

THE CHANGING SEASONS Refinements

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After extraordinary detail and sheer intensity of the autumn season's "Changing Seasons" essay, it's no easy task composing the crumbs of winter into a portrait nearly as profound, especially after such a cold winter across most of the continent after December: birding activity dropped off tremendously, it would seem, in January and February, when temperatures over large areas surpassed subzero and spending much time outdoors became risky. Birds of interest divided fairly neatly into the expected winter categories—lingerers, irruptives, and vagrants—with, as usual, a few surprises in each of these categories. From the perspective of an armchair continental birder, however, the unusual species themselves are less interesting than the increased tempo at which certain uncommon species are being reported. In particular, on reading and re-reading the regional reports, one gets the impression that birders across enormous areas are paying closer attention to gulls (and to waterbirds generally) than ever, as the many reports of hybrid waterfowl, hybrid and rare gulls, and rare loons also attest. So in a season that many called "average" for the unusual, what comes to the fore are less the rarities than the proliferation of sophisticated reports and marvelous photographs of "interesting" birds from across large areas, including more and more rural and remote wilderness areas. The refinements in our collective birding techniques and the speed at which our understanding of field identification criteria has increased—all fueled by the instantaneity of the Internet—have made it evermore difficult to distinguish changes in birds' distribution from changes in our own prowess and ability to find uncommon birds.

Weather report

- Northeastern: eastern Canada to Virginia

On first blush, meteorological reports on winter 2003–2004 from the Northeast and the Canadian Maritimes seemed uniform and dull: "near normal" or "about average" in precipitation, "a little colder than average" or

"dead-average temperatures." But these descriptions give little hint of the deep-freeze that hit the East after the first week of January—it is only when the bitter cold of January is averaged with the warm December that the winter appears "normal." Both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, for instance, saw temperatures that dropped lower than seen in many years, e. g., -25°C at Grand Manan Island 13 January. Québec and Ontario also experienced the "deep freeze," which began 5 January. "Again and again," writes Hugh Currie in Ontario, "we would note the latest date for a half-hardy species would be 6 or 7 January." February was milder in Québec but only slightly more so in Ontario, where the unusual cold persisted through the month.

To the south, in New England through the Middle Atlantic, December saw an active pattern, with winter storms 5–7 and 14–15 December that brought snow to most areas and played havoc with many Christmas Bird Counts. Nevertheless, most of the month was more clement, with above-average temperatures and a generally tolerable C.B.C. season. The start of the second week of January changed that mildness abruptly, and subzero temperatures were recorded across

the northern tier of the United States and New England, with a record low of -7°F in Boston 16 January. In Massachusetts, it was the coldest January since 1893, as Pam Hunt notes, and Nantucket Sound had frozen over by late January. January and February were drier than usual in New England, but New York had heavy snowfalls 11–13 and 27–28 January, which made it one of the snowiest Januaries recorded there. Extremely low temperatures and heavy snowfall were also the rule across most of Virginia and Maryland away from the Chesapeake Bay, where precipitation was lighter, and inland in Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and West Virginia, where lakes were largely frozen and snow cover was often heavy in midwinter.

- Southeastern: Carolinas to the Caribbean, west to eastern Texas

Weather from southern North Carolina southward was unremarkable this winter though the coastal storms that hit the rest of the East in December were felt here, and central/eastern North and South Carolina experienced some of the ice and snow of mid-January. Only northern Florida felt the mid-December cold, with temperatures down to



Harbinger of a much larger and unprecedented coastal flight of Common and Hoary Redpolls in late December 2003, this Common Redpoll was found in the photographer's backyard in Frisco, North Carolina 11 December 2003. It remained in the area for several days, long enough for veteran Carolina birders to see their first of the species in the state. In just over two weeks' time, waves of redpolls were seen coming off the ocean during the coastal Christmas Bird Counts, in a flight that stretched from southern New England to Bermuda. Photograph by J. Brian Patteson.

freezing there, but otherwise most of the peninsula was spared. Inland, Tennessee and Kentucky report a dry, warm winter on average, but extreme cold reached the Region in late January; the Gulf Coastal states and eastern Texas also got the Arctic blast in January, with temperatures in the teens in the northern parts of those states. Only February saw greater-than-average precipitation in most of the Southeast.

• Prairies & Plains,

Great Lakes south to Texas

Illinois and Indiana echoed reports from neighboring areas that the winter hit hardest in the "final two-thirds of January and the first third of February," according to Ken Brock. Along with Arctic air, heavy snows struck the Western Great Lakes in January and February, with some areas in Michigan receiving near-record amounts. Farther south, in Iowa, "about 15 January, it turned into one of those winters that at least kids like—cold, lots of snow, and lots of snow days," writes Robert Cecil. Farther north, periods of extreme cold in January were called "horrific" and "savag" in the Canadian Prairie Provinces, with temperature ranges on several days between -40° and -30° F in some places.

To the west, the gentle December also gave way to a six-week stretch of fierce cold, with North Dakota and northeastern Montana also seeing -40° F. "In late January and early February," notes Ron Martin, "the temperature did not rise above zero for a twelve-day stretch at Minot, North Dakota." Record-high snowfalls were also seen across parts of the Northern Great Plains. By contrast, Joe Grzybowski and Ross Silcock suggested that the Southern Great Plains "returned to some modicum of normal winter harshness," at least "relative to the recent decade of milder winters." Texas was dry in December but not unusually cold, and needed rains fell over all but West Texas in late winter.

• Northwestern: Alaska to northern California, Yukon to Colorado

It is sometimes the case that a very cold Eastern winter is paired with a milder winter out West. This was not so this season. Alaska's mild fall did not persist into December, and Thede Tobish calls it "a 'classic' Alaskan winter," with consistent snow accumulations, extended strong high pressure, and subzero cold snaps." On the main, the Yukon and British Columbia saw a bitterly cold January, down to -50° C in some areas and again very high local snowfall totals, which was also the case across much of western Montana and Idaho. Farther south in the mountains, at the heart of the continent, Colorado and Wyoming by contrast found the season "dry and mild," with many species lingering. In Oregon and Washing-

ton, editors observed that December fell flat birdwise but that two unprecedented winter birds—Baird's and Solitary Sandpipers—were found after a week of very cold weather in January. As elsewhere, the season there began warmer (up to 8° F warmer) than average in December but ended cooler than average (up to 8° F cooler).

reported but were, as is often the case, oddly patchy in their distribution, more like crossbills than redpolls in that respect. Both were "abundant at feeders" all through the Canadian Maritime provinces, but both were either unmentioned or "very scarce" throughout the Northeast through the Southeast, despite the very strong autumn



Figure 1. This male duck at Humber Bay West, Ontario 2 January 2004 shows characters of both Gadwall—the finely vermiculated sides and silvery tertials among them—and of Mallard, including the rusty breast and greenish rear face. Hybrids between these two species are seen relatively frequently and carry the nickname "Brewer's Duck." The photographer notes that the bird "shows the 'Baikal Teal' facial pattern of many dabbling duck hybrids, even sometimes in hybrid Mallard x American Black Ducks; it appears that this pattern may be ancestral and is expressed in situations where a dominant pattern is not present to mask it." Photograph by Alvaro Jaramillo.

