

(KR) and Presqu'ile Dec. 14 & 20 (R&MCA). Most winter finches remained in the c. and n. regions of the province, and nowhere were they in exceptional numbers. Scattered sightings of both crossbills were reported in only a few locations in the south. The only Hoary Redpoll report came from the north at Armstrong Jan. 26 (SP, NE, JA). Evening Grosbeaks were absent across most of the province, except for the far northwest.

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Appalachian Region

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This was the winter that wasn't. At the Pittsburgh weather station, all three months were warmer and drier than normal. Lakes and ponds did not freeze over until mid-January, when the only period of extremely low temperatures occurred. During late January and most of February, short periods of very mild weather alternated with short periods of moderately cold weather. During the mild February weather the ice disappeared early. There was very little snow except in the extreme north and at higher elevations.

On the local scale, the birding was dull and uneventful. Some reporters felt that it was the poorest season within memory. However, when information from all stations was combined, the Region had a fairly decent season. The mild December induced a number of species to remain later than usual, and the open water produced some good duck flights. Consequently, most locations had successful Christmas Bird Counts. Indeed, some areas had record-high counts for individual species. Many of these stragglers stayed through January. By mid-February, the northbound duck flight had started, but except for meadowlarks, grackles, and Red-winged Blackbirds, the passerine migration had not begun by the end of the period.

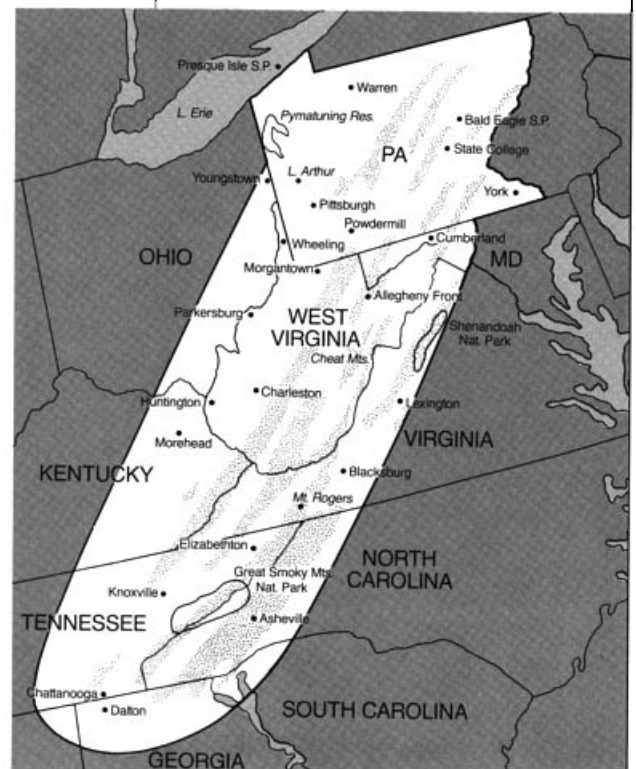
Perhaps the impression of a dull season was produced by the nearly total lack of irruptive species. The so-called "northern finches" were almost completely missing, and with the mild weather, those species that did occur had little incentive to visit feeders. While in aggregate the species list for the Region was quite long, none was in large numbers. Most species showed a pattern of being totally absent at many places and moderately numerous at others.

Abbreviations: B.E.S.P. (*Bald Eagle S.P., Centre Co., PA*); B.F.S.P. (*Beech Fork S.P., Wayne Co., WV*); Ch.N.F. (*Chattahoochee N.F., GA*); G.B.W.M.A. (*Green Bottom W.M.A., Cabell Co., WV*); M.C.F.H. (*Minor Clark Fish Hatchery, Rowan Co., KY*); P.I.S.P. (*Presque Isle S.P., Erie Co., PA*); P.N.R. (*Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., PA*); R.C.B.L. (*Robert C. Byrd Locks, Ohio R., Mason Co., WV*); Y.C.S.P. (*Yellow Creek S.P., Indiana Co., PA*).

Loons to Herons

Red-throated Loons are unusual winterers in this Region, but there were December reports of stragglers from the good fall migration: Y.C.S.P., Dec. 4 (GL), P.I.S.P., Dec. 7 & 8 (JM), Keystone L., *Armstrong, PA* Dec. 31 (SG), and s. Holston L., *VA* Dec. 1 & 3 (WC, LM). There were a few reports of small numbers of Com. Loons in December, but the only later reports were Pymatuning L., *PA* Jan. 5 (RFL) and P.I.S.P., Jan. 17 (JM), and a few wintering birds on the 4 lakes in the Johnson City area of Tennessee (RK).

