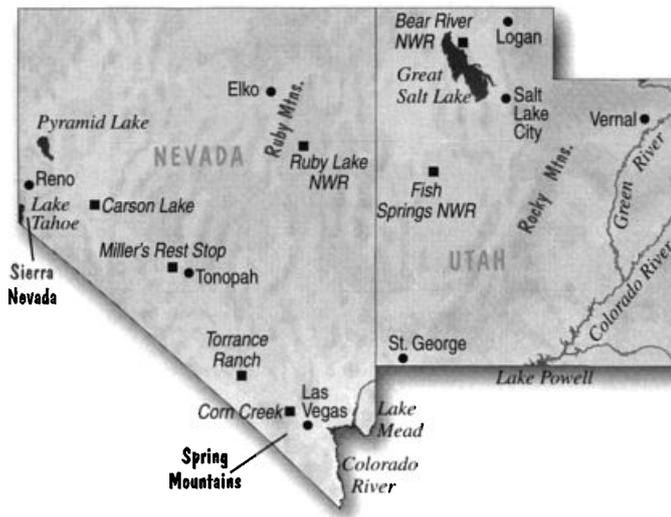


Great Basin



Rick Fridell

3505 West 290 North
Hurricane, Utah 84737
(rfridell@redrock.net)

Steve Summers

2146 North Chandler Drive
Cedar City, Utah 84720
(summers@cedarcity.net)

The winter season brought some relief to the extended drought in the Great Basin, with some areas, particularly in the northern half of the Region, receiving almost normal levels of snowfall. Through most of southern Nevada and Utah, however, water levels in lakes, reservoirs, and streams remain well below normal. The winter season saw a continuation of many vagrant waterbird species that were observed in high numbers during the fall season (Pacific Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Surf and White-winged Scoters), but lower-than-normal numbers of regularly wintering northern species were reported (e. g., Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike). On the other hand, many species observed in high numbers last winter went entirely unreported this year (e. g., Bohemian Waxwing, Common Redpoll). The most unexpected sightings of the season may have been a Yellow-throated Warbler in Zion National Park

and a Palm Warbler at Carson Lake, Nevada.

Abbreviations: A.I.C. (Antelope Island Causeway, Davis UT); Bear River (Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Box Elder, UT); E.C.R. (East Canyon Res., Morgan, UT); Farmington Bay (Farmington Bay Wildlife Management Area, Davis, UT); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark NV); Hurricane S.P. (Hurricane/SR-9 Sewage Ponds, Washington, UT); Lake Mead (Lake Mead N.R.A., Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington UT); P.L. (Pyramid L., Washoe NV); Q.C.R. (Quail Creek Res., Washington, UT); Red Cliffs (Red Cliffs Recreation Area, Washington, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills G.C., St. George, Washington, UT); Saltair (Saltair, Great Salt L., Salt Lake, UT); Stillwater (Stillwater N.W.R., Churchill NV); Zion (Zion National Park, Washington, UT).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A juv. Red-throated Loon was observed at Lake Mead 8 Dec (RSa). Pacific Loons were reported from both Nevada and Utah, with imm. birds seen on P.L. 7 Dec (MMe, GS) and at E.C.R. 1-7 Dec (J&KB, CoN et al.). A Yellow-billed Loon again spent the winter on P.L. It was found on 1 Jan during the C.B.C. (DSe) and lingered at least until 19 Feb (RSt, DGh, †MMe et al.). Horned Grebes, rare but regular winter visitors, were reported from Q.C.R. 2 Dec-1 Feb (WHu et al.), from P.L. 8-18 Jan (JWa, DSe, NB et al.), and from Lake Mead 19 Jan (JCo). A Red-necked Grebe first reported during the fall lingered at Q.C.R. through

