosts in s.w. New Jersey (*vide* WDa). Eight recorded on the *Lebanon*, PA, CBC were new to that count. A survey of Short-eared Owls coordinated by Brinkley in the Cayuga Lake Basin located 76 birds. Banders at Braddock Bay earned the enmity of local birders by manually capturing and banding a **Boreal Owl**, Feb. 6; the newly ringed bird promptly departed. Northern Saw-whet Owls were widely reported in New Jersey, but few were noted elsewhere.

An *Empidonax*, believed to be a Least Flycatcher, was present for several weeks at Montauk at least as late as Dec. 14 (HM). The **Gray Flycatcher** discovered at Cape Henlopen in November was present through December, but not found thereafter. Equally remarkable was the appearance of a Pacific-slope Flycatcher in Fulton Township on the S *Lancaster*, PA, CBC, Dec 15 (and studied



**Adult Mew Gull (front-center bird) with Ring-billed and others at Blue Marsh Lake, Reading, Pennsylvania, on January 10, 1992. Photograph/Eric Witmer.**

again Dec. 16), only 7 mi from the site where one was found last year (F. Habegger, T. Garner, J. Witmer, †EW). This is the 2nd state and Regional record.

Numerous Eastern Phoebes were located on CBCs, but two on the s.w. *Morris*, NJ, mid-winter census were apparently wintering. Another wintered at Whitesbog, *Burlington*, NJ (L. Little), but one at Owego, NY, Feb. 23 may have been an early migrant (S. Hunt). Highly unseasonal was a Great Crested Flycatcher seen and heard on the Bernville, *Berks*, PA, CBC, Jan. 1 and present several days thereafter (D. Kendall, D. & J. Steffy, E. Schleicher). Single W. Kingbirds were at Willow Brook Arboretum, *Morris*, NJ, and Sandy Hook, Dec. 8, but others were found on 4 Long Island CBCs, and individuals were present at Gardiner's Park, *Suffolk*, LI, Dec. 8–Jan. 6 (BK) and Shinnecock, LI, Jan. 1 (*fide* TWB).

Two Com. Ravens were at the N. Spencer Landfill, Jan. 17 (ABY), while in n.w. New Jersey, a pair was present all winter at Yards Creek, *Warren*, where the species is suspected to have nested last year. Later in the season, the pair was seen carrying nesting material; as noted last spring, the last confirmed nesting of raven in the state occurred about 1905.

A Marsh Wren at Durand-Eastman Park, Rochester, Jan. 11, was an unexpected winter visitor (RGS, S. Spahn). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was at Palmyra, *Burlington*, NJ, Dec. 8 (TBA, WDa), one was at Montauk for the CBC, Dec. 14 (HM), and another was at Woodland Beach, Dec. 16 for the Bombay Hook CBC (CS, K. & W. Alpin).

#### THRUSHES TO WARBLERS

American Robins took advantage of the mild weather to remain north in sometimes staggering numbers. Large concentrations were found as far north as the Rochester, Syracuse, and even St. Lawrence Regions of upstate New York; in New Jersey, 5000 were located on the n.w. Hunterdon CBC, and "thousands" were at Worthington State Forest, Dec. 21 (B. Hardiman). Four CBCs in central New Jersey tallied 6300, while the Glenolden, PA, CBC, registered 7166. Farther west, the numbers dropped dramatically, as the S. *Lancaster*, PA, CBC, counted only 28. The only Varied Thrush of the season was a female at Durand-Eastman Park Dec. 31–Jan. 13 (J. Miles, CTC, m.ob.).

Among half-hardy winterers, Gray Catbirds lingered in numbers far above average, with two wintering in the Buffalo area. Brown Thrashers, too, were present in higher than normal numbers, as were American Pipits. No Bohemian Waxwings ventured south of upstate New York, and the only concentrations were in *Clinton*, where a peak of 50 was found Jan. 31 (C. & J. Hess).

Northern Shrikes staged another major invasion into the entire Region, with one even reaching Cape May, though none were found in Delaware. Eastern Pennsylvania had about seven and New Jersey 12, many setting up winter territories for extended



**One of the up to four Razorbills that entertained the multitudes at Manasquan Inlet, New Jersey, for several weeks this winter. Photographed January 31, 1992, by Alan Brady.**

stays. In New York, one singing at Tobay Sanctuary, *Nassau*, Jan. 1 (BK) was just one of several on Long Island. Incomplete data from upstate indicates the presence of well over 100; 34 were found on the 9 CBCs conducted in the Niagara Frontier Region alone (GR). A curious Loggerhead Shrike was noted looking in the window of a house in Wanasink, *Sullivan*, NY, Dec. 8 (*fide* JA). The only other noted was the previously reported bird at Broadkill Beach, DE, seen occasionally through Feb. 20 (v.o.)

Orange-crowned Warblers were again present in good numbers, with three on Long Island, six in New Jersey, one at Norristown, *Montgomery*, PA, Dec. 28–29 (NT), and two in Delaware. A Cape May Warbler was in Griggstown, *Somerset*, NJ, for the Princeton CBC, Dec. 15, while a ♂ Black-throated Blue Warbler visited a Mendenhall, DE, feeder, Dec. 20, where it fed on cracked corn (J. & R. Woodward).

One of the many CBC highlights was a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Quogue, LI, Dec. 14 (B. Dieterich). In addition to numerous Pine Warblers tallied on CBCs, wintering birds were in Somerset Twp., *Niagara*, NY (WDn), the Rochester area (*fide* RGS), Andover, *Sussex*, NJ, (E. Metzgar), and a feeder in Atglen, *Chester*, PA (RMS *et al.*). A Prairie Warbler discovered in Cape May, Dec. 16, was kind enough to stick around for the CBC the following weekend (RC *et al.*). Palm Warblers were found on many CBCs, including the *Dutchess*, NY, count, where one was the first in 25 years.

A very late Am. Redstart was at Beaver Island S.P., in the Niagara River, Dec. 1 (P. Benham). Of the four Ovenbirds found, two in Pennsylvania and two in New York, the rarity by far was one at Cheektowaga, *Erie*, NY, Jan. 15–16 (W. Burch *et al.*). Eleven Yellow-breasted Chats was far above normal, with a half-dozen on Long Island.

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

The Western Tanager noted at Ft. Tilden, Brooklyn, in November was seen again Dec. 12, and another was on the Cape May CBC,

Dec. 22 (F. West). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was carefully studied at Watchung Res., *Union*, NJ, Jan. 2 (R. Knapp *et al.*), but a much greater surprise was a ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak at a Manhattan feeder the same day (S. Plimpton). A ♂ Painted Bunting was discovered in Rehobeth, DE, Feb. 2 (WWF). Dickcissels were found at five scattered locales, including Walker, *Monroe*, NY, Jan. 12 (CTC, MD), Honey Brook, *Chester*, PA, Dec. 22–29 (P. Hurlock), and two that wintered in *Salem*, NJ (JKM, WDa, m.ob.).

The rarer sparrows were a big part of the winter birding scene. A Clay-colored Sparrow was a highlight of the Montauk and Boonton, NJ, CBCs, and another was in Newport, *Cumberland*, NJ, Jan. 11 (BBa, VE). More accommodating was one found at Assunpink W.M.A., *Monmouth*, NJ, Feb. 2 by birders searching for the Lark Sparrow found on the local CBC, Dec. 14 (GW, m.ob.). Both birds were present through the end of the period and into April, when the Clay-colored was joined by a second. Another Lark Sparrow was on the SUNY Purchase campus, Feb. 15 into March (K. Fung, S. Woltman, m.ob.), and a third was in *Dutchess*, NY, Feb. 29 (*fide* M. Van Wagner).

A Henslow's Sparrow was at Higbee's Beach, Cape May, Dec. 11 (JDo *et al.*), and another was discovered at Overpeck Park, *Bergen*, NJ, Jan. 11 by Jim Bangma, who was looking for the Le Conte's Sparrow he had found there in November. Both birds were seen by various observers (but with great difficulty) through the end of the period. Another Le Conte's Sparrow was photographed at Cape Henlopen, Feb. 9, for a first Delaware record (A. & J. White); it was seen again briefly on the 12th before the area was closed for repair of storm damage.

Lincoln's Sparrow is another rare winter visitor, but this season there were 2 at Pawling, *Dutchess*, NY, Jan. 1 (S. Gilbert), and three in New Jersey, including one at Indian Mills for several weeks into January (WDa). Rounding out the sparrow picture were Dark-eyed "Oregon" Juncos at Rochester for weeks, at Elba, *Genesee*, NY, all February (G. Klue), and briefly at a Millington, *Morris*, NJ, feeder Dec. 15 (M. Corges). Not surprisingly, in view of the mild season, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were scarce, especially the former.

A Bobolink at a feeder in DeWitt, *Onondaga*, NY on Jan. 9 and Feb. 2 was an extraordinary winter visitor (K. Radway). Numerous large concentrations of blackbirds were noted, as many members of the family chose not to go further south for the season.

Either Brewer's Blackbirds are becoming more common or birders are looking more closely for them; both are probably true, but this season only New York missed them. Four were found on the S. *Lancaster* CBC, and one returned to an Easton, *Northampton*, PA, feeder for a 2nd winter, Jan. 16 (A. Koch). A maximum of 50 were again at Ft. Elfsborg, *Salem* for much of the

winter (WDa, m.ob.) and 10–15 were at Sharptown, *Salem*, Feb. 2 (K. Tischner). The traditional spot near Bombay Hook held 55 for the CBC. About 8 Northern Orioles were found in New Jersey, mainly in December, and three wintered in the New York City-Long Island area.

Once again it was not a winter finch year, with virtually none reported south of upstate New York. Ten Pine Grosbeaks at Millbrook, *Dutchess*, NY, Jan. 7 were the only ones to come even a little ways south (F. Germond), while the only reports of either crossbill were a few scattered groups from Buffalo to Syracuse and further north. There were some small flocks of Common Redpoll early in the season, such as 30 on the Oak Orchard, *Genesee*, NY, CBC; 60 in *Jefferson*, Dec. 30 (TMi); and 62 near the Moses-Saunders Dam, Dec. 110 (BDL). A few made it to Long Island for some of the CBCs, and one was an irregular



Present throughout February and enjoyed by many was this Great Gray Owl near Jamestown, New York. Photograph/Ned Brinkley.

visitor to a Middletown, *Monmouth*, NJ, feeder (RD). Pine Siskins were common only in the Adirondacks; for example, a flock 1000+ in *Hamilton*, Jan. 7 (GL).

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## MIDDLE ATLANTIC COAST REGION

Henry T. Armistead

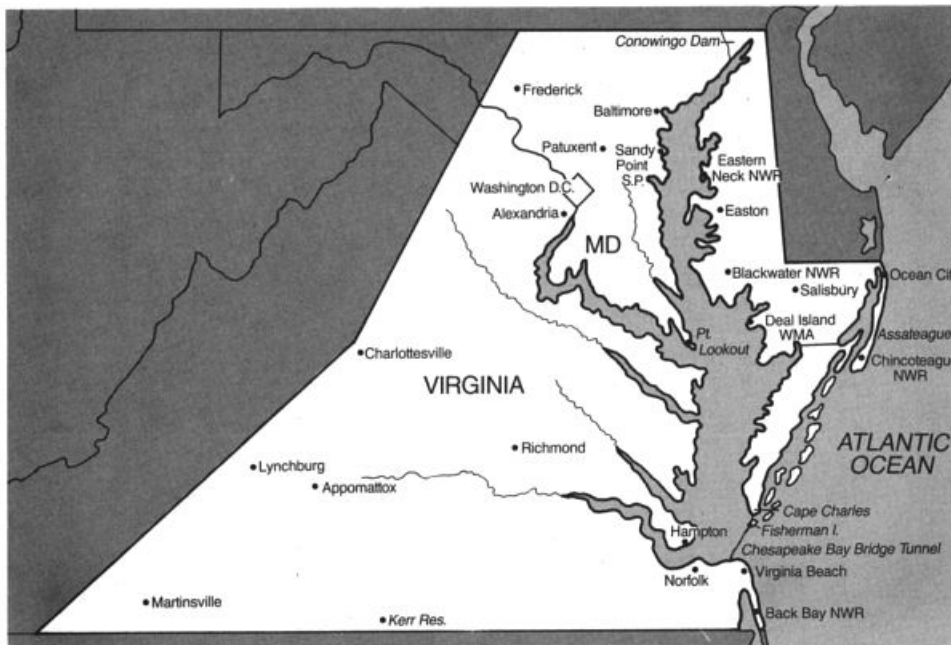
This was another very mild winter, resulting in a huge number of reports of lingering, half-hardy species but poor numbers of feeder birds. There was hardly any snow and few cold snaps. There was another big influx of alcid and several successful pelagic trips, but some boat trips were weathered out. Reports were received of damage to Bald Eagle nests in fierce wind storms. The big January 4 coastal storm closed Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge for several weeks. Temperatures averaged 3.6° F above normal in December and 3.3° in January. Precipitation was close to normal.

Field ornithology has lost an old-time friend with the death in January of John H. Buckalew, a legend in his time: former manager of Chincoteague and Bombay Hook refuges, collector, bander of tens of thousands of Laughing Gulls and Royal Terns, and one of the banders in charge (BIC) at Kiptopeke. Some of John's records are legendary, such as the first Lesser Black-backed Gull collected in North America on Assateague Island and a Hoary Redpoll on the nearby mainland. We shall miss this modest, accomplished gentleman. His family asks that those who wish may make contributions to his memory to the Chincoteague National History Association, P.O. Box 917, Chincoteague, Virginia 23336 (membership is †10).

**Abbreviations:** Assat. (*Assateague I., MD*); Back Bay (*Back Bay NWR, VA*); the Bay (*Chesapeake Bay*); Blackwater (*Blackwater NWR, MD*); CBBT (*Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel, VA*); Chinc. (*Chincoteague NWR, VA*); Craney (*Craney Island Disposal Area, Portsmouth, VA*); DC (*Washington, DC*); Deal (*Deal Island WMA, MD*); ESMD (*Eastern Shore of Maryland*); ESVA (*Eastern Shore of Virginia*); Fish. I. (*Fisherman Island NWR, VA*); Hart (*Hart and Miller Is., Baltimore Co., MD*); SPSP (*Sandy Point SP near Annapolis, MD*); Susq. (*lower Susquehanna R., MD*).

The two charts included with this report document the decline and increase over the last 40 years of Bald Eagle and E. Bluebird. I don't want to hear that party hours, adverse weather on some counts, fewer counts in earlier years/more in later, slight shifts of some count circles, and the like are not factored in. By sheer weight of numbers, anyone can see that these two conspicuous species have been increasing here as wintering birds for many years. A blank space indicates the count was not held that year. The year refers to the December count period





Bay Jan. 31 (DC). There were 4 reports of Red-necked Grebes, all coastal, such as the one at Seashore SP, VA, Jan. 3-6 (NB, GBP, DLH *et al.*). An Eared Grebe was at Chinc. Dec. 27 (RH, DC).

A pelagic trip out from Rudee Inlet, VA, discovered a N. Fulmar and a Greater Shearwater in Norfolk Canyon waters Dec. 7 (DFA, BP *et al.*, ph.). Huge numbers of N. Gannets were in the VA Capes area, with 5200 at Virginia Beach Jan. 31 (DC), thousands at Back Bay/False Cape SP, VA, Dec. 19 (DS), and on the Little Cr., VA, CBC Dec. 31; 10,775 along with five Brown Pelicans, 13 Great Cormorants, and 824 Double-crested Cormorants were counted (PWS *et al.*). The Am. White Pelican was again at Chinc. all period (DC, HTA, VBK, m.ob.; refuge pet?). Brown Pelicans again wintered in the Virginia Capes area in small numbers, which would have been unheard of only a few years ago. In addition, Davis made half a dozen less-traditional sightings of singles in this area at borrow pits, nontidal drainage canals, and reservoirs. Great Cormorants were in record numbers, such as 63 at Kiptopeke Feb. 8 (SCR) and 55 at CBBT Feb. 9 (BP, NB). Five off Gibson I. Jan. 1-4 were noteworthy far up the Bay (LMD, EB), as was one far up the Choptank R. at Denton, MD, Dec. 11-14 (MWH, SW, *et al.*, *vide* AJF). As usual, good numbers of Double-crested Cormorants wintered in the Virginia Capes area, mostly on the s. side, with 1250 Dec. 7 (SCR) and 3000 Jan. 31 (DC) at Ft. Story, and 750 on the n. side of the Bay mouth at Fish I. Mar. 1 (HTA). The continued robust populations of these piscivores in the face of the news about fish population declines is encouraging.

Hérons were in better-than-average numbers, probably because of the mildness, especially at Deal I., Maryland's best winter heron spot, where on Dec. 17 there were 75 Black-crowned Night-Herons, two Am. Bitterns, six Great and seven Snowy egrets, and 26 Tricolored Herons (MO). Later, on Jan. 6 there were three Am. Bitterns, one Great and seven Snowy egrets, and 75 Tricolored and 40 Black-crowned Night herons (MO, SM). Some of these are record winter Maryland counts. Nearby at Fairmount WMA, a Glossy Ibis was seen Jan. 22 (HLW). Great Blue Herons have extended their breeding range west to the Piedmont in Virginia, with a colony of 8 nests already active there by Mar. 2 (ph. HLB).

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#### WATERFOWL

A Trumpeter Swan of uncertain provenance was at Little Seneca Res. in Maryland n. of DC in late January-February (RF, MO, DC, RLH, GJ). The usual obscene excess of Mute Swans was at Hooper's I., MD, with 510

**Table 1. Good News/Feel Good Chart #1**  
**Bald Eagle Numbers on Selected Christmas Bird Counts at 5-Year Intervals, 1951-1991**

	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	Total
Annapolis-Gibson I., MD	0	5	2	1	5	4	2	3	6	28
Back Bay NWR, VA	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Bowie, MD						0	2	1	3	6
Brooke, VA	6	5	8	4	4	6	8	12	10	63
Cape Charles, VA				0	0	0	1	3	7	11
Chincoteague NWR, VA		1	1	0	3	2	1	10	0	18
Crisfield, MD					0	4	9	44	62	119
Denton, MD	5	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	2	14
Ft. Belvoir, VA	8	6	1	1	6	2	14	57	46	141
Hopewell, VA	6	4	1	1	1	3	17	41	61	134
Jug Bay, MD							2	2	8	12
Little Creek, VA		10	2	0	2	0	1	3	1	19
Lower Kent, MD			3	4	6	1	14	28	29	85
Mathews, VA					0	1	0	3	0	4
Newport News, VA		2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ocean City, MD	1	3	1	0	1	7	2	1	1	17
Point Lookout, MD					0	4	2	7	4	17
Port Tobacco, MD			0				11	2	21	34
Rock Run, MD				2	0	2	0	13	40	57
St. Michaels, MD		6	10	0	0	0	1	5	6	28
Salisbury, MD				1	1	2	1	7	19	31
Seneca, MD		0	0		0	1	0	0	3	4
S. Dorchester, MD	16	19	12	15	19	12	31	26	48	198
Triadelphia Res., MD	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Wachapreague, VA					0	0	0	5	3	8
Washington, DC	16	3	3	0	0	1	3	14	9	49
Williamsburg, VA							9	11	12	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>1140</b>

#### LOONS TO IBISES

A major Red-throated Loon flight occurred at Ocean City, with birds passing at a 100/hour clip Dec. 6 and c. 1000 seen there Dec. 17 (MO) and 273 Dec. 26 (DC). Unusual inland was one at DC Dec. 14 (BO). Common Loons were present on noncoastal CBCs in record numbers, especially on Maryland Bay-area counts; 22 were inland at the Kerr Res. CBC in Virginia near the

North Carolina line Dec. 15 (BP). Pied-billed Grebes were in excellent numbers and more widely reported than usual, with a hefty 150 in *Hydrilla*-infested Potomac R. waters of the Brooke, VA, CBC Dec. 17 (DBS), and 64 at Loch Raven Res. n. of Baltimore Jan. 10 (SWS). Best counts of the still-ailing Horned Grebe were 500 at CBBT Feb. 8 (BP, GBP *et al.*), 602 at the Newport News CBC Dec. 14 (TK), and 72 at Back

**Table 2. Good News/Feel Good Chart #2**  
**Eastern Bluebird Numbers on Selected Christmas Bird Counts at 5-Year Intervals, 1951-1991**

	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	Total
Annapolis-Gibson I., MD	13	229	5	0	21	21	13	42	125	469
Back Bay NWR, VA	29	13	1	4	25	27	41	36	80	256
Bowie, MD						132	192	136	257	717
Brooke, VA	55	40	11	17	76	27	30	163	409	828
Cape Charles, VA				22	15	15	16	42	36	146
Chincoteague NWR, VA		0	8	8	2	80	30	126	137	391
Crisfield, MD					15	62	37	189	161	464
Denton, MD	58	128	14	0	41	117	94	276	284	1012
Ft. Belvoir, VA	11	43	5	2	13	22	59	106	258	519
Hopewell, VA		42	0	11	31	53	92	111	196	536
Jug Bay, MD							365	220	262	847
Little Creek, VA		19	11	22	3	5	5	8	9	82
Lower Kent, MD			4	19	4	2	10	45	127	211
Mathews, VA					40	194	328	453	537	1552
Newport News, VA		17	0	0	0	18	0	6	30	71
Ocean City, MD	31	227	65	14	35	101	100	165	193	931
Point Lookout, MD					20	36	53	168	200	477
Port Tobacco, MD			19				141	168	199	527
Rock Run, MD					3	13	26	78	175	295
St. Michaels, MD		115	32	11	1	10	44	136	622	971
Salisbury, MD				0	31	50	96	252	392	821
Seneca, MD		81	2		71	257	441	281	363	1496
S. Dorchester, MD	54	55	5	14	10	40	16	107	123	424
Triadelphia Res., MD	52	67	4	5	17	54	167	189	248	803
Wachapreague, VA					0	58	5	71	299	433
Washington, DC	90	39	4	5	1	0	13	28	13	193
Williamsburg, VA							77	139	149	365
<b>Total</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>1115</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1394</b>	<b>2491</b>	<b>3741</b>	<b>5884</b>	<b>15837</b>

there Feb. 16 (HTA). Single Greater White-fronted Geese were at 3 Maryland spots: the National Geographic Society in *Montgomery* all winter (JBe, MO, DC *et al.*), Blackwater Dec. 24 (DC) and Jan. 26 (RFR), and in the SPSP area Jan. 2-11 (LMD, MI). Best Blue Goose count was 1250 at Blackwater Feb. 16 (HTA). One-three Ross' Geese were at Blackwater Dec. 24-Feb. 22 (DC, SM, MO, HTA, BGP, MG, ph.), the only Maryland locality with confirmed records. Snow Geese continue to winter in huge numbers in coastal Maryland as well as on the upper ESMD in *Queen Annes* and *Kent* (CSR, JGR, RFR, CRV), while a total of 18,660 at the Back Bay CBC, VA, Dec. 29 (PWS) cannot be considered paltry.

Wood Ducks were in good numbers; the high count, as usual, was at the Hopewell CBC Dec. 15 (LR) with 822. A Eur. Green-winged Teal was near Ocean City Dec. 28 (*vide* CSR). Blue-winged Teal was another beneficiary of warm weather, with reports from 5 locations. Eurasian Wigeon singles were at Fish I. Dec. 19 (SCR), Ocean City Dec. 14-Jan. 11 (SHD, BGP, MG, GG, MHL *et al.*), Little Creek Dec. 31 (PWS), and Deal I. Jan. 26-Feb. 22 (RFR, BGP, MO, MG); 2000 Am. Wigeon were at Deal Jan. 6 (MO). Extraordinary Redhead concentrations were again found on the Pocomoke Sound on the Crisfield, MD, CBC Dec. 27 (CRV), with 7000 estimated. Ring-necked Ducks were in good numbers, with 1400 at Little Seneca Res. Jan. 27

(MO), 547 at Williamsburg Dec. 15 (BT), and 410 at the Kerr Res. CBC, VA, Dec. 15 (BP). Common Eiders showed up in record numbers at Ocean City, with up to 26 there Jan. 11-18 (MLH, MO *et al.*), and one-two King Eiders there Dec. 6-Feb. 9 (JBe), with eight after the big coastal storm of Jan. 4 (BGP, MG). Three Com. Eiders were at Cape Henry Dec. 26 (SCR) as well as in late February (GBP, DFA *et al.*) and one at Chinc. Dec. 27 (DC). Four King Eiders were at CBBT Feb. 1 (BP, NB, JB) and three at Chinc. Feb. 15 (DC). Up to three Harlequin Ducks were at CBBT through the period (SCR *et al.*), but one at the Newport News CBC Dec. 14 (TK) was unexpected. One of each of these three "jetty ducks" was at Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach Dec. 5 (DFA); there were several days when all three were at CBBT, such as Dec. 26 (MS, GLA, HTA).

A Black Scoter at Upper Occaquan Sewage Authority Dec. 1 near Bull Run, VA, was unusual for the Virginia Piedmont (SDE). Huge Red-breasted Merganser populations were in the Virginia Capes area, with 6100 at Back Bay Jan. 31 (DC) and 11,465 at the Cape Charles CBC Dec. 30 (NB), along with 20,200 scoter sp. and 23,000 unidentified ducks, most of the latter probably scoters and Red-breasteds also. These were most likely the Red-breasteds that normally winter in such abundance on Pamlico Sound since the CBC there did not get very many this year (*vide* JF). Up to 2500 Ruddy Ducks and 1000 Canvasbacks were at the

Smithsonian Research Center in *Anne Arundel*, MD, Feb. 7 (MI). Highlights from Loch Raven Res. (SWS) included 216 Am. Wigeon and 490 Ring-necked Ducks Feb. 10, 116 Hooded Mergansers Jan. 27, 28 Gadwall Feb. 23, and 18 Redheads Feb. 26.

#### RAPTORS TO CRANES

Extraordinary were single Ospreys in mid-winter at Elk Neck SP Jan. 15 & 23 (DWr), at Little Creek Jan. 10 (GBP), and at s. Salisbury Feb. 1 (C & DB) in Maryland. Extremely early ones were at Tappahannock, VA, Feb. 24 (BPK) and Federalsburg, MD, Feb. 29 (BS), with several reports in Maryland and Virginia Mar. 1-2 (JWT, HTA, A & EJ). The breeding pair mentioned in the Winter 1991 issue (*AB* 45(5):1103) were in *Montgomery*, not *Howard*. The mild winter did not seem to put a dent in the Bald Eagle numbers. The roost at Blackwater held up to 140 birds in January, a record number there (*vide* refuge staff). The Maryland midwinter survey Jan. 11-12 found 185, the 2nd highest after 263 in 1990: 89 at Aberdeen Proving Ground, 23 at Susq., and 73 at Blackwater (GDT *et al.*). On Jan. 31 Portlock found 50 immatures and 26 adults at Horsehead Pt. on the Rappahannock R., VA. A nest near Salisbury blew down during the great storm of Jan. 4 (ELP). At least four Golden Eagles were at Blackwater (GAI, HTA, *et al.*); one was at the Ocean City CBC Dec. 28, the 5th record for there (CSR). In the s. Dorchester, MD, area Feb. 16, 40 Bald and two Golden eagles plus 35 N. Harriers were seen (HTA). Northern Goshawks were at Assat. Jan. 3 (MLH), Germantown, MD, Dec. 7 (PO), plus the nearby Seneca CBC Dec. 15, at the Blackwater R. in Virginia Beach Jan. 12 (GBP); Taylor saw one at Edgewater, MD, Feb. 7.

Observers continue to comment on the decline of Ring-necked Pheasant and N. Bobwhite, but Wild Turkey seems to be becoming more widely established. Unique was a Yellow Rail almost stepped upon at Back Bay Dec. 29 (GLA, CCW, RA). For the first time, one-two Black Rails were confirmed as overwintering on the lower ESMD in both coastal *Worcester* and in *Somerset* on the Bay (MO, HLW, SM), being encountered from November to March. Now try to find them there over the course of a harsh winter! Inland at Kerr Res., six Virginia Rails, two Soras, and 10 Am. Coots were counted Dec. 15 (BP). Best Am. Coot counts aside from CBCs were 600 at Loch Raven Res. Feb. 17 & 19 (SWS), 200 at Deal I. Jan. 26 (RFR) 63 at inland Piney Run Park in *Carroll*, MD, Jan. 19, and 125 at Little Seneca Res. Feb. 22 (MO). The deadbeat Sandhill Crane overwintered again at the little sand spit in front of Last Chance Liquors a few feet off of Rt. 50 s. of Trappe, MD, and was seen Jan. 16-April (JMA, R & RC, EMW, RFR, HTA, m.ob., ph.); Dyke even saw it dancing Feb. 2), but the one at the Jug Bay CBC Dec. 14 was a complete surprise (CS, DMd).

## SHOREBIRDS

As usual, the lion's share of interesting shorebird reports were from the ESVA, where the milder climate, large uninhabited barrier islands, and endless marshes and flats offer an hospitable environment for waders right through the winter. Three Whimbrel, 30 Greater Yellowlegs, 3500 Dunlin, and 12 Short-billed Dowitchers were in this area at Oyster Feb. 29-Mar. 1, while at Thoms Cr. a few mi away 235 Black-bellied Plovers, 85 Willets, a Whimbrel, 41 Marbled Godwits, 185 W. Sandpipers, and 40 Short-billed Dowitchers were at this favored roosting/feeding area Mar. 1 (HTA). Also on Mar. 1, a Semipalmated Plover was at Chinc.; midway between Chinc. and Cape Charles at Willis Wharf, 11 Willets, six Marbled Godwits, and 51 Short-billed Dowitchers were feeding at low tide, easily visible from the town's dockside (HTA). A few of these late-winter shorebirds may have been early migrants, especially since several of these one-observer counts were higher than those on the local CBC.

Killdeer were abundant in many areas owing to the mild weather. Going back to summer for a refinement, the nesting Am. Avocets at Craney were first found July 20, when the pair had three chicks (JW, DLH, JM), 2 days earlier than reported previously. February 22 was a most unusual date, unprecedented for the Region, for a Spotted Sandpiper seen at the base of Kerr Res. dam

(JB *et al.*). A Marbled Godwit overwintered at Chinc. on the Queen Sound flats (DC, VBK, EMW *et al.*). Two Red Knots were at Chinc. Feb. 15 (DC); one was at Ocean City Dec. 6-Jan. 15 (MLH, MO). Five Least Sandpipers were unusual inland on the very late date of Dec. 8 at Staunton River SP on the Virginia Piedmont, and so were three on the Banister River WMA CBC Dec. 15 (JB). Seven were at the Easton, MD, sewage lagoons Dec. 1 (RFR). Four Long-billed Dowitchers were in a field near Ironshire, Worcester, MD, with Dunlin and Black-bellied Plovers Dec. 29 (JO, PO). Probably owing to the mild weather, counts of Am. Woodcock were generally low. At sea, 55 Red Phalaropes were in Virginia waters Dec. 7 off of Virginia Beach's Rudee Inlet (BP, FD, PWS, DFA *et al.*); one was off Virginia Beach Feb. 22 (BP, GBP, FD, *et al.*, ph.). An Am. Woodcock shot near Eastville, VA, on the ES Jan. 3 was atypical, having a distinct, very light, buffy wing stripe on the remiges and primary coverts (ph. HG).

## JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

An ad. Pomarine Jaeger was at Chinc. Dec. 27 (DC). Parasitic Jaeger reports included singles at Ocean City Dec. 6 (MO), Back Bay Dec. 29 (PWS), Little Creek Dec. 31 (DLH), and Ft. Story (Cape Henry) Jan. 3 (GBP). In one of the more successful pelagic trips ever run from these shores, on Feb. 15, a Great Skua (ph.), 78 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 17



Trumpeter Swan (left) with Tundra Swan at Little Seneca Reservoir, Maryland, on January 25, 1992. The Trumpeter's greater bulk and more massive head and bill can be seen here. Photograph/David Czaplak.

Razorbills, 32 Dovekies, 32 Atlantic Puffins, and four unidentified alcids were seen out from Rudee Inlet, the Razorbill and puffin totals establishing new Virginia high counts (BP, DFA, NB, KHB, GBP *et al.*).

Laughing Gulls lingered in large numbers, with 310 inland near Nokesville Dec. 8 (KHB, SDE; along with an Iceland and two Lesser Black-backed Gulls), 1365 at the Newport News CBC Dec. 14 (TK), 1348 at the Jug Bay CBC Dec. 14 (PM), a record 44 at the DC CBC Dec. 14 (JBe), and 30 inland at the Bowie, MD, CBC Dec. 15 (FWF). Three Little Gulls were at Ocean City Dec. 8 (MLH, MO); an astounding 28 on Feb. 17 (NB) were at Cape Henry. Single Com. Black-headed Gulls were at 5 coastal localities in both states throughout the period. At Ocean City 8000 Bonaparte's Gulls were estimated Dec. 8 (MLH, MO), and unusual inland was one at Piney Run Park Jan. 19 in n. Maryland (RFR), while 1500 were on the Susq. Dec. 11 (MO). An ad. California Gull was one of the best gulls of the season at Ft. Story Jan. 3 (GBP, NB), the 3rd consecutive year in this general locality. An ad. Thayer's Gull was at the Laytonsville landfill, Montgomery, Jan. 3; a 3rd-winter bird was at the Worcester landfill, MD, Jan. 6 (MO, SM). Single Yellow-legged Gulls were again reported, with an adult at Laytonsville Jan. 25 (DC) and one at Georgetown Res. in DC Dec. 26-Feb. 23 (OJ, RH, RAA *et al.*, ph.; 3rd consecutive winter). Several commented that this was not a good white-winged gull winter, yet Iceland Gulls were at 11 localities, with three at Laytonsville in December (DC), and Glaucous Gulls at 6 spots, a slight majority of both species being found at landfills. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were seen at at least 22 places. Thirty-five Black-legged Kittiwakes were off Rudee Inlet Dec. 7 (DFA, BP *et al.*). Inland at Whalesville, MD, 15 mi from the sea, a storm-driven one was seen Jan. 3 sitting on the ground (SHD,

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22 July-14 August

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23 July-15 August



Good numbers of alcids were found on February pelagic trips off Virginia. This Atlantic Puffin was 55 miles off Virginia Beach on February 22, 1992. Photograph/Brian Patteson.

JBs); several other singles were seen from shore in both states.

The only Com. Tern report was one near Pungoteague on the ESVA Dec. 14 on a CBC where the overnight low was 65° F (HTA, MS). As many as 2000 Forster's Terns were still at Ocean City Dec. 8 (MO, MLH); a very late individual was at Blackwater Jan. 5 (MO). A follow-up pelagic trip to the fabulous Feb. 15 one mentioned above was run Feb. 22, resulting in views of 14 Dovekies, 13 Atlantic Puffins, 12 Razorbills, a Thick-billed Murre (ph.; first state *offshore* record),

40 Black-legged Kittiwakes, and a Little Gull (ph.) (BP, WLA, FD, HEL, GBP *et al.*)! A dead Dovekie was at Assat. Jan. 18 (MLH, MO), and live singles were in the Virginia Beach-Cape Henry area Dec. 17 (DFA, KHB), Jan. 5 (GBP), Jan. 31 (JB), and Feb. 1 (DC). Onshore Razorbills were at Cape Charles Dec. 19 during a gale (SCR) and frequently from CBBT, with at least five there Feb. 2 (BP, FD, NB *et al.*) and at least four Feb. 8 (BP, GBP *et al.*); three were at Back Bay Jan. 31 (DC). For the 2nd straight year, there was an alcid invasion. Patteson theorizes that their normal wintering grounds in the n. Atlantic may not be producing well, and that the birds are on the move in search of better feeding areas. They certainly are not here because of severe weather, although strong winds prevented several other pelagic trips this season.

#### OWLS TO SHRIKES

Unique was a Snowy Owl, always an electrifying occurrence in this Region, found in Bethesda, MD, Jan. 1 (GG, MO, RH), which died a few days later on top of a DC building (*fide* KS). On Assat. I., 63 N. Saw-whet Owls were banded Oct. 29–Nov. 30 (seven Nov. 1), the first major effort to capture this species during migration in the Region (DFB *et al.*). This operation was burdened by logistical difficulties and storms and yet was not that much lower than the Saw-whet total at Cape May.

A *Selasphorus* sp. hummingbird was at Pocomoke City Oct. 13–Dec. 29 (ph.; DB, MLH, MO, GG *et al.*). Belted Kingfishers were common this winter, no doubt owing to the mild weather. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was yet another bird more common owing to the mild winter and E. Phoebe even more so, with record counts on many CBCs, including Wachapreague, VA, Ft. Belvoir, Salisbury, and Crisfield, while Ocean City had 44, eclipsing the previous high of 32. The Kerr Res. CBC Dec. 15 had 26 E. Phoebes plus a W. Kingbird (BP, TP, FD, MP, GBP *et al.*, ph.). The Abbotts had a group of three W. Kingbirds well seen on the Cape Charles CBC Dec. 30, prompting one wit on that count to quip "just how far west does your party area extend?" This count had had the species 3 previous years, with two in 1971. The decline of birds of the open fields (bobwhite, meadowlark, etc.) along many areas of the Fall Line due to development is underscored by the presence of only three Horned Larks on the DC CBC Dec. 14 (JBe) vs. the historical high of 102 in 1944. But not so far away, 450 were along New Design Rd. in Frederick, MD, Feb. 14 (MO). The only midwinter Tree Swallows were two at Public Landing Rd., Worcester, MD, Feb. 8 (MLH, MO) and one at CBBT Feb. 17 (EMW).

After a couple of mild winters, Carolina Wrens continued in high numbers. Far inland a Marsh Wren at the Charlottesville CBC Dec. 15 was most unusual on the upper Piedmont (KLF, *fide* CES); one at Church Hill on the upper ESMD was also of interest Feb. 26 (J & PG). Single Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were at the DC CBC Dec. 14 (DFA), the Mathews, VA CBC Dec. 29 (*fide* MP), near Cape Charles Dec. 30–31 (DFA, RA, CCW, GLA), and at Richmond Feb. 2 (AB). Eastern Bluebirds continue in optimal numbers, with counts such as 235 at the Banister River WMA in the interior Virginia Piedmont Dec. 15 (JB) and 390 at Nokesville Dec. 22 (KHB). The mild winter induced Hermit Thrushes to winter in good numbers. There was a huge influx of Am. Robins into many areas in early February, including 8000 at Pocomoke State Forest, MD, Feb. 8 (MLH, MO) and 1576 in Bedford, VA, Feb. 1 (C & MH). They were abundant on many CBCs as well (5305 at Ocean City Dec. 28), yet there were curious exceptions, such as the all-time low of seven at the Cape Charles CBC Dec. 30. Cedar Waxwings were common on the vast majority of CBCs. The two N. Shrikes on Assat. in November lingered briefly into December (MLH *et al.*, ph.). Loggerhead Shrikes were at 8 localities, with a high of eight at Kerr Res. Dec. 15 (BP).

#### VIREOS, WARBLERS

Many records in this group also reflect the mild winter. Pearce found a White-eyed Vireo at Dismal Swamp NWR, VA, Dec. 15 and saw *five* there Feb. 25 plus two Solitary Vireos. Kain found *five* Solitary Vireos at York River SP n. of Williamsburg Feb. 14

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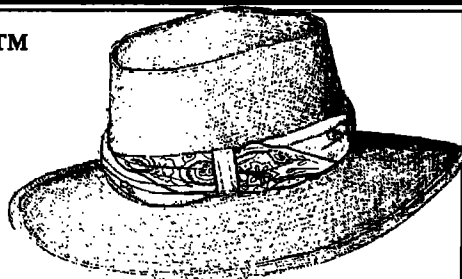
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**Thick-billed Murre over Norfolk Canyon off the Virginia coast on February 22, 1992. Apparently the first confirmed offshore record for the state, although a very few have been found on the coast or grounded inland. Photograph/Brian Patteson.**

and two Feb. 18; single Solitaries were seen on CBCs at Little Creek, Back Bay, Williamsburg, and Salisbury.

Orange-crowned Warblers, as last winter, were in higher numbers than usual, with four at Dismal Swamp NWR Jan. 8 (GBP), three at Hog I. near Williamsburg Dec. 15 (SCR), two at Stockton, MD, near the coast on several dates Jan. 6–Feb. 19 (MO, SHD, SM, MLH, JD), and two at the ESVA NWR Dec. 26 (SCR) plus numerous sightings of singles. In spite of the mild winter, very few rare warblers were seen, the best being the not-unexpected species: a Black-and-white at Cape Charles Dec. 30 (TK; seen 11 out of 27 years) and an Ovenbird at Triadelphia Res., MD, Dec. 21 (N & FS) plus a Cape May at Pt. Tobacco, MD, Dec. 15 (*fide* GW, but no details). Reese had a remarkable day at the Easton, MD, sewage lagoons Feb. 22, with four Com. Yellowthroats, a Palm Warbler, an E. Phoebe, five Marsh Wrens, and two Gray Catbirds, more like what one would expect in mid-April rather than February. Single Yellow-breasted Chats were at Stockton Dec. 29 and Jan. 6 (MO, MLH, SM), and one was dragged in by a cat at Stevensville, *Queen Annes*, MD, Dec. 17 (JGR).

#### GROSBEAKS TO FINCHES

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at a feeder near Crozet, VA, Feb. 7–Mar. 1, the first winter record in the Charlottesville area (*fide* CES, ph.). A well-studied Black-headed Grosbeak was seen near Cape Charles Dec. 30–31 (DFA, RA, GLA, CCW, BP, FD). Three Painted Buntings, an unprecedented number, were seen near Stockton, MD, Dec. 29 (MLH), near Yorktown, VA, Jan. 5–6 (DMt), and at Virginia Beach Jan. 25 (*fide* DMt). American Tree Sparrows continued rather scarce, even considering the mild win-

ter. Chipping Sparrows wintered in optimal numbers, with non-CBC observations of 25 at Bailey's Neck near Easton, MD, Jan. 11 (MO) and 14 at Trappe, MD, Jan. 11 (L & CM). A rare winter Clay-colored Sparrow was at Ocean Pines, MD, Feb. 15 into March (MLH, MO, EB, JLS, LMD, ph.). Also semi-

rare was a Lark Sparrow at Woodbridge in *Prince William*, VA, in late January (EMW, VBK *et al.*). At the S. *Dorchester*, MD, CBC Dec. 26, 143 Savannah Sparrows were the most there since 1965 (CSR *et al.*), perhaps due to the mild fall and winter. Another remarkable sparrow was a Grasshopper near Greensboro, *Carolina*, MD, on the ES Feb. 22 (MI). A mini-Patagonia effect at Back Bay, prompted by an attempt to relocate the Yellow Rail there, was the discovery of a Le Conte's Sparrow Dec. 29 (DFA, RA, NB, BP). Two Lincoln's Sparrows were seen near Snow Hill at the *Worcester* landfill, MD, Jan. 11 & 18 (MLH, MO, ph.). White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were not abundant, with some CBCs having all-time low counts, or nearly so. At New Design Rd., MD, ten Lapland Longspurs were seen Feb. 14 (MO); the highs for Snow Buntings were 75 at Hart Dec. 22 (MO, BD *et al.*) and 60 at Ft. Story Jan. 4 (GBP); seven buntings at Hooper's I., *Dorchester*, MD, on Christmas day were unusual for this county (LW).

The decline of field birds in metropolitan areas is exemplified by the total of two E. Meadowlarks on the DC CBC Dec. 14 compared with that count's high of 62 back in 1955. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Blackwater Jan. 25–Feb. 2 (DM, R & RC). This was another good winter for Brewer's Blackbirds, with three at Stockton, MD, Jan. 13 into March (MLH, MO, m.ob., ph.), one at Libertytown, *Worcester*, MD, Feb. 9 (MO), three at Virginia Beach Jan. 1 (GBP),

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Lincoln's Sparrow near Snow Hill, Maryland, on January 11, 1992. Photograph/Mark L. Hoffman.

and a gangbusting 42 at Nokesville Dec. 12, with 40 there Dec. 4 and 30 on Jan. 19 (KHB, VBK *et al.*). Single N. Orioles were seen at only 3 localities. The only report of Red Crossbills was of two near Cape Charles Dec. 30 (DFA, RA). In a season when there was virtually no flight of northern finches, one-two Com. Redpolls at Salisbury Jan. 26–Feb. 29 were most peculiar (SHD, GJ *et al.*, ph.). Pine Siskins were very scarce. Many active persons missed them completely, yet 65 were at the Kerr Res. CBC Dec. 15 (BP *et al.*) and eight at Hedgerow, Howard, MD, Feb. 1 (VB). Evening Grosbeaks were even scarcer, but the Triadelphia Res. CBC of Dec. 21 turned up 14 (*vide* N & FS).

**Observers:** D.F. Abbott, Robert Abbott, I.W. Ailes, J.M. Anderson, R.A. Anderson, W.L. Argabrite, G.L. Armistead, Val Barnes, K.H. Bass, Henry Bielstein, Jim Biggs (JBs), John Bjerke (JBe), Jeff Blalock, Eirik Blom, Mike Boatwright, H.L. Bohn, D.F. Brinker, Ned Brinkley, Carol & Don Broderick, Doug Bruce, Allen Bryan, Martha Chestem, J.B. Churchill, Patty Craig, Randy & Richard Crook, David Czaplak (District of Columbia area), L.M. Davidson, D.S. Davis, Fenton Day, Bob Dixon, Sam Droege, P.G. DuMont, Jon Dunn, S.H. Dyke, S.D. Eccles, Jeff Effinger, F.W. Fallon, Jane Farrell, A.J. Fletcher (Caroline, Maryland), R.B. Fletcher, Robert Folker, John Fussell, Inez Glime, J.G. Gottschalk, Greg Gough, Jim & Trish Gruber (Kent, MD), Mary Gustafson, T.M. Gwynn, Charles & Melva Hansrote, G.B. Harris, M.W. Hewitt, Robert Hilton, R.E. Hindle, M.L. Hoffman (Assateague), R.L. Homan, Linwood Horner, Marilyn Howe, W.H. Howe, D.L. Hughes, Marshall Iliff, G.A. Inskip, Ottavio Janni, George Jett, Alice & Edgar Jones, Teta Kain (CBBT), Dennis Kirkwood, V.B. Kitchens, M.K.

Klimkiewicz, Ellen Lawler, Kenneth Lawless, H.E. LeGrand, Joan Lepson, Nancy Magnusson, Jeff Mahler, Lee & Carol McCollough, Pat Melville, Carolyn Mills, William Minor, Dorothy Mitchell (DMt), Steve Mlodinow, David Mozurkewich, Dotty Mumford (DMd), Bill Oberman, John O'Brien, Michael O'Brien (observer-at-large, the entire state of Maryland), Paul O'Brien, F.L. Parks, Brian Pattenon (Virginia pelagics), G.B. Pearce, Bruce Peterjohn, B.G. Peterjohn, Taylor Piephoff, Bob Pilch (BPh), Paul Pisano, E.L. Pitney (lower Eastern Shore of Maryland), Bill Portlock (BPk), Nick Pulcinella, Mary Pulley, Kyle Rambo, J.G. Reese (Talbot, Maryland), Sue Ricciardi (SRI), R.F. Ringler, C.S. Robbins, Larry Robinson, S.C. Rottenborn, W.F. Rountrey, Norm & Fran Saunders, R.M. Schutsky, Don Schwab, Bill Scudder, Matt Sharp, Kathy Shuman, S.W. Simon (Loch Raven Res.), Jo Solem (Howard, Maryland), J.L. Stasz, C.E. Stevens, D.B. Stewart, Chris Swarth, P.W. Sykes, Brian Taber, J.W. Taylor, G.D. Therres, Mike Tove, C.R. Vaughn, Gail Vaughn, D. Weesner (DWt), Jerry Weinberger, David West, Steve Westre, Bob Whitcomb (BWb), H.L. Wierenga, Levin Willey, Bill Williams, G.M. Williamson, George Wilmot, E.M. Wilson (greater D.C. area), C.C. Witt, Helen Zeichner, Charles Ziegenfus.—HENRY T. ARMISTEAD, 523 E. Durham St., Philadelphia, PA 19119.

## SOUTHERN ATLANTIC COAST REGION

(FALL 1991 REPORT)

Harry E. LeGrand, Jr.

It has been said before; it was a warmer than usual season. Many places had their 20th to 23rd consecutive months of above normal temperatures. There were many weak cold fronts, plus enough coastal storms/Northeast winds to cancel about six North Carolina pelagic trips from September to November. A major coastal storm on November 9 and 10 yielded many notable inland records of waterbirds. Hurricane Bob passed offshore on August 18 and produced hardly any noteworthy sightings.

The overall migration was mediocre; many birders had a good season observing passerines, though clearly the volume of songbirds is only 50% or less of what it was 20 years ago. Winter finch flights might now be a thing of the past, thanks to birders "up North." And what could have been a great season of pelagic birding fizzled after August because of Nor'easters grounding boats and birders alike.

### LOONS TO CORMORANTS

What would a season be without an inland report of a Red-throated Loon? This season's bird was on L. Townsend near Greensboro, NC, Nov. 9 (RM, HH). A Common Loon at L. Lanier, GA, Aug. 1–28 (JP) was out of season, as was a Horned Grebe at this lake Aug. 6 (JP). Lake Townsend had a fallout of waterbirds on that memorable Nov. 9, the best being a Red-necked Grebe that lingered to Nov. 17 (RM, HH, HLi). Eared Grebes are now standard fare at a few sewage ponds in fall, and again Goldsboro, NC, had birds Sept. 3–Oct. 7 with a peak of three Oct. 4–7 (ED). The ponds at Clayton, GA, also had one Eared Sept. 27–Oct. 1 (JG, PB, TMi), whereas another Eared was on a coastal impoundment at Pea L., NC, Nov. 16 (HL, JW).

As many pelagic trips were weathered out this fall as were completed, but some good finds were made, starting with 145 Black-capped Petrels off Oregon Inlet, NC, Aug. 24 (MT party). However, the highlight of the trip was a dark-morph Herald Petrel photographed within 20 yards (MT, HL, MG *et al.*), for at least the fourth state record. Not surprisingly, when first seen the bird was identified tentatively as a Sooty Shearwater by some, but the insistence by others, particularly Gawn, that it was not a Sooty led to a high-speed chase and observation at close range. As Dave Lee has pointed out earlier in *AB*, the appearance of these dark-morph birds make one wonder about previous late summer and fall reports of Sooty Shearwater, as the Sooty is very rare in the mid-Atlantic states after the end of June. Few pelagic trips are taken in November, so it is difficult to say



three at that locale Oct. 25 (SD, JFP, JWa). Eurasian Wigeons were encountered only in North Carolina, especially at Pea I.; the first there was Sept. 29 (MT *et al.*), with a stunning *five* at that refuge Nov. 8–9 (SD). Elsewhere, one was near Davis, *Carteret*, Nov. 24 (RM, BF).

Two Canvasbacks were early Oct. 26 at Rum Creek W.M.A., GA (BD, JS, CL). A Greater Scaup at Pendergrass, GA, Nov. 3–10 (JP, JC) wasn't so much rare as easily overlooked; this editor has headaches deciding which reports of the species might represent misidentified Lesser Scaups! Common Eider was missed in North Carolina, being found instead at Huntington Beach S.P., SC, Nov. 29 (DF, DoF, RC, CE). Single King Eiders were seen as "fly-bys" along the North Carolina coast Nov. 16 at Cape Hatteras (HL, JW) and Nov. 17 at Bodie I. (RD); and that state had the only Harlequin Duck, a female at Cape Hatteras Nov. 27 (BR). Single Oldsquaws, always exciting on inland lakes, were encountered at Clayton, GA, Oct. 19–20 (PB *et al.*) for a state record arrival date, at L. Townsend near Greensboro, NC, Nov. 9 (RM, HH), and at L. Brandt also near Greensboro Nov. 17 (RM). Georgia had excellent numbers of Black Scoters, highlighted by 2000 off Tybee I. Nov. 16 (BD *et al.*) and 1000+ at Jekyll I., Oct. 20 (PR, SH). An inland Surf Scoter was exceptionally early Sept. 24 at Goldsboro, NC (ED), and up to four Surfs were at Jordan L., NC, Nov. 17–19 (SD). White-winged Scoters, much rarer than the other scoters in the Region, were found inland at Furman University near Greenville, SC, Nov. 1–16 (JB) and at Goldsboro, where five were seen Oct. 16 (ED). Three White-wingeds Oct. 18 at Jekyll I. (PR, SH) were the earliest ever for Georgia by 11 days. Five Com. Mergansers were somewhat early near Greensboro Nov. 9 (RM, HH), but definitely early were single Ruddy Ducks at the Savannah spoil area, SC, Aug. 17 (RM) and at New Bern, NC, Aug. 26–Sept. 2 (RB, BH).



**Herald Petrel off Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, on August 24, 1991. Of the handful of North American records, almost all have come from North Carolina waters. Photograph/Michael Tove.**

whether the following Audubon's Shearwater totals are unusual for the month: eight off Tybee I., GA, Nov. 16 (BD *et al.*), one off Charleston, SC, on the same day (DF), and one off Beaufort Inlet, NC, Nov. 29 (HL). A few Band-rumped Storm-Petrels were seen off Oregon Inlet in August, and two White-tailed Tropicbirds were off that inlet Sept. 7 (MT, RD *et al.*). The second-best pelagic bird of the fall was a subad. Masked Booby off Oregon Inlet Aug. 3 (BJR *et al.*). An imm. Northern Gannet seen plunge diving into Falls L., Durham, NC, Nov. 30 (LT) furnished one of just several inland records for the Region. An imm. Great Cormorant was early Oct. 12 at Huntington Beach S.P., SC (RM).

#### WADERS

It was another lackluster late summer/fall of dispersal of waders to inland lakes, though five Snowy Egrets at Clayton, GA, Aug. 11 (JS, CL) were notable. The always noteworthy Reddish Egret appeared at Ft. Fisher, NC, Sept. 1 (ph., GH, BG), at New Drum Inlet, NC, Oct. 15 (SD), at St. Simons I., GA, Oct. 12–13 (*vide* AW), and at Little St. Simons I., GA, Oct. 20 (AW, VW). An excellent count of migrant Black-crowned Night-Herons was eight near Zebulon, NC, Sept. 23 (RD), but the only inland Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was one at Rock Hill, SC, Sept. 13 (KH). Inland Glossy Ibis, always much rarer than White Ibis, were seen Oct. 21 at Rock Hill, SC (KH) and at Kingston, NC, where four were seen in flight Sept. 15 (PSa). The flurry of Roseate Spoonbills in late summer continued at the Savannah spoil area, where a peak of six was counted Aug. 17 (RM), and the last was Oct. 26 (RC, CE). In Georgia, spoonbills were seen at two locales: one at the Jekyll I. causeway Aug. 18 (GB) and two there Oct. 2 (GB, BD), and one at Little St. Simons I., Oct. 20 (AW).

#### WATERFOWL

The mysterious Fulvous Whistling-Duck, which appears in the Region mainly near the coast in late fall, was reported only from Eagle I., NC, where Massey found 28 on Sept. 26, and 34 were counted there Nov. 8 (SC, KM). A few Tundra Swans and Snow Geese were reported from across the Region, but the most notable was a Snow Oct. 26 at the Savannah spoil area, SC (RC). A fall season on the Outer Banks, NC, wouldn't be normal without Ross' Goose reports. Birds were found at several Pea I. sites beginning Oct. 20 (NB), with an outstanding count of

three at that locale Oct. 25 (SD, JFP, JWa). Eurasian Wigeons were encountered only in North Carolina, especially at Pea I.; the first there was Sept. 29 (MT *et al.*), with a stunning *five* at that refuge Nov. 8–9 (SD). Elsewhere, one was near Davis, *Carteret*, Nov. 24 (RM, BF).

#### VULTURES TO CRANES

An excellent Turkey Vulture count, seemingly too early to include many migrants, was 450+ near Goldsboro Sept. 20 (ED). An injured Am. Swallow-tailed Kite was found during the season in the Piedmont near Iva, SC, and taken to a zoo at Columbia (*vide* JEC); another kite was late at Jekyll I. Oct. 6 (PM, TM). Also somewhat late was a Mississippi Kite Oct. 12 near Socastee, Horry, SC (JPe). September 20 was the peak flight day for Broad-winged Hawk through the foothills; on this day, 984 were tallied at Pilot Mountain S.P., NC (TG *et al.*), 953 were counted near Landrum, SC (ST), and 2827

were tallied at Caesars Head S.P., SC (IP). Extremely rare in Georgia was a Rough-legged Hawk near Cobb Nov. 16 (EM), and another Rough-legged was in North Carolina, in *Gates* Nov. 29 (SD). Golden Eagle, which averages roughly one sighting per state per year, was encountered once—a subadult in n.e. *Laurens*, GA, Nov. 10 (TKP). Peregrine Falcons, almost certainly on the increase as fall migrants, were also widely reported; notable coastal reports were 15 at Jekyll I., Oct. 6 (PM, TM) and seven in view at one time at Portsmouth I., NC, Oct. 15 (SD).

Cooper had the great luck to flush a Yellow Rail at Eagle I., NC, Oct. 20. On the other hand, Carter intentionally searched for the species by clicking rocks at night, and he was able to hear a bird responding near Gadsden, SC, Oct. 19 & 26. Sykes heard a Black Rail calling during the day on Aug. 10, about 1/2 mile away from the marsh in n. *Greene*, GA, where the species was found this spring. An inland Clapper Rail was found dazed in a parking lot at Goldsboro Oct. 14 (ED). Clapper Rails (and Seaside Sparrows) migrate over the inland parts of the Region, but seldom land until they have reached salt marshes (or hit TV towers and skyscrapers)! The only Sandhill Crane outside the narrow migration corridor was in a drained Carolina bay just n. of Marion, SC, during the fall (CM).

#### SHOREBIRDS

Inland movement of shorebirds was fair, with few exceptional counts, exemplified by only 3 inland Black-bellied Plover reports. Lesser Golden-Plover, not strictly tied to mudflats in its inland passage, was found in many habitats. The best inland reports were seven on mudflats at Falls L., NC, Sept. 15 (RD), up to five at sod farms near Orangeburg, SC, Sept. 2–Nov. 26 (RC, DF *et al.*), seven at a pasture near Goldsboro Sept. 15 (ED), and four at sewage ponds in *Clayton*, GA, Sept. 14–23 (PB *et al.*). A Wilson's Plover was rare at Cape Hatteras point, NC, Aug. 25 (HL, MT), and Dinsmore had a good tally of 91 migrating Piping Plovers at Portsmouth I., Oct. 4. A count of 600 Black-necked Stilts Sept. 8 at the Savannah spoil area (RC, CE) was likely a South Carolina record. The only inland Am. Avocet was at L. Townsend near Greensboro Aug. 2 (FG, HH).

The highest count of Upland Sandpipers was of 10 Aug. 10 at the Orangeburg sod farms (TK), which will probably provide a gold mine of shorebird data in upcoming years. Thompson heard a Whimbrel in thick fog at Tryon, NC, Aug. 26; the only Long-billed Curlews were at traditional sites—one at Ft. Fisher, NC, Sept. 2+ (BG, GH) and five at Cape Romain N.W.R., SC, Oct. 13 (J. Cox). A Hudsonian Godwit at Huntington Beach S.P. Nov. 11–30+ (ND, BP *et al.*) was the best studied ever for South Carolina and one of fewer than ten state records. One Hudsonian was unusual inland at L. Mattamuskeet, NC, Nov. 17 (HL, JW). Inland Ruddy Turnstones were encountered only twice, and Sanderlings weren't often reported

inland either, with 15 at Jordan L., Sept. 22 (PSa) and four at *Clayton*, GA, Sept. 21–22 (PB, BD) being the only records of interest. Are Baird's Sandpipers becoming more common, or were observers just luckier than usual at finding them? Inland reports came from Gainesville, GA, and in North Carolina near Charlotte, New Bern, Durham, *Chatham*, and Goldsboro; there were also 3 coastal reports from the latter state. All were singles except for two at a quarry in New Bern Sept. 2 (RB). Dunlins, generally uncommon though widespread in late fall inland, were common at Falls L. Nov. 3, with 86 counted on that date (HL). At long last, **Curlew Sandpiper** was reported from South Carolina, a juvenile described Oct. 13 from the Savannah spoil area (RCI, KC, BS). Another juvenile was a good find at Pea I., Sept. 27–29 (HL, SD, C.B.C.).

Stilt Sandpiper reports seemed down, the best reports being of late birds—at the Savannah spoil area Nov. 28 (GR) and at Jekyll I., Nov. 15 (PR, BD). Buff-breasted Sandpiper numbers tend to be erratic, with this season being better than average, highlighted by a peak of eight at the Orangeburg sod farms Sept. 21 (RC). Other reports of note of Buff-breasted were three at the Morehead City–Beaufort, NC, causeway Sept. 6 (BH), three at Falls L., Sept. 15 (RD), and a peak of three at *Clayton*, GA, Sept. 14–19 (m.ob.). A **Ruff** at the Savannah spoil area Oct. 13 (RCI, KC, BS) was about the 7th for South Caroli-

na. Wilson's Phalaropes were elusive, and the only ones inland were at Goldsboro Aug. 11 (ED) and at Falls L., Sept. 15 (RD). The odds against this statistic are extremely remote: there were four inland sightings of Red Phalarope, but none of Red-necked Phalarope! Reds were encountered in Greensboro Sept. 28–Oct. 2 (ph. TH, RM, HH), near that city Nov. 18 (MT), at Goldsboro Sept. 30 (ED), and in *Clayton*, GA, Sept. 19–22 (JH, BHa, GB). Since the bulk of the species migrates off our coast from late October into December, the flurry of September records inland was even more unusual.

#### JAEGERS TO TERNS

A **Parasitic Jaeger** well studied at Jordan L., Nov. 17 (SD) & 27 (PSa) was about the 3rd inland for North Carolina. Stormy weather on the coast Nov. 9–10 brought numerous Laughing Gulls inland Nov. 10: ten at Goldsboro (ED), nine at Jordan L. (PSa), and one in *Mecklenburg*, NC (TP). Both Little Gulls were sighted in September: Fussell saw an immature at Cape Lookout Sept. 20, and Worthington saw an adult at Nags Head, NC, Sept. 27. "The" Com. Black-headed Gull returned again to Morehead City, being first noted Oct. 8 (PSa). Lesser Black-backed Gulls were too numerous along the coast to mention in detail. Single Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen on fishing boat pelagic trips off Morehead City Nov. 28 (JW) & 30 (RT).

A Gull-billed Tern was extremely late Nov.



**Masked Booby in subadult plumage 40 miles off Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, on August 3, 1991. Photograph/Alan Brady.**





**Buff-breasted Sandpiper at the Orangeburg sod farms, South Carolina, on September 8, 1991. Photograph/Steve Compton.**

23 at Jekyll I. (PS). As usual, the only Roseate Terns were coastal birds in North Carolina—two adults Aug. 25 at Cape Hatteras point (MT, HL) and one adult Sept. 20 at Cape Lookout point (JF, JO). Dean had 18 Com. Terns at Goldsboro Sept. 24 for a good inland total, and on Nov. 16 observers found the species still lingering in each of the 3 states. On that date, ten were off Tybee I., GA (G.O.S.), three were 40 mi off Charleston (DF), and one was at Cape Hatteras (RD). The better Forster's Tern reports were 21 at Falls L. Sept. 1 (RD) and six at Clark Hill W.M.A., GA, Nov. 29 (AW, VW). Five Sooty Terns were onshore at Cape Hatteras point Aug. 25 (RT), and an adult was onshore in *Carteret* Aug. 19, a day after Hurricane *Bob* missed the coast (RB, KW). A count of 25 Black Terns at *Clayton*, GA, Aug. 18 (PB, HG) was one of the better inland counts in years for this declining species.

#### PIGEONS TO FLYCATCHERS

The Region's first **Band-tailed Pigeon** was a bird photographed near the coast at Georgetown, SC, Aug. 16 (BP); the bird appeared wary, but the S.C. Records Committee will pass judgment on the origin of the bird. There is a previous sight record for North Carolina, but the report is from the mountains outside the Region. A Com. Ground-Dove was very rare in the Piedmont in *Clayton*, GA, Aug. 10 (PB, HG) and again Sept. 14 (GB). Six reports of Black-billed Cuckoo seems slightly better than average for a fall season; one was banded near Mayesville, SC, Oct. 23 (LG). The only owl sighting of interest was a Short-eared Nov. 3 at Huntington Beach S.P., SC (RC, CE). Sargent trapped and banded two late Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in Atlanta Nov. 10, and he banded the Region's (and Georgia's) 2nd ever **Black-chinned Hummingbird** at Georgetown Nov. 9, though it is likely that some (many?) winter-season *Archilochus* hummingbirds in the Region are actually Black-chinneds.

