

Middle-western Prairie Region

KENNETH J. BROCK

It was unanimous among correspondents that the winter of 1995–1996 was cold. Though average temperatures were not extremely low, the season was punctuated by brief periods of bitter cold interspersed with warm spells. In southern Illinois Bob Danley reported that local lakes froze over three times during the winter; they normally freeze no more than once. The season's precipitation levels depended strongly upon observer location relative to the storm paths. Winter storms primarily followed two tracks that more or less straddled the Region: the northerly Lake Superior track and a southerly path that buried much of the East coast. Thus, much of the Region was spared the most brutal storms. The Chicago area, for example, had little snow and was quite dry. In contrast, Fred Busroe noted that the "Blizzard of 1996" covered Kentucky with 18 inches of snow.

Despite this relatively hard winter, a fair

number of unexpected species lingered, or even wintered, in the Region. A welcomed thaw toward the end of February opened lakes and wetlands, paving the way for an extraordinary northward surge of waterfowl. Other seasonal highlights included a modest to strong invasion of "eared owls," Northern Shrikes, and several other boreal species.

The Iowa report failed arrive in time to be included in this summary.

Abbreviations: H.B.S.P (*Headlands Beach S.P., OH*); Jax.P. (*Jackson Park on the Chicago lakefront*); L. Cal. (*L. Calumet, Chicago*); R.E.D.A (*Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, MO*), Spfld. (*Springfield, IL*).

Loons to Ibises

No unusual loons were reported. Instead, reports were restricted to the typical small numbers of Com. Loons scattered across the Region. Grebes fared a bit better, with Pied-billed Grebes wintering as far north as the Chicago area and a concentration of 35 at Towhead I., KY Jan. 14 (J&PB). Four Red-necked Grebes were reported on L. Erie and one was seen on the Ohio R. above Markland Dam, KY Dec. 16 (LMC). American White Pelicans were plentiful. In addition to more than 200 migrants at Cooley Lake W.M.A., MO Feb. 22 (BJ) and 40 at the Union W.M.A., IL Feb. 20 (m.ob.), a mid-winter singleton was reported at Towhead I., KY Dec. 27 and Jan. 14 (J&PB).

In view of the relatively hard winter, a Great Egret in *Marshall*, IL Feb. 17 (BO)

was most unusual. An early Cattle Egret migrant arrived at Schell-Osage W.M.A., MO Mar. 5 (LL). Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered in n. reaches of the Region, with five in the Chicago area near Whistler Woods Forest Preserve Dec. 30 (WM), two on the same date near Roxana Pond, IN (JMc, m.ob.), and three in Dayton, OH Jan. 14 (DD).

Waterfowl

It was a superb season for waterfowl, especially geese. Small numbers of Tundra Swans were reported in most states; the only sizable accumulation consisted of 152 at Ottawa N.W.R., OH Dec. 3 (EP *et al.*). If additional evidence that the Region's Mute Swans are flourishing was necessary, it was provided Jan. 14 when 136 were counted on the Indiana portion of Wolf L. (WM). Greater White-fronted Geese appeared farther east and in greater numbers than normal. Unusually high counts included 300 in *Sangamon*, IL Feb. 24 (DBo) and 47 in *Gibson*, IN Feb. 18 (†JCb, †ML, AT). Easternmost records included eight in *Huntington*, IN Feb. 25 (Haw, DR) and one in *Medina*, OH Feb. 19 (JPo). Snow Geese were also astonishingly plentiful, with a local record of 10,000 in *Sangamon*, IL Feb. 24 (DBo), 1200 at South Hickman Bottoms, KY Feb. 22 (CP), and 73 at Ottawa N.W.R., OH Dec. 3 (TB, EP *et al.*). A plethora of Ross' Geese followed the Snows, with records from every state (including >33 in Illinois). Noteworthy among a myriad of Ross' observations were the following records: ten in *Macon*, IL Feb. 24 (MD), four–six at Kankakee W.M.A., IN Feb. 25–Mar. 2 (BGr, †JCD, †m.ob.), and one in *Marion*, OH Feb. 24–25 (†RH, TB). The Kentucky Ross' was a first-year bird discovered by Tennessee birders in *Fulton* Jan. 27 (JW, NM ph.). A peak Canada Geese count of 295,700 was made in s. Illinois Dec. 20 (RW).

