

McCullough, Debra McKee, Brad McKinney (BMc), Joann & Don Merritt (J&DMe), Wayne Meyer, Bob Miles, Charles Mills, Steve Mlodinow (SMI), Carroll Moore, Laura Moore, Jim Morgan, Jack & Elaine Morman (J&EMorm), Kevin Mote, John Muldrow (JMu), Derek Muschalek (DMu), Ken Nanney, Lynn Nymeyer, Jim & Lisa O'Donnell (J&LOd), Dale Ohl, Jerry Oldenettel, Alfred Olivas, Bill Oliver, Brent Ortego, Dorothy & Adrin Owens, Nancy & Paul Palmer (South Texas: 615 South Wanda, Kingsville, TX 78363. email: kfpcp00@tamuk.edu), Jim Paton (JPa), Dick Payne (DPa), Marcos Peredes, Jim Peterson, Tom Pincelli, Randy Pinkston (RPi), Barbara Jean Potthast (BJP), Sharon & Truman Powell (S&TPo), Ann Proske, Arvino Punjabi, **Ross Rasmussen** (N.C. Texas: 600 S. Graves #1704, McKinney, TX 75069), Janet Rathjen (JaR), Eddie Ray, Jim Ray (JRa), Joel Reese (JRe), Barbara & John Ribble (B&JRI), Jan & Will Risser (J&WRI), S. Gary Roberts (SGR), David Roeder, Phil Rostron, Bill Rowe (BRo), Sid & Shirley Rucker, Craif Rudolph, Joe & Paula Russo (J&PRu), Paul Saraceni, Rick Schaefer (RiS), Susie Schneider, Robert Schutsky (RSch), Rosemary Scott (RSc), **Willie Sekula** (Central Texas: Rt. 1, Box 130, Falls City, TX 78113. email: WSekula@aol.com), Chuck Sexton, **Ken Seyffert** (Panhandle: 2206 S. Lipscomb, Amarillo, TX 79109), **Cliff Shackelford** (CSh)(East Texas: 4908-A Rowena, Austin, TX 78751), J. W. Sifford, Steven Smith, Leanna Smith (LeS), John Sproul, Ken Stinnett (KSt), Rose Marie Stortz (RMS), Glenn Swartz, Danny Swepston, Ken Sztraky (KSz), Delbert Tarter, Kenneth Taylor, Jay Thomasson, Thede Tobish, Peggy Trosper, Mary Tryer, Leona Bell Turnbull, Al Valentine, Virgil Wade, Ro Wauer, Chad Wayne, Ron Weels (RWe), Bill & Mickey West, Steve West, Ed Wetzel, Marsha Wheatley (MWhe), Matt & Kristin White (M&KWh), E.G. White-Swift (EGW), John Whittle (JWh), Egon & Sue Wiedenfeld (E&SWie), Richard Wilberforce (RWi), Russell Wilke, Frances Williams, Steve Williams (SWi), Harry Wilson, Jeff Wilson, Scott Wilson (ScW), Jan Wimberely (JWim), Anse Windham, Jack Windsor (JWin), Kathleen Withers, David Wolf, Mimi Wolf, Alan Wormington, John Wright (JWr), Nathan Wright (NWr), Paula Wright (PWr), Joe Yelderman, Phyllis Yochem, Jimmie Zabriskie, Barry Zimmer.

—Greg W. Lasley, 305 Loganberry Ct., Austin, TX 78745-6527 (email: gclasley@onr.com) and Chuck Sexton, 101 E. 54th St., Austin, TX 78751-1232 (email: cwsexton@onr.com).

Idaho-Western Montana Region

DAN SVINGEN

The major weather pattern this season was SNOW, SNOW, SNOW! Many mountain ranges received 150–200 percent normal snowpack. Snowdrifts, floods, mudslides, and avalanches hindered birding in many areas, but didn't preclude great birds. Idaho had three first state records within two weeks, and overall had the most interesting winter season in years. Especially exciting was the cooperative Siberian Accentor at Hailey. Tolerant homeowners, helpful local birders, and nearby Trumpeter Swan, Tufted Duck, Gyrfalcon, Snow Bunting, and Black Rosy-Finch greatly enhanced the experience for hundreds of visitors. More widespread trends included relatively high numbers of Snowy Owls, Northern Pygmy-Owls, and Pine Grosbeaks, a general lack of Bohemian Waxwings (especially after December), and an absence of "feeder finches."