The rare Olive-sided Flycatcher was encountered Sept. 21 near Charlotte, NC (*fide* TP) and Oct. 5 in *Fairfield*, SC (PW). Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was found 6 times: banded near Mayesville, SC, Sept. 13 and Oct. 1 (LG), at Eagle I., Sept. 22 (GM), at

Pea I. on Sept. 27 (TP) and Oct. 7 (JN), and Carolina Beach S.P., NC, Sept. 28 (SC). North Carolina's 3rd **Say's Phoebe**, and first photographed, was at Ocracoke I. Oct. 11 (HM). Western Kingbirds were strictly along the coast as usual; six reports spanned Sept. 27–Nov. 24. Perhaps a record Regional count was 12 Gray Kingbirds at Sea I., GA, Aug. 17 (BD, PR); another Gray was an excellent find at Morehead City Oct. 2 (JF). Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, which can turn up nearly anywhere at any time (except midwinter), was encountered in each state: Aug. 18–19 at Mackay Island N.W.R., NC (BPe, BPa), Nov. 8–10 in n.e. *Laurens*, GA (TKP), and Nov. 16 near Cheraw, SC (RMA).

#### WRENS TO VIREOS

Paget found an early Winter Wren Sept. 18 at Gainesville, GA; even more notable was a Sedge Wren singing in a wet field in Francis Marion N.F., SC, Aug. 1 (PY, BDu). As remarkable as it seems, Glover banded more Veeries (134) during the fall near Mayesville, SC, than any other species! The average birder might do well to see one or two Veeries in a season, indicating how retiring the species can be in fall. On the other hand, Gray-cheeked Thrushes have become so hard to find in the past ten years that they are a red-letter bird on a birder's year list.

**Bell's Vireos** were reported twice during the season, remarkable as there were about four previous Regional records. Sykes observed one at Sea I., GA, Aug. 13 and Clark reported one Oct. 5 at Broad River W.M.A., SC. The only documented record for the Region is a specimen from October 1985 at Mt. Pleasant, SC. A singing Solitary Vireo in a Columbia, SC, yard Aug. 13 (RC, CE) must have been a wandering bird from a nearby breeding locale, since migrants do not move southward until late September or October. Warbling Vireo, about as easy to find in fall as Bell's Vireo (*i.e.*, almost impossible), was reported at Simpsonville, SC, Sept. 9 (PW); Warblings simply avoid the Region as fall migrants. On the other hand, Philadelphia Vireos were found about 15 times, including six times in the Atlanta area Sept. 7–Oct. 5 (*fide* TM) and at least three times Sept. 28 at the Carolina Bird Club meeting on the

Outer Banks.

#### WARBLERS

Glover banded four Golden-winged Warblers near Mayesville between Aug. 30 and Sept. 19, a notable total. A good tally of 35 Tennessee Warblers was made near Atlanta Sept. 28 (A.A.S.). Somewhat early were a Nashville Warbler Aug. 31 at Chapel Hill, NC (TH *et al.*) and a Bay-breasted Warbler Aug. 28 near Stone Mt., GA (PB). All six reports of the early-migrating Cerulean Warbler, with five from the Atlanta area, were Aug. 1–Sept. 1. A Swainson's Warbler, seldom seen in migration, was noted Aug. 27 near Stone Mt., GA (PB), where it apparently does not nest. Late warblers included a N. Waterthrush Nov. 5 at New Bern, NC (BH) and a Louisiana Waterthrush Oct. 25–27 near Atlanta (JH). The secretive Connecticut Warbler was noted at Mt. Pleasant Sept. 21 (DF, DoF), Yuchi W.M.A., GA, Sept. 21 (VW), Manteo, NC, Sept. 29 (HHa), and at Jekyll I. (no date—*fide* TM). The even rarer Mourning Warbler was encountered in August in Greensboro (RM, HLi), Sept. 2 near Mayesville (LG), and Sept. 4 near Charlotte (TP). Very rare along the coast were single Canada Warblers Oct. 7 at Pawleys I., SC (T & AHan) and Oct. 8 at Pea I. (RD).

#### GROSBEAKS TO CARDUELINES

The apparently declining Rose-breasted Grosbeak was found in good numbers at Fernbank Forest at Atlanta Sept. 28, with a count of 40 birds (A.A.S.); another Rose-breasted was very late Nov. 10 near Durham, NC (SHa, MS). An Indigo Bunting was rather late Nov. 14 at Huntington Beach S.P., SC (LG, EDa *et al.*). Three fly-over Dickcissels were again found at Pea I., on Oct. 8 (RD); and other Dickcissels were found Aug. 25 in *Banks*, GA (JP, JC) and Oct. 12 near Duluth, GA (JV).

Clay-colored Sparrows were widespread along the coast Sept. 27–Oct. 20, and single birds were very rare inland Oct. 13 in *Fairfield*, SC (TK) and Oct. 27 near L. Phelps, NC (RD). A record early Georgia Vesper Sparrow appeared in *Greene* Sept. 28 (PS). Lark Sparrow was not a rarity 20–30 years ago along the coast, but it is a good find now; there were about 5 coastal reports, plus inland records from Goldsboro Oct. 6 (ED) and Charlotte Aug. 16 (TP). Henslow's Sparrows are also seldom reported in migration. Two in a powerline clearing Nov. 17 in w. *Beaufort*, SC (SB) might have been on wintering grounds, whereas two more near Edenton, NC, Nov. 29 (AB) were north of the known winter range. The rare Le Conte's Sparrow was detected twice, both in North Carolina—at Arrowhead L., *Anson*, Oct. 27 (DS) and in the Henslow's Sparrow field near Edenton Nov. 29 (AB). Quite early was a Dark-eyed Junco at Bodie I., NC, Sept. 21 (HL *et al.*).

Of the four Lapland Longspur reports, a surprising three came from South Carolina, where very rare. Three were again found at

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Huntington Beach S.P., Nov. 24+ (CM, DF *et al.*), two were near Landrum Nov. 10 (ST), and one was heard calling at the Orangeburg sod farms Oct. 27 (RC); the other report was of two heard w. of L. Phelps, NC, Nov. 16 (HL, JW). Snow Buntings were encountered three times, all single birds on the North Carolina coast Oct. 26–Nov. 10.

The only Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Pea I., Sept. 8 (MT party). A count of 300 Brewer's Blackbirds on wintering grounds near Dublin, GA, in November (TKP) was not a big deal, but the three reports elsewhere, all from North Carolina, were a big deal; five were near L. Phelps Oct. 27 (RD),

one was found dead s. of Raleigh Nov. 6 (J & EPU), and two were at a regular wintering spot in Carteret Nov. 29 (JF, JW, PWR). The 3rd North Carolina report of Shiny Cowbird involved four males in a large flock of Brown-headed Cowbirds at a shopping center at Fayetteville Oct. 30 (PJC). An Orchard Oriole was very late Oct. 31 at New Bern (RB, BH, WF).

This is definitely a broken record, but there was essentially no winter finch flight this season. I think much of the "blame" must be placed on other birders; the presumed hundreds of thousands of feeders in states in the Northeast and southern Canada

must certainly be retaining Purple Finches, Pine Siskins, Evening Grosbeaks, and other finches that often wintered in good numbers in the Southeast. "Short-stopping" has been proven in geese; geese that normally winter on the Gulf Coast are now wintering in the central Mississippi Valley, and geese that used to winter along the s. Atlantic Coast are now wintering on the Delmarva Peninsula. With the increase in bird feeders, the now-annual scarcity of winter finches in the South cannot be blamed on a banner cone crop in the North year after year.

**Corrigendum:** At least 4 active nests of Ospreys have been present at L. Oconee, GA, for at least 4 or 5 years (PS); I implied (AB 45:434) that the species was a very rare breeder in the Georgia Piedmont.

**Observers:** Atlanta Audubon Society, John Batson, Giff Beaton, Bill Blakeslee, Rich Boyd, Sam Breyshaw, Ned Brinkley, Patrick Brisse, Allen Bryan, Kevin Calhoon, Carolina Bird Club, Robin Carter, Jack Carusos, J.E. Cely, Roger Clark (RCI), Sam Cooper, P.J. Crutchfield, Evelyn Dabbs (EDa), Ricky Davis, Eric Dean, Nathan Dias, Steve Dinsmore, Bruce Dralle, Barny Dunning (BDu), Caroline Eastman, Bert Fisher, Dennis Forsythe, Donna Forsythe (DoF), Wade Fuller, John Fussell, Fred Garrett, Hugh Garrett, Mark Gawn, Georgia Ornithological Society, Lex Glover, Toby Gordon, Betty Grady, Joe Greenberg, Henry Haberyan (HHa), Steve Hall (SHa), Bruce Hallett (BHa), Tom & Ann Hankins (T&AHan), Joe Harris, Todd Hass, Herb Hendrickson, Kevin Hennings, Bob Holmes, Steve Holtzman, Gene Howe, Tim Kalbach, Carol Lambert, Harry LeGrand, Henry Link (HLi), Kevin Markham, Greg Massey, Rad Mayfield (RMA), Ellery McClintock, Hugh McFadden, Roger McNeill, Charles McRae, Terry Miller (TMI), Peggy Moore, Terry Moore, Jeremy Nance, Jim O'Donnell, John Paget, J.F. Parnell, T.K. Patterson, Brian Paterson (BPa), Jack Peachey (JPe), Butch Pearce (BPe), Taylor Piephoff, Irvin Pitts, Bill Pulliam, James & Elizabeth Pullman (J & EPU), Paul Raney, George Reeves, Bob Righter, B.J. Rose, Paul Saraceni (PSa), Bob Sargent (BSa), Mike Schultz, Jeff Sewell, Doug Shadwick, Bruce Smart, Paul Sykes, Simon Thompson, Leslie Todd, Mike Tove, Russ Tyndall, Joel Volpi, Jeff Walters (JWa), Anne Waters, Vernon Waters, Ken Wilkins, Pete Worthington, John Wright, Paula Wright (PWR), Peter Yaukey.—HARRY E. LeGRAND, JR., N.C. Natural Heritage Program, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, NC 27611.

# FLORIDA REGION

John C. Ogden

The winter of 1991–1992 in Florida lacked memorable weather events; no strong cold fronts, major rain storms, or Regional droughts were present to stir the avian soup. Instead, it was on the warm side, with near normal or mildly above-normal rains throughout the peninsula. Birding must have been on the dull side, if the low total number of records submitted for the winter season, or the few rarities, can be used to judge such patterns. The Region experienced relatively few of such food-driven species as Tree Swallows, robins, or waxwings. And while pelagics, western raptors, western hummingbirds, and northern finches were scarce, so were wintering neotropicals, notably warblers.

Does this scarcity of newsworthy reports accurately reflect what actually happened in Florida this past winter, or were the total number of birders who submitted their seasonal reports too few to reveal the true story? While I'm willing to believe that it was an eventless winter for the most part, other answers may also help explain what seems to be emerging as one of the most significant patterns in Florida birding. To begin with, the number of bird reports that I received for each of the past two winters has been about 25% below the number submitted in earlier winters. That reduction generally coincides with an attempt by the Florida Ornithological Society to begin the publication of seasonal reports in their journal, the Florida Field Naturalist. After 2–3 years of testing this effort, the general conclusion is that the F.O.S. project has failed to meet the goal of more rapid publication of records. Others share my opinion that it certainly failed to produce a more readable or better screened product. And while the F.O.S. effort may have diluted the reporting effort to *American Birds*, it also demonstrated a recent and more fundamental problem in that Florida birders as a group currently seem to fall below the numerical threshold, and lack the organization, required to successively support regional data collection and management schemes. The missing Florida Region reports from several recent issues of *American Birds* offers more evidence for this argument. What it boils down to is that both the *AB* and F.O.S. seasonal reporting programs are floundering in Florida, apparently owing to a lack of strong support for either.

## LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS

A high Com. Loon winter count was of 400 at Seahorse Key, *Levy* (no date provided) (BM & RM); at the same location was one



Red-throated Loon, Dec. 28, by the same observers. Two unusually high Pied-billed Grebe counts were 282 on L. Marion, *Polk*, Jan. 11 (PT) and 205 on L. Trafford, *Collier*, Feb. 9 (LAR). Still without a verifiable specimen or photograph for Florida (W. Robertson and G. Woolfenden, ms.), one Red-necked Grebe was well described at Honey-moon I., *Pinellas*, Jan. 11 (WRG). Single Eared Grebes occurred at 3 widely separate locations: a water treatment plant near Tallahassee through Dec. 17 (JL, m.ob.), an Occidental Phosphate mine impoundment, *Hamilton*, Dec. 28 (JTK), and L. Ariana, *Polk*, Dec. 7 (PJF).

One imm. Brown Booby picked up on the beach near Englewood, *Sarasota*, Dec. 9 was banded and released (SS, AS). A high Atlantic coast count for N. Gannet was 725 at Cape Canaveral National Seashore, *Brevard*, Dec. 5 (HPR); a high Gulf coast count was 75 at Honey-moon I. Jan. 11 (DNG *et al.*). A remarkable inland concentration of Am. White Pelicans was 2500 in the *Polk* phosphate mine impoundments Jan. 4 (PJF *et al.*). Unusual so far north in winter, single Magnificent Frigatebirds were at Seahorse Key Dec. 28 (BM, RM) and at Cortez, *Manatee*, Feb. 15 (AFS).

## WADING BIRDS

Although the Everglades were much wetter this winter compared to the previous 2 years, only two species showed clear signs of increased nesting effort through the end of the period. By the end of February, in the Water Conservation Areas and mainland Everglades NP, about 2424 pairs of Great Egrets nested in 18 colonies (4 times the 1991 count) (RJS, OLB *et al.*). Downstream in Florida Bay, the

Audubon research team documented a decade-high count of 880 nesting pairs of Roseate Spoonbills in 20 colonies (RB *et al.*). The big news with Wood Storks was 1800 nesting pairs at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, the highest number nesting at that site since 1983 (THB). Storks at Corkscrew began nesting in early December, a schedule reminiscent of the historical s. Florida pattern; thus most pairs should be able to raise young before the summer rains disrupt fish concentrations. Again, it was a different story in the Everglades, where most storks waited until February and March to initiate nesting, thereby greatly reducing their chances for success. My current impression of the Everglades is that the food base (fishes, aquatic invertebrates) is so depleted that no short-term combination of hydrological events can stimulate much recovery.

Away from the colony scene, two Reddish Egrets at Hagen's Cove, *Taylor*, Feb. 9 were unusually far north in winter (NW); a count of nine white-morph Reddish Egrets in Florida Bay Dec. 27 would have been surprising anywhere in the Region, where white birds are uncommon, especially in winter (JCO, MB). High counts from the *Polk* phosphate mines included 485 Glossy Ibises and seven Roseate Spoonbills, both Feb. 15 (PJF). Many observers were fortunate enough to see the flock that had up to 32 Am. Flamingos near remote Sandy Key, Everglades NP, throughout the period (PWS, m.ob.). This flock, like several before it, contained a mix of adults and immatures; my intuitive opinion after watching these flocks come and go for over 25 years is that they are wild birds out of the Caribbean.

## WATERFOWL

One long-time s. Florida observer made a point about the remarkable scarcity of ducks in the s. peninsula by submitting a report of a single Blue-winged Teal, normally one of the more common ducks (FD)! Farther north, however, the waterfowl picture apparently was less bleak. High counts included 3000 Green-winged Teal, 5000 N. Shoveler, 7100 Ring-necked Ducks, and 1130 Ruddy Duck, all at the *Polk* phosphate impoundments Feb. 15 (PJF). While these numbers represent recent highs, the observer commented that the Ruddy count was much higher 10–20 years ago. Also a noteworthy high number was the 67,690 Redheads counted on the aerial waterfowl census along the Gulf coast between the Ochlockonee and Suwannee rivers Feb. 11 (CSG).

Among the rarities was one Ross' Goose, only the 3rd Florida record (Robertson and Woolfenden, ms.), at the Tallahassee tram road water treatment plant, *Leon*, Dec. 10

(ph., JEC & NW, *et al.*). Another rare Eur. Wigeon appeared at one of the more reliable locations, at Merritt I. Dec. 12 (HPR). Oldsquaws made a strong appearance throughout the Region, including one unusually far south at Marco I., *Collier*, Feb. 1–15 (THB, WBB). A high count for the rare Black Scoter was 46 at the s. end of Cape Canaveral Natl Seashore Dec. 6 (HPR); a single White-winged Scoter, the rarest of Florida scoters, was in n. Hillsborough Bay Dec. 28 (RTP).

#### RAPTORS TO CRANES

One (or more) Black-shouldered Kite(s) was seen at 3 locations near Archbold Biological Station, *Highlands*, in late December and January (m.ob., *fide* FEL). Great news on Bald Eagles: the Florida nesting number increased from 359 to 601 known pairs between 1981 and 1991 (SAN). One dark-morph Short-tailed Hawk arrived early at Tiger Creek Nature Preserve, *Polk*, Feb. 8 (PJF), where a pair nested last year. Very pale Red-tailed Hawks, reported as Krider's, were three Jan. 25 at Zellwood, *Orange* (GB, TR) and one from Jan. 4 through the period near Homestead, *Dade* (PWS, SAS).

The two small, elusive rails were both detected this winter. One Yellow Rail was described with convincing details by a visiting birder at Paynes Prairie, *Alachua*, Jan. 20 (*fide* BPM), and two Yellow Rails were at Loxahatchee NWR, *Palm Beach*, Dec. 28 (MS). Also at Paynes Prairie, one Black Rail was flushed before a fire Dec. 18 (JEW), and another was at St. Marks Light, *Wakulla*, Jan. 3 (JEC). American Coots were so scarce in parts of s. Florida that serious consideration was given to having a bumper sticker printed, "Where's the Coots." Not one coot was on West L., Everglades NP, where up to 50,000 wintered in the late 1960s (JCO). But the n. Florida winter waterfowl censuses revealed a 5-year high for coots at St. Marks NWR (JR); the high count for the *Polk* phosphate mines was 4000 Feb. 15 (PJF).

A record high count of Sandhill Cranes wintered in the *Alachua-Marion* area; 3690 were on the Alachua Christmas Count, and another 1000 were s. of the count circle (*fide* BPM). However, not all were in these 2 counties, as 250 cranes were migrating N over L. Alfred, *Polk*, Feb. 29 (CG).

#### SHOREBIRDS

One Lesser Golden-Plover wintered at Ft. DeSoto County Park, *Pinellas*, Dec. 15 through February (BHA, LSA); one other Lesser Golden, definitely different, was at nearby Honeymoon I. Feb. 1–4 (PMB, HPR). High winter counts for Snowy Plover were of 40 at Honeymoon I. Dec. 22 (DNG) and 31 at St. George I., *Franklin*, Dec. 25 (DS); the highest count for Piping Plover was an encouraging 112 at Honeymoon I. Dec. 22 (DNG). One Black-necked Stilt was unusually far north in winter, at St. Marks NWR, through the period (JR, CSG); 27 stilts in the *Polk* phosphate mines Jan. 4 made the highest local winter count ever



**Male Stripe-headed Tanager at Goulds, north of Homestead, Florida, in February 1992. This stray from the Bahamas was farther inland than most. Photograph/Larry Manfredi.**

(PJF, JP, KDN). One Am. Avocet also wintered at St. Marks (JR, CSG), while large winter avocet flocks included 119 on Merritt I. Jan. 29 (HPR) and up to 400 on spoil islands in Hillsborough Bay (RTP) in late December.

Solitary Sandpipers were reported from 6 locations, primarily in the c. peninsula, an unprecedented winter showing. This species is rare enough in winter that all reports are summarized here: one each at L. Woodruff, *Volusia*, Jan. 24 and Feb. 28 (HPR), Brooksville, *Hernando*, Dec. 14 (LSA), Econlockhatchee R., *Seminole*, Dec. 28 (BP, GM), Auburndale, *Polk*, Dec. 14 (CG), W. Palm Beach Jan. 24 (SF, VM), and two at Largo, *Pinellas*, throughout the period (LSA, m.ob.). Pectoral Sandpipers arrived unusually early in the n. peninsula, including three on the Springhill R., Tallahassee, four at St. Marks NWR (BDN, DAE), and 55 on Paynes Prairie (JHH), all Feb. 28 records. Extremely rare in s. Florida, one Purple Sandpiper was on the Black Point jetty, *Dade*, Feb. 22 into March (BM, VE *et al.*). Evidence of the increasing presence of Stilt Sandpipers overwintering in Florida is provided by reports in both n. and inland locations: two on the Springhill R., Tallahassee, through the period (JEC, NW) and four near Brighton, *Glades*, Dec. 23 (PWS, SAS). Long-billed Dowitchers, apparently regular in winter in the counties bordering L. Okeechobee, were also in high numbers in the *Polk* phosphate mines—193 Feb. 15 (PJF); and unusually far north—up to nine throughout the period at the Mounds Pool, St. Marks NWR (NW). The twittering courtship flight songs of two Am. Woodcock were again heard in the far s. peninsula, e. Everglades NP, Jan. 31 (PWS, SAS).

#### JAEGERS TO SKIMMERS

Substantial numbers of jaegers were along the Atlantic coast of the n. peninsula in early-mid December, with a "large" flight off Ft. Clinch, *Nassau*, Dec. 1 (BDN, DAE) and 14

Pomarine and 21 Parasitic jaegers off the s. end of the Cape Canaveral Seashore Dec. 20 & 5, respectively (HPR). Unusually high counts of Bonaparte's Gulls were 200 at L. Maggiore, *Pinellas*, Dec. 14 (RWS) and over 1000 at Alligator Point, *Franklin*, Jan. 5 (BDN, DAE). Another very rare California Gull was detected, an adult well documented by a substantial report at Honeymoon I. Feb. 7 (DNG). The high count for Lesser Black-backed Gull was seven, all adults, at Ward's Bank, *Duval*, Feb. 15 (NW). Two Great Black-backed Gulls at Whale Harbor, *Monroe*, Jan. 4 was a high count for the Florida Keys (PWS, SAS). Locally very rare, one Caspian Tern was at the Springhill water treatment plant, Tallahassee, Jan. 31 and Feb. 4 (JEC). Forster's Terns were in very low numbers on Marco I. this winter, down 61% from the 18-year mean (THB). Fairly amazing so far inland, up to 750 Black Skimmers were in the *Polk* impoundments Jan. 4 (PJF, JP, KDN).

#### DOVES TO HUMMINGBIRDS

Filling in the range gaps in the n. peninsula, Eur. Collared-Doves were encountered at Alligator Point, *Franklin*, Dec. 8 (BDN, DAE) and at Steinhatchee, *Taylor*, Feb. 8 (NW). Not all exotics have negative impacts on native avifaunas; we continue to see evidence around Homestead in winter that Collared-Doves are becoming an important prey item for Short-tailed Hawks which hunt the edges of town (JCO). Another exotic, Monk Parakeet, may be spreading; 2 pairs nested in the bottom of an active Osprey nest on Plantation Key, *Monroe*, Jan. 4 (PWS, SAS); elsewhere, Monks were commented on as being unusual w. of Vero Beach, *Indian River*, Feb. 2 (JGT) and s. of Lakeland Dec. 14 (JF, MH).

Smooth-billed Anis continue to be extremely scarce in *Dade*; one report was of eight in the s. county Dec. 28 (VE). For some reason, anis are now encountered more often in *Palm Beach* than farther south (PWS,

SAS). The Barn Owls' habit of nesting and roosting under turnpike bridges sometimes has deadly results; one live and two roadkill Barn Owls were at a Weston I-75 overpass, *Broward*, Jan. 26 (JLB).

Presumably the same **Buff-bellied Hummingbird** returned for the 3rd consecutive winter to feeders in a Ft. Lauderdale yard, throughout the period (*vide* WG). The only other hummingbirds of note were one ad. ♂ Ruby-throated Dec. 1–Feb. 11 at Tallahassee, where they are rare in winter (JEC) and one ♂ Rufous Hummingbird at Coral Gables, *Dade*, Dec. 30 (BDN, DAE).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO WARBLERS

A single Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was at Newberry, *Alachua*, Jan. 6, where only one other county winter record exists (GBH). At least 75 Cave Swallows were back roosting at the s. *Dade* colony Jan. 30 (PWS, SAS). As far as I know, no one checks this site through fall and winter to determine seasonal patterns of occurrence by Caves. Although Brown-headed Nuthatches have long occupied pine flatwoods in e. *Orange*, they also appeared this winter for the first time at 3 long-censused n. county sites, including Wekiva Springs SP and the lower Wekiva State Preserve (*vide* DF). Brown Thrashers were widespread in their return to the Homestead area the last week in February (PWS, SAS); the question is, where do they come from? This species is quite rare in the West Indies.

After several consecutive winters of seeing almost no Loggerhead Shrikes in the *Dade* farmlands, regular counts this year of four–five in the fields w. of Homestead was a pleasant surprise (JCO). Extremely rare in winter so far north in the peninsula, single Yellow-throated Vireos were at Lakeland Dec. 14 (JF, MH) and in Highlands Hammock SP Feb. 25–28 (BK, MK).

Among warblers, 19 species are considered regular winter visitors in all or parts of the peninsula (Robertson and Woolfenden, ms.). From this list of regulars, several still made local news. One ♀-plumaged Am. Redstart was at Tallahassee Feb. 2, where very rare in winter (BDN); two ♂ redstarts were on the *Polk* CBC Dec. 14 (CG, GC, HF). Also unusually far north, one N. Waterthrush was at St. Marks NWR Jan. 18 (BDN, DAE); single Wilson's Warblers were at Jacksonville (NW) and Gainesville (MKent, DML), both Dec. 15. A high winter count for Wilson's was three at the Loxahatchee Recreation Area, *Palm Beach*, Jan. 25–Feb. 22 (BHH). Last from the list of regulars, single Yellow-breasted Chats on Merritt I. Jan. 8 (BP, JLB) and on Cedar Key Dec. 27–Feb. 29 (DCH) were n. of their usual winter range. Only 2 species were reported from the list of very rare, irregular winterers. One Blue-winged Warbler remained in the Tree-tops Park, Ft. Lauderdale, Dec. 28–Jan. 19 (JDP, WG), and a Louisiana Waterthrush was at Loxahatchee Recreation Area Feb. 16 (BHH).

#### TANAGERS TO ORIOLES

Single ♂ Stripe-headed Tanagers were at Delray Beach Dec. 7, and at a 2nd location 5–6 mi away Dec. 10 (both BHH). Another ♂ Stripe-headed was seen by hundreds in the yard of Larry Manfredi n. of Homestead Jan. 3–Feb. 25 (ph. LM). This latter bird was farther inland than most. A Blue Grosbeak again wintered at the Belle Glade marina, one Dec. 22 and Jan. 18 (PWS, GSH). The 2nd Florida **Lazuli Bunting** record was of one immature, described in a detailed report, at Belle Glade, *Palm Beach*, Dec. 23 (PWS, SAS). At the n. limit of winter range, one Painted Bunting was on Paynes Prairie and another in nearby Gainesville Dec. 15 & 16, respectively (EAV *et al.*).

A very high Chipping Sparrow count was of 165 at L. Alfred, *Polk*, Jan. 25 (HPR, CG); also a local high were 11 Grasshopper Sparrows at L. Alfred Jan. 5 (PT *et al.*). One Vesper Sparrow, rare in the s. peninsula, was extremely far south near Homestead Jan. 1 (PWS, SAS). Very rare or overlooked, single Le Conte's Sparrows were at St. Marks NWR Feb. 9 (DS) and on Honeymoon I. Dec. 22 to the end of the period (DNG, m.ob.). Local high counts of White-crowned Sparrows were 14 at Brooksville, *Hernando*, Dec. 14 (LSA, DHG) and 11 at L. Alfred Jan. 5 (PT *et al.*).

Just beyond the fringes of our Region, "many" Brewer's Blackbirds were seen in a *Calhoun* field Dec. 15 by 2 observers partaking in a "broad circumperambulation" of the state in December (BDN, DAE). Cowbirds continue to make more news than one would wish. The northernmost Shiny Cowbird was one at Tierra Verde, *Pinellas*, Dec. 7 (LSA). *Collier* had its first Shiny Cowbirds in any numbers (30–40 throughout the period) at Rookery Bay (THB, WBB). In *Dade/Monroe*, up to three Shiniies were at 4 widely separate locations in late December–early January (PWS, SAS); these observers described the Shiny's winter pattern as "peripatetic." Four Bronzed Cowbirds were e. of Lakeland Dec. 11–Jan. 4, the 3rd consecutive winter at this location (LC, BC, PJF). A massive concentration of Brown-headed Cowbirds was estimated at 20,000 at the McJunkin Dairy, *Highlands*, Dec. 22 (*vide* FEL). Finally, at least three orioles in various "Bullock's" plumages made life difficult for birders around Flamingo, Everglades NP, throughout the period (PWS, SAS, m.ob.).

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

This seasonal report is dedicated to a special person, the late Henry M. Stevenson, who introduced me to Florida Ornithology beginning in 1962. Henry, unexpectedly, died in 1991. I hope that he has joined with Florida's missing Carolina Parakeets, Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and Bachman's Warblers. Henry also introduced me to the joys and frustrations of writing seasonal reports for *American Birds* (*Audubon Field Notes*). We wrote our first together in 1967. This one must be my last. The growing demands of

Everglades restoration draw me further from birding. Thank you for your patience.—JCO.

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# ONTARIO REGION

Ron D. Weir

The sixth consecutive mild winter, punctuated by a few cold periods prevailed over most of Ontario south of Thunder Bay. However, areas from Sudbury north experienced fairly heavy snowfall that accumulated. The irruption by raptors noted in autumn turned into spectacular showings by Gyrfalcon and four species of northern owls. Large numbers of scoters and eiders concentrated at the western end of Lake Ontario, possibly in response to the growing population of Zebra Mussels. Expansion by the Northern Cardinal and House Finch continued throughout the central and southern regions, although more rapidly for the latter species. Numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers and Carolina Wrens remained at high levels, while Eastern Bluebirds were more numerous in parts of the south all winter. Among the rarities were the Pacific Loon, Great Cormorant, and Ross' Gull.

**Abbreviations:** PEPt (Prince Edward Point); Pelee (Point Pelee NP and vicinity); Algonquin, Presqu'ile, and Rondeau are Provincial Parks.

## LOONS TO HERONS

The strong autumn flight by Red-throated Loons spilled over into winter; the 11 birds are over double the 1982-91 average of five. Five remained in the Hamilton area Dec.

1-Jan. 31 (*fide* KAM), and singles appeared at Kingston, Woods Bay L., Simcoe, Tobermory, Port Bolster, York, Toronto, and Grimsby Dec. 1-Jan. 2. The lone Pacific Loon at Keswick, York, Dec. 1-2 (RAD, SJM, JRM, TH) was the first in winter since 1983 and also followed a good showing by the species last autumn. Late and record-late Com. Loons were singles in Algonquin Dec. 1 (RGT, DT) and Gore Bay, Manitoulin I., Dec. 31 (TL), respectively. Another tarried near Woodstock until it froze to death Dec. 22 (JMH); the adult at Beachville Jan. 27 was Oxford's first in winter (JMH). The lone Pied-billed Grebe off Manitoulin I. Jan. 11 was record late (CTB). The 32 Red-neckeds at Meaford Dec. 22 were noteworthy for the late date (TRM); two remained at Kingston until Jan. 5 (KHg, RDW). The Eared Grebe, unusual in winter, lingered at Sarnia Feb. 22-24 (DFR *et al.*).

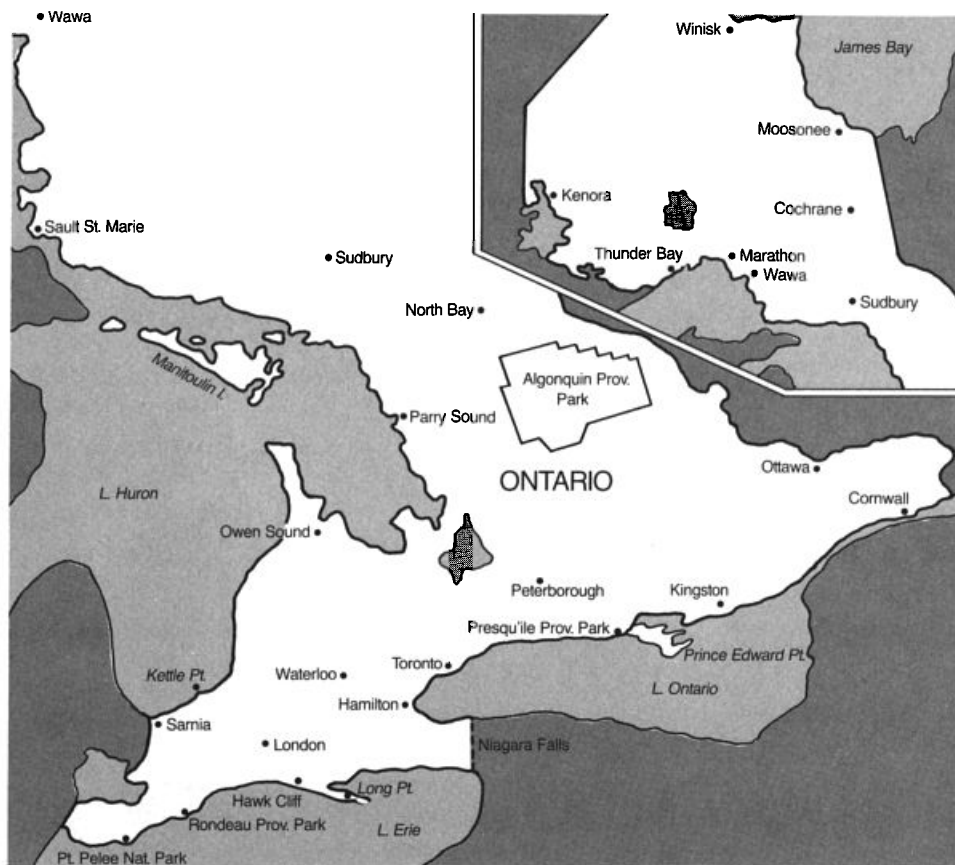
The imm. N. Gannet off Winona Dec. 1 was likely the same individual in the area in autumn (GN). Two Am. White Pelicans remained at Jordan Harbour, Niagara, Nov. 10-Jan. 13, a stay that proved fatal. One was found dead and frozen in ice Jan. 16, following a severe freeze (ph. MEH). One Great Cormorant strayed to Ivy Lea Jan. 21 (FA, WC). Late Double-crested were four in e. Hamilton Bay until some time in January (*fide* KAM) and two at Port Weller Jan. 5 (GBE). An Am. Bittern was tardy at Big Creek marsh, Halton, Dec. 14 (RZD, BCh, KAM *et al.*). At least 20 Great Blue Herons overwintered n.e. to Kingston; the adult arriving at Pelee Feb. 26 was record early by 2 days (AW).

## WATERFOWL

Tallies from the L. Ontario mid-winter waterfowl inventory Jan. 5, now in its 45th year, reached 88,740 birds of 37 species along the inshore waters from Kingston w. to Niagara (WJE). The trend to increased numbers of scoters, Oldsquaw, and Com. Goldeneye continued. The annual winter Mute Swan reappeared for the 11th year at West Guilford, Haliburton, Dec. 13-Feb. 29 (RJP). Early Snow Geese were six each at Whitby Feb. 18 (AB, DGy) and Pelee Feb. 24 (AW). The ♂ Wood Duck at Pelee Jan. 20 (AW) constituted the park's 3rd ever in winter; another remained at Woodstock Jan. 3-Feb. 29, where rare (JMH). The ♀ Green-winged Teal also at Woodstock Jan. 3-Feb. 29 was Oxford's first to overwinter (JMH). Four others at Pelee Feb. 25 were record early (GTH). The 220 N. Pintail at Pelee Feb. 24 were early for such numbers (AW). Twelve N. Shovelers were still in Toronto's High Park Jan. 30 (AB); six arrivals appeared at Pelee Feb. 25 (AW). Oxford's first winter Gadwall was a female in Beachville Dec. 14-27 (JMH); the male at Pelee Jan. 11 was the park's 2nd ever in winter (AW). The 32 Am. Wigeon in Toronto Dec. 31-Jan. 7 were reduced to 24 by Feb. 24 (EAJ).

The 10,000 Greater Scaup at Winona Jan. 1 were the most reported by far (RHC *et al.*). The 47 King Eiders represent the strongest winter showing in at least 11 years and are a surprise given the poor flight last autumn. The largest concentrations consisted of 33 near Winona Jan. 5 (RZD *et al.*) and eight along Toronto's waterfront Jan. 1 (MK *et al.*).

The others were four at Port Weller Dec. 15 (RZD *et al.*), a single shot by hunters at Pelee Dec. 13 (JAW, HGI), and another at Capreol Dec. 22-23 that died (CGB). Nine Harlequin Ducks were reported, three more than the 1978-1991 winter average. One male appeared in Sault Ste. Marie Feb. 9-Mar. 6 (EC, ATW *et al.*), where very rare; the eight in the south were at Sarnia, Pickering, Kettle Pt., Minden, Wolfe I., and Port Weller Dec. 1-Feb. 16. Impressive Oldsquaw concentrations were the 20,735 at PEPt Jan. 4 (JHE, RDW) and 10,000 along Etobicoke's lakeshore Jan. 2 (RY). Noteworthy among the 11 Surf Scoters reported is the record late individual off Manitoulin I. Dec. 1-15 (CTB). At least 3500 White-wingeds overwintered off Winona (RZD *et al.*); 2500 were along Toronto's waterfront Jan. 4 (HGC, EAJ *et al.*). Farther east, 2000 swam at PEPt Dec. 7 (KHg). Three Barrow's Goldeneyes appeared in Ottawa and were one male and two females Dec. 1-Feb. 29 (BMD *et al.*). Single males remained near Lakefield Dec. 1-Feb. 29 (*fide* DCS) and



Ivy Lea Dec. 28 (T Lusk, ES). The ad. female at Bronte Feb. 23 (MWJ) is that area's first in 10 years. Hooded Mergansers were more common than usual. The lone Com. Merganser at Atikokan Jan. 1 was that region's 2nd ever in winter (DHE).

#### VULTURES TO SHOREBIRDS

Two Turkey Vultures were still in Perth Jan. 14 (RN), and another appeared at Port Rowan Feb. 1 (RWK, MJ). Bald Eagle numbers remained high at 104 in the south plus 11 in the north. At least 17 Balds wintered at Ivy Lea (K.F.N.) and 13 at Petroglyphs PP (DCS). The 43 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 59 Cooper's were normal numbers, but the 38 N. Goshawks in the south represented the strongest winter showing since 1983-84. One albino Red-tailed Hawk was at Burkton Jan. 21 (AGC). Eight Golden Eagles were tallied (1982-91 winter average of 7). Singles were at Gore Bay, Manitoulin I., and at Turkey Pt. Dec. 1 (CTB, RDM, BCo), Kingston Dec. 2 (IDY), Keswick York Dec. 6 (RK), Brighton Dec. 15 (AGC), Kinlough, Bruce, Dec. 23 (AWM), Nanticoke Dec. 27-Jan. 5 (JBCM, SJMI), and Chepstow Jan. 8-Feb. 29 (AWM, DF). The 27 Merlins, all in the south, set a record high, aided by feeding stations to host prey (1982-1991 winter average is 11). The ad. male in Algonquin Dec. 12 was the park's 3rd ever in winter (RGT); three were in London Jan. 1-Feb. 27 (RL, SP, RH). Peregrine Falcons numbered eight, three more than the 1982-91 winter average of five. There were singles in Sarnia Dec. 1-Feb. 29 (DSK), Ottawa Dec. 1-Jan. 7 (BDL, TFMB), Kingston Dec. 25-Jan. 6 (C & MS), Hamilton and Winona Dec. 26-Jan. 3 (MC, R Beer, JS), St. Clair NWA Jan. 1 (PAW), Whitby Jan. 26 and Feb. 27 (AGC, MJB), and Guelph Feb. 6 (AAS).

#### S.A.

At least 22 Gyrfalcons were reported, nearly double last winter's outstanding flight; the total compares with the 1982-1991 average of six. The six in the north were two in Sault Ste. Marie Dec. 1-Jan. 12 (ATW) and four grey birds in Thunder Bay Dec. 1-Feb. 29 (NGE *et al.*). The 16+ in the south account for the increase over last winter's number. These were two white and one grey in the Sudbury area Dec. 1-Feb. 29 (JCN, CGB); two each in Ottawa early December-Feb. 29 (DD, RPH, BMD *et al.*) and Whitby-Ajax Dec. 2-6 and Jan. 9-18 (*vide* MJB); and four (one white, two grey, one dark) in Bruce Dec. 8-Jan. 23 (*vide* TRM). Singles appeared on Walpole I. Jan. 1-8 (KJB, PAW), Burleigh Falls, Peterborough, Jan. 15 (J & JC), Teston Jan. 18 (MW), near Beachville Jan. 31-Feb. 29 (IP, JMH, DNB *et al.*), and Carnarvon, Haliburton, Feb. 11 (EP).

A Spruce Grouse in Algonquin was displaying Jan. 11 and charged the observer, who was wearing a red coat (MR *et al.*).



Two American White Pelicans at Jordan Harbour, Ontario, unwisely far north for the season, on December 1, 1991. Photograph/Alan Wormington.

American Coots were in higher than usual numbers, led by 700 at Port Rowan Dec. 1 (AW) and 99 in Presqu'île the same day (AGC). One in Sudbury Dec. 14 was late (CGB, JB, JC). Late Sandhill Cranes were three at Turkey Pt. until Dec. 31 (*vide* JDM).

The early December cold snap over much of the south chased many shorebirds southward, but a number lingered on. The Black-bellied Plover at Wheatley until Dec. 13 was record late by 16 days (AW). One Killdeer remained at Humber Bay, Toronto, Dec. 28-Jan. 2 (EAJ *et al.*); two others were at Wheatley Jan. 1-20 (AW). The Sanderling at Rondeau Dec. 15 (PAW, AW) was tardy; a W. Sandpiper consorting with Snow Buntings along Dorcas Bay, Bruce, Dec. 13 (MWs) was record late. The last of the southbound White-rumpeds were singles at Jordan Harbour, Niagara, Dec. 1 (RHC *et al.*) and Turkey Pt. Dec. 8 (L.P.B.O.). The Baird's Sandpiper at Turkey Pt. noted in the autumn report tarried until Dec. 14, a record late date (ph. RDM *et al.*). Purple Sandpipers were four at Niagara Falls Dec. 9 (GBe) and singles at Presqu'île Dec. 1-15 (AGC, DSn), Hamilton Beach Dec. 3 (JLo), Winona Dec. 5 (AW), and Peacock Pt., *Haldimand*, Jan. 1-6 (JBCM, JBM, SJMI) that moved with four Dunlin to Turkey Pt. Jan. 7-13 (AGC, PSB *et al.*). Other tardy Dunlin were two at Presqu'île to Jan. 5 (DSn, S & DH) and one in Toronto Jan. 12-18 (RY, HK). The Long-billed Dowitcher at Turkey Pt. until Dec. 8 (L.P.B.O.) was the first in December since 1984. Several late Com. Snipe were reported; two at Pelee Jan. 20 furnished the park's first in winter (AW). The latest of several Am. Woodcock was killed by traffic at Port Stanley Jan. 19 (SWP). Remnants from the heavy autumn flight of Red Phalarope were singles at Point Clark, Bruce, Nov. 28-Dec. 4 (AWM) and Blenheim Dec. 15 (PAW).

#### GULLS TO OWLS

Following the record number of jaegers in the autumn flight, one Pomarine appeared off Wolfe I. Dec. 15 in gale force winds (GFV, RDW); a Parasitic flew past Winona Dec. 26 (A. Epp). A Laughing Gull in first-winter plumage at Pickering Jan. 3-Feb. 6 (MK *et al.*) constituted the first winter sighting of this rare species since 1985. More than usual numbers of Little Gulls were present this winter. The 106 at St. Williams Dec. 14 (AW, CAS, MWJ) are noteworthy; singles were e. to Presqu'île Dec. 13 (MR, DSn) and Kingston Dec. 15 (GFV, RDW). Two adults were still at Queenston Feb. 26 (AGC). One ad. Com. Black-headed Gull remained at Niagara-on-the-Lake Dec. 11-Jan. 31 (MR, GBe, TS); two adults were there Jan. 1 (AGC), bringing to 22 the total for the past 28 winters. The number of Bonaparte's Gulls in the evening flight past Niagara-on-the-Lake fell from 40,000 Dec. 8 to 5000 by Jan. 1 and none by Feb. 15 (GBe, AGC).

Ontario's 12th California Gull since 1981 was the adult at the London dump Dec. 14 (DAM *et al.*), the first for *Middlesex*. In the south, the 68 Iceland and 284 Glaucous are above-average numbers; the 10 Thayer's are a typical total for winter. Noteworthy were single gulls thought to be hybrid Herring x Glaucous in the Dundas marsh Dec. 26 (AW) and at the Nepean dump Jan. 11 (BMD). Some 18 Lesser Black-backed Dec. 1-Feb. 25 were noted, equal the number each winter since 1987 but exceeding the 1982-91 average of 10. The w. end of L. Ontario from Oshawa to Niagara hosted 12; L. Erie shores entertained three; a single was at Kettle Pt. Dec. 15 (AHR). Inland at Woodstock, one in first-winter plumage was found dead Dec. 1, but an adult was there Dec. 8 (JMH). Numbers of Great Black-backed continued to climb, with 1110 at the Nepean

### S.A.

The 236+ Snowy Owls (224 in the south, 12 in the north) exceed totals from the record-setting invasion in winter 1971–1972. As usual, the greatest concentrations were in e. Ontario, within the triangle defined by *Durham*, *Leeds*, and *Renfrew*; 25 wintered on Wolfe I. (K.F.N.). However, Snowies penetrated the southwest to reach *Oxford*, *Middlesex*, *Elgin*, *Lambton*, *Kent*, and *Pelee*. By late February, their northward exodus had begun from the south. The 2nd owl species to push south from the breeding range was the N. Hawk Owl, whose numbers were impressive at 102 sightings. Their pattern suggests that they originated from both n. Ontario and Quebec. The main N. Hawk Owl thrust was into counties of the southeast through *Parry Sound* and *Renfrew*, with a lesser influx via *Manitoulin I.* and *Bruce*. One reached *Sheffield* Feb. 14–29 (RZD); two were in the *Hamilton* area Feb. 14+ (RZD *et al.*). Within the south, their distribution by county was nine in *Bruce*, three *Durham*, one *Frontenac*, two *Haliburton*, two *Hamilton-Wentworth*, two *Lanark*, one *Lennox & Addington*, six *Leeds & Grenville*, five *Manitoulin I.*, one *Muskoka*, 12 *Nipissing*, 15 *Ottawa-Carleton*, six *Parry Sound*, one *Peterborough*, four *Prince Edward*, four *Renfrew*, seven *Simcoe*, five *Sudbury*, and one *Waterloo*. Farther north, there were five each in *Sault Ste. Marie*, *Thunder Bay*, and *Temiskaming*.

The Great Gray Owl also flew s. of its breeding range in large numbers. The 234 birds are fewer than the 432 noted during the unprecedented irruption of 1983–1984 but exceed the 38 of 1965–1966 and the 61 of 1978–1979. South of *Sudbury*, at least 192 were reported; as in 1983–1984, these owls appeared to move SE through *Sudbury*. The main body remained on *Manitoulin I.*, from which some crossed to *Bruce* and *Simcoe*. A small number penetrated further south through *Parry Sound* and *Muskoka* to reach *Renfrew*, *Lanark*, and *Leeds*. Some of these birds may have originated in Quebec. Near the season's close, the 16 in *Ottawa* Feb. 2–19 were that area's first of the winter (BMD). North of *Sudbury* at *Sault Ste. Marie*, at least 30 were counted Jan. 18 (ATW); 13 overwintered at *Thunder Bay* Dec. 1–Feb. 29 (NGE). Further west, one appeared at *Atikokan* Feb. 14 (DHE). Table 1 contains the tally by county to permit comparison with the summary for 1983–1984 (see *AB* 38(3):312).

The 26 Boreal Owls in the south are a record high and exceed the totals from the big irruptions of 1922–1923, 1954–1955, 1962–1963, and 1983–1984. Unlike the Snowy, N. Hawk, and Great Gray owls noted above, which are larger, diurnal, and obvious to observers, the Boreal is tiny, nocturnal, and secretive so the 26 reports are likely a gross underestimate. Of these 26, two were injured by a collision with traffic, three were killed by flying into windows, and one was found dead. Leading this winter's concentrations were the six in *Durham* Dec. 1–Feb. 29 (*vide* MJB) and four in *Bruce* Jan. 12–Feb. 22 (*vide* TRM). Two each were in *Ottawa-Carleton* Dec. 1–Feb. 23 (*vide* BMD), *Sudbury* Jan. 5–24 (*vide* JCN), *Peterborough* Jan. 24–Feb. 21 (*vide* AGC, DCS), and *Muskoka* Feb. 1–16 (RGT *et al.*, VH). Singles were reported throughout the period in *Nipissing*, *Manitoulin I.*, *Grey*, *Parry Sound*, *Simcoe*, *Haliburton*, *Frontenac*, and *Renfrew*. In the north, one was injured at *Sioux Lookout* Feb. 17 but is releasable (KMCK); another was photographed in downtown *Sault Ste. Marie* Jan. 4 (KO).

**Table 1. Number of different Great Gray Owls in s. Ontario, winter 1991–92.**

	First Date	Last Date	Number of Great Gray Owls				Total <sup>a</sup>
			Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
<i>Temiskaming</i>	Dec. 1	Feb. 29	1	?	?		13
<i>Nipissing</i>	Dec. 1	Feb. 29	3	4	1		5
<i>Sudbury</i>	Dec. 4	Feb. 29	3	25	24		28
<i>Manitoulin I.</i>	Dec. 28	Feb. 21	2	86	28		88+
<i>Bruce</i>	Dec. 18	Jan. 20	?	?	?		7
<i>Parry Sound</i>	Dec. ?	Feb. ?	?	?	?		6
<i>Muskoka</i>	Jan. 9	Jan. 20	0	1	0		1
<i>Simcoe</i>	Jan. 9	Feb. 9	?	?	?		5
<i>York</i>	Feb. 28	Mar. 1	0	0	1	1	1
<i>Haliburton</i>	Feb. 11	Feb. 11	0	0	1		1
<i>Victoria</i>	Dec. 12	Dec. 12	1	0	0		1
<i>Peterborough</i>	Jan. 15	Feb. 1	0	2	3		4
<i>Durham</i>	Mar. 1	Mar. 1	0	0	0	1	1
<i>Lennox &amp; Addington</i>	Feb.	Feb.	0	0	1		1
<i>Renfrew</i>	Dec. 23	Feb. 17	2	3	1		6
<i>Lanark</i>	Jan. 29	Feb. 16	?	?	?		4
<i>Leeds &amp; Grenville</i>	Dec. 19	Feb. 28	1	0	3		4
<i>Ottawa-Carleton</i>	Feb. 2	Feb. 19	0	0	16		16
Total							192

Total number of owls may not equal the sum of monthly entries because of duplicate birds.

dump Jan. 8 (BMD), 100+ at *Pickering* Jan. 1–31 (*vide* MJB), 55 near *Woodstock* Dec. 22 (JMH), 24 at *Presqu'île* Dec. 23 (S & DH), and 12 inland at *Peterborough* in January (*vide* DCS). Ontario's 3rd *Ross' Gull* was the adult at *Sarnia* Feb. 21 (ph. DFR), the 2nd occurrence in as many winters.

Late terns were the single Common along the *Niagara R.* Dec. 1–8 (*vide* RFA), imm. Black at *Fort Erie* Dec. 1–8 (RFA, *et al.*, RZD *et al.*) and at *Wiaraton* Dec. 15 (RG). The Atlantic Puffin well out of range at *Cochrane* in mid-December was picked up and taken to *Ottawa* for transport to *Nova Scotia* for release (*vide* HK). The species last occurred in Ontario Dec. 15, 1985. Short-eared Owl, a species causing concern in the province because of declining habitat, appeared in high numbers. About 150 were tallied in *Fisherville* near *Cayuga*, *Haldimand*, Dec. 21 (JBM); up to 25 overwintered on *Wolfe I.* (K.F.N.).

### WOODPECKERS TO WRENS

Single Red-headed Woodpeckers were on *Manitoulin I.* Dec. 14, Jan. 1–31 (EG *et al.*), and near *Brighton* Jan. 29–Feb. 1 (DSN *et al.*). The 75+ Red-bellieds represented a strong showing, of which 23 were away from the southwest. One female was well north at *Sault Ste. Marie* Dec. 2–Jan. 31 (ATW). Another was north at *Ice L.*, *Manitoulin I.*, Dec. 1–Jan. 31 (JCN), and nine overwintered in *Bruce* (*vide* TRM). The remainder were spread to the northeast and included two in *York*, three in *Durham*, two in *Northumberland*, one in *Prince Edward*, one in *Amherst I.*, and three in *Kingston*. Late Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were singles on *Wolfe I.* Jan. 5 (KHg), *Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery* Jan. 19 (EK), *Toronto's Lambton Woods* Feb. 8 (HK), and at *Tillsonburg* Jan. 26, *Oxford's* first in winter (JMH). A Three-toed Woodpecker at *Claremont*, *Durham*, Jan. 30–Feb. 1 (DL, NB) and a Black-backed at *Kingston* Feb. 29 (JHE) were the only ones reported s. of range. A Pileated near *Cayuga* Jan. 26 was that area's first in 3 years (JBM). The last autumn E. Phoebe was two that tarried at *Pelee* Nov. 30–Dec. 16 (KO *et al.*) and Dec. 2–29 (AW *et al.*).

Six Gray Jays wandered s. of the breeding range, the most since the 1970s. These included two in *Gravenhurst* Jan. 27 (WS), one in w. *London* Feb. 8 (TB), and singles at feeders near *Kingston* Dec. 15 (MGV), *Elgin*, *Leeds*, Dec. 30 (AGW), and *Phillipsville*, *Leeds*, Dec. 28–Feb. 12 (AGN *et al.*). Two Am. Crows well north at *Moosonee* Jan. 14–Feb. 2 are noteworthy (RDM, SS). Other species out of range were the Boreal Chickadee sharing a *Port Stanley* feeder with a Tufted Titmouse and Red-bellied Woodpecker Feb. 18 (SLR, MJR), and single Tufted Titmice at feeders in *Cobourg* Dec. 6–Feb. 14 (ERM) and *Ravenna*, *Grey*, Dec. 1–Feb. 29 (MO). *Carolina Wren* numbers pushed upward again, with 254 tallied on CBCs and 104+ reported through the period, excluding the CBCs. About 36 wrens





**Immature Black Tern at Fort Erie, Ontario, on the very late date of December 5, 1991. Photograph/Alan Wormington.**

were extralimitals, of which five were n. to Bruce, eight e. to Frontenac, three n.e. to Ottawa-Carleton, and singles in Parry Sound, Muskoka, Renfrew, Peterborough, Leeds, and Lanark. Encouraged by a series of mild winters and sustained by a network of feeding stations, this species' breeding range is expanding. The only House Wren was a late bird at Shrewsbury, Kent, Dec. 15 (MWJ); the Winter Wren in Algonquin Dec. 28 was a first in winter for the park (WC, RDM).

#### GNATCATCHER TO WARBLERS

A late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was on Dufferin I. at Niagara Falls Dec. 1 (GY). Eastern Bluebirds overwintered in greater than usual numbers as far north as Peterborough and Frontenac. The only Townsend's Solitaire was at Rockton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Dec. 27-Jan. 2 (BWD *et al.*). Eleven have occurred in the 10 winters since 1982. Six Varied Thrushes are the average number of birds for each of the 14 winters since 1977. Four were reported this season: singles at Cheltenham, Peel, Dec. 7-Feb. 9+ (JRM), near Bolton, York, Dec. 17-Feb. 18 (GMB *vide* JRM, RBHS), near Roseneath, Northumberland, Jan. 14-25 (ERM), and Keppel, Bruce, Dec. 6 (BE, DF).

Late Gray Carbirds were singles at Oliphant Dec. 3 (EJ), Wheatley PP Dec. 16 (KO, STP), near Guelph Dec. 21-22 (VM *et al.*), and Port Royal Feb. 8 (L.P.B.O.). Single Brown Thrashers carried at Oliphant Dec. 1-Feb. 28 (FS), Huntsville Dec. 1-Jan. 5 (HS), near Minden Dec. 15-Jan. 28 (BT), and St. Thomas Jan. 22 (RJK). The Am. Pipit at Pelee Dec. 31 was record late by a day (DEP); other late individuals were at Erieau Dec. 13 (AW), Whitney to Dec. 22 (LF, RGT, DT), and Nanticoke Jan. 8 (WS); the bird at Woodstock Feb. 26 was a record early arrival by about 2 weeks (JMH). The Bohemian Waxwing flight was again moderate, penetrating s.e. to Durham, Northumberland, Frontenac, Leeds, and Ottawa-

Carleton. Two outriders reached Guelph Jan. 7-8 (JSk); by late January the exodus from the south was underway. Northern Shrike numbers remained high over most of s. Ontario.

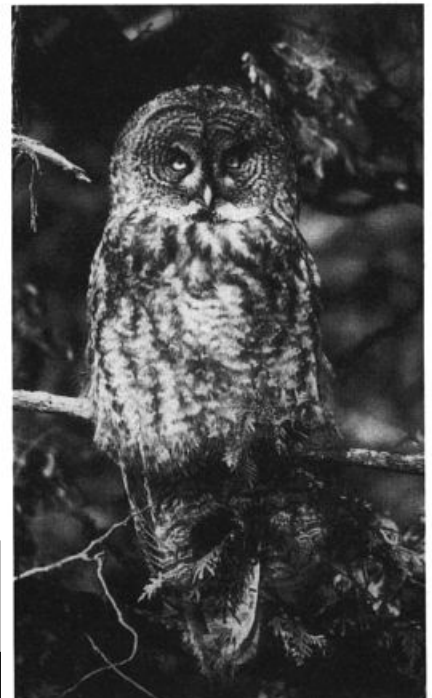
One White-eyed Vireo at Pelee Nov. 30-Dec. 29 (AW *et al.*) provided the park's first record in winter and the province's first in winter since Dec. 26, 1984. Record late Cape May Warblers were singles at Pelee Nov. 21-Dec. 27 (GTH *et al.*), a first winter occurrence there, and at Cambridge Dec. 15-18 (TC). Yellow-rumped Warbler sightings declined rapidly after the start of the year, the most northerly being one near Trenton Jan. 26 (AB). A male of the Audubon's race appeared at Pelee Dec. 1-19 (GTH *et al.*), a 2nd winter record in the park. Six Pine Warblers made an unusually high number for winter: singles were in Harrierville, Middlesex, Dec. 1 (DAM), Bowmanville Dec. 8-18 (E. Pegg *et al.*), Williamsford, Grey, Dec. 14-18 (*vide* DF), and Pelee Jan. 3, a 3rd winter record (GTH); two others wintered at feeders in Gores Landing, Northumberland, Dec. 16-Jan. 18 (*vide* ERM) and near Peterborough early January-Feb. 29 (I & LR). Late Palms were at Port Rowan Dec. 8 (DM) and Selkirk PP Jan. 1 (JC, AE).

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

The Summer Tanager in autumn at Kitchener remained to Jan. 1 (ph. DTy, BCh, TC, RZD). A ♀ N. Cardinal successfully wintered well n. of range at a Moosonee feeder (LL, RDM); and an Indigo Bunting in Toronto Feb. 5-6 (ph. PH, HK, TS) was also way out of range. The only Dickcissel was at a Kingston feeder Dec. 15 (GU, TE). Overwintering Rufous-sided Towhees were singles at Huntsville Dec. 5-Feb. 29 (BL *et al.*), Owen Sound & Brantford Dec. 1-Feb. 29 (AC, DGr *et al.*), and Peterborough Jan. 7-Feb. 29 (BB). One Chipping Sparrow survived the winter in Owen Sound Dec. 21-Feb. 29 (AC); another appeared in

Guelph Dec. 21 (ALM), Wellington's first winter record. Algonquin's first winter Song Sparrow was one Dec. 28-29 (JW, MRz). The Lincoln's Sparrow at a Whitby feeder Dec. 14-Feb. 29 fared well (MHo *et al.*); an imm. White-crowned remained at a Thunder Bay feeder until Jan. 8 (NGE). The imm. Harris' Sparrow at a feeder in Bolton, Peel, overwintered Dec. 25-Feb. 29 (KN *et al.*).

Three Yellow-headed Blackbirds appeared, singles at Pelee Dec. 16 (AW, GG), Stoney Creek Dec. 20-22 (FN), and Long Pt. Dec. 24 (L.P.B.O.). One Brewer's Blackbird remained at a feeder in Midland, Simcoe, Jan. 22-Feb. 29 (FW, RLB). Other reports included five in the St. Clair NWA Jan. 1 (KJB, JB), two each at Long Pt. Feb. 1 (L.P.B.O.) and Stratford Feb. 3 (*vide* MPD), and singles at Sheddon, Elgin, Dec. 4 (LS) and Centreville Dec. 5, Oxford's 4th in December (JMH).



**Great Gray Owl at Fenelon Falls, Ontario, on December 12, 1991. This winter season saw one of the largest invasions ever of this species to southern areas of the province. Photograph/Tim Sabo.**

Pine Grosbeaks remained common s. to Sudbury and Manitoulin I., but only small numbers moved farther south to reach Peterborough, Algonquin, Leeds, and Frontenac. Most Purple Finches departed Ontario during autumn, leaving the species scarce everywhere in the province in winter. By contrast, the House Finch continued its range consolidation and expansion, helped by feeders. Some 27,000 were tallied on CBCs (*vide* DFR), an impressive increase since the first occurred in Ontario in 1972. The only Red Crossbills were four at Claremont, Durham, Feb. 2 (JF, MMcE) and six on Hill I. Dec. 28 (JHE, RDW). One flock of White-winged in Algonquin contained 100 birds Jan. 5



**Indigo Bunting in Toronto, Ontario, far out of range for the season, on February 6, 1992.**  
**Photograph/Tim Sabo.**

(AGC), but elsewhere only eight individuals were reported from widely separated areas. Common Redpolls were fairly numerous through most of the south but after mid-January became scarce in the southwest and more numerous in the northeast. Only 11 Hoarries were noted Dec. 22–Feb. 29, five which were in the north. Pine Siskins were few almost everywhere until late January, when large numbers appeared in e. Ontario

in *Durham, Northumberland, Peterborough, e. to Frontenac, Leeds and Ottawa-Carleton.* Evening Grosbeaks remained in low numbers through the south.

**EXOTICS**

A lone Egyptian Goose remained in Toronto's High Park Dec. 4 (RY); the Bar-headed Goose reported at Presqu'île in summer 1991 was still there Dec. 1 (AGC). Origins

of both birds are unknown. Probable escapees were the two Black-billed Magpies at Winona through the period (*vide* KAM). Other escapees that appeared at feeders were single Eur. Goldfinches on Manitoulin I. Dec. 19 (HEB) and at Kingston Feb. 18 (*vide* SM), and the Budgerigar at Pickering Jan. 11 (AGC).

**Corrigendum:** AB 45:1114, column 2, sub-regional editors, after K. Hooles insert R.A. Hubert; replace R.A. Hurst by J.V. Hurst.

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**Boreal Owl at Whitby, Ontario, on December 6, 1991. One of two present at this location all winter. Twenty-six Boreals in southern Ontario added up to the biggest flight ever there. Photograph/Tim Sabo.**

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## APPALACHIAN REGION

George A. Hall

I am tempted to copy verbatim the introductory paragraphs of the 1990–1991 winter report (*AB* 45:272) since the description of winter there almost exactly coincides with this year's. In fact, the last 3 years have been similar: no real winter weather. At Pittsburgh the 3 months had a temperature excess of 427 day-degrees. December had excess precipitation, but January and February showed a deficiency of 1.40 inches; the general effects of long-term drought persist. There was very little snow and only one major cold spell. Eastern Tennessee in December had twice the normal rainfall, but the other months there were dry. In late March, the Region is experiencing the first cold, snowy weather of the winter. The spring report may cast a different light on some of the remarks that follow.

The mild open weather produced several not-unanticipated results: (1) there were many record "late dates" for transient species; (2) there were many reports of species that normally winter south of this Region; (3) there were many early dates for spring arrival; and (4) most reporters commented on the dearth of birds coming to feeders. The readily available supply of wild food was also a factor in keeping birds away from feeders.

It was not, however, a dull season. The following account gives a long list of species that normally do not winter this far north. There were followup records to indicate that many of these strays survived to the end of the period. Although it was another winter without a marked influx of "northern finches," several northern birds did show up. Rough-legged Hawks, Snowy Owls, and in particular Northern Shrikes, all had unusually good numbers. There was also a nice group of real goodies—species from distant regions. One of these, a Great Gray Owl, caused a sensation across the north of the Region and drew eager birders from afar.

**Abbreviations:** BESP (*Bald Eagle SP, Centre Co., PA*); ChNF (*Chattahoochee NF, GA*); MCFH (*Minor Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan Co., KY*); PISP (*Presque Isle SP, Erie Co., PA*); PNR (*Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., PA*).