Notable bay duck counts included 9650 Canvasbacks along the Mississippi R. near Keokuk/Nauvoo Dec. 11 (MG), 150 Redheads at Smithville, MO Mar. 2 (RF), and 2760 Greater Scaup along the Indiana lakefront Feb. 9 (JMc). Harlequin Ducks were confined to L. Michigan, where a single female was seen at Jax.P., Jan. 18–19 (PC) and three imm. males plus a female were at Michigan City harbor Dec. 16 (JcD, KB, ph.); the three males lingered through the season and molted into ad. plumage. Oldsquaws were observed in typical numbers at inland sites across the Region; one wandered S to Taylor Park, KY, where it was seen regularly Dec. 29–Jan. 3 (FR). The Region's only Black



Scoter was at Michigan City Harbor, IN Dec. 23 (JMc). The expected number of Surf and White-winged scoters were reported on the Great Lakes. Inland Surf Scoter reports included one at L. Spfld., Dec. 13 (DBo), an immature at Watertown Yacht Club, KY Dec. 17, 21, & 23 (FR), and one at Towhead I., KY Jan. 1 (J&PB). A White-winged Scoter at Towhead I., KY Dec. 27 (J&PB) was also noteworthy. Some excellent duck counts were made at Powerton L., IL Dec. 11, when 5000 Com. Goldeneye and 7000 Com. Mergansers were recorded (MG). The peak Hooded Merganser count was 100 in *Gibson*, IN Dec. 17 (JCb *et al.*).

Vultures to Shorebirds

February 10, the traditional "Vulture Day" in *Taney*, MO, yielded hundreds of Black Vultures (*vide* BJ). Elsewhere, the peak Black Vulture count was near Big Pond Sanctuary, KY, where 60–75 were recorded in December and January (KC). In Ohio, a Black Vulture was recorded at Hueston Woods Feb. 11 (DD) and four were at Rocky Fork Feb. 24 (LG). Turkey Vultures wandered n. of their winter range in n.e. Indiana, where ten were counted in *Allen* Dec. 16 (Haw) and one Jan. 13 (†DGo, JMc). The only large winter Turkey Vulture roost consisted of an estimated 400–500 birds near Big Pond Sanctuary, KY (KC). A single Osprey was also reported on the Feb. 10 *Taney*, MO "Vulture Day" (*vide* BJ). Wintering Bald Eagles were noted in all 5 reporting states: peak counts included a whopping 2800 on Missouri's Jan. 2–5 statewide survey (*vide* BJ), >100 on the Mississippi R. in *Hancock*, IL Feb. 10 (LH), and 96 counted on a Jan. 8 helicopter survey in Indiana (JCs).



Immature Northern Goshawk at Maumee Bay State Park, Ohio, January 20, 1996. Note the dark spots on the undertail coverts. Photograph/Bruce Glick.

Northern Harriers wintered in excellent numbers across the Region; maximum counts included >35 in *Ohio*, KY Jan. 28 (BBC), 24 in *Warrick*, IN Dec. 30 (JCb *et al.*), and 15 that wintered in *Franklin*, IL (LS). Northern Goshawks were present in typical numbers for a non-invasion year, with 12 reported for the Region. Noteworthy sightings included immatures at Busch W.M.A., MO Jan. 17 (DBz) and Maumee Bay S.P., OH Jan. 20 (BGL, ph.).

Almost 200 Red-tailed Hawks were reported in Illinois, where the peak tally was 47 birds at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Feb. 24 (EW, JE). Noteworthy variants among the Red-tailed throng were: two Harlan's at Urbana Dec. 16–Feb. 4 (RCh), a rufous morph in *Will* Dec. 16–17 (WM), an imm. Krider's in Max McGraw W.M.A., Dec. 18 (LH), and dark morphs in *Franklin* Feb. 8 (LS) and *McHenry* Feb. 17 (RB). Additional odd Red-taileds included two imm. Krider's in *Ohio*, KY Jan. 28 (BBC) and a total albino in St. Charles, MO Feb. 29 (*vide* BJ). Rough-legged Hawks were also plentiful, with good counts from every state. The maximum tally consisted of a remarkable 30 (eight of which were dark morphs) in *Ohio*, KY Jan. 28 (BBC). A Golden Eagle wandered S to *Bullitt*, KY, where it was seen Feb. 4 (J&PB). A total of 17 Merlins, including one at an *Ohio*, KY strip-mine Dec. 30 (HC, KC), were scattered across all 5 reporting states. Raptor of the season was an ad. gray-morph Gyrfalcon, discovered in early December in *Paulding*, OH by Doug and Micki Denakin; it cooperatively remained throughout the period (†JDu, †Haw, †RHn, †D&JH, m.ob., ph). In addition, gray-morph Gyrfalcons were seen at H.B.S.P., Feb. 10 (†EB, †RHn, AM) and at Clinton L., IL Feb. 25 (†RCh). The Region's only Prairie Falcons were in Missouri, where one wintered at Taberville Feb. 8 (FY, MR) and another was observed in *Platte* Feb. 21 (MR).

