



Only the eighth to be recorded in New Mexico, this American Woodcock was at Albuquerque 28 Nov 1999. Photograph/David Bernitsky



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The generous summer rains continued well into September and were followed by a mild autumn; this combination encouraged late breeding by some species, provided favorable conditions for migrants (especially shorebirds), and set the wild-food table for resident, transient, and wintering species alike. A downside to these conditions was serious botulism outbreaks in the Uvas Valley and near Garfield that together claimed over 2,000 birds of 12 families.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (*Bitter Lake N.W.R.*); Bosque N.W.R. (*Bosque del Apache N.W.R.*); E.B.L. (*Elephant Butte Lake*); L.V.N.W.R. (*Las Vegas N.W.R.*); N.R.T. (*north Roosevelt Co. migrant trap near Melrose*); R.S. (*Rattlesnake Springs including adjacent Washington Ranch, Eddy Co.*); R.G.V. (*Rio Grande Valley*); Zuni (*Zuni Indian Reservation*).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

A relatively quiet loon season found three Pacifics at Ute L. 16 Nov (WH); early was a Common at Brantley L. 21 Sep (MS, JZ). Grebes were among the waterbirds that benefited from the summer rains, including young Pied-billeds at Bill Evans L. 11 Aug (LM) and Pied-billed and Eared chicks at Black L., *Colfax*, 17 Aug (SOW, PM). The estimated 5,000 Western Grebes (only two Clark's noted) at the Narrows 24 Oct (SOW, PM) underscored the importance of E.B.L. to this taxon. At L.V.N.W.R., one of a pair of Clark's Grebes was carrying two chicks 11 Sep (HS, NV) and other young were in evidence there 31 Oct (CR). An Am. Bittern at B.L.N.W.R. on various dates 29 Oct–12 Nov (GW, SW) furnished the only report; the high count for Least was eight at Tucumcari L. 25 Aug (WW). Moderate numbers of

White-faced Ibises were widespread Aug–early Oct, including 100 in the Uvas Valley, *Luna*, 24 Sep (CR), where 40 had succumbed to botulism by 22 Sep (U.S.F.W.S.). Very late Turkey Vultures were one at Caballo L. 5 Nov (MS, JZ) and three near Columbus 22 Nov (LM); the species winters in nearby n. Chihuahua. Two presumably wild **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** put in a brief appearance at Holloman L. 1 Oct (GE). Peripheral Wood Ducks included eight at Conchas Dam 26 Oct (NV), three at Ft. Sumner 30 Oct (JO), two at Deming 27 Oct (LM), and one at Holloman L. 10 Oct (DE, BN); some 200 hand-fed Woodies were at Rio Grande Nature Center 20 Oct (NP). **Ring-necked Duck** was added to the list of New Mexico breeding species when a female and two pre-flight young were found at Nutria L. 22 Aug (JT); an eclipse male was also present.

An impressive seven **Surf Scoters** made a brief stop at B.L.N.W.R. 9 Nov (CR, GW); a single Surf at Conchas L. 14 Nov (WH) provided the only additional report. Very early was a Bufflehead at B.L.N.W.R. 3 Sep (GW). Late were single Ospreys at Brantley L. 2 Nov (SW) and Percha 28 Nov (DE, BN). A White-tailed Kite was near Hachita 26 Sep (AC, NMC). Two ad. Bald Eagles at Stubblefield L. 7 Aug (JO) were likely local *Colfax* breeders. Of great interest for the lower Pecos Valley was a Com. Black-Hawk at R.S. 26 Sep (SW); also noteworthy was an imm. that visited Clanton Cienega, Animas Valley, 14 Oct (AC, NMC). Harris's Hawk discoveries in the lower R.G.V. included a nest with one young at Truth or Conse-

