

Temperatures in the Region were average to above average in the month of December and early January but well below average in the latter part of January and throughout February. Precipitation was below average in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Parts of Michigan were similarly dry, while other areas had significant snow cover. The cold weather kept most lakes frozen from January through the end of the period. Significant portions of the Great Lakes froze over this season, with Lake Superior freezing over completely—the first time since 1979 that this lake has frozen over entirely.

All three state compilers characterized the season as being rather dull. Nevertheless, there was an interesting array of lingering species throughout the Region, as well as a few rarities. In Michigan, a first state record for Spotted Towhee was nicely documented, while Minnesota highlights included Band-tailed Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Barrow's Goldeneye. Wisconsin had a Mew Gull, a California Gull, and a possible first state record for Cassin's Finch.

**Abbreviation:** W.S.O.R.C. (Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Records Committee).

## LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

Wisconsin reported a Red-throated Loon 14 Dec in Racine (EH), while in Michigan, where the species is more regular, reports came from four counties, including 4 on 4 Jan in Berrien (JW). Also in Michigan were reports of Red-necked Grebes from two counties, including 3 on 24 Dec in Baraga (TA), while more unusual in that state was an Eared Grebe 23 Dec at New Buffalo, Berrien (AB, PC). Western Grebes lingered in Wisconsin, with 2 on 22 Dec in Sheboygan (p. a., BF, KF) and another 2 Jan in Ozaukee (p. a., DT). Only the 4th winter record of Western Grebe in Michigan was one 20 Feb at the Karn Plant, Bay (p. a., JS, AA). Double-crested Cormorants were reported from several Wisconsin locations, including one overwintering in Winnebago (DT). Unusual in Wisconsin were American White Pelicans to 6 Jan in Brown (PSc, DT). The 12 Black-crowned Night Herons that overwintered in Wayne (WP) made for an exceptionally high number for Michigan.

## WATERFOWL

A Greater White-fronted Goose on 8 Jan at Fox L., Martin (BB) was rare in Minnesota. In Wisconsin, 2 Greater White-fronted Geese were reported 14 Dec—4 Jan in Brown (p. a., JJ, TB, IB, DG) and one 7 Dec—23 Feb in Dane (p. a., QY, AS, AP). A single Ross's Goose was reported on 15 Dec in LaCrosse (FL) in Wisconsin, while Michigan had one on 24 Dec in the Allegan State Game Area, Allegan (p. a., PC) and another 26 Dec at Shiawassee N.W.R., Saginaw (p. a., DP).

# Western Great Lakes



Minnesota reported 2 Ross's Geese 5 Jan at L. Ripley, Meeker (DF), 2 at L. George, Martin 15 Dec—8 Jan (BB, BS), and one on the Willmar C.B.C. at Foot L., Kandiyohi (RF). Brant from the fall season in Wisconsin remained in Brown through 31 Dec (DV, BF, KF, DT), and most likely the same individual was seen again 8 Jan in Outagamie (DV). Impressive were the 111,200 Canada Geese reported on 16 Jan at Lac Qui Parle W.M.A. (DTr), which eclipsed Minnesota's previous midwinter waterfowl survey high of 60,000 in 1998. Trumpeter Swan numbers continue to increase Regionwide, with the highest totals reported in Minnesota: 575 at Fergus Falls, Otter Tail 8 Dec (SM) and 700+ at Monticello, Sherburne/Wright 24 Jan (KB). Wisconsin had reports of Trumpeters from 11 counties, while Michigan had reports from seven counties. Concurrent with the increase in Trumpeter Swans, Minnesota reports an increase in overwintering Tundra Swans: this season, 6 remained with the Trumpeters in Monticello.