### LOONS TO HERONS

The only Red-throated Loon report came from PISP Dec. 14 (SS). Common Loons were in above-average winter numbers throughout the Region. A storm Dec. 3 produced a fallout of 120+ loons at Rocky Gap SP, MD (MT, RKi). There were more Horned Grebes than normal, with records from Mosquito L., OH (CB) in the north to Holston and Watauga lakes, TN, in the south (RK). Two Eared Grebes were at PISP Dec. 14 & 25, with one remaining until Jan.

1 (JM). There were also four Red-necked Grebes at PISP Dec. 1 (JM), with one still there Dec. 15 (JeS, JiS).

An Am. White Pelican was at S. Holston L., TN, Dec. 21–23 (WC) and was found downstream on Boone L. Dec. 24–27 (*fade* RK). As reported earlier, Double-crested Cormorant is more common than in the past. This year winter records came from PISP (JM), Pymatuning L., PA (RCL), Wood, WV (JE), and Kingsport, TN (RK). The mild winter and open water induced Great Blue Herons to winter in almost unprecedented numbers, even as far north as Pymatuning L., PA (RFL) and Trumbull, OH (D & JH). In Wood, WV, they seemed about to start nesting in late February (JE); at the heronries in Mercer, PA, 180 (15% of expected summer numbers) had arrived by the end of February (EB). These herons all left the nesting area in mid-March, possibly because of the return of wintry weather. Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at Kingsport, TN (RK); one was at PISP Dec. 7 (EK).

### WATERFOWL

Even in the north most bodies of water remained open, and a surprising number of waterfowl species remained through the season. However, the only large concentrations were at Pymatuning L., PA: 7700 Mallards Dec. 22 and 2000 Com. Goldeneyes Dec. 13 (RCL, RFL). Large flocks totaling probably thousands of ducks migrated past PISP during a storm Dec. 4 (JM).

An unusual number of Tundra Swans remained through at least the early part of the winter. Most of these were in the north, where the largest number was 466 at Pymatuning L., PA, Dec. 15 (AM). Swans in Washington, TN (2nd and 3rd winter records, RK), s.w. Virginia (WC), and Greenbrier, WV (first CBC record, CH) were well out of the normal range. A Greater White-fronted Goose was in Clarke, VA, Dec. 16 and later (RSi). Snow Goose reports from Wood, WV, Dec. 11 (NW), MCFH Dec. 5–20 (first county record for white morph, FB), and Fairview, NC, Dec. 7 (RY) were unusual. Canada Geese wintered in good numbers, with high counts of 10,000 at Pymatuning L., PA, with an additional 4000 at nearby Conneaut Marsh (RFL) and 7449 at Mosquito L., OH (CB). Some rather early major northbound movements were observed at State College, PA, Feb. 23 (JP), Jersey Shore, PA, Feb. 25 (G & PS), and Somerset, PA, Feb. 29 (AM).

An unusual number of Wood Ducks remained through winter, and a Blue-winged Teal in Washington, TN, Jan. 11 (RK) was noteworthy. Greater Scaup at Colyer L., PA, Dec. 22 (K & JJ), S. Charleston, WV, Jan. 12 (WA), and Cumberland, MD, Feb. 28 (MT) were unusual inland records. Oldsquaws were also more widely reported than usual, with a count of 75+ at Rocky Gap SP, MD, Dec. 3 (MT) and at least 400 at PISP in the Dec. 4 storm (JM). All 3 scoter species were reported from PISP, with a flock of 40 Black

Scoters there Feb. 17 (TF). White-winged Scoters were also reported from Ligonier, PA, Dec. 2 (RCL). The duck record of the season was a pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** (ph.) at PISP Feb. 20–29, with a 3rd bird there Feb. 26 (3rd county record, JM). There are no previous photos or specimens for the state.

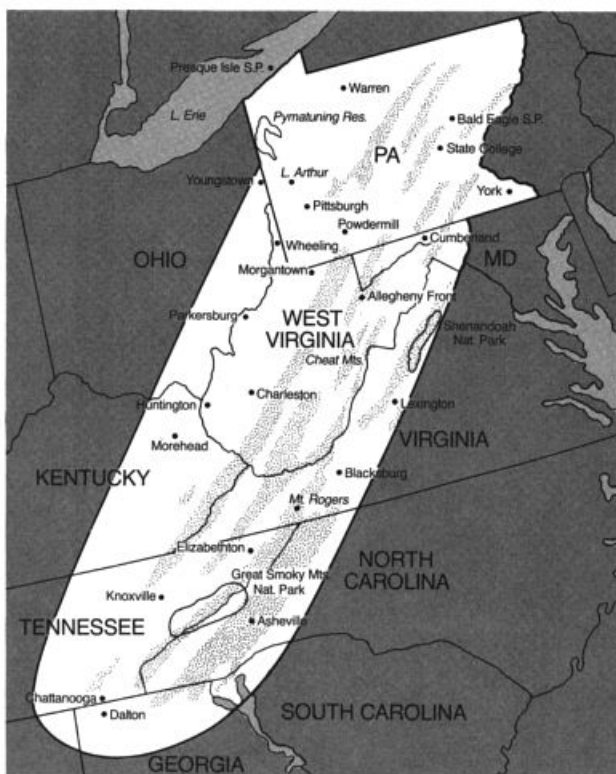
#### RAPTORS TO CRANES

Black Vultures made news in c. Pennsylvania, with up to six wintering in *Huntington* (MW, JP) and single birds in *Clinton* Dec. 22 and Feb. 23 (G & PS). One was at Parkersburg, WV, Dec. 5 (RJ). Two roosts near Bristol and Kingsport, TN, had 100–150 Black Vultures each (RK). Turkey Vultures wintered in small numbers in *Meigs*, OH (JE).

Ospreys at PISP in early December (KM) and Waynesboro, VA, Jan. 14 (CC) were unusual for winter. Bald Eagles were reported from at least 20 locations throughout the Region. At Tellico L., TN, the nesting pair returned to the nest site on Christmas (RC); at Mosquito L., OH, an adult was at the old nest Dec. 31 (J & DH). In *Erie*, PA, the N. Goshawks present early November–Jan. 9 (R & EG) might have been expected, but the records from *Botetourt*, VA, Dec. 15 (MS *et al.*), *Washington*, VA, Dec. 15 (RL), and ChNF Dec. 15 (JPa *et al.*) were noteworthy so far south. More Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks remained in the Region than normal. At Warren, PA, Rough-legged Hawks had the best showing in years, with 18 sightings (WH); a concentration of at least 16 birds was noted in *Erie*, PA (EK, WH). There were reports from 5 other n. locations, while in the south reports came from Gallipolis, OH, Feb. 26 (WA), *Mason*, WV, Jan. 18 (WA), Canaan Valley, WV, December (JPh), Ligonier, PA, Jan. 17 (HMS), Swoope, VA, Jan. 19 (YL), *Highland*, VA, Feb. 8 (CC), *Burke's Garden*, VA (RK, WC), and *Copperhill*, TN, Dec. 1 (BP). Golden Eagles were sighted at Warren, PA, Jan. 5 (J & KC), Rocky Gap SP, MD, Feb. 18 (MT), two–three at *Burke's Garden*, VA, Jan. 1 (RK, WC), *Washington*, TN, Dec. 24 (DHu), and ChNF Dec. 15 (JPa *et al.*).

The mild weather resulted in good numbers of Am. Kestrels. Merlins were reported from PISP Jan. 10 and Feb. 17 (JiS, JeS), another location in *Erie* Dec. 26 (R & EG); State College, PA, Dec. 15 (2nd local winter record, CP, RH); *Montoursville*, PA, Jan. 3 (SSt); and *Botetourt*, VA, Dec. 15 (MS, MD). Peregrines were wintering in downtown Knoxville, TN (RC) and downtown Roanoke, VA (MS). Other reports came from *Washington*, TN, Jan. 6 & 9 (JB) and near Youngstown, OH, Feb. 2 (D & JH).

Wild Turkey seems to be doing well in



most of the Region, with a record 142 listed on a *Greene*, PA, CBC (RB). Even in the south at the Elizabethton, TN, region, the N. Bobwhite has become scarce (RK); so a covey of eight in *Trumbull*, OH, Jan. 26 (D & JH) was noteworthy. The remains of a Virginia Rail that had been killed and eaten dur-



**Juvenile Baird's Sandpiper at Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania, on December 1, 1991, a very late date for this species. Photograph/Jerry McWilliams.**

ing the night were found in *Erie*, PA, Jan. 2 (the first county winter record, JM). At the ChNF, the peak of the fall Sandhill Crane flight was 100 on Dec. 15 (HD).

#### SHOREBIRDS TO WOODPECKERS

There were many mid-December dates for Killdeer, even in the north, but only a few wintered. The earliest spring arrivals occurred the last week of February. Wintering Com. Snipe were fewer than normal in e. Tennessee (RK). Other winter reports came from *Somerset*, PA (AM), Swoope and Weyer's Cave, VA (YL), and MFCH (FB). Much more unusual were reports of Baird's Sandpiper at PISP Dec. 1 & 2 (ph. JM), Pectoral Sandpiper at Cumberland, MD, Feb. 23 (RKi), Purple Sandpiper at PISP Dec. 15 (JM), and Dunlins at PISP Dec. 15, Feb. 6 & 29 (JM), and Boone L., TN, Dec. 21 and Jan. 4 (RK).

For the first time, no warm water was discharged into the public docks in Erie; as a result,

the area froze. There were no swarms of gizzard shad for food, and the usual concentration of hundreds of thousands of gulls did not occur. The maximum number of gulls was 7000–8000. For the first time in 17 years, no Little Gulls were there. However, nearby PISP produced its usual assortment of rare gulls: Thayer's Jan. 25 (JM); Iceland, total of five Dec. 5 to the end of the period (EK, JM); Lesser Black-backed, total of three Dec. 2–Feb. 9 (EK, JiS); Glaucous, total of 13–14 Dec. 23 to the end of the period (JM, JiS, EK); and Black-legged Kittiwake Dec. 13 (first winter record, 9th county record) (JiS). A Great Black-backed Gull was near Huntingdon, PA (GG). The 1600 Bonaparte's Gulls at Pymatuning L., PA, Dec. 8 was considered a low number (RFL), but at Mosquito L., OH, a count of 868 was considered large (CB). Along with the gulls, PISP had Com. Terns Dec. 1–3 (JM, JiS) and a Forster's Tern Dec. 7–11 (EK, DS).

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** at PISP Dec. 11 (†DS) may have been a new Pennsylvania record. There were 2–3 sites for Barn Owls in *Washington*, TN (DHu), but a recent nesting site near Waynesboro, VA, was not occupied (RS) although another in *Augusta*, VA, was (YL). It was a good year for Snowy Owls: three or four in *Erie*, PA, Dec. 2–Feb. 29 (JM *et al.*); Pymatuning L., PA, Feb. 29 (RFL); one, possibly a 2nd in *Frederick*, VA, Dec. 16 (RSi); and one at Parkersburg, WV, Dec. 17–Feb. 26 (JE). This last bird was believed to be the same bird that wintered at the same spot last year and was probably the bird reported in *Pleasants*, WV, in November 1991. The only Long-eared Owl was at PISP Dec. 29 (DD). Short-eared Owls continue to be more common than in the past, with winter-

ing birds at *Jefferson*, OH (MA); 3 locations in *Augusta*, VA (RS), in *Washington*, TN (DHu), as well as single reports from *Pymatuning L.*, PA, Dec. 21 (AM), *Centre*, PA (JP), and another in *Washington*, TN, picked up injured Jan. 1 (RK). A calling N. Saw-whet Owl was on *Unaka Mt.*, TN, a possible new nesting location, Feb. 22 (FA). Other records came from *Crawford*, PA, Dec. 7 (SH), PISP, up to four for the season (DD), and 2 locations in *Centre*, PA (JP).

#### S.A.

The most publicized bird of the season was a Great Gray Owl that appeared at Warren, PA, Jan. 28 and remained through the rest of the period (WH). The only previous Pennsylvania record had been a dead bird many years ago. This time the bird was viewed by more than 2500 people, many who came great distances. These swarms of birders created several problems. It was usually necessary to walk along railroad tracks to see the bird. After some birders were nearly hit by a train, the railroad company attempted to keep trespassers off this private property, without great success. There were traffic jams, and the state police complained of illegal parking on the highway.

Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported at more places than usual; Red-bellied Woodpecker continues to do well in the newly established range in the north.

#### LARKS TO SHRIKES

Large numbers of Horned Larks were found throughout the season in *Trumbull* and *Columbiana*, OH (D & JH); in late February singing males were in *Washington*, *Sullivan*, and *Hawkins*, TN (RK). A Tree Swallow at PISP Dec. 1 was the latest fall record by 15 days (JM). Common Raven continues to do well at high elevations, with an unusual concentration of 16 on *Roan Mt.*, TN, Jan. 30 (RK). This winter there were several low country records: 20–25 at the *Elizabethton*, TN, dump on the CBC (RK); 12 on the *Lewisburg*, WV, CBC (CH); and one at 2500 feet near *Fairview*, NC (RY). A new nesting, on an unused coal-processing building, was located in *Somerset*, PA (AM). There was no winter influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches s. of the breeding range, although numbers were good in the spruce forest on *Roan Mt.*, TN (RK).

It has become trite to remark that the succession of mild winters has been kind to the Carolina Wren; even the n. populations are booming. Record CBC counts were reported: from *Warren*, PA, 11 (WH); *Lock Haven*, PA, 15 (P & GS); *Erie*, PA, 9 (JM); and *Jefferson*, PA, 51 (RB). The now very rare Bewick's Wren was reported from *Whitfield*, GA, Dec. 14 (JA) and *Youngstown*, OH, Dec. 29 (PM, CKe). House Wrens were

in *Washington*, TN, Jan. 19 and Feb. 3 (JB) and in *Hawkins*, TN, Jan. 17 (JN). A Sedge Wren at *Phipps Bend*, TN, Jan. 13 and Feb. 22 furnished the first n.e. Tennessee winter record (RMa, RK).

There were few reports of kinglets, but Am. Robins were in unusually large numbers all season. Even *St. Mary's*, PA, in the far north of the Region, reported 306 on the CBC (LC). A bird identified as a Swainson's Thrush was found dead at *Warren*, OH, Dec. 11 (CB). Wintering E. Bluebirds were also numerous. The only Gray Catbird report came from *Augusta*, VA, Dec. 27 and Jan. 18 (CC), while Brown Thrashers were reported from *Wood*, WV, Jan. 24 & 26 (JE), 2 locations in *Rowan*, KY (FB), and at least six in the *Elizabethton*, TN, region (RK). The northernmost N. Mockingbirds were at PISP Dec. 8–Jan. 12 (DD), another *Erie* record in early February (CK), and *Lander*, PA, Jan. 19 (AW). The 625 Cedar Waxwings on the *Warren*, PA, CBC set a record (WH), but they were unmentioned from most of the Region.

Northern Shrike staged one of the heaviest invasions on record in n. Pennsylvania and n. Ohio. At least 10 were in *Erie* during the season (JM). There were three on a one-mile stretch of road at *Lander*, PA, Jan. 23, as well as several other sightings in *Warren* (WH, DDo), *Meadville*, PA, Jan. 26 (M & WSm), *Pymatuning L.*, PA, Feb. 22 (RFL), two in *Trumbull*, OH, Dec. 15 & 22 (J & DH), and five birds during the season in *Centre*, PA (JP *et al.*). The southernmost report was from near *PNR* Dec. 22 (the 5th local record) (RM, RCL). From n.e. Tennessee came the heartening report of 15 sites for *Loggerhead Shrikes* in 2 counties (RK). Four *Loggerheads* were reported on the

*Lewisburg*, WV, CBC (CH); other reports came from *Rockbridge*, VA, Jan. 30 (RS) and *Swoope*, VA, Jan. 19 (YL).

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

More than the usual number of Yellow-rumped Warblers wintered in the Region, but another noteworthy result of the mild weather was the number of winter warbler records: Orange-crowned Warbler at *Beech Fork SP*, WV (WA); Black-throated Blue Warbler at *Elizabethton*, TN, CBC Dec. 15 (WC *et al.*); four Palm Warblers at *Cherokee Dam*, TN, Jan. 7 (DHu); a Palm Warbler at *Roanoke* Feb. 22 (MS); a Hooded Warbler at *Knoxville* Dec. 1–15 (*fide* RC); and a Wilson's Warbler in *Greene*, TN, Dec. 26 (first Tennessee winter record, DHu). Spring warbler migration began with the arrival of a singing Pine Warbler in *Carter*, TN, Feb. 21 (DHu).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at *Waynesboro*, VA, Dec. 11 (EKe). More than the usual number of Rufous-sided Towhees wintered in *Augusta* (RS), but only one was found at PISP (JM). One was also in *Trumbull*, OH, Dec. 15 and another Jan. 26 (D & JH). American Tree Sparrows were more common than in recent years and were reported as far south as *Phipps Bend*, TN, Jan. 12–13 (TM, RMa) but were still missing from a number of places. A Chipping Sparrow was at *Waynesboro*, VA, Dec. 30 (RS) and a Clay-colored Sparrow came to a feeder at *Erie* Dec. 20–23 (first local winter record, †DB). More Fox Sparrows than usual were reported, but Field and Song sparrows were in below-normal numbers. Snow Bunting reports from *Somerset*, PA, Jan. 10 (AM) and a bald on *Mt. Rogers*, VA, Dec. 27–28 (WC) were noteworthy.



Great Gray Owl at Warren, Pennsylvania, in February 1992. Photograph/Ed Kwater.

Most blackbirds were conspicuous by their absence until the spring migrants arrived somewhat early, from about Feb. 17 to the end of the period. Two Brewer's Blackbirds were at Elon, GA, Dec. 15 (HD).

Once again, there was no influx of "northern" finches. Purple Finches were scarce at most places, but at Ona, WV, numbers coming to a feeder were twice normal (LW). Pine Siskins were abundant at a few places, but only in small numbers or missing at others. Evening Grosbeaks were in small numbers from a few locations. The only Com. Redpolls were at PISP Dec. 1 & 14 and Jan. 18 (JM, DD) and Sheffield, PA, Jan. 27 & 28 (CN). Red Crossbills were found only on the Tennessee mountains, Roan and Unaka (RK).

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## WESTERN GREAT LAKES REGION

James Grantlund

Over the past three years the winter weather pattern for the Region has been characterized by extreme variability. Winter 1991–1992 was no exception. October and November storms had already brought winter to the Region. By the end of the first week of December, temperatures began to moderate, only to change drastically by the weekend of the 15th, the beginning of the Christmas Count period. High winds, fog, and every other type of foul weather plagued the first weekend of the CBCs. Mild weather returned, and much of the remainder of the month was characterized by mild, cloudy weather. The first true cold snap occurred near the second week of January, but temperatures moderated again and by the end of January temperatures were above normal. February followed the same pattern as January, with a single cold snap in the middle of the month, but overall temperatures were moderate and precipitation was light. By the culmination of the period, spring was arriving, bringing many short-distance migrants. In summary, aside from some short periods of cold weather the season was warm and relatively dry.

Last year's trend of "no birds at the feeder" continued, which may be explained by the mild weather conditions in both. What excitement was lacking at the feeders was well made up for by owls and gulls. Both Minnesota and Michigan entertained record numbers of Great Gray Owls as well as exceptionally high numbers of Northern Hawk Owls. Wisconsin did not fare as well but did record both species. Excellent variety and numbers of gulls were reported; the highlights were two Ivory Gulls in Minnesota and one in Wisconsin. Passerines were highlighted by the number of late and lingering individuals recorded.

Veteran readers will undoubtedly notice a new author this season. Dave Powell, who wrote the Winter and Spring Surveys since 1983, recently moved to California. Dave did an outstanding job summarizing such a diverse Region and has set lofty standards. I will miss reading Dave's accounts. I speak for others in wishing Dave the best of luck in California. In the following account, CBC data are used sparingly.

### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

A remarkable seven Red-throated Loons were reported from the Coloma, Berrien, MI, CBC; only four individuals had been seen on Michigan CBCs in the previous 21 years. Common Loons lingered through December in 6 Michigan and 2 Wisconsin counties; an individual Jan. 11 on Green L., WI (TS) was the latest report. Pied-billed Grebes lingered in Michigan and Wisconsin and most likely overwintered in both. An im-

pressive 92 Horned Grebes were reported Dec. 27 in Leelanau, MI (CF). Single Red-necked Grebes were reported from Michigan Feb. 12 on Grand Traverse Bay (KT) and Jan. 13 in Leelanau (CF). In Minnesota, where the species is rare in winter, one was recorded Jan. 6 on L. Superior, St. Louis (KB *et al.*).

A Northern Gannet was documented Dec. 1 at the Erie Power Plant, Monroe (DB), providing the first Michigan record since 1978. Double-crested Cormorants were reported from 4 Wisconsin CBCs, with birds overwintering in Green Bay and Menasha. In Minnesota two overwintered at the Black Dog Power Plant; Michigan had them through Jan. 25 at Bay City. Great Blue Herons were reported throughout the Region and most likely overwintered in all 3 states. Noteworthy was a Black-crowned Night-Heron that overwintered n. of normal at the Oden Fish Hatchery, Emmet, MI (MS); another was in a more typical location in Wayne, MI (PC).

Tundra Swans were reported from all 3 states and presumably overwintered in each. The first spring Tundra Swans appeared in Crawford, WI, Feb. 23 (JD). Trumpeter Swans overwintered in Minnesota, where up to 30 were seen near a power plant in Sherburne (DO). In Michigan the introduced birds at Seney NWR remained into late December, but more unusual was the appearance of a banded bird from the Wisconsin reintroduction program at Ludington SP, Mason, MI, Feb. 22–28 (RS, DH). The Greater White-fronted Goose found Feb. 22 at the Muskegon Wastewater System, Muskegon, MI (PC, JG) may have been the same bird seen 2 months earlier on the Allegan CBC, MI (JG), suggesting that the individual overwintered. Snow Geese were reported overwintering in all 3 states. First spring arrivals of 60+ Feb. 29 (SC) at Anoka provided the 2nd earliest spring arrival of Snow Goose for Minnesota. Canada Goose overwintered in all 3 states, with spring migrants returning to Wisconsin by Feb. 22. Unusual were two Canada Geese that wintered unusually far north at Betrami, MN (DJ). The Michigan trend of increased numbers overwintering continued this year, with over 57,000 recorded during Michigan's CBC, a new record high total; at least 15,000 of these overwintered at the Allegan State Game Area, Allegan (JG).

Wood Ducks were reported as overwintering in all 3 states, with an unusually far north report of three in Clay, MN, (MO). Green-winged Teal overwintered in Minnesota and Wisconsin and most likely in Michigan, where reported from 7 counties. Likewise, N. Pintail were reported from Michigan and Wisconsin. Unusual were the numbers of N. Shovelers that lingered in Michigan and Wisconsin, with 20–30 overwintering at Madison, WI. Also overwintering in Wisconsin and Michigan was Am. Wigeon, and in all 3 states, Canvasback. Redheads overwintered in Michigan, where they are not unusual, but those in Olmsted (KB), Martin



tering at *Otter Tail*, MN (SM, DM). Ruddy Ducks overwintered in *Berrien*, MI (RS) and lasted till Jan. 15 in Milwaukee, WI.

### RAPTORS

**Turkey Vultures** were reported on one CBC in both Wisconsin and Michigan, but even more unusual was the one *January 11* in *Chippewa*, MI (JG, WW, et al.), far n. of normal. The first migrant Turkey Vultures arrived in Michigan Feb. 24. Bald Eagles wintered unusually far north in *Beltrami*, *Otter Tail*, *Cook*, and *Aitkin*, MN. Northern Harriers were reported widespread through the Region, but the award for tenacity goes to the pair of Harriers on nest at Sherburne NWR, MN, Feb. 22. Golden Eagles were reported from all 3 states.

Merlins were reported from Eau Claire, WI, Jan. 16 (SB), *Monroe*, WI, Feb. 14–15 (EE), *Berrien*, MI, Dec. 31 (KM), in *Iron*, MI, Feb. 18 (EO), and in

(BB), and *Mower* (RK, RKn), MN, were considered rare.

Both scaup species were reported wintering in Michigan and Minnesota, and 15+ Greater at the inland location of L. Geneva, *Fontana*, WI (DT) were considered unusual. A **Harlequin Duck** was reported Dec. 14 through the period in *Otter Tail*, MN (SM, DM). In Wisconsin, single males were reported at Milwaukee and on the Fox R. at Kaukauna, where the latter provided a first record for *Outagamie*. Michigan had singles to Jan. 12 at Arcadia, *Manistee* (BA), Jan. 11–18 at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (RS), Dec. 22 in *St. Clair* (DC), an ad. male Dec. 13–14 in Alpena, *Alpena* (RP, MP), and two Dec.

22–23 at Whitehall, *Muskegon* (BBo, JG, TW). Oldsquaws were found in unusual inland locations at Madison (PA) and Green L. (TS), WI, and on the Mississippi R. in St. Paul, MN. All three scoters were reported from Michigan and Wisconsin, with single Blacks from Racine, WI, and *Berrien*, MI (KM), and Surfs from Milwaukee, WI, and *Berrien*, MI (KM). A highlight for Michigan observers was an ad. ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneye** first found in Traverse City (PDA) Jan. 19 then relocated from Feb. 9–16 at Elk Rapids (RS, WB, m.ob.). Hooded Mergansers were reported from all 3 states, but exceptionally far north were individuals at Neebish I., *Chippewa*, MI, Jan. 10 (WW) and overwin-

*Alpena*, MI, Jan. 1 and Feb. 28 (RP, RSm). Peregrine Falcons were reported Jan. 1–26 at Belle Isle, *Wayne*, MI (DL), Dec. 28 in E. Lansing, *Ingham*, MI (DMr), through the period in *St. Clair*, MI, and from 4 Wisconsin CBCs. It is likely these winter Peregrines are from reintroduction programs. As in last winter, **Gyrfalcons** staged a major incursion. Wisconsin had one–two birds in *Superior* and one in *Douglas*. Minnesota reported an individual at Duluth, *St. Louis* (DE) and at least three at *Ohmstead* (RFa). Michigan tallied at least three in Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa* (PS), and individuals in *Allegan* (JG, KM), *Cheboygan* (RP, MP), and *Emmet* (DF, JF). In Minnesota, Prairie Falcon reports were more numerous than normal, with individuals Dec. 8–14 in *Hennipin* (AB, EL), Dec. 8 in *Lyon* (HK), Dec. 21 in *Dakota* (RH), and Dec. 26 in *Nobles* (ND).

### RAILS TO GULLS

A Virginia Rail was reported Dec. 30–Jan. 27 near Coldwater, *Branch*, MI (DG); another was on a Wisconsin CBC. Sandhill Cranes lingered both in Michigan and Minnesota, with sightings on 2 CBCs in the former and one CBC in the latter. They arrived back in Michigan on the late-February breezes and were in 7 counties by the end of the period.

For the 2nd consecutive year, a Purple Sandpiper overwintered at Sheboygan, WI, subsisting during bad weather on grain fed to geese and ducks. A **Dunlin** lingered at Metrobeach, *Macomb*, MI, to the very late date *January 1* (DL, FC). Common Snipe were reported overwintering in Madison, WI (KB) and were abnormally late Dec. 27 far north in *Leelanau*, MI (KW). An Am. Woodcock was recorded Dec. 15 on the *Berrien Springs* CBC, MI (RS). A lingering Sanderling was n. of normal Dec. 1 in *Lee-*



**Adult Mew Gull at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on January 30, 1992. One of two birds present, providing a fourth state record. Photograph/Brian Boldt.**

lanau, MI (CF). Also on the Berrien Springs CBC, two **Red Phalaropes** (RA) provided first records for this count.

The only jaeger report was of a well-documented Pomarine Dec. 15 on the Berrien Springs CBC, MI (KM). This individual provided the first Michigan CBC record. Two ad. **Mew Gulls** were found at Milwaukee Jan. 4 (TS, m.ob.) and lingered into mid-February, providing Wisconsin's 4th record. Wisconsin's first confirmed **California Gull**, initially found Nov. 29 at Sheboygan, stayed to Dec. 8 (CS, RHu). Thayer's Gulls were reported from all 3 states, with a 2nd-winter individual present Feb. 3–29 in *Lake*, MN. In Wisconsin one–four individuals overwintered at Superior, Sheboygan, Milwaukee, and Port Washington; another was present through December at Prairie du Sac. In Michigan there were a minimum of three adults and single first- and 2nd-winter birds Jan. 2–19 at Bay City, *Bay* (RP, MP, KT, m.ob.); two were seen Dec. 15 on the Berrien Springs CBC (RA); and one first-winter Dec. 7 and Feb. 1 at the Muskegon Wastewater, *Muskegon* (JG). A first-winter Iceland Gull was in *Lake*, MN, Dec. 29 while in Wisconsin one–two birds were at Prairie du Sac (KB) and one–four birds wintered at Milwaukee, Superior, Sheboygan, and Two Rivers. Michigan had individuals Dec. 29 through the period at the Muskegon Wastewater Plant (FM, LR, GW, m.ob.), Feb. 19 at St. Joseph (RS), and at least three adults and single first-winter and 2nd-winter birds Dec. 24–Jan. 26 at Bay City (RP, MP, MW, RW, m.ob.).

Two ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were present Dec. 14–Jan. 16 in Bay City, MI (RP, MP, RW). Wisconsin reported an adult overwintering at Superior, on Feb. 1 at Sheboygan (DT, CS), and on Feb. 13–16 at Milwaukee (BBl, DGu, JFr *et al.*); last, a subadult was at Manitowoc through December. Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported high numbers of **Glaucous Gulls**, with a high total of 35 at Superior, WI, and 75 Jan. 4 on the Saginaw R., *Bay*, MI (RW, EK). Great Black-backed Gulls were reported as being "amazing in number" in Wisconsin, where 12–15 were present during the winter period, including three at Two Rivers. This species is still characterized as casual in Minnesota, but records of an adult overwintering in *Dakota* and a first-winter bird Feb. 3–15 in *Lake* and nearby *St. Louis* (KE) suggests this may soon change. Michigan had three lingering **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, including one immature Dec. 17 at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (KM) and another Jan. 17 at Bay City, *Bay* (RP, MP); even more unusual was the report of an adult Dec. 28 at the Muskegon Wastewater Plant (DN, GW, JP). To the delight of many birders, **Ivory Gulls** were in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In Wisconsin an immature was seen Dec. 2–3 at Port Washington while in Minnesota another was located Dec. 15 in s. St. Paul, riding ice floes on the Mississippi (AS). Amazingly, another bird joined the St. Paul bird Dec. 23 (BF *et al.*), giving Minnesota their 11th and



This California Gull at Sheboygan in December 1991 provided a first confirmed record for Wisconsin. Photograph/Charles Sontag.

12th records and the first records away from L. Superior.

#### OWLS TO WOODPECKERS

The term "invasion numbers" was used last winter to describe owl totals, yet this year's totals make them pale in comparison. Snowy Owl numbers were reported as an "excellent movement" in Wisconsin, "in above average numbers" in Michigan, and as a "major invasion" in Minnesota, where 105 were reported by the end of the period (KE *et al.*). **Northern Hawk Owls** entered the Region in numbers unseen in recent years, with Wisconsin reporting individuals in *Superior*, *Ashland*, *Douglas*, and *Bayfield*. Michigan fared better and had 20 from Sault Ste. Marie to Whitefish Point, *Chippewa* (DEv, m.ob.), two in *Schoolcraft* (JG, MW, m.ob.), one in *Mackinac* (TL, PS), *Dickinson* (EO), *Cheboygan* (RP, MP), *Charlevoix* (BS, MS), and *Gladwin* (*vide JS*). Minnesota reported the "mind numbing" total of 142 individuals (KE *et al.*), the only invasion of this magnitude since 1962–1963. Wisconsin had a single report of two **Great Gray Owls** in *Douglas* (LS, KB, RD). Michigan and Minnesota both had record numbers of Great Grays. Michigan tallied 55 Great Grays, all in the Sault Ste. Marie area, *Chippewa*, and most on Sugar I. (28) (DEv, m.ob.). This total exceeded Michigan's last invasion of 38 individuals in winter 1983–1984. Minnesota reported an incredible total of 196 individuals, with the highest concentration of birds in *Lake*, although birds were seen as far south as *Hennepin*. This total exceeded last year's record total of 134. In both states birds were said to be healthy; very few were dead or starving. Short-eared Owls were reported as scarce in Wisconsin but were in above-average numbers in Michigan, reported from 5 counties; the high total was 16 Feb. 14 in Polkton Twp., *Ottawa* (JP, m.ob.). Michigan had reports of two **Boreal Owls**, one Feb. 8 at Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa* (LG, BG, JG, m.ob.) and another Feb. 8 at Gross Pointe Woods, *Wayne* (MB, RKo), very far s. of

normal. Surprisingly, Minnesota had no Boreal reports. Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported from 3 Wisconsin CBCs and 4 Michigan counties. Minnesota's first **Anna's Hummingbird** barely made it into the season, being last seen Dec. 1 in *Cook* (KH, MH).

#### PHOEBES TO WARBLERS

Michigan had two E. Phoebes on the Dowagiac CBC (RS, RA), but even more unusual was the individual that appeared at the Kalamazoo Nature Center Jan. 7 (RA). Horned Larks apparently returned to the Region early, with good numbers of migrants found by Jan. 1 in Michigan and five birds Jan. 12 in *Otter Tail*, MN, north for that early date. The mild winters continue to favor the survival of Carolina Wrens, with Michigan reporting 76 on CBCs north to *Benzie* (KW). Wisconsin reported 10–13 individuals, with the northernmost reports from Green Bay, *Mead*, Washington I., *Dee*, and near Three Lakes. Minnesota had a single report from *Hennepin* (DMa *et al.*). Winter Wrens overwintered in Michigan in *Macomb* and *Wayne* (DL). Marsh Wrens were reported in December from Horicon NWR, WI (KB) and on 2 Michigan CBCs.

Eastern Bluebirds were reported scarce in Wisconsin whereas Michigan had increased numbers; Minnesota reported an individual Feb. 29 in *Hennepin* (SC), n. of normal. Unusual was a **Townsend's Solitaire** that remained in one location long enough for many Michigan observers to add it to their lists. The bird was first found Jan. 20 in Beulah, *Benzie*, and was still present at the end of the period (BA, m.ob.). Hermit Thrushes remained into mid-January in *Wayne* (DL) and *Kent*, MI (SMi, CM) and in Madison, WI (PA, EH), overwintering in Milwaukee, WI (RD). Varied Thrushes overwintered in *Wright* and *Otter Tail* in Minnesota, and another was seen from Jan. 29 through the period in *Cottonwood* (ED). Wisconsin had individuals from Dec. 3–20 in *Door* (RL, CL), Dec. 10–Jan. 18 in *Taylor* (BAr), and Nov.



9-Jan. 22 in Madison (JM, WM). Michigan had a single individual Dec. 30 in *Isabella* (EC). Single Gray Catbirds were reported from Michigan and Wisconsin CBCs, and another was reported from Feb. 23 at Horicon NWR, WI (KB). Northern Mockingbirds were reported from one Wisconsin and 7 Michigan CBCs, but more unusual were 2 reports from *Chippewa*, MI, one in late December near Paradise (DEv, m.ob.), and another in Sault Ste. Marie Jan. 18 (TL, RF, NF, JB), well n. of normal.

An American Pipit Dec. 21 and Jan. 12 Point Moulliee, *Monroe*, MI (JF) provided one of the latest Michigan records. Bohemian Waxwings were in fair to good numbers in the n. counties of both Michigan and Wisconsin. Cedar Waxwings were particularly scarce in Michigan. Northern Shrikes ap-



**This Ivory Gull was the first ever found away from Lake Superior in Minnesota, but it was in appropriately icy surroundings, riding floes on the Mississippi River at South St. Paul on December 18, 1991. Photograph/Anthony Hertzell.**

peared to be common throughout the Region, with Minnesota reporting individuals from more than half their counties. Wisconsin characterized the species as present in good numbers but "nothing exceptional." Michigan had above-average numbers, with reports from 18 counties and a high total of 15 individuals in the Sault Ste. Marie area, *Chippewa* (DEv, m.ob.). The only Loggerhead Shrike was one visiting a feeder Dec. 20-21 near Park Falls, WI (AV). A singing Red-eyed Vireo Jan. 7 at Horicon NWR provided the first winter record in Wisconsin (KB). Yellow-rumped Warblers apparently overwintered in the s. portion of Michigan as there were widely scattered reports through the period. In Wisconsin two individuals

overwintered in n.w. *Dane* (KB). Less common in winter was a Com. Yellowthroat that lingered to Jan. 1 in *Wayne*, MI (JF).

#### GROSBEAKS TO WEAVER FINCHES

Single Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported to Dec. 3 at *Becker*, MN (BBe) and Dec. 5 near Ashland, WI (DV). The Minnesota record is one of the latest fall dates. Rufous-sided Towhees wintered in all 3 states, with an individual of the "spotted" race in *Cottonwood*, MN (ED), individuals in *Dodge* (*fide* SD), and *Douglas* (RPe) in Wisconsin and at least 10 individuals in *Kalamazoo* (JG, RKe) and two in *Macomb* (DL) in Michigan. Wisconsin reported Am. Tree Sparrow as being quite rare, as was the situation in Michigan. Chipping Sparrows rarely overwinter in Minnesota, but one was found Feb. 16-22 in *Aitkin* (HL *et al.*); another was at a St. Paul feeder until early January. The Lark Bunting present much of the fall at Whitefish Point, MI, remained until Dec. 18 (DEv). Savannah Sparrows are rarely found in Wisconsin in the winter, so the report of singles from *Oconoto* (JSm) Dec. 8, *Ozaukee* (KB) Dec. 8, and Milwaukee Jan. 1 (MK) was exceptional. Fox Sparrow, another uncommon wintering species, was seen on 7 Wisconsin CBCs then intermittently in several s. Wisconsin locations. A single Lincoln's Sparrow was reported Jan. 1 at Steven's Point, WI (MK). Swamp Sparrows overwintered in both Michigan and Wisconsin, as did White-crowned and White-throated sparrows. Slate-colored Juncos were reported in below-average numbers in Minnesota. Lapland Longspur were scarce in Wisconsin.

Red-winged Blackbirds overwintered in both Michigan and Wisconsin, with a high total of 1000 remaining through the period at Horicon NWR, WI (RD). Meadowlarks were found on 5 Michigan and 2 Wisconsin CBCs. Two Yellow-headed Blackbirds lingered into January at Horicon NWR, WI (RD). Rusty Blackbirds overwintered in Minnesota, with 10 birds in *Clay* (MO) and one in *Polk* (KS, SS), with four others on the Duluth CBC (*fide* KE). Both Rusty and Brewer's blackbirds overwintered at Horicon NWR,

WI, with up to 22 Brewer's tallied (KD); Rustys also wintered at Kaukuana, WI. Common Grackles overwintered in all 3 states, with some rather far north in Minnesota at *Otter Tail*, *Aitkin*, and *Cook*. Brown-headed Cowbirds overwintered in Wisconsin, where 300+ could be found at Horicon NWR (KD, *et al.*) and in Michigan, where good numbers could be found at Luna Pier, *Monroe* (TW). Nearly all the blackbirds began arriving by the end of February in Michigan, with particularly large concentrations of Brown-headed Cowbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds reported. Also in Michigan, a Northern Oriole appeared Dec. 21 in Harper Woods, *Wayne* (MM); perhaps the same bird was seen Jan. 1 on the Detroit R. CBC.

For the 3rd consecutive year, winter finches were scarce over s. portions of the Region. In all 3 states, Pine Siskins were categorized as scarce to absent while redpolls and Pine Grosbeaks were reported as widespread in only the n. areas. Wisconsin and Michigan reported poor numbers of Purple Finch while Am. Goldfinch were scarce in Minnesota and Michigan. Hoary Redpolls were reported from Minnesota and Michigan, with several reported from the Sault Ste. Marie area, MI, including two of the *hornmannii* subspecies (PC, LG, m.ob.). Red Crossbills were in fair numbers in n. Wisconsin but were scarce in Michigan and Minnesota. Similarly, White-winged Crossbills were reported in good numbers in n.w. Wisconsin but scarce in Minnesota. In Michigan this species was very scarce to absent, but for an unexplained reason an individual turned up at a feeder in Grand Rapids and remained Dec. 1-Jan. 18 (MHa, m.ob.). Wisconsin reported Evening Grosbeaks as present in fair numbers in the north; in Michigan the species was in low numbers. For the 4th or 5th year the Eur. Tree Sparrow in *Pierce*, WI, overwintered, being present until mid-February.

**Corrigenda:** Add to fall 1991 summary: an ad. Harlequin Duck observed and documented on the very early date of Aug. 11 at Rogers City, *Presque Isle*, MI (BGi, BGr). Minnesota



**Great Gray Owl at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, on February 8, 1992. Michigan experienced a record invasion this winter. Photograph/James Granlund.**

recorded its 10th Lesser Black-backed Gull, an adult found in Grand Marais Oct. 26–27 (PSv *et al.*). Delete the Cassin's Finch from the Summer 1991 report (AB 45:1119); the record was not accepted by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee.

In AB 46(1):91, Table 1 covering hawk migration in fall 1991, the figures given for Erie Metropark are much too high: I mistakenly sent Daryl Tessen the cumulative totals there since 1983. Correct totals for fall 1991 were: Turkey Vulture 16,403; Osprey 92; Bald Eagle 85; N. Harrier 421; Sharpshinned Hawk 4820; Cooper's Hawk 651; N. Goshawk 26; Red-shouldered Hawk 1014; Broad-winged Hawk 29,713; Red-tailed Hawk 5726; Ferruginous Hawk 1; Rough-legged Hawk 289; Golden Eagle 103; Am. Kestrel 1104; Merlin 15; Peregrine 21; Total 60,969.

**Observers:** Ray Adams, Brian Allen (BA), Bill Armburst (BAr), Philip Ashman, Karl Bardon, Betsy Beneke (BBE), Joe Bens, Steve Betchkal, Martin Blagdurn, Brian Boldt (BBI), Brad Bolduan, Al Bolduc, Walter Booth, Bill Bouton (BBo), Donald Brooks, Kay Burcar, Steve Carlson, Donald Chalfant, Fred Charbonneau, Phil Chu, Elaine Connell, Jeff Dankert, Paul Davis (PDa), Nelvina DeKam, Scott Diehl, Robert Domagalski, Ed Duerksen, Kim Eckert, Eric Epstein, David Evans, Dave Evers (DEv), Ray Faber, Bruce Fall, Diane Fowler, Jim Fowler, Chip Francke, Jim Frank (JFr), Nancy French, Ron French, Delores Gavit, Barb Graf, Leonard Graf, James Granlund, Betty Grigg (BGi), Bill Grigg (BGr), Dennis Gustafson (DGu), Dave Hall, Ellen Hansen, Mary Havenga (MHa), Ken Hoffman, Molly Hoffman, Robert Holtz, Robert Hughes (RHu), Doug Johnson, Richard Keith (RKe), Eugene Kenaga, Ron Kneeskern, Rose Kneeskern (RKn), Mark Korducki, Rosann Kovalcik (RKO), Henry Kyllingstad, Dick Leasure, Harry Le Grande, Tony Leukering, Edwin Lins, Charlotte Lukes, Roy Lukes, Dennis Martin (DMa), Dave Marvin (DMr), Jean Meanwell, Walter Meanwell, Mike Mencotti, Diane Millard, Steve Millard, Faye Miller, Kip Miller, Steve Minard (SMi), Chris Muldoon, Dave Nicosia, Elmer Olsen, Dan Orr, Mark Otnes, Ronald Perala (RPe), Marlene Planck, Rod Planck, Jim Ponshair, Lucile Radik, Jack Reinoehl, Thomas Shultz, Larry Semo, Mary Siegart, Andrew Smith, Jerry Smith (JSm), Ron Smith (RSm), Roy Smith (Michigan), Joe Soehnel, Chuck Sontag, Keith Steva, Shelley Steva, Bonnie Stout, Peder Svingen (PSv) (Minnesota), Paul Sykes, Daryl Tessen (Wisconsin), Kevin Thomas, Dick Verch, Alice Vincent, Ron Weeks, Tex Wells, Keith Westphal, Warren Whaley, George Wickstrom, Terry Wiens (TWi), Myles Willard.—**JAMES GRANLUND, 6253 N. Westnedge, Kalamazoo MI 49004.**

## MIDLEWESTERN PRAIRIE REGION

Bruce G. Peterjohn

The series of relatively mild winters continued, with above-normal temperatures the rule in every state. Snow cover and cold temperatures were generally restricted to January and the first days of February and typically did not remain for more than a few days at a time. Most of February was almost balmy, with monthly temperatures averaging up to eight degrees above normal in some locations. Precipitation was generally close to normal and mostly fell as rain.

The mild weather produced mixed blessings. Many waterbirds took advantage of the plentiful open water and wintered north of their normal ranges, especially waterfowl, which appeared in unusual diversity across the northern states. Despite the warm temperatures, gulls staged their usual good showing in many areas. On the other hand, it was a dull season for most landbirds. Few half-hardy species lingered into December; even the normal wintering passerines were encountered in generally low numbers. A fall ice storm was blamed for the landbird shortage in Iowa, but similar causes were not apparent elsewhere.

**Abbreviations:** LBL (*Land between the Lakes, KY*); REDA (*Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO*); Spfld. (*Springfield, IL*); TRL (*Table Rock L., MO*).

### LOONS TO HERONS

Migrant Red-throated Loons were noted through Dec. 1–7 along both Great Lakes. Single Pacific Loons at L. Springfield, MO, Jan. 2–Feb. 16 (†m.ob.) and Gibson, IN, Feb. 2 (GBo, ph. JC) were clearly wintering. As observers become more confident identifying this species, its status is being redefined in the Midwest. If recent records are any indication of their actual abundance, Pacific Loons may prove to be rare but regular fall migrants and winter visitors. A flock of 200 Com. Loons at East Fork Res., OH, Dec. 3 (GH, HA) easily surpassed other late fall totals. Most Com. Loons disappeared by early January, but six were still on L. Barkley, KY, Jan. 19 (J & PB), seven at Gibson, IN, through Feb. 16 (GBo), and one wintered north to c. Ohio. The ad. *Yellow-billed Loon* returned to TRL for its 3rd consecutive winter, appearing Dec. 15 and remaining through February (m.ob.).

The 65 Pied-billed Grebes in Sullivan, IN, Dec. 28 (AB *et al.*) were probably late migrants. Wintering Pied-billeds were more widespread than normal, including one or two at Cedar Rapids, IA, throughout the season (DD, RPi). The largest wintering Horned Grebe flock totalled 60 at Baldwin L., IL, Jan. 21 (TF, JDe). Spring migrants were widespread in February, peaking with

300 in Gibson, IN, Feb. 2–28 (GBo). Red-necked Grebes were scarce, with one wintering at Port of Indiana, IN (KB, EH, m.ob.) and another in Gibson, IN, Feb. 9 (GBo). As expected, small numbers of Eared Grebes lingered in Missouri, Indiana, and Ohio in early December. Wintering Eared Grebes appeared in unprecedented numbers for a species that is accidental after mid-December. These records were of two Eareds at Smithville L., MO, through Feb. 4 (BF *et al.*), one at Caesar Creek Res., OH, Jan. 30–Feb. 1 (†JDu, SU *et al.*), one wintering at Spfld. (DB), two at Baldwin L., IL, Jan. 20 (MD), and one at Crab Orchard NWR, IL, Feb. 12 (DB). A late W. Grebe was a casual visitor to Rocky River, OH, Dec. 8–20 (W & NKI, ph. m.ob.). Another was studied at Port of Indiana, IN, Dec. 31–Jan. 13 (CF, m.ob.).

The Northern Gannet discovered at West Beach Dec. 8 (†JM) and observed at Michigan City Dec. 9 (†KB, †LH) was a surprise, furnishing n.w. Indiana's first record in 87 years. The hardest Am. White Pelicans lingered in Iowa at Rathburn Res. through Jan. 19 (TJ) and Red Rock Res. until Jan. 20 (AJ). Early migrants returned to Missouri in February. Following the pattern of recent years, small numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were fairly widespread through the CBC period. Noteworthy winter flocks totalled 200 at LBL in early January (CP) and ten at Louisville Jan. 29 (BM, MS). Wintering cormorants were noted north to South Bend, IN, and Lorain, OH.

A lingering Am. Bittern was discovered at REDA Jan. 1 (JV *et al.*). Wintering Great Blue Herons were widely reported, but no remarkable flocks were encountered. Kentucky hosted the latest Great Egrets, two in Wayne Dec. 14 (JE) and another on a CBC Reports of wintering Black-crowned Night-Herons were limited to a maximum of seven at 5 sites in the Chicago area plus one at Cincinnati Jan. 19 (FR).

### WATERFOWL

Tundra Swans were sprinkled across the Region throughout the period, and migrants were difficult to distinguish from winter visitors. The most noteworthy reports included up to ten wintering at Mingo NWR, MO (CS, m.ob.), 11 at Hueston Woods SP, OH, Jan. 29 (DDi), five at L. Mermet, IL, Feb. 6 (TF), and one in Fremont, IA, Jan. 12 (MSm). Small groups of the introduced Trumpeter Swan were noted at 3 locations in Missouri, 3 in Iowa, and one in Illinois. Mute Swans continued to spread in most states, an ominous trend for our native waterfowl.

The mild weather enticed small numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese to linger into January in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa. Some may have wintered, an unusual occurrence in this Region. Spring migration began early with 30 White-fronteds at Buckhart, IL, Jan. 30 (DB), 150 at Schell-Osage WMA, MO, Feb. 1 (LM, GP), and 54 in Knox, IN, Feb. 8 (GBo). Smaller numbers



and Joliet, IL, Jan. 31 (JM). Other sizable duck flocks included 1000 Com. Goldeneye at Rend L., IL, Jan. 1-23 (TF), 200 wintering Hooded Mergansers in Calloway, KY, Jan. 21 (CP), and 12,000 Com. Mergansers at Rathbun, Res., IA, Jan. 15 (TJ).

#### HAWKS TO SHOREBIRDS

The only extralimital Black Vultures were two in Ozark, MO, Feb. 23 (BJ). Despite the fairly mild temperatures, wintering Turkey Vultures were restricted to their established range. Their N migration began early, with two at Muscatine, IA, Feb. 5 (CFu) and numerous migrants before the end of the month. Exceptionally early migrant Ospreys were two at Patoka Res., IN, Feb. 15 (LL) and one at TRL Feb. 26 (JH). Wintering Bald Eagles maintained their good numbers of recent years. Midwinter survey totals of 207 in Kentucky (JDr), 101 in Indiana

appeared elsewhere in February, including 2 Ohio reports. Numbers of wintering Snow Geese were noticeably reduced, perhaps a result of the mild weather. Three Ross' Geese at Baldwin L., IL, Jan. 21 (TF *et al.*) may have wintered. Other reports included small numbers of migrants passing through the w. states in December and February and single records from Illinois each month. Single Brant in Summit, OH, Dec. 15 (DC) and at Cleveland Dec. 21 (D & JHo) were late migrants. Canada Geese also wintered in sharply reduced numbers as favorable weather allowed them to winter farther north.

Wintering ducks were more widely distributed than normal, taking advantage of the abundant open water. Spring migrants returned to every state in February; their

northward movements were well underway by the end of the month. Numbers were generally low, although some impressive totals included 1500-2000 Am. Black Ducks wintering at Brookville Res., IN (m.ob.), 525 Gadwall at Turtle Creek Res., IN, Dec. 28 (AB *et al.*), 4000 Canvasbacks at Montrose, IA, Jan. 10 increasing to 25,000 by Feb. 21 (TK, RCe), and 4000 Ring-neckeds at Duck Creek WMA, MO, Jan. 4 (*vide* BR). Greater Scaup appeared in excellent numbers, including an unprecedented 5000 at Chicago Jan. 7 (LB). Exceptional inland flocks totalled 85 Greaters at Rend L., IL, Feb. 9 (TF, JDe), 60 at Runnells WMA, IA, Feb. 22 (JS), and 25 at L. Jacomo, MO, Feb. 15 (BF, m.ob.).

The only King Eider was reported from Cleveland Jan. 18 (CHO). Harlequin Ducks were represented by at least three on L. Michigan and one on L. Erie, normal numbers for recent years. Oldsquaw appeared in excellent numbers along the Chicago lakefront, peaking at 800 at Evanston, IL, Jan. 5 and 345 at Wilmette, IL, Dec. 28 (EW). Similar numbers have not been found on s. Lake Michigan in many years. Reports from 14 inland locations also represented good numbers of Oldsquaw. Single Black Scoters were encountered along both Great Lakes, with the latest at Port of Indiana, IN, Jan. 18 (DJ *et al.*). The only wintering Surf Scoters were two along the Chicago lakefront (m.ob.). One at Hoover Res., OH, Jan. 12 (DCi) furnished an unusual midwinter record away from the Great Lakes. White-winged Scoters peaked with 20 at Beverly Shores, IN, Dec. 26 (KB) and 10 along L. Erie. There were also reports from 3 inland locations through Jan 17. Common Goldeneye X Hooded Merganser hybrids generated excitement at Spfld. Dec. 13-15 and Feb. 6-16 (DB), L. Jacomo, MO, Jan. 17 (CH),

(*vide* JCa), and approximately 1700 in Missouri as well as a CBC total of 1508 in Iowa are indicative of their winter abundance in this Region. Wintering N. Harriers were generally scarce in most areas. Accipiters elicited few comments except for 20+ sightings of N. Goshawks, representing slightly above-normal numbers for a noninvasion year. Goshawks appeared in every state except Kentucky, with individuals wandering S to St. Clair, MO, Jan. 3 (EJ), Warren, OH, Feb. 1 (JHi), and 4 locations in c. Illinois.

Rough-legged Hawks were considered plentiful only in Iowa and Kentucky. The status of Golden Eagles is clearly changing in the winter months. In the past, small numbers were regularly found only among the large Bald Eagle concentrations near the Mississippi R. In recent winters, Golden Eagles have begun to appear almost anywhere as their numbers increased. There were 23+ reports this winter, including sightings at 7 Indiana locations and a s. Ohio specimen, where these eagles are still novelties. Merlins continue to become established as rare but regular winter residents. In addition to CBC reports, they were reported from 15+ locations. Prairie Falcons presented a mixed picture. There were at least 7 reports from Missouri, an exceptional number if all were accurately identified, but only 2 sightings in Iowa and one in Illinois. Confusion with Peregrines is a problem; all large falcons deserve more careful scrutiny in winter. Wintering Peregrine Falcons are definitely expanding, with a total of 17+ reports from every state in addition to those on CBCs. Most (if not all) of these Peregrines are the result of introduction programs.

Lingering rails were limited to a dead Virginia in Geauga, OH, Dec. 29 (PK) and a live Sora at L. Taneycomo, MO, Jan. 13-Feb. 16 (HS, PM) in addition to singles of each



**Purple Sandpiper at Headlands Beach State Park, Ohio, on December 14, 1991.**  
Photograph/Larry Rosche.

species on an Illinois CBC. The S passage of Sandhill Cranes continued through early January, with 76 in Clark, OH, Dec. 7 (*fide* DO) slightly e. of their traditional migration corridor. As has been the norm in recent years, a few cranes decided to winter with two near Pleasant Hill Res., OH (KM, BGL, m.ob.) and one returning to Columbia, MO (PMc, TB).

It was an uneventful season for shorebirds despite the relatively mild conditions. Even Killdeer were fairly scarce after the CBC period, although scattered individuals wintered north to Steuben, IN. Many Killdeer returned in February and were joined by five early Greater Yellowlegs and five Pectoral Sandpipers at Sauerheber WMA, KY, Feb. 27 (LRa). Lingering shorebirds included a Least Sandpiper at Brookeville Res., IN, through Dec. 21 (BB), a Pectoral Sandpiper at Pleasant Hill Res., OH, Dec. 8 (KM), and a Dunlin at Brookeville Res., IN, Jan. 4 (BB). Purple Sandpipers were noted at 2 locations along L. Erie, where three at Ashtabula, OH, Feb. 7 (KA) were probably wintering. The latest fall Am. Woodcock was reported from REDA Jan. 1 (JV *et al.*). Spring migrants returned to every state by Feb. 19–23. A Red Phalarope graced Carlyle L., IL, Jan. 5–13 (JV, m.ob.).

#### JAEGERS TO TERNS

The fall Pomarine Jaeger on Rend L., IL, remained through Dec. 8 (†TF *et al.*). More unusual was a Pomarine Jaeger photographed at Cleveland Jan. 20 (RH, LR) as there are few midwinter records from L. Erie. Other jaeger reports included a Parasitic along L. Erie Dec. 15 and two unidentified to species along L. Michigan Dec. 14.

Gulls generated the most excitement this lackluster season. Continuing a series of midwinter records, single Franklin's Gulls were noted at L. Manawa, IA, Jan. 1 (B & LP), Rock Island, IL, Jan. 11–12 (PP), and Saylorville Res., IA, Feb. 9 (RCe). Their appearance in this season remains a mystery. Little Gulls were scarce along the Great Lakes, with only two on L. Erie in December. Holdovers from the fall were single Little Gulls at Spfld. through Dec. 2 (DB) and Clinton L., IL, through Dec. 15 (RS). A Com. Black-headed Gull put in an appearance at Cleveland Jan. 9–13 (TL *et al.*). Most Bonaparte's Gulls departed in December despite favorable conditions. The last large flock totalled 1000 at Rend L., IL, Jan. 9 (TF, JDe); a few reappeared in late February. Wintering Ring-billed Gulls were plentiful in most areas, especially along the Mississippi R. in Iowa, where 20,000 congregated at Montrose Jan. 10 (TK). The only acceptably documented California Gull was discovered in Cook, IL, Dec. 2–3 (†RHu, EW *et al.*).

Thayer's Gulls appeared in fairly typ-

ical numbers, with maxima of 4–5 along both Great Lakes and scattered inland sightings south to the St. Louis area and Gibson, IN. It was a reasonably good winter for Iceland Gulls. Along the Great Lakes, they were nearly equally numerous as Thayer's along L. Erie, and singles were regularly in the Chicago area. Since there are few previous reports from Iowa, two or three imm. Icelands wintering in the Davenport area and another at Saylorville Res. Feb. 29 (†TK, †m.ob.) were noteworthy. An Iceland Gull was an unusual visitor up the Maumee R. in Lucas, OH, Jan. 17–23 (TKe). Lesser Black-backed Gulls have become regular along the Great Lakes and are no longer mentioned by some observers. They are still noteworthy inland, where two wintered in the Davenport, IA, area (†PP, †JF, m.ob.), singles wintered at Spfld. (DB) and Gibson, IN (GBo), and other singles were at Cedar L., IA through Jan. 5 (†TK) and at REDA Feb. 9 (JV).

Glaucous Gulls received mixed reports, with maxima of four–five daily on both Great Lakes and in the Davenport, IA, area. Singles wandered south to Alton, MO–IL, and Gibson, IN. Great Black-backed Gulls continued to increase on L. Michigan, with at least 7 reports from n.w. Indiana in January and scattered sightings from the Chicago area. A maximum of 400+ was counted at Cleveland Jan. 20 (RH, LR). Inland records were limited to two Great Black-backed at Davenport, IA, Feb. 1–9 (†JF, †m.ob.) and three at REDA Jan. 25–Feb. 8 (m.ob.). Few Black-legged Kittiwakes remained into De-

ember. The 2 reports from the Great Lakes included an ad. kittiwake at Huron, OH, Dec. 7 (†JDuk, SU), while the only inland kittiwake visited the Des Moines-Red Rock Res., IA, area Dec. 21–24 (BE *et al.*).

#### S.A.

Two gulls received considerable attention during their brief visits to the Region. A stunning ad. Ross' Gull graced Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO, Dec. 31–Jan. 11 (ph. m.ob.), where it attracted quite a crowd. It furnished the first Missouri and 2nd Regional record for this spectacular species. Equally impressive was a cooperative imm. Ivory Gull that delighted the multitudes at various Chicago-area lake-front locations Dec. 25–Jan. 2 (KH, †EW, ph. m.ob.). In the brief period that their visits overlapped, it was possible to see both in one day.

A Common Tern lingered at Lorain, OH, through Dec. 1 (JDu, SU), not too surprising given the mild conditions. There are a number of previous early December sightings of Com. Terns from L. Erie.

#### OWLS TO WRENS

The only Barn Owl reported was from Iowa. The pale Arctic race of Great Horned Owl staged a small movement into Iowa, with one

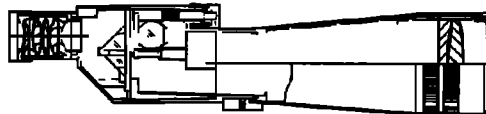


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in the Sioux City area in January (DP, BH) and another at Call SP Dec. 8 (MK). Illinois experienced an invasion of Snowy Owls, with at least 43 reports from the n. half of the state (*vide* EW). Good numbers also appeared in the immediate vicinity of the Great Lakes in Ohio and Indiana, as exemplified by a maximum of five at Cleveland and 6 reports from n.w. Indiana. Only scattered individuals were noted elsewhere in the n. states; the southern limit of this movement was marked by one Snowy Owl at Rend L., IL, Feb. 8 (LS). Long-eared Owls were relatively scarce, with scattered reports across the n. states and a maximum of ten in n. Illinois. As expected, the elusive N. Saw-whet Owl was represented by scattered individuals across the n. states. One Saw-whet in *Osage*, MO, Feb. 15–16 (JG) was s. of the normal range.

A *Selasphorus* hummingbird remained at a *Cape Girardeau*, MO, feeder through Jan. 30 (*vide* PMc, TB), but its identify was never conclusively established. Two unidentified hummingbirds were also reported from s.w. Missouri this winter, and a ♀ Ruby-throated was found dead at Springfield, MO, Mar. 20 (*vide* BJ). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers wintered north to Algona, IA, an area that also hosted a wintering Pileated Woodpecker near the w. edge of its range (MK). The mild weather enticed E. Phoebes to linger into December in most states, including a CBC total of 29 in Kentucky. The last phoebes were noted Jan. 4 at Wheaton, IL (RCo), Jan. 9 in *Rockcastle*, KY (AR), and Jan. 15 in *Taney*, MO (JH). Spring migrants returned to the s. states by late February. Late Tree Swallows lingered at Mississinewa Res., IN, Dec. 3 (Haw, BEt) and *Gibson*, IN, Dec. 31 (BGo).

The largest roosts of Am. Crows totalled 9000 in Ames, IA (JD) and 4000 at Richmond, IN (BB). It was another poor winter for Red-breasted Nuthatches, with very

small numbers reported from each state. Carolina Wren numbers continued to improve along the Region's n. margin. A Bewick's Wren in *Piatt* Feb. 16 (RCh) furnished an unusual Illinois winter record. Lingered wrens were limited to a few House Wrens into the CBC period, with one remaining through Jan. 5 at Akron, OH (LK) and a Marsh Wren at Spfld. until Jan. 26 (DB).

#### KINGLETS TO DICKCISSEL

Wintering Golden-crowned Kinglets received mixed reports while E. Bluebirds apparently wintered in normal numbers. A rare but regular winter visitor to n.w. Iowa, a Townsend's Solitaire was at Stone SP Dec. 7 (BH). Hermit Thrushes were scarce in most states, although their numbers slightly increased on Kentucky CBCs. Wintering Am. Robins were locally abundant where fruit was plentiful but were relatively scarce in many areas. It was also a poor year for Varied Thrushes, with singles in *Jackson*, MO, Dec. 24–Feb. 4 (TE, m.ob.) and at Spfld. Dec. 27 (DB).

Mimids wintered in typical numbers, including scattered Gray Catbirds and Brown Thrashers in the n. states. Migrant Am. Pipits were noted as late as Jan. 1 and as early as Feb. 17, but the only wintering pipit was near Fredricksburg, OH (EM). Cedar Waxwings appeared in variable numbers, from locally absent to locally numerous depending upon the availability of berries. Northern Shrikes returned to normal, with 15+ sightings scattered across the n. states. Casual visitors to Missouri, single Northerners were reported in *Nodaway* Dec. 8 and *Boone* Dec. 15 (TB). Loggerhead Shrikes wintered in typical numbers for recent years, primarily in the Region's s. half.

Despite fairly mild temperatures, few warblers lingered into the winter. Yellow-

rumped Warblers were generally scarce except in Kentucky. It was another good winter for Pine Warblers. Singles remained for the entire season at Columbus, OH (ST) and N. Perry, OH (KA); another was in Pleasantville, IA, Jan. 12–Feb. 3 (GB, †m.ob.); and at least three were tallied in *Wayne*, MO, Jan. 4 (BR). Their N migration started early, with 34 in *Taney*, and *Christian*, MO, Feb. 29 (JH, PM). Other lingering warblers were a Palm in Danville, KY, Jan. 6 (FL), one N. Waterthrush at Chicago Dec. 21 (MH), and a Com. Yellowthroat in n.e. Ohio through Dec. 16. Among the few other reports of half-hardy species, an Indigo Bunting wintered at Holt Summit, MO (CPa, †m.ob.), and a Dickcissel was noted in Hutton, MO, in mid-February (NT).