Pied-billed Grebes were more numerous—and more widespread in occurrence—than usual, with a high count of 170 at S. Holston L., *TN* Feb. 3 (RP, SP). A few Horned Grebes wintered in n.e. Tennessee (RK), and other reports came from Conneaut L., *PA* Dec. 7 & 21 (RFI, RCL), *Wood, WV* Feb. 20 (JE), and *Augusta, VA* Jan. 8 (YL). The only Red-necked Grebe was at Conneaut L., *PA*



Dec. 14 (RFL). For the 3rd consecutive year Eared Grebes wintered at S. Holston L., TN, where 16 made it through the season (RK, WC, LM). The Cumberland, MD, mid-winter count listed nine Double-crested Cormorants Jan. 25 (*fide* JPa), while other reports came from Pymatuning L., PA Dec. 14 & 15 (RFL), P.I.S.P. through Feb. 13 (JM), Wood, WV Jan. 2–20 (EB), Kanawha R., WV Jan. 4 (AW), and of five wintering at Kingsport, TN (RK).

Great Blue Herons were present at many places in late December and late February. High counts of Great Blue Herons were 24 on the Pittsburgh CBC Dec. 28 (*fide* PH) and 25 at M.C.F.H., Feb. 7 (KP). Six Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at Kingsport, TN (RK *et al.*) A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Blacksburg, VA Dec. 21 provided the first local CBC record (*fide* LM).

Waterfowl

It was a great season for ducks. After the fine fall migration, good numbers of most species remained into December. The spring flight started in the last 2 weeks of February, by which time most of the lakes were ice-free. The abundance of open water dispersed the ducks more widely than usual during the season, and some of the usual concentration points had fewer than normal, *i.e.* only 79 Mallards on the Trumbull, OH CBC (CB).

A few Tundra Swans were present all winter at Mosquito L., OH (D&JH), and at the Lock Haven, PA, region (P&GS). There were December records from Deep Creek L., MD (CS), P.N.R. (RCI, RM), and Pymatuning L., PA (RFL). January records were from Warren, PA (GB), and Lyndhurst, VA (YL). The northbound flight began in late February, with scattered records throughout. The largest flocks were not very big, with 130 at Waterstreet, PA Feb. 28 (J&BPe), >90 at Linesville, PA Dec. 22 (RFL), and 50 at P.N.R., Dec. 9 (RM, RCL). A disabled Trumpeter Swan was at G.B.W.M.A., Feb. 12 (MG); it was captured and ultimately sent to a rehabilitator. Three more Trumpeters were seen Feb. 20 in Wayne, WV (MG, WA). These swans had neck bands which indicated that they were a part of a reintroduction program in Ohio. Mute Swans were reported from Pymatuning L. in December (RFL, AM), Mosquito L., OH, in February (J&DH), from R.C.B.L. and G.B.W.M.A. through February (WA, KP), and Bath, KY, in February (KP).

Six Greater White-fronted Geese at Lyndhurst, VA Jan. 7–25 and Feb. 3–18, and two at Staunton, VA Jan. 23 and Feb.

3–26, provided the 3rd and 4th *Augusta* records (YL). Five were at R.C.B.L., Jan. 11 (WA), and two were found in *Grainger*, TN Jan. 15 (RK). The usually rare Snow Goose was reported from an unprecedented 30 locations throughout the Region, from *Erie*, PA (JM) in the north to *Whitfield*, GA (HD), and *Hamilton*, TN (KC), in the south. A flock of 29 in *Westmoreland*, PA Jan. 10 (DL) was the largest group reported. Blue and white morphs were even in numbers. Along with the Snow Geese came 2 reports of *Ross' Goose*: singles at R.C.B.L., Jan. 5 (MG, KP, WA; 2nd WV record) and Chattanooga, TN Jan. 15 (KC *et al.*; first county record.) The Canada Goose continues to do well. The peak count at Pymatuning L., PA was 12,000 Dec. 22, which was reduced to 4000 Feb. 22 (RFL). There were 4000 at Mosquito L., OH Jan. 22 (D&JH), and about 1000 geese were in *s. Somerset*, PA Jan. 15–Feb. 15, with one flock numbering 486 (AM). A record mid-winter count of 855 was made in *Augusta*, VA Jan. 25 (YL). Small numbers of geese were present on most CBCs. The small form of the Canada ("Cackling") Goose was at Pymatuning L., PA Dec. 21 (AM) and R.C.B.L., Jan. 18–26 (ph., WA, MG).