High in Wisconsin was 115 Gadwall 29 Dec in Milwaukee (JF). A Blue-winged Teal 20 Feb in Walworth (SF) was considered noteworthy in Wisconsin, as were the 420 Northern Shovelers 3 Jan in Dane (WH). Also a high total in Wisconsin, 400+ Red-heads were in Sheboygan 11 Jan (DT). Unusual in Minnesota were 12 overwintering Ring-necked Ducks at the Blue L. treat-

## Jim Granlund

Research Associate

Kalamazoo Nature Center

6253 North Westnedge

Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009

ment plant, Scott (m. ob.). A Greater Scaup 30 Dec in Duluth, St. Louis (PS) was the 2nd latest date for the n. portion of Minnesota, while one overwintering at Blue L. treatment plant, Scott (m. ob.) was rare. Presumably early migrants in that state were 2 Greater Scaup 21 Feb in Winona, Winona (JD). Michigan had reports of Harlequin Ducks from four counties, all from the L. Michigan shoreline in the sw. portion of the state. Wisconsin also had several reports from L. Michigan (five counties), while Minnesota had a maximum of 6 birds 19 Jan—23 Feb on L. Superior at Two Harbors, Lake (PS, JL). Casual in Minnesota in winter, a White-winged Scoter was reported 19 Dec—5 Jan in Duluth, St. Louis (MA). After the fine autumn flight, Wisconsin noted all three scoters on L. Michigan and a Black Scoter inland in Dane 10 Dec—19 Jan (MP). Michigan had typical numbers of all three scoters, primarily on the Great Lakes.

Unusual in Minnesota were 2 Long-tailed Ducks on the Mississippi R. in *Dakota* (KB, SW) 23 Dec—4 Jan. Also in that state, a female Barrow's Goldeneye was present in Fergus Falls, *Otter Tail* 30 Jan+ (SM, m. ob.).

### RAPTORS THROUGH TERNS

Forty-one Rough-legged Hawks in *Dodge* 16 Feb (DF) were noteworthy in Wisconsin (DF). Michigan had only two Golden Eagle reports this season, singles on 18 Jan in *Berrien* (JW) and on 29 Jan in Lincoln Bridge Park, *Clinton* (JB). Wisconsin did better with Golden Eagles, which were reported from seven counties. In Minnesota, an ad. Gyrfalcon was seen sporadically 19 Dec+ in *Duluth, St. Louis* (DE, ME), while Michigan had one on 6 Jan and 16 Feb in *Presque Ilse* (WG) and through the period in Sault Ste. Marie, *Chippewa* (SH, ST). As is typical, the only Prairie Falcon in the Region came from Minnesota, a single 25 Feb in *Deerhorn, Wilkin* (CM). Twenty Gray Partridges in *Shawano* 6 Feb (MP) was a good total for this declining Wisconsin species. A King Rail reported on a Wisconsin C.B.C. was unusual. In Minnesota, a Virginia Rail was reported calling on 10 Jan at Bass Ponds, *Hennepin* (TT), while Wisconsin had singles 18 Jan in *Dane* (QY) and 5 Jan in *Walworth* (MG). Michigan's only Virginia Rail was found dead 14 Dec at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (CFr).

A Killdeer on 28 Dec at the Dead R., *Marquette* (LT) was n. of normal in Michigan. Very late in the Region was a Solitary Sandpiper reported in Wisconsin on 1 Dec at *Ozaukee* (p. a., TU). For the 2nd consecutive winter, a Ruddy Turnstone was present in Michigan at *Alpena, Alpena*, this year 17 Jan—15 Feb (JSt). Not as unusual was a lingering Sanderling in Michigan 3 Dec at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (PU). Also in that state, Purple Sandpipers were reported 1 Dec at New Buffalo, *Berrien* (DVi) and 14 Dec in *Muskegon* (CF), while in Wisconsin, 2 were present in *Milwaukee* 28 Dec—1 Jan (DG, JI, JF et al.), and one was in *Sheboygan* 1 Dec—10 Jan (TW, MP, DT et al.). A Dunlin at L. Erie Metropark, *Wayne* 10 Dec (WP) was rare in winter in Michigan.