Loons to Shorebirds

A Pacific Loon at Swan L., Lake, MT Dec. 15 (DC) provided a first for Latilong 15, and about the 6th record for the state. The Clark's Grebe at Deer Flat N.W.R., Canyon, during the local CBC Jan. 4 (DL) furnished a winter first for Idaho.

A Great Egret was near Hagerman W.M.A., Gooding, ID Feb. 22 (CT), where a bird wintered last year. The imm. Black-crowned Night-Heron in Lewiston, ID Jan. 2–19 (ICS, DHk), was surprising but not unprecedented.

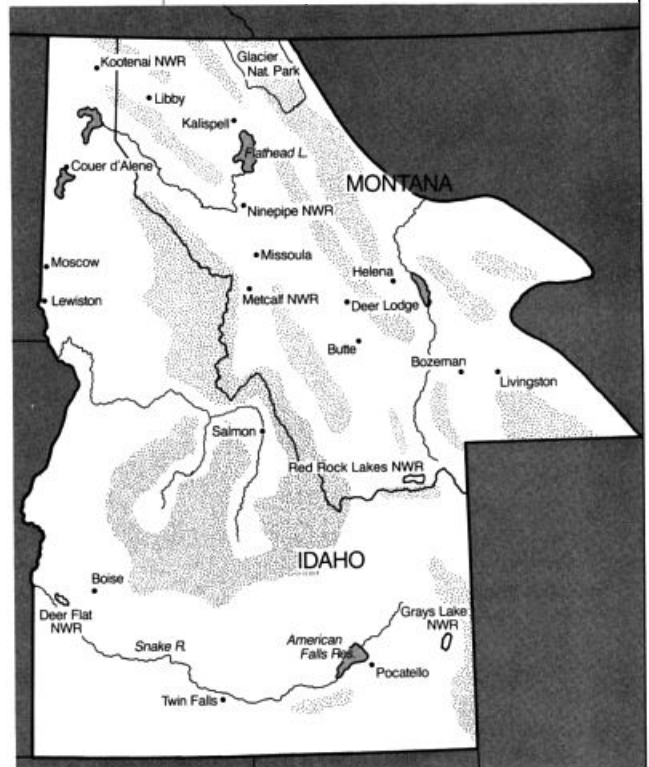
Seasonally-rare waterfowl included a Snow Goose at Deer Flat N.W.R., Jan. 4 (AF, DL),

a Snow Goose Jan. 17 (LBa, JD, DMO, ST), and Ross' Goose Dec. 21–Feb. 8 (*fide* CO, CT) at Hagerman W.M.A. A ♂ Cinnamon Teal was found on the Stevensville, MT CBC Dec. 28 (†JHo), and a ♀ N. Shoveler visited Lewiston Jan. 4–Feb. 8 (KD, DNS, ICS, m.ob.).

Idaho Eur. Wigeon sightings included two overwintering males in Boise (MC, FK, m.ob.), six males at Sandpoint Dec. 14 (*fide* EC), a male at Marsing Jan. 20 (†PS), and a ♂ Eurasian and ♂ Eurasian x American hybrid at C.J. Strike W.M.A., Owyhee, ID Feb. 8 (DJT).

Idaho's first Tufted Duck, a male, was found amidst several thousand Lesser Scaups and Ring-necked Ducks at Hagerman W.M.A., Dec. 21 (LB, †DMo), and was subsequently seen on and off throughout winter (†DNS, †PS, †CT, m.ob.). The Harlequin Duck which overwintered on Lolo Cr., Missoula, MT (SO, m.ob.) was likely injured (*fide* PW). An Oldsquaw overwintered in Marsing, ID (ph. JG, m.ob.), a first for Latilong 17. An early December Oldsquaw in Thousand Springs Valley, Custer, ID (DF, EF) may have been the same bird seen 25 mi away last fall.

An ad. Swainson's Hawk at Columbia Falls, MT, during the first week of December was remarkably late (*fide* DC, †LH). Lingering Ferruginous Hawks were discovered on the Hagerman Valley, Gooding, ID CBC Dec. 21 (†RG) and near Bruneau Dunes S.P., Owyhee, ID Feb. 23 (SM, SP), while three were at Indian





Oldsquaw at Marsing, Idaho, in February 1997. The bird remained all winter. Photograph/John Gatchet.

