

(m.ob.), rare in Teslin after mid-February (the Denisons), and absent in Watson L. (LE).

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# Oregon/ Washington Region

## BILL TWEIT AND JIM JOHNSON

It was a generally unremarkable winter, both for birds and climate. Three of the six bold-faced birds were from southeastern Washington locations, an interesting mix of Garganey, "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull, and Common Grackle. There were few conifer finches, few northern raptors, and few vagrants.

The weather was generally mild and precipitation was either average or below average, except that severe flooding was associated with coastal storms in mid-December and early February. Snowpacks in the Washington Cascades approached long-term average levels, indicating a lessening if not an end to the drought conditions that have prevailed for almost a decade.

Abbreviations: McNary (*McNary N. W.R., Walla Walla, WA*); Sauvie (*Sauvie I., Columbia, OR*).

## Loons to Waterfowl

The usual modest number of interior Red-throated Loon reports were from the Columbia R., one at Priest Rapids Dam, *Yakima, WA* Dec. 31 (AS) and two near Portland (*fide* HN), as were the 2 Pacific Loon reports from the interior: two at McNary Dam Dec. 3 (PB) and one at Richland, *WA* Dec. 15–Jan. 23 (BW). There were only 4 reports of Yellow-billed Loon, which has become a typical number in recent winters. They included one at Beckett Pt., *Jefferson, WA* Jan. 7 (D. Buckley), one at Fort Canby S.P., *Pacific, WA* Dec. 3–21 (MP, HN), one at Drayton Harbor, *Whatcom, WA* (*fide* TW), and one at Netarts Bay, *Tillam-*

*ook, OR* Jan 7–8 (CR, m.ob.). Two of the Clark's Grebe reports were from unusual areas: one far north at Bellingham, *WA* Dec. 18 (TW) and one in the Willamette valley at Henry Hagg L., *Washington, OR* Dec. 18–Jan. 2 (HN). The only report from usual areas was four in *Curry* on the s. Oregon coast (CD). The January 21 pelagic trip off Westport, *WA* found low numbers of N. Fulmar, one Pink-footed Shearwater and a few Short-tailed Shearwaters (TW); Pink-footeds are normally absent in winter. The only onshore record of Short-tailed was one seen at Point of No Point, *Kitsap, WA* Dec. 4 & 15 (VN). American White Pelican continue to winter in small numbers in the Columbia basin, with a high count of 15 at Hanford, *Benton, WA* Jan. 21 (SR). There were 3 late Brown Pelican records in Oregon, the latest was at Hammond, *Clatsop, WA* Jan. 14 (*fide* HN). Unusual numbers of Great Egrets included one near Arlington, *Snobomish, WA* Dec. 27 (D. Brock), one in Puyallup, *Pierce, WA* Jan. 20 (M. Roening), six near Eugene, *Lane, OR* Feb. 26 (T&AM), and one near Auburn, *King, WA* Feb. 28 (TB). Black-crowned Night-Herons are regular winter visitors at a few locations on the westside; a new roost with 11 birds was discovered in Eugene, *Lane, OR* this winter (T&AM).

We will continue to track Mute Swan sightings as their numbers expand in our Region; one–two were with other swans on the Lummi Flats, *Whatcom, WA* from Dec. 29–Feb. 28 (JD) and one was at McNary Feb. 9–19 (M&MLD). Two Ross's Geese,



rare winterers, were found: at Eagle Point, *Jackson*, OR Jan. 4 (MM) and at Kent, *King*, WA Jan. 13–25 (D. Beaudette, m.ob.). Six Emperor Goose reports was a welcome number; the winter of 1988–1989 was the last winter with more than a couple of reports. Singles were at Dungeness Spit, *Clallam*, WA Dec. 10 through at least Feb. 20 (D&SS), at Bay City, *Tillamook*, OR Dec. 17 (m.ob.), at the mouth of the Umpqua R., *Douglas*, OR Dec. 27 (RM), and at La Push, *Clallam*, WA Feb. 14 and reportedly several months prior (BN). Two were at Netarts Bay, *Tillamook*, OR Dec. 13–Jan. 7 (m.ob.). The census of Brant on the Oregon coast Dec. 28–29 produced an abnormally low count of 708 (R. Lowe).