A Franklin's Gull at Pt. Douglas, *Washington* 20-28 Dec (KB, DTh) provided a new late date for Minnesota. Another was in Wisconsin 24-29 Dec in *Pierce* (p. a., DKi). The only Little Gull in the Region was at South Haven, *Van Buren* 1 Dec (JG). A Mew Gull was reported in Wisconsin 1 Dec in *Milwaukee* (p. a., BB), while a California Gull 19 Dec in *Dane* (p. a., AS) would furnish that state's 7th record. All three states had good numbers of Thayer's Gulls, the

highest concentration being in Minnesota, where 11 were reported 26 Dec in *Dakota* (KB). Providing Minnesota its latest date in the s. part of the state, an Iceland Gull remained 27 Nov—20 Jan in *Dakota* (m. ob.), while another was reported 23 Feb in *Duluth, St. Louis* (PS). Michigan had only a single Iceland Gull report: 27 Dec at the Muskegon Wastewater, *Muskegon* (PC). Wisconsin reported this species from nine



This male Western Tanager visited feeders in Berrien County between 6 December 2002 and 22 January 2003. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

counties. Also in Wisconsin were single Lesser Black-backed Gulls 1 Dec—3 Jan in *Dane* (MEv, m. ob.), 18 Dec—25 Jan in *Milwaukee* (JI, BBo, SL), and 4 Jan in *Sheboygan* (BMu, TP). Michigan had reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls from three counties.

### PIGEONS THROUGH VIREOS

The Band-tailed Pigeon in Minnesota first reported in the fall remained through the period in *Ravenna Twp., Dakota* (CT, HT, m. ob.). Also in Minnesota, a Eurasian Collared-Dove was present at a feeder in *Russell, Lyon* during Dec (fide RS), while in Wisconsin, the individual first reported in the fall in *Ozaukee* remained through the period (DG). Snowy Owls were scarce in the Region this season. Minnesota had only one Northern Hawk Owl, 1 Dec near *Sandstone, Pine* (fide MA). A more cooperative bird was seen in Michigan early Jan+ near *Kinross, Chippewa* (RB, TW). Minnesota had about 18 Great Gray Owls from six counties; Michigan had one in late Dec near *Brimley, Chippewa* (DL). Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported good numbers of Long-eared and Short-eared Owls. The only report of Three-toed Woodpecker came from Minnesota, where 2 were seen 28 Dec—3 Feb on *Spruce Rd., Lake* (v. o.). Eastern Phoebe in *Pipestone Twp.* 14 Jan (TBa) and 16 Jan near *Niles* (JV), both in *Berrien*, were very late for Michigan. Also in that state was an unexpected Loggerhead Shrike 15 Dec during the Rogers City

C.B.C., *Presque Isle* (RP). A Black-billed Magpie in *Douglas* 8 Jan (p. a., RPe) provided a rare Wisconsin record. Wisconsin reported an "exceptional year" for Carolina Wrens, with reports from numerous counties. Michigan also had a good year for this species, with reports from 19 counties and a very unexpected bird 11 Jan in *Chippewa* (CF), far n. of normal range. A tardy Ruby-crowned Kinglet was reported in Minnesota on 27 Dec at *White Bear L., Ramsey* (PF).

### THRUSHES THROUGH WARBLERS

There were six Townsend's Solitaire reports in Minnesota from five counties, which is low for that state. Wisconsin had as many as 3 at *Devil's Lake S. P., Sauk* (AH) 1 Dec—19 Jan and a first county record in *Washington* 27 Dec—2 Jan (BD, TW, DT). Michigan had one 1-8 Jan in *Copper Harbor, Keweenaw* (TA, SH). There were two Varied Thrush reports in Michigan: 3-24 Feb in *Douglas, Allegan* (MWa) and 18 Dec—8 Jan in *Eagle River, Keweenaw* (TA). Minnesota had eight reports of Varied Thrush from eight counties, while Wisconsin had reports of 4 from four counties. Minnesota's