quences 30 Nov (S. Kendall) and an adult at Hatch 24–26 Nov (T. Lawton, CR); another was in w. *Doña Ana* 17 Sep (S.&W. Hill). The 12 Broad-winged Hawks that passed the Manzano Mountains hawkwatch lookout 30 Aug–10 Oct (H.W.I.) suggested an increasing trend; in the east, imm. were at Portales 5 Oct (WW), Boone's Draw 25 Sep (JEP, JO), and Tatum 11 Sep (DE, BN). Indicating their preference for the ranchers' favorite rodent were eight Ferruginous Hawks at a prairie dog town near McDonald, *Lea*, 22 Oct (JO). Only 14 Merlins passed the Manzano lookout 15 Sep–4 Nov (H.W.I.), but the species was widespread elsewhere in the east and south. A juv. Peregrine Falcon was observed chasing (and occasionally catching) butterflies above the Manzano Mts. 3 Sep (LS); another was an Uvas Valley botulism victim (U.S.F.W.S.) and late was one near Columbus 30 Nov (LM).

PTARMIGAN THROUGH TERMS

Six White-tailed Ptarmigan on the n. flank of Wheeler Peak 20 Sep (E. Rominger) provided evidence for the persistence of that northerly population. The season's first Sandhill Cranes passed over the Manzano Mts. 29 Sep (LS). An Internet report of 12 Whooping Cranes in s. *Curry* 23 Nov was judged doubtful; the species has never been confirmed in e. New Mexico. Black-bellied Plovers made a good showing at several locales including B.L.N.W.R., where present 21 Aug–19 Nov (v.o.) with a high of eight 24 Sep (GW). Noteworthy for the Guadalupe Mts. were six Snowy Plovers at Queen

L. 19 Aug (SW). Late was a Semipalmated Plover at B.L.N.W.R. 29 Oct (GW). The 100 Mountain Plovers near Star L., *McKinley*, 26 Aug (A. Crateau) was a large concentration for nw. New Mexico. Solitary Sandpipers were restricted to the w., with one to three at seven sites 1 Aug–24 Sep (v.o.), including three each at Zuni 28 Aug (JT) and Holloman L. 1 Sep (GE). A respectable 15 Willets were at the Lordsburg playa 13 Aug (JO); one–four others were at L.V.N.W.R., B.L.N.W.R., Isaack's L., or Holloman L. 7 Aug–1 Oct (v.o.). Green prairies of New Mexico hosted impressive numbers of migrant Upland Sandpipers, including 370 in the Carlsbad area 5 Aug–15 Sep, with a

SA Documented natural occurrences of **Aplomado Falcons** have increased dramatically in s. New Mexico during the past decade, including birds photographed in *Otero* (1991), *Socorro* (1992), and *Doña Ana* (1996) plus additional credible reports from those and adjacent counties each year from 1990–98. This observed increase coincided with discovery of previously unknown breeding populations in adjacent n. Chihuahua. This season proved especially exciting, with at least five convincing reports of naturally occurring birds from three counties (discounted are a questionable Internet report from Holloman L. in early Aug and another sighting at Akela, e. *Luna*, mid-Oct). Earliest was one seen chasing sparrows and perched e. of Las Cruces 3 Aug (M. Hakkila), followed by an ad. at nearby Isaack's L. 31 Aug–4 Sep (v.o., phs. JO, JZ, vt. W. Hill). Concurrently, near Muzzle L., w. *Doña Ana*, an unbanded juv. was well-described 3 Sep; it had given a falconer's captive Merlin a "near-death" experience (P. Jungemann). Subsequently, another juv. was found on Otero Mesa 11–18 Sep (R. Meyer); importantly, it was banded as a wild nestling in n. Chihuahua in May 1999 (*vide* R. Meyer, A. Montoya). Finally, another was described three mi. s. of Hachita, *Grant*, 5 Oct (M. Hakkila). Threatening this apparent natural recolonization of historic range by wild birds of local origin, however, are efforts by private groups and some agencies to initiate releases of captive-bred falcons (of se. Mexico origin) into s. New Mexico.