A ♀ *Garganey* at Richland, *Benton*, Dec. 15 (†BW, m.ob., ph.) through at least Jan. 1 provided the first record for the interior and only the 3rd for Washington. The number of Cinnamon Teal reports was unexpected, with seven in Oregon and two in Washington. Possibly a record number of Eur. Wigeon reports from the interior included one at Richland, *Benton*, WA throughout the period (m.ob.), one at Bend, OR Dec. 18 (PlSu), one at Pateros, *Okanogan*, WA Dec. 29–Jan. 29 (AS), one male at Clarkston, *Asotin*, WA Dec. 31 (M&MLD) through at least Jan. 27 (Dsv), two males at McNary Jan. 27 (M&MLD), and one at Prineville, *Crook*, OR Feb. 5 (PlSu). Both Tufted Duck reports were of females: one at Everett, *Snohomish*, WA Jan. 17–31 (SM, m.ob.) and one in s.e. *Polk*, OR Jan. 28–Feb. 9 (RH). It is difficult to rule out hybrid origin with reports of females. A count of 2000 Greater Scaup on L. Chelan, *Chelan*, WA Feb. 8 (SR) was a good indication of the numbers wintering in the interior along the Columbia. It was formerly thought to be rare in winter. As usual, all but one of the 19 Red-breasted Merganser reports from the interior were along the Columbia R. The exception was one at Pot-holes Res., *Grant*, WA Feb. 7 (SR).

### Raptors to Alcids

The number of reports of both Turkey Vulture and Osprey were in line with recent mild winters, with most reports from Oregon. Ten Turkey Vultures were found in December and January (m.ob.). Eleven Osprey were found in Oregon, with at least three wintering near Eugene (*fide* TM), and one was near Sequim, *Clallam*, WA Dec. 1 (SA). White-tailed Kites were reported from 3 of their usual s.w. Washington locations (B&GR, BT, M&MLD). In Oregon, their numbers did not match last winter's high counts: 17 were in the Rogue valley (*fide* MM), two wintered near Eugene (*fide* TM), six were in *Polk* Dec. 15 (RG), one

was in *Benton* Feb. 19 (PlSu), and one was in *Yamhill* Feb. 20 (T. Janzen), where they are very rare. At least 22 Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from Oregon, mostly from the s. coast, the Rogue valley, and *Douglas*. On the coast, two were observed nest building at Brookings, *Curry*, Feb. 5 (CD), one of very few known nests in Oregon. Three wintered at Fern Ridge Res., *Lane* (*fide* TM), which is becoming typical for that area. North of there, the species is still irregular: one at Ankeny N.W.R., Jan. 2 (K&S Sparkman) was probably a *Marion* first, one was at Scappoose, *Columbia*, OR Jan. 14 (*fide* HN), and one was at Ridgefield N.W.R., *Clark*, WA all winter (U.S.F.W.S.). Ferruginous Hawks occasionally winter in the interior and even less regularly in the Rogue valley; five were reported in the interior this winter (M&MLD, BW, PlSu) and one was n. of Medford, *Jackson* through Jan. 29 (*fide* MM). Rough-legged Hawk numbers were low throughout the Region (BT, TM). An ad. Golden Eagle was highly unusual on the outer coast at Tillamook, OR Jan. 8 (JJ, DB). Six were found in the w. valleys, where they winter sparingly. Gyrfalcons were well distributed, with five in w. Washington (m.ob.), one in w. Oregon at Finley N.W.R., *Benton*, November–Feb. 11 (m.ob.), and four in e. Washington (CCo, *fide* PM, SR, JA).