#### SPARROWS TO WEAVER FINCHES

Most sparrows wintered in normal numbers for recent years. In addition to CBC reports, wintering Chipping Sparrows included one near Red Rock Res., IA, throughout the season (TS) and another in *Saline*, IL, Jan. 9 (†TF, JDe). Lingered Vesper Sparrows were noted in *Lake*, IN, Dec. 28 (LH) and at Fredricksburg, OH, Jan. 13 (BMi). The most unusual passerine was a **Lark Bunting** discovered near Fredricksburg, OH, Jan. 1–4 (†EM, †LY). It furnished only the 2nd winter record for Ohio. Wintering Savannah Sparrows were noted north to *Holmes*, OH. Le Conte's Sparrows were reported from their established winter range in Missouri and s. Illinois, but one near Spfld. Dec. 26 (DB) was slightly n. of this range. Lingered Lincoln's Sparrows at Akron, OH, through Jan. 19 (WS *et al.*, ph.) and *Saline*, IL, Jan. 14 (†JDe) were noteworthy. The only extralimital Harris' Sparrow visited a Columbus, IN, feeder Jan. 15–Mar. 2 (D & JSa).

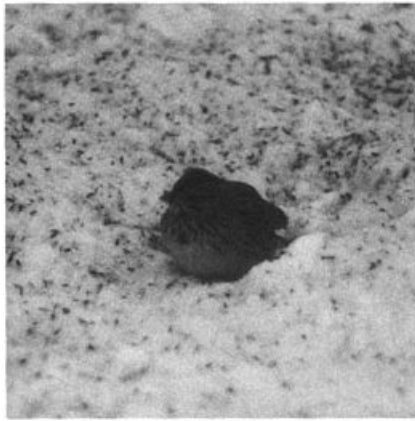
The lack of snow cover was reflected in the paucity of longspur reports. Laplands peaked with 5000 in *Barton*, MO, Dec. 7 (TB), but similar numbers were not found in Iowa and Illinois, where the largest flocks totalled 300–900. The 500+ Laplands in *Union* Jan. 20 (TF *et al.*) comprised a large concentration for s. Illinois. Smith's Longspurs were limited to small flocks of migrants in w. Missouri Dec. 7–13 and in late February. Snow Buntings were infrequently encountered, with the largest flocks totalling 130–300 in the n. states.

Blackbirds elicited few comments. Always unusual in winter, single Yellow-headed Blackbirds appeared at *Zion*, IL, Jan. 1 (RB, LB), *Mercer*, KY, Jan. 10 (FL, WK), and in *Alexander*, IL, Jan. 20 (TF *et al.*). Small numbers of Brewer's Blackbirds were scattered across most states. The most unusual report was one in *Holmes*, OH, Jan. 20 (BG). Great-tailed Grackles wandered e. of their normal Missouri range, with one in *Randolph* Jan. 15–Feb. 3 (RC) and 25 in Columbus Feb. 17–25 (BG).

It was another dismal season for winter finches. Purple Finches were universally scarce, a disturbing trend that coincides with



**Snowy Owl at Burnham Harbor, Chicago, Illinois, on December 29, 1991. Invading Snowies reached northern Illinois and other areas near the Great Lakes in good numbers this winter. Photograph/ Joe B. Milosevich.**



Possibly reflecting the mild season was this Lincoln's Sparrow lingering at Akron, Ohio, on January 18, 1992. Photograph/Larry Rosche.

the expansion of House Finches throughout the Region. The status of Purple Finches merits special attention as they may be rapidly disappearing from our winter bird communities. Neither crossbill staged a noticeable movement. Reds were limited to 4 reports from Iowa and one from Illinois. A White-winged Crossbill in *Bullitt* Dec. 29-30 (J & PB *et al.*) was a very unusual visitor to Kentucky, especially given their scarcity elsewhere, with only 4 records from Iowa and one from Ohio. Common Redpolls were the only finches to move south in appreciable numbers. Fair numbers were scattered across the n. states in December and January, including flocks of 200+ at Clinton L., IL, Jan. 25 (RCh) and 60-75 in Ohio and Iowa. A few redpolls wandered farther south, with reports from *Howard*, MO, Dec. 1 (TB), W. Frankfort, IL, through Jan. 12 (LS), and *Greene*, OH (SU, JDu), marking the limits of their wanderings this winter. Numbers of Pine Siskins were generally low, although flocks of 65-160 appeared in portions of Ohio. Except for 850 Am. Goldfinches in *Howard*, MO, Dec. 1 (TB), even this widespread species was rather scarce. Evening Grosbeaks were almost nonexistent. Only singles were reported from Indiana and Ohio. The Eur. Tree Sparrow has become well established in s.e. Iowa, where up to 50 visited a Burlington feeder this winter (CFu).

**Addendum:** A Brown Pelican was observed on Caesar Creek Res. June 2, 1991 (ph. WD), furnishing the first photographically substantiated record for Ohio and adding to the surprising numbers of Brown Pelicans observed in the Region last year.

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## CENTRAL SOUTHERN REGION

Stephen J. Stedman

The Region experienced another fairly mild winter with rainfall accumulating at normal levels or above in most sectors. For instance, Remsen reported 24+ inches near Baton Rouge for the season. However, slightly below normal precipitation fell in Alabama. As a consequence of an odd weather pattern that left the northern areas of the Region snowless, a hefty seven inches fell on Birmingham and vicinity during the night of January 18. Generally snowless conditions, however, prevailed during the remainder of the season nearly everywhere. Birds responded to these salubrious conditions predictably. Many species found predominantly on the coast appeared well inland. Others wintered in larger than usual numbers, both along the Gulf and inland. Semi-hardy species, like roadrunners and bluebirds, continued to show good population increases.

Interior sightings of hot-line species dominated the avifaunal kaleidoscope this season, a reversal of the usual pattern of coastal monopoly of rarities. Several first state records were well documented, as well as a report of one species never before encountered in North America during winter and rarely in any season.

Many observers now routinely prepare a page or more of notes for sightings of rare birds. To these faithful, residing mainly in Louisiana and north Mississippi, many thanks are due. Without a detailed "paper trail," such birds are hard to discuss comfortably in a report like this one. Contributors can assist in the production of the report by submitting all records on 3 X 5 cards, one species to a card. They can offer even more assistance by briefly noting on the back of these cards the particulars which led to their identification.

My thanks to Susan McWhirter for sending copies of all Tennessee CBCs to me. Additionally, I received a tabulation of Arkansas count data from Helen and Max Parker and a similar tabulation of Alabama data from Thomas Imhof. Finally, the *American Birds* CBC editor forwarded a copy of all Regional CBCs (sans documentation) at the eleventh hour. All of these data were valuable in the preparation of this report.

**Abbreviations:** p.a. (*pending acceptance [by the state bird records committee]*).

### LOONS TO GREBS

Red-throated Loon sightings totalled five, with single birds on CBCs in *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 28 (†GDJ) and *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 30 (†SJS) being at sites where they are expected regularly if rarely. More unusual were up to three far from the Gulf in *Hempstead*, AR, Dec. 23-Feb. 29 (CM, HP, MP) and a lone

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bird Dec. 21–Feb. 10 (†GK, SK, JRW) in *Panola*, MS—these were also unusual for the length of their stays at those sites. The most noteworthy report came Feb. 1 from far inland *Caddo*, LA (†JPS, m.ob.), where the state's 2nd or 3rd record was established (p.a. LBRC). Two **Pacific Loons** in *Panola* Feb. 4–7 (†GK, JAT, m.ob.) represented Mississippi's 4th record, while one to two in *Guntersville* Dec. 1 & 26 (†BG, *fide* LR) provided the 3rd inland record for Alabama (p.a. ABRC).

#### S.A.

The major field guides still do not reflect the fact that fairly large flocks of Horned Grebes routinely stay the winter up to 500 miles north of the Gulf Coast on the many large impoundments created during the past 6 decades in the Region's interior, particularly in Tennessee. This major northward shift in wintering range of a sizable portion of the species' population was amply in evidence again during the season. Over 100 were recorded on the Hickory-Priest CBC near Nashville, TN, Jan. 1 (*fide* CGD); at least 200 were present Jan. 4 and Feb. 16 in *DeKalb*, TN (SJS, BHS); another 70 were noted in *Henry*, TN, Feb. 16 (SJS, GSK, WAW, CEW). In addition, about 50 were recorded on Arkansas CBCs and another 100 on CBCs in n. Alabama, where 60 were noted in *Colbert* Feb. 9 (NP). One seldom-mentioned factor that might contribute to this change in wintering range is the stocking of many reservoirs with species of small fish, such as alewives and threadfin shad, designed to serve as prey for game species. Wintering Horned Grebes and other piscivores probably benefit from the introduction of these fish.

About four Red-necked Grebes invaded Mississippi, where there had been just 2 or 3 previous sightings. An adult was discovered on the coast in *Jackson* Dec. 8 (ph. RS, RR, m.ob.), while an immature appeared inland Dec. 8–9 at L. Enid in *Yalobusha* (ph. JRW, †GK, SK, MD, m.ob.), the latter bird the first for the n. sector of the state; it was probably the same bird sighted Feb. 13 on the *Yalobusha/Panola* line (†GK). Another adult was in extreme n. Mississippi on the *Waterloo*, AL, CBC Dec. 14 (LN, PK), while another immature showed up inland at *Sardis L.* Dec. 27–Jan. 6 (†GK, SK, m.ob.). No other reports of this grebe were received except for one on the *Dauphin I.*, AL, CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* JW—sans details).

Eared Grebes maintain a small wintering population in the s.e. portion of the Region, mainly just inland from and along the coast, as indicated by flocks of eight and 13 in *Jackson* and *Jones*, MS, Jan. 2 (JAT *et al.*) and Jan. 26 (TLS), respectively, as well as by singles on 2 nearby Mississippi CBCs, by one on the *Perdido* CBC on the Alabama/Florida line,



and by four farther east on the Choctawhatchee Bay CBC. Less expected was an Eared in *Union*, AR, Feb. 29 (SS). Surprisingly, only one Louisiana report surfaced—two in the southwest on the *Sabine* CBC Dec. 14 (*fide* CS, PW), much closer to the major wintering range of the species. The W. Grebe reported last fall from *Hempstead*, AR, stayed through February on L. Millwood (CM, DIH, DoH). Another, Louisiana's 12th, was observed on the *Johnsons Bayou* CBC Dec. 15 (†CK, CS, PW). Mississippi's first to be satisfactorily distinguished from Clark's Grebe showed up in *Madison* Jan. 26–Feb. 7 (HM, JS, JB, TLS, MC).

#### SULIDS TO HERONS

During December N. Gannets reached maximum density on the Gulf coast in Alabama and were notably fewer both east and west along the coast; i.e., the 1100+ reported Dec. 28 on the *Gulf Shores*, AL, CBC (LD) were 20 times more than were counted on any n.w. Florida or Mississippi CBC. Was this concentration a consequence of the direction and location of Gulf currents? Of the prevailing winds? Of nutrients flowing into the Gulf from the Mobile R.? Or of some combination of these (and other) factors?

Following their banner fall season, Am. White Pelicans continued to generate news. A rare January bird was located in *Washington*, AR, Jan. 23 (MM), and two were there Feb. 20 (MM). The first winter sighting for *Oktibbeha*, MS, involved two Feb. 15–16 (TLS, MC), though these may have been migrants. A flock of 400+ Feb. 28 in *Lafayette*, MS (GK, SK VT), also represented a local winter first. Troups viewed 350+ in *Harrison*, MS, Jan. 30 as an unusual winter concentra-

tion, while nine in *Pensacola*, FL, Jan. 26 (PT, BT) provided the first local record for that month. In Louisiana, a few reports of wintering Brown Pelicans were also issued: one in *Orleans* Dec. 21 (SWC, DD, CMa), Jan. 17 (PY), and Feb. 9 (PY); three Dec. 29 in *Cameron* (JK); and 32 on the *Venice* CBC Dec. 29 (*fide* RDP). These sightings suggest the latter species continues to recover its former range. At the same time it continues to do well farther east: Toups reported flocks of 200 in Mississippi; while some concentration of 500+ were noted in Alabama and n.w. Florida.

Double-crested Cormorants were encountered far inland during December in noteworthy numbers, including 1800+ Dec. 21 in *Pine Bluff*, AR (*fide* RD) and 17,000+ in *Washington*, MS, Dec. 29 (*fide* EA). Two Neotropic Cormorants in *Vermilion*, LA, Dec. 18 (†VR, DW, CF) were also farther inland than usual. Thirteen Louisiana CBCs accumulated reports of 122 Anhingas; this generous total was perhaps indicative of the warm season.

About 40 Great Egrets, down somewhat from counts in recent years, remained in Arkansas to be tallied on 5 CBCs; 100+ remained at *Vicksburg*, MS/LA, Dec. 28 (*fide* HM). Six Cattle Egrets in *Chicot*, AR, Jan. 1 & 9 (DS) merit mention as does the Green-backed Heron in *Washington*, AR, Dec. 14 (JW, EN), since it established the first winter record for n.w. Arkansas.

#### WATERFOWL

Up to four Tundra Swans stayed Dec. 1–Feb. 16 in *Lauderdale*, TN (WGC, JRW, MP, HP, m.ob.). Two farther east in *Stewart*, TN, Dec. 15 (*fide* DB) were the only Regional CBC birds. Still farther east two in *Putnam*, TN,

Dec. 6–7 (ph. SJS, BHS, m.ob.) provided the 2nd record locally; probably the same two were 20 mi south in *White*, TN, Dec. 18–19 (SJS, TR). One remained briefly in *Tunica*, MS, Dec. 8 (WRP), while three immatures appeared with equal brevity in *Washington*, MS, Feb. 9 (GK, SK, TLS, m.ob.). Southernmost of all, three remained in *Jefferson*, AL, Dec. 13 through the end of February (RS, m.ob.). An imm. **Trumpeter Swan** Dec. 12–Feb. 28 in *Lafayette* (†GK, VT, JRW, m.ob.) was Mississippi's 2nd ever. Tantalizing rumors of a Trumpeter in Tennessee were never substantiated.

Ross' Geese were noted in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana in small to moderate numbers, including 382 conservatively counted in *Jefferson Davis*, LA, Feb. 1 (SWC, DD, †CMA); there were no reports from the e. half of the Region in Tennessee, Alabama, or n.w. Florida. Louisiana's 4th **Brant** was reported by state wildlife personnel sometime during January in *Jefferson Davis* (*fide* SWC); up to two birds were then well described by m.ob. Feb. 1–6 in that parish (SWC, DD, †CMA, GB, CB) and in neighboring *Cameron* Feb. 21 (GB, CB). The **Brant** reported last fall in *Lafayette*, MS, was still present Feb. 28 (†VT, m.ob.).

Judging from CBC data, dabbling ducks experienced an average winter throughout the Region; however, few reports about them were submitted. Two well-described Am. Black Ducks seen Feb. 20 (CC, JP) in *Jackson*, MS, where considered rare, and one Eur. Wigeon Dec. 15 in *Stewart*, TN (CS) were prominent exceptions.

By contrast, diving ducks were well reported. Over 6800 Canvasbacks were present on the Catahoula N.W.R., LA, CBC Dec. 14 (*fide* JM), by far the largest concentration noted, while the largest Ring-necked Duck aggregations included 4000+ on the Sumner, MS, CBC Dec. 30 (*fide* GT) and an equal number in *Lafayette*, MS, Feb. 20–28 (GK, VT). Many small flocks of Greater Scaup, numbering mainly in single digits but ranging up to 50 birds, were reported throughout the Region. The concentration of 40,000 Lesser Scaup in *Cameron*, LA, Feb. 29 (JK *et al.*) must have been impressive and certainly was the highest total reported.

Oldsquaws were represented by lone birds wherever reported—4 sites in Arkansas, 2 in Louisiana, and one each in Alabama and n.w. Florida; an illustration of the loneliness of the long distance migrant? Single Black Scoters were in *Oktibbeha*, MS, Dec. 18 (TLS, m.ob.); *Hancock*, MS, Dec. 22 & 26 (JAT, GM); and *Escambia*, FL, Feb. 27 (RAD). Two appeared in *Orleans*, LA, Dec. 19 (NN). White-winged Scoter reports included five on the Lonoke, AR, CBC Dec. 15 (*fide* JLY); one on the Pine Bluff, AR, CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* RD); one in *Orleans*, LA, Dec. 21 (NN, RDP); and seven in *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 28 (LD). A single report of a ♀ Surf Scoter came from *Hancock*, MS, Dec. 21 (JAT). Common Mergansers were widespread in very small numbers, including one far south Dec.



**Immature Red-necked Grebe at Lake Enid, Mississippi, on December 8, 1991. This was only about the third state record, but at least three others appeared during the winter. Photograph/Jeff R. Wilson.**

14 in *Cameron*, LA (*fide* CS, PW). The 6th Louisiana Masked Duck (p.a. LBRC) and first since 1973 showed up in *Lafourche* Jan. 19 (†GW *et al.*).

#### RAPTORs

Ospreys were noted inland with frequency again this winter and were often more abundant than expected on the coast, particularly in Louisiana. No Black-shouldered Kites were reported from Mississippi, but two reports emanated from s.w. Louisiana: one on the Sabine CBC Dec. 14 (*fide* CS, PW); and one in *Lafayette* Dec. 29 (DP, DPa). Perhaps in response to the mild season, Bald Eagle numbers at Reelfoot L., TN, were even lower—at 111 birds (*fide* MGW)—than last winter's numbers; many were reported in small to fair numbers throughout the Region, but all other reports involved fewer than 100 birds.

Except for Waldron in w. Tennessee, subregional editors reported very few Accipiters, leaving conclusions about them to be drawn from CBC data. From them I conclude that the two smaller accipiters are doing at least adequately well in the Region: 252 Sharp-shinned Hawks were sighted on 59 of 80 Regional CBCs; 141 Cooper's Hawks were counted on 61 of those CBCs. Northern Goshawks restricted their southern visits to Tennessee, where singles appeared in *Cannon* Jan. 15 (†KN, MT) and *Shelby* Feb. 15 (MG).

Two late-migrating Broad-winged Hawks were near the parish line for *Jefferson/Lafourche*, LA, Dec. 1 (DM, RDP); a well-documented immature thought to be wintering in *Plaquemines*, LA, Dec. 29 (ph. & †DM, NN, JM) lent credence to previous reports of this species' wintering in s.e. Louisiana; another immature shared space briefly and fatally with a window, providing the 3rd w. Tennessee winter record Dec. 20 in *Shelby* (OKM).

Light morph Rough-legged Hawks were well reported; one in *Putnam* and *White*, TN, Dec. 15 and Dec. 18–20 (SJS, m.ob.), respectively, was a first for the former county. Very rare dark morph birds appeared in *Limestone*, AL, Dec. 8 (†GDJ, DGJ); *Washington*, AR, Dec. 14–15 (DJ); and *Montgomery*, TN, Feb. 16 (SJS, GKa). Immature Golden Eagles were located in *Drew*, AR, Jan. 9 (DS); *Yalobusha*, MS, Dec. 7 (†GK, SK, RB); *Winston*, MS, Feb. 23 (TLS); and *Jefferson Davis*, LA, Feb. 8–16 (†JPS, †CS, m.ob.). An adult was on the Tensas River N.W.R., LA, CBC Jan. 2 (†DPa, p.a. LBRC). Good numbers of Merlins and Peregrine Falcons were seen on the CBCs. A **Prairie Falcon** Dec. 7 in *Yalobusha* (†GK, SK, RB, m.ob.) was Mississippi's 3rd.

#### RAILS TO SHOREBIRDS

Despite a 2nd consecutive year of mild, moderately wet conditions, very few rails were reported inland. Sandhill Cranes were present in eastern middle Tennessee during December and February in their usual capacity as migrants; three at Wheeler N.W.R., AL, Dec. 29 (SM) were considered rare; ditto three in *Washington*, MS, 7–8 Feb. (JRW, MD, m.ob.); a parish first was established by a single bird Jan. 9 and thereafter in *E. Baton Rouge*, LA (VR), while four each in *Pointe Coupee* and *St. Tammany*, LA, Jan. 10–13 (JBo) and Dec. 26 (*fide* JH), respectively, were also rare.

An early Lesser Golden-Plover was in *Cameron*, LA, Feb. 29 (JK *et al.*). Rare Snowy Plovers appeared in *Cameron*, LA, on the Sabine CBC Dec. 14 (*fide* CS, PW) and in *Harrison*, MS, Jan. 23 (CC *et al.*); 133 were counted on four CBCs in n.w. Florida where they are less rare but in need of monitoring. Far inland reports of yellowlegs included a Greater in *Monroe*, AR, Jan. 29 (RD), a Lesser in *Limestone*, AL, Feb. 9 (GDJ, DGJ), and four Lessers in *Shelby*, TN, Feb. 16 (VRe, MGW). Very unusual in winter were Solitary Sandpipers at 2 Louisiana sites: *Jefferson Davis* Feb. 1 (SWC, CMA), and *St. John the Baptist* Feb. 12 (RS, MW).

In Louisiana Long-billed Curlews are rare away from the coast, so two in *Acadia* Dec. 18 (CK, CS, DM, AS) were notable; farther east, where rare even on the coast, another was at a traditional site, the Mobile Causeway in *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 29 (GDJ), and still another was in *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 30 (RLW). Marbled Godwits were deemed rarities in *Harrison*, MS, Dec. 5 (JAT, m.ob.); *Escambia*, FL, Dec. 7 (RAD, m.ob.)—the first local December





Adult Little Gull (center—dark underwings) with Bonaparte's Gulls at Lake Millwood, Arkansas, on December 15, 1991. Fifth state record. Photograph/Charles Mills.

record; and *Baldwin*, AL, Dec. 29 (GDJ). A single W. Sandpiper and three Dunlins represented a rare quartet in *Poinsett*, AR, Jan. 10 (MP, HP). Pectoral Sandpipers in Mississippi—two Dec. 10, 19, & 26 in *Hancock* (JAT, m.ob.) and one Feb. 20 in *Jackson* (CC, SM *et al.*)—represented either rare wintering, or extreme dates for migrants.

For the 6th consecutive year a Purple Sandpiper was in *Harrison*, MS; it stayed Jan. 13 into spring (ph. JAT, SMi). Small flocks of up to 15 Stilt Sandpipers remained in Louisiana, reported in *Lafourche* Dec. 1 (DM), *Acadia* Dec. 18 (DM *et al.*), *Plaquemines* Dec. 29 (DM), and *Jefferson Davis* Feb. 1 (SWC, DD, CMa). A dowitcher heard and seen well in *Bolivar*, MS, Feb. 9 (GK, SK, JRW, TLS) was most likely a Long-billed and was definitely far from usual wintering areas on the coast.

#### JAEGERS, GULLS

Two imm. Pomarine Jaegers on the Sabine CBC in *Cameron*, LA, Dec. 14 (SWC, DD, JaS) were quite positively identified (\*LSUMNS), a consequence lacking when four jaegers were seen in the same parish the next day on the Johnsons Bayou CBC (VR, CMa, AK); another jaeger thought to have been a Pomarine was noted Feb. 15 near the west end of Dauphin I., AL (†BG).

Franklin's Gulls invaded the Region in a coordinated manner. Two showed up in *Lafayette*, MS, Dec. 3 (†GK); another appeared in *Yalobusha*, MS, Dec. 8 (JRW), the same day that one was reported in *Laud-*

*erdale*, AL (†GDJ); finally, a single was seen in *Cameron*, LA, Dec. 15 (JK). Arkansas' 5th Little Gull appeared at L. Millwood, *Little River*, also Dec. 15 (ph. CM). Jackson counted 10,500 Bonaparte's Gulls Dec. 8 at the Wilson and Wheeler dams in Alabama, a state inland high count; 14,500 Ring-billed Gulls at the same sites that day were 500 shy of the high count.

Back for its 9th consecutive winter in *Harrison*, MS, a Lesser Black-backed Gull was nicely photographed (JAT), as were four (count 'em) in *St. Bernard*, LA, Dec. 21 (ph. CMa, SWC, DD). Also causing photographic behavior were imm. Glaucous Gulls in *Harrison*, MS, Feb. 23 (ph. CC) and New Orleans, LA, Dec. 8 (ph. & †DM, †AS), as well as an ad. in *St. Bernard*, LA, Dec. 21 (ph. CMa). Great Black-backed Gulls were noted in *St. Bernard*, Dec. 21 (ph. CMa.), *Jefferson*, LA, Feb. 22 (PY), and *Jackson*, MS, Feb. 25 (CC, TLS); farther to the east three in *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 30 (RLW) suggested that the species may be increasing in that part of the Region, as most previous sightings in n.w. Florida have been of single birds. Black-legged Kittiwakes put in appearances in *Cameron*, LA, Dec. 14 (†PY, DM, m.ob.) and *Grenada*, MS, Jan 10–Feb. 9 (†GK, SK, MD, JRW, m.ob.).

#### DOVES TO HUMMINGBIRDS

Eurasian Collared-Doves, not yet on the Louisiana state bird list (p.a. LBRC), were reported in *Orleans* Feb. 15 (†DM, JPS) and 23 (RDP, NN). Inca Doves were reported as

far east as *Lafayette*, LA, during the season (BJ, DP, GW, GB, m.ob.), though they had extended their range slightly farther east last fall. Rare in Arkansas, a Common Ground-Dove in *Arkansas* Dec. 20 had been shot by a hunter (*vide* JSp). The recent succession of mild winters has spelled relief for Greater Roadrunners in Arkansas, where 22 were recorded on CBCs, up from state CBC totals of five, seven, and 11 in 1988, 1989, and 1990, respectively. Groove-billed Anis were unreported outside Louisiana, where about 10 sightings occurred. Up to 16 Short-eared Owls congregated in *Vermilion*, LA, during the season (AK, KR); in addition, four in *Tunica*, MS, Jan. 19 (MD, GK, SK), nine in *Noxubee*, MS, Feb. 29 (TLS, m.ob.), and single birds in *White*, TN, Dec. 28 (TR) and *Lawrence*, AL, Feb. 26 (GDJ, DGJ) were considered noteworthy.

Two Com. Nighthawks in *Pulaski*, AR, Dec. 7–14 (†LP) just made the Little Rock CBC and provided the latest fall record for the state, while one in *E. Baton Rouge*, LA, stayed until Dec. 26 (RMZ, ph. KR) for one of that state's few well-documented winter records. Four Vaux's Swifts, identified by call, were in *W. Baton Rouge*, LA, Dec. 19 (SWC, DD); four unidentified swifts seen throughout the winter at a roost site in *E. Baton Rouge* (JK, JM), a few miles n.e., were probably the same birds noted by Cardiff and Dittmann; they may have been some of the birds reported from the same roost last winter.

Three Buff-bellied Hummingbirds wintered in *St. John the Baptist*, LA (SN, RS), while one was present Jan. 14–Feb. 28 in *St. Mary*, LA (DMi), and another Dec. 1 in *Cameron*, LA (CMa); for the 4th consecutive winter one stayed the season in *Hancock*, MS (ph. JAT, LS). About nine Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported in Louisiana (m.ob.), as well as one in *Hancock*, MS, Jan. 30 (JAT, CC, m.ob.). At least seven Black-chinned Hummingbirds were counted in Louisiana (m.ob.) along with one in *Hancock*, MS (JAT, DH) and another in *Bay*, FL, Dec. 28 (*vide* HL).

An imm. ♂ Calliope Hummingbird in *E. Baton Rouge* Jan. 21–25 (†MDa, †CMA, †AK) was about the 15th for Louisiana and was documented by the latter observer with some fine drawings. About ten Rufous Hummingbirds and four *Selasphorus* spp., many of which were banded (NN), were reported from Louisiana (m.ob.). Away from the Gulf, a Rufous was banded in Little Rock, AR, Dec. 14 (PF, RC), and a *Selasphorus* sp. was a CBC bird in *Faulkner*, AR, Dec. 14 (*vide* MJ); a Rufous stayed in *Williamson*, TN, until at least Dec. 22 (*vide* AT and PGL), having been present since sometime the previous October; another showed up on the Gunterville, AL, CBC Dec. 26 (*vide* LR). On the coast, singles were reported in *Escambia*, FL, Dec. 14 (*vide* CKi) and *Bay*, FL, Dec. 28 (*vide* HL), while a *Selasphorus* sp. enjoyed Dec. 3–20 in Mobile, AL (RS).

Alabama's first Allen's Hummingbird (p.a. ABRC) was obliging enough to be



**Lesser Black-backed Gull (left front) first basic plumage at Chalmette, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, on December 21, 1991. One of four individuals present on this date. Photograph/Curtis A. Marantz.**

banded (†RS) Dec. 3 in Mobile; it had been present since the 2nd week of November and absconded during the 3rd week of December, taking its band. Another Allen's (p.a. ABRC) then appeared—and was also banded (RS, †GDJ)—in January near Montgomery, where it stayed into February.

#### FLYCATCHERS TO WAGTAILS

Single empidonaces Jan. 15 and Jan. 16 in *Jefferson*, LA (DM), and *Hancock*, MS (JAT, CC, SMi), respectively, were the only ones reported. At least eight Vermilion Flycatchers brightened Louisiana during the season; three others made it east to Mississippi. Ash-throated Flycatchers tested observers' skill when one showed up on the *Crowley*, LA, CBC Dec. 18 (†DM, †AS) and two others crashed the *Venice*, LA, CBC Dec. 29 (†DM). Even more of a test was the *Couch's/Tropical Kingbird* found Feb. 15 in *Jefferson Davis*, LA (†CMA, †MS), and left unidentified to species. Single W. Kingbirds graced CBCs at *Johnsons Bayou*, LA, Dec. 15 (*fide* CS, PW) and *Dauphin I.*, AL, Dec. 21 (*fide* JW), while a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher lingered far north in *Little River*, AR, Dec. 7 (CM); other Scissor-tails were present in *Calcasieu*, LA, Dec. 1 (BO), *Pensacola*, FL, Dec. 14 (*fide* CK), and *Gulf*, FL, Dec. 29 (SJS).

Purple Martins arrived in *E. Baton Rouge*, LA, Jan. 29 (JBa, SH), in *Bolivar*, MS, Feb. 13 (WI), and in *Putnam*, TN, Feb. 24 (SJS). At least three sightings of N. Rough-winged Swallow occurred in Louisiana, where the species is noteworthy in winter. Bewick's Wrens were reported from *Washington*, AR, Dec. 14 (DJ, RD), where the species is very rare in winter; three in *Noxubee*, MS, and one in nearby *Clay* during January and February (TLS) were the 3rd through 6th locally in winter; another was in *Lauderdale*, AL, Dec. 22 (NP); southernmost were singles in *Vermilion* (JK, CMA) and *Acadia* (WF), LA,

both on Dec. 18.

Eastern Bluebirds have responded to the recent spate of warm winters very well indeed; highest CBC numbers ever were noted in many areas, including *Washington*, AR (DJ), and *Putnam*, TN (SJS); on the former count numbers were more than double the previous high, and on the latter they were more than triple. The first Alabama Varied Thrush (p.a. ABRC) excited m.ob. in *Birmingham* Feb. 20 until the end of the period (JBr, †GDJ).

#### S.A.

Well beyond the level of mere excitement was the reception accorded eastern North America's first Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*). Found Jan. 31 in *Oktibbeha*, MS (†TLS, ph. JAT, m.ob.), it remained only until the next day before disappearing into the mists. Some skeptics (ph. & †GDJ) suggest that this individual may have been a Citrine Wagtail (*M. citreola*), a Yellow Wagtail lookalike; breeding in far eastern Europe, the Citrine has never been recorded in the Western Hemisphere. Until the verdict is returned on this sticky identification in a future issue of this journal, readers more conservative than I am may want to refer to the bird as a *Motacilla* sp. or a yellow-colored wagtail. Whichever species this bird represented, it was undoubtedly the gem of an fine collection of avian waifs encountered during the season throughout the Region.

#### WAXWINGS TO BUNTINGS

Cedar Waxwings were deemed much less common than they have been during any previous year that Remsen could remember in *Iberville* and *E. Baton Rouge*, LA. A White-eyed Vireo in *Washington* Dec. 19 (MM)

provided n.w. Arkansas' first winter record. Solitary Vireos in *Jefferson* and *Marshall* Dec. 25 (HK) and Jan. 4 (HK), respectively, were rare for n. Alabama.

Several stray parulids, probably enjoying the warm winter, were detected well north of the coast; warbler sightings along the Gulf were about normal, except in Louisiana where some observers considered several species in above normal numbers. A Tennessee Warbler in *Dyer* Dec. 26 (WGC) became (of course) Tennessee's 4th winter record and w. Tennessee's first. Mississippi's first inland winter N. Parula stayed in *Lafayette* Dec. 21–26 (MD). The Tropical Parula in *Lafayette* Feb. 10–28 (†DP, ph. PC, †CMA, †AS) was Louisiana's 4th ever. Yellow Warblers in *Plaquemines* and *St. Charles*, LA, Dec. 29 (DM, NN, JM) and Feb. 15 (PY), respectively, were the only ones noted. A Magnolia and an Am. Redstart in *Cameron*, LA, Dec. 15 (PY, RDP, MMy/AK, VR, CMA) also had no peers. At least nine N. Waterthrushes were reported from coastal Louisiana (m.ob.). A Wilson's Warbler videotaped in *Davidson* Feb. 15 († and v. PGL) provided Tennessee's 2nd winter record, the first having come in December 1991 from the portion of the state lying in the Appalachian Region. Wilson's were so common in coastal Louisiana during winter that Muth dismissed two that wintered on his block as part of a trend in high numbers of avian insectivores; they did not even warrant a card. A Yellow-breasted Chat was detected Dec. 19 in *W. Baton Rouge*, LA (SWC, DD), where it rarely winters.

Single female-type Summer Tanagers occurred in 4 Louisiana parishes; another in similar plumage appeared Jan. 4 in *Santa Rosa*, FL (RAD), only the 2nd local January sighting. The only well described W. Tanager came from *Cameron*, LA, Dec. 16 (†RS). Blue Grosbeaks again wintered in Louisiana: following a late fall report in *Iberville*, one was noted at the same site Dec. 1, 2 & 8, as well as Jan. 30 (VR, SWC, DD); another was in *Cameron* Dec. 15 (DM, MMy, RDP, PY); and still another in *St. John the Baptist* Dec. 28 (MB). A winter first in *Harrison*, MS, Dec. 16 was a ♀-plumaged Painted Bunting at a feeder (WH, *fide* JAT); Louisiana sightings included a male and a female in *Lafourche* Dec. 15 (MF, FA) and a female in *Iberville* Jan. 18–Feb. 27 (SWC, DD). At least seven Indigo Buntings were reported from Louisiana; single birds also appeared Jan. 4 in *Santa Rosa*, FL (RAD)—providing the 2nd local January record—and very far north Jan. 11–28 in *Union*, AR (SS).

#### SPARROWS TO SISKINS

Two Bachman's Sparrows in *Winston*, MS, Feb. 16 (TLS) included a singing bird and provided the 2nd local "winter" record. American Tree Sparrows winter almost annually along the w. shore of *Reelfoot L.*, TN, even during warm winters; 55 were there Dec. 26 (MG, TF), while seven or eight remained in the area Feb. 15 (SJS, WAW,

CEW, GKa) & 23 (*fide* MGW). A Clay-colored Sparrow was reported sans details from *Hancock*, MS, Jan. 23 (JAT, m.ob.), for the 4th local winter record. Seven Vesper Sparrows wintered or were back early in *Clark*, AR, Feb. 23 (DIH, SB); four probably wintering were seen Jan. 20 and later in *Shelby*, TN (MGW, DMY). Lark Sparrows were considered rare in *Noxubee*, MS, Dec. 27 & Jan. 20 (GK, SK, TLS, MC) and *Lafourche*, LA, Dec. 15 (GW).

Rarely reported Henslow's Sparrows occurred in *Hancock*, MS, Feb. 13 (JAT, CC, SMi, JP) and *Lafayette*, LA, Dec. 27 (BF). Eleven Le Conte's Sparrows Jan. 20 in *Noxubee*, MS (TLS, MC) represented a local high count. Harris' Sparrows, rare but regular in Louisiana, especially in the n.w. section of the state, appeared in five parishes, including *Caddo*, where five were reported Feb. 2 (JK *et al.*); two in *Clark*, AR, Feb. 23 (DIH, SB) furnished the only report outside Louisiana.

Lapland Longspurs inundated *Tunica*, MS, Dec. 1 (JRW), when 2500+ were estimated; 250+ in *Limestone*, AL, from late December until February (GDJ, m.ob.) represented a good number for that area; 75 in *Colbert*, AL, Feb. 16 (NP) provided a first county record, while three in *Lauderdale*, AL, Jan. 11 (NP) were the 2nd for that county. Smith's Longspurs are rare but regular in Shreveport, LA, where three were present Feb. 1 (†JPS); up to three in *Shelby*, TN, Dec. 15 (MG, WRP) and Jan. 19 (MG, MGW) were also at a traditional site, as were eight Feb. 8 in *Prairie*, AR (HP, MP, DoH, DIH). However, one **Smith's Longspur** in *Limestone* Jan. 1 into February (†GDJ, m.ob.) was the 7th for Alabama and the state's first in 23 years (p.a. ABRC); two others in *Tunica*, MS, Dec. 1 (JRW, †GK) were also considered extremely rare.

Western Meadowlark reports included two in Arkansas, two in Mississippi, and one in Tennessee. Three hundred Brewer's Blackbirds in *Lawrence* Feb. 6 (GDJ, JH) provided a maximum for the Tenn. Valley portion of Alabama; 80 in *Hancock*, MS, Dec. 14 (JAT, m.ob.) were a good number in a coastal area where they are judged scarce. James counted 87 Great-tailed Grackles going to roost Dec. 14 in *Washington*, AR, establishing the highest count ever on the Fayetteville CBC for this locally increasing species. An imm. ♂ Orchard Oriole was seen Jan. 21 through February in *Harrison*, MS (SMi, m.ob.), where the species has occasionally wintered. Six records of N. Orioles along the Louisiana coast were not unusual, but two birds inland at Montgomery, AL, Dec. 28 (LG) were considered strays.

Northern finches generally did not have a good year. Purple Finches were reported in mostly low numbers throughout the Region. House Finch, not a true "northern" finch, was reported frequently, if in limited number, in the s.w. and n.w. portions of the Region, as well as everywhere else, as this species continues to consolidate its position. The

only Red Crossbill report came from *Van Buren*, AR, where two were seen Jan. 19–20 (MAB), while Pine Siskins were present in very small numbers or were absent, and no Evening Grosbeaks at all were reported.

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## PRAIRIE PROVINCES REGION

*Rudolf F. Koes and Peter Taylor*

Mean temperature were well above long-term averages across the Region, especially in southern Alberta; Calgary recorded an amazing 72.7°F on February 27. The few cold snaps were short-lived. The extreme cold of late fall, however, had driven out many birds before the onset of mild weather in mid-December, resulting in a rather quiet birding season overall. Early snow soon disappeared from much of south Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan, but near-normal precipitation sustained good snow cover in Manitoba.

### LOONS TO GULLS

A very late Com. Loon on the Squaw Rapids, SK, CBC Dec. 22 (WH) was eclipsed by a first-year **Yellow-billed Loon** lingering at Gardiner Dam from autumn to at least Jan. 23 (HL, RKr, m.ob.). A Horned Grebe provided a 3rd consecutive December record at Waterton Lakes NP, AB, Dec. 14 (DD, TD). A Tundra Swan remained in Calgary until Jan. 9, the latest local record. A Trumpeter Swan lingered at Echo Valley PP, SK, Dec. 1–Jan. 1 (RH, RKr, BL). Many Canada Geese wintered in s. Alberta: 8846 were counted in the Lethbridge area Dec. 28 (m.ob.), and over 3000 were at Medicine Hat Dec. 15 (DBa). In late February there were still 450 in Calgary (RDi); 300 overwintered at Regina, SK (RE, FL).

Two Am. Black Ducks wintered with 94 Mallards at Regina (FL, RE, CB). Good news was the absence of avian cholera in Calgary after 4 winters of heavy mortality for Mallards. The most noteworthy diving ducks were Calgary's first-ever overwintering Greater Scaup (RT, TT, PS *et al.*), a Harlequin Duck to Dec. 14 at Ft. Qu'Appelle, SK (RH), and 15 Buffleheads at Lethbridge Dec. 28 (A & LL, *fide* TD).

At Medicine Hat two Bald Eagles drove a dog from a dead fish only to lose their prize to a fox—all seen from a dentist's chair Dec. 18 (BV)! Northern Goshawks were widespread in Manitoba, with 19 seen on 14 out of 20 CBCs, including unofficial counts (*fide* RP). Unusual urban birds were wintering Red-tailed Hawks: four in Calgary (RT, RDu, m.ob.) and one "Harlan's" in Regina (TH, FL, RKr, AB). Gyrfalcon reports totaled about eight birds each in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and about 40 sightings near Calgary.

Gray Partridge numbers were low in s.e. Manitoba but fairly high in w. Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while Ruffed Grouse were hard to find in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan. A well-described **Greater Prairie-Chicken** at Carlyle, SK, amazed Doris Silcox: her first sighting in over 60 years! It fed on grain she provided from mid-December to Feb. 18, joined by up to nine



species flock feeding on crossbill-scattered cone debris at a Medicine Hat cemetery Jan. 4 (PH). Sixty Red-breasted Nuthatches on the Riding Mountain CBC contrasted with scarcity elsewhere in Manitoba. Brown Creepers were above average in the Calgary foothills (RDi), with normal low numbers elsewhere. Golden-crowned Kinglets were conspicuously scarce in both Manitoba and Saskatchewan, presumably driven out by the early cold weather. American Dipper concentrations included 10 in a 200-yard stretch of the Bow R. near L. Louise Jan. 19 (m.ob., *vide* RDi).

Townsend's Solitaires were scarce in the Calgary area (RDi); 3 reports in Saskatchewan made a normal total (*vide* RKr). American Robins did well in Calgary, where 20-30 overwintered (*vide* RDi). Varied Thrushes were reported in all 3 provinces in early winter; one at Yorkton, SK, lingered to mid-January (W & DHj, m.ob.). A Brown Thrasher visited a Lethbridge feeder occasionally from Jan. 13 (LSa). Bohemian Waxwings were scarce, especially after December. Small numbers of Cedar Waxwings are almost annual in parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but 2 flocks of 12 and five were very unusual in Calgary in January (RT, NT). Seven N. Shrikes was an exceptional total at Sibbald flats, AB, Feb. 2 (JSt); few were noted elsewhere.

Gray Partridge and 25 Sharp-tailed Grouse. An overwintering Am. Coot was another local first at Calgary (m.ob.). The only larid was a first-winter Glaucous Gull at Gardiner Dam Dec. 7-8 (SS, BL).

#### OWLS

Mild weather stimulated at least one of Winnipeg's E. Screech-Owls to call through much of the winter (RS); two E. Screech-Owls were reported near Langenburg, SK (DP, DW). A ♀ Great Horned Owl found injured at Winnipeg Zoo Jan. 6 had been

banded nearby as an adult Dec. 20, 1964 (unless the band had become a family heirloom). Snowy Owl numbers were low, although 16 were found in 30 sq. mi near Olds, AB, Feb. 2 (DH *et al.*).

Six scattered N. Pygmy-Owl reports in the Calgary-Claresholm foothills region were welcome after last year's scarcity (RDi, PS, BSt, JP, JS). Out-of-range Barred Owls were two in the Turner Valley near Calgary (RDi *et al.*, TT) and one in Regina, the city's 3rd, mid-November to at least Jan. 27 (FB). Excellent numbers of Great Gray Owls appeared in s.e. Manitoba for the 2nd successive winter. One-day counts of five to 10 birds were almost routine; an amazing 26 were found Feb. 22 (HC, BN). Single Long-eared Owls were in s.w. Saskatchewan at Cypress Hills PP Dec. 14 (CB, MB) and near White Bear Jan. 22 (SJ). Three Boreal Owls turned up in birders' gardens outside the Manitoban boreal forest at Kleefeld Jan. 12-13 (Ron Dueck, m.ob.), St. Adolphe Jan. 24 (AC, m.ob.), and Stonewall Feb. 15 (KG); a 4th was photographed near Lac du Bonnet in January (BSc). How many more went unseen or unreported?

#### WOODPECKERS TO PASSERINES

An imm. Red-headed Woodpecker at Moose Mountain PP Dec. 19 (RB, GB) was a winter-season first for Saskatchewan; yet again, one adult overwintered at Kleefeld, MB (DF *et al.*). A Red-bellied Woodpecker visited Elie, MB, October to Jan. 4 (LU, RP). Three-toed Woodpeckers were fairly easy to find in the Calgary-area foothills (*vide* RDi) but continued extremely scarce in s.e. Manitoba. Remarkable considering the mild conditions was the scarcity of Horned Larks in s. Alberta (RDi, DBa).

Black-capped Chickadees were abundant throughout the Calgary region (RDi). Thirty Red-breasted Nuthatches headed a mixed-

reported in all 3 provinces in early winter; one at Yorkton, SK, lingered to mid-January (W & DHj, m.ob.). A Brown Thrasher visited a Lethbridge feeder occasionally from Jan. 13 (LSa). Bohemian Waxwings were scarce, especially after December. Small numbers of Cedar Waxwings are almost annual in parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but 2 flocks of 12 and five were very unusual in Calgary in January (RT, NT). Seven N. Shrikes was an exceptional total at Sibbald flats, AB, Feb. 2 (JSt); few were noted elsewhere.

Remarkable but not unprecedented was a

#### S.A.

Phenomenal numbers of N. Hawk Owls made some Manitoban birders wish the winter would last forever (which it usually does up here). Most observations were e. of Winnipeg and s. of Manigotagan, the traditional areas for boreal forest birding and winter owl banding. Birds were widespread, however, north at least to The Pas, Ponton, and Wabowden, with scattered individuals outside the boreal forest at Brandon and Oak L. in the southwest. Altogether 135 birds were banded as of March 12 (PD, JiD, BN, HC); the highest one-day count was 23 on Feb. 29 (BN, HC). With some prior knowledge of their distribution, birds could be found at rates of 10 to 15 per 100 mi, with local concentrations as high as eight in 10 miles. Given the vast tracts of inaccessible country, one can only speculate on the provincial winter population—a few thousand? Farther west, excellent numbers remained in the Hudson Bay area, SK, where over 200 were seen and 70 banded to the end of March (WH). No N. Hawk Owls were reported from w. Saskatchewan; c. Alberta numbers were above average but not spectacular (TT).



Immature gray-morph Gyrfalcon near River Hills, Manitoba, on February 15, 1992. Photograph/Peter Taylor.

Cape May Warbler, sustained by turkey fat at Calgary Dec. 29-Feb. 4 (MD, m.ob., ph.). It was one of three warblers in Calgary, with an "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler on the CBC (IH *et al.*) and a "Myrtle" seen Jan. 15 (JeD, RDU). Alberta's 3rd documented Northern Cardinal was a well-photographed female present since Dec. 14 near Monarch,



Amazingly far north for winter was this Cape May Warbler coming regularly to feed on turkey fat in Calgary, Alberta, in January 1992. Photograph/Richard G. Thomas.

n.w. of Lethbridge (V & MH).

A Savannah Sparrow in Saskatoon for most of December (HL, m.ob.) was probably a Regional winter first. A Fox Sparrow overwintered, also in Saskatoon (SS, HL, m.ob.). Noteworthy were two White-crowned Sparrows in Weyburn, SK (NP, RB, RKr) and one in Winnipeg to at least Feb. 15 (RKO). Four Harris' Sparrows were in Manitoba in December (*vide* RP); individuals wintered at Weyburn (NP, RB, RKr) and Indian Head, SK (LSc). Saskatchewan's first winter-season Chestnut-collared Longspur was photographed near Govenlock Dec. 15 (WH).

Twelve Brewer's Blackbirds were found in s.w. Saskatchewan in December (*vide* WH). A Com. Grackle near Taber, AB, Dec. 28 was a local winter first but was overshadowed by a nearby "grand slam" flock comprising 15



Female Northern Cardinal near Monarch, Alberta, on December 17, 1991. Third confirmed record for the province. Photograph/Lloyd Bennett.

Red-winged, three Yellow-headed, and one Rusty and eight Brewer's blackbirds (all LB).

Well outside their normal Saskatchewan winter range were two Rosy Finches frequenting a feeder at Meadow L., about 100 mi n. of North Battleford (*vide* WH). Pine Grosbeaks were locally common in s. Manitoba and parts of Saskatchewan. A ♂ House Finch visited a Brandon, MB, feeder Dec. 7, Feb. 29, and Mar. 7 (MM). White-winged Crossbills were numerous in the Alberta mountains but generally scarce and erratic elsewhere; Red Crossbills were rarely seen except in and near the Cypress Hills (home to a large-billed form). Common Redpolls were the only broadly distributed and common winter finches, especially in Saskatchewan, whereas Evening Grosbeaks were very spottily distributed.

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## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

David O. Lambeth

When near-zero temperatures followed the Halloween blizzard that swept through this Region, plains people braced for the harsh winter they thought was long overdue. It didn't happen! In fact, the season was widely reported to be the first or second mildest on record. The reservoir at Ft. Peck didn't freeze over for the first time in its history, temperatures in Montana soared to as high as 72 in Miles City January 31, and 74 in Malta February 27, and lakes in northeastern South Dakota opened a month earlier than usual. Except for northeastern North Dakota, snow cover was not retained for long.

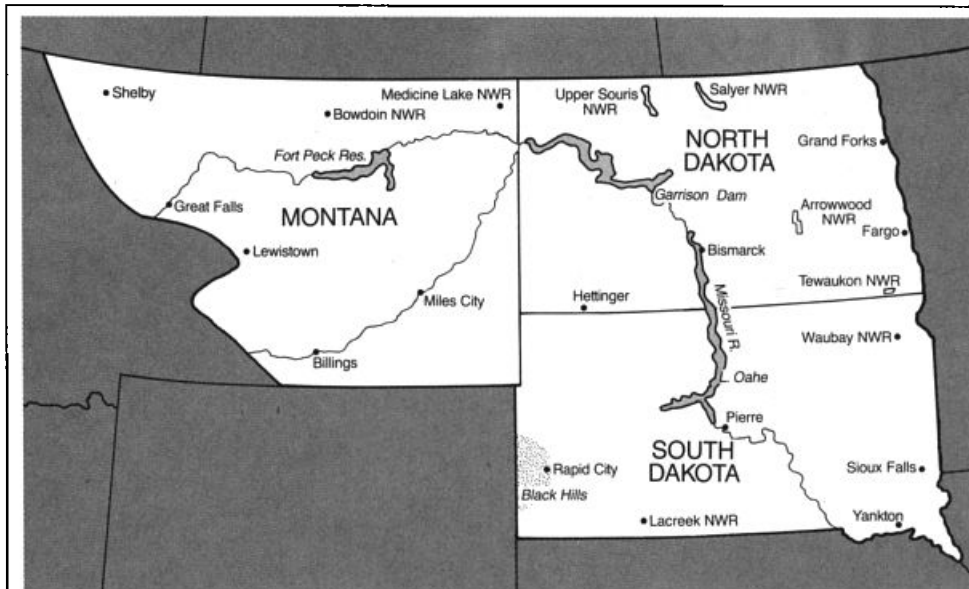
Many observers blamed the early blizzard for the scarcity of semi-hardies—a scarcity that seemed ever more real because the mildness heightened observers' expectations and allowed more intensive birding than usual. Spring migration appeared to be underway as early as February 20 and was particularly evident by the 29th, as the following report will show. Although the numbers of birds were down, a variety of unusual records added interest to the season.

### GREBES TO WATERFOWL

A Horned Grebe was present Jan. 1 at Yellowtail Dam on the s. edge of Montana (WR). Late Great Blue Herons were in Montana near Choteau Dec. 6 (MS), Miles City Dec. 10 (DH), and Yellowtail Dam Jan. 1 (WR), and in *Grand Forks*, ND, Dec. 8 (EF). A Double-crested Cormorant lingered to Dec. 16 in *Yankton*, SD (SVS).

Both Canada Goose and Mallard seemingly wintered wherever water remained open; numbers of each species ranging from a few hundred to several thousand wintered as far north as Chester, Malta, and Fort Peck, MT, and Garrison Dam and Tewaukon N.W.R., ND. Species found unusually late into the period included a Snow Goose in *Grant*, SD, Dec. 18 (LJ); a Ross' Goose in *Brookings*, SD, Jan. 20 (BKH); Redhead to Jan. 1 at Tewaukon (KLN); and **Harlequin Duck** and Red-breasted Merganser found Jan. 11 at Garrison Dam (D & CG). A ♀ Bufflehead wintered at Garrison Dam (GBB, REM). Among the 15 species of waterfowl at Yellowtail Dam, MT, Jan. 1 were one Oldsquaw, four Barrow's Goldeneye, four Hooded Mergansers, and a Ruddy Duck (WR).

Waterfowl were clearly on the move by the end of the period. Observations labelled as earliest ever for South Dakota included a Greater White-fronted Goose in *Turner* Feb. 27 (LRL), Green-winged Teal in *Yankton* Feb. 14 (SVS), and Am. Wigeon in *Yankton* Feb. 3. The 2500 Canada Geese wintering near Chester, MT, became noisy about Feb. 22 and had left by the 29th (HM). Six Tundra Swans appeared at Freezeout Lake



fined. An Eastern was found Jan. 7 at the Cree Crossing on the Milk River near Malta (DP), and an Eastern was heard calling in Billings Jan. 10 (WR). There was only one report of Snowy Owl in Montana, two in South Dakota, and about eight in North Dakota. The strong irruption of **Northern Hawk Owls** in the neighboring regions to the east and north barely spilled over into North Dakota. One was faithful to an area along the Tongue River in *Pembina* Dec. 17 to Feb. 1 (DOL, MJ), and a second was about three miles away on Jan. 1 (REM, GBB). A third Hawk Owl near Munich in late November was adequately described (*vide* MJ); these are the first North Dakota records in a decade. Long-eared

N.W.R., MT, Feb. 22 (MS). In North Dakota, the first Giant Canadas arrived Feb. 28–29 at Salyer Ref., Jamestown Res., and in *Walsh*. Other arrivals at this time included Com. Goldeneye and Com. Mergansers at Tawaukon and Audubon refuges.

#### RAPTORS TO KILLDEER

Up to 40 Bald Eagles were seen along the Missouri River at Ft. Peck (CC) and below Gavins Point Dam in South Dakota (SVS). There seemed to be more observations than usual away from the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. Two N. Harriers wintering in a pasture near Ft. Peck were unusual for that area (CC), and early migrants arrived Feb. 28–29 in North Dakota at the Salyer, Tawaukon, and Lake Nettie refuges. Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported for 2–3 locations in each of the 3 states. Cooper's Hawks were reported for Hettinger, ND, Feb. 8 (DG), and from *Deuel* (BKH) and *Roberts* (KC) in South Dakota. Northern Goshawks were again seen in good numbers and as far south as *Faulk*, SD. Golden Eagles seemed unusually abundant in n. Montana (HM, DP) and a dozen were seen in the area of Hettinger, ND, Jan. 5 (DG).

Merlins may have been moving northward in the Minot area by the end of February (*vide* REM). A Peregrine was observed attacking a Gray Partridge in *Deuel*, SD, Dec. 11 (BKH) and one at Jamestown, ND, Feb. 27 (J & AP) was the earliest ever, if a migrant. **Gyrfalcons** were found Dec. 20 at Freezeout Lake, MT (MS); Jan. 5 at Audubon N.W.R. and Feb. 29 at Lake Nettie N.W.R. (DGP), both in North Dakota; Dec. 28 in *Todd*, SD (RAP, JLP), and Feb. 15 near LaCreek N.W.R. (D & CG). A wintering Prairie Falcon in Grand Forks, ND, was sometimes seen perched on water towers within the city (DOL).

Four Virginia Rails were located in a slough near Park City, MT, Jan. 9 (WR); the species occurs with some regularity there. Killdeer were seen in South Dakota on Feb. 19 in *Meade* (EEM) and Feb. 26 in *Yankton* (SVS).

#### GULLS TO OWLS

Several Ring-billed and 100 Herring gulls wintered at Ft. Peck. California and Glaucous gulls also wintered there with the surprising numbers of 100 Californias present Jan. 9, and 17 Glaucous on Dec. 7 (CC). The best gull of the season was a first-winter **Glaucous-winged Gull** photographed at Ft. Peck Dec. 7 (CC). Farther downstream at Garrison Dam, ND, all gulls left in early January when L. Sakakawea iced over. Two adult Thayer's and four Glaucous Gulls, and an ad. **Black-legged Kittiwake**, were present Dec. 7 (GBB, REM). Another Kittiwake and a Glaucous Gull were found in *Yankton*, SD, Dec. 1 (SVS). A Glaucous Gull was also seen in *Hughes* Feb. 15 (MMM, NRW).

The ranges of Eastern and Western screech-owls in Montana are still being de-

termined. One was identified in *Custer*, SD, Dec. 4 (MJP), and in *Fall River* Dec. 29 (RAP). Except for Christmas Bird Counts, the only report of a Short-eared Owl was of two in *Grand Forks* Dec. 6–Jan. 25 (EF).

#### KINGFISHERS TO WARBLERS

A wintering Belted Kingfisher was quite far north on the Marias R. near Chester, MT (HM). Red-headed Woodpeckers are very unusual in winter in this Region and thus the sightings near Fargo Jan. 1 (L & CF) and in *Meade*, SD, Jan. 5 (NRW) are of interest. Red-bellied Woodpeckers wintered as far north as Fargo (D & ML) and Minot (REM). The markings of a N. Flicker wintering in Wimbledon, ND, strongly resembled a Gilded Flicker (*vide* H. Schlecht), although it was undoubtedly a "hybrid" of the Red-shafted and Yellow-shafted forms.

Several observers commented that Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings were unusually scarce; explanations varied from the open winter allowing widespread dispersal so that they remained unnoticed to the Halloween blizzard driving them southward. A Gray Jay was observed in *Pembina* Dec. 16 (MJ). Blue Jays seemed more numerous than usual with a Feb. 16 count totaling 45 in *Cass* and *Richland*, ND (GEN). A flock of 100 Pinyon Jays was in Billings, MT, Dec. 10 (WR). Black-billed Magpies irrupted southeastward into n.e. South Dakota (DRS). American Crows are increasingly wintering in North Dakota cities. Flocks of 60 near St. Thomas, ND, Dec. 10 (LFM) and 34 near Page Jan. 12 (DLK) were unusual in that they were in open country. While searching for Hawk Owls in *Pembina*, ND, several birding parties found two to four Com. Ravens.

A **Boreal Chickadee** appeared occasionally at a feeder in Rugby, ND (WN). Red-breasted Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets were all low in number. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet in *Pennington*, SD, Feb. 28 (RAP) provided a rare winter record for the state. Eastern Bluebirds



**Glaucous-winged Gull in first-winter plumage at Fort Peck, Montana, on December 7, 1991. Photograph/Charles Carlson.**

were tallied Dec. 16 and Jan. 2 in *Yankton* (SVS). There were three observations of Mountain Bluebirds in South Dakota the last week of February, but one near Grenora Feb. 20 (TN) beat the prior early date for North Dakota by 10 days. So few robins were present in mid-winter that the five widely scattered observations in North Dakota Feb. 25–29 may all have been of migrants. A Townsend's Solitaire regularly visited a waterer in Fort Peck (CC). A Varied Thrush was in *Pennington*, SD, Feb. 20 (*fide* NRW), and a Brown Thrasher was observed Christmas Day in *Brown*, SD (DAT).

Although some observers saw flocks of Bohemian Waxwings numbering in the hundreds, most flocks were transient and the species was absent from large areas. Cedar Waxwings were more often seen than Bohemians. A Yellow-rumped Warbler, casual in winter, was seen Dec. 28 in *Yankton*, SD (SVS).

#### CARDINAL TO FINCHES

Northern Cardinals wintered in Hoople, Grand Forks, and Fargo, ND. A Rufous-sided Towhee was found as late as Jan. 6 in Two Moon Park in Billings (WR). At least 15 Am. Tree Sparrows wintered in Ft. Peck, the most ever (CC). A Field Sparrow near Arthur, ND, Jan. 18 was well described (MO) and provided the 2nd winter record for the state. South Dakota also had Field Sparrows, Jan. 16 in *Yankton* (SVS) and Feb. 29 at Sand Lake N.W.R. (JCS). The three or more Song Sparrows wintering and visiting the refuge feeder at Tewaukon provided about the 4th winter record for North Dakota (KLN). The numbers of "crowned" sparrows was perhaps lower than usual. Observations included wintering White-throateds in Minot (REM) and Fargo (RHO), two White-throateds in Billings Jan. 10 (WR), a White-crowned in *Roberts*, SD, Dec. 21 to Jan. 12 (BB), a Harris' Sparrow in *Roberts* Dec. 2 (BB) and one in *Pennington* Feb. 2 (NRW).

Red-winged and Rusty blackbirds were also very scarce this winter. A Brewer's Blackbird was identified in *Deuel*, SD, Dec. 28 (BKH, GS). Not many Brown-headed Cowbirds are seen in winter in this Region so the flocks of 60 and 70 in *Deuel*, SD, Jan. 1 (BKH, MB) are worth mentioning. Late W. Meadowlarks were seen Dec. 5 & 31 in Grand Forks, ND (EF). Western Meadowlarks near Miles City Feb. 19 (DT) and Froid, MT, Feb. 29 (TN) may have been migrants. A W. Meadowlark wintered near Chester, MT, where it sang during warm periods (HM).

A Rosy Finch was very far east in *Brown*, SD, Dec. 11 where it was photographed (ECM). Pine Grosbeaks were reported only from North Dakota, in *Pembina* and *McHenry*. Cassin's Finches were found in South Dakota in *Pennington* (NRW) and *Meade* (*fide* EEM). How House Finches will stand up to one of our harsher winters remains to be determined. At least some re-



**The invasion of Northern Hawk Owls to neighboring regions barely reached the Northern Great Plains. This one was in Pembina County, North Dakota, on January 1, 1992. Photograph/Gordon B. Berkey.**

mained in the same cities where they were found last summer and fall. A flock of 100 at Woodlawn Cemetery in *Minnehaha*, SD, Dec. 15 is the largest ever reported for this Region (JL).

White-winged Crossbills were observed only in Minot (REM), Denbigh Experimental Forest (GGB), and in *Pembina* (MO). The only report of Red Crossbill was for a flock of 10 near Billings Jan. 16 (WR). The finch of the winter was Common Redpoll. Many feeders had 50 or more, and flocks of several hundred occurred in sunflower fields. In South Dakota, 1070 Commons and six Hoarys were banded at one station in *Brown* (DAT), and 322 Commons were banded in *Day* (DRS). Hoary Redpolls were generally reported in low numbers except for the 32 in Minot Dec. 29 (REM) and 10 in Fargo Dec. 15 (PWA). Pine Siskins were present in only a few locations, and the only Evening Grosbeaks reported were six in Rugby, ND (WN). American Goldfinches wintered at several locations in North Dakota and Montana.

**Area Editors (boldface) and cited observers:** MONTANA: Charles Carlson, Dale Hanson, Harriet Marble, Ted Nordhagen, Dwain Prellwitz, William Roney, Michael Schwitters, Dale Tribby. NORTH DAKOTA: Peter W. Aschbacher, Gordon B. Berkey, Larry & Carol Falk, Eve Freeberg, Dave & Carolyn Griffith, Mike Jacobs, Donald L. Kubischta, David O. Lambeth, Donald & Mary Lamb, Laura F. Mitchell, Ron E. Martin, Gary E. Nielsen, Wanda Nielsen, Kristine L. Nelson, Mark Otnes, Robert H. O'Connor, David G. Potter, Jeff & Amy Price. SOUTH DAKOTA: Barbara Bernstein, Marlin Bjerke, Ken Cameron, Bruce K. Harris, Leon Jurgens, Jon Little, Lester L. Lauritzen, Ernest E. Miller, Everett C. Montgomery, Michael M. Melius, Jaunita L. Peterson, Marge J. Parker, Richard A. Peterson, Dennis R. Skadsen, Gary Stava, Jerry C. Stanford, Steve Van Sickle, Dan A. Tallman, Nathaniel R. Whitney.—DAVID O. LAMBETH, 1909 20th Avenue S., Grand Forks, ND 58201.

## SOUTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION

*Joseph A. Grzybowski*

Winter in the Region began with the eventful ice and snow storms of Halloween. However, the rest of the season was generally more mild and wet than normal throughout, and by February, the spring rush was being felt. The impact of that single autumn storm may have been quite dramatic on some species of landbirds, as the numbers of passerines reported on many Christmas Counts was much lower than in previous years. Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Savannah Sparrows may have been particularly affected. However, birds needing open water found it plentiful throughout the Region this winter.

It was only a modest year for Cedar Waxwings in the Region. Kansas observers thought sapsuckers were rare; in central Oklahoma they were up. David Rintoul writes that Accipiters made a good showing in Kansas, which may explain their poor showing in central Oklahoma. Pine Siskins were scarce again everywhere. Overall, there was a lot more to say about waterbirds than landbirds this year.

#### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

It must be "loon magic," but the past 2 years have seen a lot of loon records. This winter, the two best "scoops" were in Oklahoma. The Pacific Loon reported in November from *Washington*, OK, was last observed Dec. 2 (SM). Detailed written documentation was provided for Oklahoma's 2nd Yellow-billed Loon record, Jan. 11 at Grand Lake Dam, *Mayes* (DV).

With a mild winter, some birds would be expected to winter farther north. Among such were three Com. Loons in *Geary*, KS, Jan. 25 (DLS), one in *Oklahoma* Jan. 1–2 (EK *et al.*), and 39 on L. Tenkiller, *Sequoyah/Cherokee*, OK, Feb. 1 (MM). Also in this category were Eared Grebes in *Mayes*, OK, Jan. 11 (MMI), *Douglas*, KS, Feb. 2 (LM, GP) & 16 (PJ), *Linn*, KS, Feb. 3 (CH), and *Cherokee*, OK, Feb. 19 (MMI) & 29 (JW).

Grebes are not to be left out of the "magic" of the past few seasons. An imm. Red-necked Grebe in *Oklahoma* was independently discovered by 2 groups of observers Jan. 1 (EK, VBe, JF) & 2 (JAG, JGN), and provided the first documented record for Oklahoma. A Clark's Grebe detected in *Miami*, KS, Nov. 10 was last seen Jan. 29 (CH, LM).

Several Am. White Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants successfully wintered in *Lincoln*, NE (RCR, DJR), and scattered records occurred for sites across Kansas and Oklahoma. Eight pelicans were seen in *Harlan*, NE, Dec. 14 (JJ), and by Feb. 29, 35 were already present there (RCR, DJR). The 40–50 noted in *Russell*, KS, Feb. 27 (MR) were also likely migrants.

Great Egrets lingered until Dec. 11 in

Wagoner, OK (JM, JN), and Dec. 15 in Bryan, OK (JWe). Black-crowned Night-Herons are not frequently reported in winter anymore. Thus, one or two immatures in Oklahoma were noteworthy (JGN).

Tundra Swans were observed in Carter, OK, Dec. 25 (BF), and Riley, KS, Jan. 26 (LM, GP). A tagged Trumpeter Swan from Minnesota appeared in Madison, NE, Jan. 30 (MB). Unfortunately, four of the five Trumpeters wintering on Webster Res., Rooks, KS, were shot by vandals (*vide* LM). An immature was identified in Jefferson, KS, Feb. 20 (JB, RR). Greater White-fronted Geese arrived Feb. 15 in Lincoln, NE, earlier than recorded before (RCR, DJR). American Black Ducks, a species of concern, were noted at Mitchell, KS, Dec. 15 (MR, SS), Lancaster, NE, Dec. 16 & 21 (BP, LP, JT), and Linn, KS, Jan. 11 (LM, GP).

A few Greater Scaup were reported from Kansas and Oklahoma, mostly in February. Seven sightings of up to 12 Oldsquaws were received for the Region. Surf Scoters were observed in Keith, NE, Dec. 18 and Lincoln, NE, Dec. 20 (SD, RS). A ♂ **Barrow's Goldeneye** was found and photographed Feb. 16 & 18 in Pawnee, OK (SM, m.ob.). The high count of Hooded Merganser for the season was of 135 in Coffey, KS, Jan. 19 (*vide* LM). Common Mergansers wintered more commonly in Nebraska and Kansas than Oklahoma, with 11,500 estimated in Russell, KS, Dec. 10 (MR).

#### RAPTORS TO JAEGERS

Early were two Turkey Vultures in Anderson, KS, Feb. 18 (BB). A lingering Osprey was photographed in Oklahoma, OK, Dec. 15 (MO). Bald Eagles were reported across the Region. Up to 57 were found in Harlan, NE, Feb. 29 (RCR, DJR), and over 100 were noted on the Platte R. Feb. 9 (TJ). The number of Bald Eagle nest sites in Kansas has increased to 3. The pair at Douglas, KS, began incubating Feb. 24 (*vide* LM).

Three reports of N. Goshawks were received from Nebraska (*vide* BP), two from Kansas (*vide* LM), although David Rintoul commented that they were more common in e. Kansas. Golden Eagles were noted east to Lincoln, NE, Dec. 18 (SD, RS), Knox, NE, Jan. 5 (MB), and Shawnee, KS, Dec. 28 (DG). Merlin and Prairie Falcon reports were up. Peregrines were noted in Butler, KS, Dec. 17 (PJ), Grant, OK, Jan. 29 (L & GL), and Anderson, KS, Feb. 7 (BB). One wintering in downtown Tulsa was monitored almost daily (m.ob.). A dark-morph Gyrfalcon was carefully studied in Sheridan, NE, Jan. 16 (DJR).

Can a Virginia Rail make it through a Nebraska winter? One seen Feb. 16 in Garden



apparently did (RCR, DJR). A Sora was at least tardy in Comanche, OK, Dec. 21 (KB). Sandhill Cranes appeared on the North Platte by Feb. 8 (RCR, DJR). Three lingered in Shawnee, KS, Dec. 28 (DG). Among other tardy or lingering individuals were a Long-billed Dowitcher Dec. 21 in Comanche, OK (KB), and a Spotted Sandpiper Jan. 24 in Marshall, OK (JWe). Killdeer arrived in Sedgwick, KS, Feb. 10 (PJ).

Fun, exciting, and always controversial is the problem of identifying jaegers. One immature noted Dec. 14–17 at Conestoga L., Lancaster, NE, was considered a Pomarine (JG, TL, m.ob.). Of two imm. jaegers at Milford L., Geary, KS, Dec. 25–Jan. 8 (DLS, m.ob.), one dark-morph bird was generally conceded as a Pomarine, while arguments will continue over the identity of the second.

#### GULLS

As is usually the case during the winter season, gulls and more gulls were the main



**Male Barrow's Goldeneye in Pawnee County, Oklahoma, on February 16, 1992. Photograph/Steve Metz.**

venue. Laughing Gulls, almost never recorded in winter, were observed Dec. 13–14 in Cherokee, OK (JM), and at the Dennison Dam of L. Texoma Dec. 27 (JD) and Jan. 1 (GL *et al.*). A Franklin's Gull in Riley, KS, Dec. 10 (CF) may have been tardy, while two in Geary, KS, Feb. 16 (DLS) may have been early migrants; all may have wintered, as did one to two in Tulsa, and probably one noted Jan. 18 in McIntosh, OK (VB).

Happy occasions were observations of **Little Gulls** Dec. 9 in Harvey, KS (BD), Feb. 21 in Sequoyah, OK (JCH), and Feb. 22 & 29 at Cherokee, OK (DV, JW). The two Oklahoma records are among only five for the state. Better still was the first documented **Common Black-headed Gull** for Oklahoma, photographed Feb. 1–2 in Cherokee (JW, DV *et al.*); a second was in Sequoyah Feb. 21–22 (JCH), cavorting with a Little Gull, among other gulls. While California Gulls appear to be increasing in the Region, observations of 15 birds Dec. 18 and 46 Dec. 19 on L. McConaughy, NE (RS, DS), were exceptional. Single birds were noted at locales in Kansas including Russell Dec. 14 (MR, SS), Barton Jan. 1 (SS), Kingman Jan. 6 (PJ, DVn, DK), Geary Feb. 1 (DLS), and Sedgwick Feb. 23 (DK). Three adults were in Lincoln, NE, Feb. 15 (RCR, DJR).

The Iceland Gull at Gavin's Point Dam, Cedar, NE, reported in the fall was last observed Dec. 1 (BH). Another was reported Jan. 11–12 in Lancaster (BP, LP, LE). Both are under review by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee. The Kansas folks sure aren't afraid to identify Thayer's Gulls, including adults and 2nd-winter birds. At least 16 individuals were reported this season. One purported Thayer's photographed in Oklahoma turned out to be a pale Herring Gull. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull in Oklahoma Dec. 17 (MO) may have been the same bird now observed there for 8 consecutive winters; a bird in Lancaster, NE, Feb. 16–23 (JH *et al.*) was exceptional. Reports of Glaucous Gulls appear to be increasing with at least three noted from Nebraska, at least seven from Kansas. Perhaps the "scoop" of the season was a sight record of an imm. **Great Black-backed Gull** Feb. 10 in Sedgwick, KS (PJ, DV). What would a (recent) winter be without at least one Black-legged Kittiwake? One was observed Dec. 1 in Cedar, NE (BH).

With Ring-billed Gulls dominating winter gull numbers, undoubtedly some representing the far extremes of plumage and size variation could also be seen. A likely candidate and subject of debate was photographed in Riley, KS, Dec. 4 (DR), and hopefully will provide wisdom for gull enthusiasts wishing for a Mew Gull in the Region, even if it re-





**This gull in Riley County, Kansas, on December 4, 1991, inspired much debate. Mew Gull was suggested as a possible identification, but some aspects of plumage suggested that it could be a runt Ring-billed Gull with a deformed bill. Photograph/David Rintoul.**

mains unidentified. One extreme of the Ring-billed may look very much like a Mew Gull, as shown in *AB* 45: 506 (Fall 1991).

#### OWLS TO THRUSHES

A Snowy Owl report! They have been nonexistent in recent history. Thus, one in *Phelps*, NE, Dec. 30 (RH) and another from *Coffey*, KS, Jan. 15-29 (*fide* LM) were exceptional. A Barred Owl in *Knox*, NE, Jan. 5 (MB) represented a first for the county. A N. Saw-whet Owl wintered Jan. 12-Feb. 29 in *Washington*, NE (BP *et al.*). Another was found Feb. 28 in *Sarpy*, NE (DB, RB), and at least two present from Jan. 11 on in *Jefferson*, KS (*fide* LM) provided pleasure for many birders traveling to see them. Long-eared and Short-eared owls, plentiful last winter in Kansas, were much less numerous this season (*fide* LM).

Several E. Phoebe's wintered in *Cleveland*, OK (PM, MH). One in *Tulsa* Feb. 22 (TM *et al.*) may have been the first of several migrants arriving on sites in the Region before the end of the period. Late were four Barn Swallows Dec. 7 in *Tulsa* (PS, JL). Horned Lark numbers were down in Nebraska, but not in Kansas. Scott Seltman observed one Horned Lark flock of several hundred thousand which may have covered 300 acres in *Cheyenne*, KS, and also contained about 50,000 Lapland Longspurs.

Wintering in Nebraska can often be risky for some species, but not this year. A Winter Wren seen Feb. 27-28 in *Sarpy* (AG, JA) and a Hermit Thrush in *Thomas*, NE, Feb. 19 (MB) made it. Mountain Bluebirds wintered in areas scattered over the western third of the Region. Six hundred in *Barber*, KS, made the high count (BG). Townsend's Solitaires

were noted east to *Jefferson*, KS, Jan. 11 (JLe). A very elusive Varied Thrush was observed only 3 times from Jan. 2 to Feb. 18 in *Scott*, KS (R & CF).

#### SHRIKES TO FINCHES

At least six N. Shrikes cruised e. Nebraska (*fide* BP). Loggerhead Shrikes in *Douglas*, NE, Dec. 19 (SB) and *Sanders*, NE, Jan. 25 (BJR) were unusual but carefully studied.

The Bohemian Waxwings reported from *Stafford*, KS, Dec. 20 (DR) and *Cowley*, KS, Jan. 19 (GW) & 27 (MT) were among only a handful for the last few years. A Com. Yellowthroat risked the vagaries of weather in *Geary*, KS, during December (DLS). Possibly an early migrant was a Rufous-sided Towhee in *Gosper*, NE, Feb. 28 (RCR, DJR).

It was a mixed bag on sparrows. White-crowned Sparrows were more common than usual in n.w. Nebraska (RCR, DJR). A Grasshopper Sparrow in *Comanche* Dec. 21 was among few winter records for Oklahoma (JAG, MH). Lapland Longspur numbers were down in n.w. Nebraska (RCR, DJR). A Vesper Sparrow in *Scott*, KS, may have wintered (T & SSh).

This was hardly a big season for Red Crossbills, even in n.w. Nebraska. Pine Siskins continued to show very poorly. Ditto for Purple Finches. But House Finches are present across the Region. As Pete Janzen put it, "the invasion thrill is gone." American Goldfinch numbers were up, and at least 250 Com. Redpolls were in *Lincoln*, NE, Dec. 18 (SD, RS). Five redpolls made it to Kansas, but just one got as far south as *Kay*, OK (L & GL). A Lesser Goldfinch Jan. 19 in *Scott*, KS, was quite unusual (T & SSh).

**Observers:** (Area editors boldfaced)—KANSAS: Bill Brecheisen, Joanne Brier, Bob Dester, Robert & Kathy Fenton, Clyde Ferguson, Dan Gish, Bob Gress, Chris Hobbs, **Pete Janzen**, **Dan Kilby**, Dan LaSelle, Jane Leo (JLe), LLOYD Moore, Galen Pittman, Mike Rader, **David Rintoul**, Richard Rucker, Scott Seltman, Tom & Sara Shane, Max Thompson, Don Vannoy (DVn), Gerald Wiens. NEBRASKA: Jim Alt, Roland Barth, Duane Bright, Mark Brogie, Steve Dinsmore, Larry Einemann, Alan Grenon, Joseph Gubanyi, Jeff Hall, Robin Harding, Bill Huser, Todd Jenson, Joel Jorgensen, Tom Labeledz, **Babs Padelford**, Loren Padelford, Dorothy J. Rosche, **Richard C. Rosche**, B.J. Rose, Ross Silcock, Jerry Toll. OKLAHOMA: Vic Bell (VBe), Vicki Byre, Ken Butts, Jon Dunn, Judy Flannifan, Brush Freeman, Joseph A. Grzybowski, James C. Hoffman, Mark Howery, Esther Key, Greg Lasley, Lloyd & Glenda Leslie, Elsie & Judith Logan, **Jo Loyd**, **Jeri McMahan**, Steve Metz, Terry Mitchell, Mike Mlodinow (MML), Pat Muzny, **John G. Newell**, Jim Norman, Mitchell Oliphant, Pat Seibert, Don Varner (DVa), Don Verser, Jeff Webster (JWe), Jay Withgott, Jim Woodard (JWo).—**JOSEPH A. GRZYBOWSKI**, 1701 Lenox, Norman, OK 73069.



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# TEXAS REGION

Greg W. Lasley and Chuck Sexton

And we quote: "Wow!" Our contributors were inspired to dust off their superlatives and announce that Texas birding was back in top form. Forget what we said about the previous fall having substantial rainfall; this winter was ridiculously wet. Here in Austin we became somewhat self-absorbed with our all-time record rainfall for December and February, and the season as a whole. Only later did we recognize that most of the state was similarly submerged. But not everywhere. Seyffert set the record straight: December in the Panhandle was wet, but January and February were not. "It pains us to read of all the rain falling downstate. It's too bad water can't run uphill once in a while!" Many observers remarked that waterfowl often seemed sparse or at least well dispersed, presumably because of the abundance of suitable habitat. Lush growth of upland habitats such as tall-grass prairies may have attracted and supported large numbers of birds locally, but as with aquatic habitats there often seemed to be much excellent habitat with too few birds to go around.

It was also a mild winter everywhere. Freezing weather was infrequent and had notably little effect on birdlife. After the rainfall, the lack of cold weather was perhaps the most potent factor shaping avian distribution. Lingering flycatchers, warblers, and seedeaters in the brush along the Rio Grande in west Texas have become almost routine; we will have to compare these results with those from harsher winters (hopefully, with equivalent observer coverage) to be able to

generalize on patterns of distribution. There was no significant movement of irruptive montane or northern species; siskins and Purple Finches were generally regarded as sparser than normal. Robins and waxwings mainly congregated in the berry-rich central and eastern portions of the state but exhibited much local and seasonal shifting as is often the case.

Actually many individuals were able to describe environmental conditions and the wintering avifauna all across the state quite well as a result of having chased hither and yon to catch up to an absurdly dispersed set of rare birds. There were so many rarities reported "routinely" on bird alerts (and/or by word of mouth) that very often the information on first dates or original observers was lost along the way. If this information was not specifically conveyed to us, we were often left guessing. Our apologies to anyone slighted by our confusion. On the political front, upon the request of the Hanna High School Ecology Club, the Brownsville City Commission named the Red-crowned Parrot the "city bird"; remarks by Brownsville's mayor recognized the species' contribution to tourism.

On a sadder note, we defer to Paul Palmer for a bit of news. "We have lost the company of a great lady, Kay McCracken, the doyenne of south Texas birders, who died in February. It has been noted that the only feathered beings in the universe are birds and angels. Kay must feel right at home now, learning the field marks and songs of archangels, cherubim, and seraphim, but her earth-bound friends miss her very much." We also lost our good friend Steve Hanselmann of San Antonio in February. We dedicate this column to the memory of these two special people.

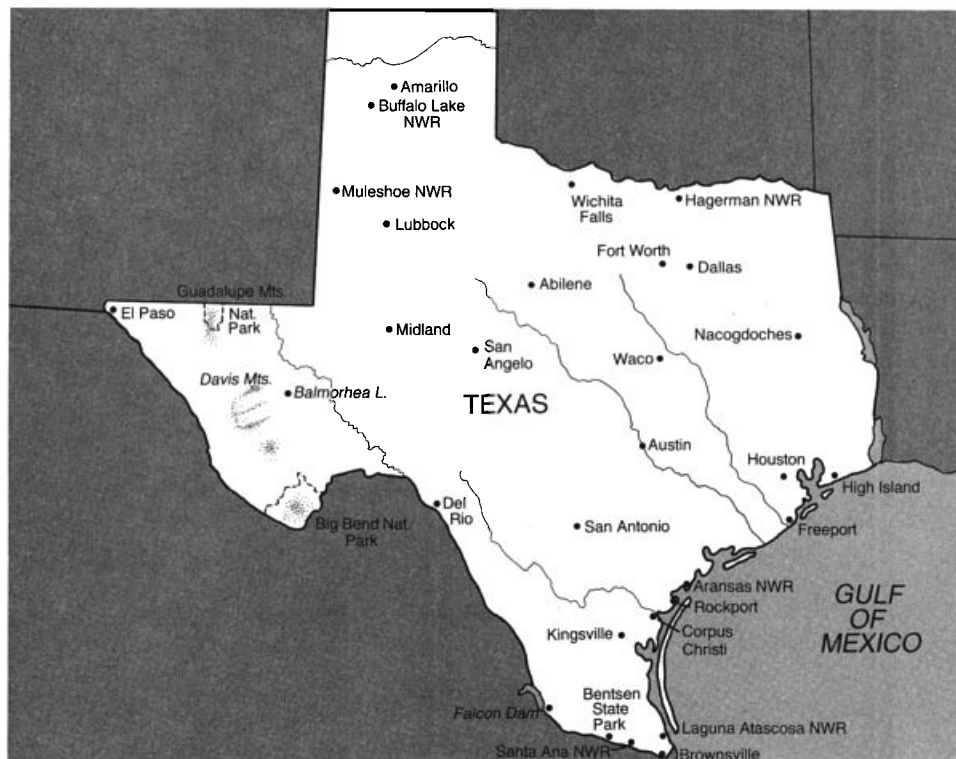
**Abbreviations:** GMNP (*Guadalupe Mountains NP*); LOP (*Lake O' the Pines*); LRGV (*Lower Rio Grande Valley*); TBRC (*Texas Bird Records Committee—Texas Ornithological Society*); UTC (*Upper Texas Coast*). The following are shortened names for the respective county, state, or national parks, wildlife refuges, etc.: Anahuac, Anzalduas, Aransas, Bentsen, Big Bend, Brazoria, Kickapoo, Laguna Atascosa, and Santa Ana.

## LOONS

One observer described this as a "very loony" season—pun intended. On L. Texoma, two Red-throated Loons returned Dec. 20 to an area they had visited annually since 1985 (HG, DHa). Though they disappeared the next day, they returned Feb. 24–Mar. 14 (HG, ph. MP). The hotbed of "loon-acy," however, was LOP in n.e. Texas. After a Red-throated turned up on their CBC Jan. 1 (†KN), converging birders scoured LOP and began a classic Patagonia picnic table effect. Although the huge lake often seemed "difficult to bird," one or two (possibly even three) Red-throated were reported periodically to Feb. 19 (†KN, m.ob.; compare with the L. Texoma dates!). Lured by the super-rarity mentioned next, 2 observers detected a Pacific Loon Jan. 13 (†PH, HBl), resighted irregularly through Feb. 16 (m.ob.). Never satisfied to let well enough alone, Jon Dunn topped off a superb Texas trip by stopping at LOP on his way home to tick off Red-throated Loon for his Texas list. He didn't. All he and Sue Utterbeck could find was a **Yellow-billed Loon** (†JD, †SU). If accepted by the TBRC, this would be the 2nd Texas record. The bird, however, proved the most elusive of the lake's loons, being resighted only at great distance Jan. 14 (†PH, †KN) and possibly again Jan. 16 (DW). We must mention that LOP did not hoard all the rare loons: another Red-throated was reported Feb. 7 at L. Tawakoni (†GBc, RK *et al.*; compare this date with those above!). Other Pacifics were reported at San Antonio Dec. 7 (WS), Galveston Dec. 24–Feb. 12 (two birds; m.ob.), and L. Worth in Tarrant Jan. 4–7 (ph. MR, †CH *et al.*).

## GREBES TO WATERFOWL

Horned Grebes were more numerous than usual everywhere, with a notable 140 at LOP Jan. 30 (AW). A Red-necked Grebe was described at Laguna Atascosa Jan. 23 (TU, ST), a species still not photographed in Texas. A smattering of W. Grebes indicated a widespread movement across the state, including unusual reports at LOP, L. Waco, L. Buchanan, and in *Hays*, most reports in late December–late January. In w. Texas, away from Balmorhea L. where the mixed *Aechmophorus* pair continued to hang out together, a



Clark's Grebe was reported at Red Bluff, L., Dec. 3 (A & MC). A Sooty Shearwater was studied from shore at the mouth of the Rio Grande Jan. 6 (†JD, m.ob.). The most notable pelican records were an Am. White at Lubbock Dec. 9–11 (CSt) and a Brown that wintered at Calaveras L. in San Antonio (WS). A Neotropic Cormorant at Balmorhea L. Jan. 27–28 was noteworthy (PI), as was a Magnificent Frigatebird Dec. 19 at Aransas Pass (E & NA). A White Ibis lingered at LOP until Jan. 13, quite unusual for n.e. Texas (NETFO).

A remarkable 19 Tundra Swans were reported around the state, although there may have been some duplication. The most interesting swan locations were at GMNP Dec. 23–Feb. 3 (first park record; ML, AW, BL); in *Briscoe* Dec. 6–8 (first county record; BPO); and near Ricardo Dec. 26 (first *Kleberg* report in nearly 3 decades, *fide* PP). Ross' Geese continued to be more numerous or conspicuous in their normal range; highest counts were 17 on Jan. 9 in *Bee* (WS) and 62 near Eagle L. Jan. 30 (JDo). Impressive regionally were three Ross' and 166 Canada Geese at Ft. Hancock, *Hudspeth*, Feb. 11 (BZ).

A pair of Am. Black Ducks was thoroughly described from Anahuac (Feb. 23–25; John & Jana Whittle, †GDL); documentation is being sought for another Black Duck reported shot near Smith Point in December (*fide* TPWD). Luckner properly points out the difficulty in confirming this species in Texas in recent years, although the species (or, rather, birds with apparent Am. Black Duck genome) are still present in modest numbers as close as c. Arkansas (*fide* JD). Birders should also be aware of the mixture of dark Mallard-group ducks in the Falcon Dam area. The ranges of Mottled Duck and "Mexican" Mallard overlap there; the two area often seen in mixed flocks. An occasional drake of the latter species may show substantial true Mallard plumage.

A Eur. Wigeon in *Jones* late February–Mar. 2 was the only one reported (TEd, m.ob.). Greater Scaup and Oldsquaw were both more numerous than usual. There were 2 Trans-Pecos reports of the former where the species is casual and at least 9 of the latter scattered across the state. A Surf Scoter was a rare find at LOP Jan. 18 (KN). A single White-winged Scoter on the LOP CBC was joined by a 2nd by Jan. 3 (D & LB); the two were viewed through the month. The best waterfowl record of the season goes to the drake *Barrow's Goldeneye* discovered at an Oxy Chemical settling basin in LaPorte Dec. 4 (LL, BH) and subsequently viewed by hundreds through Dec. 31 (ph. GDL, GL, etc.). This is the 2nd documented state record. We are grateful to Oxy Chemical for their hospitality toward the many visiting birders.

#### RAPTORS

In the unusually lush Marfa Basin grasslands, the raptor diversity was sensational. It is almost easier to name what *did not* show up

#### S.A.

While driving through w. Texas, Pat Hartigan stopped w. of Marfa Jan. 2 to scan for Prairie Falcons. He was surprised to fix his gaze on an unbanded ad. Aplomado Falcon, conveniently perched on a wire just n. of U.S. 90. Hartigan dutifully wrote some notes and made a quick sketch. He included these in a letter to Sexton that arrived in Austin Jan. 13. Within hours of the letter's arrival, the birding network was abuzz across the state and the continent. Jim Dowdell was the first to get back to the site on Jan. 14 and had the incredible good fortune to refind the bird precisely where Hartigan had left it nearly 2 weeks earlier. Through the end of the period, the bird had been viewed by hundreds of observers, photographed, and discussed at length. We feel that the most conservative interpretation of the evidence suggests a wild, naturally occurring individual. Sightings of free-flying, unbanded birds have been made recently in New Mexico and c. Chihuahua within the n. portion of the species' historical range. Dean Keddy-Hector, biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and an Aplomado expert, emphasized the difficulty of detection of the species even in known localities due to its sedentariness and the inaccessibility of most of its habitat (witness the vast square miles of potential habitat into which the Marfa bird could and *would* disappear in minutes). Keddy-Hector hypothesizes that rather than being completely extirpated from its historical range, as has been commonly asserted, the species simply fell below a detectable population level in the sparsely birded n. portions of its range. The "reappearance" of Aplomados is more easily explained by new detection (perhaps accompanied by recent recolonization movements) of these sparsely dispersed individuals rather than invoking hacked birds chewing off metal bands and moving 700 mi into unfamiliar terrain, or saltating the length of Mexico from their better-known haunts in the Veracruz region. The debate will undoubtedly endure. We wish the falcon good fortune and Godspeed at attracting a mate! We also thank Superintendent Kelly Bryan at Davis Mountains SP for acting as a superlative point-of-contact for many birders visiting far w. Texas (let's also give proper geographic credit to Valentine, TX, the nearest metropolis to the Aplomado haunts!).

rather than what *did*. How about an ad. Bald Eagle perched precariously on top of a yucca in perfect Prairie Falcon habitat! How about too many N. Harriers to count! How about *five* species of falcons! The rodent and songbird (e.g., longspur) foodbase for these hungry hunters must have been incredible. See the S.A. for an account of the prima donna at the center of all this fuss. Elsewhere, raptors



**Oldsquaw at Bachman Lake, Dallas, Texas, in February 1992. More Oldsquaws than usual reached Texas this winter. Photograph/Bob Stone.**

did not go unnoticed. A remarkable roost of up to 112 Black-shouldered Kites was noted in early winter in *Cameron* (AM); at the opposite end of the state two to three Black-shouldered were discovered s. of Vernon Feb. 8–9, for a first *Wilbarger* report (DMc, NM, m.ob.). A Com. Black-Hawk was photographed Jan. 3 at Anzalduas (ph., †JD). Four other reports for the LRGV along the Rio Grande lacked details. Gray Hawks, predominantly immatures, were widespread and conspicuous at common LRGV birding haunts; we could not readily compile the number of separate individuals reported. Of special note was a possible imm. Gray Hawk described from *Kenedy* Feb. 29 (†MA). Two Broad-winged Hawks in San Antonio Jan. 31 could only be considered very early migrants (SAAS). A well-described ad. Swainson's Hawk in *Ft. Bend* Feb. 2 (BHg) may have overwintered or may have been an early arrival. Both Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks were more numerous and commonly reported. A Ferruginous in the woodlands of *Delta* in n.e. Texas "defies explanation" (MWh, G & JL; an imm. Golden Eagle was there the same day). A rufous-morph Red-tailed in *Hunt* Jan. 25 was also an eyecatcher (PP, MR *et al.*). At least one banded Aplomado Falcon was periodically reported at the Brownville dump, not far from their hacking site at Laguna Atoscosa. Another banded Aplomado was more of a surprise at *Falfurrias* Feb. 14 (†HE, †AO).

#### QUAIL TO TERNS

A few Gambel's Quail were reported in the n. part of the Big Bend; these may represent an expansion of the species' range or some released birds. The Whooping Crane flock at Aransas peaked at 132 (124 adults and eight juveniles). From observations of crane mortality patterns in recent years, Stehn theorizes that the low salinities in the bays from the abundant rainfall may somehow benefit the cranes through its effect on the food base.

An Am. Avocet was at Balmorhea L., Dec. 15 & 25 (ML, BHa), while a Black-necked Stilt stayed the season in *El Paso* (a first winter record for the area; BJ). There were 4 reports of a total of six Solitary Sandpipers the length of the state in December; quite unusual. One Solitary at Bentsen Jan. 23 (JDo)

and another in e. Ft. Worth Feb. 15 (JCu *et al.*) may have overwintered locally. Very rarely are W. Sandpipers found in the dead of winter in n.c. Texas; one was spotted Jan. 31 in e. Ft. Worth (JWS). Two Dunlin also overwintered in that region. Unusually far south, Am. Woodcocks were reported 4 times at Santa Ana in December (*vide* JI). Also notable in midwinter were Wilson's Phalaropes in w. Harris Jan. 12 (T & PF) and at 2 locations in coastal s. Texas in late December.

This was apparently an extraordinary jaeger winter. Twenty-one Pomarines were reported Dec. 20–Feb. 18, mostly along the s. Texas coast, the largest bunch being eight at Boca Chica Feb. 12 (AW, BL). Nine Parasitics were seen Jan. 8–Feb. 16 at various coastal vantage points. Such numbers are unprecedented.

And now to gulls. A few Laughing Gulls remained inland at widely scattered spots (e.g., L. Texoma, Ft. Worth, San Antonio, San Ygnacio) in January after last fall's influx. Reports of a "Com. Black-headed Gull" at L. Waco inspired observers to study the odd gull very carefully Dec. 1–8 (JMu, †CS, m.ob.). The bird displayed the upperwing pattern of a Bonaparte's/Black-headed, but size, structure, mantle color, and other aspects approached those of Franklin's Gull. A hybrid origin is suspected, but of what parentage? A Franklin's Gull hybrid with either of the aforementioned smaller gulls would be an unprecedented and odd event. By the way, a *real* Com. Black-headed was photographed at L. Waco in winter 1989–90. We had 3 well-documented Little Gull reports: an adult returned to L. Waco Dec. 1–Jan. 10 (JMu, FB, m.ob.); another adult was at Wright Patman L. near Texarkana Jan. 29 (AW, BL); and a 2nd-winter bird was on Mustang I. Jan. 12 (Jmu, FB, PP, MR). Dates on the ad. Little Gulls are of interest. Despite the state's huge size, it is tempting to ponder if observers are occasionally bumping into the same bird as it wanders around the state. The odds of such double detections, while slim, may not be as remote as we might surmise.

Six California Gulls constitute more than a normal number. They included two separate birds on N. Padre I. Dec. 24 and Jan. 30 (A & MC); another at Port Aransas Dec. 25 (A & MC) and Jan. 2 (CC); Balmorehea L. Jan. 27–28 (†PI, DBi); San Angelo Feb. 1 (†PI, DBi again); and a final bird at Galveston Feb. 17 (†AW, BL). A first-winter Thayer's Gull was tough to find at L. Waco Dec. 1–10 (JMu, FB), but a 2nd-winter Thayer's at the Brownsville dump Feb. 5 (†DSi) was subsequently studied by several observers the next week. Regarding Lesser Black-backed Gull, "Can we talk?" (TG). The species is simply no longer a rarity. Uncommon yes, but hardly an eyebrow-raiser. Wormington and Lamond found 9 as they raced up the coast in mid-February. Future reports of this species in this column will probably be more abbreviated. For a winter with great gull di-



**Great Black-backed Gull at Mustang Island, Texas, on January 23, 1992. This species remains a rare visitor to Texas. Photograph/Tony Amos.**

versity, a single report of Glaucous (in Austin Jan. 13; BF) seemed unexpectedly meager. The Mustang I. Great Black-backed Gull was sighted occasionally into early December; the same or another full adult was photographed by Tony Amos Jan. 23. Three or four Black-legged Kittiwakes were reported along the coast; the most interesting kittiwake was an adult described from LOP Feb. 2 (†HBL, †PH). A debilitated imm. Sooty Tern was found during the Galveston CBC Dec. 21 and taken to a rehabilitator (ph. GDL). Lehman found a late Black Tern at the Surfside jetty Jan. 5–12.

#### S.A.

The rarest of the rare this season had to be the 3rd-winter Slaty-backed Gull found by David Sibley at the Brownsville dump Feb. 7 and studied by many through Feb. 22. This first Texas report is also one of very few for the lower 48 states. The bird was photographed and described in exquisite detail by many. Thank you all! Discoveries like this play havoc with our casual speculations on the next species that will be documented in the Lone Star State. (Incidentally, Shawneen Finnegan photographed an interesting dark-backed gull at the dump Jan. 15; opinions differ as to whether it was the Slaty-backed.)

#### DOVES TO NIGHTHAWKS

A White-winged Dove found dead at Longview Jan. 9 provided a first area record (NETFO); a White-winged was noted in Dallas in December; the species was more numerous in San Angelo and Midland, evidence of its continuing expansion in urban areas. A Com. Ground-Dove was banded in San Angelo Feb. 11, where very rare. The earliest written report on the **Ruddy Ground-Dove** at Cottonwood Campground in Big Bend was from Wolf Kappes of Hamburg, Germany, Dec. 24 (Big Bend files). Our congratulations to Mr. Kappes for recognizing

this bird: it was a subtly colored female apparently of the pale w. Mexico *eluta* race. This bird remained through the period (ph. †m.ob.). The TBRC will also be reviewing details submitted on 2 of the 3 Ruddy Ground-Dove reports from the LRGV this season. Peak Green Parakeet numbers included about 90–100 in McAllen and 30 in Brownsville, along with "increasing numbers" in Harlingen, La Feria, San Benito, and Weslaco (*vide* OC, ML, R & LG, m.ob.). Numbers of the "city bird" of Brownsville, the Red-crowned Parrot, peaked at about 75 in January (JD, m.ob.). More notable were two Red-crowns at Falfurrias Jan. 15 (AO) and three at Laguna Atoscosa on an unspecified date (TU). It is tempting to consider a Yellow-billed Cuckoo Feb. 16 at Laguna Atoscosa an early arrival (*vide* TU), but this is over a month early. A Groove-billed Ani at Rio Grande Village in Big Bend Jan. 7 (JDo) was far from normal winter haunts.

Four reports totaling eight Short-eared Owls in the grasslands of Big Bend and the Marfa Basin in January and February were quite unexpected. A N. Pygmy-Owl was heard in the upper elevations of GMNP Dec. 4 but could not be visually confirmed (A & MC). A Com. Nighthawk Dec. 20–21 in San Angelo (*vide* DT, \* to Angelo State University) was very late for so far north. With more observers scouring far w. Texas, White-throated Swifts were commonly highlighted on trip lists; the number wintering in rugged terrain out there is often surprising, such as 600 in *Presidio* Feb. 5 (AW).

#### HUMMINGBIRDS TO WOODPECKERS

A ♂ **Broad-billed Hummingbird** remained at an El Paso feeder Dec. 1–Jan. 8 (LLY, KRO, m.ob.) and was photographed, providing a first county record and one of very few for the state. Elsewhere, reports of wintering hummingbirds were a mixed bag. Anna's were clearly more numerous than normal and not confined to the Rio Grande in w. Texas. Anna's put in extended feeder visits in Lubbock, Midland, and Corpus Christi and were noted east to San Marcos, San Antonio, the UTC, and s. to the LRGV (m.ob.). The most notable Rufous Hummingbird record was a wintering bird in Nacogdoches Jan. 1–early March (TR, DW, CDF). Two separate birds exhibiting "adult male" plumage patterns of Allen's Hummingbird were carefully scrutinized and photographed during extended stays at Houston feeders (m.ob.). The TBRC will review documentation on these.

A Lewis' Woodpecker was discovered at GMNP Dec. 3 (A & MC), and another arrived in the Davis Mts. Feb. 27 (KB). A Red-headed Woodpecker in Midland Dec. 30 onward was a rare occurrence (*vide* FW). West Texas visitors commonly reported on Red-naped and Williamson's Sapsuckers; this helps us round out our picture of these species' winter distributions. A Red-naped provided a first winter record in the Panhandle at Palo Duro Feb. 23 (PT); another at the opposite end of the state was well documented

## S.A.

Carleen and Willard Johnson noticed a *big* hummingbird at their Corpus Christi feeder Jan. 6 and began to take notes and make contact with other birders. Quickly the bird was identified as an imm. or ♀ mango species, and the effort was on to pin the bird down to species. Excellent photographic documentation was eventually obtained (first by *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* staffer George Gongora; ph. GL, etc.) to comfortably verify the bird as the "expected" Green-breasted Mango, ruling out a few look-alikes with more distant ranges. Hundreds of birders were hosted by the gracious Johnsons in their dining room to see this first confirmed N. American record. Because of identification problems in the group, and because a 1988 mango hummingbird in Brownsville could not be verified to species from photographs (AB 43:26, 129, 1989), no chance was taken with this bird. After a week-long visit, the bird was trapped, banded, measured, and photographed Jan. 13 and released. The bird flew off strong and healthy but disappointed subsequent birding visitors by disappearing from the Johnsons' feeder. Confirmation that the bird had simply changed to another nearby but undiscovered location was made by 3 brief returns to the Johnsons' feeder Jan. 17, 24, & 27.

at Anzalduas Dec. 20–Feb. 18 (R & LG, ph. GD, m.ob.).

## FLYCATCHERS TO SHRIKES

The Tufted Flycatcher remained at Big Bend (see fall season) until Jan. 17. Observers scouring the brush along the Rio Grande in w. Texas reported an expected handful of Dusky Flycatchers and a less-anticipated handful of Gray Flycatchers (e.g., from Cottonwood Campground upriver to Ruidosa). There were even a few reports of Hammond's on the river and in the Chisos Mts. (KB, JDo). In a drier or harsher winter, we anticipate that most of these empids would not linger. Most intriguing was John O'Brien's report of a vocalizing Pacific-slope Flycatcher on the nature trail at Rio Grande Village Feb. 15, just a few dozen yards from the previous fall's sighting (of which O'Brien was unaware). It will take extraordinary documentation to confirm this species for Texas, but birders should now be alert to the possibility in late fall or winter. The Brownsville Tropical Kingbirds continue to hang around the same area they had been in for a year. Carmona discovered more Tropicals (up to six) near La Feria Dec. 25. These were well documented; at least one was still present Mar. 9 (GL, PP). Up to six Couch's Kingbirds hung around Aransas through the season, where most unusual (GB, m.ob., *fide* TS); Luckner discovered a nonvocalizing Couch's/Tropical in Chambers Dec. 30. Extremely rare in mid-



**Aplomado Falcon in Presidio County, Texas, on February 5, 1992. This bird, considered a genuine wild wanderer from Mexico, drew birders from afar. The very long-tailed profile can be seen in this flight shot. Photograph/Alan Wormington.**

winter, a Cassin's Kingbird was reported from n. Brewster Jan. 14 (*fide* KB). Eight very late Scissor-tailed Flycatchers lingered to Dec. 17 in Dallas (ph. B & CHa). A "not-quite-adult" ♂ Rose-throated Becard was calling in Kenedy Jan. 20 (†JGo *et al.*), a very rare record away from the lower Valley.

A ♀ Purple Martin lingered in San Antonio until Dec. 15 (WS). Some newly fledged Barn Swallows were in Kingsville on the odd date of Jan. 21 (GB *et al.*). A Brown Jay at San Ygnacio Jan. 28 was upriver from the species' usual haunts (JDo). An out-of-range Carolina Chickadee (carefully identified to species) remained in Midland from late December to Jan. 27 (m.ob.). Single White-breasted Nuthatches made extended stays at Amarillo (to Jan. 10; KS) and at Midland (Nov. 10 onward; FW). Winter Wrens garnered attention in deep s. and w. Texas; no fewer than 9 were detected along the Rio Grande from Big Bend westward in February. Golden-crowned Kinglets bucked the trend of most northern/montane invaders by showing up in passable numbers all the way to the lower Valley. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was a very rare find in Lubbock Dec. 18 and Jan. 2 (NS).

Mountain Bluebirds were noted again in w. and n.w. Texas after a few winters of sparsity; some observers termed it an invasion, but numbers were perhaps just back to some semblance of normalcy. Western Bluebirds moved into the Concho Valley in increased numbers (DT). Up to four Clay-colored Robins were periodically reported at Santa Ana, and there were just 2 or 3 other brief sightings of the species elsewhere. Two Rufous-backed Robins, a species with only 2 accepted state records (none in 15 years), were described s. of Ft. Davis Feb. 9 by 2 observers but could not be subsequently relocated (†SC). A Brown Thrasher, very uncommon in the Trans-Pecos, was noted several times at Rio Grande Village (JD, m.ob.). A N. Shrike in Randall Dec. 15 (KS) was the only one reported.

## VIREOS THROUGH DICKCISSELS

An unusual influx of Solitary Vireos occurred in the Trans-Pecos. Three separate races apparently wintered at Big Bend locali-

ties (m.ob.). A Gray Vireo, rare in winter, was in Pinto Canyon of Presidio Dec. 31 (KB). A ♂ N. Parula at Cottonwood Campground into late February was the most frequently mentioned among several interesting warblers in Big Bend; a few Lucy's were noted there in January, a Wilson's in February. Two Hermit Warblers were near the Chisos Basin Dec. 28 (KSt), and a Pine Warbler overwintered for the 2nd year in a row at Rio Grande Village. A singing ♂ Prothonotary was at Cottonwood Feb. 23 (GDL). Other notable winter warbler records included Yellow Warblers in San Antonio and Brownsville, Pine Warblers in Midland and Ft. Worth, a Palm Warbler near Austin in late November, and an Ovenbird at Palmetto Jan. 10.

Very strange was a sighting of an Hepatic Tanager at GMNP Feb. 13 (RWa); the species was previously known in winter only from a few equally odd c. Texas reports. Most intriguing were the handfuls of Blue Grosbeaks and all 4 species of *Passerina* buntings scattered up and down the Rio Grande in w. Texas. Which are the "expected" buntings there? What are their typical ratios? Is this a "normal" occurrence? We can't answer these questions yet, but we have begun to compile the data. A Dickcissel successfully wintered at Corpus Christi Dec. 28–Feb. 10 (GS, *fide* JI) while another in the High Plains did not: a roadkilled Dickcissel was found Jan. 16 in Lubbock (MN).

## SPARROWS TO FRINGILLIDS

Sparrow distribution patterns were again hard to interpret. There was patchiness in abundance of common species, even within each subregion. The lush grasses in e. Texas were colonized by hordes of tall-grass sparrows, but in n., w., and parts of deep s. Texas perhaps there was just too much good habitat and many species did not seem overly abundant. Just when we thought Baird's Sparrow was virtually impossible to find, we received 3 reports of five birds: two were at the Woodward Ranch s. of Alpine Jan. 14 (JDo); another was in the Aplomado area near Valentine Jan. 19 (†MG, BP); two separate Baird's were described at Kickapoo Feb. 3 & 13 (ML). It is tempting to consider this an "invasion" year for Henslow's Sparrow. In Nacogdoches, up to nine Henslow's were followed from the CBC period on into March (BGi, D & MW). Likewise, Henslows detected on the Freeport CBC at Brazoria were reported into January (m.ob.). Yet another Henslow's was w. of Monaville, which is n.w. of Katy, which is in Waller, Dec. 31 (ph. JD). A few Fox Sparrows in canyons along the rimrock of n.w. Texas in February were notable (KS, BPo). Significant were two Harris' at Aransas Pass Jan. 4 (E & NA) and another Hueco Tanks Dec. 17, a first park record (BHa). In January, good numbers of McCown's Longspurs visited n.w. Ft. Worth, where they are hard to find (CH, m.ob.).

Flocks of Rusty Blackbirds were newsworthy on the Caddo National Grasslands Dec. 17, at Aransas Dec. 19 (2nd record, *fide* TS),

and in Midland Dec. 8–10 (14 birds, a record count, J & DM). A Com. Grackle near Presidio Feb. 6 provided a new county record (AW). Three Audubon's Orioles in *Live Oak* Feb. 1 were a bit n. of their regular range (SH *et al.*). Scott's Orioles out of their normal range in the Hill Country and w. Texas were noted in c. *La Salle* (five birds, MP) and at San Antonio Jan. 11 & 31 (SAAS). There was but a single Cassin's Finch report, at Big Bend Jan. 11 (*vide* KA). A Purple Finch at L. McClellan, *Gray*, Dec. 7 (KS) was a new county record, but elsewhere the species was barely mentioned. House Finches staged another e. Texas "invasion," an occurrence that may quickly become routine. "Many" were in *Van Zandt* (PK) and *Hunt* (JN); four made an appearance in Longview Dec. 16–28 (T & RM, DM); up to 15 were in e. *Harris* Dec. 21–31, with several remaining through January (GDL). A pair of House Finches were as far "coastward" as Bayside, *Refugio*, Feb. 9 (E & NA, possibly a first area record); a Lesser Goldfinch was seen there at the same time. Notably far north was another Lesser Goldfinch at Archer City, *Archer*, Feb. 10 & 18 (DMc). The only Evening Grosbeak report came from GMNP Dec. 14 (A & MC).

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## IDAHO-WESTERN MONTANA REGION

*Thomas H. Rogers*

The Region experienced what was probably the mildest winter on record. Precipitation (both rain and snow) was deficient nearly everywhere. Snow pack in the mountains was below normal, presaging a hot, dry summer. The mild weather induced many species to stay late or to winter where they normally would not. With some exceptions, the "northern finches" put in a good appearance for the most part. The very mild February encouraged some early arrivals. In this report, Christmas Bird Count sightings, some very interesting, are not repeated.

### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

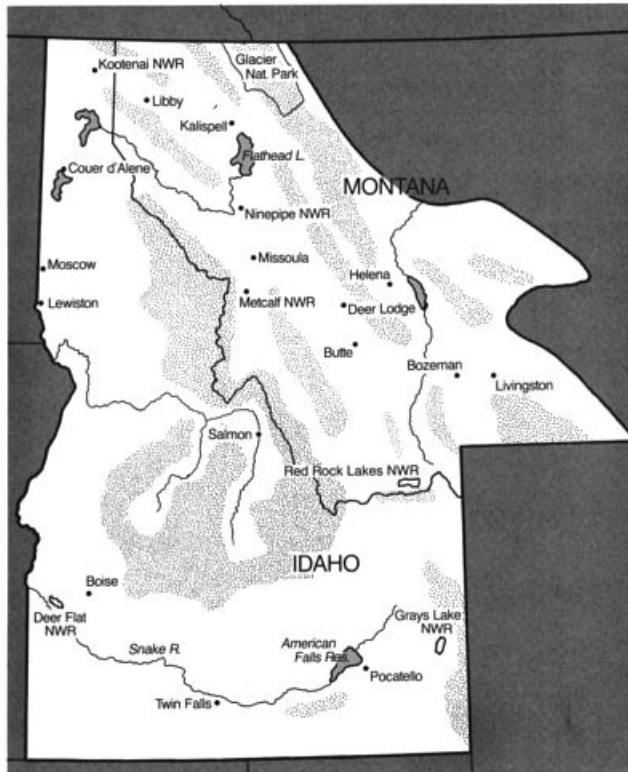
Two **Yellow-billed Loons** were on Coeur d'Alene L., Harrison, ID, Dec. 28–Jan. 1 (SW, PG, CV, WH, JW, DSv, IS). A Red-necked Grebe at C.J. Strike Dam near Bruneau, ID, Feb. 6 was noteworthy (MC, FK). Unusual winter records at Coeur d'Alene L., ID, were a Red-necked Grebe Jan. 25 (PG) and three to five W. Grebes Dec. 28–Jan. 19 (DSv, IS). Four Am. White Pelicans on the Snake R. below American Falls Dam, ID, Dec. 10 were apparently wintering (CHT). A Double-crested Cormorant was below American Falls Dam on the Snake R. Dec. 10, and an immature was there at January's end (CHT). A Green-backed Heron on the Boise R., s.w. Idaho, Jan. 7 was a rarity (MC, FK).

At least 400 Tundra Swans wintered at Flathead L., w. Montana (DC). Six arrived at Kootenai N.W.R., Bonners Ferry, ID, Feb. 3, about a month earlier than normal (JR). A Trumpeter Swan accompanied two Tundra Swans on Coeur d'Alene L. Jan. 1 (CV, WH). Trumpeters at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R., Lima, MT, peaked at 465 Feb. 5, mild weather there resulted in many of them heading N from there mid-month (KN). Notable was a Greater White-fronted Goose on Benawah L., St. Maries, ID, Jan. 26–Feb. 2 (DSv, IS). Sixty Snow Geese flew over the Boise, ID, area Jan. 25 (MC, FK), and 10 were flying over the Clearwater R. near Lewiston, ID, Feb. 22 (GV, ND). Three Ross' Geese were with six Snow Geese on the Snake upriver from Hagerman N.W.R., *Gooding*, ID, Feb. 1 (DT). Canada Geese in the Coeur d'Alene L., ID, area were selecting nesting sites in early February, several weeks earlier than normal (SHS).

A ♂ Wood Duck was sighted on Coeur d'Alene L. Jan. 17 (DSv, IS). About 1000 N Pintails returned to Kootenai N.W.R. at the end of February, an increase over the last few years for early spring migrants (JR). Two Gadwalls were reported at Lee Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, MT, Jan. 19 (CB), and the species was noted on Benawah L., St. Maries, ID (DSv, DG, C.B.). The Snake R. near Hagerman, ID, had a ♂ Eur Wigeon Jan 26

(BS); another was at Boise in early January (SP, CHT). One male was on West Pond, Lewiston, Jan. 4 and later (MK, DG).

Up to 14 Ring-necked Ducks were sighted near Lake Helena Causeway, MT, late January and early February, for the Helena area's first winter records (GH). One to two Greater Scaup were on Chatcolet L., St. Maries, ID, Jan. 12–Feb. 2 (DSv), and two were with Lesser Scaup on the Hagerman ponds Jan. 26 (DT). Three Oldsquaw were sighted on the Snake below American Falls Dam Dec. 3 & 10 (CHT); another was near Hagerman Feb. 1 (DT). Springfield Ponds, Springfield, ID, had a ♂ Surf Scoter Feb. 2 (SR). A Com. Merganser showed up at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R. Feb. 7 (KN), and a ♀ Red-breasted Merganser appeared on the Snake below American Falls Jan. 2 (CHT). Four late Ruddy Ducks were on Benewah L. Dec. 8 (DSv, IS).



#### HAWKS TO GULLS

Remarkable were sightings of two Turkey Vultures near Helena Jan. 25 (OL) and two near Townsend, MT, Feb. 18 (DB). Up to 92 Bald Eagles were counted in the Gardiner, MT, area (JQ). Hamilton, MT, had up to 12, a high number for there (JO). Swainson's Hawks were reported at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R. in December (KN). Two Peregrine Falcons, one Gyrfalcon, two Prairie Falcons, and one Merlin were reported.

Chukars were sighted near Gardiner, MT, an apparent latilong first (PM). A small flock of White-tailed Ptarmigans was again noted throughout the winter at Schweitzer Ski Area near Sandpoint, ID (MR *et al.*). Wild Turkeys were noted at Thompson L., Kootenai, ID, Feb. 15 (JN), and a small flock was around Fernan L., Coeur d'Alene, all winter (FA).

One or two Sandhill Cranes were found 2–3 mi s. of Toston, MT, Jan. 18–Mar. 7, state's first winter record (JC, RJ, BM, DB, GH, VH). A flock of 60 Killdeer wintered in the effluent of American Falls trout hatchery near Pocatello, ID (CHT). Single Com. Snipes were at Mission Point near St. Maries Jan. 19 (DSv, IS, SM) and at Coeur d'Alene W.M.A., ID, Jan. 11 (C.A.).

Ten Bonaparte's Gulls lingered on the Snake R. below American Falls Dam at least until Dec. 10 (CHT), and 12 were still on Coeur d'Alene and Benewah lakes Dec. 8 and Jan. 1 (DSv, CV, WH). Hauser L. n.e. of Helena had a Herring Gull Dec. 14–15, for the area's first winter record (GH). The Coeur d'Alene area had them all winter (SHS), and the landfill there had an imm. Thayer's Gull Jan. 17 (DSv). There also were a first-winter Glaucous-winged Gull and an ad. Glaucous Gull Dec. 1 (SHS, KS) and three Glaucous Jan. 17 (DSv). A first-year

Glaucous-winged was at Boise Jan. 4, and a first-year Thayer's was at Boise Dec. 22–31 (MC, FK). American Falls had a first-year Thayer's Gull Dec. 13 (DP, CHT).

#### OWLS TO WAXWINGS

A Barn Owl was sighted along the St. Joe R., St. Maries, in early January (DSv, C.A.). Thompson L. had a W. Screech-Owl Feb. 21 (JN). The only Snowy Owl reported was one near Creston, MT, Dec. 8 (DC). A Northern Hawk Owl was present at Bigfork, MT, in December (*vide* DC). A Barred Owl wintered near Princeton, ID (KD). Two Great Gray Owls spent the winter at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R. (KN), and one was seen several times s. of Teton, ID, Dec. 3 and later (BH *et al.*). A Short-eared Owl was sighted at Coeur d'Alene Dec. 13–14 (DSv, IS, PG) and near Rathdrum, ID, Jan. 24 (PG). A N. Saw-whet Owl appeared at the n. entrance to Yellowstone N.P., MT, Dec. 23 (MJ), and one was calling at Coeur d'Alene Feb. 20 (SHS). Two called regularly in the Princeton, ID, vicinity toward the period's end (KD). An Anna's Hummingbird wintered at a Lewiston Orchards, ID, feeder (MJ, MK, LL). A Pileated Woodpecker, rare in the Helena area, appeared at a house in Colorado Gulch a few mi s.w. of the city Jan. 27 (GN, NN).

Up to 600 Com. Ravens were in the Gardiner, MT, area (TM). Two Blue Jays appeared along Coeur d'Alene L. Jan. 3 (JH, MH), and one was at Harrison, ID, Jan. 19 (DSv). Seven were in Hot Springs, MT, in early December, and one or two wintered at a Lakeside, MT, feeder (DC). Fifteen–twenty Pinyon Jays frequented a Gardiner, MT, feeder throughout the period (JQ). Single Bewick's Wrens were sighted along Mission Cr. e. of Lewiston Feb.

12 (C.B.) and just e. of Lewiston Feb. 22 (JD, VS). One or two were in the St. Maries area Dec. 22–Feb. 1 (DSv, IS, PG, SHS), and a Marsh Wren was in the same area Dec. 28 (DSv, IS, SM).

Flocking early were 200+ Am. Robins at Boise Feb. 6 (DJ). They were showing up in numbers at Kalispell, MT, the last week of February (DC). One to three were in the Gardiner area, some visiting feeders, Jan. 26–Feb. 28 (JQ, TM). Martin City, MT's, first Varied Thrush of the year was heard Feb. 28 (DC). Up to 800 Bohemian Waxwings frequented the Gardiner area during the period, and "thousands" were in Kalispell. Their numbers were moderate to low elsewhere. An early Sage Thrasher was at the Snake R. Birds of Prey Area s. of Kuna, ID, Feb. 3 (MC, FK).

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

A Yellow-rumped Warbler was eating suet at a Missoula, MT, feeder Feb. 15–16 (BW), and another was seen on the same dates several miles from there (WH). St. Maries had one "Audubon's" Jan. 10 (DSv, IS), and Lewiston found two Feb. 22 (C.B.).

Unusual was an Am. Tree Sparrow at Benewah L. Jan. 5 (DSv). A Chipping Sparrow in near-breeding plumage was spotted at L. Lowell, Deer Flat N.W.R., Nampa, ID, Jan. 16 (MC, FK). An imm. Swamp Sparrow was observed at Heyburn SP w. of St. Maries Jan. 26 (DSv). Metcalf N.W.R., Stevensville, MT, had three in January (DG; m.ob). A White-throated Sparrow was still in the Bigfork, MT, vicinity at the period's end (DC), and a few frequented the Missoula vicinity, as did White-crowned Sparrows (PW). A few of the latter lingered into early December at Kalispell and Somers, MT (DC). A Harris' Sparrow stayed all winter at Missoula (PW); one appeared near Moscow Dec. 7 (DH); and one or two were at a Gardiner feeder throughout the period (JQ). A flock of up to 1000 Snow Buntings wintered between Rexburg and Teton, ID (CHT). Hamilton, MT, had a Brewer's Blackbird Jan. 12 (CB). Notable was a Com. Grackle with other blackbirds at a Bigfork feeder in early December (DC).

Sizable Rosy Finch flocks stayed at Red Rock Lakes N.W.R. in February (KN), and up to 500, mostly "Gray-crowned" but a few "Black" and "Hepburn's," visited a Gardiner feeder Dec. 1 (JQ). Pine Grosbeaks were sighted at Moscow Mt., e. of Moscow, ID, Dec. 21 (DG, C.B.). The species frequented a Missoula feeder all winter (DS). Up to 10 House Finches visited a Gardiner feeder much of the winter (JQ). Two White-winged Crossbills were on Moscow Mt. Dec. 21 and one–two weeks later (DG, C.B.). A female was at St. Maries Dec. 28 (DSv), and a flock

of 10 was with Red Crossbills w. of Challis, ID, Feb. 9 (BH). Red Crossbills were common in some areas. Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins seemed plentiful, but Cassin's Finches and Evening Grosbeaks were mostly reported in low numbers. Most noteworthy were a Hoary Redpoll banded Feb. 9 at Swan L., MT (EJ); a few at Kootenai N.W.R. for the first record there (KN); and two with Com. Redpolls s. of Troy, ID, Feb. 16 (DG).

**Addenda:** All dates apply to 1991. Two Red-necked Grebes were at Warm Lake, ID, June 2 (CS). Two Sandhill Cranes appeared in Stanley Basin n. of Stanley, ID, June 18 (DJ). Round Valley near Cascade, ID, had an Upland Sandpiper July 7 (LE). An imm. Ruddy Turnstone was photographed at Sandpoint, ID, Oct. 4 (KC, BC), apparently the first n. Idaho record. Six Bonaparte's Gulls showed up on a sewage lagoon near Moscow Oct. 27 (DH). A well-described ad. Arctic Tern was at Sandpoint Sept. 30 (EC, KC). A bird identified as an *Eye-browed Thrush*, also described, accompanied Am. Robins at Moscow Aug. 29 (DG, CG, CaG); there are no confirmed records for the Lower 48 states. An Ovenbird appeared at Trail Cr. n. of Council, ID, June 18 (KG).

**Observers cited (subregional editors in bold-face):** Frank Andrews, Clifton Barry III, Dwight Bergeron, Coeur d'Alene Audubon Soc. (C.A.), Canyon Birders (C.B.), **Dan Casey**, Jeff Chafee, Beverly Chapin, Earl Chapin, Ken Chapin, Mark Collie, Nancy Demeio, Judy Detwiler, Kas Dumroese, Larry Edwards, Camas Goble (CaG), Carol Goble, Dale Goble, Pam Gontz, Deborah Goslin (DGo), Kevin Gray, Brad Hammond, Winnie Hepburn, Willis Heron (WHe), John & Marty Hirth, David Holick, Virginia & **George Holton**, Marvin James (MJa), Mark Johnson, **Dean Jones**, Elly Jones, Rebecca Joyce, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Koliner**, Orville Lewis, Sandy Mack, **Terry McEneaney**, Brian McNutt, Paul Miller, Kenneth Niethammer, John Nigh, Gene & Norma Nixon, John Ormiston, Deb Patla, Susan Patla, Joyce Queckborner, Sylvia Reichel, Jimmie Reynolds, Mike Rogers, Valerie Steffan, Don Stoecker, Brian Sturges, Keith & **Shirley H. Sturts**, Dan & Ila Svingen (DSv), Colleen Sweeney, Dave Trochlell, **C.H. Trost**, Carole Vande Voorde, Greg Vorous, Byron Weber, Susan Weller, Jeff Wisman, **Philip Wright**.—**THOMAS H. ROGERS, 10820 E. Maxwell, Spokane, WA 99206-4805.**

## MOUNTAIN WEST REGION

*Hugh E. Kingery*

Gulls and woodpeckers piqued the interest of the Mountain West. Regional observers sent in 26 gull photographs—more than all other species combined and a barometer of the intriguing gull reports. Four Nevada birds probably qualify as first or second state records, depending on how rigorously one views prior reports.

Observers uniformly reported mild, dry weather. Reno's city lakes had ice only until early January, and the marsh at Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada, thawed by February 29, two weeks earlier than average.

The benign weather affected bird life differently in different places. More warblers and water birds spent the winter, and northern species did not penetrate far into the Region. For several related species (Black-capped and Mountain chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Brown Creepers) numbers were up some places and down in others. Other passerines (solitaires, robins, sparrows) and raptors (Rough-legged, Red-tailed, and Ferruginous hawks) reflected the same ambivalence. Feeders generally had fewer birds because of good natural food supplies. However, at Kremmling, Colorado, Barrett said "I was excited by the first rosy finches but 300 lbs. of seed later they are not quite as thrilling."

This dichotomy masks any trends for common species. Perhaps the differences (even from locations close to one another) reflect equilibrium rather than confusing, contradictory trends.

Common birds pose a major challenge to *American Birds* regional editors. We lack reliable measuring tools. There are extensive long-term studies to analyze changing populations, like Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys; but with the 45-day *American Birds* deadline, neither is usable. The Denver Field Ornithologists and Foothills Audubon Club provide statistics from their trips (Denver) and members' observations (F.A.C.). Though uncontrolled, these offer rough gauges for common species.

The ornithological community has become concerned about long-term trends of neotropical and other migrants; they do not see equilibrium. This concern makes it imperative to collect and share data on common birds. Common species (and those that used to be common) need attention more than rarities. The trouble is that rarities are easier to report. We all get more excited about them, and bird watchers don't notice what birds are *not* there (or we don't have good measurements of who is missing).

Field ornithologists need to study the common stuff. We need to know what is out

there, what is not, and if the birds really are in trouble. The birds cannot wait while we pad our life and state lists.

### SPECIAL OBSERVATIONS

The Indian Peaks, CO, winter count registered 16 birds/count hour, down from an average of 18. Only Mt. Chickadees had high numbers: 934 was a winter count high (7/count hour, DH).

Three Reno marshes fed by hot springs produced several surprising winter records: Virginia Rails, Soras, and an Am. Bittern on Dec. 13. "Nevada has many hot springs and they probably provide cozy wintering grounds for many birds that would otherwise migrate" (JT).

Division of Wildlife employees in Fallon, NV, saw "firsthand the critical nature of open water to urban birds when a fire hydrant test temporarily flooded a depression behind the office. Starlings, flickers, 30 Cedar Waxwings, and Am. Kestrels came flocking to the scene to drink, bathe, and feed" (AJ, WH).

An autopsy on a Mallard found on Yellowstone Park's Old Faithful road revealed that a vehicle had struck it. For the park at least, this is "the first record of a bird killed by what is presumed to be a snowmobile" (TM).

**Abbreviations:** LLBL (*Longmont/Lyons/Bert-houd/Loveland area, CO, using Foothills Audubon Club records*); 1st Lat (*first latilong record [a latilong is outlined by one degree each of latitude and longitude, measuring about 50 by 70 mi.]*); IPWC (*Indian Peaks, CO, Winter Bird Count*); R.E. (*Regional Editor*); † (*written description on file with R.E.*); †† (*written description on file with, and subject to approval of, state or local records committee*).