An unusual number of Wood Ducks wintered in the Region. The dabbling ducks were all widely reported, but other than 2800 Mallards at Pymatuning L., PA Feb. 1 (RFL), no large numbers were reported. American Black Ducks were thought to be scarce in n.e. Tennessee (RK). As many as eight Mallard x Am. Black Duck hybrids were seen at Somerset L., PA (AM). There were more than the usual number of reports of N. Pintails, topped by 500 at Mosquito L., OH Feb. 25 (J&DH). Canvasbacks and Redheads were reported from many places that do not usually see them, and the other diving ducks were in above-average numbers. Of the more unusual species, six Greater Scaup wintered in n.e. Tennessee (RK) and a maximum of five was reported from *Wythe*, VA Jan. 26 (JMu). Reports also came from Colyer L., *Centre*, PA Dec. 14 & 19 (NB, DDU), L. Arthur, PA Dec. 21 (GW), Y.C.S.P., Dec. 26 (GL), and Keystone Res., *Armstrong*, PA Jan. 7 (DL). Oldsquaws were reported from *Derry L., Westmoreland*, PA Dec. 9 (DL), Y.C.S.P., Dec. 11 (Jsa, LCa), Colyer L., PA Dec. 19 (DDU), L. Arthur, PA Dec. 21 (GW), and Kahle L., *Venango*, PA Dec. 14 & 15 (JS). Surf Scoters were found at P.I.S.P., Dec. 5 and Jan. 30–31 (JM), Kahle L., PA Dec. 8 & 19 (JS), and Colyer L., PA Dec. 14 (NB). White-winged Scoters were reported from P.I.S.P., Dec. 7–8 and Jan. 31

(JM), Pymatuning L., Feb. 22 (RFL, RCL), Colyer L., Dec. 19 (DDU), and R.C.B.L., Feb. 1 (KP).

Hooded Mergansers continue to be numerous, with a peak of 230 at Mosquito L., OH Dec. 17 (D&JH). There were more reports of Com. Merganser than usual in this Region, but Red-breasted Mergansers were in somewhat lower numbers than usual.

Raptors

Black Vultures wintered in good numbers in s.e. Virginia, where 104 were counted on the *Giles* CBC Dec. 29 (*fide* LM). Farther north they wintered at Pipestem S.P., WV (JP); reports from *Shenandoah*, VA Jan. 18 (DDA) and Cumberland, MD Jan. 25 (*fide* JPa) were noteworthy. While there was a very early arrival date for Turkey Vulture in *Butler*, PA Feb. 10 (CK), the general arrival was earlier than usual in the 3rd week of February.

At least 100 Bald Eagles were reported from 17 locations, continuing the increase shown in recent winters. High counts included 26 birds on an early a.m. count as the birds left the roost in *Hamilton*, TN (KC); 14 at Mosquito L., OH Dec. 22 (CB); a high count of nine at Kinzua Res., PA Jan. 12 (DW); several at Ohio R., *Wood*, WV, throughout the season (*fide* JE); and a record seven at Allegheny R., *Armstrong*, PA Jan. 30–Feb. 1 (*fide* PH). It was thought that there were 5 active nests in late February in the Mahoning Valley of e. Ohio (D&JH).

Up to four N. Harriers were present all winter at Mosquito L., OH (J&DH). Other reports came from *Murray*, GA Dec. 21 (HD), *Warren*, PA Feb. 2 (DBE), and *Crauford*, PA Feb. 22 (RFL). Cooper's Hawks had more than the usual number of reports, topped by a CBC record 18 at Pittsburgh (JV). There were only 3 reports of N. Goshawks: *Clarion*, PA Jan. 12 (RFL), *Waterford*, PA Jan. 14–16 (TS, JSt), and Blacksburg, VA Nov. 26–Dec. 13 (CKe). The Warren, OH CBC counted 11 Red-shouldered Hawks Dec. 22 (CB), continuing the trend of the past few winters, this species was generally in good numbers. Rough-legged Hawks were in good numbers, although lower than last year. As usual, the n. Pennsylvania locations all had good numbers, and reports came from as far south as Cumberland, MD Jan. 25 (*fide* JPa), Deep Creek L., MD Dec. 5 (CS), G.B.W.M.A. all season (MG), and Burke's Garden, VA (LM). Besides the traditional wintering areas at Burke's Garden (RK, LM) and *Highland*, VA (KP), Golden Eagles were reported from *Centre*, PA (JPe), Pymatuning L., PA

Feb. 9 (RFL), Bluestone L., WV Dec. 21 (JP), Town Hill, MD Jan. 5 (JPa), Cumberland, MD Jan. 25 (*fide* JPa), and Ch.N.F., Dec. 22 (HD).