A Pacific Golden-Plover on the Samish Flats, *Skagit*, WA Feb. 19–21 (BL&NL) probably wintered nearby, providing about the 4th recent winter record. In the last few winters, several credible reports of Lesser Yellowlegs have been received, indicating the species is rare in winter but not exceptional. Up to five were at Fern Ridge Res., *Lane*, OR from mid-January+ (*fide* JJ), a very large winter number. Neither Long-billed Curlew or Marbled Godwit are regular in winter except on the s. Washington coast. Three Long-billed Curlew wintered at Bandon, *Coos*, OR (AC) and two were at Netarts Bay, *Tillamook*, OR Jan. 19 (PlSu). Two Marbled Godwit reports were received from Puget Sound: one at Skagit Bay Jan. 1–2 (*fide* BK) and one on Dungeness Spit, *Clallam*, Feb. 19–21 (D&SS). Dunlin numbers in the Willamette valley appear to be higher than most observers assume; they peaked at 20,000 at Fern Ridge Res., *Lane*, OR in mid-January (D. Gleason, B. Cooper), even higher than last winter's numbers there. A handful of Red Phalaropes were found, all on the outer coast in January, except one at Point No Point, *Kitsap*, WA Dec. 3 (VN). The Jan. 21 pelagic trip off Westport, WA found 18 (TW).

One Pomarine Jaeger was found on the Jan. 21 pelagic trip (TW), and one was seen from shore at N. Head, *Pacific*, WA

Feb. 5 (M&MLD); these are typical winter numbers. The Franklin's Gulls found in December in the Willamette valley were probably very late migrants: one at Keizer, *Marion*, Dec. 17 (BB) and one at Forest Grove, *Washington*, Dec. 18–26 (B. Wong, D. Lusthoff). Little Gulls have wintered on American L., *Pierce*, WA for 7 consecutive winters: an ad. was reported Dec. 11 & 29 (BN). An adult was at Point No Point, *Kitsap*, WA Feb. 28 (VN), another Puget Sound location with multiple winter records. Common Black-headed Gull records are increasing annually in Washington, the 3rd and 4th reports for the year were adults at Point No Point, *Kitsap*, Dec. 22 (†VN) and Edmonds, *Snohomish*, Dec. 27 (D. Duffey). The status of Mew and Thayer's gulls in the interior deserves continuing attention; currently, most of the records are from the Columbia Basin in Washington. That pattern was evident this winter, with Mew Gull records of one adult at Ice Harbor Dam, *Walla Walla*, Dec. 3–Jan. 23 (M&MLD, AS), ≤three at Wallula, *Walla Walla*, Jan. 2–27 (M&MLD), one at Richland, *Benton*, Jan. 10 (CV), and one at Manson, *Chelan*, Feb. 20 (EH). The only Thayer's Gull report also fit the pattern with one 3rd-year bird at Ice Harbor Dam throughout the period (m.ob.) A first-winter "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull was generally on the Idaho side of the Snake R at Clarkston, *Asotin*, from Dec. 18 (†DSv) through at least Jan. 8 (†JH), when it was seen from the Washington shore. Pending the Bird Records Committee acceptance of the report, this furnishes the 5th Washington record. An ad. Slaty-backed Gull was at Sauvie Jan. 7–23 (DB, m.ob., ph.) for the 2nd Oregon occurrence. A Slaty-backed Gull was also reported at Tacoma, WA without details Dec. 24 (RS) through Jan. 10 (BR&GR *et al.*), at the site where a well-documented adult spent last winter. Western Gulls appear to be rare but regular on the Columbia R. upstream to the Snake R. confluence. This winter, one adult was at McNary Dam through December (m.ob.), three adults were near Wallula, *Walla Walla*, Feb. 10 (M&MLD), and two adults were on the lower Snake R. at Ice Harbor Dam Jan. 4–6 (AS, SR). Glaucous Gull numbers continue to be elevated from the long-term average: w. Washington had at least nine birds and e. Washington had seven. Black-legged Kittiwakes went almost unreported. Over 500 Cassin's Auklets off Westport, WA on the Jan. 21 pelagic trip (TW) indicates the wintering population off Washington is still in good numbers, as compared to the poor status of the breeding population. A Parakeet Auklet was found dead on the beach at Clatsop

Beach, *Clatsop*, Dec. 12 (*fide* HN); Oregon has had many fewer recent records than Washington.