### LOONS TO HERONS

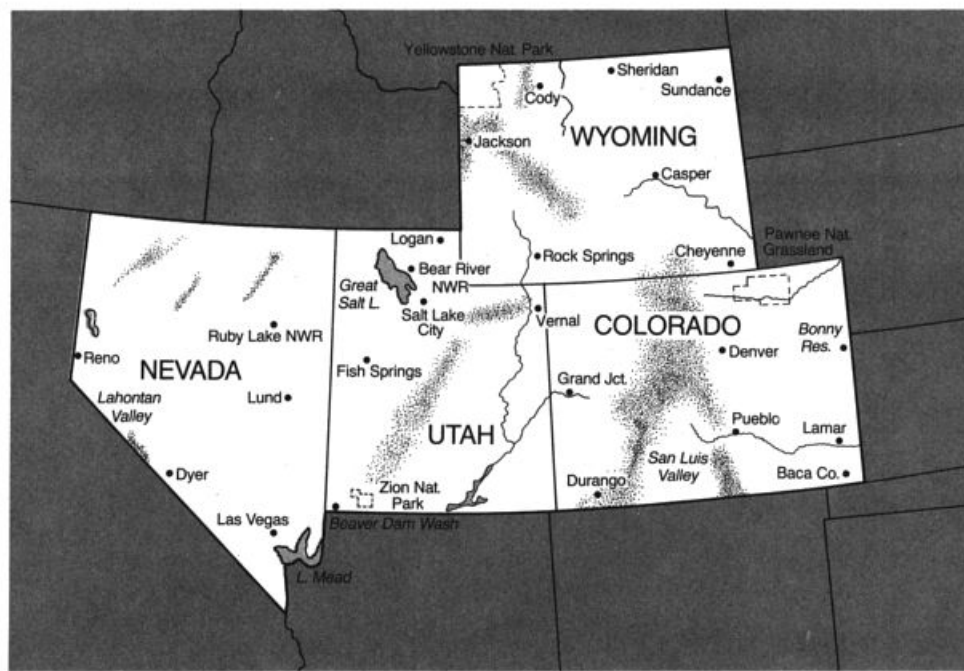
A Red-throated Loon and a Yellow-billed Loon stayed at Chatfield Res. near Denver Dec. 2–7 (†† JK). The **Yellow-billed Loon** at L. Mead near Las Vegas, Nevada's 2nd record, stayed Dec. 22–Feb. 17 (†M.C, ph.) At L. Mead, 2–6 Pacific and 2–3 Common loons spent the winter. Colorado had three Pacifics in December. Of its six Commons, none stayed longer than a week. By Feb. 3 ten Horned Grebes had arrived at Longmont, CO, and on Feb. 8 six stopped at Pueblo (100 mi south). One W. Grebe wintered at Pueblo, and one–two wintered at warm power plant reservoirs at Boulder and Wellington, CO (Rawhide). A Clark's Grebe wintered, also at Rawhide.

Other surprising wintering birds included Am. White Pelicans at Logan, UT (EW) and Casper, WY (M.A.S.), Double-crested Cormorants at Ruby L. NWR and Reno, the usual Great Egret at Fish Springs NWR, UT, and Great Blue Herons at Yellowstone, Casper, Eagle, and in n.e. Colorado (19 on the C.D.O.W. count Jan. 6).

### WATERFOWL

The 700 Tundra Swans at Stillwater NWR Dec 2 topped last year's, but 2–4 years ago





Lamar Feb. 17 (PS). Six early ones arrived at Ruby L. in late February. The Region reported several shorebirds; e.g., two Am. Avocets at Carson L., NV, Feb. 4 (LN) and 50 there Feb. 26 (AJ). A dozen or more Greater Yellowlegs wintered at both Reno (at a warm spring, JT) and Fish Springs (JB). Grand Jct. had one Jan. 22–24 and three Feb. 29 (CD, RL); a probable Greater was seen at Holly, CO, Feb. 16 (PS). A Wilson's Phalarope was at Moab, UT, Dec. 14 (††DF).

A Franklin's Gull arrived in Longmont, CO, Feb. 22 (JP), only the 2nd February report. Six Bonaparte's were at Pueblo Jan. 4, the 3rd January record there. Nevada picked up its 16th and 17th Mew Gull records, with birds at L. Mead Dec. 3–7 (ph. MC) and Reno Dec. 22–Feb. 13 (†DBo, †DT, ph. JT). Denver had a very low

twice as many stopped in December (AJ, WH). By February, 260 had returned. Wintering Tundras included a normal 250 at Hiko, NV, 60–70 at Fish Springs, UT, and one–two at Grand Jct., CO. The banding office reported that a Tundra Swan at Sweetwater L. near Gypsum, CO, November 1990 had been banded in February 1990 at Pungo NWR, NC: "that bird doesn't believe in retracing its steps" (JM). An aerial count found 513 Trumpeter Swans in Yellowstone Dec. 10; the Jan. 29 count of 112 (5-year range of 85–177) included an influx of swans from Canada (USF&WS). Ruby L. wintered 35 Trumpeters, and Fish Springs had 22 at its Jan. 13 peak; one immature stopped at Pueblo, CO, Feb. 19–23 (BD, †DS).

Early January Snow Goose counts included 400 at Fowler in s.e. Colorado and 940 in n.e. Colorado. One hundred northbound Snow Geese showed up at Torrington, WY, Jan. 27 (J & GL). They began to arrive at Carson L., NV, Feb. 4, with a vanguard of 350; 14,000 had arrived by Feb. 18, including several collared ones from Alaska and the w. Canadian Arctic plus one from Russia (AJ, WH)! Four thousand had massed Feb. 15 at Ordway, CO (C.F.O.). With the Snows at Fowler were 13 Ross' Geese on Jan. 12 (MJ). Neck collars on some of the 2500 Canada Geese that wintered in Stillwater Refuge and Yerington, NV, showed that they breed in the Anderson R. delta, Canada. Many of the thousands that winter from Denver to Ft. Collins breed in the same area; counts dropped this year. D.F.O. reported 9268 on its field trips compared with a 7-year range of 6092–12,366; LLBL reported 20,699 after 36,433 last year.

One of the Eur. Wigeons at Reno last fall stayed the winter (ph. JT, JaW); another at Ft. Collins Feb. 8–10 courted a ♀ Am. Wigeon (ph. DL, JBr). Nevada's 4th Harlequin Duck spent the winter at Reno

(†EM, JaW, ph. JT). Up to four Oldsquaws wintered at both Pueblo and Rawhide Res. Only one scoter wintered at Rawhide: a ♀ White-winged. A surprising four Barrow's Goldeneyes wintered at Reno (JT); another four were at Ruby L. (JMa).

#### RAPTORS

Raptor counts seemed generally low. Roadside hawk counts at Rocky Mtn. Arsenal near Denver ranged from 13–31, with Ferruginous peaking at only 16 on Jan. 16 (USF&WS). Bald Eagles at the Arsenal dropped some, with 28–30 using the roost in January (35–40 last year). The midwinter Bald Eagle count netted 863 in Colorado, an increase from 704 in 1990 and 480 in 1980. Most of the increase occurred in w. Colorado, where counts went up from 504 in 1991 to 657 in 1992. An imm. Red-shouldered Hawk stayed in a Pueblo backyard and nearby riparian area Jan. 4+ (RR, †BD, ph. PS). Another immature was at Gardnerville, NV, Jan. 25 (†WEH). The Denver area reported fewer Ferruginous Hawks: (Arsenal, above); LLBL had 53 for the season of 68 last year; and D.F.O. trips found 23 (7-year range from 6–29). Yet Cedar City, Utah's 15–20 wintering "ferrugs" was 3 times the usual number (SH). With the wide-open winter, all raptors probably spread out. At Sheridan, WY, 25 Rough-leggeds roosted in a heron colony all winter (ET). A Peregrine Falcon hacked in Rocky Mountain NP wintered at Rocky Mt. Arsenal (LM). Sheridan had a Gyrfalcon Jan. 5, and one was caught at Magna, UT, Dec. 26 (ph. AJH).

#### CRANES TO GULLS

Fifty late Sandhill Cranes flew over Canon City, CO, Dec. 11 (††SW), and one was at Grand Jct., CO, Dec. 23 (CD, RL). In February they began moving, with 100 over Walsh, CO, Feb. 6–8 (JnlT) and 500 at

count of Ring-billed Gulls: D.F.O. trips tallied only 1178 (7-year range 1451–14,919); 2000 wintered at Pueblo. Winter records are starting to echo the increase in nesting California Gulls: 2–10 wintered at Pueblo, and singles were at Denver Jan. 28 (WWB) and Longmont Feb. 26 (BP, JP). A 2nd-winter Lesser Black-backed Gull stayed at Pueblo Jan. 11–Feb. 15 (BPe, †VT, ph. PS, ph. CS), and a first winter bird joined it Feb. 8–Feb. 16 (†VT). These two, plus one Dec. 14 on the Denver C.B.C., doubled the number of substantiated Colorado records. Nevada's 2nd Yellow-footed Gull Dec. 3 stood out among nearby Ring-billed, California, and Herring gulls (†VM, ph. †MC). The Glaucous Gull at Reno was, surprisingly, Nevada's 2nd or 5th (depending on the acceptability of the first, one-observer, reports); it spent a month, Dec. 31–Feb. 1 (ph. †EK, ph. DM, ph. †DBo). Wyoming had its 4th Glaucous Gull (the first in 22 years) at Goldeneye Res., WY, Feb. 16 (†J & GL). Other Glaucous Gulls stopped at Loveland, Denver, and Julesburg, and Dec. 26 at Lamar, CO (†JnlT 1st Lat). Single Black-legged Kittiwakes stayed at L. Mead Dec. 11–Feb. 17 (MC, 11th Nevada record, 3rd to winter) and Pueblo Dec. 6–Feb. 1 (DJ, BD *et al.*).

Then come n. Nevada's Thayer's and Glaucous-wingeds and hybrids; photographs of four (ph. JT) circulated to 3 out-of-state experts (JE, DSh, RS). The experts agreed on one, at Pyramid L. Jan. 4, as a Glaucous-winged. They issued split decisions (or indecisions) for the others: (1) Pyramid L. Feb. 1: 2 votes for Thayer's, one for Glaucous-winged X Western hybrid (favoring Glaucous-winged); (2) Pyramid L. Feb. 28: one for Thayer's, one for Thayer's or Herring X California, and one for Glaucous-winged X Western; (3) Pyramid L. Dec. 18: two for Glaucous-winged X Western and one for 2nd- or 3rd-year Herring. The point of

this long dissertation is that gulls are notoriously hard to identify, hybrids exacerbate that problem, and experts do not always agree.

#### ROADRUNNER TO HUMMINGBIRDS

A Greater Roadrunner spent the winter in the rafters of a cattle barn at Walsh, CO; it would peck on the farmhouse window to be fed cracked corn (JnlT). Springdale, UT, had a major incursion, with one yard attracting up to five/day; it was the best year for roadrunners since 1984 (JG). Northern Pygmy-Owls records came from the Wyoming and Colorado mountains, and one was partaking of feeder birds in Springdale, UT, near Zion NP (JG). An early Burrowing Owl appeared at Fish Springs Feb. 26 (JB). Up to eight Short-eared Owls wintered at Wellington, CO (NE *et al.*). Boreal Owls began to sing in the n. Colorado Rockies: three at Cameron Pass Feb. 19 and one in *Boulder* Jan. 17. Two Costa's Hummingbirds wintered at Boulder Beach on L. Mead.

#### WOODPECKERS

A Red-headed Woodpecker wintered in a Denver suburb, changing from imm. to ad. plumage over the winter (J & BH). An ad. Red-headed passed through Florence, CO, Feb. 19 (NP). A Red-bellied Woodpecker on the Grand Jct. CBC (very likely the most westerly record ever) stayed until Jan. 5 (LS, †CD, 1st Lat). One at Ft. Collins Dec. 16+ provided a 1st Lat wintering record (JMM *et al.*). East across the Interstate highway, one banded Dec. 29+ was a 1st Lat record (JS). Other records came from Canon City (BPe, PS 1st Lat), two at Pueblo, two at Holly, one at Rocky Mt. Arsenal (†LM), one at Brush, and some at the usual stronghold at Bonny Res.

The winter's sapsucker tally reinforced the idea that Yellow-bellieds winter regularly in Colorado. Two of the 17 Yellow-bellieds stopped briefly on the W. Slope: at Eagle Dec. 5-7 (†JM) and Mancos Jan. 17 (†AV). Front Range cities attracted most: three in Ft. Collins and Pueblo, two in Lyons, Boulder and Longmont, and one in Denver, Salida and Westcliffe; birds wintered in Ft. Collins, Boulder, and Lyons. These wintering sapsuckers seem to prefer artificial plantings of mature pines; the Boulder birds wintered within half a mile of natural ponderosa pine forests. One Ft. Collins bird hung out in 10 tall pines in a cemetery. The two Red-naped occurred on the W. Slope: Grand Jct. Dec. 27 (†AV) and Carbondale Jan. 28 (†JBr). Reno rounded out sapsucker reports with a Red-breasted at Reno Jan. 23 (EK).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO WAXWINGS

At Reno a Black Phoebe stayed Dec. 15-Jan. 19 (JaW, JT) and another was at Lahontan Dam Feb. 21 (DT). A Vermilion Flycatcher wintered at Las Vegas (ph. MC). Blue Jays continue their march through the Region; one appeared twice in January in Alamosa, CO (CK). Pueblo recorded no Bushtits this winter; they might be declining (DS). A Car-



Immature female Gyrfalcon caught and banded at Magna, Utah, on December 26, 1991. Photograph/Alan J. Hinde.

olina Wren on the L. Isabel C.B.C. turned out to have spent all of 1991 at a feeder; it stayed through Feb. 29+ (MY *et al.*). Another Carolina Wren ranged along the shore of Barr L. near Denver Feb. 26 (HEK, UKi). January Winter Wrens stopped at Reno Jan. 23-28 (†JaW, ph. JT) and Grand Jct. Jan. 25 (†CD 1st Lat). The IPWC counted 53 Golden-crowned Kinglets.

The winter's E. Bluebird records concentrated in Colorado's Arkansas Valley, with one at Colorado City Dec. 4, two at Hasty Jan. 26, and 10 at Pueblo Feb. 19.

Townsend's Solitaires reflected the ambivalent reports of many common Regional species; top counts came from Sheridan Jan. 26 (27, GK) and the IPWC Jan. 11, plus a seasonal total of 76 at LLBL (nine last year). Only one-two appeared elsewhere. Four Hermit Thrushes included December birds at Las Vegas, Fish Springs, and Durango, CO, and a window kill Feb. 29 at Keystone, CO (MP). A Varied Thrush reportedly wintered at Cheyenne, WY (D & EH).

Pueblo had a Gray Catbird Dec. 27 (DS), and Lyons, CO, had one Feb. 22 (HL). Three

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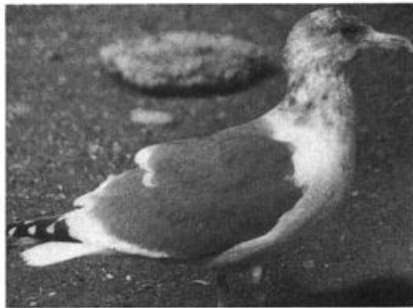
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Brown Thrashers spent the winter: at Las Vegas, Salida, and Idaho Springs, CO (VM, RE, FC & D.F.O.). Bohemian Waxwings essentially stayed north: Sheridan reported 1000 Jan. 14 and 200 Feb. 15; Casper had a dozen in February, as did Tensleep, WY. Only 2 reports came from the south: 10 at L. Isabel Dec. 28 and 50 nearby at Pueblo Feb. 29. How did they escape notice in the intervening 400 miles? Cedar Waxwings were much more widespread. All 4 states had them, with flocks of over 100 at Cedar City, UT, Yellowstone, Cortez, and LLBL.



**This gull photographed at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, on February 1, 1992, drew no unanimous identification when sent to out-of-state experts: some called it Thayer's, some called it Glaucous-winged X Western hybrid. Hybrid gulls are difficult, of course, and single photographs are often misleading. Photograph/Jane Thompson.**

#### WARBLERS TO FINCHES

At Fallon, NV, one Orange-crowned Warbler wintered "by feeding in ornamental junipers against a south-facing wall that breaks the N wind and absorbs solar energy during the day, making a little microhabitat sufficiently warm to support a hardy wintering warbler" (AJ, WH). Las Vegas reported two Orange-crowns, one using a backyard hummingbird feeder, and one was in Boulder, CO, in January (AC). Most remarkable was Colorado's 2nd Cape May Warbler to spend the winter: from Jan. 24–Feb. 16 it followed a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker around a Boulder neighborhood and fed at sap wells that the sapsucker made in ornamental pines. It also foraged on the ground, perhaps for insects, and drank silver maple sap (AC [video], ph. DL). Many Yellow-rumped Warblers stayed around: 20 at Stillwater, 10–15 at Grand Jct. and Pueblo, plus 1–5 in Reno, Logan, Boulder, and Ft. Collins. A remarkable Townsend's Warbler stayed at Ogden Jan. 15–Feb. 5 (MK).

D.F.O. found a Green-tailed Towhee in n.e. Colorado Jan. 25. A Rufous-crowned Sparrow at Corn Creek near Las Vegas Dec. 16 is the 6th from Nevada but apparently the first documented by photograph and written description (†MC ph.). White-throated and Harris' sparrows visited feeders throughout the Region as usual. At Kremmling, CO, however, the White-throated Dec. 1–Jan. 16 and Harris Dec. 1–Feb. 16 (NB) were 1st Lats. A Golden-crowned Sparrow returned (?) to Red Rocks Park near Denver (one win-

tered there last year) and stayed Jan. 19+ (D.F.O.). The 250 Snow Buntings at Bear River NWR, UT, Jan. 18 made a large flock for the Region, especially for Utah (PP). Casper had 60–120 Jan. 17–18, Yellowstone had 2 reports of one-two, and five were at Jackson Res., CO, Jan. 4. Single Yellow-headed Blackbirds wintered at Colorado City and Pueblo.

A Purple Finch stayed at Walsh, CO, Dec. 3–Jan. 4 (†JnlT, ph. SM). Several Red Crossbill flocks wintered in the mountains from Logan to Boulder, and Yellowstone reported a White-winged Crossbill twice in January (TM). Casper reported the most Com. Redpolls: 100 Feb. 17. A few wintered there, and Sheridan and n. Colorado reported three. Pine Siskins returned to normal numbers, it seemed, with many reports of 10–100 from Cedar City north and east to Ft. Collins and Sheridan. A flock of 20 Lesser Goldfinches stopped Jan. 4 in a Glenwood Springs, CO, yard (†VZ).

**Corrigendum:** Withdraw the report of Nevada's first nesting Com. Loons (*AB* 45(5):1141). Since the mother had six young riding her back, loons usually have only two young, and the observer was inexperienced and did not provide a convincing written description, the report lacks adequate backup for a first state nesting record (JT).

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## SOUTHWEST REGION Arizona

*David Stejskal and  
Gary H. Rosenberg*

This winter was characterized by mild temperatures that lasted into December and by heavier-than-normal rainfall throughout the state. The mild temperatures most likely account for the number of lingering insectivores in the southern portion of the state into December. Certainly a testimony to the mild winter was the overwintering of Eared Trogons in the Huachuca Mountains, providing the first definite winter records for the United States. The most exciting event was discovery of the United States' first Blue Mockingbird, which created quite a dilemma for some in the birdwatching community—i.e., those few people who did not respect landowner rights. It was on private property. Fortunately, the bird was later relocated and observable from the public road adjacent to the property, allowing many birders to enjoy it.

**Abbreviations:** BTA (*Boyce Thompson Arboretum*); LCR (*Lower Colorado River*); PAP (*Pinal Air Park*); SPR (*San Pedro River*); STP (*Sewage Treatment Plant*); VOC (*Village of Oak Creek*).

#### LOONS TO MERGANSERS

A Red-throated Loon at Bill Williams Delta, L. Havasu, Dec. 4 (JK) represents only the 10th Arizona record, with all but 3 of the records found on L. Havasu. The only Pacific Loon reports came from the LCR, where rare but regular; one was at Cibola NWR Dec. 7 (TC, DT), another on L. Havasu Dec. 7 (TC, DT). Outstanding was a Red-necked Grebe on L. Havasu Feb. 22–23 (†TC *et al.*); there were only 2 previous records, both on LCR reservoirs. Very rare away from the LCR was a single Horned Grebe at Gilbert Dec. 13 (SGa) and up to two at Fountain Hills through January (m.ob.). Eight W. Grebe records came from scattered s. Arizona locations; the most significant sighting came from Roper Lake SP s. of Safford Feb. 4 (GM).

There are few Arizona winter records for Am. White Pelican away from the LCR, so the number in *Maricopa* this winter was surprising: 32 at L. Pleasant Dec. 6 (B. Glenn), two on Roosevelt L. Dec. 10 (H. Messing), and 15–35 at PRD through January (TC, L. Hatcher *et al.*). Four along the LCR n. of Ehrenberg Feb. 15 (PS) possibly were early migrants. An imm. Double-crested Cormorant remained at Kino Springs near Nogales through the period, where it was often reported as a Neotropical. This illustrates the difficulty in differentiating these 2 when only one is present. One–five Neotropical Cormorants were at Patagonia L. through Feb. 18 (m.ob.); the vast majority of Arizona



**Cape May Warbler at Boulder, Colorado, on February 9, 1992. Photograph/David Leatherman.**

records are from this locality. White-faced Ibis is a scarce winter visitor in s. Arizona away from the LCR, where it is rare but regular; up to four were at Gilbert through January (SGa); one was in s.w. Phoenix in late January (M. Larson).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continue to winter in the Phoenix area, with 35 at Chandler Jan. 15 and six at Gilbert Jan. 29 (both SGa). More than the usual number of Tundra Swans were reported, with scattered individuals in the Phoenix area in early December, one at Willcox Dec. 7 (R. Dorrance, R. Machover), one in Tucson Dec. 10 (B. Lyon), one in Page Springs throughout January (B. Phillips *et al.*), and four at Snyder Hills STP near Tucson Jan. 2–3, with one remaining until Jan. 5 (J. Druik *et al.*). A single “Blue” Goose was reported from Black Mesa Feb. 24 (CL), apparently representing the first record of this Snow Goose color morph from n. Arizona. Only two Ross’ Geese were found: one at Gilbert all winter (m.ob.) and one with two Snow Geese at Gila Farms Pond Jan. 14–23 (RBr, A. Spenser). Rare but regular in winter, single Greater White-fronted Geese were at Sun Lakes, Chandler, late December–Jan. 10 (M. Scott *et al.*) and at Willcox Jan. 11 (GW). Although Brant is

a regular winter visitor in the Gulf of California, its Arizona status has remained that of only casual occurrence, with fewer than 15 records for the state and only one in the past 10 years. Multiple sightings in the Phoenix area were exceptional, with one on the Verde R. at Ft. McDowell Dec. 11–14 (W. Beall *et al.*, ph. SGa) and another (or the same?) about 25 mi SW at Chandler Jan. 7 (ph. M. Scott).

An unusual concentration of 30+ wintering Cinnamon Teal was at Chandler Jan. 5 (TC, DT). Five reports of Eur. Wigeon (all males) were received from the Phoenix area: one at Scottsdale through January (m.ob., ph. SGa, SF); one returned to the Phoenix Zoo Dec. 4 and remained through January (R. Jones, H. Messing); another was at a different location in Scottsdale Dec. 6–January (SGa, RBr, *et al.*); one was along the Salt R. e. of Phoenix Dec. 16 (D. Pearson, RW); and one was at Sun Lakes in Chandler Jan. 10–15 (*fide* SGa).

Scarce away from the LCR in winter, two Greater Scaup were reported: one was at Snyder Hill STP Jan. 1 (M. Stevenson), and another was at Scottsdale Jan. 21+ (BD, L. Hatcher *et al.*). Always a surprise away from their usual wintering areas on the LCR, a ♂ Barrow’s Goldeneye was at Prescott Dec. 15 (†W. Anderson). At least one of the two Oldsquaw found at Snyder Hill STP in November was found shot Nov. 30; the other also appeared wounded from a gunshot. The only true winter report came from Lee’s Ferry Feb. 22 (CL). The ♂ Surf Scoter found at Lee’s Ferry in October was still present Feb. 22 (CL). No fewer than 15 Hooded Mergansers were reported statewide. An unusually high concentration of 300+ Common Mergansers were at Arrowhead Ranch in n.w. Phoenix late December–January. Five ♂ Red-breasted Mergansers were at Parker Dam Feb. 22 (TC *et al.*), where rare but regular. However, the four individuals reported from s. Arizona were more unusual: a female at Patagonia L. Dec. 7 (G. Hummel), a male in n.w. Phoenix Dec. 29 (TC, DT), a female at Chandler Jan.

5–10 (TC, DT), and another male at Patagonia L. Jan. 30–Feb. 18 (PL, SF, TC).

#### VULTURES TO TERNS

For the 2nd winter in a row, Black Vulture was in s.w. Phoenix, where this species used to be a regular visitor: an injured bird was seen there Jan. 16 (*fide* BD). Black-shouldered Kite continues to be a sparse but widespread visitor (if not permanent resident) to s. Arizona; no fewer than seven were reported Dec. 7–Feb. 20. A Harris’ Hawk at Skull Valley, w. of Prescott, Jan. 1 (VM) was n. and w. of its normal Arizona range. A Red-shouldered Hawk wintered in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 1–Feb. 9 (TC *et al.*); there are now at least 16 Arizona records, and it has been recorded 5 out of the last 6 winters. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk was well described along the Verde R. below Bartlett Dam. Feb. 13 (†L. Armstrong *et al.*); there are only a handful of winter records for s. Arizona and only about 20 records in all for the state. A “Harlan’s” form of Red-tailed Hawk, an extremely rare winter visitor, was reported s.w. of Phoenix along the Salt R. Dec. 1 (TC). Crested Caracara is a rare resident in s.w. Arizona and is found infrequently outside its known state breeding range. Two single birds in n. Phoenix Dec. 6–23 (*fide* TC, ph. B. Van Pelt) and another in Arivaca Dec. 28 (EVW, L. VanderWerf) were of interest.

Surprisingly, two Clapper Rails along the Gila R. near Buckeye Dec. 19 (RBr, *fide* D. Todd) represented the first winter *Maricopa* record. Three Com. Moorhens at Roper Lake SP near Safford Feb. 4 (GM) provided probably the first local record; the species is generally scarce and local in s.e. Arizona (although common in appropriate habitat in the s.w. portion of the state). A flock of 110 Sandhill Cranes over the Whetstone Mts. Feb. 12 (GM) was well away from known state wintering areas.

Four Mt. Plovers w. of Gila Bend Dec. 7 (PS) may represent the first record in this area since the late 1970s (it was formerly the most reliable area in the state to see this species).

Still a rare winter bird in the Phoenix area, two Am. Avocets were present throughout the period at Gilbert (SGa). A Greater Yellowlegs at Willow L. near Prescott Dec. 14–16 (CT) provided the first local winter record. Unprecedented for winter was a Sanderling at Chandler STP Jan. 14 through the end of the period (RBr, A. Spenser; ph. SGA). This is surprising considering their regularity in winter at both the Salton Sea and the n. Gulf of California. Rare but regular in winter in s. Arizona, W. Sandpiper was reported in about average numbers, with one in Green Valley Dec. 20 (EVW), three in Tucson Dec. 22 (KK, LK), one at Snyder Hill STP Jan. 1 (M. Stevenson), two at Gilbert Jan.



1-11 (TC, DT), and one at Gila Farms Pond Jan. 24 (TC, DT). An unusually high winter concentration of 225 Long-billed Dowitchers was at Gilbert STP Jan. 11 (TC, DT). On the heels of the unusually large number of Red Phalaropes in the fall, two additional birds were at Cibola NWR Dec. 7 (TC, DT) and another was at Willcox Dec. 19 (LD). It is our opinion that these records represent a continuation of the fall invasion into the Southwest as opposed to true winter records.

Two Bonaparte's Gulls, an irregular winter visitor, were at Casa Grande Jan. 6 (N. Boyagen). At least 100 California Gulls were reported s. of Davis Dam, LCR, Feb. 23 (TC); historically large concentrations wintered at this locality, but smaller numbers have been present in recent years. A group of seven Forster's Tern in Tucson Dec. 6 (J. Osborn) represents one of only a handful of winter records away from the Colorado R.

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

Six Inca Doves at Skull Valley w. of Prescott Jan. 1-20 (B. Pearson) were outside their normal range; this species, however, has a tendency to wander or disperse in fall and winter. Another species prone to wander at this season is Com. Ground-Dove; extralimital records this winter include two at Skull Valley Nov. 17-Jan. 8 (B. Pearson, CT) and four near that locality Feb. 6 (B. Pearson). This is the first winter in 5 years that we did not receive at least one Ruddy Ground-Dove report. Unprecedented for winter in Arizona and casual anywhere in North America at this season was a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson Dec. 22 (KK). Two Greater Roadrunners along the Little Colorado R. near Cameron Jan. 26 (CL) and 2-3 throughout the period in Flagstaff (*fide* JC) were both from areas in the state where seldom reported. Possibly related to the mild temperatures was the finding of a recently dead **Elf Owl** at Glendale, w. of Phoenix, Dec. 18 (*fide* TC); this represents one of very few winter records for the state.

A **Violet-crowned Hummingbird** attempted to winter in Bisbee the 2nd straight year and was last seen Jan. 17 (JWh). The small population that has nested locally near Patagonia in recent years arrived at their usual feeders by the early date of Feb. 15 (S. Mlodinow). Two different *Selasphorus* sp. (probably Rufous) were at Portal feeders Dec. 5 (DJ), with one remaining to Dec. 21. Last fall's **Eared Trogon** "invasion" continued into winter, with another sighting of one, in Scheelite Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Jan. 28-29 (R. Smith). The pair that attempted nesting in Upper Ramsey Canyon last fall apparently overwintered successfully; the pair was reported sporadically through the period beginning in early February (*fide* JWh), providing the first definite winter record. An **Elegant Trogon** in Garden Canyon, Huachuca Mts., Jan. 9 (R. Smith) provided one of the few recent winter records away from Sycamore Canyon into the Pajarito Mts w of Nogales. No fewer than *eight*

Green Kingfishers were reported, with records from Nogales, Arivaca, Sonoita Cr., and the San Pedro R. In the last few years this species has apparently become resident on several of s.e. Arizona's perennial streams.

As many as two Lewis' Woodpeckers were in Tucson Dec. 19-31 (R. Hasseth *et al.*) but were not reported from any other s.e. Arizona localities. Arizona's 6th **Red-headed Woodpecker**, which appeared Nov. 21 near Continental, was present in the same tree throughout the period (m.ob.). During the winter, the juvenal-plumaged bird molted *entirely* into a stunning ad.-plumaged bird. There was some rumor of a 2nd individual, particular when it was pointed out that it normally(?) takes 2 years to acquire entirely white patches in the secondaries (juveniles have 2 widely spaced black bars on white secondaries). But Kenn Kaufman observed this individual in January in the process of molting the secondaries. Therefore we discount the two-bird theory. A juv. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Dec. 1 at BTA (CT *et al.*) remained through the period. This species appears to be a rare but regular fall and winter visitor. The status of Red-breasted Sapsucker is similar; this winter one was reported from Ahwatukee, s. of Phoenix, Dec. 29 (PB); another was in Tempe Jan. 13 (D. Laush).

#### FLYCATCHERS TO VIREOS

A N. Beardless-Tyrannulet at BTA Jan. 19 (CT) was well n. of normal winter range in Arizona but was not unprecedented. Two E. Phoebe reports were received, about average; one was along Sonoita Cr. Dec. 5 (J. Osborn) and another was at Cook's L., San Pedro R., Feb. 27 (TG, D. Laush). A late "Western" type Flycatcher was along Sonoita Cr. Dec. 1 (PS); few winter sight records of this complex have been identified to species, although the single winter specimen for the state is assignable to the Baja California subspecies of Pacific-slope Flycatcher. A late Hammond's Flycatcher along the Salt R. in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 1 (TC) was slightly n. of normal wintering range. Slightly more impressive was a Dusky Flycatcher identified along the Verde R. near Clarkdale Feb. 12 (CT); there were no previous winter records from this region of the state. More Gray Flycatchers than usual were seen throughout s. Arizona w. to Cabeza Prieta NWR, probably due to the mild winter. A late Cassin's Kingbird was reported from Green Valley Dec. 25 (EVW).

Several Cactus Wrens were near Sedona in late January-late February (W. Turner, J. Searle, P. Lindberg, *fide* AG). This species may be expanding its Arizona range to the north; these records may represent the first *Coconino* sightings. A Black-tailed Gnatcatcher nest at Sells Feb. 27 (T. Huels, GM) was considered very early. A Varied Thrush at BTA Jan. 12-25 (J. Bartley *et al.*) was the only one reported. A Gray Catbird at BTA Dec. 15 (CT *et al.*) remained throughout the period; there are only a few previous winter records.

#### S.A.

On the Patagonia Christmas Bird Count Dec. 21, Bob Norton and Deb Treadway discovered a **Blue Mockingbird** (*Melanotis caerulescens*), one of the most exciting birds found in Arizona in recent years and the first documented record for N. America n. of Mexico (ph. DTr, GR). The bird was seen by several other observers the day of the count; but because it had been located on private property (with special CBC permission), it was not seen again until Feb. 15, when it was rediscovered and viewable from a public road. This Mexican endemic ranges as far north as c. Sonora (about 110 mi s. of the border); in the n. portion of its range, it is highly restricted to dense riparian undergrowth. There are first-hand reports of Blue Mockingbirds seen in cages in Nogales, but this individual showed absolutely no abnormal feather wear, as would be evident if this bird had recently been held in a cage. There is at least one unconfirmed sighting for Arizona from Guadalupe Canyon, an area that is contiguous with the Yaqui drainage of n. Sonora, from where the mockingbird is known. Although the identification to species is not in doubt, the ABC is nonetheless reviewing this record with respect to origin.

Three Brown Thrashers were around the state this winter; one at Teec Nos Pos in December (RN, DTr), one e. of Phoenix Dec. 16 (R. Aylsworth, N. Carroll), and another along Sonoita Cr. Jan. 11 (JC *et al.*). North of its usual Arizona range was a Crissal Thrasher along the Little Colorado R. near Cameron Jan. 26 (CL). Although there are a few extralimital records for this region of the state, this species is not known to nest or winter locally. Arizona's first "winter" **White-eyed Vireo** was found dead (but seen alive the previous week) at the Phoenix Zoo Dec. 7 (K. Ingram, TC); there were only 8 previous state records.

#### WARBLERS TO ORIOLES

The ♂ **Golden-winged Warbler** found in late November at Ramsey Canyon was last seen Dec. 28 (†JWh *et al.*), providing the 2nd winter record for the state and only the 2nd or 3rd winter record for the U.S. No fewer than six Chestnut-sided Warblers were found around s. Arizona, with one in Phoenix Nov. 30 (*fide* SGa), one along the Salt R. in s.w. Phoenix Dec. 1 (TC), another near there Dec. 16 (SGa), two along the Verde River e. of Phoenix Dec. 16-Jan. 10 (TC, SGa, RN), and one along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson Dec. 22-Feb. 8 (DS *et al.*). As usual, a couple of Black-and-white Warblers were in the state, with one remaining at Ramsey Canyon until Dec. 16 (JWh *et al.*) and another along the Verde R. e. of Phoenix Dec. 16-Feb. 2 (TC, DTr). A **Worm-eating Warbler** frequented Reid



**Blue Mockingbird along Sonoita Creek near Patagonia, Arizona, on December 21, 1991.**  
Photograph/Gary H. Rosenberg.

Park, Tucson, Jan. 12–20 (P. McCrory *et al.*); this is only the 3rd true winter record. This year's Louisiana Waterthrush came from Pena Blanca L. Dec. 5 (R. Machover); this species is virtually annual in the mountains of s.e. Arizona in winter. A few early Wilson's Warblers were seen in February, with one along the San Pedro R. near Sierra Vista Feb. 23 (PH) and two at Nogales Feb. 23 (T. Lamb).

A ♂ Summer Tanager was at Prescott Dec. 19–28 (ph. R. & E. Reek), and another male was along Sonoita Cr. near Patagonia Dec. 21 (RBr); this species is at best a casual winter visitor. A singing Rufous-winged Sparrow at the BTA Jan. 20–23 (CT) provided the first record of this "southeastern" Arizona specialty from n. of the Gila R. Of local interest were two Black-chinned Sparrows s. of Prescott Dec. 15–Feb. 19 (CT). Eight Fox Sparrows (about average) were reported in the winter. Only three Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported this season, with one at Patagonia Dec. 21, one near Portal Dec. 21 (T. & L. Gates), and another (or the same) there Feb. 14 (D. Sonneborn). Rare but regular in winter, Harris' Sparrows were reported from Black Mesa Jan. 29 (CL), near Mesa mid-December–late January (m.ob.), and two along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson Feb. 3 (D. Cassian). The Lapland Longspur in November in the San Rafael Grasslands was seen again Dec. 17 (B. Lyons).

Possibly only 2nd and 3rd winter records were single ♀ Orchard Orioles along the Santa Cruz R. in Tucson Dec. 22 (ph. GR *et al.*) and at Fountain Hills e. of Phoenix Jan. 2–25 (ph. J. & M. Sommers, ph. SF, m.ob.). A ♂ **Streak-backed Oriole** at Cook's L. on the San Pedro R. Feb. 27 was the *third* year in a row that a male was at this locality.

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## New Mexico

### Sartor O. Williams III

An El Niño winter, characterized by relatively mild, moist conditions over most of New Mexico, was likely responsible for many species lingering late, returning northward early and/or overwintering in unusually high numbers, as well as for early breeding activity by several others. Adding to the interest, the "Patagonia Picnic Table Effect" came into play at Conchas Lake in eastern New Mexico, providing two new state—and several new local—records.

**Abbreviations:** Bitter L. (*Bitter Lake NWR*); Bosque Refuge (*Bosque del Apache NWR*); CCNP (Carlsbad Caverns Natl Park); EBL (*Elephant Butte L.*); LVNWR (*Las Vegas NWR*); RGNC (*Rio Grande Nature Center, Albuquerque*); Zuni (*Zuni Indian Reservation*).

### LOONS TO MERGANSERS

A large, pale loon with three Commons at Conchas L. Dec. 15 (JV) was subsequently verified as New Mexico's first **Yellow-billed Loon** Jan. 22 (CR *et al.*, ph. LG); it remained through February and was well documented by many observers. Common Loons were conspicuous from the Rio Grande eastward, including up to eight at Conchas L. Jan. 25 (SW *et al.*), seven at EBL February 1 & 15 (JP), one at Las Cruces Dec. 1–17 (GE, E. Wootten), and four near Loving Dec. 31. (SW *et al.*). Noteworthy were at least two Pacific Loons at Conchas L. Feb. 20 (LG, TH) and one–two at EBL Jan. 16 (LG, TH) through Feb. 15 (JP). Horned Grebes made a good showing, with singles at Las Vegas Dec. 22 (CR, CS) and Bosque Refuge Dec. 8 (PRS), several at Conchas L. January–February, including 11 there Feb. 15 (CR, JP), and

two–eight at EBL Jan. 4–Feb. 20 (v.o.). A possible **Red-necked Grebe** was at Conchas L. Jan. 26 (PRS *et al.*) and Feb. 20 (TH, LG) but was missed by most who sought it; the species remains unverified by specimen or photograph in New Mexico. *Aechmophorus* grebes again wintered in numbers at EBL, where over 1000 were counted from the air Jan. 13 (SOW); northerly were three Clark's at Española Dec. 29 (*fide* BL) and one near Las Vegas Dec. 22 (*fide* GB) while westerly were two Westerns and one Clark's at Bill Evans L. Dec. 4–10 (EL, RF).

Lingering Am. White Pelicans included 148 at Caballo L. Dec. 29 (BZ *et al.*), with at least 30 there through January (PES, CS), and 17 at Brantley L. Dec. 24 (SW *et al.*). Moderate numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were in the Rio Grande and lower Rio Pecos valleys through the period; some at Caballo L. sported nuptial plumes by Feb. 27 (JH). Neotropics were confined to the Rio Grande from Bosque Refuge southward (v.o.) except for one at Bill Evans L. Dec. 13 & 28 (ph. RF). Unusual for winter were two Cattle Egrets at Las Cruces Jan. 19–20 (S. Tweit). Early were two White-faced Ibises at Bosque Refuge Feb. 1–15 (v.o.).

The only Tundra Swan was at Bosque Refuge Dec. 21 (JP). Peripheral Greater White-fronted Geese included 58 at McKinney Flats, *Hidalgo*, Feb. 15 (AC, NMC). Ross' Geese away from usual concentrations included two at RGNC Dec. 8 (TB) & 15 (HS) and three at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ *et al.*). Wood Ducks were in unprecedented numbers at RGNC, with over 200 Jan. 12 (PES); southerly were four at Silver City Dec. 14 (RF *et al.*) and singles at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ) and Feb. 8 (*fide* CS) and at Rattlesnake Springs in February (SW, BV). A ♂ **Eurasian Wigeon** was at Cass Crow, *Eddy*, Dec. 31 (SW).

Greater Scaup were more plentiful than usual, with well-detailed birds including two at Maxwell Feb. 8 (CR), five at LVNWR Dec. 7 (JP, CB), and Feb. 5 & 25 (CR), three at Conchas L. Jan. 25 (JP, AK), and three at EBL Jan. 16 (LG, TH). A ♂ **Oldsquaw** at Conchas L. Jan. 23 (LG, CR) was still there Feb. 22 (JP). The only scoter was a White-winged at EBL Jan. 4–Feb. 15 (JP *et al.*). For the 3rd consecutive year Barrow's Goldeneyes wintered on the San Juan R. below Navajo Dam, with seven Dec. 26 (DC) and 10 Feb. 22 (ph DC). Hooded Mergansers were widely reported, including 11 at Maxwell NWR Feb. 8 (CR), eight at Clayton L. Dec. 28 (CR, MM), and 12 at Storrie L. Dec. 24 (CR); westerly were two–three in the Gila Valley Dec. 13 & 28 (RF, EL). Low water at Caballo L. apparently favored Com. Mergansers, as an estimated 10,000 wintered December (BZ) and January (CS).

### EAGLES TO GULLS

In spite of the warmer winter, 308 Bald Eagles were counted on standard aerial transects Jan. 13–15 (SOW *et al.*), the 3rd highest total since the surveys began in the late



**Orchard Oriole at Fountain Hills, Arizona, on January 23, 1992. The bird spent much of the winter at this feeder. Photograph/Shawnee Finnegan.**

1970s. Also noteworthy were 10 in *Harding* (*fide* W. Cook). Both Bald Eagle nests known to have been active in recent years (one each in *Colfax* and *Sierra*) were again occupied by February (v.o.). Early (or wintering?) was a Com. Black-Hawk at Glenwood Feb. 21 (M. Gates, *fide* JH). Six Harris' Hawks were at 3 *Hidalgo* sites Feb. 15 (EL), including three at a nest; numbers were rebounding in *Eddy* (*fide* SW), with 15 at Loving Dec. 31 (SW *et al.*). A *Zone-tailed Hawk*, casual in winter, was near Gila Jan. 22 (SM, *fide* RF). Ferruginous Hawks were widespread and relatively numerous in the east and south (m.ob.). Rough-leggeds were widespread in the east in low to moderate numbers, with a high of 10 at Angel Fire Jan. 30 (CR, SBa); southerly were singles in the Peloncillo Mts. Dec. 29 (RS) and Animas Valley Jan. 8 (AC, NMC), and one-two at Brantley L., Loving, and CCNP in December (SW *et al.*). Over 20 Merlins were reported statewide, including one east to Stead, *Union*, Feb. 6 (JH, JV). Unusual was a Peregrine in the Gila Valley Dec. 7 & 28 (*fide* RF). A pair of Prairies was on territory in the Peloncillo Mts. by Jan. 28 (SOW).

Ten Wild Turkeys were in the Clayton area Dec. 28 (CR, MM), where rarely reported. Twelve N. Bobwhites at Roswell Dec. 14 (SBI *et al.*) was high for there. Very unusual were three Com. Moorhens at Zuni Dec. 15 (*fide* JT); elsewhere there were seven at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ *et al.*) and five at Loving Dec. 31 (SW, T. Hines). Early Sandhill Cranes were three at Maxwell NWR Feb. 8 (CR); over 17,000 were at Grulla NWR, *Roosevelt*, Feb. 13 (CR), but numbers were down in the Gila Valley (*fide* RF).

Lingering/wintering shorebirds included nine Greater Yellowlegs at Bosque Refuge Dec. 14 (SC *et al.*) with others there Jan-

uary-February (v.o.), 24 at Bitter L. Dec. 14 (SBI *et al.*), and moderate numbers at L. Grande, including up to 75 there Dec. 28 (SW *et al.*). Single Lessers were at Bosque Refuge Dec. 14 (LG) and at Loving Dec. 31 (SW *et al.*). Unusual were three Dunlins each at Bosque Refuge Feb. 16 (ph. LG) and Bitter L. Dec. 9 (CB). Noteworthy were 80 Long-billed Dowitchers at Bosque Refuge Feb. 1 (JP, DH).

The loon attraction at Conchas L. was likely responsible for the discovery of New Mexico's first verified *Mew Gull*, an adult present Feb. 22-24 (JP *et al.*; ph. G. Lasley, LG). Northerly were two Bonaparte's Gulls at Conchas L. Jan. 26 (CR *et al.*); small numbers of Bonaparte's were at EBL Dec. 29-Feb. 6 (v.o.), and one was at Brantley L. Dec. 24 (SW *et al.*). A first-winter probable Thayer's Gull was at EBL Jan. 16-Feb. 22 (LG, CS, JP).

#### DOVES TO FLYCATCHERS

Noteworthy were two White-winged Doves at Albuquerque all winter (AS). One-three Incas were at Bosque Refuge Dec. 14 (SC *et al.*) and Feb. 2 (DC *fide* PRS); 49 were at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ *et al.*), six near Alamogordo Dec. 28 (RJ *et al.*), and a few at Carlsbad (*fide* SW). The only Com. Ground-Dove was in the Animas Valley Jan. 22 (AC, NMC).

Greater Roadrunners were reportedly scarce in the Gila-Silver City area (*fide* RF); at Las Cruces a pair was incubating by late February (GE). Single Whiskered Screech-Owls were calling in two Peloncillo Mts. canyons Jan. 27-28 (SOW), indicating winter residency there. Fifteen White-throated Swifts were at Caballo Dam Dec. 29 (BZ *et al.*); early were "many" at Glenwood Feb. 26 (D. McKnight). One-two Anna's Hum-

mingbirds were at Las Cruces feeders mid-December to mid-January (*fide* CS, BZ), where more or less regular in winter in recent years.

A Red-headed Woodpecker was at Mesilla Dec. 15 (BZ) to Jan. 4 (GE), the 2nd consecutive winter there. Highly unusual were one to two ♂ *Red-bellied Woodpeckers* near Las Vegas Dec. 22 (CS); the species was verified in the state only last year. Among the better-detailed probable Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were two at Conchas L. Jan. 23 (CR, LG) plus singles at Corrales (*fide* HS), Bosque Refuge (v.o.), and Las Cruces (BZ). Late were two Red-naped at Tesuque Dec. 15 (CR). Southerly was a Downy Woodpecker at Bosque Refuge Feb. 27 (RT, PB).

An apparent Hammond's Flycatcher was at Percha Dam Dec. 29 (ph. BZ) to Feb. 22 (ph. LG); a possible Dusky also was there Jan. 4 (JP) plus another possible at Glenwood Feb. 25 (JH). Northerly Black Phoebes were at Española Dec. 29 (PI *fide* BL) and Cochiti L. Feb. 15 (PI), while northerly Say's were one-two at Zuni Dec. 11 and Jan. 29 (DC) and one at Cochiti L. Jan. 19 (BV). Westerly E. Phoebes were one at Gila Dec. 28 (SM, *fide* RF) and one-two at Percha Dam Dec. 29-Feb. 15 (BZ, JP). Highly unusual was a *Cassin's Kingbird* in the Gila Valley Jan. 9 & 23 (RF), apparently only the 2nd winter report for the state.

#### SWALLOWS TO WRENS

Early were two Tree Swallows at Bosque Refuge Feb. 16 (LG, C. Davis, *fide* PRS) and four at Mangas Springs Feb. 21 (RF). Unusual were two N. Rough-wingeds at Caballo L. Dec. 29 (*fide* BZ) while early were five at Bill Evans L. Feb. 24 (EL). Cave Swallows were at CCNP Jan. 23, the "earliest ever" (*fide* SW).

Single Gray Jays were near Red River Jan. 30 (CR, SBa) and Feb. 8 (PRS). Several Blue Jays found their way west to the Rio Grande corridor, including at least two at Santa Fe in mid-December (*fide* PI), one-two at Corrales Jan. 5-Feb. 10 (BV, TB), and singles at Albuquerque Dec. 15 (*fide* HS), Caballo Dam Dec. 29 (BZ), and Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ, BV). Pinyon Jays remained conspicuous in the north through the period, especially in the Santa Fe area, where 1536 were counted Dec. 15 (PI *et al.*); easterly were eight at Conchas L. Jan. 25 (SW *et al.*) while southwesterly were six at Pleasanton Feb. 25 (JH), 91 at Silver City Dec. 14 (RF *et al.*), and 31 in the Mimbres Valley Feb. 25 (EL). Peripheral Black-billed Magpies were singles at Chico Wash, *Sandoval*, Dec. 27 (JH) and Corrales Jan. 26 (JP, TB). Noteworthy Am. Crows included two at Conchas L. Feb. 15 (CR *et al.*) and two at Glenwood Feb. 25 (JH). Seven Chihuahuan Ravens were at 2 Albuquerque sites Dec. 15 (*fide* HS); a flock of 500 was on the plains near Vaughn, *Guadalupe*, Feb. 27 (CR *et al.*). Unusual was a Com. Raven at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ).

Three Black-capped Chickadees were below Navajo Dam Dec. 26 (ph. DC). Single submontane Mountains were at Corrales,

RGNC, and Percha Dam (JP). Easterly were six Bridled Titmice in the Caballo L. area Dec. 29 (GE, BZ). A Verdin was carrying nest material at Deer Creek, Animas Mts., Jan. 31 (AC, NMC). Notable highs for Bushtits were 242 at Zuni Dec. 15 (JT *et al.*) and 270 in the Peloncillo Mts. Dec. 29 (RS *et al.*).

Noteworthy was the discovery, well n. of usual range, of up to 11 Cactus Wrens in *San Miguel*s. of Conchas L., carrying nest material Feb. 15 and singing Feb. 23, when 5 nest structures were counted (CR). Easterly Canyon Wrens were six near Clayton Dec. 28 (CR, MM) and one at Conchas L. Jan. 22 (CR). A probable **Carolina Wren** was heard at Valmora, *Mora*, Jan. 29 (CR). A Winter Wren was at Corrales Feb. 10 (TB), 16 (JP), & 27 (LG, TH); another was at Silver City Jan. 21 (P. Boucher, *fide* RF). A Sedge Wren was at Bosque Refuge Dec. 14 (JP, AK) but not found thereafter. Northerly Marsh Wrens were one near Española Feb. 9 (SBa) and one–two at LVNWR December to early February (CR).

#### KINGLETS TO WARBLERS

Submontane Golden-crowned Kinglets included three at Trujillo Canyon, *San Miguel*, Dec. 26 (CR), one at Albuquerque Feb. 18 (AS), five in salt cedars at Bitter L. Feb. 27 (CR *et al.*), and two at Brantley L. Dec. 24 (SW *et al.*). Low to moderate E. Bluebird numbers invaded the Rio Grande Valley from Española and Santa Fe s. to Las Cruces (m.ob.); elsewhere were one at Watrous Feb. 24 (CR), five in the Gila area Dec. 28 (*fide* RF), 40 at Brantley L. Dec. 24 (SW *et al.*), and a record 205 at CCNP Dec. 14 (SW *et al.*). Both Western and Mountain bluebirds were widespread in generally high numbers, including several hundred of each in the Silver City (*fide* RF) and Peloncillo Mts. (*fide* RS) areas; easterly Mountains were 25 near Clapham, *Union*, Feb. 6 (JH, JV) and one near Texico, *Curry*, Feb. 13 (CR). Easterly were 18 Townsend's Solitaires at Clayton Dec. 28 (CR, MM). A **Rufous-backed Robin** was at a Socorro feeder Dec. 16–Jan. 15 (PB), only the 4th New Mexico report. American Robins were so numerous in the Santa Fe and Albuquerque areas they made local newspapers and TV news; over 1200 were at Santa Fe (PI *et al.*), and over 2600 were at Albuquerque (HS *et al.*) Dec. 15.

Several Sage Thrashers wintered n. of usual (v.o.), including nine at Española Dec. 29 (CR). Westerly Brown Thrashers were singles at Zuni Dec. 15 (JT), near RGNC Jan. 12 (T. Walker *fide* HS), and at Riverside, *Grant*, Jan. 24 (M. Zimmerman *et al.*). Late were two Bendire's Thrashers in the Peloncillo Mts. Dec. 29 (RS), while easterly was a Curve-billed at San Jon, *Quay*, Feb. 13 (CR). An active Crissal Thrasher nest with 2 eggs was at Petroglyph Natl Mon. Feb. 28 (HS). Northerly Phainopeplas were two each at EBL Jan. 11 (JP, DH) and Percha Dam Jan. 4 (JP); easterly was one in the Pecos Valley, *Eddy*, Jan. 28 (SW). Eight N. Shrikes were at 7 northern sites, from Navajo Dam east to



**Yellow-billed Loon at Conchas Lake, New Mexico, on February 2, 1992. First state record. Photograph/Larry Gorbet.**

*Mora* and Las Vegas Dec. 22–Feb. 20 (CR, PRS, SBa); another was at Brantley L. Dec. 24 (SW *et al.*) but not detailed.

Unusual in winter was a Solitary Vireo, probably *cassini*, at Mesilla Dec. 15 (BZ, BV). Hutton's Vireos again were reported in the lower Rio Grande Valley, with singles at Percha Dam Jan. 4 and Feb. 14 (JP), Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ), and Mesilla Jan. 4 (GE). A high of 17 Orange-crowned Warblers was at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (BZ *et al.*). Highly unusual was a ♀ **Townsend's Warbler** at Silver City Jan. 29 (EL). Late was a Com. Yellowthroat heard at Zuni Dec. 13 (JT).

#### CARDINALS TO CARDUELINES

A ♂ N. Cardinal was near Separ Dec. 7 (EL). Northerly Pyrrhuloxias included two in the Gila Valley Dec. 28 (RF *et al.*), four at Bosque Refuge Dec. 14 (SC *et al.*), one there Jan. 26 (BV), and one at Bitter L. Feb. 27 (CR *et al.*); Las Cruces had a high of 102 Dec. 15 (BZ *et al.*). A ♀ possible "eastern" Rufous-sided Towhee was at Socorro Dec. 4–Jan. 31 (PB); the race is unverified in New Mexico.

A Cassin's Sparrow was singing in *Eddy* on the early date of Feb. 22 (SW). Northerly Rufous-crowneds were two at Trujillo Canyon Dec. 26 (CR), with one there Jan. 26 (*fide* PRS); another was singing at Conchas L. Feb. 22 (CR *et al.*). Noteworthy Field Sparrows were singles at Conchas L. in February (SBa, CR, LG) and at Sumner L. Feb. 13 (CR). A Brewer's Sparrow was at Petroglyph Natl

Mon. Jan. 25 (HS), where rare in winter; several Black-throateds also wintered north to the Albuquerque area (HS). Unusual was a Lark Sparrow at Zuni Dec. 15 and Jan. 15 (ph. DC), as were seven at Las Cruces Dec. 15 (*fide* BZ). Early were four Sage Sparrows singing near Bloomfield Feb. 20 (CR, PRS). Single Golden-crowned Sparrows were at Española Dec. 29 (*fide* BL) and at Corrales Jan. 5 (BV) through Feb. 26 (TB *et al.*); late was a dark-lored White-crowned at Zuni Dec. 15 (JT). Single Harris' Sparrows were west to Zuni Dec. 12 (JT) and the Gila Valley Dec. 29 (RF); two were at Albuquerque Dec. 15 (HS), while a banded one returned to Las Cruces for its 4th winter there (CS). Lapland Longspurs were found e. of the mountains, with eight at Maxwell NWR Feb. 8 (CR), one–three in the Las Vegas area Dec. 5–Feb. 22 (CR *et al.*), and two–four at Moriarty Dec. 4–Jan. 23 (CB, PES).

Eastern Meadowlarks were singing at Petroglyph Natl Mon. by Feb. 24 (HS). Rarely reported, two probable Rusty Blackbirds were at Rattlesnake Springs Dec. 3 (CB).



**Adult Mew Gull at Conchas Lake, New Mexico, on February 23, 1992. First documented state record. Photograph/Greg W. Lasley.**

Northerly was a Brown-headed Cowbird at Zuni Dec. 15 (JT); seven wintered at LVNWR (*fide* CR).

Sizable flocks of Rosy Finches, most identified as Brown-capped, were in *Rio Arriba*, *Taos*, and *Colfax* January–February, including 350 near Tres Piedras Feb. 9 (SBa), 75 at Red River Feb. 8 (PRS), and 250 at Angel Fire Jan. 30 (CR, SBa). Pine Grosbeaks are irregular in the Sandia Mts., so noteworthy were three at Sandia Crest Jan. 16–18 (JP, ph. LG) and six near The Prow Feb. 27 (HS). Red Crossbills were notably scarce, with re-



ports only from Trujillo Canyon Dec. 26 (CR) and Jan. 26 (PRS) and Los Alamos Jan. 16 (PRS). Pine Siskins were widespread in low to moderate numbers, including east to Clayton and the lower Pecos Valley (m.ob.); exceptional were 160 at L. Huerfano, *San Miguel*, Feb. 23 (CR) and "large flocks" in the Silver City area (*fide* RF). Northerly Lesser Goldfinches were five at Zuni Dec. 13 (DC) and two at Petroglyph N.M. Feb. 1 (HS). Moderate numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were in or near the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mts.; elsewhere there were five at Navajo Dam Feb. 20 (CR, PRS), 15 at Zuni Jan. 11 (DC), one—two at Albuquerque Dec. 15 and Jan. 18 (JP *et al.*), eight in the Sandia Mts. (K. Anderson *et al.*), and six at Post Office Canyon, Peloncillo Mts., Dec. 29–30 (RS, CS), the latter a local first.

**Corrigendum:** An imm. tern collected at Santa Rosa L. Sept. 23 and reported last period as a Common has proven to be New Mexico's first Arctic Tern (*fide* JH).

**Observers:** Sy Baldwin, Pat Basham, Sherry Bixler, Charles Black, George Blanchard, Terry Brownell, David Cleary, Steve Cox, Alan Craig, Narca Moore Craig, Gordon Ewing, Ralph Fisher, Larry Gorbet, John Hubbard, David Huges, Tyler Huning, Pat Insley, Robert Jenness, Andy Kraynik, Burton Lewis, Eugene Lewis, Steve MacDonald, Marty Mayfield, John Parmeter, Christopher Rustay, Catherine Sandell, Robert Scholes, Hart Schwarz, Patricia R. Snider, Paul E. Steel, Alan Swain, Ross Teuber, John Trochet, Brad Vaughn, James Vaught, Steve West, S.O. Williams, Barry Zimmer.—SARTOR O. WILLIAMS III, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, P. O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504.

## ALASKA REGION

*T. G. Tobish, Jr., and M. E. Isleib*

Even from our relatively sporadic winter observations, it has become clear that Alaska's winter season can be broken into three sections. Depending upon the severity and timing of freezeup, late migrants and semi-hardy lingerers constitute the bulk of interesting records often into early January. Usually Christmas Bird Counts turn up many of these species and others from the next group, which includes noteworthy overwintering species that are discovered or have settled at sites in January. From late January to the period's end (the duller birding period), significant finds are rare and generally limited to a few wandering casual winter species or extremely early migrants. More than perhaps any other season, weather patterns play the most important role in these noteworthy observations and winter records. Winter 1991–1992 had all the signs of an excellent year for a good volume of interesting overwintering, semi-hardy species. But even though there was a scattering of unusual wintering forms, locally heavy snow cover and an early passerine outmigration in September and October likely negated what could have been. Sparrows and other passerines were in below-average numbers while resident passerines and winter waterfowl and raptors were generally noted in above-average counts, at least south of the Alaska Range.

Regionwide mild temperatures allowed for an early, above-average snow accumulation from the central Interior to Cook Inlet and northern Prince William Sound. Snow cover was otherwise below average. The only significant deep cold was reported from the Seward Peninsula and eastern Interior except for late February, when subzero temperatures penetrated to the North Gulf Coast. Indeed, Southcoastal had essentially no subzero periods, and most of Southeast was well above the norm all season.

### LOONS TO WATERFOWL

Although the greater Ketchikan area produces the winter's high Pacific Loon counts, the 420+ gathered near Mountain Pt. Dec. 30 (SCH) was easily the Region's highest ever. This number was nearly four times the 1990 Christmas Bird Count tally for the whole state. Up to 300 could be seen daily, generally in s. Tongass Narrows. Whether these numbers are normal or unique to this season is unknown. A total of four Pied-billed Grebes was noted in the Ketchikan area Dec. 14–Feb. 19 (SCH, DB), the season's only report. Although it has generally been understood that the Region's W. Grebe wintering population was centered in c. Southeast around Sumner Strait and s. Mitkof I., data this season from s. Southeast may suggest otherwise. Large flocks of W. Grebes were concentrated in Tongass Narrows, where a peak count reached 580 Feb

14 (SCH). West of there, 200+ were in Kasaan Bay, e. Prince of Wales I., in mid-December (MAA). Heresay reports also included "large flocks" wintering in protected bays adjacent to Nichols Passage (*fide* SCH).

Five Red-faced Cormorants in Resurrection Bay Dec. 21 (RLS, TGT) was an above-average local count. This form is not uncommon in summer at the mouth of Resurrection Bay. Reports of Great Blue Herons were interesting from Ketchikan, where a local tally of 59 was peak Feb. 14 (SCH). Fall-dispersed Great Blue Herons wintered at the regular sites w. of breeding areas, at Kodiak I (one Feb. 18) (TL) and at Seldovia (six all season) (MM).

Whooper Swan reports came from traditional locales, at Amchitka I., where the peak was seven Jan. 24–29, and Adak I. (three Feb. 10) (JCW, BR, AD). The Kodiak area's first winter and 4th ever Trumpeter Swan was an immature that remained in Kalsin Bay all period (RAM, DWS, †MEI). The Mitkof I Trumpeter count peaked at 61 Dec. 27–Jan. 10 (PJW) at the traditional Blind Slough site. An imm. Snow Goose that wintered on the Stikine R. delta Jan. 15 through the period (PJW) represents Southeast's first and one of few ever in the Region in winter.

Mild weather no doubt contributed to local record Mallard counts at Anchorage, 2775 on Dec. 14 (m.ob.), and in Kachemak Bay, where a local congregation of 1500 in China Poot Bay in mid-December grew to at least 5000 by mid-February (MM, GCW). Kachemak Bay traditionally offers limited dabbling duck habitat in the 2nd half of normal winters. Other noteworthy dabbling duck reports included a ♀ N. Pintail all season, a Gadwall Dec. 1 through mid-January (m.ob.), and one Am. Wigeon all season, all in Anchorage (m.ob.), and a N. Shoveler at Homer Dec. 1+ (GCW).

Unusual winter *Athya* reports were more numerous and included a record local high of 24 Canvasbacks at Adak I. Jan. 8–12 (JCW, BR, LG), single Redheads at Anchorage Dec 1 to mid-January (m.obs.) and Kodiak I. Feb. 8 (ph. RAM, JBA), a ♀ Tufted Duck at Cordova Feb. 9 (REF), a ♀ Greater Scaup inland on the upper Kenai R. Feb. 17 (TGT, LJO), and an unusual count of 40+ Lesser Scaup at Annette I. in extreme Southeast Feb. 7–25 (SCH). The Anchorage Redhead was the Region's northernmost winter report. King Eiders wintered in good numbers e. of their normal winter range, to Seward, where up to eight were noted Dec. 21–Jan. 18 (RLS, TGT), Cordova (one Jan. 19) (REF), and s. to Auke Bay n. of Juneau, two "mid-December to mid-January" (GVV). An unusually high count of 100+ King Eiders out in Kachemak Bay Feb. 15–28+ (GCW) may represent a regular occurrence of open-water wintering birds since no previous winter boat trips had been made near the mouth of the bay. Similar notable groups of Steller's Eiders e. of traditional sites included 68 mostly female types in Cordova all season (REF) and up to three near Seward Dec. 21–Jan. 18

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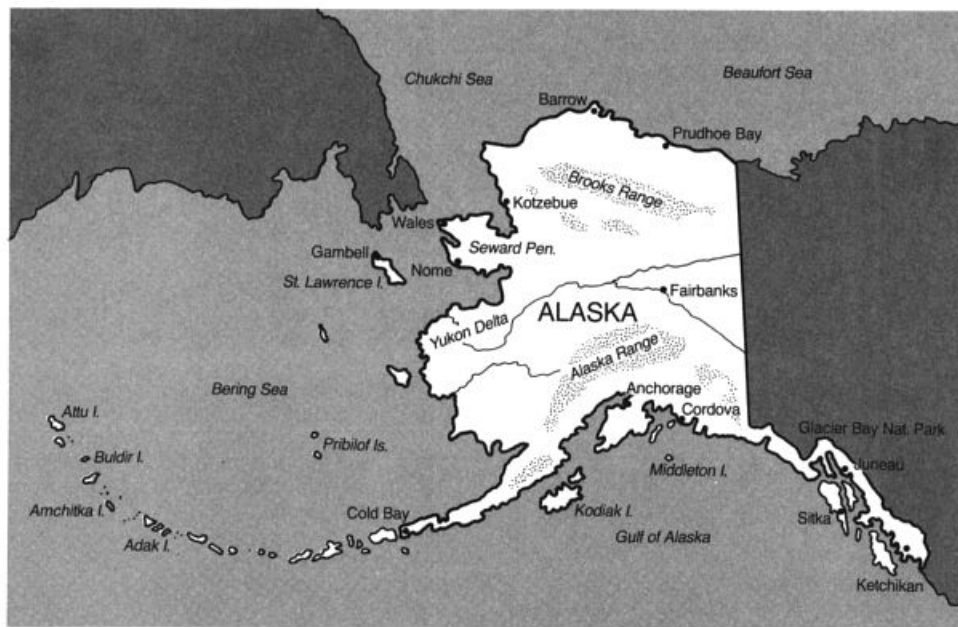
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(TGT, RLS). Peak counts of Steller's within the center of their winter range reached 28,000 at Izembek Lagoon Dec. 17 and 27,905 to the east at Nelson Lagoon Dec. 30 (CD, CFZ). Casual in winter, the season's only Smew was a female at Amchitka I. Feb. 23 (AD).

#### RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

An imm. *Haliaeetus* eagle with a mostly white, distinctly wedge-shaped tail and dark brown head was identified by the observer as **White-tailed Eagle** Feb. 17–20 (†GVB) at Shemya I. This would be the Region's first winter report since Sutton and Wilson's March 1945 record (*Condor* 48(2):83-91). Northern Harrier reports were above average, with female types noted from Adak I. Dec. 21 (one) and Amchitka all period (two) (JCW, AD, GVB), and at Homer, where two different birds were found Dec. 1 and Jan. 20 to early February (MM, GS, JK, GCW). Sharp-shinned Hawks were also more common in Southcoastal, where they are sporadic depending upon weather and wintering passerine numbers. At least four frequented e. Kodiak Dec. 12–Feb. 20 (RAM), singles lingered n. to Anchorage Dec. 19 (BT) and Hope Jan. 28–Feb. 24 (WT), and they were reported as "all over Homer" all season (*vide* GCW). Surprising mid-winter reports of Rough-legged Hawks came from Amchitka I., where one very pale bird "late-January through late-February" (JCW, AD) was a winter first for the Aleutians, and one over e. Anchorage Feb. 28 (JW) furnished a 3rd local winter record. Five Am. Coots wintered in Ketchikan (SCH), and two were seen sporadically on Sitka's Ward L. Dec. 1–Feb. 20 (MW).

The hardy **Spotted Sandpiper** that successfully wintered at the s. end of Mitkof I. Dec. 7–Feb. 8+ (PJW) constituted the Region's first true winter record. There are a few previous records beyond early December. Al-

though Dunlin were missed at Petersburg for the first time since winter 1983–1984, a tally of 93 from e. Kodiak's Bays Dec. 27–29 (RAM) was that area's highest ever winter count. One Dunlin at Seward Dec. 21 (RLS, TGT) was a first winter sighting for Resurrection Bay.

Two Bonaparte's Gulls in Sumner Straits Dec. 7 were likely late migrants, but at least three overwintered on the Ketchikan waterfront, with singles found Jan. 21 (DB), Jan. 24, 30, and Feb. 27 (SCH). Casual for winter, two different California Gulls were near Ketchikan Dec. 13–Jan. 11 and Dec. 14–Jan. 24 (SCH). Three first-winter gulls at the Ketchikan dump, noted separately Dec. 10–24, Jan. 31–Feb. 1, and Feb. 3–20 were identified as Slaty-backed Gulls (SCH\*, †ph.). All three individuals showed similar characters to the single similarly aged specimen in the University of Alaska Museum, i.e., very pale mantle with contrasting darker body feathering, dark eye smudge on very pale face, very pale upperwing coverts with a clean dark secondary bar, and dark brown retrices with the outer pairs showing fine white bars. Since our experience with early winter, first-year plumages is limited, final identification of these birds (and the specimen) will follow a comparison with a series of other early first-winter specimens. Heintz continues to locate "Western-type" Gulls from the hordes of gulls at the Ketchikan dump. At least three birds were noted. One adult remained all season (ph. SCH), another adult was seen Dec. 7 and Feb. 10, and a 3rd winter bird was present Jan. 21–Feb. 29. All these were variously described as "near pure" Western types to likely Glaucous-winged X Western hybrids.

A count of 200 Marbled Murrelets from a boat survey of ice-free Kachemak Bay Feb. 15 (GCW) was one of the area's highest winter totals, but numbers of Marbled Murrelets from s. Southeast this season were staggering.

Concentrations of Marbled Murrelets were in s. Tongass Narrows near Ketchikan beginning Dec. 13–14, when 200 were gathered near Mountain Pt. By Feb. 14, 2295 were tallied with a handheld counter in Clover Pass; this number was described as conservative since the counting method likely missed many birds that were diving during the count scan (SCH). Whether this is a late-winter staging zone or simply an opportunistic feeding aggregation is unknown, but s. Southeast inshore passes may represent the center of the species' winter range.

#### OWLS TO PARULIDS

Northern Pygmy-Owls were widespread in Southeast. Three around Juneau all period (MEI), four individuals on Mitkof I. Dec. 7–Feb. 8, and three near

Ketchikan early December to mid-February (SCH) were slightly above average, but at least one on Prince of Wales I. Jan. 4+ (MAA) and another at Sitka Dec. 1 (MW) were notable for the outer coast and away from the mainland and adjacent islands, where winter records are concentrated. The season's W. Screech-Owl reports came from Ketchikan Jan. 11 (SCH) and Juneau Feb. 20 (JF). A single calling Barred Owl was heard s. of Juneau in February (RHA).

The massive 2-year-old Tok area burn is beginning to produce woodpecker concentrations. At least four Black-backed Woodpeckers were there among good numbers of the commoner species Dec. 28 (TJD). Above-average numbers of N. (Red-shafted) Flickers were around s. Southeast this season. Up to 15 were reported between Ketchikan and Prince of Wales I. Dec. 7–Mar. 1 (SCH, MAA). Although these numbers are comparatively high, with increased observer coverage they may represent average mild-winter numbers. Elsewhere, one N. (Yellow-shafted) Flicker appeared near Homer Feb. 10 (WD), and an Anchorage bird returned to feeders for the 3rd consecutive winter (TGT). An Anchorage feeder attracted a Chestnut-backed Chickadee Feb. 2 (RM), a 2nd local record; the previous Upper Cook Inlet record was of two, still coming to the Girdwood feeder where they first arrived in winter 1988–1989.

Red-breasted Nuthatches reached record highs in the Upper Cook Inlet basin, where the population has exploded. The Anchorage CBC of 145 Dec. 14 nearly doubled last year's previous record total, while 17 on the Matanuska Valley count was also a local high count (*vide* JS). After very few Regional winter records prior to the late 1980s, reports of Townsend's Solitaires are nearly annual. This year, singles were at Cordova Dec. 1–21+ (REF), Eagle R. n. of Anchorage Dec. 1–21 (EO), and near Homer, a first local winter



This gull in Southeast Alaska at Ketchikan on February 3, 1992, was apparently a first-winter Slaty-backed Gull. Photograph/Steve Heintz.

record Jan. 22–30 (WN, DE).

The Kodiak area produced another first Alaska winter parulid record. The Region's first winter **Orange-crowned Warbler** stuck zealously to a peanut butter feeder all period, well into March (ph. RAM). Exceptionally late was a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** near Ketchikan Dec. 13 (SCH).

#### EMBERIZIDS TO FRINGILLIDS

Most surprising was the bright ♂ **Rufous-sided Towhee** that occasionally left berry thickets to visit a Juneau feeder Dec. 22 through the period (GEA, MEI *et al.*). This bird was clearly from the spotted western populations and was not far from the feeder that produced the state's only other substantiated record in December 1984. Given the mild season, overwintering sparrows were distinctly lacking. The only notable reports included a nice CBC count of 21 Am. Tree Sparrows at Homer Dec. 15 (*vide* GCW) and single Interior *zaboria* type Fox Sparrows at Homer (Feb. 16–18+) and Kodiak through the period (TGT, GCW). This rusty form is rare but apparently annual along the N. Gulf Coast in winter. One Lincoln's Sparrow attempted to overwinter at an Anchorage feeder Dec. 1 to mid-January (TGT), a 3rd local winter report; two wintered at Kodiak late December into March (RAM). Two "Oregon" Dark-eyed Juncos at Adak I. Dec. 21 (GVB) were most unusual for the Aleutians.

Snow Buntings winter away from traditional sites in Southwest only in small numbers scattered around the Region's s. coastal fringe, so reports from the e. Interior of four in Tok Feb. 22 (LV) and one Jan. 6 and 25 Jan. 11 to the west at Delta (SB, BS) were most unusual. We have few other Interior winter records. The only extralimital McKay's Bunting was picked out of a Snow Bunting flock at Kodiak Dec. 27–28 (RAM, PS, MEI), where the species is casual in winter. Bramblings were nearly widespread in

the s. half of the Region. This year 15 birds wintered, at feeders in Anchorage (three all period, JB, DR, m.ob.), Seward (three Dec. 18–21+, *vide* JSi), Kodiak, where two birds from late November were joined by six others by Feb. 19 (RAM), and Petersburg (one Dec. 15 into March, PJW).

A ♂ **Cassin's Finch** appeared briefly at a Homer feeder Jan. 23–Feb. 10 (FC, PB, GCW, ph. RLS). Remarkably, the Region's only prior substantiated records were singles at Homer in early spring 1985 (see West and Bailey, *Murrelet* 67:32) and at Middleton I. in fall 1991. Aside from scattered small groups of White-winged mostly s. of the Alaska Range, both crossbills were essentially absent from the Region. This has generally been the situation since mid-summer 1991. Redpolls were locally common across the e. half of the Interior but were otherwise absent until the very end of the period. Pine Siskins were present across the N. Gulf Coast in about average numbers except in the Cook Inlet Basin, where locally common.

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA/YUKON REGION

Chris Siddle

The season was exceptionally mild, with record-high temperatures common across British Columbia, especially in January and February. Almost twice the normal amount of rain fell in January in Vancouver, but February was drier than average across southern British Columbia. Most rivers remained open in northern and central British Columbia, while record-breaking snowfalls occurred in December in the southern Yukon, where temperatures were fairly mild all winter.

There were several notable events. Northern Pygmy and Great Gray owls were more common than usual in north-central British Columbia. Northern finches were generally scarce except at higher elevations in the Okanagan. Bohemian Waxwings stayed north, giving the Okanagan, a traditional wintering area, the lowest counts in decades. The mild weather allowed many semi-hardy species to linger far north of their usual winter ranges or to winter in larger-than-usual numbers.

**Abbreviations:** Iona (*Iona Island Regional Park and jetty, Van.*); PG (*Prince George*); QCI (*Queen Charlotte Is.*); Van. (*Vancouver*); VI (*Vancouver I.*); Vic. (*Victoria*); YT (*Yukon Territory*).

#### LOONS TO DUCKS

Loons and W. Grebes were very plentiful around Van., with Red-throated Loons, Com. Loons, and W. Grebes setting new high records for various mainland CBCs. A Pacific Loon at Vernon Dec. 12 (PR) was typical of the tiny number usually reported for the interior early every winter. A Yellow-billed Loon was at the Adam's R. mouth Dec. 21–22 (PR, †CS), where rare but almost regular. One at Oak Bay provided the 4th record for a Victoria CBC (*vide* DFF). One at Darrell Bay, Squamish, Dec. 21 & 23 was at one of the most consistent places for Yellow-billed Loons in s. coastal British Columbia (KW). Grebe counts were generally high in the Okanagan, with an all-time high of 74 Pied-billeds on the Vernon CBC Dec. 15 (PR). The season's only Clark's Grebe was at Iona I., Van., Dec. 15 (†CE, †RT).

No tubenoses were reported except for an errant Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel in Active Pass Feb. 14 (RT), one Short-tailed Shearwater on the Masset CBC, and fulmars at Masset during count week (MH). Great Blue Herons were at Revelstoke, with one Dec. 1 and Feb. 1 & 15, and two Jan. 9 & 22 (ET). This species is very rare in winter in that area. The mild winter allowed three of the four Cattle Egrets at Delta, W. Delta, and Colony Farm (Coquitlam) to survive into March

(WCW). Two Green-backed Herons, very rare in winter, were reported: at Richmond Dec. 17 (KS) and Langley Dec. 29 (GRR).

Larger-than-usual numbers of Canada Geese wintered at Revelstoke, with 2286 counted Jan. 15 (ET). An ad. Greater White-fronted Goose, casual in the Okanagan, was at Summerland Jan. 5 (LR); another was at Kamloops Dec. 14 (RH, SR). February's mild weather allowed several dabblers to move north early. Record-early arrivals were noted at Revelstoke for Green-winged Teal (two Feb. 29), N. Shovelers (one Feb. 29), and Gadwalls (three Feb. 15) (ET). Green-winged Teal, normally much farther south, wintered with Mallards, Com. Mergansers, and Com. Goldeneyes on open low-elevation rivers in the PG area (JB). An Am. Black Duck was at Nanaimo Jan. 5 (BW, JG), and another was at Reifel I. Dec. 21 (JI). A resident flock of about 70 Am. Black Ducks can be found on Michael L. and other ponds in the Yellowpoint area. This introduced species, which has virtually disappeared from the mainland, seems now restricted to the Yellowpoint area of VI (GEG). Fifty-five thousand N. Pintails at Ladner Dec. 22 were a new all-time high for any Canadian CBC and reflected the increased numbers of dabblers that wintered this season. A pair of Am. Wigeons at PG Feb. 29 were early spring arrivals by 2–3 weeks (NK).

Tufted Duck numbers were much higher than usual. Whether this represents a real increase in vagrancy or an artifact of increased numbers of observers is unclear. A male and a female were seen intermittently at Iona I. all winter from Dec. 7 (DAJ, JDe). Two females graced Nelson Nov. 30–Dec. 12 and Jan. 4–24 (LVD, GD). An ad. drake was at Kelowna Dec. 27–Jan. 11 (CC, ph. CS). An imm. male was at Esquimalt Lagoon Dec. 29 (†CS). Red-breasted Mergansers, usually rare winter visitors, were unusually frequent in the Okanagan. A pair was also at Needles, Arrow L., Dec. 28 (GD). On the coast, 2000 Red-breasted Mergansers fished with cormorants and Bald Eagles at Duke Point, Nanaimo, Feb. 15 (DS). Some 613 Com. Mergansers were left over Dec. 15 from the late fall concentration of 2000–3000 at Vernon (PR).

#### S.A.

An ad. ♂ Smew, the 6th ever in the province, was at Sunrise L., Langley, off and on Feb. 16–23 (†DC, JJ). Only a few birders saw it, which may be fortunate considering the controversy surrounding the bird. It appeared in the same collection of ponds where a Smew wintered in 1989–1990. However, this time a waterfowl fancier reported that he had lost a Smew but had not lost one in 1989–1990! Enforcement staff for the Canadian Wildlife Service report that at least 8–10 people in British Columbia and Washington keep captive Smevs, which sometimes escape and are not reported.



#### VULTURES TO SHOREBIRDS

A Turkey Vulture at Valemount in late December (*vide* JB) provided the northernmost winter record for British Columbia. The herring run in Cumberland Channel off Nanaimo attracted large Bald Eagle concentrations. A Feb. 8 count at Duke Pt. was 229, with another 250+ estimated nearby (BB). Five hundred Bald Eagles were in the same area Feb. 15, with "up to 60 swarming over herring balls" (DS). The Victoria CBC had an all-time high of 42 Cooper's Hawks (ViNHS). A Red-tailed Hawk at PG Jan. 26 (PGNC) was far n. of usual winter range. A very dark Merlin, fitting the description of the *suckleyi* subspecies (rare in the interior), was in Kelowna Jan. 17 (†CS). Two reports of Peregrines, also rare in winter in the interior, were received: an ad. at Kelowna Dec. 25 (CC) and one at PG Dec. 17 (CA).

It was probably the best winter ever for Gyrfalcons in British Columbia. At least three or four frequented the Van. checklist area. One was often at Roberts Bank from Dec. 3–Feb. 28 (JDe). At least one frequented Reifel I. from Dec. 8 (TH, JI) to Feb. 24 (JI). A 3rd was often seen in the 4300 block of Kingsway in Burnaby, where it roosted in December (GB, PY). Other locations where Gyrs were reported included Active Pass (Dec. 20, RT), 41B St. at 28B Ave., W. Delta (m.ob.), Brunswick Point, and Pitt Meadows. One was at Kamloops Dec. 14 (RH), and at least one frequented Vernon's fields from Dec. 24 (PR, ph. CS) to at least Jan. 24 (†CS). One was at PG Dec. 15, where very rare (IC, DE, MPH). A Gyr was at Martindale Flats, Saanich, Dec. 26–Feb. 27 (*vide* BB). The usual scattering of Prairie Falcon sightings was reported, with one at Bruns-

wick Point, Ladner, Dec. 16 through period's end (RT, †GAP, HP). Possibly this bird has been visiting Delta-Ladner each winter since 1988–1989.

Three Sandhill Cranes, rare winterers in s.w. British Columbia, were in Delta Dec. 22 (DTy, RTy, PW). One was seen nearby Jan. 5 (JDe, RT).

Two reports were received of Lesser Golden-Plovers, which are very rare in winter. One Dec. 15 through period's end at Masset was a first winter record for the QCI (MM, PH, MH). A *fulva* type was at Union Bay Wildwood Log Sort, VI, Dec. 25–28 (†DI, †MI, WH). A Greater Yel-

lowlegs at Masset (MH) may have wintered. A Spotted Sandpiper, rare in winter, was at Courtney Dec. 10 (DM). The "Three Amigos," a Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, and Whimbrel, wintered successfully at Blackie Spit, where they have been in irregular attendance since 1989–1990 (WCW, m.ob.). The Marbled Godwit provided the 2nd winter record for Van., the first being last year. As has been the case since 1987, a Dunlin was found in early winter (Dec. 1) in PG (JB, m.ob.). This year was so warm that the bird stayed all season.

#### GULLS TO HUMMINGBIRDS

The Okanagan Valley supported relatively large populations of gulls formerly considered rare in the area. Single Thayer's Gulls were reported from Oliver-Osoyoos, Penticton, Kelowna, and Vernon, the highest single count being three adults and four first-years at the Kelowna Dump Dec. 31 (PR, ph. CS). Six Thayer's were at Kamloops Dec. 14 (RH, SR). The large number of Glaucous-winged Gulls reported in fall 1991 continued in the Okanagan and at Kamloops. Five adults were at the Kelowna Dump Dec. 31 (PR, CS), and four first-years were at Sutherland Park, Kelowna, Jan. 5 (CC, CS). The Penticton CBC had six Glaucous-wingeds Dec. 28 (*vide* RJC). Kamloops reported four Dec. 14 (RH, SR). Glaucous Gull numbers were slightly above average, with three wintering in Duncan-Cowichan (*vide* DFF), a first-winter bird at Goldstream estuary Jan. 4 (JA, GA) and two adults, seldom reported from VI, at Courtenay Feb. 4 (DM). Two Glaucous Gulls were in the Okanagan: a first-winter bird at Penticton Jan. 1 (LR) and Dec. 28 (*vide* RJC), and an adult at the Kelow-



**Adult male Tufted Duck at Kelowna, British Columbia, on December 31, 1991.**  
Photograph/Chris Siddle.

na Dump Dec. 31 (PR, ph. CS). Kamloops had one Dec. 14 (RH, SR). California Gulls wintered in s. British Columbia in large numbers, with record CBC tallies at Ladner and Vernon. Kamloops also reported a higher-than-usual number of 1000 California Gulls Dec. 14 (RH, SR).

The Van., Ladner, and White Rock CBCs reported few Marbled Murrelets. The total of only 46 birds for all 3 counts is typical of a recent trend for this species threatened by the loss of its old-growth forest. Rhinoceros Auklets were more widely distributed than usual, with two at Point Roberts, WA, Dec. 22 (TH, TP *et al.*) and one at W. Van. Jan. 13 (KW). One was seen on the Skidegate, QCI, CBC; one at Pender Harbour Dec. 22 (TG); six were seen during the Sooke CBC.

A Barn Owl was freshly road-killed in Vernon Jan. 7 (PR) for one of only a handful of winter reports from the Okanagan. Snowy Owls were very scarce this winter, with one at Iona I. from Dec. 26 until sometime in February (BGS, m.ob.), a single sighting at N. Van. Jan. 9 (BWh), one or two at Victoria Dec. 5 (JG, RS) and Dec. 9 (RS), and one at Round L., Quick, Dec. 6 (KF). Reports of single N. Hawk Owls were received from PG, Shuswap L., Kamloops, Williams L., and Whitehorse, YT. Prince George, Terrace, and Smithers had unusually high numbers of N. Pygmy Owls. Prince George, which usually has none in winter, had three, including one at Pilot Mtn. about 15 km n.w. of PG Feb. 28 (MPh). Terrace had an all-time high—eight—on its CBC. Singles were in downtown Smithers Jan. 15 (ML) and Feb. 6 & 7 (EL), near Tyhee L. Feb. 29 (HH), and at Hazelton in February (BH).

North-central British Columbia (and possibly the s. Yukon, which is covered by very few observers) experienced "an invasion" of Great Gray Owls. In the PG area the first was seen in the Bowron R. valley 40 km s.e. of PG Jan. 12 (MCI). The next was near Clucolz, 50 km w. of PG Jan. 16 (MPh). Two others were outside PG in January, and eight were in Pineview just e. of PG Feb. 2 (SK, LL). The Smithers area had at least six, with singles at Tyhee L. Jan. 7 (KW, RM), Round L. Jan. 15, 27, & 28 (KF, RM, DS, EL), Francois L. Jan. 29 (EL), Ootsa L. n. date (EL), and near Hazelton in January (BH). The Yukon reported three Great Grays, with one at Whitehorse in late December (DRu), a 2nd along the Alaska Hwy 200 km s.e.

Beaver Cr., s.w. Yukon, Jan. 13 (CMcE), and one near Teslin in January (KE). Numbers of N. Saw-Whet Owls also wintered in the PG area. A single 35 km e. of PG responded to a tape Dec. 28 (CB, PGNC). Another was just n. of PG Jan. 28 (*vide* SK). One answered a tape at Ste. Marie L., 25 km s.e. of PG, Feb. 8 (PGNC). A Long-eared Owl at Edith L., s. of Kamloops, Feb. 2 furnished the latilong's 3rd winter record (RH, CS). One at Victoria Dec. 16 was a vagrant (BD, m.ob.). Reports of Short-eared Owls were scattered across the province. One at Sandspit, QCI, where the species is rare, was present throughout the period and may be the first winter record (MB). Two Boreal Owls, very scarce anywhere in British Columbia, were heard on the Penticton CBC Dec. 28 (DSJ).

#### WOODPECKERS TO THRASHERS

As usual in mild winters, Lewis' Woodpeckers wintered in the c. and s. Okanagan Valley, with at least two at Kelowna (CS) and five at Penticton (*vide* RJC). An ad. ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, casual on the coast, appeared for the 3rd year in a row to winter at Shaughnessy Park, Van. (†TH, m.ob.). A Downy Woodpecker, casual on the QCI, was at Queen Charlotte City Dec. 14 (MM).

The first Eur. Skylarks were singing Jan. 25, a couple of weeks early (*vide* BB). Swallows lingered around Van. well into December, with two Cliff Swallows at Iona I. Dec. 7–11 (†WCW, m.ob.) and Musqueam Park Dec. 16–17 (DH, RT). Also at Iona I. were two Barn Swallows Dec. 1–30 (JMc, HMc, m.ob.). One was a typical N. American type, but the other had the solid collar and very pale underparts of one of the Eur. subspecies (DMP). Steller's Jay numbers were much reduced in Revelstoke, Kimberley, Cranbrook, and the lowlands of the Okanagan (CS, ET, MW). Blue Jays were much less widespread than last winter. Single Blue Jays were at Edgewood (JP), McBride (*vide* JB), Dunster (*vide* JB), Kamloops (RH), and Balfour near Nelson (LVD). Two were at Invermere Dec. 29 (LHA), where this species is a regular year-round resident. Thirty-one Clark's Nutcrackers at Valemount Dec. 15 was a large concentration for that area (*vide* JB).

White-breasted Nuthatches continue to expand into c. British Columbia, with resident birds reported for the following locations: four at Valemount, three or four at PG, one at McBride (*vide* JB), and one at Fort St. James Jan. 4 (PGNC). Three Ruby-crowned Kinglets were reported from the Okanagan, where casual in winter: one at Summerland Jan. 26 (LR) and the 2nd and third at Vernon Dec. 7 and Jan. 10 (PR). A Mt. Bluebird at Delta Jan. 19–Feb. 8 (JDe, †WCW, m.ob.) provided the 3rd winter record for Van. Prince George had its first winter Townsend's Solitaire Dec. 15 (PGNC). An Am. Robin survived the Yukon winter at Whitehorse from November until at least Jan. 1 (HG). There have been only one or two other Yukon winter records. Several single Am. Robins were reported throughout the winter

from both PG and the Robson Valley area (*vide* JB). Varied Thrushes were virtually absent from the Okanagan Valley (CS).

#### WAXWINGS TO FINCHES

Bohemian Waxwing numbers were highest in n.c. British Columbia. While PG reported large flocks, especially in December (JB), Penticton had only 436 on its Dec. 28 CBC, an all-time low; the species usually winters in the thousands in the Okanagan (*vide* RJC). Vernon, Kamloops, and, oddly, the s. Yukon, also reported a scarcity of Bohemian Waxwings. Cedar Waxwings were more scarce than usual in both the Van. and s. VI areas but were much more common than usual (especially in December) in the s. and c. Okanagan. Two Loggerhead Shrikes were described: at Coquitlam Dec. 27 (†WDK) and at Kamloops Dec. 14 (†EMA).

A record-high seven warbler species were seen. Single Orange-crowned Warblers were reported from Vic. and Saanich Dec. 10 (JG), Jan. 10–13 (RS), Jan. 22 (BB), and Feb. 16 (BD). Six Orange-crowns were in the Van. area. As expected in a very mild winter, Yellow-rumped Warblers were the most widespread warblers in the s.w. of the province. In the Okanagan, where it is a rare winter straggler, one Audubon's Warbler was at Kelowna Dec. 31 (PR, CS). Single Yellow-rumps were also at Revelstoke Feb. 4 (ET), Nakusp Jan. 9–10 (GD), Queen Charlotte City Feb. 18–20 (MH, LW), and Sandspit (MB). Three Palm Warblers that wintered at Sandspit, QCI (MH, LW, MB) provided the islands' first winter records. Slightly more usual was one in Saanich Jan. 4 (JA, GA), one of the tiny handful expected each winter. The only Townsend's Warbler was one on the Skidegate, QCI, CBC (MH). A **Black-and-white Warbler** at Musqueam Park, Van., Dec. 15 to the period's end (RTa, m.ob.) provided the 8th Van. record and the province's 2nd winter record. Common Yellowthroats, very rare in winter in s.w. British Columbia, were found twice, with one or two at Jerico Park, Van., Dec. 1–Feb. 5 (DMP, RWP, JMc, HMc) and one at Coquitlam (WDK, GC). A Wilson's Warbler at Musqueam Park, Van., Dec. 12 (TP, BGS *et al.*) was very rare but expected, as usually one or two can be found each winter in s.w. British Columbia. However, a freshly dead Wilson's Warbler discovered near Vernon Dec. 26 or 27 (NM) was a first in winter for the province's interior.

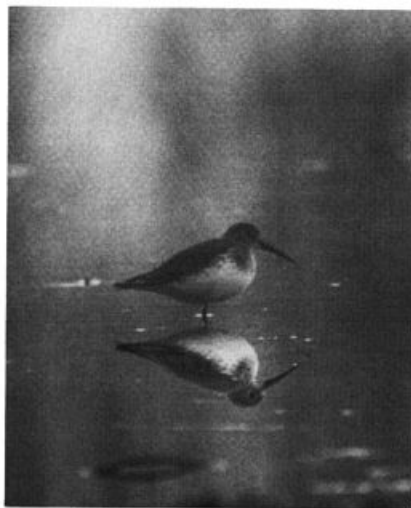
American Tree Sparrows were more common than usual at many interior locations, including Kamloops, Vernon, Revelstoke, and PG. An ad. Chipping Sparrow, casual in the interior in winter, visited a Vernon feeder Jan. 13 & 23 (†PR, †CS) for the 2nd Okanagan winter record. A Savannah Sparrow was at another Vernon feeder Jan. 10 & 21 (†PR, JQ, †CS), for a 4th Okanagan winter record. Lincoln's Sparrows were much more frequent around Van. Twelve and eighteen were reported on the Van. and Ladner CBCs. Swamp Sparrow sightings are still on the increase. Vancouver and area reported at least six. Dun-

can, VI, had one at Somenos Flats Feb. 28 (*fide* BD), while Saanich had one Dec. 26–Jan. 31 (BD, RS). A Swamp Sparrow on the Vernon CBC provided the 4th Okanagan record (†CS, PR, RH). Revelstoke's first winter Swamp Sparrow appeared Dec. 21 (GD) & 30 (RH). Squamish reported its first CBC Swamp Sparrow Dec. 21 (RJC). Fewer White-throated Sparrows than usual were reported: three at Vernon; one at Revelstoke Dec. 21 to period's end (ET), and one in Saanich Jan. 11 and Feb. 1 (*fide* BD). A Golden-crowned Sparrow at Revelstoke Dec. 22 (DP, HGo, JW) provided the first winter record.

An imm. White-crowned Sparrow at PG Jan. 10 provided a rare winter record (CA, JB, DR). Fewer Harris' Sparrows were reported than usual in the interior, with none at Vernon, the usual stronghold, and individuals at Summerland Dec. 22 to period's end (LR), W. Van. Dec. 15 (GAR, HP), Vic. Feb. 11 (JG), Courtenay (JL, BL), and Saltspring I. December–Feb. 17 (*fide* BD). Two Harris' were at Kelowna, one throughout December (VP) and the other Jan. 11 (PR). One or two Lapland Longspurs with Horned Larks at Vernon Jan. 11–12 were very unusual (CS). A flock of 20 at Iona I. Dec. 15 (†CE, †RT) provided the only report from the coast. A N. Oriole overwintered at a Kelowna feeder (LK, DB), for one of only 3 or 4 winter records for the province.

After the exceptional 1990–1991 winter, Bramblings were much rarer this winter. A ♀ Brambling appeared in Nelson Dec. 12 and Jan. 7 (LVD). After providing the first record for the W. Kootenay checklist, the bird collided with a window and died. A ♀ type at Westham I. Dec. 31 (†MJT) to Feb. 4 (†MJT, †WCW *et al.*) was the 6th for the Van. area. In the Okanagan, Pine Grosbeaks were absent from the lowlands but frequent in the subalpine and boreal zones. Elsewhere in s. British Columbia, few Pines were reported, though the Yukon reported them as common (HG). Cassin's Finches were absent from the n. and c. Okanagan, where numbers often winter. White-winged Crossbills stayed common in the mountain forests of the Okanagan and W. Kootenays and were even seen twice in the mountains n. of Van. Common Redpolls were almost absent from the s. interior valleys (Revelstoke, Nakusp, Nelson, Vernon), but in the Okanagan they were frequent higher in the boreal and subalpine zones. Fourteen at Masset Dec. 27 (CB, MH) were of note since this species is casual on the QCI. Two Hoary Redpolls were reported: one at Vernon Feb. 8–9 (†CS) and one at Masset Dec. 27 (CB, ph. MH), for a first confirmed QCI record. Evening Grosbeaks were very scarce in PG, Smithers, Terrace, Revelstoke, the Okanagan, and Van. all season (JB, ET, DS, CS). All CBCs reported Evening Grosbeaks as absent or present in low numbers except for Nelson, with 597 (JH) and Grand Forks, with 775 (RW).

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**Dunlin near Prince George, British Columbia, on January 29, 1992. The persistence of this bird so late into the winter undoubtedly attests to the mildness of the season. Photograph/Jack Bowling.**

Mike Bentley, Colin Bowling, Jack Bowling (Prince George and northern British Columbia), Denise Brownlie, Ruth Bumpus, Geoff Burchell, Richard J. Cannings (Okanagan), Ivan Cartwright, Don G. Cecile (Port Alberni), Christopher Charlesworth, Mark Clark (MCI), George Clulow, Dean Copley, Gary Davidson (Kootenays), Joe Denham (JDe), Brent Diakow, Cam Eckert, Kathy Egli (KE), Dorothy Ewert, David F. Fraser (Victoria), Kelly Fulton, Jeff Gaskin, Martin Gebauer, Grahame E. Gillespie, Hilary Gordon (HGo), Anthony Greenfield (TG) (Sunshine Coast), Helmut Grunberg (Yukon), Betty Hagen, Larry Hallverson (LHa), Peter Hamel, Tom Hanrahan, Willie Haras, Margo Hearne (Queen Charlotte Islands), Hildo Hoek, John Hollington, Rick Howie (Kamloops), Dave Huggard, Doug Innes, Marian Innes, John Ireland, Dale A. Jensen, Jason Jones, Sandra Kinsey, Linda Knowles, W. Doug Kragh, Nancy Krueger, Marcel Lavigne, Laird Law, Eric Lofroth, B. Lunam, J. Lunam, Eric MacAlary (EMa), Hue MacKenzie (HMc), Jo-ann MacKenzie (JMc), Norbert Maertens, Derek Marven, Roger McColm, Cathy McEwan (CMc), S. McRuer, Mary Morris, Marilyn Pasieka, Roy M. Phillips, Mark Phinney (MPh), Verna Pickering, Tom Plath, Rosamund Pojar, G. Allen Poynter, Helen Poynter, Doug Powell, Jim Prentice, D. Michael Price, Prince George Naturalists Club (PGNC), John Quirk, Phil Ranson (Williams Lake), Syd Roberts, Dave Robinson, Laurie Rockwell, Don Russell (DRu), Glen R. Ryder, Ron Satterfield, Kelly Sekhon, Brian G. Self, Dirk Septer (Smithers-Terrace), Michael G. Shepard, Chris Siddle, Dennis St. John (DSJ), David Stirling, Mary J. Taitt, Robin Taylor (RTa), Rick Tootchin, Ellen Trembley, Danny Tyson (DTy), Rick Tyson (RTy), Linda Van Damme, Victoria Natural History Society (ViNHS), Paul Wadden, Ron Walker, Louise Waterhouse, Wayne C. Weber (Vancouver), Mildred White, Barb Whittaker (BWh), Bruce Whittington, John Woods, Ken Wright, Paul Yorke.—CHRIS SIDDLE, Site 10, Comp. 56, R.R. B, Vernon, BC V1T 8L6.

## OREGON/WASHINGTON REGION

(FALL 1991 REPORT)

Bill Tweit and Jeff Gilligan

It was a very dry fall until November in the interior. It was so dry that, in mid-October, Spokane was virtually encircled by forest fires. The first winter storms arrived in late October and helped extinguish the last hot spots from the fires. On the west side of the mountains, while August was wetter and warmer than average, both September and October saw a drought of 45 rainless days in the Seattle area. This was the longest ever fall dry stretch there. November was its usual cold and wet self throughout. On the ocean, sea surface temperatures were generally above average for the third consecutive fall.

Most observers felt the passerine migration was unspectacular. A few local movements were noted. At 4500' above Swauk Pass, Washington, Aug. 30, Ruby-crowned Kinglets dominated, accompanied by numbers of Hammond's Flycatcher, five species of warbler and Chipping Sparrow (DP). In the Seattle area on Sep. 1, a large movement included Yellow Warbler (most common), and four other warbler species (RD, IP). A strong warbler movement was noted through Portland September 4 (JB). A movement at Wapato, Washington, September 21 followed stiff NW winds (AS) and included kinglets, five warbler species and tanagers. Above average numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Yellow-rumped Warbler were found September 29 in southeastern Washington (BT).

Other striking aspects of the fall of 1991 were the generally low numbers of tubenoses, a very good fall flight of Brown Pelican and Elegant Terns, a relatively poor shorebird passage except for numbers of Pectoral and Sharp-tailed sandpipers, very low numbers of Franklin's and California gulls, a gigantic number of Boreal Owl reports, and unusual movements of both Blue and Scrub jays.

**Abbreviations:** Fields (*Fields, Harney Co., OR*); Leadbetter (*Leadbetter Pt., Pacific Co., WA*); Malheur (*Malheur Natl Wildlife Ref., Harney Co., OR*); O.S. (*Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor Co., WA*); Sauvie (*Sauvie I., Columbia Co., OR*); S.J.C.R. (*south jetty of the Columbia R., Clatsop Co., OR*); W.W.R.D. (*Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla, WA*).

### LOONS TO DUCKS

Pacific Loons appeared in the interior in large numbers. The peak count was eight on Park L., Grant, WA, Oct. 6 (AS) and 15 others were found at 6 locations. Only two Yellow-billed Loons were reported, from Pt. Wilson, Jefferson, WA, Oct. 19 (Mike Donohue) and Pt. No Point, Kitsap, WA, Oct. 31–Nov. 28 (†VN). Tubenose numbers were generally below average. Northern Fulmar

were found in small numbers through September (TW, JJ), 25 or fewer per pelagic trip, with only a modest increase in October numbers. For the 3rd fall in a row, Flesh-footed Shearwaters were very scarce. One out of Garibaldi, OR, Aug. 26 (DSt) was the only report. Most trips found fewer than 100 Buller's Shearwaters, better numbers than fall 1990 but poorer than most years. The peak count was 227 off Westport Oct. 5 (TW). Sooty Shearwaters were considerably less abundant along the coast than in some falls (HN, TW). The only exceptional tubenose numbers were a concentration of storm-petrels 30 mi off the Columbia R. mouth Sept. 21 that numbered 1500 Fork-tailed and two Leach's (JE). There are few fall records of Leach's off our coasts.

Brown Pelicans were present again this fall along the Washington coast in numbers that would have been unthinkable in the 1970s (DP, FSh, UW). Oregon observers noted a heavy return migration along the coast the last week of October and the first week of November (JG).

Great Egrets were a bit more common than usual in n.w. Oregon (JG), but numbers elsewhere were average or below. An imm. Little Blue Heron at Yaquina Bay Aug. 29–31 (RG, †BB, m.ob.) was the 4th Oregon record. It was a good fall Cattle Egret flight. Three were reported from the Oregon coast; while in the Willamette Valley, two were at Corvallis Nov. 20–23 (HH, m.ob.), one was at St. Paul, Nov. 24 (Dave Copeland) and three were near Portland Nov. 11 (Lars Norgren). There was only one in w. Washington, at Orting, Pierce, Nov. 16 (Peter Kline). The eastside numbers were very surprising. Four were near Othello, WA, Nov. 13 to at least Dec. 9 (RH), one was at Walla Walla, WA, Nov. 20 (KK), and the eight in Prineville, OR, Nov. 5 (Rick Demmer) provided a first *Crook* record.

Trumpeter Swans have been introduced into the Summer Lake W.M.A., Lake, OR, this summer and fall in an attempt to establish a wintering population at that location (fide TC). The introduced birds have been neck-banded and color marked. The only extralimital Ross' Goose was one at Silcotte I., Asotin, WA, Nov. 9 (PS). Emperor Geese are rare but regular in fall. A juvenile was at Sauvie Oct. 16 (JJ) and an adult was at Bay Center, Pacific, WA, Nov. 15–23 (†BSh). Only two Eur. Wigeon were reported from the interior: one near Richland, WA, Nov. 23 (Phil Bartley) and one at Pine Hollow Res., Wasco, OR, Nov. 5 (CC). A King Eider appeared at Bandon Nov. 5 into December (Joe Kaplan, m.ob.) for Oregon's 4th record. Seven Oldsquaw, somewhat above average,



were found in the interior from Oct. 28 (JA) to the end of the period, including the first *Kittitas*, WA (Steve Hall), *Adams*, WA (RH), and *Crook*, OR, records (TC, LR, CM). Two Black Scoters were on Suttle L., OR, Nov. 11 (LR), for the 2nd *Jefferson* record, and nine Surf (AS, PM, LR, CC, CM) and 21 White-winged (m.ob.) scoters were found inland. The annual fall count of Barrow's Goldeneye in Olympia, WA (G & WH) totalled 928 Nov. 3, above the last 2 falls, but below the 1973–1988 average.

#### KITES TO PHALAROPE

There were five Black-shouldered Kite reports from s.w. Washington (Craig Peterson, DP, BSu, BSe, FSh), about average for fall. In Oregon, 11 kites were recorded from the Rogue valley (MM) and six along the coast (HN). The recent average fall count for Oregon is 30 birds. Red-shouldered Hawks were found in the usual areas of coastal *Curry* and *Coos* in s.w. Oregon, and there were a surprising number of reports from the Willamette Valley: one along Five Rivers Rd., Lane Sept. 1 (Dawson & Bobby Mohler), up to two at Finley N.W.R., Sept. 12 to Oct. 27 (WCa, CC), one at Banks, *Washington* Aug. 25 (DSt), and one imm. at Sauvie Sept. 4 (JJ). The two e. Oregon reports were even more surprising: one at Malheur Sept. 14 (CO) and a subadult at Sycan Marsh, *Lake* Nov. 16–24 (SSu). A Ferruginous Hawk at Eagle Point, *Jackson*, OR, Sept. 17 (†HS) was a westside rarity. There were three Gyrfalcon reports from w. Oregon, none with conclusive details, and only one in n.w. Washington (Dick McNeely). Three Prairie Falcon sightings in the Willamette Valley this fall were an unusual number: one at St. Paul Sept. 11 to Nov. 24 (BB), one at Baskett Slough N W R ,

Nov. 2 (Don Pederson) and one near Albany, Nov. 28 (RG). Excellent numbers of Merlin in the interior were noted by several observers (RH, JW *et al.*).

More observers reported raptor movements this fall than ever before. The notable observations were all from Washington: 69 over Slate Peak, *Okanogan* Sept. 11 (JM), 33 over Redtop Mt., *Kittitas* Sept. 4 (JM), 27 over the Willapa Hills, *Pacific* Sept. 15 (FSh), 93 over Slate Peak Sept. 25 (David Buckley), 15 over Red Top Mt. Sept. 28 (Jennie Smith) and 23 there the next day (Steve Easley), 30 over Tiffany Mt., *Okanogan*, Oct. 18 (AS) and 16 over Rock Island Peak, *Okanogan*, WA, Oct. 20 (AS). In general, the September numbers were primarily Accipiters and Red-tailed Hawks, while most of the October numbers were Rough-legged Hawks and Golden Eagles.

Both races of Lesser Golden-Plover occur annually on the coast: DP and BSu found that 25 at O.S. Aug. 23–24 included five ad. and two imm. *dominica* and 18 ad. *fulva*, and as late as Oct. 27 there were still two *fulva* and two *dominica* at S.J.C.R (HN). A L. Golden-Plover at W.W.R.D. Sept. 9 was identified as *fulva* (M & MLD). The status of *fulva* in the interior is unclear. Ten Lesser Golden-Plover reports from the interior is above average; the peak count was five at McNary N.W.R., WA, Sept. 18 (M & MLD). An Am. Avocet at Telegraph Slough, *Skagit*, WA, Sept. 2 (fide BK) and one at Sauvie Sept. 7 (TL) were the only reports of this westside straggler. It was an excellent fall for Solitary Sandpipers at several n.e. Washington locations: the peak count at Reardan was eight Aug. 18 (JA) and six were near Moses Lake Aug. 21 (AS). However, for the 3rd consecutive fall Solitaries were scarce in all other parts of the Region with only eight reports (RTh, BW, RV, DL, LR, TC).

An Upland Sandpiper at Leadbetter Sept. 19 (†BSe) is the first westside record for this species in over ten years. Bar-tailed Godwits are rare annual fall migrants; one was at Leadbetter Aug. 18–Sept. 18 (†AS, SA). Three imm. Hudsonian Godwits appeared at S.J.C.R. Sept. 1 (†JG, ph.) for the 2nd Oregon record with multiple individuals and at least the tenth for the state. Two Ruddy Turnstones at Reardan, *Lincoln*, WA (JA) and one at Ochoco L., OR, Sept. 1, the first *Crook* record (LR, TC, CM) comprised the usual few interior fall counts.

The Red Knot at St. Paul, OR, Sept. 12 (†BB) was a first for the Willamette Valley away from Sauvie. Two of the largest peak counts of W. Sandpiper came from the interior: 1200 at W.W.R.D. Aug. 26 (M & MLD) and at Malheur 8600 were noted Aug.

21 to Sept. 4 (*vide* TC). The period of heaviest coastal movement of W. Sandpiper was late August to the 2nd week of September, when 1000 were at S.J.C.R. Aug. 31 (MP), 1800 were at Sauvie Aug. 22 (HN), 1600 were at Telegraph Slough, *Skagit*, WA, Sept. 2 (*vide* BK) and very large numbers were at Bandon, *Coos*, OR (JG, JJ). None of these counts, except the Bandon numbers, were near the levels of 10,000+ that should have been reported. It was an average or better fall for Pectoral Sandpiper. Their numbers seemed particularly good to most observers, since 1989 and 1990 were two of the poorest falls in memory for them. At Reardan, WA, the peak was a typical 56 on Sept. 24 (JA), and observers at other interior and coastal locations noted similar numbers (M & MLD, BW, M & EE, HN). There were many reports of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: one at Leadbetter Aug. 30 (†BSb) was the earliest, one at Nehalem, OR, Nov. 12 (Robert Lucas) was the latest and three at Aberdeen, WA, Oct. 27 (GG) were the peak count. Interior reports are still very rare; this fall there were two along Frenchman Hills Rd., *Grant*, WA, Sept. 29 (†BT) with one still there Oct. 6 (AS), one at Lower Klamath N.W.R., OR, Sept. 24 (†RE) and one at Malheur Oct. 5 (†BB) was a refuge first.

Stilt Sandpiper numbers were low, with only two westside reports: one at Whidbey I., WA, Aug. 18 (DP) and up to two at Sauvie (HN) Sept. 1–9. It was a poor year in the interior as well (JA, M & MLD, AS, TC). Nine Buff-breasted Sandpipers were found in w. Washington, including six in unusual areas: four at Dungeness, *Clallam* Sept. 1 (FSh), one different bird at Dungeness Sept. 14 (EH), and one at Lyman, *Skagit* Sept. 15 (SA). The 12 w. Oregon records were from coastal locations, except for one at Sauvie Aug. 22 (HN) where they are quite rare. The total of 21 probably indicates a modest flight. The Regional Ruff total of six includes at least one imm. at O.S. Aug. 23 to Oct. 26 (DP, BSu), an ad. male at O.S. Oct. 17 (DN), one imm. at Agate L. Sept. 1–27, reportedly the first Rogue valley record (RE, Jerry Wahl, ph.), two at S.J.C.R. Aug. 11 (MP), and one imm. female at Sauvie Sept. 4–5 (JJ). A juv. Short-billed Dowitcher in the Columbia Basin at Potholes Res., WA, Aug. 7 (DP) was identified as *caurinus*. The only other interior sighting were two Short-billed Dowitcher at W.W.R.D. Aug. 25 (†AS, BW). The count of 20,000 Long-billed Dowitcher at Malheur Oct. 27 (JJ, TC) is astounding; no other Regional peak counts even approach that number. For the 2nd consecutive fall, Red-necked Phalarope numbers on pelagic trips were very low; the highest count out of Westport was a measly 97 Aug. 17 (TW). Red Phalaropes are regular but rare in the interior: one at W.W.R.D. Sept. 9–25 (KK), one at Summer Lake W.M.A., OR, Sept. 20 (SSu) was a *Lake* first, and one was at McNary N.W.R. Sept. 28 (M & MLD).

#### GULLS TO OWLS

The total of seven imm. Franklin's Gulls found on the westside continues the declining trend of the last two autumns. Prior to this recent decline, 20 or more could be expected in a fall. The records this fall included up to two at Everett, WA, Sept. 2 to Oct. 20 (RM, BSu), one at Seattle Oct. 6 (EH), three at Marysville, *Snobomish*, WA, Oct. 22 (RM), and the only Oregon report of one at Sauvie Aug. 3–Nov. 10 (NL). In interior areas away from Malheur, the 4 sightings included imm. Franklin's at Lyons Ferry, *Franklin*, Oct. 5 (M & MLD), Soap L., *Grant*, Oct. 13 (AS) and near McNary Dam, OR, Oct. 12 (M & MLD). A late and locally rare Franklin's Gull was at Spokane Nov. 10 (JA). Three Little Gulls, a subadult at Seattle Sept. 21 (RTh), one at Everett Oct. 20–26 (BSu, DB), and one at American L., *Pierce*, Nov. 3 (W. Wilkins), were routine fall numbers. TW found that Bonaparte's Gulls in the Bellingham area were late in arriving, low in total numbers and departed early. Mew Gulls are quite rare in the interior: one was in Spokane Nov. 10–22 (JWi, JA), one was at John Day Dam Nov. 9 & 17 (NL) and three were at Lyon's Ferry, *Franklin*, WA, Nov. 23 (KK).

California Gulls were much less common than usual along the outer coast: only 800 were at S.J.C.R. Aug. 20 (HN) and fewer than 100 were at Grays Harbor Aug. 23–25 (DP). Thousands should have been present; much lower than normal numbers were also reported in fall 1990. Production of Glaucous-winged Gulls this summer from the large Protection I. colony in the Strait of Juan de Fuca was thought to be the best ever (UW). The interior records of Sabine's Gull were one at Glenwood, *Klickitat*, WA, Sept. 6 (John O'Connell, ph.), a first county record, and one at John Day Dam Nov. 9 (NL). For the 3rd fall since 1983, Elegant Terns reached the Washington coast, although the flight was much smaller than the 1983 or 1990 flights. In Oregon, up to four were at the Chetco R. mouth, *Curry*, Aug. 21–Oct. 27 (†AB, CD, *vide* HN), one was at Coos Bay Aug. 19 (Barbara Griffin) and four were at Yaquina Bay Aug. 2 (Wes & Florence Bell). Northernmost were two at O.S. Aug. 23–25 (DP, BSu) and again Sept. 18 (BW).

Counts of Com. Murres off Westport were not impressive (TW). Apparently, breeding success of murres off Oregon remains below normal. Some unusual concentrations of Marbled Murrelets were reported this fall. On Puget Sound, 57 were counted on Langley Bay, near Anacortes, *Skagit* Aug. 6 (M & MLD). Along coastal Oregon, 29 were at Boiler Bay, *Lincoln* Aug. 13 (M & MLD), up to 55 were at Yaquina Head in August and September (Kathy Merrifield) and 40 were at Cape Meares, *Tillamook* Sept. 11 (Richard Smith). The Ancient Murrelet on the Monmouth Sed. Ponds Sept. 29 (SD, †BB) was a Willamette Valley first and a very early migrant, as normal fall arrival time in Puget Sound is mid-October. A Horned Puffin Aug. 9 near the mouth of the Siuslaw R.

(†MH) was the 2nd recent fall record for Oregon.

A pair Barred Owls near Mollalla, *Clackamas* produced young (SD, m.ob.); breeding records for Oregon are sparse.

#### S.A.

The number of Boreal Owl reports was astounding, especially since there were no reports this summer and few this spring. In the Okanogan Highlands of n. Washington, nine were found in the Tiffany Mt. region Sept. 14 (KB) and three were there Oct. 18 (AS). In the e. Oregon Cascades, nine were found during October at 2 locations in *Deschutes* (TC, m.ob.) and *Lane* (*vide* HN). Finally, in the Wallowa and Blue Mts. of n.e. Oregon and adjacent Washington, up to three were found in *Wallowa*, OR, Oct. 12–15 (Verda Teale, DL, M & MLD), and four more in *Columbia*, WA, Oct. 11 (M & MLD, ph.). Were these birds present and undetected in these areas during spring and summer, or had they bred farther north and moved south post-breeding? We know very little about the most basic aspects of their occurrence in the Region.

#### POORWILL TO THRUSHES

A Com. Poorwill in Tacoma Oct. 4 (John Slipp) was one of fewer than ten records for w. Washington. The Vaux's Swift over the Nisqually N.W.R., *Thurston*, WA, Nov. 2 (RTa) was very late. A ♀ Broad-tailed Hummingbird south of Mt. Hood, OR, Aug. 17–18 (DL, DA) may be the northernmost for the Cascades. Several Lewis' Woodpecker reports from the mid-Willamette Valley in October and November (*vide* BB) are notable, as the species apparently deserted e. Washington this fall (AS, BT). Some of the e. Washington birds may have moved into or through the Willamette valley. Two Acorn Woodpeckers were at Lyle, *Klickitat*, Oct. 11 (R&GR) which is the only Washington locale where they are regular. An ad. ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was at Silver Lake Oct. 6–10 (†SSu, ph.) for Oregon's 8th record.

A *Tropical Kingbird* at Ocosta, *Grays Harbor*, Oct. 21 – Nov. 20 (†JS, †AS, m.ob., ph) was heard calling on several occasions. This is the 10th Washington record and the first with species identification confirmed by voice. The only Oregon report was one at Hammond, *Clatsop*, Nov. 17 (Jack Kiley).

Steller's Jay movements undoubtedly occur regularly in the Region, but are not often observed, so the count of 52 seen moving south during twelve minutes at O.S. Sept. 8 (AS) is interesting, especially as the other jay species seemed to be staging movements this fall. The number of Blue Jay reports in Washington was almost bewilderingly large. *Ten* appeared this fall, the earliest in Fairfield, *Spokane* Sept. 25 (Donna Schluter). Five of the reports were from w



Washington, at Seattle (George Lowe), Vashon I. (Mary Fitch), and two at Klipsan Beach, *Pacific*, during November (*fide* Alan Richards, ph.) reached the outer coast. Remarkably, there was only one Oregon report, in LaGrande Nov. 25 (Guy & Freda Vaughn). The unusual number of extralimital Scrub Jays may have originated from several different populations. Two Scrub Jays in Seattle Aug. 13 (Carol Fahrenbrun) and one in Tacoma Sept. 25 (James Lyles) likely came from the growing population in s.w. Washington. Up to six at an Astoria, OR, feeder throughout the fall (Dan Fay) could have come from farther south on the coast or from the Willamette valley. Most puzzling were the exceptional number of Scrub Jays found in e. Oregon, where they were all local first records. One was at Malheur Field Station, *Harney* Oct. 2 (Sheran Jones), one was at Bend all fall (TC), another at Mt. Vernon Oct. 14 through November (Pat & Sharon Sweeney, Tom Winters), one was in LaGrande from Nov. 25 on (Joyce Coate) and two were in Prineville, OR, Nov. 6 to the end of the period (Chris Carey). Were these from the Great Basin populations to the south and east, from the populations in south-central Oregon, or from the Willamette valley populations to the west?

The Bewick's Wren range in the interior is expanding. The Spokane area population, only about a year old, is surviving well (JA) with individuals continuing to appear in new areas. In e. Oregon, one near Wamic Sept. 1 (DL) was evidence of continuing expansion into the Deschutes R. drainage.

#### MIMIDS TO WARBLERS

A N. Mockingbird found Nov. 1–9 north of Ellensburg was the first *Kittitas*, WA, record (HO, PM), one in the Bend area Sept. 1 (CM) was the 3rd *Deschutes* record and the 3rd interior report was one at McNary Park, OR, Sept. 14 (CC). Others in Oregon were found on Sauvie Nov. 1 (JJ), at Warrenton, *Clatsop* Nov. 29 (CC), at Brookings from Oct. 15 on (CD), and two were in the Rogue Valley throughout the fall (Dick Cronberg, Ric Thowless). Eight reports is more than average for fall. Bohemian Waxwing numbers around Spokane were poor this fall (JA). A ♀ *Phainopepla* in Lakeview Sept. 26 (Bing Wong) was a 4th Oregon record, the 3rd from the interior. A *Philadelphia Vireo* at Summer Falls S.P., *Grant*, Sept. 25 (†KB) is the first well-documented sighting for Washington, even though it was a single person sighting.

A Tennessee Warbler was at Seattle Sept. 17 (Kevin Aanerud), for about the 12th state record. A *Northern Parula* near Tokeland Aug. 18 (†GG, †Hugh Willoughby) was the 4th for Washington. The Yellow Warbler at Umatilla, OR, Nov. 30 (KK) was very late. The only vagrant warbler in s.e. Oregon this fall was the ad. ♂ *Magnolia Warbler* at Cottonwood Cr., *Malheur*, Sept. 28 (DA, DL). An apparent hybrid Black-throated Gray X Townsend's Warbler was found in Seattle

Sept. 1 (†RD). An ad. ♂ *Prairie Warbler* landed briefly on a pelagic trip boat 3 mi offshore from Brookings Sept. 28 (†DF, †KS) for about the 3rd Oregon record, all from the coast. One Palm Warbler was found along the Washington coast, at O.S. Nov. 21 (Bob Morse), and six were located along the Oregon coast (HH, Dfa, MP, PS). One at McNary Park, OR, Oct. 19 (†Tony Greager) was highly unusual; they are very rare vagrants in the interior even though they are scarce annual fall migrants on the coast. There were two *Blackpoll Warblers* in e. Washington, immatures at Davenport (†JA) and at Richland (†BW), both Sept. 7. There are still fewer than 10 confirmed Washington records. A Black-and-white Warbler near Portland Sept. 4 (†JB) and a female window-kill in Hillsboro, *Washington* Nov. 11 (HN, \*) were the only reports this fall. An Am. Redstart at Seattle Sept. 8 (SA) was the only westside report of this scarce migrant. A N. Waterthrush at Nisqually N.W.R. Nov. 9 was a rare w. Washington vagrant and a *Thurston* first (†GR).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Malheur Sept. 1 (CO); they now appear to be annual in s.e. Oregon. Clay-colored Sparrows appeared twice at Brookings, Oct. 22 and Nov. 7 (†CD, †AB), and at Nehalem Meadows Nov. 9 (Jim Hannan); they are rare but regular on the Oregon coast. A *Lark Bunting* in Westport Sept. 10 (Gary Bowman, ph.) was the 8th Washington sighting. Oregon's 2nd *Le Conte's Sparrow* was a juvenile in Fields Oct. 12 (JJ, m.ob., ph.); both records are from the same weed patch. One Swamp Sparrow at Seattle Nov. 1 into early December (Dick Veit) was the only w. Washington report. Interior reports were well above average levels: one to two were at McNary Park, OR, Oct. 27 to Nov. 24 (M & MLD), one in Fields Oct. 12 (TC, SSu) was the 2nd *Harney* record, one at Sycan Marsh Oct. 1 (SSu) was the first *Lake* record, one was at Ochoco L. Oct. 6 (TC) for the first *Crook* record, and one was near Walla Walla, WA, Nov. 28 (†AS).

Snow Buntings exhibited an unusual arrival pattern, a sprinkling of birds appeared in many areas, some quite unusual, Oct. 25–26. One was at Yaquina Bay, *Lincoln*, Oct. 25 (SR), up to nine were at Yaquina Head Oct. 16–28 (*fide* DF), one was at S.J.C.R. Oct. 25 (Tim Shelmerdine) with six there two days later (HN), nine were at O.S. Oct. 26 (Jim Oakland, Richard Lindstrom), one on Hartstine I., WA, Oct. 26 (Tom Weir) was probably a first *Mason* record, one was at Everett Oct. 26 (DB), four were in Marblemount, *Skagit*, WA, Oct. 26 (*fide* Keith Wiggers), and one was at Swift Res., WA, Oct. 29 (Don Jole) for a *Skamania* first. A Bobolink at Leadbetter Sept. 18 (FSh) may have been a first *Pacific* record. All reports of Tricolored Blackbird from Oregon came from areas in the Rogue Valley where well-established (Ray Skibby, HS) or from the Prineville area where they have recently become regular winter visitors (TC) A ♀ Hooded Oriole was at the South Slough

Sanctuary, *Coos*, Sept. 1 (†JJ); there are about ten Oregon records.

Red Crossbills began to reappear in the n part of the Region during July. By August, lots of Red Crossbills were on Lewis Peak, *Walla Walla*, WA (KK) and small numbers of singing birds were in the *Kittitas* portion of the Washington Cascades (PM) Aug. 17. On Aug. 30, in *Kittitas*, Types II and IV were common in the Engleman Spruce forest (DP, Tom Hahn). Numbers of Red Crossbills moved into the Oregon Cascades and Coast Range from late July into October (HN) and into the e. Oregon mountains after mid-August (JE). Small numbers of White-winged Crossbills were found in the northern Cascades of Washington during August through the first half of October (DN, IP, DP, JM, RTa, GR) and in n.e. Washington (JA). In the Oregon Cascades, where White-wingeds are always notable, small numbers were found during the first half of August at Larch Mt. (GL, JE) and farther south at Three Sisters (MP). Small numbers of Com. Redpoll were found near Spokane beginning Nov. 14 (JA). Ten Lesser Goldfinches at Ridgefield N.W.R. Oct. 4 (G & WH) made a large number for s.w. Washington and at an unusual location.

**Initialed observers:** (subregional editors in boldface) Jim Acton, David Anderson, Scott Atkinson, Alan Barron, Dave Beaudette, Jimbo Beckman, **Barb Bellin** (Salem area), **Thais Bock** (Tacoma area), Ken Brunner, Wilson Cady, Craig Corder, **Tom Crabtree** (e. Oregon), Mike & Merry L. Denny, **Colin Dillingham** (Curry Co.), Stephen Dowlan, Rich Droker, Ray Ekstrom, **Merlin & Elsie Eltzroth** (Corvallis area), **Joe Evanich** (e Oregon), Darrel Faxon, Dave Fix, George Gerds, Roy Gerig, Hendrik Herlyn, Randy Hill, Glen & Wanda Hoge, Eugene Hunn, Matt Hunter, Jim Johnson, Ken Knittle, Bob Kuntz, Nick Luthaby, Gerard Lillie, Tom Love, Donna Luthoff, John Martin, Phil Mattocks, Craig Miller, **Marjorie Moore** (Rogue valley), Roger Muskat, **Harry Nehls** (w. Oregon), Vic Nelson, David Nunnallee, Bob O'Brien, Clarence O'Leary, Hal Opperman, Paul Osburn, Mike Patterson, Ian Paulsen, Dennis Paulson, Robert & Georgia Ramsey, Lew Rems, **Tom Rogers** (easternmost Washington), Skip Russell, Howard Sands, Kevin Sands, Brian Self (BSe), Fred Sharpe, Bill Shelmerdine, **Dory & Stan Smith** (Clallam Co.), Dave Stejskal (DSt), Andy Stepnewski, Paul Sullivan, Steve Summers, Bob Sundstrom, Ruth Taylor (RTa), **Larry Thornburgh** (Coos Co.), Rob Thorne (RTh), Carol Vande Voorde, Rick Vetter, Terry Wahl, Wayne Weber, Ulrich Wilson, Jeff Wisman (JWi), Bob Woodley.—**BILL TWEIT**, P.O. Box 1271, Olympia, WA 98507, and **JEFF GILLIGAN**, 25 NE 32nd Ave., Portland, OR 97232.

# MIDDLE PACIFIC COAST REGION

David G. Yee,  
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Bruce E. Deuel

Fall's El Niño intensified through winter. By March, signs pointed to a substantial event. The southern seabirds Black-vented Shearwater, Xantus' Murrelet, and Pink-footed Shearwater were unseasonably numerous; two frigatebirds and a tropicbird were noted. Conversely, the temperature-sensitive northern seabirds Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Ancient Murrelet, with few exceptions, were very scarce.

Near-normal rainfall was received for the first time in six years, but the Region remained in a drought condition. Don Roberson's assessment that the dearth of overwintering rarities such as warblers and orioles has been related to drought-induced late-blooming eucalyptus is probably accurate.

For the second winter, nearly every report commented on the Regionwide lack of montane irruptives, in particular Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush, and Pine Siskin.

**Abbreviations:** CCRS (*Coyote Creek Riparian Banding Station, Santa Clara Co.*); CV (*Central Valley*); FI (*Southeast Farallon Is.*); SF (*San Francisco*); ph. (*photo on file with Regional Editors*). All records from FI and Palomar should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO).

## LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS

*San Benito's* 2nd Red-throated Loon, at San Justo Res. Feb. 27–Mar. 8 (RMrr, KVV) was surprisingly the only one reported inland. Two Pacific Loons were on Folsom L., *Placer & Sacramento*, Dec. 28–Jan. 1 (†GEw, †TDM). A Yellow-billed Loon on Whiskeytown Res. *Shasta*, Dec. 30–Feb. 17 (G. Woods, J. Coon, BY, †SBT, †F. Gardner) was the first for our Interior district. Four Red-necked Grebes were inside the greater SF Bay, and singles were inland at Clearlake Park, *Lake*, Jan. 2 (JRW) and at Little Panoche Res., *Fresno*, Jan. 7 (GF, MPl).

Black-footed Albatross prefers our continental shelf break; its numbers decrease down the continental slope into deeper waters. Laysan Albatross in California prefers the deep ocean. These patterns were illustrated by a 24-hour boat trip to 100 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 that tallied 59 Laysans but only one Black-footed (SFB, AWa). A trip beyond the Cordell Bank, *Marin*, Feb. 1



found four–seven Laysans (RS, m.ob.), and a single was seen from Pigeon Pt., *San Mateo*, Feb. 18 (BS). Except for 200 seen up to 100 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 (SFB), N. Fulmars were very scarce as the El Niño took hold. The fulmar's preference for deep water is magnified in warm-water seasons. Three Mottled Petrels were 80–84 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 (AWa, †SFB, †RAE).