The lack of snow-covered fields may be responsible for the fewer-than-normal Am. Kestrel sightings along highways. A Merlin was seen at B.F.S.P., WV Dec. 5 (KP), on the *Giles*, VA CBC Dec. 29 (*fide* LW), and at Churchill, PA Dec. 30 (TF, KS). Peregrines were seen at Conneaut L., PA Dec. 14 (RFL) and in *Gallia*, OH Feb. 16 (KP). It appears that a 2nd pair of Peregrines may nest in Pittsburgh (PH). A dark-morph *Gyr Falcon* was seen at P.I.S.P., Feb. 8 (†MF, JHo), and there was another report of what may have been the same bird at Erie Feb. 21 (GC).

Bobwhite to Gulls

The N. Bobwhite is almost extirpated in the north of the Region, so a report of six at Canfield, OH Dec. 6 (D&JH) was noteworthy. Wild Turkeys continue to do well, with a roost of 162 at Radford, VA Feb. 25 (CKe), a wintering flock of 110 at Mosquito L., OH Jan. 22 (D&JH), and record CBC counts of 99 at Pittsburgh (JV) and 71 at Butler, PA (SB). A Virginia Rail was seen in *Hamilton*, TN Feb. 1 (RW). American Coots were in high numbers in December, with a high count of 784 on the *Garrett*, MD CBC Dec. 21 (CS). The only reports of Sandhill Cranes came from Hiwassee N.W.R., TN, where 4946 (an average winter number) were counted Jan. 1 (KC *et al.*), and at *Murray*, GA Jan. 17 (JSp).

A count of 240 Killdeers was made at Boone L., TN Dec. 30 (RK, AJ), and 48 were seen at Swoope, VA Jan. 7 (AL). Migrant Killdeer arrived early in the 3rd week of February. Three Least Sandpipers were in *Hamilton*, TN Jan. 1 (DJ, JHe). Two Purple Sandpipers were at P.I.S.P., Dec. 2 (F&BH). A Dunlin was at P.I.S.P., Dec. 6–15 (JM, DD), and 13 were found in *Hamilton*, TN Jan. 1 (DJ, JHe). Common Snipe were reported from *Wood*, WV Dec. 28 (JE), Swoope, VA Jan. 7 (YL), *Westmoreland*, PA Jan. 17 & 23 (DL), and normal numbers were wintering in n.e. Tennessee (RK). The arrival of migrant Am. Woodcock was early, with a report from B.F.S.P., WV Feb. 3 (MG, KP) and other arrivals at *Westmoreland*, PA Feb. 19 (DL) and *Greene*, PA Feb. 21 (RB).

A *Pomarine Jaeger* was seen at P.I.S.P., Dec. 5 (†, ph. JM). There were good numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls in the Region in December, with a high count of 200 at Mosquito L., OH Dec. 17 (D&JH), but the only later reports came from n.e. Tennessee, where a few wintered (RK). Except for 800 at Boone L., TN, in

mid-January (RK), the usual large concentrations of Ring-billed Gulls did not develop in December and January. The Pittsburgh CBC listed only 25, compared with 3200 in 1995 (PH). A count of >1000 was made at M.C.F.H., Jan. 31 (KP). After Feb. 9, "thousands" appeared in s.w. Virginia and n.e. Tennessee (LM). There were more sightings of Herring Gulls at sites away from the Great Lakes than normal.

As usual, P.I.S.P. contributed a list of the rarer gulls: three Little Gulls Dec. 8–Jan. 5 (JM), eight Iceland Gulls Jan. 1–Feb. 25 (JM), two Lesser Black-backed Gulls Jan. 4 (EK) and Feb. 19 (JM), and five Glaucous Gulls Jan. 1–Feb. 23 (JM). Other unusual gull reports included Laughing Gull at B.E.S.P., Dec. 14 (NB); *Iceland Gull* at South Avis, PA (P&GS; first county record); and Great Black-backed Gull at Warren, PA Jan. 13 (BHi).