### Owls to Wrens

Snowy Owl numbers returned to the disappointing levels of the last decade after an upsurge last winter. They were absent on the westside, and only three could be found in e. Washington: one near Moses Lake, *Grant*, Dec. 15 (M&MLD) to Feb. 19 (EH), one ad. male near Reardan, *Lincoln*, Jan. 17 (JA), and one near Withrow, *Douglas*, Feb. 19 (EH). Burrowing Owls are rare in winter anywhere in the Region. In the interior, one in N. Richland, *Benton*, WA Dec. 8 (PB) could have been a late migrant, but one at George, *Grant*, WA (SR) definitely wintered. On the westside, one wintered in the Willamette valley near Shedd, *Linn* (RH) and two wintered on the s. coast at Gold Beach (CD). Barred Owl reports continue to pour in from new areas and unusual locations: one was in Pullman, *Whitman*, WA Feb. 23 (DJ), a pair was heard in the Oregon Coast Range near Crow, *Lincoln*, Jan. 14 (*fide* TM), one was calling on Peavine Ridge, *Curry*, OR Feb. 22 (DM), and one was at Finley N.W.R., *Benton*, OR Feb. 22 (RH).

The imm. ♀ **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** found in Salem in November (reported then as a Red-naped) reappeared Feb. 3+ (†BB, m.ob.) for Oregon's 7th record. Hopefully, the Red-naped Sapsucker reported at *Walla Walla*, WA Jan. 2 (R. Lepaine) was identified correctly, as Yellow-bellied is almost as likely to occur at this season. One Red-naped Sapsucker, near Bend, OR Feb. 5 (PlSu), was carefully identified. The Red-breasted Sapsucker in Pasco, WA Dec. 17 (TG) furnished a 2nd *Franklin* record. The first was in the winter of 1992–1993 (see *AB* 47: 295). Five Black-backed Woodpecker appeared at Riverside S.P., near Spokane, WA at a relatively low elevation in a freshly burned Ponderosa Pine stand (JA), indicating how quickly this species can colonize new habitat. There were an remarkable number of reports of lingering swallows of several species. Generally, only Barn Swallows linger past November in the Northwest, but only one of the reports was of Barn Swallows: two at McNary Feb. 11 (M&MLD). Other reports included ≤four Tree Swallows at Fern Ridge Res., *Lane*, OR to Dec. 4 (TM), one Tree at Ankeny N.W.R., *Marion*, OR Dec. 14 (RH), one Tree at Medford, OR Dec. 29 (*fide* MM), a Violet-green at Baskett Slough N.W.R., *Polk*, OR Dec. 27 (JJ), and a N. Rough-winged at Point No Point, *Kitsap*, WA Dec. 24 (VN).

The Blue Jay invasion that began in the fall continued into the winter, although

many birds disappeared during January. Without repeating all of the fall report records that remained into December and January, the following records indicate the scope of their winter distribution. At least four additional birds were noted in e. Washington during December. The only Washington individuals that were reported to remain through the winter were one near Blaine, *Whatcom* (*fide* TW) and four in the Clarkston, *Asotin* area (*fide* RR). Both the w. Oregon birds, in *Lincoln* and *Washington* disappeared during December. A Scrub Jay in Netarts, *Tillamook* on the Oregon coast Dec. 17–Jan. 19 (DB, JJ, PlSu) and two at a feeder in Tacoma, *Pierce*, WA October–February (*fide* TB) were both in counties with few previous records. A minor number of westside Mt. Chickadee reports were received, non-invasion numbers: one in Mt. Vernon, *Skagit*, WA Dec. 4–23 (*fide* BK), one near Roseburg, *Douglas*, OR Dec. 17 (*fide* RM), and one at Bayview, *Skagit*, WA the last 2 weeks of December (*fide* BK). A White-breasted Nuthatch in Bellingham, WA in December (TW) provided one of very few recent north Puget Sound records.