one-day high of 73 on 22 Aug (SW); w. to the R.G.V. were eight at San Antonio 19 Aug (JO), one to two at E.B.L. 15 and 18 Aug (JO), one at Isaack's L. 15 Aug (JO), and 44 in Mesilla Valley 21 Aug (MS, JZ). Long-billed Curlews likewise found favorable conditions, with high counts of 510 near Portales 2 Oct (JO), 300 at Hagerman 20 Sep (DS), and 250 near Lovington 16 and 22 Oct (JO). An imm. **Ruddy Turnstone** at L. Isabel 12 Oct (WW) furnished a *San Miguel* first. Similarly rare, a **Red Knot** was at E.B.L. 24 Nov (ph. JO). Far w. were single juv. Semipalmated Sandpipers at Blackrock L. 22 Aug and Bluewater L. 25 Aug (JT). A high 14 Pectoral Sandpipers were in the Uvas Valley 24 Sep (CR). Impressive numbers of Stilt Sandpipers visited B.L.N.W.R. 21 Aug–15 Oct, including 108 on 24 Sep (GW) and a late one 19 Nov (GW); w. were singles in the Uvas Valley 24 Sep (CR) and at Deming 1 Oct (LM). Well-described was a juv. **Ruff** at Nutria L. 22 Aug (JT); there are but three previous (one certain) New Mexico reports. The one to three **Short-billed Dowitchers** at Bosque N.W.R. 9–12 Sep (JO, WH) were refreshingly well described. An **American Woodcock** at Albuquerque 28 Nov (ph. D. Bernitsky) provided New Mexico's eighth well-documented record. Red-necked Phalaropes where rarely reported included five at Pescado L. 11–12 Sep (ph. DC), three in the Uvas Valley 24 Sep (CR), and two to four at Isaack's L. 4–10 Sep (DE, BN, LM). Very rare, single **Red Phalaropes** were at L.V.N.W.R. 20 Oct (WW) and Holloman L. 9 Oct (DE, BN). Notably early was a Franklin's Gull at Tucumcari 25 Aug (WW). A probable Thayer's Gull was at Brantley L. 23 Oct (vt. JO) and 2 Nov (SW). A juv. Sabine's Gull at B.L.N.W.R. 19 Sep (DS) provided the lone report. Undetailed reports of Com. Terns came from Sumner L., B.L.N.W.R., Brantley L. and E.B.L. 18–28 Sep (v.o.).

DOVES THROUGH FLICKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves strengthened their grip on e. New Mexico, with singles at Ft. Sumner and nearby Bosque Redondo 18, 24, and 25 Sep (JEP, JO), N.R.T. 9 Oct. (JEP, JO), Portales 6 Sep (ph. JO), and Texico 11 Sep (ph. JO), plus 18 at Roswell 26 Oct (GE) and seven at Jal 23 Oct (ph. JO); w. was one at Rio Rancho 3–30 Nov (*vide* HS). White-winged Doves consolidated their hold on the ne. with seven at Ute L. and 11 at Logan 25 Sep (JO). A Com. Ground-Dove at Isaack's L. 8 Sep (LM) furnished the only report. Far e. was a

Flammulated Owl roosting at N.R.T. 2 Oct (JEP), where there was a Long-eared Owl 9 and 22 Oct (JEP, ph. JO). A dying Spotted Owl was found near Cloudcroft 14 Aug (*vide* R. Dickerman); noteworthy was one heard in the Manzano Mts. 22 Oct (LS) that quickly became silent upon attracting the attention of a Great Horned Owl. Two roosting Short-eared Owls were found at Chaco Canyon 6 Nov (H. Smith); elsewhere one was n. of Lordsburg 26 Nov (CR) and another was hit by a car near Hachita 23 Oct (MS, JZ). A vocal Whip-poor-will was n. to the Zuni Mts. 23 Aug (JT). The Jemez Mts. Black Swift colony had seven nests, each with one nestling, 25 Aug (HS, NV). A *Chaetura* swift was over the Gila R. near Riverside 8 Oct (RS). Benefiting from the generally lush conditions, hummingbirds were described by some as present in "astounding" numbers. Among the rarer hummers were a male Broad-billed e. to the White Sands Missile Range housing area, *Doña Ana*, Oct–Nov (D. Holderman), a Blue-throated in the Animas Valley 16 Oct (AC, NMC), and a Magnificent e. to Carlsbad 27 Aug (SW). Far e. was a Calliope at Clayton 5 and 25 Aug (WC *vide* LF). A notable movement of Lewis's Woodpeckers was documented in the Manzano Mts., where 121 were tallied 29 Aug–11 Oct, including highs of 21 on 20 Sep and 27 on 8 Oct (LS). Westerly Red-headed Woodpeckers were singles at Stubblefield L. 21 Sep (RW) and Las Cruces 20 Nov (GE); e. was an Acorn at B.L.N.W.R. 7 Sep (GW) and a Williamson's Sapsucker near Nara Visa 9 Oct (JO). Two probable Three-toed Woodpeckers in the Pinos Altos Mts. 19 Sep (LM) were at the s. fringe of the distribution. Flickers with yellow feathers were scattered from Clayton to the Animas Valley; that none were accused of being "Gilded" showed admirable restraint on the part of eager listers.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WRENS