Gray Catbirds were in *Coon Rapids, Anoka* 2-3 Jan (JH) and in *Mahtomedi, Washington* 1 Jan (EF), Michigan's lone catbird was in *Dearborn, Wayne* (JC) 24 Dec—16 Feb, while Wisconsin's were noted 3 Dec in *Dane* (PA) and 29 Jan in *Kenosha* (WF). Also noteworthy in Wisconsin were reports of Northern Mockingbird 29 Dec in *Dane* (QY), 16 Feb in *Iowa* (AH), and through the period in *Ashland* (TO, DV). The only American Pipit report in the Region came from Wisconsin, where one was found on 12 Dec in *Racine* (EH). It was a poor year for Bohemian Waxwings in Wisconsin, with only 3 reports statewide. Michigan fared a bit better, with reports from six counties and a high of 80 on 22 Jan in *Presque Ilse* (WG). Minnesota had the best numbers of Bohemians: an impressive 2000 at *Grand Marais, Cook* 28 Jan (RJ). Both Michigan and Minnesota reported unusually high numbers of Cedar Waxwings in the n. portions of their states. There was an impressive variety of warblers seen again this season. Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported single Orange-crowned Warblers, 12 Jan at Pt. Mouillee State Game Area, *Monroe* (AB, PC), and 29 Jan+ in *Racine* (JJ), respectively. Michigan reported single Pine Warblers 19-21 Feb in *Plainfield Twp., Kent* (BDe) and in Jan near *Jenison, Ottawa* (RSh). A Palm Warbler in *Kenosha* 3 Dec (p. a., BMa) will provide Wisconsin its 2nd latest date ever if accepted by the W.S.O.R.C. A Yellow-throated Warbler was present in Michigan near *Delton, Barry* 23

Nov—17 Jan (MN, CN). Also in that state, an Ovenbird was found 27 Feb and remained through the period in Hunting Woods, *Oakland* (KS). Finally a **Northern Waterthrush** at Whitewater S.P., *Winona* 8-14 Dec (DB) provided a first winter record for Minnesota.

### TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A popular winter visitor was the cooperative male **Western Tanager** in Berrien Twp., *Berrien* 6 Dec—22 Jan (TBa, PC, m. ob.). Even more exciting was a first Michigan record for **Spotted Towhee**, found on 28 Dec during the Tuscola County C.B.C. near Grindstone City, *Huron* (p. a., MW, m. ob.); the bird remained into mid-Jan. Chipping Sparrows were reported from both Michigan and Wisconsin and seem to be more regular in winter in the e. portion of the Region. Noteworthy in Minnesota were reports of Field Sparrow 5 Jan at Cedar L., *Hennepin* (TT), 5 Feb in Simpson Twp., *Olmsted* (CH, JH), and 8 Feb at Minneopa S.P., *Nicollet* (CHe). A Vesper Sparrow was an unusual winter find in Michigan 6 Dec at Tawas Pt. S.P., *Iosco* (BBe). Only the 9th winter record for Minnesota, a Lincoln's Sparrow was seen 13 Dec in Fergus Falls, *Otter Tail* (SM). Also in that state, Swamp Sparrows remained in record-high numbers in the south. Two in *Lake* 28 Nov—21 Dec (JL) provided unusual records in the n. portion of Minnesota. Michigan reported single Harris's Sparrows 4-22 Jan at Riverbends Park, *Macomb* (SS, AC) and on 12 Dec in Coldwater, *Branch* (DR). Wisconsin also had two records: 7 Dec in *Dane* (PA) and 18 Jan—8 Feb in *Rock* (OY). Wisconsin reported a Rose-breasted Grosbeak during the C.B.C.

A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** on 20 Jan in Waskish, *Beltrami* (DJ) provided Minnesota its most northerly winter record. Noteworthy in Wisconsin were 1000 Rusty Blackbirds 17 Dec in *Dodge* (KK). In Minnesota, 2 Rusty Blackbirds overwintered at Two Harbors, *Lake* (JL, PS), as did a Baltimore Oriole at Silver L., *Lake* (BN, SN). A high total of 4000 Snow Buntings was reported in Wisconsin 30 Jan in *Brown* (DT). Numbers of winter finches on the whole were very poor this season, including very low numbers of redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak. Exceptions to the trends were White-winged Crossbills, which were found in good numbers in the n. portions of the Region. Minnesota had particularly good numbers, the maximum being 300 on 11 Jan in *Aitken* (WN). But even more significant was the discovery of a White-winged Crossbill nest with three eggs 28 Feb in Two Harbors, *Lake* (JL), only the 2nd confirmed nesting in Minnesota. A

**Cassin's Finch** reported 18 Jan in *Bayfield* (p. a., TM) would be a first state record for Wisconsin (and 2nd Regional record) if accepted by the W.S.O.R.C. There were unusually high numbers of American Goldfinches present in the n. portions of Michigan this winter. Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported Evening Grosbeaks as being rare to absent, even in areas where they are typically present. This species seems to be getting rarer with each passing winter in Michigan. There has not been a significant irruption into the s. portions of Michigan in recent memory.