Creek Res., Ada, ID Feb. 24 (KT). Montana's Flathead Valley attracted ≥ 350 wintering Rough-legged Hawks, 219 of which used a single communal roost Feb. 17 (COI). Gyrfalcon sightings, up compared to recent years, included singles at Gannett, ID Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (LB, m.ob.), Ennis L., Madison, MT Dec. 26 (*fide* JP), Shoshone, ID Feb. 2 (DJJ), and White Sulphur Springs, MT Feb. 17 (EL). Two Gyrfalcons were in the Helena Valley, Lewis and Clark, MT, late December into February (DS, m.ob.), and ≥ 2 Gyrs overwintered in Montana's Flathead Valley (*fide* PW).

Two Sandhill Cranes flew over Hope, ID Jan. 13 (EC), for n. Idaho's first winter record. A W. Sandpiper was at Dry L., Canyon, ID Feb. 22 (DL), where most of Idaho's few winter records have originated. The Least Sandpiper which persisted at Mann L., Nez Perce, until Dec. 22 (DNS, ICS) was record-late for n. Idaho. One–three Dunlin remained at Mann L. until Dec. 22 (DNS, ICS), while 12 Dunlin were at C.J. Strike W.M.A., Feb. 8 (DJT). Winter Dunlin have been recorded in Idaho several times in recent years.

Gulls to Jays

Notable gull sightings were numerous and widespread. Idaho's 9th Mew Gull, a first-winter bird, was in Lewiston Dec. 22–Feb. 8 (WH, †DNS, ICS), where an adult was present in November. The state's 10th–12th Mew Gull records followed quickly, with single adults in Coeur d'Alene Jan. 19 (GC, PAC, BG, †SHS, m.ob.), Sandpoint Feb. 16 (GC, PAC, BG, †SHS, m.ob.), and in and near Hagerman W.M.A., Feb. 22 & 26 (JG, †SM, SP, LW). Unexpected Thayer's Gull sightings included single first-winter birds at the Raft R. mouth, n.e. Cassia, ID Jan. 11 (CT) and Deer Flat N.W.R., Jan. 20 (JG, †PS); one–three first-winter birds were near Hagerman W.M.A., Feb. 7–8 (DL, DJT, CT). One–two first-winter Glaucous-winged Gulls were in the Coeur d'Alene area Feb. 4–22 (PAC, JH, SHS, JW,

m.ob.), where 85% of Idaho's 25 or so records have originated. The single Glaucous-winged Gull at Upper Salmon Falls, s.w. Gooding, ID Jan. 25 (DGr, AS) provided a first for Latilong 25, as did the two nearby Glaucous-winged x Western hybrids (DGR, AS). The 2nd-winter Glaucous-winged at Dworshak Dam, Clearwater, ID Feb. 22 (GT) furnished a first for Latilong 4. Two–three Glaucous Gulls were at the Polson, MT, dump Dec. 2 (DC, DH, PW), where now expected. The first-winter Glaucous Gull at Hagerman W.M.A., Jan. 17–Feb. 7 (LBa, JD, DMO, ST, m.ob.) furnished a Latilong second.

There are < 20 Barn Owl records for Montana, so the injured bird near Missoula (DH) and the road-killed bird along the road between Kalispell and Libby (*fide* PW) were of interest. As noted last fall, Snowy Owls were relatively numerous this year. Winter sightings included ≤ 5 by Sandpoint, ID Dec. 16–Feb. 28 (EC), one near Kalispell, MT Dec. 10–Jan. 28 (DC), one overwintering near Eureka, MT (LY), one on the Helena CBC Jan. 4 (*fide* SN), two on the Rathdrum Prairie, w. Kootenai, ID Dec. 1–Feb. 28 (SRo, JS, m.ob.), and ≤ 20 wintering in Montana's Flathead Valley (DH). By mid-February, 16 Great Gray Owls could be seen along Cache Rd. near Tetonia (CT), Idaho's winter hotspot for this species.