A Least Flycatcher was w. to Sumner Dam 6 Sep (JO); another was at Caprock 14 Sep (DE, BN). Two possible **Buff-breasted Flycatchers** in Clanton Canyon 18 Aug (LM) were not relocated in subsequent days. Far ne. was a Black Phoebe at Clayton L. 26 Sep (ph. JO). E. Phoebes were unusually conspicuous w. to the R.G.V.; farther afield was one near Riverside, *Grant*, 5 Nov (RS). Vermilion Flycatchers have become a fixture ne. to Conchas L., where one to two continued in evidence 25–28 Sep (JO, WH). Single Great Crested Flycatchers were at Endee, *Quay*, 11 Sep (ph. JO), near Clovis

11 Sep (JO), and at N.R.T. 18 Sep (JEP, ph. JO). Late-nesting Cassin's Kingbirds were "carrying food" at R.S. 2 Aug (SW) and in the Animas Mts. 6 Aug (AC, NMC). Linger-ing Western Kingbirds were one at St. Vari-an 22 Oct (JO) and three at Hermanas 21 Oct (SOW). An Eastern Kingbird was w. to Zuni 27 Aug (JT). Early was a N. Shrike at L.V.N.W.R. 23 Oct (JEP); e. were singles at Conchas L. 6 and 14 Nov (JEP, JO, WH) and s. *Curry* 21 Nov (J. Lofton), while s. was one at Bosque N.W.R. 11 and 14 Nov (WH, ph. JO). At least one **White-eyed Vireo** was at R.S. 3 Oct (JO). Late was a Bell's Vireo at Caballo Dam 27 Nov (JEP); upriver, three were banded at San Marcial 9–23 Sep (HW). Presumed Blue-headed Vireos were singles at Zuni 18 Sep (DC), Bosque Redondo 9 Oct (JEP), Frio Draw, *Curry*, 11 Sep (JO), Milnesand 5 Sep (JO), and R.S. 24 Oct (vt. JO). A probable **Philadelphia Vir- eo** was at Sumner Dam 2 Oct (DE, BN). Blue Jays wandered w. in Oct to the R.G.V. and environs, including Los Alamos, Albu- querque, Tijeras, Manzano Mts., Veguita, and Socorro (v.o.); another strayed to Silver City mid-Oct (*fide* R. Fisher). Clark's Nutcrackers in peripheral areas included 12 in the Manzano Mts. 6 Sep (WH) and "large numbers" there in late Oct (LS), plus one–two at San Mateo Peak 10 Oct (HS). Interesting were several Tree and Barn Swallows eating Russian olives at L.V.N.W.R. 11 Sep (HS, NV), as were some 270 Cave Swallows roosting in sorghum fields near Carlsbad 14–15 Aug (SW). A moderate flight of Red-breasted Nuthatch- es found small numbers e. to the Clayton,

SA Reports of **Carolina Wrens** in New Mexico have been on the rise for several years and recently the species has found the middle R.G.V. much to its liking. In 1998, a juvenile of unknown origin was banded at Albuquerque. This year, at Socorro's Riverine Park, JO located a pair carry- ing nest material into a stump 5–6 Aug, tending the nest 19 Aug, and carry- ing food to the nest 1–2 Sep. A fam- ily group, including at least two juvs., was seen 9 Sep (CR) and JO pho- tographed two to three fledglings 15 Sep, establishing the first New Mexico breeding for the species. As fate would have it the stump was removed by maintenance crews in late Sep. Yet another Carolina was at R.S. on vari- ous dates 22 Aug (ph. JO) to 24 Oct (v.o.).