18 Dec (†RF). An early group of 16 White-faced Ibis turned up at Stillwater 19 Feb (WHe).

A remarkable count of 11,825 Tundra Swans was recorded at Bear River 12 Dec (BO), and 9 Trumpeter Swans were at Bear River 4 Dec (TA). One or 2 Trumpeter Swans were also seen at Ruby Lake N.W.R., Elko, NV 12 Dec-30 Jan (JWa). Greater White-fronted Geese were reported from three Nevada counties (Churchill, Clark, Washoe) and two Utah counties (Utah, Washington), with a high count of 14 at Fallon, Churchill, NV 20 Dec (DSe, CT). Low numbers of Ross's Geese (one to 5) also were found in Churchill, Clark, and Washoe, NV, and Washington, UT. Wood Ducks were found throughout the season in Churchill, Elko, and Washoe, NV, and in Salt Lake, Utah, and Washington, UT. A Common (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal discovered at Lemmon Valley, Washoe, NV 8-21 Feb (FP et al., †MMe) was perhaps the first documented in Nevada. Large numbers of Northern Pintails wintered at Bear River, with counts of 13,077 on 31 Jan and 18,482 on 28 Feb (BO). For the 2nd consecutive winter, a drake Eurasian Wigeon was found at Lakeridge Golf Course in Reno, Washoe, NV. This well-documented bird was first reported 20 Jan and lingered through at least 2 Feb (DSe et al., ph. ChN). Greater Scaup turned up at a few spots throughout the Region, with high counts of 25 at P.L. 17 Jan (JWa) and 15 at Stratton Pond, Washington, UT 11 Dec (LT et al.). Female Long-tailed Ducks were found at three locations in Utah: E.C.R. 1 Dec-18 Feb (J&KB, BHu et al.), Saltair 26 Dec-1 Jan (CoN, BR), and A.I.C. 2 Jan-23 Feb (BrS et al.). No Long-tailed Ducks were reported from Nevada. Following a large fall invasion into the Great Basin, several scoters lingered into the winter season. As many as 4 Surf Scoters were observed at P.L. 7 Dec-26 Feb (MMe, GS, NB, JWa). Two White-winged Scoters were observed in Nevada, including an ad. male on a farm pond near Fallon, Churchill, NV 11 Dec (NB, JT) and another in the same area on 27 Feb (WHe). White-winged Scoters were observed at two Utah locations. One or 2 remained on E.C.R. 1 Dec-22 Mar (J&KB et al.), and one or 2 females wintered on the newly-created Sand Hollow Res., Washington, UT 2 Dec-.

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Bald Eagles regularly winter in the Great Basin but are typically spread throughout the Region; thus, a concentration of 174 Bald Eagles at Farmington Bay 6 Feb (BrS, DSh) was notable. Red-shouldered Hawks were reported from their usual locations in Clark, Churchill, Douglas, and Washoe NV, but none were reported from Utah. The

Harlan's form of Red-tailed Hawk is rarely observed in the Great Basin, so individuals reported from Kaysville, *Davis*, UT 3 Feb (J&KB) and from Reno, *Washoe*, NV 25 Dec (ZS, MMe) were noteworthy. A white-morph Gyrfalcon was reported without details from Bicknell Bottoms, *Wayne*, UT 28 Jan (NH, *fide* BF). The raptor event of the season was certainly the high concentration of birds observed throughout the winter at the University of Nevada, Reno agriculture farms, *Washoe*, NV. Abundant prey attracted both high numbers of individuals and a great diversity of raptor species. Observers reported as many as 100 raptors utilizing the area at the same time. Species observed included Northern Harrier, Cooper's, Red-shouldered, Rough-legged, Ferruginous, and Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrel, and Prairie Falcon. Night brought out a variety of owls, including Barn, Great Horned, Long-eared, and Short-eared Owls.

Common Moorhens were observed on two occasions in n. Nevada, at Walker L., *Mineral* 9 Jan (JE) and Carson L., *Churchill* 4 Feb (DT). The only Common Moorhen reported from Utah was seen throughout the season at Red Hills (LT et al.). A Wilson's Phalarope was observed out of season 9 Jan at A.I.C. (J&KB). Herring Gulls are seldom observed in the s. portion of the region, so an imm. at Q.C.R. 5 Jan (SS,RF) was noteworthy. Thayer's Gulls were reported from P.L. 3 (NB, JT) & 26 Jan (DT). Thayer's Gulls were also observed at three Utah locations (*Davis*, *Salt Lake*, *Utah*), with a high of 7 reported at the Bountiful Landfill, *Utah*, UT 8 Jan (C&LW). One or 2 Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported from P.L. throughout the season (DT, RTr, JWa et al.). Glaucous-winged Gulls were also at Walker L., *Mineral*, NV 30 Dec (DSe, MMe), Bountiful Landfill, *Utah*, UT 23 Dec (p. a., MJ, DAL), *Saltair* 29 Dec (p.a., CN), *Utah* L., *Utah*, UT 2 Feb (p.a., MMo), and Farmington Bay 9-27 Feb (DG et al.). Glaucous Gulls were reported from two Nevada locations—P.L. 3 Jan (NB, JT) and Lake Mead 14 Feb (RS)—and from three Utah locations: *Saltair* 29 Dec (CN, TS et al.), Bountiful Landfill 18 Jan (EH, KCh), and Farmington Bay 2-27 Feb (J&KB et al.).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued their invasion into the Great Basin this season. Between 2 and 7 were observed in Logandale, *Clark*, NV 13-27 Feb (SS, JCl, RSc et