Virginia Rails were reported in Joliet, IL Dec. 15 & 16 (JM) and Beverly Shores, IN Dec. 16 (JCd). Sandhill Cranes appeared in every state; most sightings involved mid- to late February spring migrants. Noteworthy among these was 1000 passing over *Hart*, KY Feb. 24 & 25 (SK), one in Lorain, OH Feb. 25 (NK), and 15 in Mariemont, OH Feb. 25 (RB, *vide* NK). Most notable among the smattering of late-fall Sandhill migrants were 150 in *Jefferson*, KY Dec. 20 (J&PB) and one at Duck Creek W.M.A., MO Dec. 11 (GP). A very early Greater Yellowlegs arrived at Montrose, MO Feb. 25 (RF). Perhaps the season's most unexpected shorebirds were the Baird's Sandpipers dis-



This adult gray-morph Gyrfalcon spent most of the winter in Paulding County, Ohio. Photograph/Jon L. Dunn.

covered at Buck Creek S.P., OH Dec. 3 (DO) and Rockport, MO Feb. 21 (†MR). The season's only Purple Sandpipers were at Miller Beach, IN Dec. 2 (BJk, m.ob.) and Fairport Harbor, OH Dec. 2–10 (RHn, LRo, EB). An extremely late Dunlin was seen in Chicago Dec. 1–4 (JPu).

Gulls to Owls

Most of L. Michigan's gulls had moved southward by mid-December; consequently, peak counts of the common wintering species were lower than normal. Among the rarities was an ad. California Gull that was identified in Cleveland, OH Dec. 28 (†D&JH). Perhaps in response to the southward movement of the larid flocks, Thayer's Gulls were more widespread than normal, with 28 birds distributed across all 5 reporting states. The southernmost Thayer's were at Markland Dam, KY Dec. 16 & 22 (LMc, JDu) and at R.E.D.A., Feb. 8 (3rd-winter) & 23 (ad.) (JZ, GG). Iceland Gulls were recorded in good numbers, with 13 in Ohio, five in Illinois, three from Indiana, and one from Missouri. The latter was a 3rd-winter bird seen at R.E.D.A., Feb. 8 (JVb). Also plentiful were Lesser Black-backed Gulls, with 32 reported in the Region. One Lesser wandered S to R.E.D.A., where it was seen Feb. 11 along with a first-winter Glaucous Gull (m.ob.). A total of 93 Glaucous Gulls were counted elsewhere in the Region. Westward expansion of Great Black-backed Gulls continued this winter, with the report of two birds at R.E.D.A. in January and February (JZ). Black-legged Kittiwakes were unusually common, with singletons at Gilson Park, Wilmette, IL Dec. 4 (JM ph.), Clinton L., IL Dec. 17 (RCh), Markland Dam, KY Dec.



Immature Black-legged Kittiwake in Wilmette, Illinois, December 4, 1995. Photograph/Joe B. Milosevich.

16–24 (LMc, JDu, J&PB), H.B.S.P., Feb. 3 (EB, RHn), and Mel Price Lock & Dam, *Madison*, IL Feb. 2–Mar. 10 (DK).