• Southwestern: southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Great Basin

Most areas across this sector reported a continuation of very dry conditions and a dearth of wintering sparrows: White-crowned and Golden-crowned were scarce in southern California, most grassland species were extremely hard to find in New Mexico, and the Texas portion of the Chihuahuan Desert, with little seed production, held very few Rufous-crowned, Brewer's, or Black-throated Sparrows. El Paso, Texas continues to suffer under extreme drought conditions: its entire rainfall total for 2003 did not break 10 cm, the fourth lowest on record in 125 years, according to Mark Lockwood. Fortunately, at least in New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada, February brought regular rain and snow that began to refill reservoirs, especially in northern areas, but most areas' reservoirs are still at very low levels.

The Boreal Birds

• Finches, finally

While crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks made few headlines, staying chiefly in Canada and along the northern sections of border states, Purple Finches and Pine Siskins were widely

2003 flight of Purple Finches along the Atlantic coast. Siskins were widely reported as common in Pennsylvania and in Illinois and Indiana, but not much to the south of 40° N latitude. Superb counts of Purple Finches, the best in years, came from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, and Indiana, while, to the south, Kentucky, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and the Central Southern region had counts called "moderate to high." Northern Texas and Florida appeared to be the southern limit of the Purples, though two were recorded in New Mexico, where quite rare. The perpetual question along the Atlantic Seaboard after a heavy flight of Purple Finches that is followed by a C.B.C. season with very few: *where do they go?* The shrugged answer is usually: "inland?" But it seems very unlikely that the high numbers seen in the heartland involve birds that moved back from the Atlantic coast; rather, the coastal Purples probably move westward, dispersing into the more remote Appalachian and the Blue Ridge mountain ranges. (But even this answer seems unsatisfactory, as observers there had rather few at feeders, even during harsh periods.)

These finches rarely get the attention that

their Arctic brethren, the redpolls, command during their infrequent irruptions well south of typical range. Both species moved southward this year, in some places in record-high numbers but generally observed as a regular, advancing wave that began in Canada and moved progressively southward through the season (with one exceptional movement, considered below).

Common Redpolls, present in southern Canada and the northern portions of the northernmost U. S. states by late in November, spilled southward in mid- to late December. Though New England and the Middle Atlantic registered a heavy flight of the species, the Hudson-Delaware editors note that the flights in winters 1999–2000 and 2001–2002 were larger overall. The largest flocks were seen in midwinter or toward season's end, as expected, with flock maxima of about 750 in New York, 300 in Maine, 250 in Pennsylvania, 200 in Massachusetts, 80 in Maryland, 60 in both Virginia and Washington state, 50 in Iowa, Illinois, and Connecticut, 40 in Oregon, and 20 in Rhode Island and Indiana. The Western Great Lakes states, where redpolls are annual in numbers, also had flocks of hundreds, and adjectives such as "everywhere" (the Dakotas), "a good influx" (Nebraska), "common and widespread" (Idaho and western Montana) will have to suffice for areas with many redpolls, few observers, and/or enormous regions! Certain Christmas Bird Counts did a brisk business in the species, with some northern border-state counts topping the four-digit mark, such as 1019 on the Saranac Lake C.B.C. 4 January in the Adirondacks. Data from the C.B.C. database were not quite ready at the time of writing but should shortly provide a better snapshot of the flight between mid-December and early January. Meanwhile, many of the birds seen through the winter have been logged at <www.ebird.org>, and it is possible to make various charts and graphs to show the progress of the flight, at least in core areas of the flight, which is where eBird contributors (and eastern U.S. citizens generally) also happen to be concentrated.

Outliers in this flight were not quite as outrageous as in winter 2001–2002 (when Florida and Texas got singles), but singles in midwinter in northern Arkansas, St. Louis, Missouri, and southern Kansas were south of usual limits, one in Tucker, Georgia in late January was very rare there, and small flocks of up to 30 on Bermuda were unprecedented. Out West, where no region reported a big invasion, three in Elko, Nevada were the only ones reported in the Great Basin. On the Pacific Coast south of British Columbia, there were a few exceptional redpoll reports: one

hardly expects flocks of 25 Common Redpolls (reported at Astoria, Oregon 21 December), and farther south, a single bird at Sierra Valley, Plumas County, California 3 January was a potential county first. This latitudinally lopsided flight (more birds farther south in the East than the West) appears to be the invariable rule for redpoll movements.

Flock sizes and extralimital birds tell us only so much about the actual magnitude of the flight—or about the unusual trajectory of the flight observed on the Eastern Seaboard in the last week of December, a time that coincided with multiple post-Christmas coastal Christmas Bird Counts. This timing allowed for careful documentation of what proved to be an unprecedented coastal fallout of redpolls that spanned from southern New England to the Carolinas and Bermuda but that was most palpable from New Jersey to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. There is no clearer explanation of the flight/fallout than that provided by Todd Day and Marshall Iliff in the Middle Atlantic region's "S. A." box (do read this), which suggests that the interaction of high- and low-pressure areas combined to produce powerful northwesterly winds on 26–27 December that pushed thousands of redpolls out over the ocean, probably around northeastern Canada and New England. The fallout observed on the rather calm days of 28–29 December was restricted to the outer coast (few birds observed more than a few kilometers from the ocean), and many birds were seen arriving from offshore, by parties stationed on the beaches! Figures from 28 December—such as 244 on the Barnegat, NJ C.B.C.; 186 on the Ocean City, MD C.B.C.; 167 on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC

C.B.C.; 34 in coastal Virginia—were echoed the next day with 72 on the venerable Back Bay, VA C.B.C., where the species has been recorded only in three counts of the previous five decades (four birds total!).