Owls to Wrens

The only reports of Barn Owls came from Johnson City, TN, where they were present all season (RK), and Glade Spring, VA Jan. 4, a local CBC first (*fide* LM). Snowy Owls were seen at Garland, PA Dec. 21 (JDa), Harborcreek, *Erie*, PA Dec. 7 (S&LD), and three–four at P.I.S.P., Dec. 16–Feb. 2 (CT, JF, JM). Long-eared Owls were found in *Westmoreland*, PA Dec. 21 and Feb. 23 (DBY) and at Y.C.S.P., Jan. 7–Feb. 11 (m.ob.). It was another good winter for Short-eared Owls: six at Imperial, PA January–February (BM); six at Volant, PA Feb. 8 (MF); *Butler*, PA Dec. 21 (SB); Fairfield, PA Jan. 8 (CG); *Venango*, PA Dec. 30–Jan. 3 (JS); four at G.B.W.M.A., Jan. 1–Feb. 16 (MG, WA), and six at R.C.B.L., Jan. 7–Feb. 16 (WA, MG). Single N. Saw-whet Owls were found at Buttermilk Hill Nature Sanctuary, *Venango*, PA Dec. 13–Feb. 23 (JS), B.E.S.P., Jan. 4 (RH), and Scotia Barrens, PA Feb. 17 (TO, SC).

Three Rufous Hummingbirds reported in the autumn account remained into the winter: one at Staunton, VA, to Jan. 3 (m.ob., *fide* YL); *Hamilton*, TN, to Jan. 26 (TR); and one on the Dalton, GA CBC Dec. 21 (*fide* HD.). Most heartening were the reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers from Warren, PA (JSc, JN), *Centre*, PA (*fide* JPe), *Trumbull*, OH (J&DH), *Mason*, WV (KP), Washington, TN (RK), and *Murray*, GA (HD). Red-bellied Woodpecker CBC counts of 30 in *Indiana*, PA (*fide* PH) and 14 at Williamsport, PA (P&GS), were measures of the recent range extension of this species. For an almost completely urban area, the 17 Pileated Woodpeckers on the Pittsburgh CBC (JV) was noteworthy.

Eastern Phoebe at Conneaut Marsh Dec. 15 (RFL), Pittsburgh Dec. 28 (JV), and *Wood*, WV Dec. 28 (*fide* JE) were unusual winterers; a Feb. 22 arrival at Canfield, OH (D&JH), was early. There were numerous reports of flocks of 100–200 Horned Larks. Tree Swallows at Blacksburg, VA Feb. 26 were quite early (SK). Seventy-five Fish Crows, a recent arrival, were seen in *Centre*, PA Dec. 22 (TO), 41 were seen as far south in the Shenandoah Valley as Staunton, VA Dec. 14 (MS), and three were seen near Cumberland, MD Dec. 23 (JPa). Common Ravens continue to increase in the normal breeding range in *Elk*, PA (LC), Sheffield, PA (DW), and Rector, PA (12 on the CBC; RCL, RM). In *Somerset*, PA, 3 pairs were nest building (AM), but reports from the lowlands at *Venango*, PA (JS) and *Greene*, PA (RB), indicate possible range expansion.

The only reports of Red-breasted Nuthatches came from St. Marys, PA, where they nested this past summer (LC), and *Hamilton*, TN Dec. 28 (J&CW) and Jan. 1 (WH, RR). Brown-headed Nuthatches were listed on CBCs at Dalton, GA, and Ch.N.F. (HD). Brown Creepers were unusually numerous, with several CBCs reporting record counts. Despite the mild weather, the Carolina Wren continues to be reported in low numbers. At Morgantown, birds present in December were not evident in late January after the only major cold spell (GAH). Marsh Wrens were reported from the Glade Spring, VA CBC Jan. 4. (RC, RBi) and 2 locations in *Hamilton*, TN., Dec. 28 and Feb. 1 (KC *et al.*).

Kinglets to Finches

Golden-crowned Kinglets were generally in low numbers, although the *Indiana*, PA CBC had a record count of 87 (M&RH). Eastern Bluebirds were in excellent numbers, and several CBCs had record counts. Hermit Thrushes were reported from more locations than normal, but numbers were not exceptionally high. Gray Catbirds were seen at *Indiana*, PA Dec. 22 (PJ), P.I.S.P., Jan. 1 (IF), and Y.C.S.P., Jan. 11 (MH). A N. Mockingbird at Fairview, *Erie*, PA Dec. 19 (JM) was n. of the usual winter range. *Erie* also had a Brown Thrasher Jan. 15 (FZ), and one was at Meadville, PA Jan. 13 (IF).