Idaho only has about 3 winter records of Anna's Hummingbird, making two at a Boise feeder early December through February (AL, *fide* DJT) noteworthy. If accepted, the White-headed Woodpecker pair near Hamilton, MT, in mid-February (A&DC) will provide about the 7th state record. Yet another unexpected straggler during this high-snow winter was the Lewis' Woodpecker on the Salmon CBC Jan. 4 (*fide* HR).

Overwintering Idaho Blue Jays included three–four in both Coeur d'Alene (C&LS, m.ob.) and Moscow (DG, m.ob.), and singles in Grangeville (SR), Pocatello (CT), and Boise (MC, FK, DJT).

Nuthatches to Finches

Several observers (KD, SHS *et al.*) noted that Pygmy Nuthatches are apparently increasing and spreading in n. Idaho, which is welcome news as the bird's preferred old-growth Ponderosa Pine habitat has been heavily impacted by past timber harvest and fire suppression. As mentioned in last winter's report, the n. limit of wintering Rock and Canyon wrens in Idaho is poorly understood. The Jan. 13 Canyon Wren along the Lewiston side of the Snake R., and pairs of both Canyon and Rock wrens on the Clarkston side (DNS, ICS),

provided further evidence that these species winter regularly at least as far north as the L-C Valley, Idaho's "banana-belt." An even more enterprising Canyon Wren escaped December and January weather altogether by roosting in a Peck, ID, basement closet (SR, S&DW)! Two Bewick's Wren were along Garden Gulch Rd., Nez Perce, ID Dec. 12 (WH), and another was near Lewiston Feb. 8 (GW, FC). Bewick's Wren sightings typically decline after very cold or heavy snow winters. A Regularly-rare N. Mockingbird was near Marsing, ID Jan. 4 (JG, DL, AF) during the local CBC. About 100 Am. Pipits were at the Nampa, ID, sugar beet processing plant Jan. 25 (DGr, AS), attracting the unwelcome attention of the resident Peregrine Falcon pair. Up to three Hermit Thrushes persisted in Boise until Dec. 8, with at least one remaining Dec. 31 (MC, FK).

SA The Region's first and the Lower 48's 2nd Siberian Accentor visited Hailey, ID, feeders Dec. 27–Feb. 28 (†M&MD, †JD, ph. †PWP, †DNS, †PS). The bird was identified by Wright-Pulliam as it visited her feeder in late December, but the bird disappeared before other observers could see it. On Jan. 5, Morgan [who had just found Idaho's first Tufted Duck a few days earlier] wandered around the neighborhood and refound the Accentor about 0.5 mi. from the original location. The bird spent the next 2 months alternating between 4 feeders within a few hundred yards, putting in regular appearances each morning and afternoon.

A ♂ Northern Cardinal visited a Lewiston feeder Jan. 5–Feb. 28 (†M&MD, †KD, L&HH, †DNS). If accepted, this would provide Idaho's first record, but the



Perhaps the most sought-after individual bird ever in Idaho, this Siberian Accentor—only the second ever for the lower 48 States—was present for more than two months near Hailey, at least from late December 1996 into March 1997. Photograph/Don Morgan.

bird's origin is already controversial due to previous demands for the species' introduction (a proposal supported by a former governor), and the unconfirmed report of a N. Cardinal pair in neighboring Clarkston, WA, in early January (*vide* MK).

Chipping Sparrow have not been recorded during winter in n. Idaho, so the single persisting until Dec. 12 near Moscow (KD) and two-three in Sandpoint Dec. 14–Feb. 28 (EC) were surprising. Other seasonally-rare sparrow sightings included a Fox Sparrow at Lewiston Jan. 15 (ICS) and single Lincoln's Sparrows on the Hagerman Valley, ID, CBC Dec. 21 (*vide* CO) and at Deer Flat N.W.R., Jan. 26 (DGr, AS). A White-throated Sparrow overwintered at an Orophino, ID, feeder Dec. 4–Feb. 28 (MR), a first for Latilong 4.

The ♀ and four imm. Great-tailed Grackles found at Marsing last fall persisted until at least Feb. 27 (JG, m.ob.). The species also wintered there in 1995. With <30 accepted Idaho records for Purple Finch, the pair in Boise Dec. 15 (†MC, FK), was noteworthy.