In the Southeast, within a few days of the coastal fallout, very few redpolls were seen on the coast or anywhere, though a few made brief appearances at feeders, rarely (as on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina) remaining through the season. In most places in the North, flocks began to "vanish" by the middle of February, with the exception of interior New York and Pennsylvania, where flocks in the hundreds could be found through the end of the February. In both cases, it seems plausible that redpolls withdrew toward the interior, whether in preparation to move back northward to breeding areas or to find food, and the increases in redpolls in early spring around the northern and western Great Lakes perhaps bear this out. As bird observers (and people generally) are scarcer away from metropolitan areas in the eastern Coastal Plain, the "disappearance" of the birds could well indicate, as with Purple Finches, that flocks were moving inland as flocks, rather than disbanding *per se*, as sometimes assumed.

About 210 Hoary Redpolls were reported in the flight of Commons this winter in the Lower 48 states (Table 1), where Hoary is "regular" only in far northern Minnesota, but observers still struggled with identification of the species, and our musings here are limited by uncertainty surrounding at least some reports. Pam Hunt notes a "relatively high ratio of Hoary to Common Redpolls: many flocks containing Hoaries only had 20–40 total birds." This observation is at variance with the old chestnut that suggests Hoaries should be only one in 1000 Commons or fewer (as they were said to be in the Atlantic Provinces region this season), which does make one wonder about the data that underlie this ratio. Indeed, Minnesota observers note that in an "average" winter, Hoaries might number one percent of total redpolls and that their proportion at feeders around Duluth, for instance, might rise as high as 10–20% in exceptional winters (Eckert 1982). This discrepancy between the far Midwest (and North Dakota) and the East suggests to me that Hoaries are simply more numerous west of the Great Lakes than east of the lakes.

Previous Hoary Redpoll irruptions in New England were recorded in winters of 1999–2000 (15, mostly in Maine) and 1981–1982 (8 in Massachusetts), so the winter of 2003–2004 could represent, pending review of reports, the largest documented invasion on record. In New York, with 35 re-

Table 1. Estimates of Hoary Redpolls reported in winter 2003–2004, by U. S. state.

STATE	No.	COMMENTS
North Dakota	38	above average
New York	35	record high
Minnesota	31	about twice the recent average
New Hampshire	23	reviewed and accepted; 35–40 reported; record high
Maine	20	very high; a conservative estimate
Michigan	14	through April
Wisconsin	14	through April
Massachusetts	8	includes one on 22 November
Vermont	5	unofficial; review expected in 2005
Montana	4	above average
Maryland	2	very few state records
South Dakota	1	very rarely reported
Pennsylvania	1	potential second state record

Single unconfirmed reports from Connecticut and Virginia are not included; New Jersey, Ohio, Rhode Island, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, West Virginia, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Washington, and Oregon had no reports of the species. States to the south of those mentioned have no past records. All reports are subject to review by state/provincial records committees.

ports of Hoary to about 3000 of Common, regional editors felt that the Hoary number was “double or triple” that expected based on previous flights. One simply has to think that the increase represents an increase in observer awareness, acumen, and effort. It seems that everyone I know in the Northeast was “gunning” for Hoary Redpolls on his or her patch, fired up by early reports of southward-moving redpolls from Canada. Even folks not able to get outside to bird much because of snow and cold stocked and watched thistle feeders with religious regularity and were sometimes rewarded. It seems accurate to say that more Hoary (and remarkably pale Common!) Redpolls were probably photographically documented in this winter than any others in the East, with two good articles on the subject now published in state journals, in *Bird Observer* (Smith et al. 2004) and *The Kingbird* (Hildreth 2004). These articles build on thinking about the variation in redpoll plumages advanced by Czaplak (1995) after the major invasion of 1994; both are recommended reading. I was not able to locate any images of birds in this invasion that appeared to show nominate (Greenland) Hoaries, and it seems that most or all documented birds were *exilipes*, as it typically the case. Though some observers have suggested that Hoaries are “overreported” in the East during redpoll irruptions, my experience is that observers in upstate New York, for instance, tended to be exceedingly tentative and cautious in reporting Hoaries—and that they might even be underreported there as a result.

• Grosbeaks in absentia

Where are the Evening Grosbeaks lately? It is an easy exercise to identify areas in which they were scarce or absent this winter. None were in the Great Plains or Great Basin, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, or Indiana; editor Ken Brock notes that this was the sixth winter without a single report of the species in the Illinois & Indiana region. The species was deemed “scarce” in both Colorado and Wyoming. Evening Grosbeak is numerous enough in winter to escape mention in the Pacific Northwest, but only *one* was reported, on 1 December 2003, from the Middle Pacific Coast region. Singles were also the rule in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, South Carolina, Yukon Territories, and Oaxaca, Mexico. Three were noted in Ohio, “a few” in Connecticut, three in Virginia, and seven in Georgia. “Good,” for recent winters, was the total of 24 or so in the mountains of Maryland.

Even in areas where expected, numbers of this striking finch appear to be depressed. Peter Taylor and Rudolf Koes state that the species seems to be “declining even in [its] main strongholds along the southern edge of the boreal forest” in the Prairie Provinces, while Bruce Mactavish reports just “moder-

ate” numbers from Newfoundland, echoed by Brian Dalzell for the other Atlantic Provinces. The only counts over 100 came from the Christmas Bird Counts in the Adirondacks (the Hudson–Delaware regional total topped 500 for the season, the highest in three winters) and from Ontario, where the Minden C.B.C. found 125 Evening Grosbeaks, though nearby Algonquin Provincial Park, which usually holds flocks through the season, had none. Many observers have suggested that the



Figure 2. This male duck photographed at Lake Hefner, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma 25 February 2004 shows characters both of Gadwall—such as the nut-brown crown and silvery tertiaries—and of Northern Pintail, such as the bill shape and color, long scapulars, and basic plumage and structure. Neither species, however, shows a white cheek in any plumage. A hybrid between these two species would be a relatively rare combination, but this seems the most plausible explanation for this individual. Photograph by James W. Arterburn.

eastward expansion of this species between the 1950s and the early 1980s has long ended and that the species has been in mode of contraction for well over a decade now. What of the species in its core range? With fewer than 1000 mentioned in this issue’s regional reports, perhaps we should be concerned about this enigmatic bird of the boreal and mixed forests. As an obsessive-compulsive aside: there were at least 16 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks reported in the regional reports (north of Mexico and Florida) this season: singles in Ontario, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Brunswick, Virginia, North Carolina, three each in Michigan and Alabama, and four in Georgia. Some of these birds appeared to overwinter at feeders. Now, Rose-breasted are not close relatives of Evening Grosbeak, but currently they are probably more likely to appear at many folks’ feeders (including my own) in the winter season than are Evening Grosbeaks. Something to ponder!