al.). Up to 10 were regularly observed in Washington City, *Washington*, UT and at Springville, *Utah*, UT. Collared-doves turned up at a variety of new Utah locations as well, including one found on the Dinosaur-Jensen C.B.C., *Uintah* 4 Jan (*fide* KPa), 6 on the Cedar City C.B.C., *Iron* 20 Dec, which were seen again 12 Jan (SH, SS et al.), and 2 at Minersville, *Beaver* 27 Feb (SS). White-winged Doves rarely winter in the Region, so a flock of 6 observed throughout the season in Washington City, *Washington*, UT was very unusual. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was reported from Stillwater 26 Dec (WH). Reports of Anna's Hummingbirds are becoming increasingly common in the Great Basin, especially during the winter season. Several were reported from the s. portion of the Region (*Clark*, NV, and *Washington*, UT), with a high of 4 at Leeds 21 Jan (CS). A few wintering Costa's Hummingbirds were also reported from *Clark*, NV (RS, JCo). A few scattered Lewis's Woodpeckers were reported wintering in the Region (*Clark*, NV and *Utah*, *Iron*, and *Washington*, UT). An Acorn Woodpecker, originally found on 15 Oct (DSh), remained along Hwy 12 n. of Boulder, *Garfield*, UT through the winter (KCh, RTu et al.). A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker spent much of the winter at Lytle 18

tions: Orem, *Utah* 25 Jan (AT) and Springdale, *Washington* (LT).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Vermilion Flycatchers are rare but regular in the s. portion of the Region. This winter, they were reported from two Nevada locations: 2 males were observed in Pahranaug Valley, *Lincoln* 12 Jan (JHi), and a pair was found in Logandale, *Clark* 17 Feb (RSc, JCl). An early Cassin's Kingbird turned up at the H.B.V.P. 28 Feb (TL). Many observers noted fewer-than-normal Northern Shrikes in the Region, but there was a scattering of reports from *Washoe*, NV and from Box Elder, *Davis*, *Emery*, *Uintah*, *Utah*, and *Washington*, UT). Unusual swallow sightings included a Violet-green at Farmington Bay 6 Dec (JHo), a pair of Northern Rough-wingeds at Hurricane S.P. 2 Feb (CS), and a Barn at Lake Mead 3 Jan (RS). A well-documented Eastern Bluebird was found on the Logan C.B.C., *Cache*, UT 14 Dec (†RR). This is Utah's 4th Eastern Bluebird record. Two Varied Thrushes were reported from Utah, one on the Zion C.B.C. 28 Dec (*fide* BoS), the other at Salem Pond, *Utah* 2-9 Feb (JHe et al., ph. MMD). Winter Wrens were reported from typical wintering areas including *Churchill* and *Washoe*, NV, and *Tooele*, *Utah*, and *Washington*, UT.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

One of the major surprises during the winter season was the first-year female Yellow-throated Warbler found on the Zion C.B.C. (p. a., †JS). It was found 28 Dec near the Grotto Picnic area in Zion but unfortunately could not be relocated despite subsequent searches. Another big surprise was a Palm Warbler located 9 Jan at Carson Lake, *Churchill*, NV (JE). Fortunately, this bird stuck around and was seen by many observers 9 Jan–9 Mar (ph. MMe, DSe et al.). American Tree Sparrows were reported from a few locations in the n. portion of the Region (*Elko*, NV, and *Davis*, *Juab*, and *Utah*, UT), with a high count of 10 at Farmington Bay



One of the highlights of the season in the Great Basin was a wintering Palm Warbler located on 9 January 2003 at Carson Lake, Churchill County, Nevada. It was enjoyed by many observers through at least 9 March. Photograph by Martin Meyers.

26 Jan (TJ). It was a very good winter for Swamp Sparrows in the Region. The first report was of 2 observed at the Timpanogos Treatment Facility, *Utah*, UT 6 Dec (EH et al.). These sparrows were observed off and on through 25 Jan. Wintering Swamp Sparrows were also observed at Camelot Woods, *Utah*, UT 3-25 Jan (BrS et al.), Q.C.R. 5 Jan–11 Feb (SS, RF et al.), and

26 Jan (TJ). It was a very good winter for Swamp Sparrows in the Region. The first report was of 2 observed at the Timpanogos Treatment Facility, *Utah*, UT 6 Dec (EH et al.). These sparrows were observed off and on through 25 Jan. Wintering Swamp Sparrows were also observed at Camelot Woods, *Utah*, UT 3-25 Jan (BrS et al.), Q.C.R. 5 Jan–11 Feb (SS, RF et al.), and

JON DUNN TO VISIT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON ONCE AGAIN

Jon Dunn will conduct a birding seminar at American River College, Sacramento on Saturday November 1, 2003. Jon will review identification of three difficult groups of birds: terns, flycatchers, and warblers. Any time remaining will be devoted to a general question and answer session. The seminar will be held in room 420 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The best access is from parking lot C on Myrtle Ave.