The northernmost Greater Roadrunner since the late 1970s was observed in e. *Camden*, MO Feb. 22 (NS). Snowy Owls were remarkably scarce, with two on the Chicago lakefront, one in *Coles*, IL, and one that ranged from *Allen*, IN to *Paulding*, OH. On Oct. 17, a Burrowing Owl was extricated from the chimney of a *Jackson*, MO residence; the bird was rehabilitated and released (†K. Hogan, C. Bascom, ph.). Although no other details were available, a Great Gray Owl was photographed in *Butler*, IA Feb. 19 (SD ph.). It was an excellent winter for the “eared owls,” with 70 Long-eared and 141 Short-eareds reported in the Region. Peak Long-eared Owl counts included 12 in *Allen*, IN Dec. 31–Feb. 17 (CS, m.ob.) and eight in *Monroe*, IL Feb. 17 (DK). Maximum Short-eared tallies included the following wintering groups: >20 in *Franklin*, IL (LS) and 22 in *Warrick*, IN (JCb *et al.*). Northern Saw-whet Owls were also unusually widespread, with ten birds reported in the n. states; the peak count consisted of four at Killdeer Plains, OH Feb. 18 (RHa).

Hummingbirds to Shrikes

A Rufous Hummingbird lingered in Lebanon, MO until the first snow arrived Dec. 9 (LP) and a unidentified hummingbird of the genus *Selasphorus* was reported in Willow Springs, MO Dec. 9 (*vide* LRI). Red-headed Woodpeckers were present in good numbers in Cleveland, OH (LRO). A very tardy Scissor-tailed Flycatcher lingered near the Bois D'Arc exit of I-44, *Greene*, MO until Dec. 2 (†JLu). Following last fall's heavy flight, Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported in good numbers across the Region. Most surprising for mid-December was a House Wren in Dayton, OH Dec. 17 (†JDu, ST). Lingering Marsh Wrens were detected at Miami-Whitewater, OH Dec. 5 (*vide* NK), in

Kent, OH Dec. 17 (LRO), and in *Buchanan*, MO Jan. 14 (LL). Townsend's Solitaires mentioned in the autumn report lingered at West Beach, IN through Dec. 7 (JMc), at Klehm Arboretum, IL until Jan. 11 (RM), and at Lyons Woods Forest Preserve, IL through the period (EW, DJh, JLa, m.ob.). A Hermit Thrush at H.B.S.P., Feb. 4–Feb. 19 was exceptional for that date (LRO, RHn). Huge Am. Robin flocks, total estimated to exceed 100,000 birds, appeared in *Barton*, MO in mid-February (*vide* BJ). Varied Thrushes were seen Jan. 7 in *McHenry*, IL (*vide* RB), at Muscatatuck N.W.R., IN Jan. 20 (†DGr), and at Parma Heights, OH Jan. 23–Feb. 22 (†RHa, m.ob.). Rare in winter, the 15–25 Am. Pipits observed at Schell-Osage W.M.A., MO Feb. 17 & 29 (J&EZ, m.ob.) and 16 at R.E.D.A., Feb. 24 (PMc *et al.*) were noteworthy. Cedar Waxwing concentrations were not reported; peak counts included 250 in Bernheim Forest, KY Jan. 9 (J&PB) and 200 in Lucas, OH Feb. 17 (*vide* LRO). A sprinkling of Bohemian Waxwings graced the Region, with one at West Beach, IN Dec. 2 (†Haw *et al.*), three at Ravinia Park, *Lake*, IL Dec. 19 (LH), and one at Ogdun Dunes, IN Dec. 29 (JMc, †DGo).

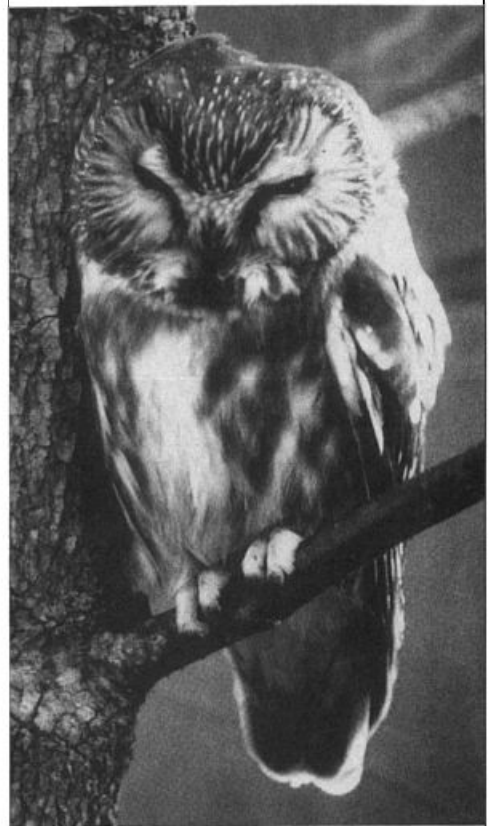
SA The Region enjoyed a major N. Shrike invasion. This flight surpassed the winter 1981–1982 incursion, which involved 43 birds, and may have exceeded the large invasions of the mid-1950's. Even without the Iowa report, more than 63 birds were reported across the Region. State tallies included >30 in Illinois, 20 in Ohio, 17 in Indiana, and one in Missouri. The latter, an immature, was seen at Reed W.M.A., in Jackson, w.c. MO Jan. 20 [JZ].