• Waxwings

Like the redpolls, Bohemian Waxwings, another star among this winter’s irruptives, began showing up away from breeding areas mostly late in December and especially in January, as most thermometers bottomed out below zero in northern areas. Northern New England had the largest counts of any loca-

tions in the East, with counts as high as 2000 from New Hampshire (off the charts) but most daily maxima in the low hundreds. By February, southern New England enjoyed up to 20 per site (as in Connecticut), and upstate New York’s counts were approaching 1000 total reports (highest single count of 200), much the same as in the winters of 1999–2000 and 2000–2001. Just a few more degrees of latitude to the south, Bohemians suddenly become a great rarity, and birders

scrambled to search for them, finding mostly singles south of upstate New York: at least eight (and probably more) total for New Jersey (up to three per site), one from Maryland, its second, one from Long Island (where quite rare), and one on Bermuda, also its second record. Though New England birders note a two-year cycle in this species, extralimital records are more widely separated in time, but it could well be, again, that the increase in the popularity—and the sophistication—of birding is responsible for the recent small spike in southerly records in places such as Maryland and Bermuda.

• Vole-birds and snow-birds

It is rare but welcome when regional editors are able to tie winter influxes of a species to weather events, even if the weather itself is not the primary cause of the influx but merely the vehicle that facilitates the movement. The Middle Atlantic regional editors were able to do so not just for redpolls but also for Rough-legged Hawk, an uncommon species in the Southeast, or at least uncommon enough that a careful compilation of reports can show some correlation to a weather event, in this case the first big storm of the winter season at the end of December’s first week. This strong low-pressure event, which produced heavy snowfall over a large

area south and east of the Great Lakes, seemed to send a sudden flurry of Rough-leggeds into Pennsylvania and the Piedmont of Virginia and as far south as Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina (with one later to Georgia). Certainly, Rough-legged Hawks are able to forage in areas with heavy snow cover, and their strong southerly flight—with over 50 birds in Virginia and Maryland—was probably the product of a good breeding season in the north country coupled with a scarcity of prey in wintering areas to the north. Most birds seen at the southern edges of range are young birds (adult males are rather rare), less equipped to cope with periods of prey scarcity. Nevertheless, the apparently unprecedented numbers at the southern extreme of winter range were noted in a winter in which winter snows were particularly heavy over much of the species' core range, and one wonders whether this first storm might not have been *both* the trigger and the vehicle that brought such numbers southward. It was, in any case, an excellent winter in which to see numbers of this glorious species in Pennsylvania (where a coordinated survey tallied 341) and in New England, where even coastal New Hampshire had a few.

Short-eared Owl and Northern Shrike staged similar southward movements, with similar timing. For the shrikes, Joe Burgiel and fellow editors note that most records for New York accrue in either December or February (not January), which suggests to them that shrikes moved southward into Pennsylvania (where "numerous" this season) rather than down the Atlantic coast, where records were few and far between. Over 300 shrikes were tallied, roughly, in the regional reports, though most editors commented more generally: "plentiful" in Indiana and Illinois (17 total), "widespread" in North Dakota (59 during the C.B.C. season), and "above average" in Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico (at least 20 among those states). Outliers were few, despite the good flight, with only two in Texas, two in southern California, and three in northwestern Missouri—hardly a southern push to compare to the redpolls'.

Snowy Owls, by contrast, were in their lowest numbers in years throughout southern Canada and the United States: I counted just 50 mentioned specifically in the regional reports this winter, with the southernmost in Washington state, Oklahoma, and Virginia. The species went unreported for the first time in many years in Iowa, was "unusually scarce" throughout the Prairie Provinces, and in "very low" numbers in the Northern Great Plains. Even in non-invasion years, Washington/Oregon get a dozen or so, but only three were found in that region this winter. Of another, smaller mouser, Bob Leberman notes

that "heavy, persistent snow cover undoubtedly contributed to the smaller-than-usual number of American Kestrels observed during the Pennsylvania raptor survey (268), less than half of the 2001 and 2002 counts," but in New Jersey, where snow cover was less extensive, Joe Burgiel and colleagues note a sharp decline in wintering kestrels as recorded on the state's Christmas Bird Counts since the 1970s and warn of a potential crash in the population.

Though it is true that many species forage well despite snow cover, there is certainly a breaking point, beyond which we see a facultative migration in birds that forage in field habitats. Most finches of the northern kind do not spend much time feeding on the ground itself, except at feeding stations, and raptors are able to cope with snow (so long as prey critters are detectable), but longspurs and other field-foragers are rather vulnerable when snow cover is heavy for long periods. Huge flights of Lapland Longspurs, sometimes passing at night, are well known on the northern and central Great Plains immediately following large snowstorms locally or to the north, and on a smaller scale, this appears to happen to the east as well. All regions east of the Mississippi River that reported Lapland Longspurs noted that they were in higher numbers than usual this season, including all of New England, where the Massachusetts peak count of 44 was perhaps the highest in a decade. In North Carolina, Henderson County produced the all-time highest state count of 100 birds on 6 December, following the heavy snowstorm in the Ohio Valley, the Virginias, and the Northeast; Virginia was also recipient of many large flocks, detected along roadsides in the northern parts of the state just after snowstorms. Both Pennsylvania and Ohio report large counts, peaking in late February with 1500 birds in Ohio, mostly flocks heading northward. To the west, in Missouri and Iowa, observers found that their highest counts "as expected coincided with the snow cover of late January and February," with single flocks of 200 to 300 in those states, respectively. One made it to Bermuda.

The lost & the "lingering"?