### Thrushes to Finches

Thirteen reports of N. Mockingbird, all from the westside, provided the highest winter numbers in the last 2 decades. Eleven of the reports were from Oregon. In contrast to last winter, Bohemian Waxwings were widely reported from the eastside, although they were not as numerous as many winters. Spokane, WA had more Cedar Waxwings than Bohemians (TR)! They are very rare in the Willamette valley, but one was in Monmouth, *Polk* throughout February (B. Tice, RH). Loggerhead Shrikes, which are very rare in winter, were carefully reported from 3 e. Washington locations: one on the Hanford site, *Benton*, Jan. 7 (NL), and singles near Beebe and St. Andrews, *Douglas*, Feb. 19 (EH).

The ♂ **Black-throated Blue Warbler** that appeared on Mercer I., *King*, Nov. 2 stayed through the winter, for the first winter record for Washington (M. Hatheway, m.ob.). Higher than normal numbers of Palm Warblers were reported, including six on the Oregon coast, one on the Washington coast, and one inland at Ridgefield N.W.R., *Clark*, WA Jan. 13–16 (WC). Wilson's Warblers were extremely rare in winter, with one on the Samish Flats, *Skagit*, WA Dec. 3 (*fide* BK) and one in Sequim, *Clallam*, Dec. 17 (B. Long); there are now reports in 3 of the last 4 winters. A Yellow-breasted Chat at Ashland, *Jackson*, Dec. 14–Jan. 25 (M. Uhtoff) furnished the 3rd winter record for Oregon.

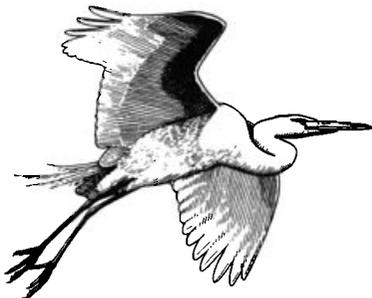
An ad. ♂ Black-headed Grosbeak that came to a feeder at St. Helens, *Columbia*, Feb. 18+ (*fide* HN) is probably the first over-winter record for Oregon. Another Oregon winter first was the Green-tailed Towhee at Riverton, *Coos*, Dec. 24–26 (D Fix, m.ob.). Swamp Sparrow numbers did not approach the dizzying heights of last winter, in fact their numbers were about one-sixth of those from last winter, more like the recent average. Eleven were reported from w. Oregon, although their *Tillamook* stronghold was inaccessible due to flood conditions. Eastern Washington had two: at McNary through at least Jan. 4 (M&MLD) and at Whitcom I., *Benton*, Feb. 25 (M&MLD). Six reports from w. Washington included two in *Clallam* (B Long), one in *Snohomish* (SM), one in *King* (TB, EH), one in *Skagit* (*fide* BK), and one in *Clark* (WC). Rusty Blackbirds are rare in winter, but are found almost annually. Two were at the Walla Walla College Dairy Farm, *Walla Walla*, Jan. 7–8 (M&MLD). A **Common Grackle** at the Walla Walla College Farm Jan. 1–7 (LG&JG, m.ob., ph) provided the first Washington record since 1982, and the 2nd Regional record in 6 months. Northern Orioles were in Medford, *Jackson*, until Jan. 22 (*fide* MM) and in Eugene, *Lane* Feb. 28 (*fide* TM); there are about 13 previous winter records for Oregon.

Prior to this winter, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch have been found at only one location in the Oregon Coast range, on Mary's Peak, *Benton*, where eight were present this winter (J. Lundsten, m.ob.). Up to twenty were on Sugarloaf Mt., *Polk*, Jan. 26–27 (BB), about 30 mi n. of Mary's Peak. They are not known to breed in the Coast range. Red Crossbills were scarce in most of w. Washington (BT) and White-winged Crossbills were unreported anywhere in the Region. Pine Siskins were reported in average or smaller numbers on the westside (TM, BT). A small flight of Pine Grosbeaks reached the w. Washington lowlands for the first time in 10 years, including >six in Bellingham throughout the period (TW), three in Mt. Pleasant, *Skamania*, Dec. 8 (WC), five at Point No Point, *Kitsap*, Dec. 21 (VN), one at Sequim, *Clallam*, Dec. 30 (D&SS), 12 at Discovery Bay, *Jefferson*, Jan. 28 (BN), two on Mt. Persis, *Snohomish*, Feb. 11 (JD), and one on San Juan I., *San Juan*, Feb. 21 (S. Peterson). Evening Grosbeaks were almost unreported (BT, TM).