Jon is currently a member of the ABA's Board of Directors and is one of the consultants for Birding magazine. He is a member of the ABA's Checklist Committee, as well as a member of the AOU's Checklist Committee, and he served on the California Bird Records Committee for 17 years.

Jon is a staff member of Wings, a company that conducts birding tours worldwide. In that connection he leads birding tours in North America and Asia. He has written and co-written numerous papers on these subjects that have appeared in a variety of journals. He was chief consultant to the National Geographic Society's Field Guide to the Birds of North America. He has also co-authored, with Kimball Garrett, Birds of Southern California: Status and Distribution, and Warblers. He is often a featured speaker at birding symposiums throughout the United States.

The proceeds of this seminar will be shared by Sacramento Audubon Society and North American Birds. Seating is limited, so please sign up early. The cost is \$45.00 for members of Sacramento Audubon and \$50.00 for others.

**Please reserve _____ seats for the Jon
Dunn Seminar at \$45.00/\$50.00 each.**

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Make checks payable to
Sacramento Audubon Society and send to:
Cathie Lazier, Treasurer
5427 13th Ave., Sacramento, CA 95820-2319

Jordan R., Salt Lake, UT 7 Feb (JHo). Swamp Sparrows turned up in Nevada as well, with up to 2 at Lemmon Valley, Washoe 10-19 Feb (NB, JT, AW et al.). White-throated Sparrows were reported from Reno, Washoe, NV 14 Dec (MME), Baker, White Pine, NV 3 Feb (JWo), and Ogden, Davis, UT 7 Feb (BrS, DSh). There were several reports of Harris's Sparrows from Utah this winter (Davis, Salt Lake, Uintah, Utah, Wasatch); however, the only Nevada report came from Overton, Clark 14 Feb (JCl, RSc). Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported from typical winter locations in Washoe, NV (RiB, JWa et al.) and Red Cliffs (JM et al.). A Golden-crowned Sparrow was also observed at Logandale, Clark, NV 17 Feb (JCl, RSc). A Lapland Longspur found on the Dinosaur—Jensen C.B.C., Uintah, UT 4 Jan (fide KPa) was the only longspur reported during the winter. And finally, a flock of up to 17 Snow Buntings was observed along the A.I.C. 1 Jan–9 Feb (J&KB, KCh et al.).

Contributors and cited observers: Tom Aldrich, Dave Allen (DAI), David Arsenault (DAr), Glenn Barlow, Betsy Beneke, Joel & Kathy Beyer, Nancy Bish, Donn Blake, Steve Brocoum, Richard Brune (RiB), Ron Brunson (RoB), KC Childs (KCh), Lois Clark, Joan Clarke (JCl), Kristen Comella (KCo), Alan Condie, Jack Cochran (JCo), Jim Eidel, Bill Finemore, Rick Fridell, Pomera Fronce, Dennis Ghiglieri (DGh), Dana Green (DGr), Bill Hart (BHa), Nate Hart, Steve Hedges, William Henry (WHe), Josh Heward (JHe), John Hiatt (JHi), Jack Holley (JHo), Eric Huish, William Hunter (WHu), Bob Huntington (BHU), Mike Johnson, Tony Jones, Josh Krietzer, Tiffany Lance, Jerry Liguori, Junece Markham, Martin Meyers (MMe), Mike Monson (MMo), Milton Moody (MMd), Carol Nelson (CaN), Colby Neuman (CoN), Chris Nicolai (ChN), Deedee O'Brien, Bridget Olson, Felix Owens, Kathy Paulin (KPa), Fred Petersen, Mark and Louis Ports, Kristen Purdy (kPu), Bruce Robinson, Ron Ryel, Terry Sadler, Mike San Miguel (MSa), Rick Saval (RSa), Rita Schlageter (RSc), Greg Scyphers, Dennis Serdehely (DSe), Rebecca Serdehely (RSe), Charlie Sheard, Bryan Shirley (BrS), Dennis Shirley (DSh), Bob Showler (BoS), Zach Smith, John Spence, Mark Stirling (MSt), Rose Strickland (RSt), Priscilla Summers, Steve Summers, Chris Tenney, Jane Thompson, Alton Thygerson, Larry Tripp, Dennis Trousdale, Ryan Trousdale (RTr), Robin Tuck (RTu), Julie Van Moorhem, Alan Wallace, Jack Walters (JWa), Cliff and Lisa Weisse, Tom Willis, John Woodyard (JWo), Jim Woolf (JWl). ☺