A few extralimital species seen in small numbers across very large areas could be said to fit very minor "patterns" this season (or synoptically, with other seasons), among them several interesting raptor species. Prairie Falcons do not seem to move far out of range, but this winter saw single birds a bit far from home at Arkadelphia, Arkansas, Gunterville Dam, Alabama, and The Wilds, Ohio. The few reports of this species in the true "East," east of Appalachia, have apparently never passed muster with records committees

because of the real possibility of escaped falconers' birds. White-tailed Kite, increasingly known for northward movements in recent years (though not nearly as dramatic as Mississippi or Swallow-tailed Kites), continues to be somewhat enigmatic as well, with very unusual appearances in Comanche County, Oklahoma 6 December, Denton, North Carolina 27 February, and near Stevensville, Montana through 12 December. The species is said to be spreading in the Pacific Northwest (where roosts of 20 and 24 birds were noted) but in low numbers in the Southwest. Paul Lehman tells me that northward and eastward wandering in this species shows divergent seasonal timing east of the Rocky Mountains versus west: in the East, most records are from early spring through early summer, whereas in the coastal Pacific Northwest and the Southwest, most are recorded in fall and winter. In consulting Brian Wheeler's (2003 a, b) new books, *Raptors of eastern North America* and *Raptors of western North America*, I see that this is quite true—except for Alabama, where the 10 or so records are from fall/winter. Could these be wandering Florida birds that don't make it much away from the Gulf Coast at this season? And what about the North Carolina record in late February? It seems to me that the Carolina record (along with an older one there from January 1957) might arguably be called "early spring" records—probably all associated with an unseasonable warm-up, such as often happens in late winter there. Perhaps the same is true of some of Alabama's records. This species is, after all, much harder than Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kites.

More fathomable in their lingering, *Buteo* species that usually migrate to the Neotropics are being found more often in recent winters. Five Broad-winged Hawks between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island topped the three reported in southern Louisiana—remarkably, the only others north of Mexico were reported in Texas and Florida. Louisiana also had a rare Swainson's Hawk in mid-December, another was well described from Nova Scotia 6 December, and two were noted at Canyon Terrace, Benton County, Washington 11 February! There were none reported from Texas this year, though California had five or more overwinter.

Several southerly species slowly expanding their ranges were reported on the northern fringes of range and beyond. Missouri's third Inca Dove wintered in St. Charles County through late February, with another north to Meade County, Kansas 11 December. Counts of 10 from Rocky Ford, Colorado and 16 from Wagoner County, Oklahoma were locally high, while a small colony in Garden City, southwestern Kansas appears to be taking hold. To the south, a fledgling in Lafayette

Parish, Louisiana 21 December was very late evidence of local nesting. The species is increasing steadily in southern Utah and Nevada as well, with a nearby Arizona record from the northern site of St. Johns on 27 December. Great-tailed Grackle, whose expansion has seemed to lose headlines to the increasing western appearances of Common Grackle, was found in Ontario and Oregon, and the species has consolidated and expanded its winter range in both Missouri and Iowa as well. In Idaho, however, only one could be found this winter in Ada County. Another southern species found increasingly far to the north of normal, single Brown Pelicans in were Nova Scotia 27 December (a bird sent to a rehabilitation center in Florida) and Massachusetts 23–25 December. A flying flock of three in interior northern New Jersey during a blizzard 15 December must have been a bizarre sight.

In closing this section, I will tap-dance on thin ice for a paragraph. I keep reading interesting articles and summaries about the rather rapid recent weakening of the Earth's magnetic field (most recently in the *New York Times* and on the PBS television series "Nova") and wondering what effect this might have, or be having, on birds' navigation. The changes, now measured at up to about fifteen percent, have resulted in damage to satellites and have led some scientists to suggest that we may be nearing the next reversal of polarity, such as apparently last occurred around 760,000 years ago. One of my guiding assumptions, in sections above and below, is that apparent increases in reports of extralimital birds are often attributable to the gradual maturation of amateur ornithology (advanced "birding") in North America. That assumption seems to work well for irruptive species (finches, Bohemian Waxwing, northern owls, etc.)—whose distributional patterns are tracked over the Internet with more nuance than ever, prompting more and more people to get out and look for them—but the assumption is problematic for birds whose ranges are clearly expanding, such as Cave Swallows, Mississippi Kites, and White-winged Doves, or species involved in unexplained large-scale movements, such as the many Barn Swallows that appear in midwinter along the Pacific coast. These birds are relatively distinctive and have been found in areas that have been carefully canvassed for years by savvy birders, and so it is manifest that something new is happening.

But then there are birds such as the Philadelphia Vireo found by Wayne Petersen at Plymouth, Massachusetts on Christmas Eve this past year, a report that would have made me fall out of my chair perhaps even five years ago but that now, for all its rarity, seems fully within the realm of

the real—if not expected for this species, then part of a suite of observations of Neotropical birds that never make it out of the United States in the autumn. I can't help wondering: are we seeing more "lost" and lingering birds than in decades past—not more of them because of the increase in observers and their talents, but more altogether? If we take the view (see Sullivan 2004) that these birds are not in fact simply lingering to enjoy the last fruits of autumn before departing southward (the global "warming" scenario) so much as end-of-the-line, misoriented migrants or reverse-migrants, then might some of these birds' misorientation or disorientation be connected to the changes in the magnetosphere? Without repeating the entire tedious defense of the (potential) scientific merits of studying uncommon and rare birds here: Who but us birders is in place to observe wayward birds and to document them in numbers? Should the earth's polarity some day reverse, whose eyes and skills and reporting networks can provide data that might reveal some connection between misorientation and magnetic changes? [*Mirabile dictu*: as this article was going into layout on 22 July 2004, Alvaro Jaramillo sent a newspaper story from 22 July that three-fourths—some 1500 of 2000—homing pigeons completely lost their way while traveling a modest 150-km route between Ljungby and Malmö in southern Sweden on 17 July; the birds usually complete the route in about two hours, and very few fail to complete the journey. The birds have vanished, with no sightings of them during the week. Organizer Lars-Aake Nilsson of the Malmö Homing Pigeon Club is quoted as saying "I have worked with pigeons since 1960 and have never experienced anything like this." The weather was said to have been calm.]

Looning

The extremely low temperatures all through areas north of about 38° N latitude led to the icing over of many water bodies and even the gradual freezing over of large parts of the Great Lakes over this winter. Probably as a result, numbers of several waterfowl species increased markedly south of usual range, and loons and especially white-winged gulls also featured prominently in regional reports. An overview of the season's vagrant loons east of the Great Plains—four Yellow-billed between Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; 26 Pacifics from the interior East, the East and Gulf coasts, and the Great Lakes states; and widespread Red-throateds from Appalachia to Alabama and beyond—would have been jaw-dropping only a few years ago. In case it was overlooked in the regional report: accompanying Tennessee's fantastic Yellow-billed Loon at Pace Point were up to

three Pacific Loons. We are, as so often at this journal, compelled to ask: are wintering loons of several species increasing on our interior water bodies?