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# Middle Pacific Coast Region

**DAVID G. YEE, STEPHEN F. BAILEY, AND DANIEL S. SINGER**

January was very wet, February was very dry. Overall it was a mild winter, with stormy January creating one of the best Sierra Nevada snowpacks in recent years. Waterfowl numbers were the highest in a decade. The mild temperatures may have contributed to the many passerine species, such as swallows, grosbeaks, tanagers, and orioles, that overwintered, despite it not being an exceptional winter for flowering exotic plants.

Abbreviations: C.V. (Central Valley); Cyn. (Canyon); H.S. (Hayward Shoreline, Alameda); S.F. (San Francisco). All records from F.I. and Palomarin should be credited to Point Reyes Bird Observatory.



## Loons to Tropicbirds

Fall's ad. Yellow-billed Loon off Pacific Grove and Monterey was molting out of alternate plumage Dec. 12 (†SFB) and remained through Feb. 7 (†SCR, m.ob.). An imm. Yellow-billed Loon frequented the same area Dec. 12–Feb. 16 (J. Bouton, †SFB, m.ob.). Another ad. (or sub-ad.) Yellow-billed Loon on Tomales Bay, Marin, Feb. 19–Mar. 16 (KB, †DSG, †JM, RS) was found dead (2–3 days old) on Dillon Beach Mar. 19 (\*C.A.S.). It was the 7th specimen for California.

Two Red-necked Grebes on Clifton Court Forebay, Contra Costa, Feb. 14 (SAG) were a scarce inland find. Four dependent young W. Grebes at 3 sites in Santa Clara Jan. 2–Feb. 18 (SCR, WGB, MMR) evidenced very late fall breeding, though perhaps not locally.

A hint that Laysan Albatrosses may be prospecting California for nesting sites was the individual that regularly flew in to spend long periods of time in Pt. Arena Cove, Mendocino, Nov. 30–Mar. 5 (M. Martin, m.ob.); a local boat skipper reported that it had been present since July! Three Flesh-footed Shearwaters at Cordell Bank Dec. 10 (RS, DLSh) preceded 4 sightings of singles from there s. to Monterey Bay Dec. 12–Feb. 16 (DLSh, SFB, BS). Fall's peak of 300 Short-tailed Shearwaters was equalled at Cordell Bank Dec. 10 (RS, DLSh). Manx Shearwaters extended their visits into winter with 3 Monterey Bay sightings, including 2 on CBCs: Santa Cruz CBC Dec. 17 (†DLSh, †SA), Monterey Bay CBC 10 mi off Pajaro R. mouth, Monterey & Santa Cruz, Dec. 30 (DLSh, †SFB), and 3.4 mi n. of Pt. Pinos Feb. 16 (DLSh). Again R. Richmond spotted an Ashy Storm-Petrel off H.S., Alameda, this time on the late date of Dec. 29.

An unidentified *tropicbird* was reported from an aerial survey of seabirds in Monterey Bay Feb. 2 (WBT, JD).

## Herons to Ibises

Cattle Egret reports noted only about 137 individuals, with 88% of these coastal or near-coastal. *Humboldt* reported the most with 37, but even there local CBCs reported low numbers. The only coastal White-faced Ibises—two in Santa Cruz Jan. 1–4 (CKf, m.ob.) and two-three in Monterey Feb. 11–28 (DSe, m.ob.)—probably involved the same birds.

## Waterfowl

The mid-winter waterfowl census conducted by California Fish and Game and United States Fish and Wildlife Service in January had only 80% coverage due to poor weather conditions. Nevertheless, totals, es-