The only Am. Pipit report came from Crabtree, *Westmoreland*, PA Jan. 26 and Feb. 14 (DL). A N. Shrike was seen in *Venango*, PA Dec. 2 and Jan. 4 (JS), and another was present in *Crawford*, PA to at least Dec. 31 (CGe). There were only 5 reports of Loggerhead Shrikes in n.e. Tennessee, one of the last strongholds in the

Region (RK), but 3 s.w. Virginia CBCs reported Loggerheads (LM). The only other reports were two in *Augusta*, VA Feb. 15 (LH) and Feb. 24 (JHf), and several sightings, presumably the same bird, in *Murray*, GA (JSp).

An Orange-crowned Warbler was seen in *Hamilton*, TN Dec. 28 (WH). Yellow-rumped Warblers were reported on CBCs, including 19 at Pittsburgh (JV), eight at Williamsport, PA (G&PS), and *Wood*, WV (JE), and in *Columbiana*, OH Jan. 4 (D & JH). More unusual were Yellow-throated Warblers at a feeder in *Augusta*, VA Dec. 3+ (m.ob., *fide* YL, MS), and one at Kingsport, TN Jan. 13 (2nd winter record; FA). A Pine Warbler was at a suet feeder in *Indiana*, PA Dec. 26 (JD). Palm Warblers were at B.F.S.P., Jan. 4 (MG), on the CBCs at Bristol and Glade Springs, both Virginia (*fide* LM). There were 2 sightings in *Sullivan*, TN in January (RK, WC, LM). A **Common Yellowthroat** was at Ligonier, PA Dec. 29 and Jan. 4 (2nd local winter record; B&ES, RM), and another was in *Hamilton*, TN Jan. 25 (LW).

A ♂ and ♀ **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** were at a feeder in Warren, OH Dec. 20–22 (CB), and one was at Staunton, VA Jan. 14 (3rd county winter record; YL). There were many more reports than usual of E. Towhees in December, and most of them were still present late in February.

Most species of sparrow occurred at more places than usual, but individual species showed a patchwork pattern of being numerous at some places and absent, or nearly so, at others. This was especially true for Am. Tree Sparrows. More Chipping Sparrows than usual were present in December, and a few remained in January. Regular winterers such as Song, White-throated, and White-crowned sparrows were in low numbers at most places. More unusual species were Savannah Sparrow in *Rockingham*, VA Dec. 21 (MS); Lincoln's Sparrow at G.B.W.M.A., Dec. 29 (MG), and on the Elizabethton, TN CBC (3rd local record; FA); Swamp Sparrow on several CBCs and a *Garrett*, MD, report Feb. 2 (CS); and "Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco at *Indiana*, PA Dec. 20–Feb. 16 (MH). Lapland Longspurs were reported from P.I.S.P., Dec. 5 & 8 (JM), Fairview, PA Dec. 10 (JM), Greencastle, PA, in January (CG, KG), and as far south as Stuart's Draft, VA Jan. 14 (AL). Snow Buntings were present in the usual n. Pennsylvania locations, but a few were as far south as Crabtree, PA Jan. 17 and Feb. 13 (DL), B.F.S.P., Dec. 4 (MG), and *Rockingham*, VA Dec. 21, a first local CBC record (MS). Red-winged Blackbirds and Com. Grack-

les made their spring appearance in the 3rd week in February, while some E. Meadowlarks wintered.

Purple Finches were present all season in many places, but in low numbers. House Finch populations continue to decline; most areas reported them as scarce. The only Redpoll report was a single in *Indiana*, PA Feb. 8 (A&DB). Red Crossbills were reported from breeding areas at Shenandoah Mt., VA (LT), Cranberry Glades, WV Jan. 28 (JP), and Ch.N.E., Dec. 22 (*fide* HD). There were a few scattered reports of Pine Siskins, mostly singles with goldfinch flocks. Small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks were reported from Williamsport, PA Dec. 22 (P&GS), *Centre*, PA Dec. 22 (AN), Rector, *Westmoreland*, PA Dec. 10, and Lewisburg, WV Dec. 23 (CH).

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