Loons found inland after December often stay put on their lakes of choice, provided the water remains open, and can be relocated in most places with some work. The Georgia Yellow-billed was very cooperative and seen by multiple birders, the birds to the north a bit less so. Though wintering loons do certainly move around, both within lakes and lake systems, they do not pose quite the problem of quantification that, for instance, Red-necked Grebes do when they are seen in large numbers well south of typical winter range. Of interest would be a long-term analysis of loon numbers—at least for interior areas that remain unfrozen—through which we might better understand whether the apparent increase in loon numbers at interior sites represents an actual increase or simply a product of our increased acumen and attention to interior lakes. My suspicion in the case of loons is that these species—Pacific and Yellow-billed in particular—have visited such areas in past decades but that they went undetected. It would be interesting to see if Christmas Bird Count data indicate an actual increase in loon numbers per party-hour. Nevertheless, even if such an increase were detected, it does not tell us whether birders have simply shifted their efforts away from field edges and toward the lakeshores, or whether our skills have become more refined, such that seeking out loons and identifying them has become something we do more efficiently, rapidly, accurately than in years past. Scientific manipulations of the "data" produced by Christmas Bird Counters would find it hard to adjust for changes in birding culture and practices such as the increase in "looning" in recent years.

I remember when first birding the Cayuga Lake area in upstate New York in the late 1980s, local birders, myself included, thought Red-throated Loon a great prize and rarity; it was at least a species most birders had not seen on the lake. A few people thought they might have seen one out in Aurora Bay, the widest part of the lake, but the birds were distant and difficult to follow. So we decided, one October day, to rent the *Loon-A-See*, a party-barge that could take us to where the loons were eluding us. We were instantly rewarded with good views of Red-throated Loon. A few years later, several die-hard observers started up a loon count at Taughannock Falls State Park, with tally sheets much like those used at a hawkwatch. Though Red-throated Loons could not be called common there, they are now seen passing in small numbers each year. In this case, as with so many others, it was an in-

crease in both effort and identification skill that revealed what had probably been the case for a long time—that a species thought very rare was simply a low-density migrant.

By way of a probably not surprising confessional, and a tangential one at that: I have trouble with cameras. No matter how hesitantly I spend money—waiting for just the right rig to come along—I am always several steps behind the latest technological advances. Moreover, I find that I'm not the most mechanically inclined when it comes to operating the cameras I buy. So when watching the local loon flotilla around First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, Virginia last January I noted a Pacific-type loon with large white flank patches, I experienced a not-unfamiliar gut-gripping feeling: here's a potentially great bird, ripe for the digiscoping, and all I have is 560mm lens on a Canon EOS 3 body. The images of the bird are underwhelming. In communicating with other birders around the East, I've heard the story several times now—a bird that looks like an Arctic Loon on the ocean but is just a little too far off to photograph well. This has happened to birders in Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, and Georgia, at least, and a few other places—including the same site in Virginia four years earlier.

The moral of this digression (other than the self-reproach of "You blew it!") should be, in part, as for the Red-throated Loons on Cayuga Lake: next time, get the right tools for the job—in this case a digital camera to hold to the scope (a party-barge would be nice, too). But the rest of the lesson should be: don't be discouraged by imperfect first encounters. Given the many reports of "possible" Arctic Loons in the East over the past two decades, some lucky birder will surely nail down an Arctic with beautiful photo-

Table 2. Hybrids reported December 2003–February 2004

Scarlet Ibis x White Ibis	Pasco, FL	22 Dec
Scarlet Ibis x White Ibis	Duval, FL	1 Feb+
Greater White-fronted Goose x Canada Goose	Ridgefield, WA	18 Dec
Ross's Goose x Snow Goose (blue) (2)	L. Apopka Restoration Area, FL	28 Dec
Mallard x Northern Pintail	Olympia, WA	14 Dec
Mallard x Northern Pintail	Oklahoma, OK	29 Dec
Gadwall x Northern Pintail	Oklahoma, OK	25 Feb
Gadwall x American Wigeon	Suffolk, VA	1 Feb
American Wigeon x Eurasian Wigeon	Willcox, AZ	all season
American Wigeon x Eurasian Wigeon (2)	Alviso, Santa Clara, CA	1 Feb
Gadwall x Mallard	Humber Bay West, ON	2 Jan
Common Teal x Green-winged Teal (4–5)	westside WA and OR	all season
Common Teal x Green-winged Teal	Hempstead Lake S. P., NY	21 Feb
Ring-necked Duck x scaup	Renton, King, WA	24–26 Dec
Ring-necked Duck x scaup	Fernhill Wetlands, WA	19 Jan
Ring-necked Duck x scaup	Lane Community College, WA	20 Jan
Tufted Duck x scaup	Silver L., Rehoboth, Sussex, DE	9 Dec
Tufted Duck x scaup	near Maryhill, Klickitat, WA	through 28 Dec
Tufted Duck x scaup	Borax L., Lake, CA	6 Jan
Common Goldeneye x Bufflehead	Wenatchee, Chelan, WA	through 18 Dec
Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser	Oklahoma, OK	4 Dec
Common Goldeneye x Hooded Merganser	L. McConaughy, NE	19 Jan
Barrow's Goldeneye x Common Goldeneye	Blaine, OK	3–7 Feb
King Eider x Common Eider	St. Andrews, NB	17 Dec
King Eider x Common Eider	Deer I., NB	29 Feb
American Oystercatcher x Black Oystercatcher	Santa Cruz I., CA	15 Feb
American Oystercatcher x Black Oystercatcher	Palos Verdes Pen., Los Angeles, CA	1 Feb
American Oystercatcher x Black Oystercatcher	Newport Beach, Orange, CA	31 Dec
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull (5)	L. Erie waterfront, OH	over season
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	Rochester S.T.P., Strafford, NH	23 Dec
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	L. Hefner, OK	8 Jan
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	Penn-Warner Tract, Bucks, PA	15 Jan
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	Whiting, IN lakefront	17 Jan+
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	s. Baldwin, AL	25 Jan
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	Starved Rock S.P., IL	31 Jan
Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull	Presque Isle S. P., PA	1 Feb
Western Gull x Glaucous-winged Gull	Corpus Christi, Nueces, TX	7 Feb+
Western Gull x Glaucous-winged Gull	Confluence Park, Delta, CO	13–23 Feb
Kelp Gull x Herring Gull	Brownsville, Cameron, TX	late Feb
Eurasian Collared-Dove x Mourning Dove	President's I., Shelby, TN	1 Jan
Eurasian Collared-Dove x 'Ringed Turtle-Dove' (2)	Mexicali, Baja California	24 Nov
Eurasian Collared-Dove x 'Ringed Turtle-Dove' (2+)	La Parguera, Puerto Rico	22–25 Jan
Berylline Hummingbird x Magnificent Hummingbird	Ramsey Canyon, AZ	18 Feb
Sapsucker cf. Red-breasted x Red-naped	Patagonia L., AZ	30 Nov–18 Dec
Sapsucker cf. Red-breasted x Red-naped	Tucson, AZ	25 Dec–4 Jan
Sapsucker cf. Red-breasted x Red-naped	Yuma, AZ	8–16 Feb
Couch's Kingbird x Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Leicester, NY	through 2 Dec
Blue Jay x Steller's Jay (2)	Coeur d'Alene, ID	over season
Townsend's Warbler x Hermit Warbler	Mountain View, CA	15–21 Dec
White-crowned Sparrow x Golden-crowned Sparrow	near Mt. Vernon, WA	7 Feb
White-crowned Sparrow x Golden-crowned Sparrow	Sauvie I., OR	28 Feb