Melrose, Portales, and Carlsbad areas (v.o.). Single Winter Wrens were at N.R.T. 9, 16, and 28 Oct (JEP, JO, WH), near Tatum 16 Oct (ph. JO), and at Hondo Falls, Sandia Mts., 22 Oct (DE); two were near Redrock 27 Nov (CR). Rarely reported, a **Sedge Wren** was at Bosque N.W.R. 11 Nov (WH).

KINGLETS THROUGH WARBLERS

Golden-crowned Kinglets were much in evidence in several smaller mountain ranges and in submontane areas. Far e. were three Western Bluebirds near Eunice 23 Oct (ph. JO). A **Varied Thrush** at Fruitland 20 Nov (ph. TR) provided a *San Juan* first; there are fewer than a dozen New Mexico reports. Noteworthy Gray Catbirds were one in Las Huertas Canyon 14 Sep (WH), possibly a first for the Sandia Mts., and one to two at Socorro 19 Aug–14 Sep (JO), including one "carrying food" on the latter date. Late was a N. Mockingbird at Clayton 24 Nov (LF). Single Brown Thrashers w. to the R.G.V. were singles at Corrales 24 Oct (WH), Los Lunas 8 Sep (CR), Socorro 2 Nov (PB), and San Marcial 14 Oct (banded HW). North of expected was a Crissal Thrasher at Eldorado near Santa Fe 28 Sep (DF). Out of range was a probable Sprague's Pipit in grasses at Bluewater L. 4 Sep (DC). A Phainopepla strayed e. to B.L.N.W.R. 10 Sep (GW). Late (or over- wintering?) was an Olive Warbler in the Animas Mts. 4 Nov (AC, NMC). The wood- warbler migration, while not spectacular, was nevertheless entertaining and included Tennessees at Las Animas Cr., *Sierra*, 28 Sep (WW) and R.S. 4 Sep (SW), N. Parulas in the R.G.V. at Isleta L. 21 Nov (DE), Bosque N.W.R. 13 Nov (JO, DE), and E.B.L. Dam 26 Nov (JEP), Chestnut-sideds at Moriarty 6 Sep (DE, BN) and Berrenda Cr., *Sierra*, 23 Sep (CR), Magnolia at Albuquerque 3 Oct (CR, BN, DE), and Black-throated Blues at Albuquerque 3 Oct (CR, BN, DE), Sumner L. 5 and 16 Oct (WW, DE, BN), and N.R.T. 16 Oct (JEP, ph. JO). Black-throated Green Warblers were unusually prevalent, with one to two at N.R.T. 18 Sep–9 Oct (JEP, JO, MS, JZ), singles at Milnesand 6 Sep (JO) and Jal 23 Oct (ph. JO), and at least two at R.S. 24 Oct (vt. JO). Noteworthy were Hermit Warblers in the Pinos Altos Mts. 27 Aug (MS, JZ) and 16–18 Sep (LM) and the Peloncillo Mts. 27 Aug (MS, JZ). Among the rarer Eastern strays were a **Blackburnian Warbler** at Boone's Draw 18 Sep (JEP, JO), **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Glenwood 1 Sep (B. & D. McKnight), **Pine Warbler** at N.R.T. 9 Oct (JEP, JO), and **Kentucky Warbler** at Boone's Draw 4 Sep (JO), plus

single Palms at L.V.N.W.R. 17 Oct (B&DF), N.R.T. 5 Oct (WW), and Sunland Park 9 Oct (JNP) and a Hooded at San Marcial 8 Sep (banded HW). New Mexico's first con- firmed **Swainson's Warbler**, discovered at Socorro in late July, remained through 14 Aug (v.o.).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