Pink-footed Shearwaters on the trip beyond the Cordell Bank Feb. 1 were variously estimated from 25–100 (RS, BDP, JW), and 55 were offshore of Monterey Feb. 29 (DLSh). Such winter numbers were unprecedented. Nevertheless, Flesh-footed Shearwater (four) again outnumbered Pink-footed (only one) on the deep-water trip to 100 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 (SFB, AWa). Three

Flesh-footeds were seen on the Cordell Bank trip Feb. 1 (RS, JW, MiF), and singles were off Santa Cruz Dec. 14 (*vide* BBrr) and Monterey Bay Feb. 29 (DLSh). Sixty Black-vented Shearwaters at Moss Landing Dec. 22 (PJM) lingered from fall, but similar numbers remaining or reappearing in March were unseasonable. Three Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, plus "probables," along shore from the Gulf of the Farallones to the Monterey Pen., Dec. 26–28 seemed storm-related.

A Red-billed Tropicbird was reported from a helicopter on the way to FI Feb. 20 (C. Elfic, *vide* KH). Two Pelagic Cormorants at Vallejo Dec. 23 (ABtt, J. Karr) and one at Hayward Shoreline Dec. 29 (RJR) were rather far into SF Bay. A Brown Pelican at Sunnyvale sewage ponds Feb. 26 (R. Freeman) was a rare winter visitor to *Santa Clara*. Two frigatebirds were presumed to be Magnificent. An immature followed and rode fishing boats from Pacific Grove to Monterey Feb. 11–12 (N. Lemon *vide* AB).

The next day an ad. male flew N past Ano Nuevo Pt. (GJS).

## EGRETS TO DUCKS

Four Cattle Egrets in *Del Norte*, up to 18 in *Humboldt*, and 69 on the Stockton CBC were the only reports involving more than three birds. A White-faced Ibis near Moss Landing Jan. 1 (PJM *et al.*) was the only one reported along the coast, but six at Joice I., *Solano*, Dec. 23 (RS, D. Wight) were the first on the Benicia CBC.

Rare swans made a big splash in the Region. As many as six "Bewick's" Swans wintered in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (DGY *et al.*). The Whooper Swan at Lower Klamath NWR, *Siskiyou*, in November remained well past the end of the period



Whooper Swan (center), towering above the nearby Tundra Swan and Canada Geese, at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, California, on December 29, 1991. Apparently a third state record, although none of the records have yet been accepted by the California records committee. Photograph/Monte M. Taylor.

(m.ob.), with two ad. Trumpeter Swans there until Jan. 26 (†DR, †SBT). A color-marked Trumpeter from a flock introduced to Oregon's Summer L. was on Goose L., *Modoc*, Jan. 4 (*fide* BED), and three adults were in Sierra Valley, *Plumas*, Feb. 28 (†LJ).

The 84 Greater White-fronted, 28 Snow, and 30 Ross' geese along the coast were many more than normally reported. In addition, two Snow X Ross' Goose hybrids frequented Laguna Grande, *Monterey*, Dec. 17–Jan. 20 (N. Citron, JC, ph. DR). A Brant island at Lower Klamath NWR Feb. 16 (BDP) was noteworthy, as was one at the San Jose-Santa Clara sewage plant Feb. 18 (SBT). Three endangered Aleutian Canada Geese (*B. c. leucopareia*) were out of range at Half Moon Bay, *San Mateo*, Dec. 8 (†RSTh). Observers may expect to see more of these as the population expands but are cautioned that it takes more than a white neck ring to make an Aleutian.

Six Eur. Green-winged Teal reports (an average number) included a 2nd *San Joaquin* record on the Bract Tract Jan. 4 (DGY, WRH) and a Eur. X Am. hybrid at Bolinas Lagoon, *Marin*, Feb. 9 (RS). Up to nine Blue-winged Teal were along Santa Fe Grade, *Merced*, Feb. 1 (FGB, SAG, JMR), the only noncoastal report. Numbers of Eur. Wigeon continue to increase, including an astounding 85 at the Gray Lodge WMA Dec. 26 (Peace Valley CBC, *fide* BED).

Hybrid *Aythya* ducks were reported as a returning Ring-necked X scaup sp. at L. Merritt Dec. 19 and a Tufted Duck X scaup sp. at Inverness Jan. 30 (both DaS). Nine Tufted Ducks were in 5 SF Bay counties, more than usual. Though recently removed from the CBRC review list, this species should still be described when found in unusual locations. Increasingly regular on large inland bodies of water, a ♀ Greater Scaup in Redding, *Shasta*, Dec. 6 (BED) was less expected.

An ad. ♀ King Eider in Humboldt Bay Jan. 6–Feb. 1 (†BBA, †FJB, †GSL) was the Region's 3rd in 2 years. The *Steller's Eider* at Bodega Bay in November remained through the end of the period, revealing itself as an ad. female (m.ob.). A concentration of 22 Harlequin Ducks was at Pt. Saint George, *Del Norte*, Dec. 15 (*fide* ADB). Oldsquaws are becoming regular deep inside SF Bay, where up to six were reported. Inland, two or three were in the Klamath Basin Dec. 17–Jan. 26 (m.ob.); one was on O'Neill Forebay, *Merced*, Dec. 27 (†DS, PJM). Only six of 26 reports included sex and age data, making it difficult to determine total numbers for this species.

Surf Scoters, rare inland, included one at O'Neill Forebay Dec. 27 (PJM, DS) and two first-year males at Sacramento NWR Feb. 16 (DSh). A huge flock of 4000 Com. Goldeneyes was off Novato, *Marin*, Feb. 6 (JW). Of about 150 Barrow's Goldeneyes reported, the most noteworthy include a male on O'Neill Forebay Dec. 27 (PJM, DS) and a pair in Quincy, *Plumas*, Feb. 7 (LJ). Seven inland Red-breasted Mergansers were more than average

#### RAPTORS

At least four Turkey Vultures in *Del Norte* December–Feb. 5 were the most in many winters (ADB). In many areas Black-shouldered Kites are becoming scarce again; only four or five are currently known in e. *Alameda* (ALE). *Yolo's* 5th N. Goshawk was in the Berryessa Hills Dec. 15 (JMHu).

Fall's late ad. Swainson's Hawk lingered in Sierra Valley to Dec. 15 (†LJ). Up to 28 Swainson's Hawks Feb. 16 (WRH) were on Venice I., *San Joaquin* (DGY), and two were in *Sacramento* (TDM, GEw) (see AB 45:316). Seven "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawks included *Sierra's* first (†LJ), three in *Solano* (†RS, †CLO, †RLCL), singles in *San Joaquin* (MJL) and *San Mateo* (†RSTh), plus a continuing bird in *Sacramento* (TFi). An imm. Ferruginous Hawk at Ft. Dick Dec. 14–20 (ADB, m.ob.) was *Del Norte's* 2nd. Another at Ft. Bidwell, *Modoc*, Jan. 9 (JCS) was unusually far northeast for midwinter. Rough-legged Hawk was scarce throughout c. California.

The *richardsoni* Merlin was back for its 3rd winter in Mt. View (MMR). Another *richardsoni* was at Bolinas, *Marin*, Nov. 30 (DGY, KH, RAK). Peregrine Falcons continued to increase everywhere, but three adults on the same rock at Castle Rock, *Del Norte*, Dec. 14 (ADB) was a surprising sight.

#### RAILS TO SHOREBIRDS

Black Rail reports increased from SF Bay-area marshes, including 12 in the Pittsburg Marshes, *Contra Costa*, Dec. 14 (EHa *et al.*), but predation by herons continues to be a problem. Two Lesser Golden-Plovers found their way inland to Tyler I., *Sacramento*, Feb. 20–25 (m.ob.). A Mt. Plover made a rare coastal visit to Abbott's Lagoon, *Marin*, Dec. 14 (BDP), while excellent numbers wintered at regular inland locations in *Kings* (29, PJM), *San Benito* (100, m.ob.), *Solano* (19, THK), and *Yolo* (230, m.ob.).

A Greater Yellowlegs wintered n.e. of usual range at Modoc NWR (RLR). Twelve Lesser Yellowlegs at Lemoore, *Kings*, until Dec. 27 (PJM) were late fall migrants there. An inland Willet, very rare in winter, was on Staten I., *San Joaquin*, Feb. 23 (GEw). Also rare in winter was a Wandering Tattler north to MacKerricker SP, *Mendocino*, Feb. 5 (RJK, C. Vaughn). Almost 1400 Red Knots on the *Alameda* shoreline in February (DES, RJR) made the largest number ever recorded in the Region in winter. Single *Stilt Sandpipers* at Lemoore Dec. 1–27 (RH, PJM, †DS) and on the Santa Fe Grade Jan. 24–26 (†DS, DES, RJR) were first Regional winter records. Up to five Ruffs at Lemoore through Dec. 27 (PJM, DS) with two staying until Jan. 27 (DS) and one at Moss Landing Jan. 3 (†DEG) were unprecedented winter numbers. Late phalaropes included a Wilson's at Lemoore Dec. 1 (RH) and a Red-necked on the American R. in *Sacramento* Dec. 7 (MJL).

#### JAEGERS TO ALCIDS

Thirty Pomarine Jaegers up to 100 mi s w of

Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 (SFB) and 15 off Monterey Feb. 29 (DLSh) were high numbers for winter. The only Franklin's Gull was a presumed returning bird at Sandy Wool L., *Santa Clara*, Jan. 25 (G. Shurtleff). A first basic W Gull at Davis sewage ponds Dec. 18 (†SFB) was *Yolo's* first. Another W. Gull was in s.w. *Sacramento* Jan. 12 (TDM). Eleven to 13 coastal and SF Bay-area Glaucous Gulls featured an adult at Stinson Beach Feb. 14 (DaS). Three others were in *Yolo & Sacramento*; *Lake's* first was at Clearlake Park Feb. 19–20 (†JRW, †S. Klynstra). Fifty Black-legged Kittiwakes were up to 100 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes Dec. 14 (SFB), but there were very few others. An immature flying past Martinez Marina Jan. 8 (RJR) was the 3rd for *Contra Costa*. A Caspian Tern at Kings R near Stratford Dec. 31 (DS, PJM) was our most inland this winter; a Caspian near Arcata Jan. 19 (J.C. Robinson) was the northernmost.

Likely reflecting the El Niño were up to four Xantus' Murrelets offshore *Monterey* Feb. 27 (RT) and two 15 mi n.w. of Pt. Reyes Feb. 1 (RS). In contrast, Ancient Murrelets were few except for 40 offshore Pt. Reyes Beach Dec. 14 (RS). Perhaps the latter birds departed as the El Niño became stronger. The prize of the long Dec. 14 trip was a Parakeet Auklet that was circled closely 74 mi s.w. of Pt. Reyes (†SFB, †IvS, †RAE, ph. RN).

#### PIGEONS TO WOODPECKERS

The erratic wanderings and late fall nestings of Band-tailed Pigeon have been attributed to fluctuating food sources, especially acorns. Perhaps the early nesting pair near Calistoga, *Napa*, Feb. 2 (M. Eisenman, BiG) was under similar stimulus. Twenty-five Mourning Doves all season at Modoc NWR, with a peak of 70 Jan. 24, were noteworthy as they are very rare here after November (RLR). The reappearance of Burrowing Owls at Marina Dec. 15 (JSo) and Castroville Jan. 11–21 (DSe, BGE) was encouraging. *Monterey* news, but *Santa Cruz* appeared to lose one of two known wintering sites near Watsonville when a ground squirrel poisoning program was implemented (RAM *fide* *Albatross*).

Up to 10 Com. Poorwills calling in the back country of Ft. Ord, *Monterey*, Feb. 24 (DR) were presumably prompted by the unseasonably warm weather. Single ♂ Costa's Hummingbirds were in SF Jan. 1 (ADB) and Fair Oaks, *Sacramento*, Feb. 12–29 (GEw *et al.*), an average winter showing. In the past 20 years only 13 *Selasphorus* hummingbirds have lingered into December, with just four identifiable to species (two each Rufous and Allen's). The season as many as five *Selasphorus* hummingbirds lingered in Berkeley Dec. 10–15 (AdW, m.ob.); another was near Tiburon Dec. 28 (†BHi). Among the identifiable, a ♂ Rufous buzzed Walnut Creek Dec. 9 (T. Finger), and an imm. ♂ Rufous was a CBC highlight in *Sacramento* Dec. 18–21 (†TDM *et al.*). These might be attributed to a mild winter, as have most prior records

In addition to four Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers that wintered in *Marin* and SF, *Sacramento's* first was in Sacramento Dec. 10 (†TDM); *Monterey's* 5th was in Carmel Feb. 11+ (M. Sutherlin, †ph. DR, m.ob.). Supplementing six coastal Red-naped Sapsuckers were apparent county firsts for *Calaveras* at Camanche Res. Dec. 29 (†DGY, †WRH) and *El Dorado* at Coloma Historical Park Jan. 26 (MP), and the 2nd and 3rd winter records for the Mono Basin at Lee Vining Jan. 2–4 (M. Findling) and Mono L. Feb. 21 (ES), respectively.

#### FLYCATCHERS TO CHICKADEES

For the 3rd straight winter, a Least Flycatcher graced the Region: U.C. Berkeley Botanical Gardens Dec. 5–Jan. 19—*Alameda's* first (†M. Vaughn, †JM, †GFi, m.ob.). And for the 3rd winter in the past 4, a Hammond's Flycatcher wintered in the Region: Olema Dec. 16–Jan. 25 (RS, B. Keener, †JW). Single "Western" Flycatchers were at CCRS Nov. 29–Jan. 29, SF Dec. 16–Feb. 6 (DPM, JsC), and Gazos Creek Rd., *San Mateo*, Jan. 3 (SAG). It is difficult to attribute these recent winter Empid sightings to the drought, observer awareness, or other factors.

A Black Phoebe at the Quincy sewer ponds Feb. 7 (LJ) was a winter first for *Plumas*. It was a banner season for E. Phoebe. In addition to the bird returning for its 3rd winter at Lost L., *Fresno*, Nov. 28 (J. Robinson, B. Williford), one was at the Merced NWR early January to Feb. 15 (SAG, TAC); six were coastal from *Monterey* to *Marin* Nov. 29–Feb. 26. Even more impressive was the mini-invasion of *Vermilion Flycatchers*. An imm. female at Bates Slough, *Tulare*, Dec. 30 (†PJM, †DS) was not completely unexpected, but the ad. male at Gray Lodge WMA Jan. 26–Feb. 27 (RJK, †GFi) that was joined by a 2nd male Feb. 17 (K. Francone) furnished the northernmost state record. *Solano's* first Tropical Kingbird at Benicia Dec. 23 (G. Clifton, W. Neville) was slightly inland while singles at Elkhorn Slough, *Monterey*, Dec. 22–23 (PJM, MiF) and on the Centerville CBC, *Humboldt*, Dec. 29–Jan. 4 (*vide* BBA) were more expected.

An apparent Cliff X Barn Swallow hybrid at Redwood Shores, *San Mateo*, Feb. 21 (†RSTh) must have been a surprise, though it is not without precedent (Phillips, 1986, *Known Birds of North and Middle America*, part 1). A lingering Barn Swallow was at the Stockton sewer ponds Dec. 23 (DGY). Wandering corvids included a Clark's Nutcracker at Modoc NWR Feb. 27, a refuge first (RLR), and a Yellow-billed Magpie at Pt. Reyes Feb. 22–23 (JMHu, RS, m.ob.), *Marin's* 3rd. Two Mt. Chickadees on San Benito Mt. Dec. 8 (SA, †DSG) may carry a distinction greater than establishing a *San Benito* first. Since there appear to be no previous records from the entire Diablo Range and the anomalous nature of the San Benito Mt. region, is it possible that the area may now hold a disjunct population of Mt. Chickadees similar to the one recently re-

found in *Monterey*, especially since the two areas share other similar boreal species?

#### BLUEBIRDS TO WOOD WARBLERS

About 170 Mt. Bluebirds and 20 Townsend's Solitaires in the Coast Ranges surrounding SF Bay constituted a minor invasion. The former species made no moves into the lowlands, but the latter also hit the immediate coast (three) and the CV (two). The Region's first "good" December Swainson's Thrush was banded at Palomarin Dec. 11 (†D. Reinking) and was probably a late migrant. A Sage Thrasher in Hayward Dec. 29–Mar. 8 (RJR, m.ob.) and two in Sierra Valley, *Plumas*, Feb. 2 (LJ) were slightly displaced.

As is now customary, a few N. Shrikes were in the Sacramento Valley: singles at Sutter NWR Dec. 4 (JCS) and along Gridley Rd., *Colusa*, Jan. 29–Feb. 2 (GFi, m.ob.). Among a record-high 17 coastal Solitary Vireos (*seven* in *Humboldt*), only four were found past the first part of January. One in Crescent City Jan. 30 (ADB) was *Del Norte's* first in winter; the only *plumbeus* was in Eureka Jan. 17–Feb. 19 (FJB), the Region's first coastal winter record of this race n. of *Sonoma*. A very tardy Warbling Vireo was at Pescadero Cr., *San Mateo*, Dec. 28 (DJK).

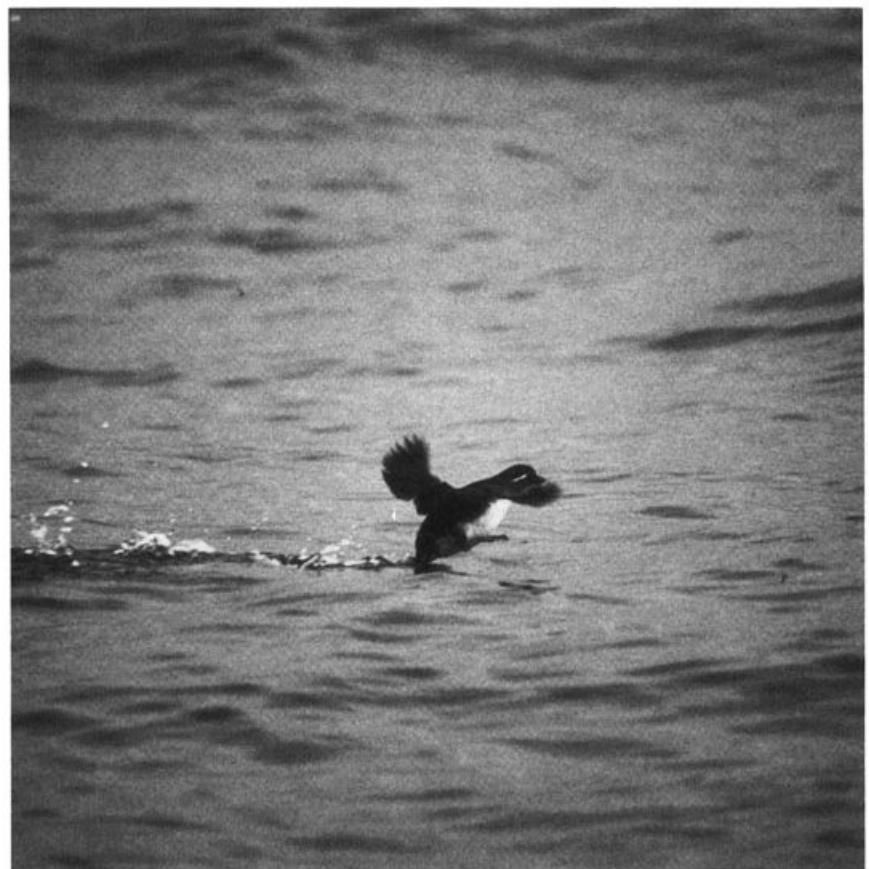
It was another mediocre season for warblers. Coastally, there were only two Tennessees, six Yellows, 20 Palms, two Am. Redstarts, and five Wilson's. In the interior, there were only four Black-throated Grays and one

Townsend's among the Sacramento and Stockton CBCs. Coastally, species in average or slightly above-average numbers included 30+ Nashvilles, 19 Hermits, and 14 Black-and-whites.

A Yellow Warbler near Stratford, *Kings*, Dec. 31 (PJM, †DS) was very rare for the interior. The season's warbler bright spots were the Region's 3rd wintering Chestnut-sided Warbler in Eureka Dec. 14–Feb. 29 (JCS, m.ob.) and 2nd wintering Blackburnian Warbler in Santa Cruz Dec. 14–Feb. 22 (DLSu, m.ob.). A "Myrtle" Yellow-rumped Warbler at Mono L. Feb. 21 (†ES) was a February first for the Mono Basin. The scant winter records e. of the Sierran crest suggest they are truly a winter rarity in this Region rather than an oversight. A very late MacGillivray's Warbler was in Alviso, *Santa Clara*, Dec. 15 (*vide* MiF).

#### TANAGERS TO FINCHES

Rich in flowering eucalyptus trees, SF always hosts wintering tanagers. The two Summer Tanagers that arrived in late November at L. Merced wintered until Feb. 2 (LLu, m.ob.), and a bird returned to Pine L. Park Dec. 8 (JsC), its 3rd straight winter. Another was at Muir Beach, *Marin*, Feb. 23 (*vide* KH). Three of five W. Tanagers were in SF Dec. 16–Feb. 8; the dissidents were at the Cosumnes R. Preserve, *Sacramento*, Dec. 7 (DGY, WRH) and Table Bluff, *Humboldt*, Dec. 26 (M. Fisher). A very healthy four



Parakeet Auklet taking off from the water, 74 miles southwest of Point Reyes, California, on December 14, 1991. Photograph/Rod Norden.

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found this winter: a returnee to Woodside, *San Mateo*, Nov. 13 through the end of the period (K. Gilmartin, *et al.*), one in Ferndale Dec. 29 (GSL), one along Gazos Creek Rd., *San Mateo*, Jan. 3 (SAG), and *Napa's* first in St. Helena Jan. 12–19 (L. & R. Bertoli, ph. RLCL, m.ob.).

Exciting news from the CV was the Region's 2nd winter record of **Blue Grosbeak** on Bouldin I., *San Joaquin*, Dec. 14 (†MJL, MFe). The Green-tailed Towhee at the Smith R mouth, *Del Norte*, Dec. 8 (ADB, J. Gartland) was the first coastal winter record n. of *Sonoma*. Conversely, an Am. Tree Sparrow at Pigeon Pt. Nov. 11–Jan. 31 (RSTh, m.ob.) appeared to be the first truly wintering bird along the coast s. of *Humboldt*. A mild influx of wintering Chipping Sparrows manifested in the greater SF Bay region, as *Marin*, *Napa*, *Solano*, *Contra Costa*, *Santa Clara*, and *San Benito* all claimed small numbers (fewer than 10). These counties list this sparrow as casual at best in winter. Once again, truly wintering Clay-colored Sparrows were found: singles at Wilder Ranch SP, *Santa Cruz*, Jan. 20–Feb. 5 (DEG), Mendocino Jan. 25–Feb. 25 (S. Cardwell *et al.*), and Ukiah SP Feb. 29 (DT). The latter two were *Mendocino's* 2nd and 3rd records. Four other birds were found coastally through December.

*Lake's* first Black-throated Sparrow at the Clearlake Landfill Dec. 21 (†JRW, NWWh) was only the Region's 2nd in winter in 10 years. *San Mateo's* first winter record of Grasshopper Sparrow at Pigeon Pt. Jan. 27 (CBe, a roadkill) was only the Region's 3rd in January. Our only Sharp-tailed Sparrows were singles at Palo Alto Baylands Nov. 23–Feb. 18 (LLu, m.ob.) and SF Bay NWR, *Alameda*, Dec. 29 (*vide* RJR), traditional wintering locales. The high number of Swamp Sparrows reported (110+) appears to be an annual event; six at Grizzly Island WMA, *Solano*, Dec. 23 (†RS, D. Wight) were the farthest inland. Four Harris' Sparrows were scattered throughout the Region Nov. 25–Feb. 23.

A well-described "Pink-sided" Junco in Sierra Valley Dec. 11–12 (†LJ & KL) was probably accurate. However, as mentioned in the past (AB40:328), the status and identification of this form is still poorly understood. *Plumas's* first **McCown's Longspur** in Sierra Valley Dec. 1 (†DS, †LJ), †MMC) was the Region's first in 3 years. Up to 20 Lapland Longspurs in Sierra Valley Dec. 1–14 (LJ, DS, KL, MMC) and 20 at Pt. Reyes Feb. 25–Mar. 8 (BDP, m.ob.) were noted winter concentrations. Our only Chestnut-collared Longspurs were up to 11 all winter at Pt. Reyes (JiD, m.ob.). A Rusty Blackbird was at King Salmon, *Humboldt*, Feb. 13–Mar. 1 (BBA). It was a very poor winter for orioles: a Hooded at Smith R., *Del Norte*, Dec. 15 (ADB, R. Bauman), and Northerns in Ferndale Dec. 29 (LPL) and Carmel Jan. 24 (BJW).

A ♀ **Brambling** in the Ferndale Bottoms Dec. 29–Feb. 28 (FJB, TWL, †m ob) was

the Region's 5th. Red Crossbills went virtually unreported all fall/winter except in *Plumas/Sierra*, where an exceptional cone crop brought "unprecedented large numbers" and "100s" into the area (LJ). A wandering Lawrence's Goldfinch in Fall R. Valley Jan. 24 (†KvG) gave *Shasta* its 2nd.

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## SOUTHERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

*Guy McCaskie*

The Region finally received a reprieve from the five years of drought, with most areas receiving above-average rainfall by the end of the period. In general, most observers commented on the low numbers of many species, such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes, and Fox Sparrows. There was no influx of winter finches, minimal numbers of montane species into the lowlands, and unimpressive numbers of berry-eaters such as American Robins and Cedar Waxwings. However, we were blessed with a remarkable number and variety of "quality" birds, making it an exciting season. Observers on a CAL COFI research cruise off the coast January 28–February 13 reported a variety of seabirds, giving us valuable information from this rarely-visited area.

**Abbreviations:** FCR (*Furnace Creek Ranch, Death Valley, Inyo Co.*); NESS (*n. end of the Salton Sea, Riverside Co.*); SCRE (*Santa Clara River Estuary near Ventura*); SESS (*s. end of the Salton Sea, Imperial Co.*). As virtually all S. California rarities are seen by many observers, only the observer(s) initially finding and identifying the bird is included. Documentation is on file with the California Bird Records Committee (c/o Michael A. Patten, P.O. Box 8612, Riverside CA 92515) for all rarities listed in this report. Records submitted without documentation are not published.

### LOONS TO FRIGATEBIRDS

A Red-throated Loon photographed on Diaz L. near Lone Pine Dec. 21–Jan. 10 (JWi) was the 2nd for *Inyo*; another photographed at SESS Jan. 25–27 (MBS) was the first for *Imperial*. An **Arctic Loon** photographed on Morro Bay Dec. 7–23 (TME) immediately followed California's (and the Lower 48's) first, on Point Reyes in November. I suspect Arctic Loons will be found regularly along the Pacific coast now that observers know what to look for to identify this species. A Pacific Loon on L. Isabella, *Kern*, Nov. 28–Feb. 15 (RL) was inland, where considered rare. Since Red-necked Grebes are very rare anywhere in S. California, one in Ventura Dec. 5 (SE), another in nearby Oxnard Dec. 8–23 (BS), and a 3rd on a small pond in Manhattan Beach, *Los Angeles*, Dec. 11–24 (DS) were all of interest. At least 120,000 Eared Grebes died on the Salton Sea in late winter (RMCK); the cause is still unknown.

Eleven Laysan Albatrosses were seen well offshore Feb. 5–11 (PP) during the CAL COFI cruise, with nine between 119 and 58 naut. mi w. of Pt. Arguello, *Santa Barbara*, Feb. 11. Two **Mottled Petrels** were seen Feb. 11 (PP), with one at 34°10'N 122°41'W (109 naut. mi w. of Pt. Arguello) and the other at



34°29'N 122°04'W (71 naut. mi w. of Pt. Arguello); although considered casual over California waters, recent work far offshore suggests it may be regular there November–March. A Murphy's Petrel 159 naut. mi w. of San Miguel I. Feb. 10 (PP), and three more between 79–71 naut. mi w. of Pt. Arguello Feb. 11 (PP) were earlier than any previous spring records. Five Cook's Petrels around 33°07'N 124°06'W (193 naut. mi w. of San Miguel I.) Feb. 10 (PP) and another at 34°10'N 122°42'W (110 naut. mi w.n.w. of Pt. Arguello) Feb. 11 (PP) were all over waters where this species is proving regular. A Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, very rare anywhere in S. California waters, was off the Palos Verdes Peninsula during an organized boat trip Feb. 21 (MH). A Least Storm-Petrel 50 naut. mi w. of San Miguel I. Feb. 9 (PP) was the first reported in California waters in winter.

An imm. **Brown Booby** at the entrance to San Diego Bay Dec. 14 (DPo) brings the number of records for the coast to more than half-dozen. An imm. **Red-footed Booby** accompanied the CAL COFI ship for about an hour and a half as it moved from 31°23'N 121°54'W (161 naut. mi w.s.w. of San Nicolas I.) to 31°33'N 121°29'W (141 naut. mi s.w. of San Nicolas I.) on Feb. 1 (PP), the 5th in S. California waters but the first in winter. Three Brown Pelicans at NESS Dec. 15 (MAP) and another at SESS Jan. 1 (GMcC) were undoubtedly wintering on this inland body of water. An imm. ♀ Magnificent Frigatebird, exceptional in winter, was grounded by heavy rains in National City, *San Diego*, Jan. 5 and was taken to an animal shelter, where it was nursed back to health and identified to species (GMcC).

#### HERONS TO RAPTORS

A Great Egret near Bishop, *Inyo*, Dec. 1 (T & JH) was unusually late for this area of California. At least three ad. Little Blue Herons remained around s. San Diego Bay through the period (EC), but the species was unrecorded elsewhere. The ad. Reddish Egret spending its 10th winter on s. San Diego Bay remained through at least Jan. 10 (JWal); the immature there Nov. 11 was still present Mar. 29 (GMcC). The ad. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron frequenting the area between La Jolla and San Elijo Lagoon, *San Diego*, since 1981 was associating with Black-crowned Night-Herons in La Jolla Dec. 26 through the end of the period (EC); one of the two adults in the Tijuana R. valley near Imperial Beach since October 1991 was still present at the end of the period (GMcC).

Seven Tundra Swans near Whittier, *Los Angeles*, Dec. 15–16 (MCL) and three more in Carlsbad, *San Diego*, Dec. 5 (MJ) were the southernmost along the coast; one on L. Hemet, *Riverside*, Jan. 19 (CMcG) was the southernmost in the mountains; 13 around SESS Dec. 3–7 (WRR, Cin-Ty Lee) were the southernmost in the e. part of the Region. An ad. ♂ **Trumpeter Swan** in Tecopa, *Inyo*, Jan. 23 (JTa) was wearing a numbered green collar; it had been transported from Montana to s. Oregon earlier in the winter and was only the 3rd ever in S. California. At least six blue morph Snow Geese spent the winter around SESS (MAP) and another was near Ridgecrest, *Kern*, Nov. 2–Feb. 9 (MTH), this being more than the normal numbers in S. California most winters.

A ♂ Eur. Green-winged Teal, very rare to casual in S. California, was near SCRE Dec. 16 (HB). Blue-winged Teal are regular along

the coast in winter but very rare in the e. part of the Region at this time of year; two along the Colorado R. at Imperial Dam Dec. 28 (MAP) and two more at NESS Jan. 19 (ES) were of interest. At least 35 Eur. Wigeon were found this winter, including two near Big Pine Feb. 19 (T & JH) and two more at SESS in January and February (PEL) in the e. portion of the Region. In addition, single hybrid Eur. X Am. Wigeon were at the Santa Ynez R. mouth Dec. 6–15 (SEF), in Goleta all winter (SEF), on Chatsworth Res. in the San Fernando Valley Mar. 15 (KLG), and near Lakeview, *Riverside*, Jan. 20 (MAP).

What was undoubtedly the same **Common Pochard** that spent part of the 1988–1989 and 1990–1991 winters at Silver Lakes near Victorville, *San Bernardino*, was there again Jan. 14–Feb. 8 (CM). Three ♂ Tufted Ducks were found this winter: one on Miramar L. in San Diego Jan. 13–Feb. 9 (PAG), another on L. Isabella Jan. 17–18 (JS), and

the 3rd at Fisherman's Retreat w. of Beaumont, *Riverside*, Feb. 27–Mar. 15 (*vide* EAC). In addition, a hybrid Tufted Duck X scaup was present in Oceanside Feb. 16 through the end of the period (TC). An imm. ♂ King Eider at the pier in Seal Beach Dec. 13–17 (JB), then at the nearby pier in Belmont Shores Jan. 9–17 (CM), and finally at the pier in Hermosa Beach Mar. 4–5 (PB), was the 7th in S. California. A Harlequin Duck, rare in S. California, was off Morro Bay Jan. 28 (SH); another was at Pt. Sal, *Santa Barbara*, Dec. 21–22 (DQ); the two at Point Mugu, *Ventura*, in November 1990 remained through the end of the period (BL). Ten Oldsquaws were reported along the coast, average for this time of year. Thirty-three Black Scoters off Vandenberg AFB, *Santa Barbara*, Dec. 15 (SEF) were in an area where similar concentrations were found in previous winters; only 10 others were found away from this area. Three imm. White-winged Scoters on Castaic L., *Los Angeles*, Jan. 26 (JKA) were inland, where considered very rare.

A Bald Eagle spent its 3rd winter on Siler Lake Res. near downtown Los Angeles (DKo), proving this species can adapt to the close proximity of man. A Red-shouldered Hawk near Westmorland, *Imperial*, Jan. 1 (MAP) was outside this species' normal range. An imm. Broad-winged Hawk on Pt. Loma in San Diego Dec. 28–29 (REW) was probably a very late fall straggler since it could not be found after this date. At least two Zone-tailed Hawks were in coastal *San Diego*, where one or two are found each winter, with an adult at L. San Marcos Dec. 21–24 (DKi) and what may have been the same bird near Escondido Jan. 12 (CR), and an immature in Santee Jan. 15–Feb. 3 (TC);

an immature near Brawley Dec. 31 (PU) gives us the first sound record for the area around SESS. A "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk, very rare to casual in S. California, was near Ridgecrest, Kern, Dec. 14 (T & KS); another was near Otay L., San Diego, Jan. 14 (JCL). A few Rough-legged Hawks were scattered throughout the Region, with one near Lakeview Dec. 1-Jan. 20 (MAP) and two around SESS Jan. 17-27 (GMcC) being the southernmost.

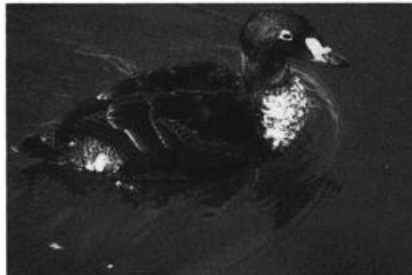
#### CRANES TO ALCIDS

An imm. Sandhill Crane near Lancaster Dec. 10-Jan. 20 (TM) was away from known areas of regular occurrence. As usual, a few Lesser Golden-Plovers of the Asiatic race *fulva* were along the coast this winter, with two on Vandenberg AFB Feb. 11 (KH), up to seven near Santa Maria Dec. 1-Jan. 25 (BH), one in Goleta Feb. 23-Mar. 1 (FS), at least 12 in Seal Beach throughout the period (DRW), and one on San Nicolas I. Dec. 3-6 (Gerry McChesney). A flock of 750-800 Mountain Plovers near El Centro Feb. 24 (BRZ) was a larger-than-normal concentration. A Black Oystercatcher in Laguna Beach Dec. 10-28 (DRW) was one of very few in Orange.

A Solitary Sandpiper in Torrance, Los Angeles, Jan. 10-Mar. 7 (MB) was one of a very few ever found wintering in California. Single Whimbrels at SESS Dec. 17 (GMcC) and Feb. 23 (GMcC) were inland, where virtually unrecorded in winter. Four to five Ruddy Turnstones on the Salton Sea near Salton City Jan. 1-Feb. 2 (KR) were undoubtedly wintering at this inland locality. At least 20 Sanderlings were inland on the Salton Sea near Salton City in January and February (MAP), where this species is now found regularly in winter; but another inland on Owens L., Inyo, Jan. 2-6 (T & JH) was completely unexpected. A Wilson's Phalarope, casual in winter, was at Point Mugu, Ventura, Dec. 19 (LRH). A Red-necked Phalarope was off San Pedro, Los Angeles, Feb. 8 (KLG), where this species may prove regular with Red Phalaropes in very limited numbers in winter. A Red Phalarope near San Luis Obispo Feb. 20 (BKS) was a short distance inland.

A Mew Gull on L. Hemet Dec. 1 (SM) was well inland. Since W. Gulls are most unusual away from the immediate vicinity of the coast, an adult on L. Perris, Riverside, Feb. 14 (DG), another adult at NESS Dec. 15 (MAP), and a 3rd-winter bird at Bombay Beach near SESS Feb. 16 (NF) were of interest. An ad. Glaucous-winged Gull at SESS throughout the winter (GMcC) and a first-winter bird in nearby Brawley Jan. 26 (PEL) were in an area where two or three are found each winter; but a first-winter bird on L. Isabella Jan. 19-20 (JLD) was the first in Kern. Three Glaucous Gulls, rare in S. California, were reported, with a first-winter bird on Vandenberg AFB Jan. 28 (KH), another on Miramar L. in San Diego Jan. 25 (TLW), and the 3rd around S. San Diego Bay Jan. 7-Feb. 15 (TC).

Two Elegant Terns in Carpinteria Dec. 7 (LRB) were late. A Com. Tern at the mouth



Immature male King Eider at Seal Beach, California, in December 1991. Photograph/A. Borodayko.

of the San Diego R. Jan. 25 through February (PEL) undoubtedly wintered locally. The status of Black Skimmer on the coast continues to change, with increasing numbers wintering farther and farther north: up to 77 in the Santa Barbara/Goleta area throughout the period (GT), up to three at the Santa Ynez R. mouth Jan. 3-26 (GL), and one at San Simeon Feb. 15 (GPS) were the northernmost this winter.

A concentration of more than 250 Com. Murres off Pt. Mugu Jan. 18-26 (DD) was a large number this far south. A Xantus' Murrelet 185 naut. mi s.w. of San Nicolas I. Jan. 30 (PP) was far from shore, but we have very little information as to where this species spends the winter. Of extreme interest were seven Parakeet Auklets during the CAL COFI cruise, with one at 31°33'N 121°28'W (140 naut. mi w.s.w. of San Nicolas I.) Feb. 1 (PP), five around 33°07'N 124°06'W (193 naut. mi w. of San Miguel I.) Feb. 10 (PP), and the 7th about 211 naut. mi off the coast Feb. 6 (PP). A loose aggregation of 1200 Rhinoceros Auklets on the water s. of Santa Rosa I. Feb. 8 (PP) was an exceptional concentration.

#### DOVES TO WOODPECKERS

Up to four White-winged Doves in Goleta Dec. 20 through February (PEL) and another in nearby Solvang Oct. 30-Dec. 20 (HS) were along the coast, and far from the desert oases in e. San Diego, where small numbers regularly winter. Four Inca Doves that arrived at FCR in fall remained to at least Jan. 10 (T & JH); one in Borrego Springs Feb. 16 into March (AM) was only the 2nd in San Diego. One of the Com. Ground-Doves that arrived at FCR in fall remained through at least Dec. 17 (T & JH). Six Ruddy Ground-Doves were at FCR Dec. 2 (DSi), with four remaining to at least Jan. 10 (T & JH); a male was in Ridgecrest, Kern, Feb. 3 into March (MA); a female was along the Colorado R. near Earp Dec. 10 to at least Feb. 1 (JS); and another was on the coast in Santa Barbara Oct. 5-Jan. 30 (KB, SEF).

A Lesser Nighthawk near Brawley Jan. 11 (CMcG) and another in nearby El Centro Feb. 24 (BRZ) were both probably wintering locally. Five Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported, with single immatures in San Diego Dec. 12-Jan. 5 (B & IM), Santa Isabel, San Diego, Dec. 16-Jan. 11 (DA), Desert Center, Riverside, Jan. 2 (GH) and at Snow Creek near Palm Springs Mar. 3-5

(MAP), and an ad. female in Cambria throughout the period (TME).

#### FLYCATCHERS

An Olive-sided Flycatcher, most unusual in winter, was in Santa Barbara Dec. 28-Feb. 9 (JH). Two Greater Pewees were in San Diego, with the individual that spent the past 3 winters again present Nov. 7 through February (DH) and another nearby Dec. 14 through February (B & IM). A Hammond's Flycatcher on Point Loma in San Diego in October was still present Jan. 24 (REW) and probably wintered locally. A Dusky Flycatcher in San Luis Obispo Dec. 1-Jan. 25 (TME, JLD) and another in Laguna Hills, Orange, Dec. 14 through February (DRW) were among very few in California in winter. Only three Gray Flycatchers were reported, with one near Robidoux, Riverside, Dec. 12-Feb. 9 (CMcG), another in Westminster, Orange, Dec. 22-Jan. 17 (SM), and the 3rd in Santee, San Diego, Jan. 18-Feb. 1 (DPA); this species used to be more numerous as a wintering bird in California. Four "W. Flycatchers," presumably Pacific-slope Flycatchers, were reported, with one in Lompoc Feb. 23 (BH), one to two in Irvine Dec. 29-Feb. 22 (MTH), and the 4th in Coronado Dec. 25 (REW).

More than the expected number of E. Phoebes were found, with single birds in San Luis Obispo Feb. 27 (EVJ), Montana de Oro S.P., Nov. 13-Feb. 22 (JSR), Atascadero Dec. 21-Feb. 16 (GAM), Santa Barbara Nov. 23-Dec. 28 (PEL), Irvine Nov. 16-Mar. 15 (DRW), and near San Diego Nov. 3-Mar. 1 (CGE). A Vermilion Flycatcher in Irvine Nov. 16-Feb. 9 (DRW) and another spending its 3rd winter near Santa Maria Oct. 20-Jan. 25 (KH) were along the coast, where now quite rare; one near Lancaster Dec. 14-Jan. 29 (TMA) was away from any area of regular occurrence. Two Dusky-capped Flycatchers, a casual winter visitor to California, were found: one along the Santa Ynez R. near Lompoc Jan. 31-Feb. 9 (MAH), and the other in Orange, Dec. 12 through February (DRW). Single Ash-throated Flycatchers in San Luis Obispo Dec. 14-15 (JSR), Castaic Junction Feb. 2 (KLG), and near San Pedro Oct. 25-Feb. 18 (MH) were along the coast, where very rare in winter; but one in the Algodones Dunes Feb. 23 (SG) was in the s.e. corner of the Region, where small numbers undoubtedly winter regularly.

Three Tropical Kingbirds remained through winter, with one near Chino Dec. 24-Jan. 11 (KR) believed to be the same bird first found here in winter 1981-1982; another in Anaheim Dec. 31-Feb. 29 (JEP) was the same bird found here the last 2 winters; the 3rd was on the coast at Point Mugu Jan. 13-Feb. 2 (NBB). The Thick-billed Kingbird in Seal Beach Oct. 29 was still present Mar. 14 (TW); the individual that spent the past 9 winters near Tustin, Orange, was again present Dec. 8 through the end of the period (BED); but most remarkable was a 3rd individual braving night temperatures of 18°F in

Lone Pine, *Inyo*, Dec. 25 through the end of the period (MS). A W. Kingbird in Santa Barbara Dec. 8–Feb. 10 (MAH, SEF) was only the 4th in California in winter.

#### BUSHTITS TO VIREOS

Four Bushtits at FCR Jan. 10 (T & JH) were at an unusual locality. Up to three Pygmy Nuthatches in Santa Barbara Feb. 4–Mar. 5 (FS) were away from any area of regular occurrence. A Rufous-backed Robin, found loosely associating with Am. Robins in Snow Creek Village near Palm Springs Mar. 1–20 (TJG), had probably been in this general area all winter and was the 7th in California. What was surely the same White Wagtail as present around Saticoy, *Ventura*, the past 4 winters, was there Feb. 8 (JWas). The only N. Shrikes were an adult at Fish Springs near Big Pine Dec. 21 (T & JH) and another adult near Olanchia, *Inyo*, Dec. 22 (T & JH).

At least a dozen Solitary Vireos were along the coast, with seven being the interior race *plumbeus*, another inland in Bakersfield Jan. 4 (JCW) was also of this race. A Philadelphia Vireo in Goleta Feb. 14–Mar. 17 (HM, SEF) was the first known to have successfully wintered in California (and the U.S.?), although one lingered to Jan. 1 in *Orange* and another to Jan. 12 in *Los Angeles* in 1983 and 1979, respectively.

#### WOOD WARBLERS

A ♂ Golden-winged Warbler near El Toro, *Orange*, Feb. 19–Mar. 14 (BB) was a complete surprise; there was no previous winter record for California, although individuals have been found as late as Dec. 15 (1990) in *San Diego* and Dec. 20 (1972) in *Los Angeles*. A Tennessee Warbler in San Marino Jan. 4 (KLG) and another in *Orange* Feb. 9 (MTH)



**Prairie Warbler near San Diego, California, on January 26, 1992. Only the third known to have spent the winter in southern California. Photograph/Jon L. Dunn.**

were the only two this winter. Ten Nashville Warblers along the coast was fewer than in recent winters. Seven Yellow Warblers along the coast this winter was far fewer than expected. Two Chestnut-sided Warblers were present, one in Irvine Regional Park near *Orange* Nov. 24–Feb. 29 (JB) and the other on Pt. Loma in *San Diego* Feb. 18 to at least Mar. 29 (EL); one in *Goleta* Dec. 7 (PEL) was best treated as a late fall migrant. Only 12 Black-throated Gray Warblers were reported along the coast, half the expected number for winter. Five Hermit Warblers between *Santa Barbara* and *San Diego* was about average along the coast



**Thick-billed Kingbird at Lone Pine, California, on December 27, 1991. This individual stayed for the rest of the winter at this high northern location, surviving many sub-freezing nights. Photograph/Tom Heindel.**

this time of year. A Blackburnian Warbler in Bakersfield Dec. 29–30 (DSH) is best considered an exceptionally late fall vagrant.

A Grace's Warbler in *Santa Barbara* Oct. 6–Feb. 17 (HPR) was the same bird from last winter. Four Pine Warblers were found, one in *Goleta* Dec. 26–Feb. 16 (RWH, SEF), another in *Santa Barbara* Dec. 12–16 (PEL), a female in *Laguna Beach* Nov. 24 through February (RAE), and a male on Pt. Loma in *San Diego* Jan. 6 to at least Apr. 12 (PAG). An imm. ♂ Prairie Warbler in *Penasquitos Canyon* near *San Diego* Nov. 3 through at least Apr. 5 (CGE) was only the 3rd in *S. California* in winter. Thirteen Palm Warblers along the coast was an expected number for winter, but one at *NESS* Jan. 25–Feb. 2 (RMcK) was inland, where most unusual. Seven Black-and-white Warblers along the coast was about average. Two Am. Redstarts around *SESS* in December and January (GMcC) were in an area where small numbers are found every winter, but one on the *Colorado R.* at *Lost Lake* Dec. 13 (MAP) was of more interest. The only N. Waterthrush was in *Irvine* Feb. 23 (RAE). At least 25 Wilson's Warblers were in riparian growth along the coast, where small numbers are found each winter.

#### TANAGERS TO ORIOLES

A ♂ Hepatic Tanager in *Santa Barbara* Dec. 23–Mar. 13 (HPR) was the same bird first found here in winter 1982–1983. A Summer Tanager was in *Santa Barbara* Dec. 23 (JEL); five more were found in January and February in *Orange* and *San Diego*, where small numbers regularly winter. Western Tanager numbers were decidedly low: only 21 along the coast. Five Rose-breasted Grosbeaks along the coast was about average, but four Black-headed Grosbeaks in the same area was more than expected in winter. A Blue Grosbeak in *Irvine Regional Park* near *Orange* Feb. 29–Mar. 9 (CTC) was one of very few ever found in *California* in winter. An Indigo Bunting at FCR Dec. 2 (DSi) was a late fall vagrant.

A Green-tailed Towhee at *L. Perris* Feb. 14 (CMcG) and another on the *Palos Verdes Pen.* Dec. 21–Feb. 22 (RAE) were n. and w. of areas of regular winter occurrence. The only Am. Tree Sparrow was one at FCR Dec. 4 (T & JH). Two Clay-colored Sparrows were found: one in *Goleta* Dec. 28–Mar. 3 (RPH) and the other on Pt. Loma in *San Diego* Jan. 10 through at least Apr. 10 (GMcC). A Black-chinned Sparrow, most unusual in winter, was in *La Jolla Canyon*, *Ventura*, Feb. 1 (LRH). A

Black-throated Sparrow in *Colton*, *Riverside*, Mar. 7 (MAP) and another in *Brawley* Feb. 9 (HC) were both away from areas of normal occurrence. A Lark Bunting on the *Carrizo Plain*, *San Luis Obispo*, Dec. 7 (JCW), and another near *Blythe* Dec. 22 (MAP) were the only two reported. Large-billed [Savannah] Sparrows again wintered in coastal marshes, with three on *Morro Bay* Jan. 20 (JM) and one on *s. San Diego Bay* Feb. 16 (PU) being the latest; this species arrives early and departs early as a winter visitor to *S. California*. Three Sharp-tailed Sparrows in marshes at the mouth of the *Tijuana R.* in *Imperial Beach* Dec. 22 (TME) were still present Feb. 16 but were only seen during exceptional high tides. At least 40 Swamp Sparrows were along the coast, more than expected. White-throated Sparrows were in about normal numbers, with 30 reported; only seven Harris' Sparrows could be found.

At least three McCown's Longspurs remained near *Palmdale*, *Los Angeles*, from fall to at least Dec. 30 (AME); eight were with other longspurs near *Blythe* Dec. 22 (GMcC). A few Lapland Longspurs remained into December, with one in *Seal Beach* Dec. 17 (RAE), two in *Irvine* Dec. 15 (SM), and four more near *Blythe* Dec. 22 (GMcC); two on the *Plano Trabuco*, *Orange*, Dec. 17 through February (JT) clearly wintered. A flock of 17 Chestnut-collared Longspurs in *Irvine* Dec. 7–29 (SM), about 35 on the *Plano Trabuco* Dec. 14 through the end of the period (JTo), and about 60 near *Blythe* Dec. 22 (GMcC) were large numbers for *S. California*.

A Rusty Blackbird in *Seal Beach* Dec. 8–9 (SM) was only the 2nd in *Orange*. A Com. Grackle, a casual straggler to California, was in *Big Pine* Feb. 16 through February (T & JH). A ♀ Orchard Oriole near *Tecopa* Jan. 22–Feb. 1 (JTa) was in a most unusual area for a wintering bird; single males in *Manhattan Beach* all winter (ML) and *Irvine* Nov. 16–Jan. 18 (DRW) were along the coast, where one or two are found each winter. Five Hooded Orioles along the coast this winter was more than usual, but 25 N. Orioles in the same area was far fewer than expected. An imm. ♂ Streak-backed Oriole at *Parker Dam*, *San Bernardino*, Dec. 10–18 (JS) was the 6th in *California*. A Scott's Oriole at *Whitewater*, *Riverside*, Dec. 21 (DCH) and up to five in *Borrego Springs*, *San Diego*, throughout the period (AM) were along the w. edge of the low desert, where small numbers are found every winter; but single birds in *Lompoc* Nov. 4–Dec. 15 (PR), *Santa Barbara* Dec. 27–28 (JEL) and near *Orange* Jan. 4–Feb. 29 (JTo), and three more near the *Plano Trabuco* Feb. 14 through the end of the period (RT) were along the coast, where unexpected.

**Addendum:** Ashy Storm-Petrels reported netted on *San Miguel I.* the night of Jan. 7 (AB 45:319, 1991) were actually netted on *Prince I.* off the n. end of *San Miguel I.* the night of Jan. 8–9 by a USFWS survey crew under the direction of Harry R. Carter.





Clay-colored Sparrow in Goleta, California, on February 22, 1992. Photograph/Shawneen Finnegan.

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## HAWAIIAN ISLANDS REGION

Robert L. Pyle

Reasonably wet conditions through most of 1991 gave way to severe dry weather through the winter. Rainfall amounts for January and February were below normal at 28 of 31 reporting stations, ranging mostly from 15–70% of normal. This was closely associated with the onset of El Niño conditions in the central Pacific. Another result of the El Niño was Hurricane *Ekeeda*, which brushed Christmas, Fanning, and Palmyra islands, well south of Hawaii, in late January. This was the first hurricane ever known to form in the central north Pacific in January. One can speculate on the role of El Niño in the appearance of many vagrant birds in Hawaii this winter, including two new state species and two others with only one or three prior records.

**Abbreviations:** BPBM (*prefix for catalogue numbers of specimens in B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu*); FFS (*French Frigate Shoals*); H. (*Hawai'i I.*); HRBP (*prefix for catalog numbers of photographs in Hawaii Rare Bird Documentary Photograph File*); K. (*Kaua'i I.*); M. (*Maui I.*); O. (*O'ahu I.*); JCNWR (*James Campbell NWR, O.*); PHNWR (*Pearl Harbor NWR, O.*).

### ALBATROSSES TO SHEARWATERS

Two **Short-tailed Albatrosses** spent the winter again on Sand I., Midway Atoll (RD, SRi, BE, *et al.*). One, band ♀000, has appeared regularly since 1984 and is now in ad. plumage. The other, band ♀015, still in imm. plumage, first came in 1989. They favored different places, several hundred m apart on the same beach, among Laysan and Black-footed albatrosses. In the protected nesting areas at Kilauea Point NWR on Kaua'i, Laysans hatched 20 chicks from 59 eggs laid this winter. Four more chicks hatched from 20 eggs laid in nearby areas off the refuge. These are near last year's counts (KV). No predation has occurred this year; all 24 chicks were healthy in mid-April and are expected to fledge later in spring.

A Hawaiian (Dark-rumped) Petrel (*Endangered*) called several times before dawn Jan. 23 as it circled over a cabin in Hakalau NWR, probably the first refuge record (JJ). It probably breeds in very small numbers on Hawai'i I. Twenty Hawaiian Petrels were found and turned in to the shearwater aid program on Kaua'i this fall and winter season, along with 1811 Newell's Shearwaters, one Christmas Shearwater, and a few of other species. Ninety-two percent were banded and released successfully (TT). On O'ahu, 186 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were on beaches and were turned in to Sea Life Park for rehabilitation. Half recovered and were banded and released. At least 49, an unusually high number, suffered from varying de-

grees of pox disease around the eyes; most recovered after treatment (MB). One major event was a visit by a **Little Shearwater** to Sand I., Midway Atoll. Heard calling several times in November from a particular pile of rubble, the bird was finally found Dec. 17 and photographed extensively (HRBP 936-940) (†RD, D. Williamson, BE *et al.*). It was heard thereafter until at least Jan. 1 (SRi). One specimen collected on the same island in 1963 is the only prior record for the Hawaiian Is.

### CORMORANTS TO GEESE

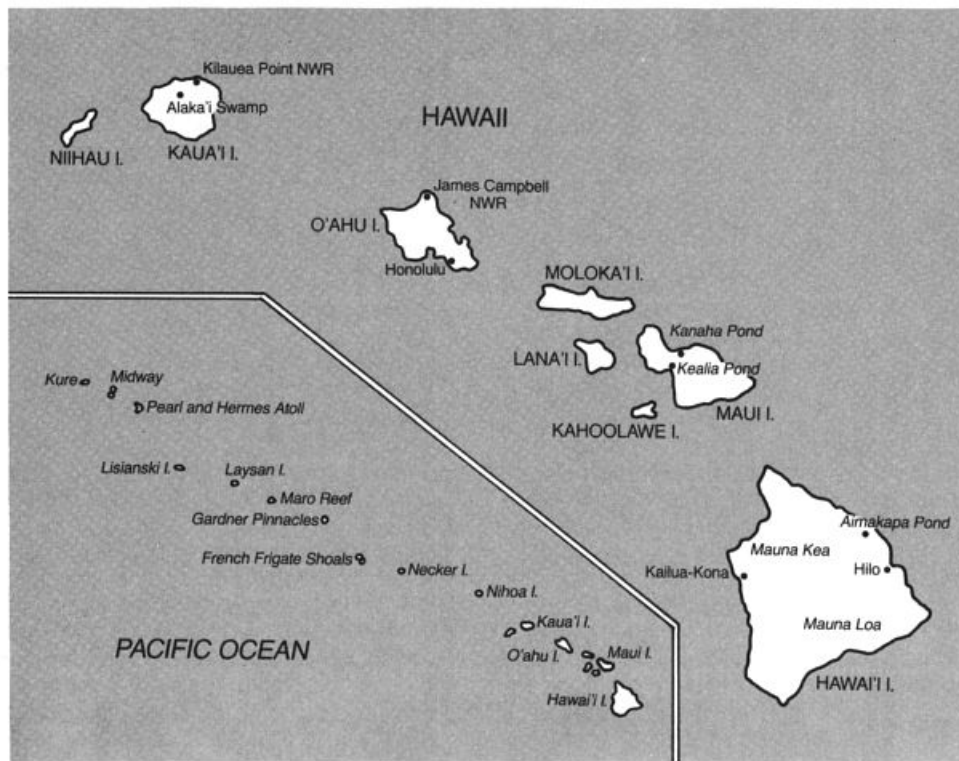
Another major event at Sand I. was the appearance of a **Pelagic Cormorant**, which remained in the harbor the first part of December. It was photographed alive (†RD, HRBP 933-935) but was dead Dec. 19 (\*BE, BPBM-178503). This record is preceded in the islands only by a specimen collected on Laysan I. in 1896 and two sight reports at Sand I. in the 1970s of birds probably of this species.

Hawaiian Geese (*Nene, Endangered*) continue to breed successfully on Kaua'i. Four broods were in their favored area around Kipu Kai, and one brood of three goslings was across the mountains in Mahualepu. More nestings may have occurred, as the birds have been more secretive this year (TT). One Brant, a casual Hawaii straggler, spent the winter at Kealia Pond, M. (JO, DY); another was at Kawaihe Harbor, H., Dec. 26 (†RD). The two Snow Geese reported last season at JCNWR remained at least into April; the one at Hanalei NWR, K., was still there Mar. 10 (KV). (Contrary to last season's report, only one Snow Goose has been seen at Hanalei NWR this winter (KV), although two were at Lumahai Beach.) The flock of 10 Cackling (Canada) Geese, including one with a yellow neck band, was last seen at Hanalei Feb. 22 (KV). The same yellow-banded bird with six companions appeared at Waipi'o Pen., O., March 8 (PD); the group remained there until at least Mar. 22 (PD, RLP, MO).

### DUCKS

One to five Green-winged Teal, a usual number, were reported this winter at Midway Atoll, Waipi'o Pen., O., and Aimakapa Pond, H. (v.o.). But at Kealia Pond, M., a flock of 45 in mid-December grew to 60 by Jan. 25 (JO), an unprecedented count. Thirteen Hawaiian Ducks (*Koloa, Endangered*), the last remaining at the Olinda Endangered Species Propagation Facility on Maui, were released Dec. 20 in upper Pi'ina'au Stream, M. (FD).

Continuing a trend of recent years, N. Pintails and N. Shovelers, the numerically dominant winter visiting species, appeared in generally lower numbers at most locales compared to a decade ago. An exception was at Kealia Pond, M., where peak counts of 180 pintails and 116 shovelers in mid-January (JO) were encouragingly high. A ♂ Garganey was at Kealia throughout the winter (JO); one was seen occasionally at JCNWR. From one to four Eur. Wigeon



recent years. One Yellow-fronted Canary, well observed Jan. 19 in appropriate habitat on Makole-lau Ridge leading to Pu'ukolekole on Moloka'i (WW) is the first report of the species on that island. A pair of Saffron Finches, very scarce on O'ahu, was seen Dec. 16 on the Bishop Museum grounds in Honolulu (AA), a surprising location.

#### HAWAIIAN HONEYCREEPERS TO JAVA SPARROW

Of 93 'Apapane, 'Amakihi, and other Hawaiian honeycreepers mist-netted at Hanawi on Halekala Mtn. in late February, only one had a pox lesion. At Hakalau NWR, H., much closer to ranchland and other human activity, 10–15% of those captured show evidence of pox disease (JL). Maui Parrotbills (critically *Endangered*) were seen or heard daily Feb. 15–28 in Hanawi; one female was captured and banded (JL). A visiting birder reported seeing a bird he is confident was a Kaua'i Nuku-pu'u

were reported in December and January at Midway Atoll (SRi), Kealia Pond (JO, DY), and Waiakea Pond in Hilo, H. (JL). A ♀ Canvasback was at Kanaha Pond, M., Dec. 26 (MG), and a Com. Merganser was at Hanalei NWR, K., from Dec. 29 to at least Feb. 22 (KV, RV). Both species occur very rarely in Hawaii.

#### HAWKS

Ospreys, an occasional Hawaii visitor, were reported on several islands. One remained at Sand I., Midway Atoll, from Oct. 16 through the end of March (SRi *et al.*); one was seen repeatedly Dec. 6–Mar. 20 on Maui, mostly at Kanaha Pond but occasionally at Kealia Pond (F & RD *et al.*); and the one on O'ahu was seen several times at Waiawa Unit, PHNWR, through January and February (GF *vide* BE). A Hawaiian Hawk ('Io, *Endangered*) was calling in Hakalau NWR for 2–3 minutes at 1:00 a.m. Dec. 12, between 2 small earthquakes felt 1/2 hour before and afterward (JL).

A Merlin, never before reported in Hawaii, was seen many times at Sand I., Midway Atoll, in November and December (BE *et al.*) and at least until Mar. 12 (SRi). It was reported to closely resemble a ♀ *F.c. suckleyi* (RD). Peregrine Falcons (perhaps only one) were reported 10 times on O'ahu from mid-December through early March, from Honolulu in the southeast, to Aiea and Pearl Harbor in the center to, Amorient Aquafarm and JCNWR at the n. tip, and around to Ulupau Head on the e. coast (m.ob.). Peregrines were reported twice on Hawai'i I.: one along Chain-of-Craters Rd. Jan. 18 (BD) and one probable Peregrine imperfectly seen along Saddle Road Dec. 3 (TP). Two Peregrines were seen occa-

sionally at Tern I., FFS, Nov. 1–Dec. 7. They were chasing and catching shorebirds; at one point one was harassed by 42 White Terns (*vide* BF).

#### SHOREBIRDS TO FINCHES

Rare shorebird species reported with good details this winter included a Killdeer and Rufous-necked Stint at Kealia (JO, DY) and a Gray-tailed Tattler at Sand I., Midway Atoll (SRi, RD). A first-winter Glaucous Gull was studied at Loko Waka Pond and adjacent Kealoha Park in Hilo, H., Jan. 5 (KI). A Black-legged Kittiwake, very rare in Hawaii, was picked up in Maunawili near Kawainui Marsh, O., Feb. 8, rehabilitated at Sea Life Park, and banded and released Mar. 4 (MB). A Sandwich Tern, never before reported in Hawaii, spent several days in mid-January at Amorient Aquafarm and JCNWR (B & BE, RLP, RD, MO). It was closely observed and photographed (†PD, HRBP 950–953).

Two young Barn Owls fledged from a nest in a tree cavity in the forest at Hakalau NWR Dec. 5, but one was found dead 10 days later (JL). Up to five Short-eared Owls wintered at Sand I., Midway Atoll (SRi, RD). Two were found dead and were preserved as specimens, which will allow determination of whether they are of the Holarctic or Hawaiian subspecies. Seven Uniform Swiftlets in N. Halawa Valley (RLP) and one at nearby Aiea Ridge (PD, TC) gave a high count of eight for the Honolulu CBC Dec. 21.

Seven 'Elepaio at the upper end of N. Halawa Valley Dec. 21 (RLP) and one at the upper end of Aiea Loop Trail Jan. 25 (PD) were very encouraging since this species has been scarce to almost vanishing on O'ahu in

(super-critically *Endangered*) Feb. 29 on the Alaka'i Swamp Trail beyond its intersection with the Pihea Trail (VL). Two family groups (each two adults and one immature) of 'Aki-apola'au (*Endangered*) and an unattended immature were in the study area at Hakalau NWR, H., in December and January (JL). Young 'Tiwi and 'Apapane were common in the Hakalau study area in January and February, indicating a good nesting season in December, probably related to the ample rains last summer and fall (JL). One Po'ouli (super-critically *Endangered*) was observed by researchers in Hanawi Feb. 15 (*vide* JL).

A flock of six–seven Warbling Silverbills at Hakalau NWR Jan. 17 is the first report of the species in that refuge (JL). On Maui, where Java Sparrows are just getting started, at least 100 were at a Lahaina feeder Feb. 28 (MG), flocks of three–five were seen regularly in Kihei, and a group of three–four was in Wailuku town Dec. 20 (JO).

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