Vireos to Buntings

A Dec. 5 window kill at a Michigan City, IN, auto dealership proved to be an imm.



Great Gray Owl in Butler County, Iowa, February 19, 1996. Photograph/Stephen J. Dinsmore.



Northern Saw-whet Owl at Killdeer Plains, Ohio, February 24, 1996. One of at least four present at this site. Photograph/Wendell L. Argabrite.

White-eyed Vireo (*H. Dancy); the specimen, which constitutes Indiana's first December record, was taken to the Chicago Field Museum. The season's only Orange-crowned Warbler was at Rend L., IL Dec. 16 (DK). A few Yellow-rumped Warblers wintered n. of their normal range, with two in n. LaPorte, IN Dec. 6 (SB) and three at South Bend, IN Jan. 1 (M&VR). Other late-departing warblers included a male Pine Warbler at Hammond, IN Dec. 1 (JB) and Com. Yellowthroats at Miami-Whitewater, OH Dec. 5 and Conneaut, OH Dec. 12 (JPo).

The newly-designated Spotted Towhee was found at Braidwood, IL Dec. 30 (JM) and Lebanon, MO Dec. 8–Feb. 14 (L. Pannell). It was a good winter for sparrows, as was illustrated by the 800 Am. Tree Sparrows counted Jan. 1 at Miami-Whitewater, OH (*vide* NK). A remarkable four Chipping Sparrows were found in Ohio during December; reports included two in *Tuscarawrus* Dec. 3 (ES), one at Springfield Dec. 23–Jan. 7 (†DO), and one in *Holmes* Dec. 21–30 (ES). The number of winter LeConte's Sparrow reports was typical for the Region, with one near King City, MO Jan. 1 (LL), one at Cypress Creek N.W.R., IL Jan. 15 (DK), and two at Bradford Farms, Boone,

MO Feb 15 (PMc). An excellent winter count of 18 Savannah Sparrows was logged at a Warrick, IN strip-mine Jan. 20 (†ML, JCb). Harris' Sparrows appeared in good numbers in s.w. Missouri (L. Herbert) and one–three were reported at feeding stations elsewhere in the state. East of the Mississippi R., an imm. Harris' Sparrow was seen at Nelson L. Marsh, Kane, IL Nov. 21–Dec. 25 (DL), and another frequented the Cathy McGraw feeding station in Henry, OH, from Dec. 12 through at least Jan. 13 (†RHa, EP). The season's peak Lapland Longspur count consisted of 100 at Killdeer Plains, OH Feb. 25 (RHa); three wandered S to e. Jefferson, KY, where they were seen Jan. 6 (J&PB). Typical Snow Bunting numbers were recorded in the n. states; southernmost reports included six in Buchanan, MO Dec. 23 (LL) and one in e. Jefferson, KY Jan. 6 (J&PB).

An impressive 90 E. Meadowlarks were at Paint Cr., OH Jan. 12 (*vide* NK). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen at Roscoe, IL Jan. 17–18 (ES). The only reported Rusty Blackbird concentration consisted of 100 in Platte, MO Feb. 21 (MR). A group of four–twenty Brewer's Blackbirds remained in Fremont, OH Dec. 30–Feb. 28 (TB, RHa, m.ob.) and a molting male was seen near Columbia, MO Feb. 17 (†PMc). In Missouri, Great-tailed Grackles were especially common. Peak counts included 200 at a Clay horse farm Jan. 1 (RF) and 50 in Platte Feb. 21 (MR). A lingering Baltimore Oriole was found in Embshoff Woods, OH Dec. 12 (KF, *vide* NK).