North was a Summer Tanager at Clayton L. 26 Sep (JO). Cassin's Sparrows took advan- tage of the lush conditions in the sw., with 30 in the s. Animas Valley (including breed- ing activity) 6 Aug (AC, NMC), 34 in the Animas and Playas Valleys 27 Aug (AC, NMC), and 10 singing near the Big Hatchet Mts. 31 Aug (SOW). A partial survey of Botteri's Sparrow habitat in the middle Animas Valley found territories occupied by singing birds, plus one juv., 1–2 Sep (SOW). Clay-colored Sparrows w. of usual were one near Riverside 12 Nov (RS) and seven at Berrenda Cr. 23 Sep (CR). Taking advantage of abundant grasses, large numbers of Brewer's, Vespers, and other sparrows plus Lark Buntings inundated the state, particu- larly in the sw. Early were single Field Sparrows at Carlsbad 1 Oct (SW) and N.R.T. 9 Oct (JEP). A gray Fox Sparrow at Pilar 21 Oct (RW) was the only report. White-throated Sparrows had a banner sea- son, especially in the middle and lower R.G.V., but the only Golden-crowned was at Ruby Ranch, *San Miguel*, 20 Oct (WW). Along with three resident Yellow-eyed Juncoes in the Animas Mts. 4 Nov were both *dorsalis* and *caniceps* Gray-headed Juncoes (AC, NMC). Pyrrhuloxias n. of known breeding areas included one to two at N.R.T. (JO), Boone's Draw (JO), B.L.N.W.R. (GW), Bottomless L. (GE), Albuquerque (DE), and E.B.L. (NP). A male Rose-breast- ed Grosbeak was at R.S. 3 Oct (ph. JO). A possible **Yellow Grosbeak**, described as an ad. male, was reported at Bosque N.W.R. 4 Oct (R. Rowland) but available details were sketchy and the bird was not relocated. Scarce in the lower R.G.V., three Painted Buntings were at La Mesa 21 Aug (MS, JZ); on the se. plains were four at Milnesand 6 Sep plus two at Caprock and one at Maljamar 21 Aug (JO). Three **Rusty Blackbirds** were at Bosque N.W.R. 21 Nov (AC, NMC, ph. JO). Also rare in New Mexico, a male **Purple Finch** was at Conchas L. 31 Oct (ph. JO), but undetailed was another at Clayton 5 Nov (WC, *fide* LF). Responding to an overabundance of sun- flowers, Lesser Goldfinches were notably numerous, including 225 at Zuni 21 Aug (JT), and showed evidence of late nesting at

Zuni 16 Aug (DC) and Animas Valley 6 Aug (AC, NMC); late were two at Fruitland 20 Nov (TR), one at Zuni 6 Nov (DC), and 20 near Redrock 27 Nov (CR). Earliest Am. Goldfinches were two at Berrenda Cr. 23 Sep (CR) and five at Conchas L. 25 Sep (JO). The only(!) Evening Grosbeaks reported were 19 at Santa Fe 16 Oct (NP).

Initialed Observers: Pat Basham, David Cleary, Wes Cook, Alan Craig, Narca Moore Craig, Douglas Emkalns, Gordon Ewing, Bernard & Dawn Foy, Lavina Fry, HawkWatch International, William Howe, Larry Malone, Patricia Mehlhop, Bruce Neville, Jerry Oldenettel, John E. Parmeter, James N. Paton, Nick Pulcinella, Tim Reeves, Christopher Rustay,

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Fall 1999 produced yet another in a developing trend of mild autumns, characterized by above average temperatures and dominated by warm, rainy anticyclones. These conditions caused a protracted freeze-up, with minimum mid-season snow accumulations, tardy fresh-water icing, and a slow out-migration for waterbirds. First significant snows were 10 to 20 days late nearly statewide and a systematic low-pressure storm season tracked traditionally across the North Pacific/North Gulf Coast from October onward. Few storms originated north of the central Bering Sea, which directed what to some seemed interminable northerly flows across the north and west half of the Region. Southeast was simply inundated with rain, even more than the norm, which certainly discouraged much field checking. As in several of the past years, early-season mild weather between storms created another window for an early whole-scale passerine exodus. Noteworthy songbird concentrations were totally unreported and again late dates were few.