graphs in the East—as Coloradans did in 2002—and, as with Yellow-billed and Pacific Loons, our confidence and our competence in the identification of the "fifth loon" will be

buoyed up as we scan our local patches. The fidelity to wintering sites in some loons, too, is worth keeping in mind: Table Rock Reservoir, Missouri, after all, could be said to be the birthplace of "looning" in the continent's eastern interior, its regal Yellow-billed Loon returning almost annually 1990–1995. Steve Mlodinow points out, however, that interior records of the species had been mounting to the west for some years (Patten 2000), possibly owing to the long-term increase in man-made reservoirs in the West. So perhaps loons have indeed increased in some interior areas in recent years.

Gulling

Gulls occupy more and more space each year in the Winter Season's regional reports, so much so that regional editors now merely summarize without details multiple reports of species once boldfaced. In the East, the "gulls of the season" were clearly the different adult Slaty-backed Gulls documented at Glace Bay, Nova Scotia on the day after Christmas, and at the Rochester, New Hampshire water treatment plant 23–27 December. Mew Gulls, rare anywhere well inland in the Lower 48, were found on the Montréal C.B.C. 14 December and on both sides of the Niagara River, in both Ontario and New York, in mid-month. Few other gulls of real note came from the Atlantic coast, other than Florida's returning Heermann's Gull. Globe-trotting gulls seemed to be most remarkable this year in the South and especially in Texas, where there seemed no limit to what might turn up. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were both seen in rather larger numbers south of usual, as were apparent Herring Gull x Glaucous Gull hybrids (Table 2). An Iceland and two Glaucous Gulls made it south to Port Canaveral, Florida, while an Iceland Gull in the Bahamas

was not only the first for that country but first for the West Indies anywhere. A Photo Salon to be published in the next issue brings together some of the more remarkable Texas

gull discoveries of the winter and spring 2003–2004, which included Far Western taxa such as Glaucous-winged and nominate California Gulls alongside Eurasian taxa such as Black-tailed, Slaty-backed, Yellow-legged, and possible *vegae* Herring Gulls, all considered very rare in Texas. Naturally, Texas often showcases a diversity of birdlife that smaller states cannot. But gulls are another matter: all of the species to be featured in the Texas gull Photo Salon, one can argue, could show up anywhere on the continent—and, given sufficient concentrations of gulls, perhaps even the same suite of species could appear simultaneously, even away from tried-and-true locations such as Niagara Falls, which has had most of these species in the past.

Hybrids

I can't get enough of hybrids, and one reason for my enjoyment of them is that each hybrid mentioned in the regional reports shows that someone was paying close attention to individual birds. If you attend a talk or birding workshop by Sibley, Dunn, Kaufman, or O'Brien, you'll hear them stress, over and over, the need to *look at the bird*. As obvious as this might sound, I am repeatedly struck by fellow birders' occasional lapses in this respect, as well as my own. Hybrids—or, really, *apparent* hybrids—mark moments in our birding when we move beyond most field guides and try to make sense of a phenotype that appears most readily explained by some combination of characters from multiple species. Strictly speaking, we cannot determine what sort of genetic material is involved. But in so many cases, we can make an educated guess, based on general appearances.

I've added a short section on hybrids here mostly to showcase, in a single spot, what I consider an "average" showing (perhaps fewer hybrid geese than normal) for a winter season's reports. Surely, too, there were many more individuals that did not get reported to regional editors, especially in areas where intergrades or hybrids are routine. Naturally, the hybrids most frequently reported are also the least surprising—hybrids of Herring and Glaucous Gulls (sometimes called "Nelson's Gull," though that appellation has been applied to a whole range of phenotypes, not limited to F_1 hybrids of Glaucous with Herring), of Tufted Duck and scaup, of



Figure 3. This male goldeneye at Canton Lake, Blaine County, Oklahoma 7 February 2004 shows head and bill shape intermediate between Common Goldeneye and Barrow's Goldeneye, with the white facial patch precisely intermediate between the two goldeneye species. The pattern of the back is closer to Barrow's but shows intermediate characters, and the gloss on the head was purplish-maroon. Compare this bird with the hybrid Common Goldeneye x Barrow's Goldeneye on page 100 of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Photograph by Lou Truex.

Townsend's and Hermit Warblers, and of Red-breasted and Red-naped Sapsuckers (Table 2). Birders often report such birds tentatively, even with trepidation, and for good reason: hybrid birds might well show features not typical of either parent species (Figures 1 and 2, for instance) or might well appear so like one parent as to go unnoticed as a hybrid, though many do look dead-intermediate between parent species (Figure 3). To assist us in our "educated" guesses, a number of articles (e. g., Randler 2001) and several books by Eric and Barry Gillham (1996, 1998, 2002) have recently been published that depict a bewildering, often subtle array of waterfowl hybrids, backcrosses, and even intersexual individuals. All are a worth a gander.