Observers cited (subregional editors in boldface): IDAHO: Larry Barnes, Laurie Barrera (LBa), Frances Cassirer, Earl Chapin, Mark Collie, Gordon Comrie, Pam Comrie (PAC), Mike and MerryLynn Denny (M&MD), **Kas Dumroese** (KD), Jon Dunn, Dave Faike, Elise Faike, Aubrey Fautheree, Robin Garwood, John Gatchet, Denny Granstrand (DGr), Dale Goble (DG), Bill Gundlach, Winnie Hepburn, John Hirth, Lloyd and Helen Hogden (L&HH), David Holick (DHk), Dick Johnson, Florence Knoll, **Merlene Koliner**, Al Larson, Dave Lawrence, Steven Mlodinow, Don Morgan (DMo), Christina O'Brien (CO), Stephen Pink, Marvin Reed, Sharon Ritter, **Hadley Roberts**, Scott Robinson, John Shipley, Andy Stepniewski, Cliff and Lee Strelz (C&LS), **Shirley Sturts** (SHS), Dan Svingen (DNS), Ila Svingen (ICS), Peder Svingen, Sue Tackett, Kendall Thomas, Gil Thompson, Dave Trochlell (DJT), **Chuck Trost**, Griff Walker, Sarah and Dick Walker (S&DW), Jeff Wisman, Libby Wolfe, Poo Wright-Pulliam (PWP). MONTANA: **Dan Casey**, Adele and Don Coon (A&DC), Liz Hill, Denver Holt, Judy Hoy (JHo), Eric Lichtwardt, David Lockman (DLo), Sue Newell, Chad Olson (COl), Sophie Osborne, John Parker, **Don Skaar** (DS), Dan Sullivan (DSu), **Philip Wright** (PW), Lewis Young.

—Dan Svingen, P.O. Box 132, Grangeville, ID 83530.

Mountain West Region

VAN A. TRUAN AND
BRANDON K. PERCIVAL

This winter the Region was quite a bit wetter than last year, and temperatures were slightly above average. The Rockies had a deep snow pack, approximately 160 percent of normal. In early January, heavy rains fell on the eastern Sierra snowpack, causing severe flooding of the Truckee, Carson, and Walker River Basins in Nevada. As a result of Nevada floods, many lakes were filled to capacity, providing greater habitat for more wintering birds. Also, winter water storage in irrigation reservoirs in eastern Colorado remained high.

The Region experienced some migration of montane species into lower elevations, including Mountain Chickadees, nuthatches, Cassin's Finches, crossbills, and rosy-finches.

Abbreviations: P.N.G. (*Pawnee National Grasslands, Weld Co., CO*), R.M.N.P. (*Rocky Mountain N.P., Larimer Co., CO*); S.W.A. (*State Wildlife Area*).

Loons to Ibis

Red-throated Loons scattered throughout the Region, with an adult at Cherry Creek



Continuing a recent pattern of this species wintering in the interior, this Yellow-billed Loon was at Mud Lake, Nevada, December 18, 1996. Photograph/David McNinch.

Res., *Arapahoe*, CO Dec. 6 (JBH), another adult Dec. 27–30 (BKP, CLW), and two were at L. Mead, *Clark*, NV Feb. 27–29 (JWi). More Pacific Loons were reported than normal, with one at Baseline Res., *Boulder*, CO Dec. 1 (PG, BK) & 14 (JLD, JV), an immature at Holbrook Res., *Otero*, CO Dec. 1 (BKP, DSm), one at Pueblo Res., CO Dec. 7–27 (BKP, MJ *et al.*), two at Cherry Creek Res., CO Dec. 8–14 (DFO, JBH, m.ob.), one at Mud L., *Douglas*, NV Dec. 14–18 (WEH, BH, m.ob.), one at Las Vegas Wash Marina, L. Mead, NV Dec. 5 (CT *et al.*), another at L. Mead, NV Feb. 2 (JC, MC), and three there Feb. 14–17 (RSc). A single Com. Loon was at Mud L., NV Dec. 14–18 (WEH, BH, m.ob.), 27 at Walker L., NV Jan. 3 (LN), and another at Quail Cr. Res., *Washington*, UT Jan. 11 (SDS). **Yellow-billed Loons** continue to winter inland at scattered locations in the Region. One was at Quail Creek Res., UT Nov.