**Corrigenda:** The citation for Hooded Warbler in *N. A. B.* 56: 440 "North of its breeding range in Wisconsin was a territorial Hooded Warbler in *Marathon*" should be replaced by "A successful Hooded Warbler nesting was confirmed on 18 Jul in *Portage*, a first for that Wisconsin county (MB)."

**Observers** (subregional editors in boldface): Andy Aldrich, Mark Alt, Philip Ashman, Thomas Auer, Tim Baerwald (TBa), Bob Bell (BBe), **Karl Bardon** (Minnesota), Ida Baumann, Ty Baumann, John Baumgarner, Murray Benner, Brian Boldt (BBo), Brad Bolduan, Rick Brigham, Adam Byrne, Allen Chartier, Phil Chu, Julie Craves, Jeffrey Dankert, Bob Dekosta (BDe), Bob Domagalski, Marty Evanson (MEv), Dave Evans, Molly Evans, John Feith, Bob Fisher, Karen Fisher, Sean Fitzgerald, Persis Fitzpatrick, Dan Floren, Chip Franke, Curt Franzmann (CFr), Randy Fredrickson, Dave Freriks, Werner Fritz, Ellen Fuge, Jim Granlund, William Grigg, Maureen Gross, Dennis Gustafson, Chad Heins (CHe), Scott Hickman, William Hilsenhoff, Chris Hockema, John Hockema, Aaron Holschbach, Eric Howe, Jim Hughes, John Idzikowski, Robert Jannssen, Douglas Johnson, Jim Johnson, Kevin Kearns, Douglas Kieser (DKi), Fred Leshar, James Lind, Derek Lovitch, Steve Lubahn, Craig Mandel, Ted May, Steve Millard, Bill Mueller (BMu), **Brad Murphy** (Michigan), Bill Nelson, Susie Nelson, Warren Nelson, Chuck Nieves, Micha Nieves, Tim Oksiuta, Andy Paulios, Walter Pawloski, Ron Perala (RPe), Dave Peters, Mark Peterson, Tom Prestby, Robert Preston, **Wayne Rohde** (Wisconsin), Delores Royer, Ron Shavaliar (RSh), Paul Schilke (PSc), Roger Schroeder, Brian Smith, Kathy Smith, Joe Soehnel, Jane St. Onge (JSt), Aaron Stutz, Peder Svingen, Louis Taccolini, Scott Terry, Daryl Tessen, Dave Thurston (DTh), Dave Trauba (DTra), Carol Tressel, Hank Tressel, Tom Tustinson, Pat Underwood, Tom Uttech, John Van Der Linden, Dick Verch, Dave Vinnege (DVi), Quentin Yoerger, Marjorie Waldschmidt (MWa), Steve Weston, Jon Weupper, Myles Willard, Thomas Wood. 🐦

## Help your friends get more from birding!

Keep them abreast of what's going on in the birding world—from ID skill-building, to checklist changes, to travel opportunities, to conservation issues.

### BUILD A BETTER BIRDING COMMUNITY! SEND A GIFT OF ABA MEMBERSHIP TODAY.

Your friends will receive from you all the benefits of ABA membership, including:

- **Birding**—our full color bi-monthly members' magazine
- **Winging It**—our monthly members' newsletter
- **Supplemental publications**—including *A Birder's Resource Guide* and the *Big Day and List Report*
- **Involvement**—conventions, conferences, workshops, birding trips, volunteer opportunities, and more
- **Discounts**—on AVIS car rentals



American Birding  
ASSOCIATION

TO SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER, CALL:

**(800) 850-2473**

OR GO TO:

[www.americanbirding.org/memgen.html](http://www.americanbirding.org/memgen.html)

The American Birding Association  
aims to inspire all people to  
enjoy and protect wild birds.