In the East, aside from various combinations of Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers, we do not knowingly encounter many hybrids in passerines or near-passerines, which make discoveries such as Tennessee's Eurasian Collared-Dove x Mourning Dove or New York's continuing Couch's Kingbird x Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (McGowan and Spahn 2004) all the more fascinating. Out West, however, hybrids and intergrades are a way of life, it seems. Arizona birders, for instance, encounter challenging birds routinely, and their apparent hybrid sapsuckers, as elsewhere in the West, simply defy naming in many cases (Table 2)—and provide a wonderfully humbling case study for anyone who might be too quick to put a name on a bird. In the most thorough study of intergrade or hybrid sapsuckers to date, Johnson and Johnson (1985) looked at the *daggetti* subspecies of Red-breasted Sapsucker and its apparent hybrids with Red-naped Sapsucker. Odd-looking sapsuckers in Arizona tend to draw

the attention of birders in having more red on the head and breast than is expected in typical Red-naped—thus probably hybrids with Red-breasted—but some variation is seen in both species, and hybrids and birds of hybrid derivation show a bewildering array of phenotypes, such that the distinction between hybrids and variants is often unclear. Some birds appear so much like *daggetti* Red-breasted Sapsuckers that they could well be pure *daggetti*; nevertheless, the Arizona editors and most birders leave such birds formally unidentified. This position might be an uncomfortable one from the perspective of the casual hobbyist birder, but even a brief glance at the thirteen

sapsucker phenotypes described in the Johnson and Johnson paper will confirm that this is the only prudent way to handle this difficult situation. Gary Rosenberg and Mark Stevenson in their winter column also call for continued careful documentation of Black-capped Gnatcatchers, given the recent rash of Arizona reports of the species—hybrids with Black-tailed have been documented and could be easily mistaken for pure Black-capped. Ditto Yellow-shafted Flickers. Ditto Flame-colored Tanagers. And ditto hummingbirds: an apparent Berylline Hummingbird x Magnificent Hummingbird hybrid was recorded there this season, possibly the same individual noted around Miller Canyon since 1999 (see Heindel and Howell 2000).

Another good example of difficult identifications is afforded by hybrids between Eurasian Collared-Dove and "Ringed Turtle-Dove" (an avicultural form), usually reported in places where the former is species is colonizing rapidly (Table 2). Marshall Iloff, who reported several "tweener" doves from Mexico, Baja California this season, is quick to point out that he also sees Eurasian Collared-Doves whose plumages are "off" elsewhere around the country, especially in Texas but also probably in California and Colorado—smaller, paler birds that often have intermediate plumage characters (tone of undertail coverts, upperwing coverts, etc.). (Paul Lehman has seen such birds in British Columbia and southwestern Arizona as well.) Iloff suggests that we may assume too quickly that hybridization is involved and wonders, given the small initial population of the species in the New World (some few dozen birds that escaped in the Bahamas), whether some of the original founders might them-

selves have had "Ringed Turtle-Dove" genes. Jeff Wilson's discovery this winter of a relatively straightforward hybrid of Mourning Dove with Eurasian Collared-Dove in Tennessee, while less problematic, was most unsettling. Informal reports from Florida that collared-doves are muscling out the Mourning in urban and suburban areas are also unwelcome news; these reports are widespread enough to merit a serious scientific study, perhaps drawing on research monies available for game species?

Postscript: blue feet & interregional wanderings

In editing the Mexico regional reports for the Winter season, I noted with vicarious satisfaction that while temperatures plunged into what Don Cecile calls "the bone-chilling majesty" of -40°C in Canada in January—and our feet even in Virginia were turning a bit blue—one of our regional editors, Rudolf Koes of the Prairie Provinces region, had migrated south some 3100 km and was watching both boobies and gannets on the beaches of Tamaulipas and Veracruz. A well-deserved and well-timed break, but a working vacation, really, as he dutifully sent in his sightings to *North American Birds*.

On the other coast of Mexico, it seems one of the boobies ended up taking an even longer journey. According to Denny Granstrand of Yakima, Washington, a married couple sailing about 350 km off western Mexico found themselves host to a hitch-hiking Blue-footed Booby. This bird stayed with them, catching flying fish en route, until they reached their destination—the big island of Hawaii—whereupon the bird departed. A trip of 4300 km isn't bad—still not quite besting the Red-footed Booby that arrived in Alaska after coming on board in Hawaii (4500 km), or the Cape Petrel that followed a sailing ship for handouts for about 8500 km (King 1839)—but the question still goes begging: how do we classify such a stowaway or ship-follower on our various checklists? Should they be added to such lists, with all the rights and privileges of so-called regular or official species? Or should their hardiness and ingenuity in adapting to human inventions instead be weighed against their inclusion? The question is still very much open on this continent. As we constantly refine our birding skills, we find, perhaps to our perplexity, that the birds are refining their people skills as well (the booby appeared to learn that it would not be chased off the boat if it defecated seaward)—and taking some vacations of their own.

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STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED IN THE REGIONAL REPORTS

*	specimen collected
+	bird(s) seen through end of period
†	written details on file
A.F.B.	Air Force Base
acc.	accepted by records committee
A.R.C.	Avian Records Committee
b.	banded
B.B.S.	Breeding Bird Survey
B.O.	Bird Observatory
B.R.C.	Bird Records Committee
C.A.	Conservation Area
C.B.C.	Christmas Bird Count
C.P.	County Park
cm	centimeter(s)
Cr.	Creek
Ft.	Fort
G.C.	Golf Course
G.P.	Game Preserve
Hwy.	Highway
I. (Is.)	Island(s), Isle(s)
imm. (imms.)	immature(s)
Jct.	Junction
juv. (juvs.)	juvenile (plumage); juvenile(s)
km	kilometer(s)
L.	Lake
mm	millimeter(s)
m.ob.	many (or multiple) observers
Mt. (Mts.)	Mount/Mountain (Mountains)
N.A.	Nature Area, Natural Area
N.F.	National Forest
N.M.	National Monument
N.P.	National Park
N.S.	National Seashore
N.W.R.	National Wildlife Refuge
p.a.	pending acceptance
P.P.	Provincial Park
Pen.	Peninsula
ph.	photographed (by + initials)
Pt.	Point (not Port)
R.	River
R.A.	Recreation(al) Area
R.B.A.	Rare Bird Alert
R.P.	Regional Park
R.S.	Regional Shoreline
Res.	Reservoir
Rte.	Route
S.B.	State Beach
S.F.	State Forest
S.G.A.	State Game Area
S.P.	State Park
S.R.A.	State Recreation Area
S.R.	State Reserve
S.W.A.	State Wildlife Area
S.T.P.	Sewage Treatment Plant/Pond
subad. (subads.)	subadult(s)
Twp.	Township
v.r.	voice recording (by + initials)
vt.	videotape (by + initials)
W.A.	Wildlife Area
W.M.A.	Wildlife Management Area
W.T.P.	(Waste)water Treatment Plant/Pond