As in the past few years, the most exciting fall reports came from Bering Sea sites, mainly the Pribilofs and St. Lawrence I.,

where Lehman and Co. set up shop at Gambell from late August into early October. He was nicely rewarded for his efforts and produced plenty of new information on later-season bird movements for that northerly outpost. With the end of Attu trips in sight, fall coverage at places like St. Paul, Gambell, and Nome could take up the void nicely. MacIntosh's 10-day pelagic voyage at the Continental Shelf off Kodiak I. in late August produced a nice seabird summary from the warm-water peak, data we rarely receive in these days of concentrated passerine research.

Abbreviations: ABO (*Alaska Bird Observatory*); North Gulf (*North Gulf of Alaska*); SE (*Southeast Alaska*); SC (*Southcoastal Alaska*); SW (*Southwest Alaska*); UCI (*Upper Cook Inlet*); Y-K Delta (*Yukon-Kuskokwim River Deltas*).

LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

Three adult Arctic Loons near Nome Aug 18–19 (+WINGS) were unusual onshore, while only one was noted at Gambell 22 Sep (PEL). Two adult Common Loons with a dependent young on Salmon L., Prince of Wales I., 13 Aug confirmed local nesting near the s. end of the species' known Alaska breeding limits. One of the Region's higher single counts was 26 Yellow-billed Loons moving past Gambell's point 28 Sep (PEL). A Pied-billed Grebe showed at Haines 3 Oct (AD), the only report of this rare annual fall visitant. Casual in the n. Bering Sea, two Red-necked Grebes appeared at Gambell, where there are few records, an imm. 22 Sep and an extremely late adult 1–3 Oct (+PEL); with the late freeze-up, above-average numbers lingered well into October in UCI around Anchorage (m.ob.). W. Grebes entered the Region on time in s. SE with a 11 Nov peak of 155 at Ketchikan sites (SCH, AP). Shipboard surveys in August around an active trawler over the Shelf, some 60 nmi se. of Kodiak, produced cautious counts of 30 Laysan, 500 Black-footed, and single imm. Short-tailed Albatross 30 Aug (RAM). Other notable pelagics in the area were four+ Pink-footed Shearwaters 22–26

Aug and at least one Flesh-footed Shearwater 22–23 Aug (RAM)—although probably annual, both species remain unsubstantiated by specimen or photograph for Alaska. This year's significant inshore Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels were reported from the Ketchikan Narrows where they are casual in the fall storm season. Small groups were scattered in the area between 3 Oct–5 Nov, with an amazing peak of 120 present 26 Oct (SCH, AP). Two on Mother Goose L., Alaska Pen., 6 Sep were even more surprising and apparently not storm-related (CA, MM, LM, LS). St. Paul I. observers chased a nervous heron around that island's road system 1–2 Aug that they identified as a **Gray Heron**. They were unable to get decent views of the standing bird and no photographs were obtained. Although this widespread Palearctic species does not breed close to the Region or at northerly latitudes, it is known to wander after breeding season like our Great Blue Heron.

Trumpeter Swan numbers continue to expand in SE, punctuated by higher counts and more juveniles noted on the s. Mainland Naha R. system and an offshore peak of 52 on Prince of Wales I. 25 Nov (AP). Fall season rarely presents many noteworthy waterfowl rarities and this year's mild and tardy season produced essentially none. Prominent finds focused solely on *Aythya* ducks, especially Ring-necks which may be expanding in SE. Near-record local counts were 10+ at Ketchikan's Ward L. 4 Nov (SCH, AP), 20 at Sitka's famous Swan L. through Nov (MLW, MET), and 15 on a Mainland L. near Wrangell 29 Nov (SCH). The Anchorage area's staging peak was latish and totaled only 73 on military base lakes 18 Oct (DFD). Two drake Tufted Ducks wandered e. to Kodiak, where nearly annual, 22 Sep and 26 Oct+ (RAM). Ospreys were near record late in UCI, where an active Anchorage nest had both young and adults present to 23 Sep+ (DFD); two adults on s. SE's Naha R. lingered in an area where they probably bred (AP).