The Region enjoyed a much better-than-average winter finch season. Perhaps the most enticing winter finch report consisted of eight–ten Pine Grosbeaks, including three males, feeding on elm buds at Pecatonica, IL Feb. 26 (*vide* BGv). This constitutes the Region's first Pine Grosbeaks since the winter of 1990–1991. Purple Finch numbers were normal in most areas, but the species was deemed common in many portions of Missouri. House Finches were reportedly down in Jefferson, KY (AS), and the infectious eye disease was noted on birds in n.w. Indiana (KB). Up to three Red Crossbills were seen at Woodlawn Cemetery, Toledo, OH in January (RHa *et al.*) and one–two appeared infrequently at Highland Cemetery, South Bend, IN Jan. 26–Feb. 9 (JCd, m.ob.). White-winged Crossbills were more widespread, with small numbers in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio. The most extensive White-winged invasion occurred in Missouri, where records included a female at Busch W.M.A., Jan. 12 (JVb), a male at a Jefferson City feeder Feb. 7 (JLu, †JuL, ph.), a female at a Cole feeder Jan.



Apparently continuing its very slow expansion from the St. Louis area is the Eurasian Tree Sparrow. This individual (left, with House Sparrows), at Marshall, Indiana, February 17, 1996, furnished a first state record. Photograph/Alan W. Bruner.

19–21 (†J. & A. Wylie), and two in Chesterfield Jan. 6–7 (†B&PJ, ph.). Common Redpolls executed a minor invasion, with reports from every state except Kentucky. Peak counts included 80 at the Klehm Arboretum, IL Jan. 1 (BGv), 50 at the Woodlawn Cemetery, Toledo, OH Jan. 6 (RHa), and 30 in Joliet, IL Dec. 16 (CA). Redpolls were detected as far south as Sangamon, IL, where singles were recorded on 3 occasions (DBo). Two ♂ Hoary Redpolls were identified at Woodlawn Cemetery, Toledo, OH Jan. 6 (†JDu, ST). Small numbers of Pine Siskins were reported in every state; the peak count was 50 at Bolingbrook, IL Dec. 17 (WM). Interestingly, although Evening Grosbeaks were reported in every state, the largest concentrations occupied s. reaches of the Region. Peak counts included: 125 in Saline, IL Jan. 30 (JDe), 80 near Conckle's Hollow, OH Feb. 25 (JDu, ST), 75 at a Munfordville, KY feeder Jan. 21 (SK), and >20 in Hanson, KY Jan. 21 (BW). The Eurasian Tree Sparrow vaulted across e.c. Illinois, with a sighting at the Douglas-Hart Nature Center, Coles, IL, to Parke, IN; the latter, which constituted Indiana's first record, was logged at a Marshall feeder Feb. 16–18 (†AB, m.ob., ph). This species also continued its westward expansion, with a Dec. 4 sighting at Gene Ruhr's feeding station in Columbia, MO.

Corrigenda

The summer report of Ring-billed Gulls at Dresden, IN (*AFN* 49:934) should have

read >250, not >9250. The Eur. Tree Sparrows reported in Des Moines, IA, during summer 1995 (*AFN* 49:937), were actually in Des Moines in e. Iowa, not in the city of Des Moines. In the 1995 summer report (*AFN* 49:934) the 675 Long-billed Dowitchers reported at Metzger Marsh, OH July 23, were in fact Short-billed Dowitchers.

Rarities Committee Updates

The following records, which were excluded from the season reports, were approved by state rarities committees. Illinois: a first-year Glaucous-winged Gull identified on L. Springfield, Sangamon, Dec. 31, 1994 (†DBo). Indiana: a Marbled Murrelet flew past Michigan City Harbor Nov. 19, 1994 (†JMc, †BE), Missouri: an ad. gray-morph Gyrfalcon seen at Mark Twain Res., Dec 26, 1994 (†PMc).

Contributors cited (Subregional editors in boldface):

Cindy Alberico, Renee Baade, Susan Bagby, Margaret Baker, Emil Bacik, Thomas Bartlett, Beckham Bird Club, Jane & Pat Bell (J&PB), David Bohlen (DBo), Joy Bower, Dennis Bozzay (DBz), Ken Brock, Alan Bruner (AB) (Indiana), Rick Bushmeyer, Fred Busroe (Kentucky), Jim Campbell (JCb), John Cassady (JCd), John Castrale (JCs), Robert Chapel (RCh), Kathryn Clay, Herbert Clay, Paul Clyne, Robert Danley (Illinois), Myrna Deaton, Judy DeNeal (JDe), Stephen Dinsmore, David Dister, Jon Dunn (JDu), Josh Engel, Brad Etter,

Robert Fisher, Ken Fulmer, Larry Gara, Michelle Georgi, Graeme Gibson, Bruce Glick (BG), Don Gorney (DGo), Darlena Graham (DGr), Brad Grover (BGv), Brendan Grube (BGr), Ray Hannikman (RHn), Rob Harlan (RHa), Jim Haw (Haw), Dick & Jean Hoffman (D&JH), Larry Hood, Brad Jackson (BJk), **Brad Jacobs** (BJ) (Missouri), David Johnson (DJh), Barbara & Paul Johnson (B&PJ), Dan Kassebaum, Ned Keller, Tom Kemp, Steve Kistler, Norma Kraps, Larry Lade, Dennis Larson, Midge Lechner, James Landing (JLa), Jim Lundsted (JLu), Julie Lundsted (JuL), Walter Marcisz, Paul McKenzie (PMc), Jeff McCoy (JMc), Lee McNeely (LMc), Joe Milosevich (JM), Ann Missig, Nancy Moore, Roy Morris, Brenda Onken, D. Overacker, Larry Pannell, Clell Peterson, Ed Pierce, John Pogacnik (JPo), Gary Pogue, John Purcell (JPu), Frank Renfrow, Marge & Vic Riemenschneider (M&VR), Larry Rizzo (LRi), Mark Robbins, Doug Rood, **Larry Rosche** (LRo)(Ohio), Ed Schlabach, Cindy Sembach, Leonard Stanley, Anne Stamm, Ed Sterling, Nina Stone, Sue Tackett, Andy Thieneman, Jack VanBenthysen (JVb), Eric Walters, Richard Whifton, J.R. Wilson, Fred Young, and Jim Ziebol. Many other individuals who could not be personally acknowledged also submitted notes to the various state reports.

—Kenneth J. Brock, Dept. of Geosciences, Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN, 46408.

Central Southern Region

STEPHEN J. STEDMAN

The Region experienced a cold winter, several blizzards blanketing its northern reaches with up to a foot of snow and many cold snaps penetrating to the Gulf Coast. An illuminating indication of the probable effect of these cold conditions on birdlife was provided by Morris Williams, who monitors breeding raptors in south-central Tennessee and northern Alabama. He found that Great Horned Owls nesting in *Lauderdale*, AL were about six weeks behind schedule in their nesting cycle this year. Certainly anyone who looked out the window could tell that leaf emergence was delayed several weeks in most parts of the Region.

Many rarities highlight this season's report, but perhaps the most notable avian event was the wintering of massive numbers of hummingbirds along the Gulf Coast. It sounds improbable, but hummingbird numbers and species once again exceeded those of any previous winter—by a substantial margin. Exactly what really is

a "good" hummingbird winter may not yet be something we can comprehend, but thanks to the work of many dedicated hummingbird banders and watchers, we are now much closer to comprehension.

My thanks to the many observers who took the time to submit carefully-documented records of their season's sightings, and to the subregional editors for bringing some perspective to the wealth of data provided.

Abbreviations: A.B.R.C. (*Alabama Bird Records Committee*); F.B.R.C. (*Florida Bird Records Committee*); p.a. (*pending action*); T.B.R.C. (*Tennessee Bird Records Committee*).

Loons to Frigatebirds

Rare inland, a Red-throated Loon was noted in *Chambers*, AL Jan. 11 (†AMB, GH). Formerly rare anywhere in the Region—but increasing in incidence—a Pacific Loon was in *Baldwin*, AL Feb. 1 (†ALM, ADM). A count of 260 Horned Grebes in *Panola*, MS Dec. 20 (WMD) was deemed exceptional, as was 500 in *Benton*, AR Dec. 2 (MM). In *Marshall*, AL Feb. 20–22 (†WS, †GDJ, DGJ) a Red-necked Grebe represented that state's 8th record, while an Eared Grebe, also in *Marshall*, AL Feb. 23 (†AMB, GH, MK) was noteworthy for its inland locale. Other Eared Grebe sightings included three in *Okaloosa*, FL Dec. 12 (RAD) and one each in *Orleans* and *St. Bernard*, LA Dec. 23 (DM) and Dec. 27 (DM), respectively. Alabama's first *Aechmophorus* identified to species was a *W. Grebe*, also in grebe-rich *Marshall* Dec.

